

Youth, Policing and Democratic Accountability

A Study in Applied Critical Theory

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Declaration

In submitting this thesis for examination I, Ian Loader, hereby affirm and declare that:

- (i) I have composed this thesis in its entirety, and
- (ii) it is entirely my own work.

(Ian Loader)

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between young people and policing. It draws upon the resources of contemporary social and political theory, and interviews with young people (aged 15-23) and police officers in Edinburgh, in order to explicate the possibility of democratic communication between youth and the police, and analyse the consequences of its absence.

Theoretically, it delineates an applied reformulation of Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action that can expedite a grounded investigation of the relationship between youth, crime and policing. In this regard, Habermas' work (i) shapes the elucidation of a prefigurative methodological approach to the relevant substantive issues, and (ii) serves as a standpoint from which to review the existing sociological literature on both youth culture and policing. In this latter context, it specifically informs the generation - through a reconstruction of subcultural theory - of an original theoretical framework within which to make sense of the accounts constructed in interviews with young people and police officers.

Using this framework, the substantive research explores the ways in which young people and police officers communicate their respective experiences and dispositions. In particular, it moves beyond the conventional criminological focus on juvenile delinquency, and expounds the various ways in which young people experience and apprehend crime in public places. Conversely, it assesses how police officers understand and relate to youth social practices (whether in terms of pedagogic promotion or control). In both cases, the analysis is further solicitous to the impact that different post-school economic trajectories have upon youth practices and the policing of them. Finally, the substantive enquiry examines both the possibilities of communication between young people and police officers, and some of the obstacles that stand in its way.

The thesis concludes by drawing together the conceptual and substantive dimensions of the enquiry in order to think anew about the vexed question of police accountability. It endeavours, in particular, to redeem an interest in the question of democratic accountability by (i) articulating a number of questions that, it is argued, any proposals for police accountability must address, and (ii) outlining a series of institutional proposals that, if enacted, might resolve some of the existent tensions in police-youth relations in ways that involve the discursive negotiation of both the police and the policed.

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Like any production, the doctoral thesis is in so many ways a collective endeavour. I would like therefore to take this opportunity, if not to repay the debts accrued over the last four and a half years, then at least to acknowledge what is owed and to whom. Thanks first and foremost must go to my supervisors, Richard Kinsey and Neil Walker, without whose enthusiasm, support and criticism, none of what follows would have been possible. My appreciation also goes to all the young people and police officers who gave of their time to answer my questions; as well as to the many teachers, youth workers, youth training supervisors and senior police officers who helped arrange the interviews. Special thanks in this regard are due to David Garbett, (then) the assistant chief constable of Lothian and Borders police, who did much to facilitate the research with the police. Thanks also to Jean Goldring and Margaret Penman for their work in transcribing the interviews.

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The power of judgement rests on a potential agreement with others, and the thinking process which is active in judging something is not, like the thought process of pure reasoning, a dialogue between me and myself, but finds itself always and primarily, even if I am quite alone in making up my mind, in an anticipated communication with others with whom I know I must finally come to some agreement. And this enlarged way of thinking, which as judgement knows how to transcend its individual limitations, cannot function in strict isolation or solitude; it needs the presence of others 'in whose place' it must think, whose perspective it must take into consideration, and without whom it never has the opportunity to operate at all.

Hannah Arendt (1961) *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* pp. 220-1.

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Introduction

Communication is one of the central problems of modernity, if not perhaps its central problem. In social formations characterised by pronounced differentiation and social distance, the nature of communicative exchange - its presence or absence; inclusions and exclusions; reciprocities and distortions - is of pivotal force in shaping the character of social relations between individuals and groups. The thickness of communicative social bonds betoken much about the possibility of living meaningfully and creatively with 'difference', and of peacefully resolving social conflicts. For beyond the reach of inclusive and equitable dialogue lies only hostility, violence and warfare (witness Bosnia). Given the significance of institutions to modern social existence, the problem of communication is always also concerned with the institutional processes through which such communication may be enacted and sustained. The opportunities for different social groups to articulate their visions of the 'good life', and to deliberate upon rival claims to economic and social resources, thus constitutes one of the central benchmarks of a democratic polity.

This thesis pursues these thematic concerns by means of a theoretical case study (Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987: ch. 1) of the relationship between young people and policing. As such, it enters into two domains of public and criminological discourse that have long been the subject of pronounced argumentation. In the first instance, criminological enquiry has since its inception been much concerned with questions of juvenile delinquency, a concern that intermittently resonates with, and occasions challenges, recurring public anxiety about 'lawless youth' (Pearson 1983) - an anxiety most recently manifested in the aftermath of the tragic death of Jamie Bulger. Policing issues and problems have also - in the last twenty years or so - been the focus of widespread political debate and criminological inquiry; concentrating, at various times, on questions of public disorder; the (ab)use of police discretion; police technology; and police effectiveness in fighting crime. Most recently, public concern with such matters has spawned the publication of three official reports on policing in Britain - the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice (Runciman 1993); the Sheehy Inquiry (1993), and the White Paper on Police Reform (Home Office 1993).¹

By mobilising the concept of communicative action, I shall endeavour in this study to think afresh about some of these long vexed criminological questions. In particular, I draw upon the resources of contemporary social theory and political philosophy, and interviews

¹ These reports were published at too late a stage for incorporation within the body of the thesis. I have, however, especially in relation to the proposals contained in the white paper, footnoted a short discussion and commentary at appropriate junctures.

with young people (aged 15-23) and police officers in Edinburgh, in order to explicate the possibility of democratic communication between youth and the police, and analyse the consequences of its absence. In this regard, the concept of undistorted communication is pivotal to the research and reflection that follows, in that it provides a standpoint from which interpretation and critique are able to proceed, and serves as a normative ideal that anticipates a possible resolution of many of the tensions identified by such critique.

In substantive terms, such an undertaking has two significant corollaries. In the first place, it necessitates redeeming the connections between democracy and policing that have largely been elided since the fierce controversies of the 1980s (cf. Reiner and Spencer 1993). I am thus concerned in what follows to engage in critical dialogue with the 'managerialist turn' that the debate on police accountability has recently taken (Woodcock 1991), and to foment interest in the possibilities and problems of democratic accountability. In particular, I shall be solicitous to the question of how all social groups may have their experiences and concerns vis a vis policing incorporated within the institutional processes of a democratic public sphere. In so far as they represent a social group who experience frequent contact with both crime and policing (Anderson et al. 1990b), and evince a marked apathy towards existent political institutions, young people provide a significant case in point for any such project.

To approach the issue of youth and policing from this standpoint also requires that the question of juvenile delinquency is moved from centre-stage. In this regard, my ensuing concern is to explore substantively the multiplicity of ways in which young people come into contact with crime in public places - that is, as offenders, witnesses and - importantly - victims; and to make sense of how young people apprehend questions of crime, personal safety and policing. I am also concerned to explicate, not only young people's routine adversarial experiences of policing, but also the ways in which they understand, and make use of, policing as a 'service'. Conversely, I shall explore the dispositions of rank and file police officers towards questions of youth and crime, and in both cases, assess how respective experiences and understandings change in the years following the end of full-time schooling.

In pursuing these substantive questions, I draw heavily in what follows upon the work of German social theorist Jurgen Habermas (1984; 1987; 1990). Over the last three decades Habermas has done much both to reformulate the legacy of Frankfurt School critical theory, and to think through the possibility of embedding communicative discourse within the institutional processes of democratic social institutions. However, given the

level of abstraction at which he conducts his enquiries, I shall be concerned in the present context to reformulate the recent 'applied turn' in critical theory (Forester 1985b) in ways that can expedite a grounded investigation of the relationship between youth, crime and policing.

Thus in Part One - *The Theory of Communication* - I begin by providing a thematic overview of Habermas' theory of communicative action, and delineating a (prefigurative) methodological stance within which to approach the relevant substantive issues - both in terms of selecting the most propitious method of enquiry, and developing an appropriate methodology of interpretation. I then employ Habermas' formulations as a standpoint from which to review the existing literature on both youth culture and policing, and articulate - by means of a reconstruction of subcultural theory - a theoretical framework with which to make some meaningful sense of the accounts constructed in interviews with young people and police officers.

The four chapters making up Part Two - *The Practice of Communication* - are concerned to explore the ways in which young people and police officers communicate their respective experiences and dispositions. In particular, I effect an interpretation of the propositional content of, and relationship between, the social practices that young people deploy in public places, and explore how various post-school economic and social trajectories impact upon the relationship between these practices. With regard to police accounts, my concern in these chapters is with the ways in which officers' apprehend and relate to youth social practices (whether in terms of pedagogic promotion or control), and with how they understand the effects of various youth transitions upon such practices. Part Two then concludes - in a way that connects the substantive research with the deliberations of Part Three - with an analysis of the possibilities for communication between young people, and of the police, and the obstacles that stand in its way.

In Part Three - *The Institution(s) of Communication* - I draw together the theoretical and substantive themes of the enquiry in order to rethink the disputatious question of police accountability. In particular, I am concerned in the concluding chapter to address the issue of democratic accountability, and deliberate upon some of the possibilities and pitfalls it generates. In pursuing this task, I am interested in both explicating some of the questions that I believe must be addressed by any proposal for rendering the police democratically accountable; as well as furnishing - in a necessarily rather speculative fashion - institutional proposals that, if enacted, might resolve some of the problems that bedevil police-youth relations in ways that involve the discursive negotiation of both the police and the policed.

COMMUNICATION, ACTION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

It is the aim of this book to provide a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication, action and social research. The book is divided into three parts. Part One provides a critical overview of the theory of communicative action. Part Two provides a critical overview of the theory of action research. Part Three provides a critical overview of the theory of social research.

Part One

The Theory of Communication

The primary motivation for the development of the theory of communication is the need to understand the relationship between communication and action. The theory of communication is a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication and action. The theory of communication is a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication and action. The theory of communication is a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication and action.

- (i) a critical overview of the theory of communicative action
- (ii) an elucidation of the central concept of 'action' in critical theory and some of its implications and applications
- (iii) an outline of the pedagogical methodology informing the substantive research, and a discussion of research objectives and methods.

¹ Critical theory is a term that has been used to describe a range of theories and approaches to social research, including the Frankfurt School and their successors. The concept of 'action' is central to the theory of communication, and is a specific example of a more general concept of 'action' in critical theory. The theory of communication is a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication and action. The theory of communication is a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication and action. The theory of communication is a critical and reflective account of the relationship between communication and action.

Chapter One

COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

If critical theory is to have a future in the English speaking world it will be through the use of critical theory within various theoretical projects and disciplines and the development of critical theory in relation to contemporary conditions, concerns and problems. Only then will critical theory be a living force. (Kellner and Roderick 1981:170)¹

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to delineate a theoretical perspective - drawn largely, though not exclusively, from Habermas' (1984; 1987; 1990) theory of communicative action - in which to frame the research and reflection that follows. It is often remarked that Habermas conducts his enquiries at a level of abstraction that resists easy translation into specific analysis and political practice. In the light of this accurate (though sometimes overstated) complaint, my primary objective is to fashion an applied reformulation that enables critical theory to inform the understanding of some discrete criminological problems.²

The particular problem with which I am concerned is the relationship between young people and policing, and the institutional context that surrounds it. Within this specific setting, I shall employ Habermas' critical theory as a standpoint from which to think anew about some familiar and longstanding problems regarding the vexed question of police accountability. This can only be accomplished however if the theory of communicative action is subject to both some methodological and conceptual reformulation. This chapter is concerned with the first of these tasks and is divided into four sections:

- (i) a thematic overview of the theory of communicative action;
- (ii) an elucidation of the recent 'applied turn' in critical theory and some of its implications and aporias;
- (iii) an outline of the prefigurative methodology informing the substantive research, and a discussion of research objectives and methods;

¹ Critical theory is used throughout the enquiry specifically to refer to writers associated with the Frankfurt School and their contemporaries.

² The neglect by criminologists of the work of the Frankfurt School stands as a specific example of a more widespread isolation of the criminological enterprise from normative political theory. As Bottoms (1987: 262) remarks: 'It is a matter of considerable regret that, for the most part, there has been little real attempt by criminologists to get to grips with the revivals of social and political philosophy that have taken place since about 1970.' With regard to critical theory, the main exception to this remains Pearson (1975); the only other attempt I have found to link these two fields is Groves and Sampson (1986), whose approach merely flirts with critical theory before lapsing back into a positivistic marxism.

(iv) a theoretical discussion of the methodology of interpretation mobilised for the purposes of the enquiry.

The Objectives and Central Themes of the Theory of Communicative Action

The historical promise of the critical theory that emerged from the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt in the 1930s was to bring about a genuine collaboration between philosophical reflection and social scientific research (see for commentary, Jay 1973; Held 1980). By the end of the 1940s this promise had largely evaporated. The first generation of critical theorists could see no escape from the domination occasioned by an expanding domain of technological-instrumental rationality. The autonomy and freedom that Enlightenment reason had promised was increasingly seen to have been illusory, and the early critical theorists made a pessimistic retreat from the public realm of ethics and politics into the private sphere of aesthetics (Adorno 1973; Adorno and Horkheimer 1972).

Over the last three decades, Jurgen Habermas has done more than any other writer to reformulate the legacy of critical theory in the light of changing historical circumstances. Most recently, he has introduced and developed the concept of 'communicative action' in order to steer a path between the instrumental reductionism to which rationality has been subject in modern societies, and the post-modern critics who have responded to this process by turning their back upon any prospect of employing rationality in the service of human emancipation (Lyotard 1984).³ In pursuing this path, Habermas has viewed communicative action as a means to deliver modernity from a rationalisation process that has severely restricted the possibility of institutionalised democratic communication among citizens.

The political objective that has guided the various threads of Habermas' critical theory has been the possibility of human freedom and autonomy - the realisation, in other words, of a future in which people are capable of collectively and individually developing their potential free of illegitimate social constraints. This objective has been interpreted in terms of bringing about communication free from domination and institutionalising such communication within a democratic public sphere (Habermas 1989). In the light of this, the theory of communicative action anticipates:

a new principle of social organisation, according to which action-orienting norms and principles would be generated in processes of public and unlimited

³ This has, for example, long been one of the abiding themes of Foucault's genealogical efforts to reclaim the 'subjugated knowledges' repressed by totalising reason (see Foucault 1980).

discussion. The new principle of social organisation would be that of discursive will formation through communication freed from domination. (Benhabib 1986: 229)

The pursuit of this objective has engaged Habermas in two dimensions of enquiry whose intimate connection represent a continuing thread within critical theory. The first of these may be termed - following Benhabib (1986: 224-8) - the 'explanatory-diagnostic' dimension of critical theory. This refers to its capacity to explain the crisis tendencies of modern societies, and explicate the ways in which they are apprehended and experienced by different social groups; a moment necessary if critical theory is to avoid lapsing into mere normative philosophy, devoid of any explanatory potential. The second - more normative - dimension of critical theory Benhabib terms its 'anticipatory-utopian' intent. This refers to the fact that critical theory sets out to understand the dynamics of the present with a view to its radical transformation. This utopian dimension is important in that it distinguishes critical theory from mainstream sociological analysis, by providing a counterfactual standpoint from which social reality is interrogated and explained. Such explanation addresses the felt needs and experiences of different (currently marginalised) social groups and explores the possibilities that exist for realising them within a different and better future.

This combination of the explanatory and the utopian is essential to any social theory's claim to be a *critical* theory. In the context of the theory of communicative action, such a dual theoretical promise has taken the form of (i) a normative exploration of the meanings and implications of communicative rationality, and its anticipation in the formal properties of human language, and (ii) a sociological explanation of the possibilities for communicative action immanent within the modern world, coupled with an analysis of both the institutional constraints standing in its way, and the consequences of its absence. It is necessary to deal briefly with each of these dimensions.

Habermas' critical theory rests upon a distinction between several types of social action, the most important of which is that between communicative and instrumental or strategic action (Habermas 1969: 81-121; 1984: 8-42). Communicative action is oriented to 'reaching a mutual understanding' about an unclear situation with the goal of consensually co-ordinating objectives through persuasion alone - what Habermas terms 'the unforced force of the better argument.' The rationality associated with it refers to the competence of social actors to raise validity claims and criticise the claims of others. Through a process of rational discussion these claims can be evaluated and revised according to their truth, legitimacy or authenticity - depending on whether they refer respectively to the world of external objects, intersubjective norms or subjective feelings.

The mutual understanding that such a discursive process anticipates requires relations of reciprocity and symmetry to pertain between the parties involved.

Instrumental action, by contrast, is oriented to controlling the natural world in order to bring about a certain state of affairs; strategic action is correspondingly oriented to the control of the social world. While the former necessitates the deployment of existing knowledge and skills in the service of production, the latter aims to have others act in ways that fulfil certain purposes. (To illustrate the difference it might be said that building a bicycle requires instrumental action, while the selling of it demands strategic action.) The rationality common to both types of action however is one that attempts to calculate the best means to achieve certain specified ends. Historically, these types of rationality are coupled with the claim that the ends themselves lie beyond the reach of reasoned argumentation.⁴

The distinction between these two types of rationality provides Habermas with a framework for re-interpreting processes of social rationalisation. These were seen by both Max Weber and an earlier generation of critical theorists to have entailed the increasing domination of the modern world by instrumental reason, and its orientation to towards mastery and control. Employing a broader concept of rationality, Habermas is able to concur with the broad outlines of this thesis while avoiding its fatalistic conclusions. His central claim is that the 'paradoxes of rationalisation' have occasioned an institutionalisation of instrumental reason achieved at the expense of communicative reason. In this context, the task of modern critical theory is to chart the consequences of this paradox and explore the prospects of 'redeeming modernity' through a programme of communicative ethics.

In order to develop the first of these tasks, Habermas (1975: 1-7; 1987: part vi) introduces a further distinction between 'system' and 'lifeworld'. The system encompasses the economy and the administrative state and has the task of functionally co-ordinating societal integration. This co-ordination task is organised by the 'steering mechanisms' of money and juridical power, both of which operate in an instrumental relation to the external world. The system is, at various times, subject to dysfunctions and crises (such as inflation, unemployment, legitimisation deficits) that have to be managed in various ways. The task of critical theory in this context is to grasp the dynamics of these crises and explore how they are experienced by different social groups.

⁴ As MacIntyre (1981: 54) puts it, 'Reason is calculative; it can assess truths of fact and mathematical relations but nothing more. In the realm of practice it can speak only of means. About ends it must be silent.' By contrast, one of the central tenets of critical theory is that normative claims can be subject to (discursively) rational debate and evaluation.

The lifeworld refers to a realm of expectations, definitions and understandings within which social action routinely takes place. It represents both a context of practical knowledge within which everyday experience occurs, and a repository for the products of such experience. The lifeworld is the domain within which cultural knowledge and traditions are transmitted, groups solidarities established and individual identities formed. Each of these tasks is coordinated and reproduced through communicative action, to the extent that people cope with and resolve problematic situations by drawing upon existing stocks of knowledge, and critically evaluating and revising them in the light of their experience.

This sociological framework - coupled with the distinction between instrumental and communicative rationality - provides Habermas with a perspective from which to expound processes of societal rationalisation and analyse their consequences. He argues that crises occurring at the level of the economy and the state (and in particular the need of the state to compensate for the inequalities wrought by the free market) are solved by an increasing penetration of the state into the routine contexts of everyday life (cf. Offe 1984). In terms of rationality, this process brings forth the increasing dominance of instrumental rationality over the communicative processes that regulate mundane social interaction, a process Habermas (1987: 332-73) describes as the 'colonisation of the lifeworld'.

The prime consequence of such colonisation is that it undermines the practical knowledge and traditions established in different lifeworld contexts. As state institutions increasingly intervene in social life, individuals and groups are oriented to cope with the fact that their lives are increasingly subject to institutional power over which they have little proactive control - whether that be in spheres of education, social security, housing provision or policing. The intervention of state institutions in these areas reconstitutes people as the 'clients' of public bureaucracies and undermines the understandings that coordinate everyday social relations:

Through processes of regulation and intervention, the lifeworld context is increasingly subject to monetary and legal measures. But the communicative structures of the lifeworld can fulfil (their) functions when individuals themselves generate motives and reasons for action via argumentative processes. There can be no 'administrative production of meaning' for meaning and motives can only be recreated through the power of conviction as experienced by participants themselves. (Benhabib 1986: 249)

The colonisation of the lifeworld gives rise to a public culture in which political and normative decision-making has been reduced to a series of merely technical questions to be formulated and answered by experts. Institutions oriented to the instrumental control of the

social world rely upon the exclusion of various publics from their decision-making processes (Fischer 1990); a situation the programme of communicative ethics is designed both to interrogate and endeavour to transcend. Communicative ethics (with the prospect of free discursive will-formation as its central focus) provides a normative standpoint from which the systematic distortions of communication existing in the present are apprehended. It operates as both a methodology of critique and a means to overcome the distortions identified by such critique.

Communicative ethics rests upon two propositions, each of which seeks to validate a controversial claim. In the first place, it has to be established that communication oriented to reaching mutual understanding is an immanent possibility rather than a utopian dream conjured from thin air. The theory of 'universal pragmatics' attempts to do this by articulating the presuppositions that speakers anticipate every time language is used (Habermas 1979: 1-69). Habermas contends that in engaging in speech actors implicitly raise four validity claims and presuppose that they can be justified if challenged. These are (i) a claim to be comprehensible; (ii) a claim to speak the truth; (iii) a claim to speak legitimately in context, and (iv) a claim to speak sincerely. These four claims constitute a subtle common sense that speakers always already presuppose when using ordinary language. For if they are absent, the shared experience upon which communication is built collapses and has to be (consensually) rebuilt through argumentation.

Habermas uses the theory of universal pragmatics to demonstrate that communication oriented to consensus is immanent in human language.⁵ However, the programme of communicative ethics also rests upon the claim that it is possible to distinguish between a 'rationally motivated consensus' and what Habermas terms 'mere agreement' (Habermas 1990: 43-115). The purpose of the 'ideal speech situation' is to provide the procedural criteria necessary for this evaluative task. The criteria of 'ideal speech' are that (i) each participant has an equal chance to initiate and continue discussion; (ii) each must have an equal chance to assert, recommend and explain their claims and to challenge the claims of others; (iii) all must have an equal chance to express their feelings, wishes and intentions; (iv) there must be an equal distribution of chances for speakers to order and resist orders; to promise and refuse; and to be accountable to, and demand accountability from, others.

⁵ Benhabib (1986: 309-27) has recently added the important rider that for communicative discourse to be genuinely immanent it has also to be anticipated in a society's institutions and cultural traditions; for in the words of Ricoeur (1981: 99): 'Upon what will you concretely support the reawakening of communicative action, if not upon the creative renewal of cultural heritage?' In research terms, this has the implication that communicative possibilities must be investigated, not just formally, but in concrete social contexts. For without this, the programme of discourse ethics risks losing its explanatory force and collapsing into mere normative philosophy. Grahame (1985) has usefully described this complementary research strategy as 'cultural pragmatics'.

The criteria of ideal speech anticipate communicative processes from which untruthfulness and duplicity, and inequality and subordination have been removed (Benhabib 1986: 284-6). They constitute a set of procedural rules and social relations that must obtain in order for it to be said that a consensus over disputed claims is based upon 'the unforced force of the better argument'. In this sense, the ideal speech situation provides the normative basis on which theory of communicative action rests - a standpoint, that is, from which the exercise of critical reason is able to proceed (Horster and Van Reijen 1979: 41).

In two important texts, John Thompson (1984; 1990) has recently argued that any critical interpretation of existent social phenomena must make good two related claims. In the first place, it must demonstrate its adequacy vis a vis competing interpretations. This entails an articulation of the standards from which critique proceeds and the bringing forward of evidence and reasons that are able to defend the interpretation during an ensuing process of disputation. Second, it involves the censure of existing relations of domination from the perspective of alternative forms of social organisation better suited to satisfying the legitimate needs and desires of different (currently marginalised) social groups (cf. Gardiner 1992).

Within the programme of communicative ethics, the criteria of ideal speech serve to advance this dual purpose. In the first place, they provide a critical standard against which any empirical consensus can be called into question and evaluated. A communicative ethics is a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Ricoeur 1976) that endeavours to uncover spurious claims to universality and legitimacy. It thus represents a contemporary reworking of the 'critique of ideology' that occupied a central place within both classical marxism and early critical theory.⁶ Communicative ethics also serves as a normative ideal (and nothing more) for a programme of democratic renewal. In this reconstructive context, the procedural elements of ideal speech signal an intimate connection with the viability and desirability of a democratic public sphere. For while communicative ethics cannot determine *a priori* a move towards any specific form of democratic organisation, it serves to focus attention on the question of:

finding arrangements which can ground the presumption that the basic institutions of society and the basic political decisions would meet with the

⁶ To the extent that the procedures of ideal speech are approximated in the legitimation claims of modern institutions (for example, in the notion of policing by 'consent') such critique is able to proceed immanently.

unforced agreement of all those involved, if they could participate, as free and equal, in discursive will-formation. (Habermas 1979: 186) ⁷

In this regard, communicative ethics anticipates the embedding of deliberative mechanisms within the institutions of a participatory and democratic public sphere. It thus has built into it a host of substantive normative assumptions (about the value of participative decision-making processes, and the importance of universal access to them) that foretell, and attempt to realise, two political possibilities. It aspires, first of all, to making good the claims that currently legitimate public institutions - a process Benhabib (1986: ch. 8) refers to as the 'politics of fulfilment'. More broadly, it informs a 'politics of transfiguration' that struggles to create communicative forums in which people are able (individually and collectively) to articulate new needs, construct new solidarities and build new identities.⁸

The 'Applied Turn' in Critical Theory

One of the most frequently voiced criticisms of critical theory is that it operates at a level of philosophical abstraction that renders it difficult to employ in the concrete analysis of contemporary social problems. While these claims could equally be laid at the door of Habermas, some writers have recently argued that the theory of communicative action can be used to inform an analysis of the prospects for institutional change in a host of substantive areas of social policy. For example, Misgeld (1985: 97) maintains that:

Critical theory has moved beyond its merely philosophical phase. It has become more research oriented and more political. Its aim is to establish limits and orienting values for processes of planned institutional change by critically examining the values subscribed to in this process and by recognising and forcefully documenting the place of people and of their administratively untutored reason in all this.

This recognition has meant it has become increasingly possible in recent years to speak of an 'applied turn' within critical theory. This term signifies a body of work that endeavours to use the theory of communicative action as a means to scrutinize how public institutions define social problems and address themselves to their solution (Forester 1985a; R. Young

⁷ Habermas (1975: 111-18) has consistently viewed such an ethics as a method for uncovering suppressed 'generalisable interests', a formulation whose strong consensualist assumptions have come in for much criticism (cf. Lukes 1982; Fay 1987: ch. 7). Two attempts to forestall these objections have recently been proposed and are worthy of note. Benhabib (1992: 9) for example, has reworked the principle of 'generalisability' to mean the deliberation rather than the agreement of all; an elucidation requiring no more than that 'collective decisions be reached through procedures that are radically open and fair to all.' By contrast, Cohen and Arato (1992: 368) contend that the notion of 'generalisable interest' must cede to the idea of 'collective identity' - a delineation in which 'discourse ethics provides a way of discovering or re-affirming what, if anything, we who come into contact with one another and who are affected by the same political decisions and laws have in common.'

⁸ Habermas' work can be viewed in this context as part of a political project that attempts to integrate the insights of both liberal and socialist philosophical traditions. Other recent attempts to develop such a position include Held (1987: ch. 9); Unger (1987b); Keane (1988), and Doyal and Gough (1991).

1990; Dryzek 1990; Fischer 1990). Thus a number of writers - working in fields such as planning and education - have explored the ways in which social problems are conceptualised in instrumental 'means-ends' terms and subject to determination by 'expert cultures'. Relatedly, they have begun to investigate the ways in which communicative reason has been sidelined by processes of instrumentalisation, and examine the unfulfilled potential of the former to inform the construction of agendas for institutional change.

The practical force of this development is that it places at the forefront of critical social analysis the question of the legitimacy of public institutions, and in so doing, enables a concrete exploration of the relationship between communicative ethics and questions of institutional justice (Benhabib 1986: 283).⁹ The theory of communicative action is important in this context in that it provides a set of procedures with which to test the claims that social institutions make to the mantle of democratic legitimacy (Cohen and Arato 1992: ch. 8). These concepts enable an investigation of these institutional validity claims, and are especially pertinent to the interrogation of any claim to have achieved public consent through the inclusion of all citizens in decision-making processes.

The purchase of such an analysis is that it employs, for the purposes of critique, the very criteria that social institutions in liberal democracies mobilise to legitimate themselves. For the procedural criteria of ideal speech offer a means to uncover any legitimisation claim that in reality rests upon the manipulation of consent and the manufactured ignorance of various publics. The objective of critical theory in this regard is not to bring about a pre-determined form of life, but to employ its concepts in a critique of existing institutional arrangements. In this sense, the 'applied turn' in critical theory is concerned: 'not with the realisation of the ideal speech situation, but with specific problems of power and powerlessness, with ideology, legitimation and democratic politics' (Forester 1985b: xvi).¹⁰

While this 'applied turn' in critical theory is to be welcomed, it remains at present a somewhat partial development. The lacuna pervading many of the attempts to ground the theory of communicative action is that these interventions have thus far been confined to theoretical, and largely speculative, assessments of how critical theory may illuminate specific fields of social policy. While this objective constitutes one component of the

⁹ The abstract nature of much critical theory has meant that its intimate connection to democratic theory and practice has often been elided. However, in rendering explicit these connections it should be noted that Habermas has not developed a substantive theory of democracy, but rather a theory of communication with implications for democracy. Further care is therefore required when putting the ideas to work in the service of radical democracy, as is the deployment of additional theoretical resources.

¹⁰ Habermas (Nielsen 1990) has recently remarked that he wishes he had never coined the term 'ideal speech situation' as it conjures up a vision of a concrete form of life, rather than a set of critical procedures.

project of 'applying' the theory of communicative action (as any critical theory must retain an 'utopian-anticipatory' moment), it tends to dominate the analysis at the expense of an equally important explanatory dimension. The limitation of this approach is that the concepts tend to be used to set up and conclude analysis without being integrated into it, the consequence being that the theory tends to pre-determine in significant respects its own substantive conclusions.

A good example of this is provided by Forester's (1985c) analysis of planning practice. In this essay, Forester employs the theory of communicative action by mapping the central features of planning practice onto the propositions of universal pragmatics. While this is suggestive in a number of ways, it neglects to scrutinize the degree to which this interpretation captures and explains the lived contexts of the planning profession; the way in which these practices are understood by various publics, and the possibilities for democratic change existing within either the profession or its 'client' groups. In short, the analysis never really engages sociologically with its object of enquiry and consequently fails to develop or deepen the concepts being employed.¹¹

The root of this difficulty lies in an unmediated application of the abstract formulations of the theory of communicative action. Such an approach engenders problems because the relevant concepts do not readily lend themselves to a contiguous encounter with empirical contexts. As a result, recent attempts to apply the propositions of communicative action have failed adequately to develop the substantive potential of critical theory. The resolution of these difficulties, I suggest, lies in using the theory of communicative action as a series of research hypothesis from which to develop a further set of bridging concepts that can be employed in discrete fields of social enquiry.

This prospect returns us to a number of questions that have surfaced frequently within critical theory without ever being satisfactorily resolved. In the context of the theory of communicative action they take the following form: how is it possible to integrate the theory's concepts within substantive social research programmes? To what extent can these concepts inform the explanation of concrete experiences and problems in such a way as to become genuinely falsifiable research hypotheses? Pursuing these questions offers one fruitful line of enquiry for sociologists wishing to develop the insights of critical

¹¹ As R. Young (1990) points out, without such an encounter it is all too easy to fall into the trap of applying the tenets of critical theory in an idealistic way, by paying insufficient attention to the contexts of application. Horkheimer's (1968: v) remarks on these dangers are all too salient in the present context and worthy of quotation: 'thoughtless and dogmatic application of the critical theory to practice in changed historical circumstances can only accelerate the very processes which the theory aimed at denouncing.'

theory. Adequate answers to them may help to redeem the historical promise of the Frankfurt School to integrate normative philosophy with empirical social science.

Reformulating the ‘Applied Turn’: Outline of a Prefigurative Methodology

The substantive objective of this enquiry is to pursue these questions through the construction of a theoretical case study (Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987: ch. 1). My aim is to employ (and in so doing develop) the theory of communicative action as an analytical device with which to investigate the relationship between young people and policing. (It is important to note that this *relationship* is constituted as the object of enquiry, not the discrete phenomena that comprise it.) In this sense, the research attempts to develop the explanatory and normative dimensions of critical theory in an empirical investigation of a particular social field.

For this concrete objective to be realised the ‘applied turn’ in critical theory requires both some conceptual and methodological reformulation. In the first place, it is necessary to delineate a series of concepts that enable a concrete exploration of young people’s social practices and their relationship to policing. An elaboration of such concepts must await a review of the literature on youth culture and policing in chapters two and three. The reformulation of critical theory also requires the development of a methodological approach that is able to expedite the overall purposes of the enquiry. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with these methodological questions and is organised around the following themes:

- (i) an elucidation of the research objectives and the methodological framework within which the research takes place;
- (ii) a discussion of the methods employed in the research;
- (iii) an outline of the theoretical perspective mobilised in the interpretation of the research data.

With any social research, the choice of research methodology needs to be related to the overall theoretical purposes. This empirical enquiry has two related objectives. In the first place, I am concerned to address a number of substantive questions surrounding the relationship between young people and policing. In relation to crime these include: young people’s experiences and understandings of different dimensions of crime; the measures they employ to secure their personal safety in areas of public space, and the way in which police officers perceive various issues pertaining to youth and crime. With regard to policing, they encompass young people’s experiences and perceptions of policing, as well

as the way in which police officers perceive and relate to various youth social practices. In both of these dimensions of enquiry, I am concerned to explore how (or indeed whether) these respective experiences and understandings change once young people leave school and embark upon divergent economic and social transitions.¹²

The methodology selected to pursue these questions is the 'semi-structured' interview. For this method facilitates the investigation of a number of specific issues among both young people and police officers, while enabling those interviewed to introduce concerns that are of importance to them. In particular, the interview method permits the research to generate *accounts* of how young people and police officers perceive the issues involved, and enables one to compare and contrast respective dispositions. This dimension of the enquiry is specifically concerned with the propositional content of these accounts, or in other words, with the ways in which they 'say something about something' (Ricoeur 1981; Thompson 1990: ch. 6).¹³

The second - more encompassing - purpose of the enquiry is to explore the possibility of democratic communication between young people and the police; and analyse both the obstacles that stand in its way, and the consequences of its absence. This dimension of the research is more explicitly normative in its formulation: it is undertaken from a counterfactual standpoint that anticipates the institutionalisation of a system of police accountability that encompasses the 'voices' of all social groups. In this context, the research methodology *prefigures* the institutional changes being advanced. The investigation explores - and brings into a imaginary dialogue with police officers - the experiences and claims of one of the groups who are precluded from engaging in institutionalised communication by current arrangements for rendering the police accountable (the notion of *accounts* plays a central role here in terms of its connection to issues of account/ability).

In this prefigurative context, it is important both to understand the interviews as an event, and to explicate the meanings of the accounts they produce (Ricoeur 1981: 167). In terms of the former, prefigurative methodology situates researchers in a mediating role between institutional actors and social groups who are denied communicative possibilities, and in this context, critical reflection upon the *process* of generating accounts is extremely

¹² In this context, the enquiry is designed to complement (and develop in very specific ways) continuing research on these issues being undertaken with secondary school children at the University of Edinburgh (for a preliminary report of findings see, Anderson et al. 1990b).

¹³ This may be contrasted with forms of analysis (such as conversation of discourse analysis) that attempt to explore the internal narrative structure of accounts.

pertinent to the theoretical objectives (and politics) of the research. For the problems and pitfalls that ensue in operationalising such a methodology serve as useful pointers to how such democratic processes might operate if they were to be embedded in institutional forms.¹⁴ With regard to the latter, the *substance* of the accounts is important in terms of exploring the reciprocity and antagonisms evinced in the understandings of young people and police officers. An analysis of the propositional content of accounts also permits exploration of how far these respective dispositions are shaped by an institutional context that denies young people and police officers the possibility of mutual dialogue and critique.

An important caveat needs however to be posted at this juncture. The elaboration of a prefigurative relationship between theory and practice must be cognisant of the fact that this conception of research (and the knowledge it produces) is the consequence of what Pierre Bourdieu terms 'the scholarly gaze' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 70; cf. Bourdieu 1990). Bourdieu warns that theoretical knowledge is never generated under conditions of practice, but is the product of a 'contemplative eye' that has partially 'retired' from the social world. In the present context this observation has a number of consequences: first, it serves as a pertinent reminder that the knowledge generated by interview accounts is a product of a research context, rather than institutionalised relations with immediate effects. Secondly, it warns against the danger of collapsing the 'practical logic' of young people and police officers into the 'theoretical logic' of social science - a mistake Bourdieu terms the 'scholastic fallacy'. Above all, it alludes to the fact that prefigurative (or indeed any) social research, must couple its role as the advocate of institutional change with a consideration (and explanation) of the possibilities for, and limits to, such change.

In order to pursue the research questions mentioned above, semi-structured interviews were conducted with both young people and serving police officers in Edinburgh (see appendix). Thirty-three interviews (thirteen individual interviews and twenty group interviews) were carried out with a total of ninety-nine young people, sixty-one young men and thirty-eight young women. They were aged between fifteen and twenty-three and interviewed between July 1990 and June 1991. Thirteen young people were selected by following up the sample drawn for the Edinburgh crime survey, and interviewed individually (Anderson et al. 1990a). In addition, twenty groups of young people were drawn from further education colleges, youth clubs, unemployed clubs and youth training schemes. They were chosen from different areas of Edinburgh and Lothian region in order to encompass a range of post-school educational and vocational trajectories.

¹⁴ For these reasons, the methodological problems encountered in doing the research will not be discussed here, or in a separate appendix, but instead, will be integrated with the substantive discussions of the research in Part Two.

Fifty-two serving police officers were individually interviewed in two separate phases. In the first place, twenty-seven officers were interviewed as part of research conducted for the Safer Edinburgh Project on multi-agency policing (Kinsey 1992). For the purposes of this enquiry, specific questions were included in the interview schedules on officers' perceptions of policing young people in the city centre. The officers were drawn from three stations in central Edinburgh and interviewed in May and June 1990. The sample was made up of eighteen beat officers, six area officers, and three community involvement officers (including one juvenile liaison officer). A second series of interviews with twenty-two officers was undertaken in September 1991 exclusively for the purposes of this research. They were conducted in six police stations situated throughout Edinburgh chosen to dovetail with areas of the city in which the interviews with young people were carried out. Of the twenty-two officers interviewed, thirteen were beat officers, seven area constables, and two juvenile liaison officers.

The Methodology of Interpretation

I want finally in this chapter to consider the question of how the accounts generated by the research are to be interpreted? A reformulation of 'applied' critical theory requires a methodology of interpretation that accords with both the broader tenets of the theory of communicative action, and the concrete objectives of the research. The 'depth hermeneutics' variously associated with social theorists such as Ricoeur (1981), Thompson (1990: ch. 6) and Giddens (1984: ch. 6; 1993) can fruitfully be utilised for this purpose. In the context of the enquiry at hand, this methodology proceeds in three related ways:

- (i) a hermeneutic appreciation of the propositional content of the accounts of young people and police officers;
- (ii) a broader exploration of the relationship between these accounts, and the institutional contexts and social relations to which they make reference;
- (iii) a critical re-interpretation of the meanings of these accounts viewed in relation to both these contexts, and the normative standpoints of the enquiry.

A necessary starting point for any social research is the recognition that the object domain of social science has been pre-interpreted by its members (Schutz 1967). Social scientists are confronted by what Giddens (1993) has termed a 'double hermeneutic'; they must, that is, attempt to understand a social world that has already been interpreted by people in the course of their everyday routines. In this sense, the domain of social science is in fact:

a subject domain which is made up, in part, of subjects who, in the routine course of their everyday lives, are constantly involved in understanding themselves and others, and in interpreting the actions, utterances and events which take place around them. (Thompson 1990: 275)

This circumstance has two important consequences for a prefigurative methodology. In the first place, it demonstrates that the theoretical practice (and political objectives) of critical theory have an approximation in the conventional processes of everyday life. Interpretation, reflection and critique are things that people have to undertake in order merely to 'go on' with mundane social activities. Consequently, there is no *fundamental* distinction between the methodology of interpretation employed in prefigurative research and those that a participatory democracy would enable its citizens to exercise (though Bourdieu's rider about the different conditions of production of theoretical and practical logic should always be kept in mind).

The second implication of the 'double hermeneutic' is the recognition it accords to the fact that people are reflexive agents who know a lot about how to deal with the recurring problems of everyday life. In the light of this, it is imperative for a prefigurative methodology to explore the what Giddens (1984: 41-5) terms the 'practical consciousness' of the subjects of social research. An interpretation of this consciousness must understand the ways in which people generate rules, strategies and dispositions in order to 'make sense' of the institutional and social worlds they inhabit, and explore how these dispositions serve to reproduce (or in some cases challenge and transform) the conditions to which they are a response.¹⁵ In expounding this practical consciousness in the present context, depth hermeneutics proceeds (in the first instance) by explicating from the inside the propositional content of youth and police accounts; it must, that is, be sensitive to the ways in which young people and police officers apprehend, and develop strategies to manage, the routine problems they encounter.

In this regard, depth hermeneutics shares much common ground with various interpretive approaches to sociological enquiry, such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology and naturalism (Garfinkel 1967; Schutz 1969; Matza 1969). These positions share the conviction that the process of interpretation involves 'seeing the world from the others' point of view' and developing an 'appreciation' of what these accounts mean to their authors (Matza 1969: ch. 2). Thus Matza views hermeneutics as a process of

¹⁵ This dialectic between structure and action - or what Giddens terms 'structuration' - has been the common thread of a number of recent attempts to dissolve the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism, by developing a relational conception of sociological analysis. For example, Bourdieu (1990) uses the concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' in this regard; see also Bhaskar's (1986; 1989) cognate delineation of a 'transformational model of social activity'.

'empathy', during which the interpreter attempts to narrow the distance between researcher and subject in order to generate an authentic understanding of the world: in other words, 'remaining faithful to the phenomena under study.'¹⁶ Within the context of a prefigurative methodology, the concept of appreciation can usefully be coupled with some of Habermas' (1984: 102-42) observations on the process of understanding meaning in the social sciences. Habermas argues that appreciation (or an understanding of the others' point of view) can only successfully be accomplished if the researcher participates (in the broadest sense) in the world of which s/he remains a part.¹⁷ An understanding of pre-interpreted social phenomena remains open only to interpreters who adopt, what Habermas terms, a 'performative attitude' to the social world:

Understanding a symbolic expression fundamentally requires participation in a process of reaching understanding. Meanings - whether embodied in actions, institutions, products of labour, words, networks of cooperation, or documents - can only be made accessible *from the inside*. Symbolically pre-structured reality forms a universe that is hermetically sealed from observers incapable of communicating....The lifeworld is only open to members who make use of their competence to speak and act. (Habermas 1984: 112; italics in original)

In this regard, a prefigurative methodology contains within it both a relativist and an anthropological moment. It must apprehend young people's and police officers' accounts in their own terms, and convey these indigenous meanings to other lifeworld contexts (Giddens 1987: ch. 1). It is at this point, however, that interpretive sociology and depth hermeneutics part company. For while the former views the production of a phenomenological 'account of accounts' as exhaustive of the interpretive enterprise, the latter endeavours to situate the anthropological moment of social research within a more encompassing explanatory endeavour.

From the perspective of critical theory, interpretive sociology manifests related conceptual and political shortcomings. In the first place, these approaches tend towards a philosophically problematic conception of direct representation, or what Hammersley (1992: ch. 3) terms 'naive realism'. In this regard a host of troubling questions remain unanswered within interpretive sociologies: for example, what does it mean to 'remain faithful' to the subjects of research? and how is such an appreciation to be furnished? Are social phenomena blessed with a single unambiguous meaning that it is possible to capture

¹⁶ The significance of the concept of appreciation is that it involves a non-pathologising orientation to the subjects of enquiry, and in this regard, Matza contrasts it with both criminological positivism, which he argues, by attempting to rid itself of the phenomena being studied (in this case, deviance), is unable to grasp what it means to its participants; and romanticism, which, he suggests, operates an equal but reverse distortion by unduly accentuating the positive dimensions of social phenomenon.

¹⁷ In other words, there is no disinterested 'Archimedean' standpoint (outside the processes of discursive struggle) from which it is possible for interpreters to position themselves in order to make objective pronouncements about the meanings of people's accounts (Bernstein 1983).

and relay? How does such a conception of interpretation deal with problems of multiple and shifting meaning? Despite Matza's foregrounding of issues of complexity and diversity, it seems to me that he failed to address fully the host of philosophical and practical issues generated by these questions.

Secondly, the concept of 'empathetic understanding' entails a rather difficult exercise in mental gymnastics; something that Habermas (1984: 109) aptly characterises as 'a mysterious act of transposing oneself into the mental states of another subject.' These difficulties notwithstanding, the central limitation of this conception of the hermeneutic enterprise is that it leaves social scientific interpreters without any means of generating (critical) distance from the subjects of enquiry, or of articulating a standpoint from which understanding and critique are able to proceed. It risks, in other words, collapsing the language of the researcher into that of the subjects of research, and rendering social enquiry unable to move beyond the task of recovering the indigenous meanings of accounts.

The politics of interpretive sociology rest upon the contention (sometimes explicit, more often implicit) that a liberal relativism is the best means to respect, and give full credence to, the norms and practices of different (marginalised) social groups, and especially those at the bottom of society's 'hierarchy of credibility' (Becker 1970; cf. Feyerabend 1978; Lyotard 1984). While this perspective represents a welcome corrective to the pathologising tendencies of positivist social science, this advance is purchased at the expense of reducing the social world to a multiplicity of (incommensurable) groups and actors whose claims can only be judged internally. The political consequence of this position is to deny the possibility that different social groups (and institutional actors) can communicate meaningfully with one another, and potentially alter each others' perspectives. Thus in their efforts to avoid pathology, advocates of appreciation all too often forget that while 'what is totally rejected cannot be understood in its own right; what is totally accepted cannot be analysed critically' (Heller 1985: 80; cf. Young 1975).

An applied reformulation of critical theory provides a way of transcending these limitations by conceiving of the methodology of interpretation as a process of mutual dialogue. Instead of viewing interpretation as the construction of an empathetic intimacy - or positing the subjects of research as co-partners in a hermeneutic enterprise (cf. Clifford and Marcus 1986) - a prefigurative methodology takes advantage of the researcher's status of as an outsider (and mediator). Thus, in the context of the present enquiry, interpretation is conceptualised as bringing the practical knowledge of young people and police officer's

into a counterfactual dialogue with both each other, and the normative standpoint of the researcher.

In this regard, Habermas argues that in attempting to understand the meanings of an account, the interpreter must (imaginatively) bring to mind the reasons people would introduce to defend, and make good, the validity claims inherent in their utterances. An interpretation of these reasons necessarily involves posing and answering questions pertaining to their validity: in other words, understanding meaning requires a critique of the norms and practices implicit within (and projected by) the practical knowledge of young people and police officers:

In order to understand an utterance in the paradigm case of a speech act oriented to reaching understanding, the interpreter has to be familiar with the conditions of its validity; he (*sic*) has to know under what conditions the validity claim linked with it is acceptable, that is, would have been acknowledged by a hearer. But where could the interpreter obtain this knowledge if not from the context of the observed communication or from comparable contexts?...Thus the interpreter cannot become clear about the semantic content of an expression independently of the action contexts in which participants react to the expression with a 'yes' or 'no' or an abstention. And he does not understand these yes/no positions if he cannot make clear to himself the implicit reasons that move the participants to take the positions they do....But if, in order to understand an expression, the interpreter must bring to mind the reasons with which a speaker would, if necessary and under suitable conditions, defend its validity, he is himself drawn into the process of assessing validity claims. For reasons are of such a nature that they cannot be described in the attitude of a third person....One can understand reasons only to the extent that one understands why they are or are not sound. (Habermas 1984: 115-16)¹⁸

Drawing upon these propositions, prefigurative methodology posits a dialogical relationship between the researcher and researched. In the present context, this entails that the claims of both young people and police officers are subject to critique from a standpoint that anticipates democratic communication between young people and the police. However, if such dialogue is to be *mutual* (and the enquiry is to be explanatory, as well as normative) it is important that the practical knowledge of these respective actors is able to shift the perspective from which they are being judged. In this regard, prefigurative methodology takes seriously the knowledge claims of different groups and institutional actors with a view to initiating a process of mutual critique and education:

If...we start from the idea that an author's utterance has the presumption of rationality, we not only admit the possibility that the interpretandum may be exemplary *for us*, that we may learn something from it; we *also* take into

¹⁸ McCarthy (1985) has argued that - in positing an internal relation between meaning and validity - Habermas is making a claim that is both too strong and unnecessary for his purposes. McCarthy contends that it is possible to postpone the evaluation of reasons while still understanding the meanings implicit in people's accounts.

account the possibility that the author could learn *from us* . (Habermas 1984: 134; italics in original)

The methodology of interpretation associated with prefigurative research additionally involves situating the accounts of young people and police officers in the institutional and social contexts to which they make reference. Practical knowledge always arises from - and attempts to 'make sense' of - particular sets of institutional arrangements and structured social relations. These form, what Bourdieu (1977: ch. 1) terms, the 'conditions of possibility' for certain forms of experience and meaning. In this context, a depth hermeneutics must couple an (internal) understanding and (external) evaluation of the accounts of young people and police officers, with an objectifying explanation of the relationship between these accounts and the social-historical conditions to which they are a cognitive response.¹⁹

In the present context, such an enquiry needs to address three sets of questions. In the first instance, it is necessary to relate these accounts to the *fields of interaction* within which young people and police officers come into contact with one another. The dispositions of young people and police officers arise from a particular set of routine contacts (and non-contacts), such as adversary encounters on the streets. In this context, the object the enquiry is to explore the relationship between these fields of contact (and non-contact), and the rules, strategies and dispositions that enable young people and police officers to understand what is 'going on', and act in ways that ensure felicitous outcomes. It must also analyse the cumulative learning and practical knowledge that such routine encounters engender, as well exploring the meanings and perceptions that are suppressed by existent fields of interaction.

These fields of interaction are themselves shaped by *institutional arrangements* that delimit the possibilities open to either party. These arrangements operate as a 'relatively stable cluster of rules and resources' (Thompson 1990: 282) to which police officers and young people respectively deploy and respond. For example, encounters between young people and police officers are shaped by the various forms of 'capital' available to each party. These include the legal powers, discretionary space and organisational constraints of police officers, as well as the background (social) characteristics and demeanour of different groups of young people. In this context, it is further necessary to explore the relationship between these institutional constraints and possibilities, and the practical knowledge of police officers and young people.

¹⁹ In this sense, Thompson (1990: ch. 6) argues that 'understanding' and 'explanation' should not be viewed as mutually exclusive (as in the hermeneutic tradition derived from Dilthey), but as complementary dimensions of an overall hermeneutic enterprise; cf. Ricoeur (1981: ch. 5).

These fields of interaction and institutional arrangements are themselves shaped by (and in turn shape) a broader ensemble of *structured social relations*. These relations are constituted by asymmetrical distributions of wealth and power organised around the axes of class, gender, ethnicity and age. In the context of the present enquiry, these relations raise two salient questions: in the first place, it is necessary to explore the extent to which policing differentially impacts (as either a force or a service) on different groups within the population. Secondly, it is essential to address the question of how far institutional changes within the sphere of policing can impact upon social relations as a whole. In this context, the enquiry transcends the hermeneutic question of the meaning of accounts, and places them within a broader analytical framework concerned with inequalities of opportunity, wealth and power. However, these relations will always be grasped (if only partially) in the dispositions of different social actors, and it is therefore necessary to explore the extent to which the practical consciousness of young people and police officers ‘penetrate’ these structured social relations, as well as analysing the ‘limitations’ obstructing this process (cf. Willis 1977).

The final dimension of the methodology of interpretation involves drawing the themes of understanding, evaluation and explanation together in an interpretive reconstruction of the meanings of youth and police accounts. In this regard, depth hermeneutics is concerned to use a conceptual and substantive knowledge of relevant contexts in order to furnish a re-interpretation of a social world that has been pre-interpreted by its members. This critical reconstruction of meaning proceeds by, ‘positing “possible worlds” of what might become the case via programmes of social reform’ (Giddens 1987: 48) - a process that involves opening up fields of perception and action that are either presently unperceived by actors, or submerged within their understandings of the present.²⁰ It is this reconstruction of meaning that gives depth hermeneutics its critical (and political) purchase on the social world, for it represents an invitation to people to see themselves and the world differently, and act on this basis:

Criticizing a belief means (logically) criticizing whatever activity or practice is carried on in terms of that belief, and has compelling force (motivationally) in so far as it is a reason for action....Now social beliefs, unlike those to do with nature, are constitutive elements of what it is they are about. From this it follows that criticism of false belief is a *practical intervention* in society, a political phenomenon in a broad sense of that term. (Giddens 1984: 340; italics in original)

²⁰ As Hawthorn (1991: 164) relatedly puts it: ‘to grasp the actual is to understand it in the light of the particular possibilities which it suggests.’

YOUTH CULTURE AND MARGINALISATION

This chapter is concerned with the conceptual dimension of the applied reformulation of critical theory. Its overall objective is to generate a series of concepts within which to situate the material gathered through interviews with young people. This necessitates employing the theory of communicative action as a standpoint from which to engage in critical dialogue with the existing literature on youth culture. Within both criminology and cultural studies, the concept of 'subculture' has been one of the most influential analytical devices employed in the study of young people, and with this in mind, I shall address the successive waves of subcultural theory, paying attention both to their formal conceptual structure, and to their substantive claims.

In the context of the present enquiry, the review represents an exercise in theoretical reconstruction. Following Habermas (1979: 130-177; 1990: 21-42), I take this to mean examining the objectives and conceptual structure of a theory, and reworking them in order that it is better placed to fulfil its overall purposes; a process that involves retaining what is valuable and discarding that which is counter-productive. In relation to subcultural theory, this entails an evaluation of the contribution the concept of subculture has made towards understanding how young people apprehend, and respond to, their structured marginalisation. The review focuses upon this central question and is organised around three themes:

- (i) a conceptual exposition of the formal structure and substantive themes of theories of youth subculture;
- (ii) a critique of the theoretical premises and propositional claims of such theories;
- (iii) a reconstruction of subcultural theory oriented towards formulating an alternative conceptual framework within which to understand youth social practices.

A Conceptual Exposition of Subcultural Theory

Though the study of collective delinquency has a long history within criminological enquiry (Thrasher 1927; Whyte 1943), its formulation in subcultural terms began in the United States in the 1950s, with the work of Cohen (1955), Miller (1958) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960). This research - along with Downes' (1966) 'testing' of the original work in England - may be termed the 'first phase' of subcultural theory. Some two decades later, the concept was taken up again within cultural studies and put to work in explaining the

styles and practices of working class youth in 1970s Britain. This body of work - largely associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham (the Birmingham School) - collectively makes up the 'second phase' of subcultural theory.¹

At first glance, these two variants of subcultural theory could not appear more different. In the first place, they arose from divergent political and social contexts. Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin were writing in the midst of a conservative United States in the grip of McCarthyism and the 'end of ideology' era (Bell 1960).² By contrast, second phase subcultural theory was concerned with the problems of working class youth, in what Stan Cohen (1980: iii) describes as, 'a sour, post welfare state Britain which had patently not delivered the goods.' Secondly, the concept of subculture was cast within very different theoretical frameworks and political projects. The first wave of subcultural theory was shaped by a confluence of Chicago school ecology theory (Park 1925), Mertonian (1968) anomie theory, and an implicit social democratic agenda; while the Birmingham school was informed by a Gramscian neo-marxism and espoused an avowedly radical political message. Yet, despite these considerable theoretical and political disparities, a number of common themes pervade the respective phases of subcultural theory. As Stan Cohen (1980: iv) points out:

Both work with the same 'problematic'....growing up in a class society; both identify the same vulnerable group: the urban male working class adolescent; both see delinquency as a collective solution to a structurally imposed problem.

In other words, both versions of subcultural theory are organised around a similar formal conceptual structure concerned with the question of how (some) young people make sense of, and respond to, their structural marginalisation (and both make corresponding reference to the dimensions of structure and action). In the context of the present enquiry, such similarities are more important than any substantive differences between the two traditions. For these reasons, I propose to review the two phases of subcultural theory together, focusing upon three common questions and explicating their *shared* virtues and shortcomings.³

¹ The key texts here include Hall and Jefferson (1976); Mungham and Pearson (1976a); Willis (1977); Robins and Cohen (1978); Corrigan (1979) and P. Cohen (1980). An excellent review of this literature can be found in S. Cohen (1980).

² It often goes unremarked that to write about class inequalities and differential opportunity structures in this historical context represented an act of not inconsiderable courage.

³ This approach will, of course, underplay the disparities both between the two traditions and among different writers within each tradition; where such diversity is important I draw due attention to it.

The formal starting point of subcultural theory is a concern with the *structurally imposed problems* that confront (especially) male working class youth.⁴ The importance of this focus is that it allows young people's practices to be situated within specific class locales and analysed as a response to problems of marginalisation. Albert Cohen (1955: 84-93) for example, argues that working class youth (socialised into a value system emphasising reciprocity, immediate gratification and the importance of locality) are judged a 'failure' by an education system that rewards young people according to a middle class ethic. In a similar vein, Cloward and Ohlin (1960: 110-23) elucidate the pressures resulting from the visible discrepancy between culturally induced aspirations (such as those inscribed in the ideology that 'everyone can be president') and the legitimate means available for their attainment - pressures, they argue, that are most urgently felt by working class youth.

In this context, the pivotal theme of first phase subcultural theory is a concern with the differential opportunities available to particular classes of young people, and the 'problems of adjustment' and alienation facing working class youth as a consequence of their failure to 'make it' educationally. Whether they seek to succeed by the middle class standards of the school (Cohen 1955: 110) or aspire to 'higher status within their own cultural milieu' (Cloward and Ohlin 1960: 72-3) a whole section of working class youth are seen by first wave subcultural theorists to be in the market for a (delinquent) solution to shared structural problems.

Though the substance of British subcultural theory is markedly different from its progenitors, its focus on economic and political contexts evince the same formal purposes. In theoretical terms, the Birmingham school conceptualise this context as one in which different class cultures (that is, patterns of meaning developed by social groups to articulate their social and material experience) are positioned in relation to major institutions within a hierarchy of domination and subordination (Clarke et al. 1976). Drawing upon the legacy of Antonio Gramsci (1971), Clarke et al. argue that the dominant culture seeks to universalise and naturalise its interpretations of the social world and thereby establish its hegemony over other cultural formations, a process that meets with varying degrees of resistance and accommodation among subordinate classes. It is within these configurations of structural conflict that the Birmingham school situate the problems, and responses, of working class youth.

⁴ Both waves of subcultural theory have, what might be termed, token chapters on female and middle class youth culture; see Cohen (1955: ch. 4); McRobbie and Garber (1976) and Webster (1976).

In substantive terms, the Birmingham school were concerned to explore the consequences of post-war attempts to restructure the working class, and in particular, the neighbourhoods within which it was able to institute its own values and associated forms of social life. An influential illustration of this analysis is provided by Phil Cohen's (1980) account of the East End of London. Cohen argues that the East End represented a particular form of working class community based on (i) the use and importance of communal space such as streets, the corner shop and local pub; (ii) an extended kinship network providing support and mutual aid, and (iii) a diverse and craft-based local economy. From the 1950s onwards, the demolition of slums and the decanting of the indigenous population occasioned a displacement of the street and other areas of public space; the 'privatisation' of the kinship network, and the decline of the industries which had supported the community. The overall effect of such changes was to rupture the networks, experiences and local knowledge that constituted the community, forcing its members to 'choose' between staying put in a declining locale or moving to the new towns on the periphery of London - tensions which, Cohen argues, were lived out symbolically by local youth.

The second thread uniting both phases of subcultural theory is a concern with the question of how young people *creatively respond* to structurally generated problems. The virtue of this perspective is that it accords proper credence to human agency conceived of as a continuing effort to find solutions to routine problems.⁵ Within this framework, Cohen (1955: 121-37) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960: 139-43) contend that delinquent subcultures emerge out of interaction between young people facing similar experiences of adjustment or alienation. These common resentments motivate a series of tentative exploratory gestures (such as minor acts of collective delinquency) that move young people towards a new, and delinquent, solution.⁶ Out of this process of exploration (and the opposition of conventional agents, such as parents and teachers) young people generate a set of (subcultural) norms and status criteria that each member is able successfully to meet.⁷

⁵ It should be noted that, from the perspective of structuration theory (Giddens 1984), subcultural theory rests upon a somewhat rigid distinction between structure and action. Arguably, the only exception to this is Willis' *Learning to Labour* which Giddens (1984: 289-304) has consistently portrayed as an example of substantive research informed by structuration theory.

⁶ This same point is made some twenty years later by Willis (1977: 121), who contends that the counter school culture he studied was the result of 'concrete and uncertain exploration.' There are striking similarities between these two accounts, yet there is not a single mention of first wave subcultural theory in Willis' text.

⁷ Cloward and Ohlin (1960: ch. 7) distinguish further between criminal, conflict and retreatist subcultures. However, for my purposes, these distinctions are less important than the overall argument regarding the formation and character of the subcultural response.

Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin recognise that the delinquent subculture is only one possible solution to the status problems of working class youth. In the first place, they compare it with the 'college boy', who seeks an individual route out of his predicament through educational attainment. The limitation of this solution, they contend, is that, while it offers a fruitful avenue for some, it is likely to result in dissociation from peer groups in return for (what are at best) long delayed rewards. Secondly, there is the stable 'corner boy' - acknowledged by Cohen (1955: 128) as 'perhaps the most common' response. This represents an acceptance of working class life chances and an attempt to make the best of the situation; in other words, the corner boy opts for familiarity, in preference to the precariousness of both college boy and delinquent responses (cf. Whyte 1943: chs. 1-3).

The subcultural response differs from these in so far as it cognitively eliminates the causes of young people's problems. The development of a set of subcultural norms and practices enables young people to persuade themselves that the (unattainable) goals they seek are not worth pursuing. Unlike the corner boy response, which compromises with middle class morality, the subcultural solution is based on, 'an explicit and wholesale repudiation of middle class standards and the adoption of their very antithesis' (Cohen 1955: 129). It is here that the appeal of the delinquent subculture lies, for it provides an alternative set of values and a friendship network which equip working class youth with an identity that makes sense of their shared predicament. In other words, delinquent subcultures offer collective compensation for structural marginalisation: the image is one of the frustrated young person, 'bored and demoralised at school and work, bursting into delinquency in leisure in order to compensate for his alienation and achieve a sense of status' (Frith 1987: 187).

British subcultural theory, while also emphasising the role of creativity, extensively recast the explanation of youth subcultures. The Birmingham school positioned a succession of post-war British youth subcultures (such as teds, mods, rockers and skinheads) in relation both to the dominant culture and the parent (working class) culture of which they were a part. Thus Clarke et al. (1976: 14) argue that, while youth subcultures shared a number of common features with the parent culture, they also exhibited a distinctive identity of their own; one 'focussed around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc.' which significantly differentiates them both from ordinary working class youth and working class culture as a whole.

To illustrate this perspective, we may return to Phil Cohen's (1980) work on the restructuring of London's East End. Cohen suggests that a succession of local youth

subcultures developed in response to the forces destabilising the economic and social life of the East End. In this situation, the internal tensions faced by the parent culture are 'played' out in terms of intra-generational conflict; the latent function of the subculture is 'to express and resolve, albeit 'magically', the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture' (ibid: 82). From this perspective, the succession of East End subcultures (mods, rockers, skinheads, scooter boys) are viewed as living a central theme: 'the contradiction, at an ideological level, between traditional working class puritanism and the new hedonism of consumption; at an economic level, between a future as part of the socially mobile elite or as part of the new lumpen proletariat' (ibid: 83).

For example, the mod life-style is interpreted by Cohen as an attempt to realise (in an imaginary relation) the conditions of existence of the socially mobile white-collar worker. Conversely, the skinheads are seen to be exploring the 'lumpen' option by attempting to reclaim traditional working class culture in the face of its decline. Their stress on territory, aggressive masculinity, and chauvinism is viewed as a symbolic re-assertion of working class values. Hence the violence that skinheads express towards those apprehended as a threat to the 'purity' of the community - such as, the police, social workers, 'queers' and pakis (cf. Pearson 1976). So too, the emphasis they place on the material focal points of working class life - the local streets, the pub and the football stadium - locations that become, 'a way of magically retrieving the sense of group solidarity and identification that once went along with living in a working-class neighbourhood' (Robins and Cohen 1978: 137; cf. Clarke 1976b).⁸

The final shared conceptual theme I want to address concerns the *nature and adequacy of the subcultural response*. In this context, it should be noted that the Birmingham school develop a point that was largely implicit within the work of Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960). In the original formulation, delinquent subcultures offered a set of norms and practices that enable young people to cope with the consequences of structural disadvantage: a solution in the form of the fun and excitement of group delinquency. This orientation was retained by some of the (more empirical) work undertaken by the Birmingham school. Thus for example, Parker (1974: ch. 3), in his ethnography of young people in Liverpool, shows how hanging around on the streets (though frequently boring) enables 'the boys' to obtain relative freedom from adult supervision; while Corrigan (1976)

⁸ One of the internal tensions within second wave subcultural theory concerns the relative weight to be placed upon class-based and generational experiences. Cohen's (1980) emphasis on how youth subcultures live out the contradictions befalling the working class as a whole places him squarely within the former category. For others, such an emphasis accords insufficient explanatory attention to the experience of young people themselves. For example, Clarke and Jefferson (1976) focus on the mods' own economic situation as unskilled manual workers, and emphasise the importance of the weekend away as an escape from routinized domination at work.

cogently demonstrates how the streets provide a series of spaces within which 'weird ideas' emerge from the context of 'doing nothing'.

The merit of this perspective is that it testifies to how street culture provides young people with a certain autonomy in the face of their marginalisation. However, this grounded orientation was something of a subterranean theme within Birmingham school analysis. For the most part, notions of resistance and defence replaced compensation as the *raison d'être* of youth subcultures. Their implicit political purpose was to protect the values of the working class and their communities: 'the delinquent changed from 'frustrated social climber' to cultural critic and innovator....subculture was, no less, a political battleground between the classes' (S. Cohen 1980: iv).

In this context, much of British subcultural theory can be viewed as an attempt to analyse (or more accurately, decode) youth subcultures as forms of ritualistic rebellion (Clarke 1976a; Hebdige 1979). Drawing upon Levi-Strauss' concept of *bricolage*, the Birmingham school explored how youth subcultures appropriated commodities that held discrete meanings within dominant culture and made them homologous with the focal concerns of the group. For example, the skinheads style of cropped hair, braces and boots stylistically communicated their image of 'hardness' and aggressive masculinity, and 'protected' working class culture through the symbolic representation of its most regressive elements. In an analogous vein, the mods adopted that innocuous means of daily transport, the scooter, and 'transformed' it into a potent symbol of subcultural identity.⁹

Concerned as they were with the possibilities for radical social change, the Birmingham school devoted considerable attention to the misplaced and ephemeral nature of such stylistic revolt. Firmly entrenched in the domain of leisure and focused around ritualistic opposition, it was argued that subcultural resistance could be no more than 'magical' in its effects: it represented a series a symbolic gestures that offered no lasting solutions to the structural problems facing working class youth:

By 'magical resolution' we understand not only an attempt to engage the problems arising from class contradictions, but also attempts to *solve* them

⁹ This 'reading' of subcultural style exhibits a host of methodological and substantive problems that I can merely mention here in passing. In the first place, such semiotic analysis pays little attention to appreciating - even in the first instance - what these styles mean *from the inside*. As a consequence, it tends to silence the voices of young people themselves and lack any controls on interpretation (Cohen 1986: 21). Secondly, subcultural style is almost always interpreted in terms of resistance and opposition, and rarely apprehended in terms of either its of brutal imagery (as in the punk use of the swastika) or its conservative effects. Similarly, the analysis evinces a curious normative standpoint in so far as there is a tendency to treat with a 'deferential care and an exaggerated contextualisation' (S. Cohen 1980: xxvii) norms and practices - such as racism and sexism - the slightest trace of which would be condemned if they surfaced within bourgeois culture.

which, crucially, do not mount their solutions on the *real* terrain where the contradictions themselves arise. (Clarke 1976a: 189; italics in original)

One of the most striking examples of this is Willis' (1977) study of a counter-school culture. Willis demonstrates how 'the lads' construct - in opposition to the boredom and formal routines of the school - an arena of autonomy oriented to 'having a laff': a culture, that is, which offers them a sense of freedom, a space for creativity and an opportunity to build confidence in their own abilities. However, and this is the crucial point, these responses coincide with a time when fundamental life-course decisions are settled to their disadvantage. As they make the transition to work, 'the lads' find themselves placed in subordinate roles within capitalism: condemned to a life of manual labour.¹⁰ The paradox is that this outcome is experienced as true learning, affirmation and resistance in the counter-school culture. As Stan Cohen succinctly put it: 'the solution, ironically, is the problem: the boys eventually collude in their own domination' (S. Cohen 1980: viii).¹¹

Willis' study brings home the point that youth subcultures offer, at best, a partial and temporary palliative for young people's problems. They represent what I shall term (collective) internal practices, in that they do not engage with the external institutional conditions which generate youth marginalisation. In this regard, subcultural theory manifests a number of significant lacunae. For while it has documented the inadequacy of young people's responses, it has failed, both conceptually and substantively, to address itself to the question of their institutional resolution. Moreover, by privileging the (internal) practices of some (delinquent and deviant) young people, it has silenced the voices of the vast majority of youth, and reinforced many of the stereotypical dispositions that stand in way of institutional change. It is to these issues I now turn.

A Critique of Subcultural Theory

My concern in this section is to address - from the standpoint of the theory of communicative action - some of the substantive aporias of subcultural theory, and consider the extent to which they result from a conceptual framework that is organised around the concept of subculture. I shall additionally reflect upon some of the consequences of an exclusive analytical focus upon youth subcultures and introduce some issues raised by

¹⁰ It should be noted that, in her complementary study of working class girls in Birmingham, Griffin (1985: 16) found, 'no clear link between pro- and anti-school attitudes, friendship groups in school, and young women's subsequent jobs.' Griffin concluded that Willis' thesis was not so much wrong, as merely irrelevant to the experience of girls.

¹¹ In Willis' (1990) most recent work, this critical edge has been superseded by a far more celebratory orientation towards the creativity of youth culture.

authors who have not been hidebound by a subcultural frame of reference. The discussion will focus on three questions in particular:

- (i) the consequences of a restricted analytical focus on delinquent subcultures;
- (ii) the neglect of questions of gender within subcultural analysis;
- (iii) a consideration of how subcultural analysis deals with the question of youth transitions.

(i) Subcultural Analysis and the Delinquent Obsession

From the standpoint of the present enquiry, the central shortcoming underpinning subcultural theory is an attachment to the use of *subculture*, both as a substantive starting point and as an explanatory concept. The limitation of this conceptual orientation is that it draws boundaries around the phenomena at hand and abstracts it from the social contexts in which young people's practices are enacted (Murdock and McCron 1976). By employing what Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) would term a substantialist (rather than a relational) concept, subcultural analysis has both privileged and misconceived the responses of one section of male, working class youth; and been unable to make adequate sense of the relationship between these practices and the other means by which young people cope with structural marginalisation.

Subcultural enquiry has in particular been transfixed by the idea of the coherent and tightly-organised delinquent or deviant youth subculture. For example, Clarke et al. (1976: 14) maintain that their interest lies in those groups, 'which have reasonably tight boundaries, distinctive shapes, (and) which have cohered around particular activities, focal concerns and territorial spaces.' This encompassing interest has manifested itself in two ways: either in a concern with the offending behaviour and related practices of subcultural youth, or with their alleged commitment to an autonomous set of values. I shall critically address each of these in turn, paying particular attention both to their substantive propositions and their consequences.

The first dimension of this issue concerns the focus upon, and explanation of, youth subcultures as tightly defined, cohesive social groups. It may well be, of course, that such boundedness and collective identity is - at certain times and in specific places - subjectively experienced by those who engage in subcultural practices. However, such practices occur in the sphere of leisure, a realm that lacks the properties necessary to act as the material basis for a tight-knit social grouping. 'Members' of youth subcultures may also conduct relations with their families; experience residential care; attend school or work; or have to

deal with the harsh worlds of youth training and unemployment. The problem with subcultural theory is that one obtains little sense of how subcultural practices fit into young people's everyday routines and relationships; it fails, that is, adequately to make sense of the fluidity and diffuseness of the phenomena it is trying to explain.

A related aspect of this concerns an excessive concentration (one might even call it an obsession) upon juvenile delinquency. This focus is particularly marked among first wave theorists who conceive of subcultures as little more than a conduit for persistent delinquent activities. The problem with this concentration is twofold. In the first place, it again (and relatedly) misapprehends the nature of the phenomena at hand. Subcultural theory is left with what Matza calls an 'embarrassment of riches' in so far as it predicts too much delinquency:

If delinquents were in fact radically differentiated from the rest of conventional youth...their...involvement in delinquency would be more permanent and less transient, more pervasive and less intermittent than is apparently the case. (Matza 1990: 21-2)

Given the fact that subcultural 'members' are perfectly capable of conventional activity for most of the time, Matza argues that, for the most part, young people's involvement in crime is best viewed as a fleeting phenomena which seldom becomes the organising feature of their lives. Young people, Matza (1990: 28) argues, are neither compelled or committed to delinquent activities, but rather, find themselves 'casually, intermittently, and transiently immersed in a pattern of illegal action' (cf. Anderson et al. 1990b: ch. 4). Some of the substantive research undertaken under the broad rubric of the Birmingham school expounds such a grounded and contextualised approach to questions of juvenile delinquency. Parker (1974: 119) for example, argues that 'the boys' he studied were precisely the intermittent offenders Matza spoke of - 'spend(ing) most of their time as 'straight guys', sleeping, eating, playing and watching football, working, drinking in the local, listening to music, talking politics etc.'

Parker fails, however, to transcend a second problem associated with the delinquent obsession. His work falls squarely within that tradition of criminological enquiry oriented to 'appreciating the deviant' - according meaning to delinquent behaviour and interpreting it as a rational response to structural problems. Notwithstanding its considerable merits, the limitation of this approach is that it tends to collapse the youth question into the criminal question, thereby silencing the experiences and concerns of young people outside the

context of offending.¹² In the words of Phil Cohen (1986: 19): those 'who do not take drugs, drop out, run away from home, become wildly promiscuous, and engage in street violence or petty crime, were pushed to the sidelines of academic concern.' More specifically, such an approach manifests yet again the long-standing criminological inattention towards such matters as young people's contact with crime as victims and witnesses; their anxieties in public space and how these are managed; and the demands young people have to make of agencies such as the police (cf. Anderson et al. 1990b: ch. 1).

The second analytical difficulty with subcultural theory has been its tendency to portray 'members' of youth subcultures as living in either an autonomous normative world of their own, or else as turning their back on the conventional world and finding solace in the values of the parent (working class) culture. Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960) are both wholehearted proponents of the former position; contending that delinquent subcultures offer a solution to the status problems of young people that involves inverting the values of the conventional culture, and generating a 'non-utilitarian, malicious and negativistic' alternative (Cohen 1955: 28).¹³

By contrast, other (subcultural) commentators on youth culture stress the parallels between the values of working class youth and those of the parent culture. The original variant of this position is encapsulated perfectly in the radical cultural separatism of Miller (1958), who argues that working class culture as a whole is autonomous and criminogenic. Within a British context, Gill (1977) similarly emphasises the role of the young in carrying on indigenous traditions; while Willis (1977: 73) contends that, 'in the working class area....there is a huge reservoir of class feeling to be drawn upon once trust has been decisively withdrawn from the school.'

These related dispositions evince a number of shortcomings. In the first place, both ethnographic research and theoretical reflection have pointed to the need for a much more nuanced and contextualised account of the relationship between young people's values and their actions (Parker 1974; Sykes and Matza 1957). In addition, a large weight of survey research has consistently contradicted the assertion of an alienated youth culture (or juvenile underclass) that is against 'authority' and committed to anti-social values. Rather, the available evidence points to the conventional political and normative temper of

¹² The irony is that Parker (1976: 28) demonstrates his awareness of this when he (rightly) states that, 'any of us concerned with youth studies are in danger of perpetuating the 'youth as a problem' syndrome.'

¹³ Once again, a similar picture is painted by Willis (1977: 12) when he argues that the 'lads' symbolise their opposition to authority by inverting the values associated with it - such as diligence, deference and respect.

contemporary youth and the existence of an inter-class consensus on the relative seriousness of different offences.¹⁴

With this in mind, it might be said that the central problem with subcultural theory is that it has unwittingly served to fuel the ideology of alienated youth and buttress the predominant 'social problems' orientation of 'youth studies'.¹⁵ The concept of subculture resonates all too easily with both common sense stereotypes of young people as irresponsible and anti-social 'hooligans', and with the notions of a 'juvenile underclass' that have recently been promulgated by several 'new right' commentators on social policy (Murray 1984; 1990). In the context of the present enquiry, such proclivities are important in so far as they reinforce (paternalistic) understandings of young people as lacking the necessary maturity and responsibility to participate in decision-making processes that effect their lives (Franklin and Franklin 1990).¹⁶ One consequence of this has been that young people are predominantly constituted as 'objects' to be managed, rather than as subjects whose experiences and claims ought to be listened to and taken seriously by agencies such as the police.

(ii) The Neglect of Gender

For the purposes of the present enquiry, a further limitation of subcultural analysis arises when attempting to fit young women's experiences of public places into a schema designed to explain the practices of young men (cf. Campbell 1984). In this regard, I concur with Griffin's (1985: 187) suggestion that 'research on youth cultures needs to shift away from the "gang of lads" model'. However, in undertaking such a step, it is neither necessary nor desirable to fashion a discrete framework for situating young women's problems and experiences. For if the substantive enquiry is to explore the relationship between the problems and practices of young men and women vis a vis crime and policing, such a framework would be counter-productive. Rather, what is required is the formulation of a conceptual lens that is able to capture and explain, 'the *differential* relation of boys and

¹⁴ See, for example, Fogelman (1976); Kitwood (1980); Coleman and Hendry (1990) and Anderson et al. (1990b).

¹⁵ One explanation for this may be the tendency for writers in this field to project either their fears (first phase subcultural theory) or hopes (British subcultural theory) onto contemporary youth (cf. Davis 1990).

¹⁶ It might be objected at this point that young people lack the necessary maturity to take part in such deliberation. The central limitation of this objection is its tautologous nature; for such dispositions rest on the assumption that young people lack the maturity to participate meaningfully in decisions that effect their lives, while simultaneously reinforcing the stereotypes that contribute to their exclusion. By contrast, it is my suggestion that it is possible to accept that young people are 'inexperienced' without falling for the paternalist *non sequitur* that supposedly follows. It is also possible, in this context, to radicalise the conservative assumptions that are usually associated with notions of 'maturation', and begin to explore the possibility that young people may learn about, and 'mature' into, institutional processes of participatory democracy.

girls to the *same* set of major institutions' (Powell and Clarke 1976: 225; italics in original).

The point about subcultural analysis of youth culture in this regard is that it has concentrated on male cultural forms and elided considerations of gender, thereby rendering itself conceptually unable to explore the reciprocal relationship between male and female social practices.¹⁷ This aporia has manifested itself in two related ways: in the first place, it has shaped the interpretation of male (sub)cultural responses. For while much subcultural theory has implicitly been all about the aggressive masculinity of male youth culture, it has rarely accounted for the fact that the expressive resistance of young men, 'has often been at the expense of women (especially mothers) and girls' (McRobbie 1981: 114). In its efforts to accord positive meaning to male responses, British subcultural theory has manifested a certain romanticisation and tended to gloss over the more oppressive features of male youth subcultures.¹⁸ In particular, little attention has been devoted to theorising (and thereby making integral to the explanation) the symbolic or material violence exhibited within male youth culture - for example, in Parker's (1974: 136) account of how even 'the exceptionally good natured' could employ 'a smack' in order to get their way in relation to women (cf. Willis 1977: 43-7).

Secondly, the absence of young women from the enquiry has meant that their experiences and concerns are seldom voiced. One acquires little sense from subcultural analysis of how young women react to derogatory labelling or respond to the sexism and violence of their male peers. While male cultural responses are accorded meaning and rationality, the voices of young women are silent; they remain passive 'objects' viewed solely through the eyes of their male peers.¹⁹ Through this exclusion, subcultural theory has served to perpetuate a longstanding and widespread phenomena - one aptly captured by

¹⁷ When young women appear in subcultural analysis it is usually by way of an apology for their absence. As Corrigan and Frith (1976: 239) concede: 'in this piece we have (in common with almost every other writer on youth culture) ignored women - our notion of the 'working class kid' is a male one. We have no excuse except ignorance - we know very little about the culture of teenage girls' (cf. Mungham and Pearson 1976b: 4; Corrigan 1979: 13; Robins 1992). A debate has occurred in this context about whether girls really were absent from 'male' youth subcultures, or whether their invisibility stemmed from the restricted focus of British subcultural theorists. For example, McRobbie and Garber (1976) suggest that girls were present within both teddy 'boy' and skinhead subcultures; while S. Cohen (1980: 186) argues that, 'in many ways Mod was a more female than male phenomena.' Given my overall critique of the concept of subculture, I consider this controversy to be of secondary importance.

¹⁸ While much of this criticism has been launched at British subcultural theory, to the extent that it is a product of a particular conceptual standpoint, it applies equally to 'first phase' theorists.

¹⁹ Thus it is not strictly accurate to say that young women do not appear in subcultural analysis. The problem is that, when they do, they surface largely within the categories to which boys have assigned them. The most frequent illustration of this is the depiction of young women according to a male sexual 'double standard'. For example, Willis (1977: 43) argues that among 'the lads': 'there is a traditional conflict in their view of women: they are both sexual objects and domestic comforters. In essence this means that whilst women must be sexually attractive, they cannot be sexually experienced' (cf. Parker 1974; Robins and Cohen 1978).

Susan Griffin (1981: 245): 'So little of real female experience has ever been expressed. We have no familiar images with which to speak of our lives or our identities, or through which to voice our feelings.'

In recent years, feminist scholars have begun to address this neglect by exploring the, 'ways in which girls interact among themselves and with each other in order to form a distinctive culture of their own' (McRobbie and Garber 1976: 219). In a manner analogous to the analysis of male subcultures, this work has centred upon how young women creatively respond to structurally generated problems. Such problems are seen to stem from the practices of their male peers; as well as the pressures resulting from both their class position and the ideologies of traditional femininity - for example, to engage in domestic labour, look after younger siblings and acquire a boyfriend. For these reasons, girls are viewed as responding to a social context that denies them even the temporary adolescent autonomy accorded to their male peers:

boundaries between girlhood and womanhood are far less accentuated, and the confined and permanent status of womanhood cannot be easily distinguished from girls' transient subordination as youth....labouring in the home, serving and pleasing others, their girlhood merges into womanhood. (Nava 1984: 15)

In this context, female youth culture has been interpreted as a means of handling relations with boys, as well as an attempt to stave off the 'premature middle age induced by childbirth and housework' (McRobbie 1981: 123; cf. McRobbie 1978; Griffin 1985). This (anti-school) culture, it is argued, focuses around the solidarity of female friendship groups - informal networks that enable girls to subvert the ideology of the school and carve out a space oriented to, 'developing their social life, fancying boys, learning the latest dance, having a smoke together in the lavatories and playing up to the teachers' (McRobbie 1978: 104). Equally importantly, they provide the basis for girls' culture beyond the confines of school and work, a culture, Griffin argues, revolving around the their respective houses and bedrooms.²⁰

These cultural forms provide young women with a means of coping with the problems they encounter and a space for developing positive identities. In this regard, commentators on female youth culture have suggested - in a manner akin to Willis and other theorists of male youth culture - that they remain partial (or what I shall term internal) solutions. To the

²⁰ The bedroom also forms the basis of what McRobbie and Garber (1976) call 'teeny bopper' culture. While they (regretfully) concede that this culture is almost entirely packaged by commercial interests, they suggest that it provides a space for girls to develop an autonomy of their own. Its merits are that (i) it is easily accommodated in the home; (ii) it is sufficiently flexible to allow anybody to join; (iii) it avoids the risk of humiliation by boys, and (iv) it offers an opportunity for the development of exclusive concerns centred around pop idols.

extent that girls' culture emphasises femininity and is imbued with an ideology of romance, it provides the seeds of their own entrapment within marriage and domesticity. As Nava (1984: 15) puts it: 'ultimately, and paradoxically, girls most common form of rebellion serves only to bind them more tightly to their subordination as women.' In short, girls are both saved by, and locked within, a culture of femininity.

Though much of this work has complemented the substantive concerns of (male) subcultural theory, it has inherited and deployed a similar conceptual structure. Analytical attention has focussed on how girls too develop inadequate responses to structurally generated problems. As a consequence, even when this analysis identifies discrepancies between male and female youth culture (such as in pointing to the use and importance of domestic space within girls' culture) it has continued to emphasise the oppositional nature of girls' cultural responses. McRobbie, for example, maintains that:

I think there is a case to be made for forms of fantasy, daydreaming and 'abandon' to be interpreted as part of a strategy of resistance or opposition; that is, as marking out one of those areas that cannot be totally colonised. Dance and music play an important role in these small daily *evasions*. (1984: 134; italics in original)

Irrespective of the insights offered by such analysis, theorists of female youth culture have replicated the narrow interpretive lens of their male peers by concentrating on the minority of working class girls who develop (what are viewed as) 'rebellious' responses to their marginalisation. The significance of this from the standpoint of the enquiry at hand is that this focus has under-emphasised the more mundane problems, experiences and practices of female youth.²¹ A central feature of this neglect concerns the way in which young women routinely come into contact with different dimensions of crime; how they understand and manage the everyday dangers associated with public space; and the ways in which they experience - and make claims upon - the police.²² An adequate consideration of these questions requires a transcendence of a subcultural frame of reference, and a focus on the various means by which young women, individually and collectively, apprehend the possibilities and risks of public places.

²¹ The main exceptions to this focus have been Griffin's (1985) study of working class girls, and research that focuses upon female experiences of specific issues and institutional sites (Stafford 1991).

²² These concerns have been a consistent theme of much recent criminological research; see, Hamner and Saunders (1984); Crawford et al. (1990); Anderson et al. (1990a); Anderson et al. (1990b), and Stanko (1990).

(iii) Subcultural Analysis and Youth Transitions

The final aspect of subcultural enquiry I want to consider concerns its capacity to explain youth transitions and their impact upon young people's social practices. The limitation of much of subcultural analysis in this context is that, by organising itself around a single substantialist concept, it has only been able to understand such processes in terms of the emergence and disintegration of tight-knit youth subcultures. Because of a failure to connect young people's (sub)cultural activities with the spheres of education, work and familial relations, subcultural theory has been unable to develop a conceptual language that can make meaningful sense of the multifarious ways in which these practices change with the post-school trajectories available to young people. Perhaps as a consequence, subcultural theorists have devoted scant attention to these questions (cf. Matza 1990: ch. 2).

Youth transitions do not merely signal a shift between the 'natural' categories of adolescent and adult. Rather, they represent an on-going social process of inclusion and exclusion - a process shaped by the differential availability of past economic and social capital, while determining access to such capital in the future. The transition to 'adulthood' interpellates young people in particular class and gender positions, as well as seeing them develop related subjective identities.²³ In this regard, the passage from the 'youth' to 'adult' involves, most importantly, a threefold formal transition in the fields of production, consumption and political participation - the substantive features of which are a product of historical conflicts and accommodations, and subject to negotiation and transformation in the present.

In the domain of production, such transitions signify a shift from potential to actual *labour* power. During most of the post-war period (for young men at least) the passage to 'adulthood' was marked by a shift from full-time education to full-time employment. Phil Cohen (1986) has developed the concept of 'reproduction codes' to explain the dynamics of this process (cf. Hollands 1990: ch. 1). He argues that - until around the mid 1970s - the transition to work was organised (economically, politically and culturally) around the linked codes of 'apprenticeship' and 'inheritance'; codes that provide the majority of male working class youth - following in their father's footsteps - with a route into full-time manual labour (Willis 1977).

²³ In system terms, the broad significance of these transitions is their centrality to the transmission and reproduction of cultural knowledge, group solidarities and personal identities (Habermas 1987).

The concept of 'reproduction codes' can also be employed to understand the transitions undertaken by both middle class youth and young women. Among the former, transitions from school more often involve a period of further or higher education followed by employment in full-time salaried work and careers. Such transitions enable (largely) middle class youth to develop positive identities around the intermediate status of 'student', even though these may be accompanied by increasing financial hardship and dependency (Aggleton 1987). Among the majority of young women, for most of the post-war period, leaving school more usually involved a shift to domestic labour and child-rearing - a transition occasionally (and again increasingly) supplemented by part-time work (Jones and Wallace 1992: ch. 2).

These transitions differentially position young people within social relations of production, and shape the access they obtain to allocative and authoritative resources (Giddens 1984).²⁴ In this context, it is important to take account of contemporary shifts in 'reproduction codes'. In particular, the paradigm of full employment has begun to look increasingly tattered in recent years, and paths to full-time employment has been superseded by, what Wallace (1987) terms, a series of 'ragged transitions' (cf. Coffield et al. 1986). Upon leaving school, working youth, both male and female, are increasingly likely to face intermittent and uncertain periods of work, training and unemployment, a development that has resulted in the proliferation of a range of post-school youth identities superseding those associated with full-time employment (Willis 1984a; 1984b; Banks et al. 1991).

In the related sphere of consumption transitions from school denote a passage from vicarious to direct *consumer*. Access to goods and services that previously relied upon familial capital now come to depend upon young people's access to independent resources. The transition to 'adulthood' has conventionally involved reduced dependence upon parents and the procurement of autonomous domestic space, and in this sphere, one consequence of increasing youth unemployment has been to extend young people's dependence upon their parents, and postpone the acquisition of full 'adult' independence.²⁵

Finally, the transition from school involves a shift from putative to full *citizenship*. This involves both the cultural designation of 'adult' maturity and responsibility, and the

²⁴ Giddens (1984: 33) defines these concepts in the following terms: 'Allocative resources refer to capabilities - or more accurately, to forms of transformative capacity - generating command over objects, goods or material phenomena. Authoritative resources refer to types of transformative capacity generating command over persons of actors.'

²⁵ In this regard, Jones and Wallace (1992: chs. 4-5) contend that 'youth' presently represents a period during which young people are temporarily and uncertainly suspended between economic dependence and independence.

developmental acquisition of a range of formal civil, political and social rights, such as the right to vote and claim social security (Marshall 1950; 1971). The important point about this process concerns how the transition to formal citizenship is undercut and fractured by young people's differential access to economic and social resources. In this regard, young people can experience a discrepancy between the ideology and practice of citizenship and political participation, at the very moment they acquire the formal status of full citizens.²⁶

The relationship between these different dimensions of youth transitions is a centrally important issue. One of Habermas' (1987) substantive claims is that in modern capitalist societies the dimension of consumerism has been privileged at the expense of citizenship, as material satisfaction has come to compensate for people's lack of opportunity to participate meaningfully as citizens. In this context, transitions to 'adulthood' - even if successful in conventional economic terms - involve a shift to what Habermas (1975: 75-92) terms 'civic privatism', rather than the chance to participate in institutional processes of public decision-making. In a similar vein, Bauman (1987: chs. 10-11; 1991) has recently suggested that questions surrounding the legitimacy of public institutions (such as the police) have been displaced by 'seducing' the majority with the benefits of consumerism, while controlling those groups excluded from the consumer society.

While these social diagnoses are suggestive in various ways, they urgently require substantive research into how such processes are subjectively experienced by people in the course of their everyday lives. In the context of the present enquiry, a number of issues emerge for consideration. In the first place, it is important for the analysis to be cognisant of the ways in which the experience of different facets of these transitions is cut across by divisions of class, gender and race. In a related but more specific vein, it is necessary to investigate the effects that access to, and exclusion from, allocative and authoritative resources have upon youth practices. Such an analysis would include a consideration of, among other things, the changing uses and understandings of areas of public space; mutations in young people's contact with different dimensions of crime, and young people's changing experiences of, and dispositions towards, policing. What is required in this context is a conceptual framework that is able to obtain an interpretive grasp on the relationship between transitions from school and young people's changing experiences and

²⁶ Without a recognition of this, the discourse of citizenship will remain as nebulous and ideological as that of 'adulthood'. In order to avoid confusion, it is important to distinguish between the different ways in which the term 'citizenship' can be mobilised - as a normative concept (to be advocated); as a sociological concept (to be employed in explanation), or as an object of analysis (to be explained). In the present context, citizenship refers to the last of these meanings.

understandings of crime and policing. It is to an elaboration of such a framework that I now turn.

Reconstructing Subcultural Theory: A Conceptual Framework

Having reviewed the substantive literature on youth culture, I want now to address explicitly the conceptual dimension of my reformulation of the 'applied turn' in critical theory. My purpose in this final section is to employ the theory of communicative action to fashion a conceptual framework that is able to retain the strengths of subcultural theory while transcending its limitations. In the context of the enquiry as a whole such a schema is pivotal, in that it enables one to situate the interview material and ask a number of theoretically informed questions of it. The delineation of such a framework centres upon four connected themes:

- (i) an account of its genesis in the theory of communicative action;
- (ii) a discussion of the schema's theoretical status and purpose;
- (iii) a definitional explication of the concepts constituting the framework, indicating its purchase over subcultural formulations;
- (iv) an outline of some of the substantive research questions it generates.

The grid outlined below sets out an explanatory framework for classifying the range of social practices young people develop in response to their marginalisation. A social practice can be defined as a relatively enduring cluster of activities, interactions and dispositions oriented to responding to recurring problems (cf. Giddens 1991: 80-8). Youth social practices are constructed by drawing upon, and reworking, a mix of experiences, practical knowledge, and understandings of the 'parent' culture, together with other available cultural resources, such as argot, music and dress. While the content that gives real historical meaning to such practices varies across time and space - and according to class, gender, race and age - this formal definition is important in apprehending some of the features common to the practices of various social groupings.

A Grid of Youth Social Practices

Individual Internal	Collective Internal
Individual External	Collective External

In terms of the theory of communicative action, the grid has both a substantive and methodological force. In relation to the former, the 'individual-collective' axis refers to relations between individuals and groups within the lifeworld. Though the distinction is not analytically tight, the understanding of social action along this dimension remains of heuristic value. For while all action is collective in a minimal though important sense of the term, the contextual orientations and meanings of social action can differ in significant respects. For example, though working in the informal economy relies upon a whole series of social networks for its successful accomplishment, its overriding objective is individual need satisfaction: it has no collective logic other than to protect the networks upon which it relies.

The 'internal-external' axis refers to relations between structured social relations and institutional arrangements, and groups and individuals within the lifeworld. Its explanatory concern is with the institutional contexts within which social action takes place and the ways in which routine practices reproduce or transform such contexts. In this regard, the grid reworks subcultural enquiry in the direction of structuration theory (Giddens 1984). Thus in place of a rigid distinction between structure and action, this perspective emphasises a dialectical relation between the two, into which there is no privileged point of explanatory entry. With this in mind, social action can be characterised in terms of either its orientation towards, or effects upon, the process of social reproduction. Action can be termed internal if it accommodates to the institutional constraints placed upon it, and external if it transforms those constraints and thereby alters the context in which future social action occurs.²⁷

In methodological terms, the concepts within the grid are neither derived exclusively from the theory of communicative action, nor are they solely emergent from the research data (cf. Glaser and Strauss 1967). Rather, they serve as a conceptual bridge between the somewhat abstract formulations of critical theory and the material obtained during interviews with young people. For if as Habermas (1990: 1-20) proposes, the theory of communicative action is to provide a series of falsifiable hypotheses (rather than a string of *a priori* or quasi-transcendental claims), it must be able to generate concepts that can be operationalised within substantive research programmes. Without this, critical theory will remain a falsifiable construction in only a partial sense of the term, in that while it may be

²⁷ Social practices can, in other words, be defined along this dimension of the grid both subjectively (in terms of what they mean to their participants), and objectively (in terms of what counts as a competent performance of the practice). Thus, a practice may be intended as transformative but fail in its objectives, or conversely, may be oriented to coping with a situation and end up transforming it.

subject to theoretical reflection and critique, it will not be bought to bear in a sociological engagement with the social world.²⁸

It should be noted in this regard that the grid is (no more than) a heuristic device for making some meaningful sense of empirical phenomena that exist independently of it (Bhaskar: 1986; 1989). Its constituent concepts serve as a set of 'thinking tools' that expedite the asking of certain questions about lived social relations in urban public space (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). In this sense, they are a temporary construct that take shape solely for the purpose and duration of the enquiry at hand, and their adequacy must be judged in terms of their cogency in illuminating different facets of the relationship between youth, crime and policing. The framework thus supersedes the substantialist formulations of subcultural theory with a series of concepts that enable one to think *relationally* about youth culture. The concepts within the grid acquire their meaning only within the overall system of relations constituting the framework, and in this sense, the grid's axes designate points on a continuum rather than sharply demarcated possibilities. Social practices cannot properly be viewed as mutually exclusive: young people may engage in a number of social practices at any one time, and are likely to move in and out of each 'box' at different points in their biographies.²⁹

Internal practices refer to the multifarious means by which young people cope - either materially or cognitively - with structured marginalisation, or else find ways of compensating for it. *Individual internal practices* can be defined as modes of social action that accommodate to structured social relations and institutional arrangements, thereby reproducing them. They can involve delinquent activity or be designed to secure personal safety, and in both cases, this facet of the grid - together with individual external practices (see below) - has the merit of recognising the individual elements of social action that subcultural enquiry all but elides. Examples of the former include utilitarian juvenile crime, such as petty theft or housebreaking, as well as working in the informal economy. (For while both of these practices rely upon a network of social relations for their success, the

²⁸ In particular, if the theory of communicative action is to explain the relations between the system and lifeworld in concrete contexts, it requires a series of concepts that are able to connect these two dimensions of lived social relations. This is especially important with regard to Habermas' thesis on the 'colonisation of the lifeworld'. For while this thesis is suggestive in a number of ways, an exploration of its validity and implications requires concrete research into how (or indeed whether) such colonisation is experienced in real life contexts, and to what extent, and by what means, it is resisted when it occurs.

²⁹ An understanding of social practices in terms of the above grid does not of course exhaust the possibility of other formulations. In this regard, such practices should more appropriately be referred to as - for example - practices with individual internal dimensions, thereby emphasising that routines such as avoidance behaviour can, in other contexts and for other purposes, be conceptualised in more pertinent ways. For the sake of clarity of expression, however, I will use the shorter formulation (for example, individual internal practices) throughout the deliberations that follow.

focus of the accommodation is individual rather than collective.) Such practices also encompass a range of - what Merton (1968: ch. 4) terms - 'retreatist' adaptations, such as the routine use of leisure arcades and individual drug-taking. Individual internal practices oriented to personal safety include avoidance behaviour of various forms - ranging from avoiding particular streets and parts of the city, to not going out during certain times of the day (Stanko: 1990a).

Collective internal practices can be defined as modes of social action that accommodate - and thereby reenact - shared problems resulting from structured social relations and institutional arrangements. In the context of subcultural theory, the significance of this concept is that it provides a way of redescribing youth subcultures in relational terms - that is, in ways that capture their connections with both broader social contexts and other youth adaptations. Such a concept is additionally able to obtain an interpretive hold on the diverse ways in which young people 'hang around' in urban public places. Many of the devices employed to ensure personal safety are easily turned into collective internal practices - arranging to go out with friends would be a mundane example. It is also possible to view 'hanging around' in groups as a strategy for collective safety in so far as it ensures that no one individual has to cope with the dangers of public space alone. The narration of 'cautionary tales' about dangerous people and places additionally represent collective internal practices, in that they facilitate the sharing among young people of practical knowledge about the risks of city spaces (Anderson et al. 1990b). As with individual internal practices, such routines may help to engender both a sense of security, as well as generating (while never transcending entirely the risks of public space) materially safer forms of social organisation.

One of the distinguishing features of collective internal practices is that they recognise a group interest, albeit at the level of practical consciousness (Giddens 1984: 41-5). Such practices provide young people with a means of coping with the consequences of structured marginalisation - for example, by using public places to develop positive identities. However, as subcultural theorists rightly point out, both individual and collective internal practices are partial solutions and cannot be 'considered in any sense as mastery over the future' (Willis 1977: 121). Whatever their advantages as coping mechanisms for the immediate term, internal practices effect no permanent or institutional answers to the forms of marginalisation young people face. As Willis (1990: 130) remarks in his most recent work on youth cultures:

Informal cultures can mirror image official exclusions and leave quite unattended the formal, public and material questions of democratization.

External practices can be defined as modes of social action that transform in some way the social relations and institutional arrangements within which future social action occurs. They can be distinguished from internal practices in that they are oriented to reconstructing, rather than accommodating, the structured contexts of social action; and in so doing, they utilise and make demands of public institutions. Given that all social action is transformative in a minimal sense of the term (Giddens 1984), the mutations introduced by external practices must be enduring enough to effect a discontinuity upon either an individual's relation to structured social arrangements, or upon some aspect of these arrangements as a whole. This dimension of the grid again has the virtue of opening up a sphere of social enquiry with which subcultural theory has been largely unconcerned.

Individual external practices can be defined as action having a significant transformative potential upon the material circumstances of the individual. The consequence of these practices is to transform an individual's relationship to existing institutional arrangements while leaving such arrangements largely in place. In this regard, internal and external designations represent opposite poles of a continuum rather than sharply distinguished possibilities. Thus both utilitarian crime and working in the informal economy can become external practices, provided they are sufficiently successful to transform an individual's material situation. More conventional in this regard is the upward social mobility offered by educational attainment. The 'college boy' solution alluded to (though largely disregarded) by both waves of subcultural theory offers a prime example of such orientations (Cohen 1955; Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Willis 1977).

It can be surmised that individual external practices provide a majority of young people with some form of transition into 'adulthood', whether that be in terms of further education, training schemes or employment. Such transitions - if successful in conventional economic terms - are likely to be accompanied by increasing financial independence; the procurement of autonomous domestic space, and a more structured and focused use of public places. It is in these circumstances that - as young people face a *direct* exposure to market relations - class divisions are increasingly likely to determine their experience; and it is in this context that the limitations of individual external practices become apparent. For as Willis notes, while they offer social mobility for some, individual external practices do not speak to group interests and demands:

To the *individual* working class person mobility in this society may mean something. Some working class individuals do 'make it' and any particular individual may hope to be one of them. To the class or group at its own proper level, however, mobility means nothing at all. (1977: 128; italics in original)

In the context of the present enquiry, the significance of these reconceptualisations of youth culture is that they permit a theoretically informed set of questions to be asked of the interview material. It becomes possible, for example, to move beyond the privileging of youth subcultures and explore the various ways in which young people, individually and collectively, respond to structured marginalisation. This schema additionally enables one to transcend the delinquent obsession that has marked much criminological and subcultural enquiry, by considering how young people develop practices that secure their personal and collective safety in public space. In both of these domains it also becomes possible to explore the relationship between these different practices (for example, do the collective internal practices of some young people undermine the well-being of others?) and ask questions about their connections with young people's various experiences of policing.

This framework also allows one to address, in the course of the research, two further lacunae of subcultural enquiry. In the first place, it facilitates an exploration of the differential ways in which young men and women use and understand social practices, as well as an investigation of reciprocal relations between these practices. (To what extent, for example, do the attempts of young males to develop positive identities by 'hanging around' in public places impact upon the social practices of young women?) Furthermore, it becomes possible to explore the effect that leaving school has upon the relationship between young people's social practices, and chart the ways in which different post-school social trajectories shape young people's experiences of crime and policing.

The final concept within the grid opens up a series of questions of a somewhat different order. *Collective external practices* - the normative dimension of the schema - focus attention directly upon the social relations and institutional arrangements within which existent uses of public space occur. Such practices can be defined as modes of action having a significant transformative effect upon the social relations of the collective. They are oriented to transforming the structured contexts within which future social action takes place and - in so far as this is necessary to effect relations throughout the social spectrum - these practices anticipate the realisation of significant institutional change. In the immediate context, my concern in this regard is with the current institutional arrangements for rendering the police accountable and the possibility of reform programmes that will embed forms of democratic communication between the police and various social groups.

Such practices can be further distinguished according to the scope of their impact. *Specific* collective external practices effect a transformation upon a particular aspect of institutional arrangements and have no wide-reaching consequences for social relations as a

whole: for example, when the police change a particular practice on an ad hoc basis in response to pressure from specific social groups. *Generic* collective external practices effect a significant transformation upon the way in which social relations as a whole are formulated and lived. In doing so, they alter the institutional context within which future social action takes place, and serve as a prerequisite for the initiation of further specific collective external practices. An example would be a reconstruction of the institutional conditions in which police policy as a whole is developed, implemented and revised, or a significant alteration in the role of the police in maintaining social order.

In the context of subcultural theory, this dimension of the grid charts a path between the social democratic tinkering of the first wave, and the structural fatalism of the Birmingham school.³⁰ The politics of collective external practices evince an approach to questions of institutional change close in spirit to that variously referred to by contemporary social theorists as 'utopian realism' (Giddens 1990), or the pursuit of 'credible ideals and transformative insight' (Unger 1987a: 15). This perspective seeks to engage imaginatively with the present from the standpoint of an immanent yet unrealised future, and advocate local transformations capable of advancing such a future: in other words, it is oriented to, 'transforming the experience of what is into a projection of what could be' (I. M. Young 1990: 6).

Collective external practices advance the objective of critical theory to interrogate social reality with a view to its transformation, and in this context, they connect the 'explanatory-diagnostic' and 'utopian-anticipatory' moments within the applied reformulation of critical theory (Benhabib 1986). They function as a normative standpoint from which to ask questions of existent youth social practices, and their possibility serves to relativise such practices and point up their limitations. Such a counterfactual reading can potentially engender a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of youth culture; for it neither dismisses nor romanticises young people's social practices, but rather, develops a standpoint from which to distinguish between their emancipatory and brutalising features.

³⁰ The politics of first wave subcultural theory were left largely unarticulated by Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960), despite underpinning almost all that was written. My sense of this is that they felt a little social democratic reform could improve the lot of working class youth, so that they too could share the 'American dream'. In this context, it is possible to note the involvement of many of the authors in the 'Mobilisation for Youth' programmes of the 1950s, though it should be remembered that one of the writers associated with this tradition - Richard Cloward - went on to co-author a forceful critique of social democratic welfarism (Cloward and Fox-Piven 1971). Though, by contrast, the Birmingham school foreground questions of politics and evince an overt sympathy with the plight of working class youth, strategic proposals are conspicuously absent from their work. Solutions to young people's problems, it seems, must await fundamental social transformation, and it is in the absence of this that British subcultural theorists search - ultimately in vain - for 'signs' of an oppositional consciousness among the young. The few exceptions to this are Robins and Cohens' (1978: 174-94) proposals for educational groups and young tenants associations; and Willis' (1977: 185-93) nebulous proposals for educational reform (cf. Willis 1985).

Collective external practices relatedly operate as a plausible solution to the problems that counterfactual interpretation identifies. In so far as this interpretation identifies the co-existence of pathological relations and transformative possibilities, the research objective becomes to speculate upon the prospects for the latter with a view to contributing to their realisation. Such an orientation thus addresses itself to institutional transformations that ameliorate the downside of youth social practices (violence, aggressive masculinity, racism, sexism and so on) while building upon - rather than colonising - their progressive facets.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the prospect of institutional arrangements which might be devised to address the problems identified in the previous chapter. It will do this by exploring the possibility of a 'youth social policy' which might be devised to address the problems identified in the previous chapter. It will do this by exploring the possibility of a 'youth social policy' which might be devised to address the problems identified in the previous chapter.

This elaboration of the institutional conditions of possibility for policy affords a helpful framework to ask some more detailed questions about the relationship between policy and the youth question. In particular, I shall consider the various ways in which the category of 'youth' is represented within policy discourses and reflect upon how such representations inform the policying of young people in public places. These considerations are then employed as a basis from which to introduce a range of research questions pertinent to the policying of youth social practices.

The chapter is organised around three themes:

- (i) a critical review of the present institutional arrangements governing policy and practice;
- (ii) an exploration of the historical and cultural representations of 'youth' within policy discourses;
- (iii) an outline of some of the tentative research questions pertinent to the relationship between policying and youth social practices.



POLICING AND THE YOUTH QUESTION

Institutions systematically....channel our perceptions into forms compatible with the relations they authorize. They fix processes that are essentially dynamic....and they rouse our emotions to a standardized pitch on standardized issues....Any problems we try to think about are automatically transformed into their own organizational problems. The solutions they proffer only come from the limited range of their own experience. (Douglas 1992: 92).

The purpose of this chapter is to employ the theory of communicative action as a standpoint from which to scrutinize the present institutional arrangements for rendering the police accountable, and in so doing, articulate a conceptual framework within which to situate the accounts generated in the police interviews. My review of these arrangements - and the legal and sociological literature surrounding them - has both a normative and explanatory dimension. It addresses itself to issues of democratic principle, and in particular the question of policing by consent, as well as considering the ways in which current institutional designs facilitate certain forms of policing practice while precluding others.

This elaboration of the institutional conditions of possibility for policing affords a backdrop from which to ask some more discrete questions about the relationship between policing and the youth question. In particular, I shall consider the various ways in which the category of 'youth' is represented within police occupational culture and reflect upon how such designations inform the policing of young people in public places. These considerations are then employed as a basis from which to introduce a range of research questions pertinent to the policing of youth social practices.

The chapter is organised around three themes:

- (i) a critical review of the present institutional arrangements governing policing policy and practice;
- (ii) an elaboration of the meanings and effects of representations of 'youth' within police culture;
- (iii) an outline of some of the substantive research questions pertinent to the relationship between policing and youth social practices.

Situating Police Accountability: Law, Democracy and Work

Policing as an institutional practice is constituted by dimensions of both force and service, the elements of which are differentially experienced by various individuals and social groups. In structurally divided societies these two dimensions of the police role are enacted in the reproduction of - what Marenin (1982) terms - a general order (a reference to a universal interest in protecting the conditions of organised existence by ensuring public tranquility), as well as a specific order (denoting the protection of the interests of particular social groups and classes).¹ The social distribution of these contrasting functions will depend largely on the relationship between the structured asymmetries of power existing in the wider social realm, and the institutional arrangements for rendering police work accountable to different 'publics'. I want in this section to consider this relationship by investigating the various ways in which chief officers are held to account for their policy-making functions, and the arrangements for controlling the discretion of police constables on the ground.

For the purpose of this enquiry, I draw upon the conceptual framework recently elaborated by Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987; Jefferson 1990), who argue that police work has to be understood in terms of the relationship between three 'structures of control': namely, law, democracy and work.² The virtue of such an approach is that instead of positing a single dimension of control as uniformly dominant - as is all too often the case with research on police culture for instance (Punch 1979; Holdaway 1983) - it focuses attention on both the actual and potential determinants of policing practices. In so doing, it conceptualises 'control' as a 'social relation whose character varies in different contexts' (Johnston 1988: 67), and emphasises that in any specific field, the substance of police work will depend on the particular alignment of a range of institutional regulators. Determining the relationship between these structures is thereby rendered as a task for substantive enquiry within discrete spheres of policing.

Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987: 15-8) delineate a view of a *legal structure* constituted by a range of connected dimensions. The capacity of such a structure to control police work will, they argue, depend upon such matters as (i) the constitutional position of chief constables and the provisions and principles governing their accountability; (ii) the

1 The significance of Marenin's formulation is that it enables the broader social functions of policing to be investigated without an *a priori* assertion that formal policing is either universally oppressive or beneficial.

2 A related depiction of the influence of the 'environment' on police work can be found in Reiss and Bordua (1967), who delineate however a weakly differentiated and somewhat abstract conception of the environment. A more grounded perspective - emphasising the role of law, community and police organisation - can be found in Ericson (1982 ch. 1); cf. Johnston's (1988) elaboration of the relative importance of managerial-bureaucratic, professional, rank and file and local democratic controls.

substantive powers of police officers and the legal safeguards determining their enactment, and (iii) the powers of existing judicial and supervisory bodies such as the courts and the Police Complaints Authority. By conceptualising the legal structure in such a way, this framework permits consideration of how and in what circumstances the law may or may not influence police behaviour, rather than conceiving of legal regulation as an all-or-nothing affair.

For the purposes of the present enquiry, the most significant aspect of the legal structure concerns the constitutional position of the office of constable. At present, the formulation of police policy is governed by the *Police (Scotland) Act 1967*. This legislation allocates responsibility for policing between a tripartite structure consisting of chief constables, local police authorities and the Secretary of State for Scotland, and situates operational decision-making in the hands of chief constables.³ In this regard, it embodies two related principles that are pivotal to the British policing tradition - those of 'legal accountability' and 'constabulary independence'. The former concept determines that police officers - at the level of chief constable, as well as officers on the ground - both undertake their task within the confines of the law, and have a legal duty to act against *all* violations of the legal order. The latter holds that a police officer's duty to enforce the law is an independent (rather than delegated) one, and that in pursuing it, officers are precluded from taking direction from any external authority.⁴

This understanding of the office of constable is both underpinned and legitimated by the belief that the role of the police within a liberal democratic polity is one of universal and impartial law enforcement. Proponents of such a position - including the body of chief constables (Reiner 1991a: ch. 11) - contend that the strictures of legal accountability and the prohibition on external direction are essential to secure both the political neutrality of

3 In England and Wales, the corresponding piece of legislation is the *Police Act 1964*. Despite a variance in wording (the Scottish legislation, for example, makes no explicit reference to 'operational control' being vested in chief constables) the two pieces of legislation divide responsibility within the tripartite structure in similar ways, and they will consequently be considered as a whole in what follows (in England and Wales, the Home Secretary is the third party to the structure). The chief substantive difference between the two systems is that, in Scotland, police authorities consist entirely of elected councillors and have no magisterial members.

4 This doctrine has been firmly established by the case law on this issue, both ante and post the 1964 and 1967 legislation. The most significant of these cases are *Fisher v. Oldham* (1930) 2 K.B. 364; *R v. Metropolitan Commissioner ex parte Blackburn* (1968) 1 All. E.R. 763, and *R v. Metropolitan Commissioner ex parte Blackburn (No. 3)* (1973) 1 All. E.R. 324. In the first Blackburn case, Lord Denning made what has come to be viewed as the classic judicial pronouncement on the matter when he opined: 'I hold it to be the duty of the Commissioner of Police, as it is of every chief constable, to enforce the law of the land....The responsibility for law enforcement lies on him. He is answerable to the law and the law alone' (1968) 1 All. E.R. 769. Within police studies an important historical debate has emerged on the origins of the doctrine of 'constabulary independence'. Jefferson and Grimshaw (1984: ch. 1), on the one hand, conceive it as centrally integrated with the practice of modern policing since its inception; while Lustgarten (1986: 48) views its emergence - and the corresponding waning of the powers of the watch committees - as 'part of the broad counter-attack against the perceived threat of bolshevism and socialism in the decade following 1919.' (Cf. Marshall 1965; Reiner 1991a: ch. 2).

policing from government (whether central or local), and the non-partisan and even-handed enforcement of law against all offenders. Sir Robert Mark (1977: 56) - a former Metropolitan Police Commissioner - encapsulates this tradition perfectly when he states:

The fact that the British police are accountable to the law, that we act on behalf of the community as a whole and not under the mantle of government, makes us the least powerful, the most accountable and therefore the most acceptable in the world.

The central limitation of this kind of conventional justification of policing practice is that it significantly fails to recognise the practical impossibility of realising the ideal of universal law enforcement, whether at the level of chief constable or officers on the ground. In terms of the former, a formal legal conception of police accountability forgets that chief officers lack the time, knowledge or resources to organise their force for such an undertaking (Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984: ch. 5). Chief constables are thus confronted with the principled problem of 'how to respond to an inability to deal with all offences in the light of the general duty to enforce the law' (ibid: 141), and it is in this context that the fundamental weakness of a legally comprehended conception of accountability becomes apparent. For it takes no account of the fact that policing is of necessity a *partial* and *selective* practice, requiring chief officers to exercise considerable discretionary judgement - determining, for example, such matters as local policing priorities; styles of policing and resource allocation. Chief constables are, in other words, engaged in the enterprise of formulating 'public policies for upholding the law' (ibid: 148), a task for which the principal mechanism of control - the law - provides no guidance.

In relation to constables on the ground, Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987: 15-8; Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984: 139) argue that the legal structure is most able to regulate police work in circumstances where there is both a complainant and a clear legal provision to be enforced: situations in other words where the police officer's task can accurately be described as 'the objective and honest application of a rule or standard of conduct' (Lustgarten 1986: 164). However, such circumstances rarely obtain; police officers are far more frequently required to deal with problematic situations requiring the exercise of considerable discretion - deciding, for example, between competing accounts of an incident (such as a pub fight or 'domestic' dispute); and determining what if any course of action to pursue (such as whether to warn, caution or arrest any of the disputants). Similarly, the legal and situational dynamics of many public order settings permit police officers considerable space in which to define proactively the legality of particular behaviours (Jefferson 1990: ch. 3).

This raises the centrally important question of the extent to which legal rules are able to regulate the exercise of such discretion - a matter that remains the subject of intense debate within contemporary police sociology. The 'subculturalist' position on this issue - discussed in more detail below - maintains that the circumstances of policing operation invariably enable police officers to undermine legal controls on their discretion (Punch 1979; Holdaway 1983; cf. Reiner 1992a: ch. 6). Against this, the 'structuralist' perspective of - among others - Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987) holds that it is possible to identify circumstances in which the legal structure is able to have some regulatory effect.⁵ This it is argued can be achieved by closing down - through the enactment of tighter legislation - the discretionary space in which police officers operate, thereby providing a framework (of rules) which can *negatively* exclude certain modes of police operation.⁶

Though legal regulation may in some contexts be able to circumscribe the discretionary space within which police officer's operate, the 'open-texture' of rules, and the requirements for justice to accommodate the exigencies of specific incidents, requires that street-level discretion is both an inherent and desirable aspect of police work (Kinsey et al. 1986: 165-8; Reiner 1992a: ch. 6). The centrality of such discretion places significant generic limits on the capacity of legal rules alone to regulate police practice on the ground. For in exercising situational discretionary judgement, constables are placed in a position more akin to that of chief officers. They are in effect rendered as what Muir (1977) terms 'street-corners politicians' - called upon to resolve disputes in situations where the law can provide little *positive* guidance as to how to proceed, and in these circumstances, police policy emerges by default as the *de facto* sum of how individual officers deal with such disputes.

These reflections have a number of significant consequences for the the field of police-youth relations. Research has consistently indicated that, of all social groups, young people are most likely to come into contact with police officers in adversary encounters in public places.⁷ Such policing of young people most regularly involves either (i) those

5 For a review of the debate between 'structuralists' and 'subculturalists' on this issue see Brogden et al. (1988: ch. 7).

6 This approach attempts to steer a path between an excessive (and sociologically naive) legal formalism, and a legal nihilism guilty of an equal but opposite error. A good example of such an approach is provided by Dixon (1992) who - reviewing research on the operation of the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984* in England and Wales - notes its uneven impact, and argues persuasively that legal rules are able to have effects in some situations, such as in the more closely supervised confines of the police station. For a summary balance sheet of research on *PACE* which implies a similarly modulated stance, see Reiner (1992a: 225-32); cf. Kinsey and Baldwin (1985). Though little research has been carried out on the *Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1981*, it is possible to speculate that the relatively infrequent use of proactive police powers (such as stop and search) in Scotland is at least partly a consequence of a tighter legal regime that restricts detention ordinarily to six hours and demands corroborative evidence for convictions.

7 For young people over sixteen see, Smith and Gray (1983); Kinsey (1985; 1992); Dobash et al. (1987; 1990); Crawford et al. (1990). For evidence pertaining to eleven to sixteen year olds, see Anderson et al. (1990b: ch. 5).

offences - such as breach of the peace - whose wide discretionary ambit permits police officers ample scope to define situationally the meaning of the offence; or (ii) routine order maintenance activities involving the exercise of pedagogic authority, rather than the explicit invocation of law. This sphere of police work is consequently one in which a permissive legal structure permits police officers considerable decision-making leeway. In such an environment, the law - far from being a strong controlling influence over police action - is frequently reduced to something of a flexible resource, available either as a last resort problem-solving device, or alternatively, as a mechanism for legitimating determinations governed by extra-legal considerations (Ericson 1982).

The *democratic structure* of control focuses attention on the sites through which various 'publics' (or 'constituencies') are able to exercise an effect over policing policy and practice (Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987: 20-2). Such a structure can be apprehended in terms of both the formal means through which the police are to be rendered democratically accountable for their actions, as well as the informal channels through which particular social groups may be able to influence police decision-making. The notion of a democratic structure additionally connects with much broader questions about the nature of democratic institutional processes. In this regard, democracy can usefully be conceptualised as:

a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control....the most democratic arrangement to be where all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision-making directly. (Beetham 1993: 55)

The formal democratic components of the present arrangements for police accountability are threefold: namely, the Secretary of State for Scotland/Home Secretary; local police authorities and, in England and Wales, local police-consultative committees. The doctrine of 'constabulary independence' currently means that none of these bodies is legally empowered to direct chief constables in the exercise of their responsibilities. Rather, the democratic element of current arrangements consists primarily of chief officers 'retrospectively accounting' (Brogden et al. 1988: 152) for their actions to the democratically constituted parties within the tripartite structure (through, for example, the provision of annual reports).⁸

Notwithstanding this formal parity, the Secretary of State/Home Secretary is currently accorded a dominant place vis a vis local police authorities within the tripartite structure. In

This study found that levels of contact were higher than for adults across boundaries of class and gender, though working class boys experienced the highest levels of adversary contact.

⁸ These arrangements rest upon what Marshall (1978) has termed an 'explanatory and co-operative' model of democratic accountability, a conception he counterposed to one of 'subordination and control'.

the first instance, a majority of police funding comes from central government (51% directly, coupled with the significant amount of local policing finance sourced from central grants).⁹ The Secretary of State/Home Secretary is also legally empowered to arbitrate in disputes between chief constables and local police authorities.¹⁰ In recent years, this legally constituted central government influence has been exacerbated by the increasing use of Home Office circulars to influence police policy-making on a national basis.¹¹ Drawing upon interviews with chief constables in England and Wales, Reiner (1991a: chs. 10-12) has noted how the effect of recent developments has been to extend informal central government influence over police policy without any explicit enhancement of its formal powers. He further suggests that this process has effectively rendered police authorities marginal to the formulation of local policing policy.¹²

The final democratic component of the current arrangements is provided by local police-consultative committees.¹³ The official aim of such committees is to facilitate public discussion between the police and community representatives about local crime and policing issues.¹⁴ Research evidence on the workings of these arrangements has suggested quite strongly their limited effect in either rendering the police more locally responsive, or serving as a forum for critical public discussion of policing issues (Morgan 1989; 1992; Fyfe 1992; Mitchell 1992). The agendas of such committees have tended in practice to be constructed by the police themselves; and they are most often attended by police middle

9 The recent white paper on police reform in England and Wales (Home Office 1993: 26) proposes in this regard to provide the Home Secretary with the additional power to cash limit local police budgets.

10 This dominance has recently been given judicial backing by the English Court of Appeal in *R v. Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte Northumbria Police Authority* (1988) 2 W.L.R. 590, where it was held that local authorities had no power to challenge chief constables decisions where he secures support of the Home Secretary. Commenting on the case, Reiner (1992a: 240) suggests that it 'seems to underline the impotence of local police authorities vis a vis the other two legs of the tripartite structure of police governance, making them a fig leaf of local influence in a highly centralised, de facto national structure.'

11 Aside from unifying policing policy across forces, the chief concern of the Home Office circulars in recent years has been to secure increased effectiveness in the delivery of policing services. To this substantive end, both the Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary have seen their role in the supervision of policing intensify since the early 1980s. The prime effect of such changes has been to shift deliberation about police accountability away from concerns about democracy towards a more managerial focus on 'value for money', one consequence of which has been that the police's critics among politicians are currently more likely to be found on the right rather than the left of the party political spectrum. This focus on managerial questions has culminated in the recent publication of the enquiry into police responsibilities and rewards commissioned by the Conservative government (Sheehy 1993), a report that has attracted considerable criticism among police officers of all ranks.

12 In this regard, the recent white paper on police reform (Home Office 1993: 20) ostensibly appears to enhance the role of local police authorities by suggesting that they 'act on behalf of local people as the "customer" of the service which the police provides', and initiate - after a process of consultation - the development of costed 'local policing plans'. However, these proposals leave the doctrine of 'constabulary independence' intact, and require police authorities to act within a central policy framework laid down by the Home Secretary.

13 These were established on a national statutory basis (in England and Wales, though not Scotland) by the s. 106 *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984*, following the recommendations of the Scarman Report into the Brixton disorders of 1981 (Scarman 1982).

14 Some academic commentators saw the advent of such arrangements as a means to secure a more responsive local police force (Savage 1984). Their critics, by contrast, contended that they were introduced to forestall demands for greater democratic accountability and that 'at the end of the day (they) leave policy-making exactly where it was to begin with, firmly in the hands of the police themselves' (Lea and Young 1984: 254).

management, rather than officers with experiential knowledge of particular localities. In terms of public involvement, they have predominantly served as a vehicle for the concerns of the local 'good and the great', rather than eliciting the views of those groups - such as young people - who constitute the 'routinely policed' (Jefferson 1990).¹⁵ Thus Morgan (1992: 179) - in an overview of his extended research on local consultative committees - concludes:

The failure to attract widespread public participation, and the fact that P.C.C. members are disproportionately law-abiding (at least as far as having criminal convictions is concerned) male, middle class and middle-aged, leads us to doubt their ability to represent the different views about policing to be found in the community.

It is in the relative absence of a strong formal democratic structure that the informal mechanisms for shaping local policies and practices come to assume a distended force. Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987: 21-2) point out that individuals and groups engage with the police through a whole range of 'contacting roles'. They may for example experience contact with the police as victims, suspects or witnesses; they might also do so as representatives of particular community organisations or governmental institutions. Such contacts also occasion - depending on their circumstances and subject matter - varying degrees of conflict or reciprocity. More broadly, different social groups engage in such encounters with contrasting amounts of what Bourdieu (1989; 1991) terms 'symbolic power' - that is, a varying capacity to articulate their claims with the appropriate language and disposition.

The significance of this confluence of situational roles and unequal distribution of symbolic power, concerns its impact upon the informal 'democratic' processes through which different constituencies influence police practice. In this context, young people can be particularly disadvantaged: in the first place, they most frequently encounter the police in roles that both symbolise 'trouble' and are subject to contention (for instance, being 'moved on' from street corners and other public places). Conversely, they least often come into contact with officers in situations that occasion reciprocity and build trust.¹⁶ Young people also lack the 'political clout' that may enable other social groups to impress upon the police their particular version of local social order, and are conceived among the groups who are least likely to complain formally about police actions towards them - thereby

15 These research findings take on an added importance in the light of the Conservative government's recent proposal that such committees form a central plank (along with public opinion surveys) of the consultation process that is to precede the formulation of 'local policing plans' (Home Office 1993: 20).

16 For example, the little research that exists on youth victimisation suggests that young people rarely use a police service as victims of crime, and that youth victimisation is accorded a fairly low place on policing agendas (Anderson et al. 1990b: chs. 2 and 5; Morgan and Zedner 1992a).

rendering them unable to figure prominently among the constituencies that police officer's informally take account of in resolving disputatious situations.

A number of thematic observations can be made regarding the constituent elements of the democratic structure. The principal limitation upon any strong form of democratic influence over the formulation of policing policy is the doctrine of 'constabulary independence'. This has the effect of exempting police decision-making from formal external control - a circumstance that is justified on the grounds that such decisions are best left to the 'professional' judgement of police officers (Oliver 1987). The cogency of such justifications depends too a great extent on viewing policing decisions as matters of either managerial or practical competence, requiring the exercise of an essentially 'technical' judgement (Ericson and Shearing 1986). By contrast, I contend strongly that both chief and operational officers are in different ways engaged in a process of political decision-making, both in the sense that they set priorities for the distribution of a particular public good, and in so far as such decisions impact upon the ordering of social relations in significant ways. Viewed from this interpretive standpoint, it becomes problematic for policing decisions to be vested in a public official subject to such weak lines of democratic accountability. As Reiner (1992a: 240; italics in original) puts it: 'There are no valid constitutional or historical grounds *in principle* for exempting the police from control by democratically elected authorities. Such claims have long been definitively demolished.'

The further consequence of 'constabulary independence' is that it licenses mechanisms for eliciting public consent about policing matters that rest upon a conception of what Barber (1984) calls 'thin democracy'. Such arrangements reflect in this regard 'a frightened kind of politics' (Phillips 1991: 15), rooted in a liberal philosophy oriented to preventing the abuse of police power through retrospective regulation, rather than engaging the widest possible range of voices in the proactive formulation of public policy agendas (Barber 1989; Benhabib 1992: ch. 3). The resulting paucity of institutional arrangements through which various 'publics' can voice their claims about policing, means that existent practices rest at best upon what Habermas (1984) terms a 'normatively secured consensus' (based upon conventional, prereflexive and taken-for-granted assumptions about means and ends); a position he contrasts with the counterfactual ideal of a 'communicatively achieved consensus', determined by an explicit and reflexive agreement arrived at through unconstrained discussion under conditions of freedom, equality and fairness.

The 'thin' character of the present democratic structure is both problematic in terms of democratic legitimacy, and of some consequence for the character of policing policy and

practice. In terms of the former, it means that the *consent* that is so central to the British policing tradition tends in practice to be assumed and empty of genuine substantive content, rather than the articulated product of reflexive public deliberation. While this effects the nature of democratic citizenship across the polity as a whole, it has a particular impact upon the policing of those social groups excluded from the limited mechanisms for effecting policing practice that do presently pertain. Prominent among such (marginalised) groups are young people - being both formally excluded by reason of age from the electoral process, and lacking the symbolic power necessary to impact upon local decision-making procedures in other ways (both formal and informal). The chief consequence of this is that young people's experiences of crime and policing remain largely absent from policing and crime prevention agendas.¹⁷

The final mechanism of control it is necessary to address is the *work structure*. An important strand of police sociology characterises the police organisation in terms of an opposition between two internal cultures - a 'management culture' concerned with police legitimacy on a system-wide basis, and a more pragmatic and parochial 'street culture' oriented to getting the job done with the minimum degree of fuss (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni 1983; Holdaway 1983: ch. 11; cf. Walker 1991a: ch 2). Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987: 18-20) persuasively contend that this opposition rests upon a largely un-researched assertion about the dispositions and practices of senior police management. Drawing on their research in an English metropolitan force, they delineate a more holistic view of the work structure consisting of two constituent parts:

an 'organisational' one - referring to the vertical dimension of rules, policies, approved procedures, command and control - and an 'occupational' one, referring to the horizontal dimension of the norms and practices of colleague groups. (ibid: 19)¹⁸

17 Though laudable in intent, and expressive of a notable shift in the professional ideology of senior police officers, the contemporary vogue for 'consumerist' notions of 'opening up the service' (Woodcock 1991; cf. Hirst 1991; Butler 1992; Wallace 1992) seems set merely to exacerbate these tendencies. For they remain the product of a managerially bounded mode of thought that manifests at least three related and significant aporias: (i) official police discourse on these matters veers between viewing the 'public' as an undifferentiated mass, and conceiving them as atomised 'consumers' of a police service. In both cases, current concerns pay little attention to the collective experiences and demands of different social groups, or to the significant inequalities of power that pertain between different policing constituencies. In this sense, they are largely oriented to responding to overt individual demand for policing services, rather than identifying hidden collective experiences and need; (ii) 'consumerism' tends to posit policing as an unproblematic and clearly defined product that is consumed by the public, rather than an essentially-contested service whose role is itself in need of public deliberation; (iii) in so far as they are concerned to elicit public demand without effecting any change in either the institutions or principles of police governance, 'consumerist' agendas are firmly located in the realm of managerial rather than democratic accountability. In particular, the current preoccupation with 'listening to the public' make conspicuously little mention of how the conflicting demands of different constituencies (and the police) are to be resolved (cf. Cooper 1993).

18 The virtue of this conceptualisation is that it permits empirical enquiry into identifying the circumstances in which managerial and peer group mechanisms are likely to constitute effective regulatory controls - one that is able to advance without assuming the two processes to be in perpetual and all-encompassing conflict.

Along the 'organisational' dimension of the work structure, such controls might include internal policy directives and disciplinary procedures, as well as managerial efforts to translate external policy proposals into force policy and monitor its implementation. Grimshaw and Jefferson's substantive research (to date the only systematic account of police policy-making in Britain) found that formal policy - in the sense of 'an authoritative statement signifying a settled practice' (ibid: 204) - was either absent or so ambiguous as to be effectively so. Their analysis of such a circumstance supports the contention of earlier research on the Metropolitan police that the policy vacuum generated by the lack of authoritative policy guidance is 'filled by the preoccupations, perceptions and prejudices that develop among groups of constables and sergeants in response to the people and the problems they have to deal with' (Smith and Gray 1983: 336).

The 'occupational' component of the work structure - the 'subcultural' norms and practices of rank and file police officers - constitutes one of the most thoroughly investigated facets of the police organisation.¹⁹ Drawing chiefly upon the theoretical resources of symbolic interactionism and other interpretive sociologies, a significant tradition of police sociology has documented how police officers construct - and orally reproduce (Shearing and Ericson 1992) - a series of informal 'recipe rules' (Manning 1977: 142-5) that enable them to cope with shared routine problems: most prominently, the threat of unpredictable violence, the need to maintain authority and the requirement to obtain results (Skolnick 1975: ch. 3).²⁰ Yet despite its grounding in detailed ethnography, such research has 'across studies and through time' evidenced an occupational culture in which 'deviance, the cover-up, secrecy, colleague loyalty, mistrust of outsiders, cynicism and violence recur as characteristics - to which are opposed 'due-process', senior officers and the public' (Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987: 8).

Much of the research on police culture has emphasised how the working norms and practices of police officers are able to exercise a determining influence over the enactment of police discretion. It has further suggested that the autonomy of an officer's working environment and the difficulties (if not impossibility) of direct supervision serve to undermine any efforts at either external (democratic) or internal (managerial) regulation. Thus, in contrast to what is viewed as the imaginary panacea of reforms aimed at realising

19 Some of the most important contributions to this tradition include: Westley (1970) ; Cain (1973); Skolnick (1975); Manning (1977); Punch (1979); Baldwin and Kinsey (1982); Holdaway (1983); Brewer with Magee (1991); Young (1991). For an excellent review of the (now) huge literature on police culture see, Reiner (1992a: ch. 3).

20 Police culture and its effects has proved a popular research object for those with a micro-sociological bent. Such research is premised on the contention that society cannot be grasped as a totality, but is constituted through the multiplicity of everyday encounters that agents reflexively interpret and negotiate on a routine basis (Schutz 1967; Garfinkel 1967; Rock 1979). Not surprisingly, this tradition of enquiry is dominated by small-scale participant observation studies of such interactions and their constitutive role.

greater democratic accountability, 'subculturalists' emphasise the importance of changing the norms and practices of the occupational culture:

What has to be achieved is the incorporation within the operative police sub-culture of working procedures and norms which embody the universalistic respect for the rights even of weak or unpopular minorities. (Reiner 1992a: 216)

While 'subculturalist' research has documented in immense detail the adverse influence of the occupational culture over police practice, its insights at times lapse into a series of undifferentiated generalisations about the substantive character of police culture. In the first place, it tends towards a reification of police culture by presenting it as a kind of institutional universal that is invariant across time and place; wholeheartedly opposed to due-process and the legal rights of unpopular groups, and an obstacle to any enlightened police reform. Thus although particular studies have distinguished a number of distinct subject positions among police officers (Muir 1977; Shearing 1981a), research on police culture has not on the whole been theoretically or substantively attuned to either the tensions and fissures within police culture (and the possibilities for change existing therein); variances between rank and file cultures in different geographical locations, or changes in police occupational dispositions and practices over time (cf. Dixon 1992). Furthermore, though 'subculturalist' enquiry takes proper heed of the problems inherent in regulating police work (and of effecting reform upon a recalcitrant workforce), it tends at times to suggest that the influence of police culture is unimpeachable, and in so doing, has accorded insufficient attention to the relationship between the content of police culture; the external and hierarchical pressures acting upon police officers, and the relative strength of other potential forms of institutional regulation.²¹

Thus in the context of police-youth relations, while 'subculturalists' have rightly focussed research attention on police culture, and emphasised the effects on the policing of youth of the dispositions and practices of rank and file officers, they have largely forgotten that policing practices develop in the *absence* of some controls as much as in the presence of others. For the purposes of the enquiry at hand therefore, I propose to recast the substantive insights of 'subculturalist' research on police culture within a more 'structuralist' frame of reference. In making some meaningful sense of the interviews with police officers, such a framework transcends the limitations of 'subculturalist' research by (i) exploring how external and managerial pressures (most prominently, to 'get results')

21 For example, while Wilson's (1968: 7; italics in original) contention that - 'the police department has that special property....that within it discretion increases as one moves down the hierarchy' - is often quoted in support of the 'subculturalist' thesis on the autonomy of police culture; it is less often noted that the chief lesson of Wilson's study is that different operational (or management) styles of policing are able to effect the character of police culture and its influence over police discretion.

shape the character of police culture, and developing an appreciation of the ways in which such pressures are apprehended and experienced by officers; (ii) securing an interpretation of the dispositions and practices of police officers in terms of their operation within both a permissive legal structure, and a formal democratic structure that provides few mechanisms through which the competing claims of different social groups (including young people) can be entered into the formulation of policing policy and practice.

Police Culture and the Youth Question

If you are to keep down the level of public objection to your policies and practices, you have to make sure you do not treat the organised working class and the vocal middle class in quite the same way as you do the 'mindless hooligan'. (Fielding 1990: 1-2)

'Subculturalist' writing on policing has been much concerned to explore how police officers develop a 'them and us' disposition towards a public viewed as indifferent to their plight.²² Such police antipathy, it is contended, has both an instrumental and ideological aspect: on the one hand, it is the product of the fact that officers are required to act as impersonal symbols of authority - a role that necessitates them retaining a certain 'distance' from members of the public, both in and out of work.²³ It is also a constituent part of a rank and file professional ideology that conceives of the police as a 'thin blue line', engaged in an isolated and thankless endeavour to keep social chaos at bay. From an occupational standpoint displaying a strong attachment to an absolute and binary moral code, society is often cynically apprehended as under constant threat - both from an eclipse in moral standards, and from a public impervious to the spiral of decline.

The idea that officers view the public with uniform antipathy tends however to posit the police as autonomous from any external public influence. In this regard, 'subculturalist' interpretations evince two related shortcomings: in the first place, they disconnect the dispositions and routine practices of police officers from the asymmetries of power pertaining within the wider social realm, thereby rendering them unable to explore fully the place of policing practices in enacting the process of social reproduction. More particularly, the 'public as enemy' metaphor draws attention away from understanding some of the important distinctions officers make between different individuals and social groups. For as Shearing notes:

22 For the United States see, Westley (1970: ch. 2), and Skolnick (1975: ch. 3). For evidence of related dispositions within the British police see, Cain (1973); Reiner (1978: ch. 11), and Holdaway (1983: ch. 6).

23 Such studied distance is frequently reciprocated by members of the (even 'respectable' middle class) public, who reserve for police officers the slightly grudging recognition accorded to all those who undertake society's 'dirty jobs'.

a fundamental distinction is made by the police between the people they serve, and the troublemakers they control in the course of providing their service - that is, between the people they do for things *for* and those they do things *to*. (1981b: 285; italics in original)

The fundamental substantive distinction forged within police culture is between 'respectables' and 'roughs'. The former term within this occupational typology signifies those social groups apprehended as supportive of the police and the social order they uphold. As the dominant classification, it functions as the referent against which various categories of 'rough' are identified.²⁴ In formal terms, these categories - together with the more particular subdivisions officers generate (Reiner 1992a: 115-21) - take their cue from broader social divisions and inequalities, and mediate them through the occupational experiences of police officers. As Reiner (1992a: 117) notes: 'they are police relevant categories, generated by their power to cause problems, and their congruency to the police value system.'

On the 'rough' side of this binary divide, it has been suggested that police culture conceives of some of its audiences as their 'property'. In formulating this conception, Lee (1981: 53-4) contends that a social group becomes 'police property' when 'the dominant powers of society (in the economy, polity etc.) leave the problems of social control of that category to the police.' This category is employed by Lee as a way of making some meaningful sense of the experience of those marginalised social groups - such as prostitutes, vagrants, blacks and gays - whose social control the 'respectable' middle and working classes are content to 'leave' to the police. With regard to such groups, he argues, the police undertake a largely 'order maintenance' function, oriented to routine control and exclusion and permissively invoking the law as a means to this end.

Though the concept of 'police property' is useful in drawing attention to problems and experiences shared across marginalised social groups, it remains - as currently formulated - somewhat crude and undifferentiated.²⁵ If it is to enhance understanding of the circumstances of specific social groups it requires more detailed elaboration. With regard to young people, the concept is in particular need of refinement, most obviously because - for the vast majority of contemporary youth, situated within the confines of the familial

24 As Manning (1977: 237) points out: 'there are no terms for 'respectables' perhaps because they are the implicit background against which the other types are drawn.' By contrast, research on police culture has identified a whole range of terms denoting 'roughs'. Examples include: 'slags' (Smith and Gray 1983); 'scum' (Shearing 1981b); 'gougers' (Brewer with Magee 1991: ch. 3.), and 'assholes' (Van Maanen 1978).

25 In particular, Lee's formulation (i) collapses the distinction between those groups whose practices are subject to specific modes of legal regulation (such as vagrants and prostitutes), and those rendered the subject of police attention because of a powerlessness stemming from broader processes of social exclusion (such as blacks and gays); (ii) fails to specify with any precision the social and situational conditions in which different individuals and groups may (or may not) come to be apprehended as the 'property' of the police.

relations, formal education and employment - the police do not constitute a primary agency of social regulation.

In the context of young people's use of public space however, the notion of 'police property' remains of analytical value and worthy - in a qualified form - of retention. For it is in such locations - local streets, city centres, and others public sites of relative autonomy - that young people and the police most commonly encounter one another.²⁶ I want in this section, therefore, to draw from existing sociological literature on policing a number of inferences that may assist comprehension of the different ways in which young people are constituted as 'police property' within the rank and file culture of police officers. In particular, I am concerned to explore how broader social representations of 'youth' are mediated with occupational experience to define and position young people in discrete ways. The analysis is organised under two thematic heads:

- (i) an occupationally contextualised account of the meanings that 'youth' is accorded within police culture;
- (ii) an elaboration of the effects of such representations on police-youth relations in public space.

(i) The Meanings of Youth as 'Police Property'

Objective relations of power tend to reproduce themselves in relations of symbolic power. In the symbolic struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly over legitimate naming, agents put into action the symbolic capital they have acquired in previous struggles and which may be juridically guaranteed. (Bourdieu 1989: 21)

In according occupationally relevant meanings to the the category of 'youth', police officers are able to draw upon a number of wider social representations. Dominant among such images is the comprehension that young people lack social maturity and responsibility. Transposed into the fields of crime and policing, this understanding of the youth question takes the form of two contrasting - though ultimately complementary - conceptions: namely, youth as 'trouble' and youth as 'vulnerable'. The first of these concentrates attention on the ways in which young people - free from the burdens of 'adult' responsibility - occasion problems for others, whether they be teachers, local residents or police officers themselves. Positioned on the 'rough' side of the police binary moral divide, young people are defined in terms of the characteristics that distinguish them from

²⁶ Alongside their exclusion from economic and social resources, a dependence on the unstructured use of public places is one of the predicaments that unite the otherwise disparate social groups who may properly be described as 'police property' (Stinchcombe 1969).

'respectable' publics. For while the latter tend to be accorded rationality, maturity and normality, young people and other marginalised social groups denote the polar opposite of such canons of respectability. In this regard, dispositions dominated by images of 'trouble' inform routine policing practices oriented to control and exclusion.

The second conception again emphasises the immaturity of youth, but focuses this time on young people's resulting vulnerability, and their need for (moral) protection both from themselves and others. The significance of a notion of 'vulnerability' is that it distinguishes young people in important ways from other social groups designated as 'police property'. For the inexperience of youth - and the capacity for moral development it implies - qualifies the orientation to exclusion that ordinarily accompanies economic and social marginalisation.²⁷ It provides the police with an (often paternalistic) impulse to pedagogy and inclusion that acts as a counterweight to those of exclusion and control - a process that manifests itself both in formal initiatives such as police-school liaison schemes, as well as in the informal pedagogy that so frequently accompanies the routine policing of young people's use of public space.

These connected representations do not however operate as free-floating ideologies, directly and one-dimensionally shaping the policing of youth. Rather, they can only properly be understood in the context of the working environment in which they are mobilised. Their practical force lies both in the extent to which they are accorded a space within which to operate (by, for example, weak legal and democratic structures), but also in terms of how they mesh with the concrete organisational concerns of police officers. For as Gelsthorpe (1986: 142) remarks with regard to police conceptions of teenage girls, it is impossible in discrete operational fields to disentangle the ideological and organisational determinants of policing practice:

'Sexist ideology' is not a discrete phenomenon, but a mixture of personal views, professional policies and practices which are continually 'shaped' by the exigencies of practice and organisational constraints. Indeed, it is impossible to distinguish between professional ideology, organisational expediency and sentiment.

The occupational disposition most pertinent to the meanings of 'police property', concerns the well-documented point that police officers - at all levels of the organisational hierarchy - lay claim to a 'we know best' expertise with regard to questions of 'law and order' (Ericson 1982: ch. 3; Holdaway 1983: ch. 6; Fielding and Fielding 1991). Drawing upon their practical experience of aspects of the social world to which outsiders have little or no

²⁷ Young people may consequently represent one social group for whom police officers at least partially suspend their occupational pessimism (cf. Vick 1981).

access, police officers evince a strongly instrumental orientation to the constituencies they police. Irrespective of whether they are classified as 'rough' or 'respectable', the public are deemed ignorant of crime and policing issues - matters over which the police view themselves as having a monopoly of experience and knowledge. Furthermore, given their enduring strength as a symbolically powerful social institution, and their privileged access to national and local communications media, the police are institutionally empowered (and frequently willing) to 'legitimately name' social groups and problems, and inscribe them with particular definitions and meanings.²⁸

In relation to young people, this 'institutional capacity to name' has a twofold significance. In the first place, it enables the police to offer diagnoses of and prognoses for contemporary youth, and delineate fairly powerful (though rarely uncontested) terms of reference for professional and public discourse on crime and the youth question (cf. Hall et al. 1978: chs. 1-3). In so doing, the police (if only implicitly) make a claim to 'know' the experiences and concerns of young people and represent that knowledge to others.²⁹ Within the context of arrangements for securing public consent that are largely unable to elicit the concerns of young people, police assertions of expertise about youth crime are rendered both partial and - to the extent they make a totalising claim - ideological.³⁰ This does not necessarily however distil their practical effects - among the most prominent of which are to construct young people as a problem to be analysed and solved (rather than as citizens with experiences and demands to voice), and to reproduce the category of 'youth' as one whose dominant meanings imply marginalised silence.

In a more concrete capacity, such images of youth (denoting them, largely, as hostile and anti-authority) are able to occupy the space created by a 'thin' democratic structure. In these circumstances, such depictions provide police officer's with a (self-fulfilling) occupational justification for two related phenomenon: in the first place, they legitimate the absence of democratic communication by leaving unchallenged images that apprehend young people as both unwilling to communicate, and having nothing meaningful to contribute to a mutual dialogue on policing matters. Secondly, they serve to naturalise

28 Despite the explosion of sociological interest in policing during the last two to three decades, little sustained theoretical or substantive attention has yet been accorded to analysing the symbolic power of the police to diagnose crime problems and set the terms of reference for ensuing public discussion. Neither has much consideration been directed towards exploring both the practical and broader social significance of the police-centred character of much public discourse about crime. In this sense, police sociology cries out for an account of the police conceived of as a social institution whose symbolic power says much about the society within which it operates (cf. in relation to punishment, Garland 1990).

29 This aspect of the analysis draws much of its inspiration from Edward Said's *Orientalism* - a brilliant account of the ways in which the Orient comes to be 'known' within Western scholastic disciplines (Said 1978; cf. Smith 1988).

30 In the sense of being part of a system of meaning that sustains social relations of domination (Thompson 1984; 1990: chs. 1-2).

police-youth relations that presently amount to little more than a series of sporadic and often fractious encounters; situations, characterised by the 'paradox of face' (Muir 1977: ch. 7) and serving only to cement further the largely negative dispositions of either side.³¹

Far from tempering such apprehensions, the occupational impulse to education tends at present merely to compound them. For the generic instrumental dispositions of rank and file officers infuse present practices with an aspiration to instruct, rather than a desire for communication conceived of as a mutual learning process.³² When this 'we know best' instrumentalism is reinforced by a paternalist orientation to youth, the police come to view existent mechanisms for dialogue (such as schools-liaison schemes and cognate community involvement initiatives) as opportunities for the one-way transmission of 'good advice'.³³ In this regard, present processes of formal and informal pedagogy are not enacted as exercises for ascertaining and taking seriously the experiences and claims of young people, but are necessary precisely because young people are deemed to lack the capacities required to participate in decision-making processes.³⁴

(ii) The Effects of Youth as 'Police Property'

If the statistical involvement of youth in crime provides the justification for police attention to them, it would appear to be the *image* of 'deviant' youth as *potential* trouble, or symbolic threat to authority, that structures much of police thinking and practice in this area. (Brogden et al. 1988: 103; italics in original)

One of the chief occupational dispositions within which social representations of 'youth' are enmeshed is the requirement for police officers to develop an experientially-grounded knowledge of the people and places they (and importantly only they) are empowered to regulate (Rubinstein 1973: ch. 4; Ericson 1982; Holdaway 1983: ch. 4). As a means of coping with routine problems and danger, police officers develop among themselves interpretive grids of particular localities. These grids - often built around notions of relative

31 Said (1978: 46) analogously describes how Orientalist dispositions serve to polarise the distinction between Occident and Orient, and thereby reduce the possibility of productive dialogue between the different cultures and traditions. Said - an exiled Palestinian living in the United States - also notes that the chief consequence of such polarisation is to reinforce the entrenched power of the dominant.

32 This seems to me to be one of the central - though to date untheorised - lessons of police consultative committees.

33 It is of course cognitively difficult - if not impossible - to learn from those one exists in a paternalistic relationship with. In this sense, Said (1978: 33-4) notes how paternalism operates with a split reference; it ostensibly serves the interests of the groups it benevolently speaks on behalf of, while in effect sustaining the power and authority of the institution exercising it.

34 In more general terms, these tendencies bespeak a besieged occupational mentality that views genuine dialogue with different publics both as threatening and antithetical - an anxiety Young (1991: 15) aptly summarises as follows: 'reflexivity in any dogmatic culture always presents the possibility that the whole scheme of things will simply fall to pieces.'

suspiciousness³⁵ - enable officers to situate individuals and groups in terms of the extent and ways in which they (might) impact upon routine workloads. It is within this context that the occupational concerns of police officers and wider social representations of youth have significant effects, in so far as the confluence of the two predisposes police officers to young people's use of public space in discrete ways.

In terms of their contact with crime, young people occupy a prominent and rather structured place in a police officer's everyday workload. For the most part, young people become a routine occupational concern for police officer's in relation to either an involvement in technical acts of delinquency (which, in terms of the minor commission of street crime, constitutes a predominantly youthful phenomenon), or with regard to problems arising from the unstructured use of public places (Dobash et al. 1987; Anderson et al. 1990b: ch. 5). By contrast, the police are far less often concerned with young people requiring a service as victims of crime; and neither - given the low esteem community policing is held in within the occupational culture - are most officers likely to encounter young people on a regular basis in situations oriented to building and sustaining trust. In a rank and file culture that privileges experientially-based 'common sense' knowledge, these patterns of contact are likely to be of some significance.

Principal among these effects maybe the mundane reinforcement such patterns have upon the meanings officers attach to young people's use of public space. For it is in the context of an occupational requirement to maintain order on their 'patch' that an image of youth as 'trouble' assumes a paramount importance (James and Polk 1989). For a number of reasons, young people - especially when 'hanging around' the streets in groups - make a claim to use public space in ways deemed incongruous with what Sacks (1972) terms the 'normal ecology' of local social ordering.³⁶ In terms of the present enquiry, two such consequences ought to be noted: first, in so far as young people and police officers develop cultural practices (oriented, for example, to alleviating the boredom of everyday routines) informed by divergent conceptions of the legitimate use of public space, such usage is predominantly conceived of by officers as a (symbolic) threat to their capacity to control the locality. Secondly, to the extent that officer's seek to secure local ordering with a minimum amount of 'fuss', they are also likely to view young people's use of public space or liable

35 In addition to being formally trained to be suspicious (Powis 1977), police officers acquire a more grounded suspiciousness - based upon their knowledge of particular locales - that assists them in coping with the contingencies of their work (Skolnick 1975: ch. 3; Brewer with Magee 1991: ch. 3).

36 In a social context in which mundane urban existence is structured around either autonomous private spaces, or the functional and consumption-oriented use of public space (Worpole 1992), an undirected dependence upon the streets and other public places (such as shopping centres) is likely to run counter to operative conceptions of 'order'.

to occasion occupational trouble for them - in the form, for example, of complaints from other public audiences.³⁷

The overall practical effect of social representations of 'youth' is to sensitize the police to particular meanings of young people's use of public space, while confining others to the periphery. In this regard, the prominence of notions of 'trouble' among the former says as much about the symbolic threat that young people pose to dominant comprehensions of local social order, as it does the persistence and seriousness of juvenile crime. For when set against the weight of evidence suggesting the relatively trivial and ephemeral character of much youthful disorder, current police dispositions can be said to result in the *over-control* of young people's use of public places.³⁸ Conversely, the peripheral concern of the police with the arguably more serious problems young people face from the attendant risks of public space, suggest that the current occupational impulse towards routine control renders young people *under-protected* as victims of crime (Anderson et al. 1990b: chs. 2 and 5).

The situational importance of the classification of youth as 'police property' concerns its capacity to transcend the boundaries of discrete policing encounters.³⁹ For it equips officers with a series of routine dispositions that - when coupled with an occupational requirement to 'take charge' of the encounter - structure police dealings with their divergent audiences.⁴⁰ Individuals and groups do not present themselves to the police in

37 It should be noted that routine policing concern with young people is by no means a recent development; rather, the collective use of public space by young people became an object of 'respectable' concern around the time the police were constituted to deal with urban disorder. From the control of street-selling in the nineteenth century, through to the more symbolic struggles of the present day, the police have been centrally concerned with the regulation of marginalised and 'unproductive' youth. Documenting this changing relation has been one of the main themes of 'revisionist' police history: see in particular, Silver (1967); Storch (1975); Cohen (1979), and Brogden and Brogden (1984).

38 Much criminological theorising and research on juvenile crime has emphasised its transient and ephemeral character: see among others Matza (1990: ch. 2); Parker (1974); Muncie (1984: ch. 2); Anderson et al. (1990b: ch. 5), and Rutherford (1992).

39 In this regard, my approach differs in significant respects from that tradition of police research which emphasises the situational determinants of police-public encounters (cf. Piliavin and Briar 1964; Bittner 1967; Wirthman and Piliavin 1967; Hudson 1970; Sykes and Clark 1975; Van Maanen 1978, and Smith and Visser 1981). At its most radically situational, this tradition maintains that policing can only be understood by apprehending how police officers deal with concrete exigencies. For example, Fielding (1988: 46-7) argues that both structural and subcultural explanations of police work offer limited insight into police decision-making, and that analysis must be sensitive to the idiosyncratic dynamics of discrete incidents. Thus: 'choices are the complex and shifting reflections of the officer's momentary resolution of situational demands, situated knowledge of locale, situated knowledge of pertinent formal and informal organisational requirements, knowledge of the law and its application, experience and biography.' While this approach properly recognises that images of (for example) youth have to be reenacted in the context of situational encounters, it tends towards the empiricist conclusion that the only determinants of police practice are those that are demonstrably present. In so doing, it draws attention away from understanding the effects of absent mechanisms of control (such as strong legal and democratic structures), and renders itself unable to make sense of the way in which the dynamics of police-youth encounters are always already shaped by the pre-constitution of youth as police 'property'.

40 In entering an encounter, officer's expose their legal and symbolic authority to potential challenge. The officer's consequent objective is to 'take charge' of the situation and resolve any dispute with the minimal degree of situational fuss and occupational comeback - a task that is eased considerably if the parties recognise (or at

an unmediated fashion as victims, offenders or witnesses. Rather, they appear in these roles accompanied by a set of cultural attributes - drawn from a wider social register and situationally ascribed to them by the police. In contexts where police culture is a significant determinant of policing practice, such ascriptions are of some consequence.

In the field of police-youth relations, at least three related situational effects of existent dispositions can be noted. At the most general level, the apprehension of youth in public places as 'police property' serves in important ways to circumscribe the concrete negotiating scope of the respective parties. The possible roles available to police officers and young people do not just 'emerge within the interaction' (cf. Van Maanen 1978: 224) but are to a large extent 'fixed' in advance. In this sense, the combination of organisational concerns and wider social representations give significant shape and meaning to police-youth interactions both prior to and during their enactment:

Communication is possible in practice only when accompanied by a practical spotting of cues which, in enabling speakers to situate others in the hierarchies of age, wealth, power and culture, guides them unwittingly towards the type of exchange best suited in form and content to the objective situation between the interacting individuals....The whole content of the communication (and not just the language used) is unconsciously modified by the structure of the relationship between the speakers. (Bourdieu 1977: 26)

The second consequence of present institutional arrangements and power relations concerns the extent to which they become inscribed within - and reproduced by - the very language of the interaction itself.⁴¹ By viewing police-youth encounters from this standpoint, it becomes possible to open up for substantive investigation the ways in which the situational authority of the speakers (and especially the police) depends not on what is said, but on the institutional support underpinning their capacity to say it. For in circumstances infused by marked asymmetries of power (and an absence of institutional sites for democratic communication), the persuasive authority of the language employed in police-youth interactions is rendered largely external to the words used, and becomes instead, a mere product of the force they imply.

least appear to recognise) the officer's authority. In this regard, 'respect is the most valuable resource available to the police' (Reiss and Bordua 1967: 47) - both in the positive sense that its presence helps steer the encounter towards a successful resolution, and in so far as its absence problematises the officer's claim to authority by throwing open the question: 'who's in charge?'

41 As Thompson (1984: 43) remarks (in a discussion of Bourdieu): 'there is no linguistic exchange, however insignificant or personal it may seem, which does not bear the traces of the social structure it helps to reproduce.' Much of the specific analysis presented here is drawn from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. However, while Bourdieu rightly emphasises the ways in which linguistic communication is shaped by social relations of domination, the cogency of his analysis is limited somewhat by the catch-all nature of the explanation. For his tendency to view all utterances (including, presumably, his own) as expressive of their institutional underpinnings, fails to take proper account of the independent persuasive force of language, and the consequent capacity of communication both to undermine existing relations of domination, and to serve as a force for institutional change. For these reasons Habermas, rather than Bourdieu, serves as the main theoretical influence upon the argument of this thesis.

The final situational effect of the social representation of young people as 'trouble' is that it shifts the informal burden of proof operating within police-youth encounters. For while it is always possible for the actions of any individual or group to temporarily render them 'rough' in police eyes (Piliavin and Briar 1964; Van Maanen 1978), the apprehension of youth as 'police property' routinely places the onus on young people to escape (through their words and deeds) an officer's prior dispositions.⁴² The respect required from all social groups takes on an added significance with regard to young people precisely because it is expected to be absent (the irony of this being, of course, that the police require most deference from those who are least likely to offer it). In this sense, an uncooperative attitude does not so much determine the outcome of the encounter (cf. Fielding 1988), as merely enact further symbolic violence to police authority from a social group whose presence on the streets has already been preconstituted as 'trouble'.

Policing and Youth Social Practices

The deliberations of this chapter have been oriented to elucidating a conceptual framework that is able to make some meaningful sense of the accounts generated in interviews with police officers. With this in mind, I want to connect this framework with the grid of youth social practices outlined in chapter two, and in so doing, explicate some of the substantive research questions that will be pursued in Part Two. I shall be generally concerned in this regard to explore how far the present arrangements for police accountability enable the dispositions of officers to determine the policing of various youth practices. More particularly, the ensuing analysis will examine the ways in which police officers apprehend such practices, and explore how they orient themselves to either their promotion or control.

In terms of the policing of *individual internal practices* involving utilitarian street crime, such a framework directs substantive research attention to the ways in which policing is oriented to their control. Such control can be enacted either instrumentally through routine police practice, or pedagogically by means of various community policing initiatives. Present deliberations also generate a focus upon the extent to which this orientation becomes more pronounced once such practices are no longer apprehended as part of 'growing up', and relocated in social registers of class and place. By contrast, existent representations of 'youth', and the police's relative lack of contact with young people as

42 A reverse process is arguably at work when young people require police assistance as victims. In this case, young people enter the encounter against a social and occupational understanding that rarely recognises them as legitimate victims. The informal onus of proof therefore shifts to young people to demonstrate that they deserve such a status (Morgan 1988; cf. Christie 1986).

victims of crime, mean that individual internal practices oriented to securing personal safety are likely to impinge far less on the understandings and priorities of police officers. To the extent that such matters are of concern however, the occupational impulse to instruct 'vulnerable' youth raises the question of how far officers seek to define the acceptable limits of such practices. In more general terms, present patterns of police-youth contact demand interpretation of the extent to which individual internal practices are a response to either the generic limits of policing in securing the safety of public space, or a more specific police failure to take seriously the issue of youth safety and victimisation.

The apprehension of youth as 'trouble' further prompts consideration of how far the policing of *collective internal practices* - such as groups of young people 'hanging around' - is organised largely around routine control. When coupled with the complementary conception of youth as 'vulnerable' it may even be that the collective use of public space constitutes a dimension of young people's existent social practices that police officers are concerned to dissolve (through either routine control, or ideological redefinition) into what are perceived as more legitimate pursuits. It is also pertinent in this context to explore the extent to which the routine control of collective social practices becomes more marked once the unstructured use of public space is no longer registered as a sign of youthful exuberance.

Dominant apprehensions of youth also engender reflection on the extent to which collective internal practices are conceived of among police officers largely in terms of the 'trouble' they may occasion for others. In this context, it is of some significance to examine the ways in which (i) the routine practices that flow from such dispositions render officers unable to comprehend the (collective) security provided by such practices (Anderson et al. 1990b: chs. 3 and 5); and (ii) the extent to which - in so far as this dimension of youth practices is appreciated - the strong individualist ethos of the institution means that officers fail to apprehend the *group* interests that collective routines and understandings accommodate.

In so far as utilitarian crime is 'successful' enough to be constituted as an *individual external practice*, policing attention is likely to become more strongly oriented to coercive control. However, the paternalistic impulse to inclusion noted above, prompts the question of whether police officers (additionally) seek to promote what they deem as legitimate variants of individual external practices - such as pursuing further education, or securing employment. The substantive enquiries that follow will consequently explore both the propositional content of officers' (moral) guidance; as well as analysing the extent to which

such admonition accords with the economic and social realities of young people's lives. It is further necessary in this regard to comprehend the dispositions of police officers towards those who are viewed as either not amenable to 'good advice', or else unwilling to heed police pedagogy.

These reflections also generate a more embracing question concerned with the policing effects of inclusive and marginalised youth transitions. It is possible in this regard to suggest that the 'over-protection' and 'under-control' associated with dominant conceptions of 'youth' undergoes partial dislocation and reconstitution as a result of the transition from full-time education (the term 'partial dislocation' indicating that a tension between 'control' and 'protection' pervades the policing of all social groups.) In particular, it becomes pertinent to ask whether those who secure conventionally successful economic transitions both escape the classifications associated with 'youth' and see the police recede in importance from their everyday lives; and conversely, to enquire as to whether those who make marginalising transitions are reconstituted as 'police property' in a fashion stripped of the qualifications accorded to youth, and subject to more intensive policing supervision?

In so far as the police are parasitic upon existent social relations (charged as they are with their maintenance), they are structurally unlikely to be at the forefront of *collective external practices* oriented to effecting radical institutional change.⁴³ While the police may at times be amenable to, or even prominent in initiating institutional practices with specific collective external dimensions (such as specialist domestic violence units), they have consistently resisted any attempt to bring about generic collective external practices oriented to transforming arrangements for rendering the police accountable. Indeed, it was argued above that senior police officers at least have tended to understand any effort to democratise the police largely in terms of a threat to the established doctrine of 'constabulary independence' (Reiner 1991a: ch. 11).

In the absence of such institutional arrangements for enacting democratic communication between the police and young people, the ensuing enquiry mobilises a methodology of interpretation composed of two related elements: in the first place, it examines the dispositions of police officers towards the possibility of communication with young people. Such analysis seeks to appreciate the propositional content of police accounts of this issue, and (creatively) reconstruct them in terms of both the more general occupational ideologies of which they are a part, and the institutional arrangements and

43 This is not to say that the police do not campaign for what they comprehend as external solutions to social problems. Since the 1970s, both the Police Federation and the Association of Chief Police Officers have been active in diagnosing social ills and advocating appropriate remedies (Reiner 1980).

social relations about which they attempt to make some practical sense. Secondly, the possibility of democratic communication serves more generally as a counterfactual standpoint from which to apprehend police dispositions towards youth. In this regard, the analysis seeks to situate police dispositions within both mechanisms of accountability that preclude such communication, and social relations characterised by marked asymmetries of power, so as to reflect upon the problems and misapprehensions such arrangements currently engender.

Part Two

The Practice of Communication

The chapter is organized around three main issues:

- (i) an identification of the dynamics of young people's experience of collective identity practices;
- (ii) a discussion of the effects of collective identity practices and assessment of ways for youth practice experts to respond for the production of personal and collective energy;
- (iii) an explanation of why the lack of young people's experience of crisis is commercialized by the police.

Chapter Four

YOUTH SOCIAL PRACTICES

The following four chapters are concerned to delineate a depth interpretation of the accounts generated in the interviews with young people and police officers. In this regard, the enquiry now shifts from a theoretical elaboration of the meanings and significance of democratic communication, towards a substantive exploration of the ways in which experiences and ideas regarding matters of crime and policing are communicated in practice during the course of interviews. Within this framework, the purpose of the present chapter is to analyse the accounts young people proffer of their various social practices, and apprehend their significance in terms of young people's use of public space.

An interesting and significant feature of these accounts concerns the extent to which they are constituted through a recent retrospective on young people's lives. Many of the narratives young people constructed during the interviews were practical reflections upon experiences of the preceding few years. Though the dividing line is by no means hard and fast, this chapter is concerned largely with such reflections. Thus, in addition to addressing the propositional content of young people's accounts and situating them in terms of existent institutional arrangements and social relations, the analysis endeavours to make sense of the fact that school-based experiences continue to occupy a prominent place in older teenager's practical apprehension of questions of crime and policing.

The chapter is organised around three related themes:

- (i) an interpretation of the meanings of young people's accounts of collective internal practices;
- (ii) a discussion of the effects of collective internal practices and assessment of how far youth practices operate as routines for the production of personal and collective safety;
- (iii) an explication of why so little of young people's experience of crime is communicated to the police.

Place, Football and Identity: The Meanings of Collective Internal Practices

Because they are so restricted to their neighbourhood or its immediate vicinity, (young people) may be the major producers and carriers of neighbourhood life: its local stereotypes, its named boundaries, its known hangouts, its assumed dangers and its informal groupings. (Suttles 1967: 38)

Local public space looms large in the lives of many young people and occupies a contradictory position within them. On the one hand, a reliance upon the unstructured use of public places is a product of an age-based exclusion from both autonomous private space and cultural resources of various kinds. On the other, they serve as a set of locations in which youthful identities can be constructed in relative autonomy from direct adult supervision. It is in this interpretive framework - as a response to the structured marginalisation of youth - that the accounts young people offer of their social practices must be situated:

IL: Why do young people spend so much time hanging around on the streets?

A: There's nothing else to do in Niddrie, except go round somebody else's hoose.

(21 year old female, Craigmillar)

IL: Why did you spend so much time on the streets?

A: Nowhere else to go. No money to go anywhere.

(18 year old female, Craigmillar)

IL: Why do you get groups of young people hanging about the Wimpy bar?

A: Coz there's probably nowhere about their area where they can hang about.

(20 year old male, Craigmillar)

Young people's accounts demonstrate that one of the most prominent means of responding to such exclusions is by 'hanging around' in groups in public places. In so far as it functions as a way of coping with shared marginalisation, this practice manifests marked collective internal dimensions. Such practices do not of course represent the only means by which young people cope with their predicament; nor do they occur in isolation from a host of other mundane routines centred upon family, education and leisure (failing to recognise this would be to re-admit the limitations of subcultural enquiry). To focus upon practices with collective internal dimensions is thus not to accord explanatory privilege to this facet of the grid, but merely to acknowledge that much of young people's use of public space is based upon a range of shared informal practices.¹

¹ It is appropriate at this juncture to post a qualification to the analysis that follows. Young people's use of public space cannot in reality be separated from their lives in the private sphere. For example, some youth social practices - such as watching television or playing computer games - are developed in private space and can be individual or collective (cf. Willis 1990). Access to public space is also conditioned by the amount of domestic labour that young people are expected to undertake, and previous research has consistently shown that such expectations fall heavily on young women (Griffin 1985: ch. 3; Hollands 1990: ch. 6). While an investigation of the private sphere lies beyond the scope of the present enquiry, it is important to note that the social practices

'Hanging around' in groups is best conceived as a series of connected practices and understandings existing at the level of what Giddens (1984: 41-5; 291-2; 327-34) terms 'practical consciousness'. The analytical significance of this concerns the requirement not to over-intellectualise such practices (thereby committing the 'scholastic fallacy'²). Youth social practices are not consciously thought out strategies for resolving concrete problems, but the product of a far more practically-oriented reflexive monitoring of events, occurring in such a way as to relate activity to those events. Young people grasp, in partial and contextualised ways, both the significance and dangers of public space, and the character of power and authority relations existing therein. The practices and understandings young people develop enable them to 'go on' with mundane social existence in ways that sustain a sense of 'ontological security' (Giddens 1991: ch. 2); in other words, they assist young people in appropriating the places they routinely use by reducing (both materially and cognitively) the risks and powerlessness associated with relations in public.

Practical consciousness is something that one thinks *with* rather than *about* (cf. Ricoeur 1981: 227), and in this sense, the skills and knowledge that constitute it function in ways akin to a 'second-nature' that is not easily articulated in a propositional form. As Giddens (1984: 291-2) remarks, 'such knowledge may be carried primarily in their practical activities or in discourse which is highly contextualised.' A significant indicator of this is that young people's accounts of their practices take a narrative form, couched in terms of concrete experiences and events, rather than abstracted reflections on such experience. The meanings of these grounded narrative accounts consequently require a creative reconstruction of meaning that seeks to elucidate both their prominent substantive themes and their existential and strategic importance in relation to young people's use of public space.

An important feature of collective internal practices is that they provide young people with a means of routinely passing the time - something that is seldom much fun if undertaken alone. Young people develop (mixed) male and female informal groups that enable them to explore public places in a mundane and unstructured manner.³ As one

young people employ in public space exist alongside their private pursuits and obligations. Public space may occupy a marginal place in the lives of some young people.

² Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 123) employs this term to refer to those approaches (he evidences rational choice theory) which 'put the mind of the scientist who conceptualizes practice in the place of the socially constituted practical sense of the agent.'

³ Though a number of the interviews suggest that young women can be marginalised within mixed groupings, especially when there with their male partners. As one twenty-one year old from Niddrie reflected, 'Well ken, I just used to sit at the church and watch them all mucking about; they were all muckin about and I was just sitting there.'

sixteen year old female put it discussing Leith Walk in Edinburgh: 'That's where everybody goes....to sit and talk, smoke ourselves to death, that's all we do.' In this regard, collectively 'hanging around' the streets often involves long periods of 'doing nothing' punctuated by outbreaks of sporadic and unpredictable excitement (cf. Corrigan 1976):

IL: When you say you hang around, whereabouts do you hang around?

A: Just go about in gangs walkin about the main streets, chinese takeaways an that. Chippies.

IL: Is it boring?

All: Yes.

IL: Why do you do it then?

A: Nothing else to do. (16/17 year old males, Gorebridge)

We used to stand along at the bridge. It was alright we used to get a laugh. Used to be stupid cerrying on, smoking, occasional weekend cerry oot, that was really it. Annoying the neighbours. (20 year old male, Craigmillar)

I did a stupid thing at Warrender Park Terrace. Me and my brothers put in a window with a stone. There was a big police investigation but I never got caught for that. We were smashing windows all the time....if you hit it on the top of it breaks the window. There was an old guy nearly had a heart attack. (16 year old male, Broughton) ⁴

A collective reliance upon public sites additionally enables young people to manage exclusion by imposing meaningful frameworks on the locality. 'Hanging around' the streets in groups is strongly associated with processes of defining and defending a sense of place, and an integral feature of such practices is the development of a shared informal understanding about what constitutes 'our area':

A: The Leith area is the bottom of Leith Walk, to ken where Balfour Street is.

B: Pilrig isnae in Leith. It goes right doon to ken Bonnington and it stops at the Anfield along at the harbour. And it'll go up to Trinity School.

IL: Who decides where the boundaries are?

C: It's just like they'll no walk into our boundary because we could be walkin about there.

A: We ken where Leith is, it goes away along past the docks.

B: This side of the Links is the rough side. (16/18 year old females, Leith)

Young people's dependence upon narrowly circumscribed areas of public space means they develop detailed practical knowledge of the locality that escapes many other social groups: though, of course, such knowledge is as much constituted by absences, local folklore and stereotypes as by routine experience (Smith 1986: 121-8; Anderson et al. 1990b: ch. 1). These 'cognitive maps' enable young people to embellish the physical structure of the city with a 'working' interpretation of its divisions and boundaries, and their place - spatially

⁴ The following editing marks are used throughout the interview text: (i) pause in, or interrupted, response; (ii) (...) material omitted; (iii) (*explanatory material inserted*).

and socially - within it (Lynch 1961; Suttles 1967; ch. 2).⁵ In relation to the use of public places, these connected practices and knowledge have both an existential and strategic significance for young people, according meaning to particular places and enabling them to regulate their routine spatial movement.

The existential identity provided by collective internal practices is built upon the material uses of the streets and a series of symbolic meanings denoting the importance of different areas: in Unger's (1987a) terms, the city for young people is 'made and imagined'. The significance of such practices is that they sustain (through, for example, the narration of stories about both the locality and other often unknown parts of the city) a purposeful identity premised upon a sense of 'belonging' both to an area and its informal youth groupings:

A: Number one is the Y.L.T. Young Leith Team, number one. They could take anybody.

IL: Do you know any of them?

All: Aye.

A: We're in the Y.L.T.

B: Have you no heard o the Y.L.T.?

IL: No.

B: Have yer no seen Y.L.T. written aboot?

IL: No.

A: Gis a pen and I'll show you it. That's the Y, goes along there, and that's the L and the T. Young Leith Team.

IL: How do you know if someone's in the Y.L.T. or not?

B: Because we ken their faces.

IL: What do you have to do to get in?

B: It depends where you stay.

A: Y.L.T. is for Leith, Y.L.S. is for Lochend; Y.N.T. is for Niddrie; Y.C.T. is for Craigentiny. (*15/16 year old females, Leith*)

It is within this interpretive context that inter-area 'rivalries' and 'fighting' can best be understood. The identities some young people (mainly though not exclusively young men) build around collective internal practices are sustained largely through demonstrating the verbal (and when required, physical) capacity to 'defend' their area. In terms of the identities such loyalty to place occasions, these two endeavours are of connected

⁵ The construction of such maps is of course by no means specific to youth; all social groups develop practical knowledge of urban locales as a means of both ascribing meaning to such places and negotiating their movement through them. The nuances of such maps depends largely upon the use different groups are required to make of different parts of the city. Those who use public places regularly - whether through choice or necessity - tend to acquire a more detailed practical knowledge of such locales, while those (for example, the elderly) whose use of public space is more restricted make do with maps consisting of fairly undifferentiated and stereotypical distinctions (Stanko 1990a: ch. 3; Evans et al. 1993).

significance, in that a central facet of any inter-area violence concerns the story-telling that surrounds it:⁶

IL: Do you ever get any trouble from anyone when you're hanging around?

A: Aye, all the time.

B: Plenty people. Folk come up in cars and start fights and everythin.

IL: What sort of folk?

B: Well, it's all to dae wi the different towns, likes of Loanhead and Bonnyrigg. They're always fightin Penicuik.

A: Bonnyrigg, Mayfield. Different 'casuals' from each area.

C: Ormiston and Gorebridge are right together and they used to fight wi each other, ken. Stupid. (...)

IL: How do these fights start?

B: Say five cars come up, stop, all the doors open and these guys come out wi baseball bats. That's when you know there's goin to be a fight. You either run away or....

A: You run away if they've got baseball bats! (*15/17 year old males, Gorebridge*)

IL: What problems do you think the police face round here?

A: They face a few problems. Like there's an annual event - about four months ago - at the Niddrie tunnel, happens exact same day every year.

IL: What's that about?

A: All o Niddrie fight all of Bingham, ken at the tunnel. We all have an annual fight, nothing better to do? We enjoy it, it's good.

IL: How many people?

A: Sometimes twenty a side sort of thing. If everybody's into the swing o things there's a good fifty of us, fifty or sixty. All battering each others' brains out.

IL: Do people get hurt?

A: Aye folk get hurt, broken noses, broken legs and everythin.

B: I've seen a few people get a couple of bricks over the head. (*17/18 year old males, Niddrie*)

Much of the available supporting testimony suggests that the incidents of violence manifested in the above accounts are relatively rare (though occasionally deleterious) occurrences. For example, during the course of the research a local headteacher described how the railway tunnel between Niddrie and Bingham served as a protective barrier over which insults could be exchanged and missiles *safely* thrown (cf. Marsh et al. 1978). In a similar vein, a number of the police officers interviewed maintained that such fights occasion few serious problems:

IL: Are there any serious fights, or is it just messing around?

A: Oh, they'll square up to each other from a distance with sticks or golf clubs, but very rarely do you see them attacking each other, somebody's always phoned before then, or if one lot approaches the other will run away. That's all it is. There's never anybody hurt or anything. But cars get damaged, they

⁶ It is of course difficult to assess the extent to which such stories predominate in young people's lives outside of the interview context. The frequency and ease with which they were narrated suggest however that they may constitute a significant facet of young people's oral culture.

climb over cars, smash windows of cars, but they dinnae hurt each other. (*Male beat officer*)⁷

I've never been to one yet where there's ever been any serious bother. Generally speaking, they're either well gone or it's been blown out of proportion by whoever has phoned in....The ones I have been to it's usually been a verbal fight more than a physical one and I have never seen anybody who has been seriously injured. (*Male beat officer*)

An interpretation of youth accounts singularly concerned with whether they are accurate portrayals of 'what actually happened' is likely to miss the existential importance of these narratives of violence (such events were recalled frequently during the interviews, often with tremendous relish and excitement).⁸ An identity organised around loyalty to place is not so much sustained by physical violence as transmitted through informal networks of communication, and in this regard, the 'truth' of these narratives is of less significance than their incorporation within young people's practices and understandings. Central to this process is the development of an often intricate practical knowledge of both the relationship between different locales and the (usually prominent) place of the local area within this system of relations:

The just dinnae like the folk from Bonnyrigg or something like that. It's nothing to do with Penicuik, because Penicuik is basically a dump....Gorebridge, Newtongrange and Mayfield sort of really fight between each other, but if Newtongrange is fighting against Mayfield and Ormiston is also fighting against Mayfield then Newtongrange and Ormiston join up, ken. Then the next again week you can see Ormiston and Mayfield joining up and fighting against Newtongrange. You beat folk up and the next again week you join up with them tae batter the folk you joined up wi the week before....Easthouses, well they're just really pretty small. They just go about wi the folk from Whitburn an that. (*16/17 year old males, Gorebridge*)

The most significant feature of youthful identities centred upon loyalty to place is the extent to which they depend upon narratives of opposition and exclusion. Collective internal practices evince the characteristics of what Sennett (1970) terms a 'purified community' - defined in a largely negative fashion and based upon a distrust of other people and places.

⁷ The stations the officer work in have been removed in order to protect confidentiality.

⁸ The interpretation of these accounts poses a number of acute theoretical problems. One possibility is to dismiss them on the grounds that the events they describe either did not happen or have been significantly exaggerated - in other words, that they do not correspond to an external reality. Not only is this empirically difficult to substantiate, it also philosophically problematic in its implication that researchers have access to a 'reality' that enables them to legislate on the truth of young people's validity claims. The converse position holds that there are no grounds from which it is possible to evaluate young people's accounts, and they can only be interpreted according to criteria internal to the culture that generates them. While the first of these positions is unacceptable because it ignores the way in which such accounts enable young people to construct 'external' reality, the second falls down (i) because it reduces the social world to a series of windowless monadic cultures; and (ii) because it denies the possibility that there are grounds from which it is possible (discursively) to challenge young people's accounts of the social world. What is essential is that the standpoint from which critique proceeds is made explicit in order that it may itself become open to challenge and revision (Bernstein 1983).

In this regard, such practices are often premised upon an aggressive masculinity oriented to demonstrating superiority over other parts of the city:

And once you beat Bingham, obviously Portobello have to step in. Then you got Broomhouse, Wester Hailes. Wester Hailes are the biggest in Edinburgh. Niddrie dinnae really fight Wester Hailes. Niddrie fight Craigmillar, Bingham, Porty, the Inch. If you stayed up Broomhouse, it would be Broomhouse fighting Lochend.

(17/18 year old males, Niddrie)

Some of the young people who routinely 'hang around' in public places reinforce this culture of exclusion with the sense of belonging that comes from being identified as a 'member' of the 'football casuals.' Stories of 'casuals' figured prominently in the accounts both of young people who identified themselves as present or erstwhile 'members', and more commonly, among those who talked of the threat posed by groups of 'casuals' in various parts of the city. In public discourse about the youth question in Scotland, the term 'casual' has come to signify two related phenomenon. In the first place, it refers to a particular youth style consisting of baggy jeans, big trainers and a variety of expensive designer tops. 'Casuals' in this regard are unusual among post-war British 'subcultures' in that they do not primarily define themselves around a consciously created 'style' (cf. Clarke 1976a). In recent years, such 'style' has been incorporated into high street fashion in such a way as to lose its connection with any particular youth grouping. It could even be plausibly maintained that - unlike 'subcultural' styles containing moments of genuine invention and spontaneity - 'casual' style has to a great extent been both literally and metaphorically manufactured by the commercial fashion industry:⁹

It's people who, like wear really expensive claes. There's loads round here.
(21 year old female, Craigmillar)

The 'casuals' are all smart gear an that, ken. A hundred quid fer a jumper.
(17 year old male, Leith)

The second dimension of 'casual' identity concerns its association with football. In Edinburgh, this takes the form of an attachment to one of the city's two Premier League football clubs - Hearts and (more especially) Hibernian. While this identity can additionally be connected to the areas in which the clubs are located, the 'casuals' are generally perceived to be a football-based occurrence:

IL: Is it all to do with football or does it matter where you come from?

A: Certain areas matter, like Leith is a Hib's area and Gorgie's a Heart's area. They're the two main areas. All the areas in between like the Southside, I

⁹ It is perhaps a 'sign' of the changing fashions of the sociology of youth that precious little has been written on the 'style' of 'football casuals' and its meanings. The only exception to this (albeit in an English context) remains Redhead and McLaughlin (1985); and Redhead (1991: 75-92).

think it doesnae really matter as long as you stick with your own group. These two main areas are Hibs and Hearts. (18 year old female, Niddrie)

IL: What do you think the 'casuals' thing is about then?

A: Football, that's all it is. Football and nothing to do. They've got nothing to do but fight. It's a war you can't win. There's so many groups about. They may be cowards, I don't know, but they've got each other. (16 year old male, Broughton)

In this regard, many youth accounts made a clear demarcation between practices and understandings oriented towards loyalty to place and those centred around football (and football violence). One even distinguished between the long-standing traditions (and folklore) surrounding inter-area rivalry, and what was understood as the more recent and transitory phenomenon of football violence:

IL: What's the difference between say, groups from Wester Hailes fighting Muirhouse or Leith fighting Trinity, and groups of Hibs's 'casuals'?

A: Hibs's 'casuals' are the ones. They fight for a name.

B: Leith fight for their part of the town. Hibs fight for, I mean like C.C.S. (*Capital City Service*) and that fight for Hibs, but Hibs only....

A: To get a reputation.

B: Leith and all the other groups fight for an area. (16/18 year old males, Leith)

IL: Is all this 'casuals' stuff the same as the football 'casuals'?

A: No, I wouldnae say that because that wis goin on a long time before fitba actually got oot of hand. Fitba's only got oot o hand the last decade or somethin like that, where as that sort of cerry on's been goin on for years. The old knuckle dusters in the sixties an that, that's what all that's about, between different territories an that.

IL: So do you think that's always gone on round here?

A: Oh yeah, it's gone on fer years. I don't think you'll ever stop them. No matter what you dae. (21 year old male, Bonnyrigg)

'Football casuals' have also in recent years come to signify the existence of 'organised' groups orchestrating violence, both at football matches and in urban public places more generally. They have consequently attracted a considerable amount of attention from the media and the police (at the time of the research, for example, Lothian and Borders police kept a 'casuals' register, and had assigned an officer full time to monitor 'casuals' activity).¹⁰ In this context, 'football casuals' are frequently seen to fit the sociological stereotype of the tight-knit subculture - run by a small clique of older professional criminals who run protection rackets, arrange fights at football matches and raids on pubs, as well as paying any fines accrued by their 'members'. The overwhelming majority of police officers interviewed apprehended the 'casuals' in this context:

They've got their leaders and they know who's boss and we've seen them getting cars hired and running around in cars. You don't know who owns the

¹⁰ A recent account of 'football casuals' from a police perspective can be found in Harper (1990).

car and it'll be false names they've hired the cars under. They drop them off at the pub, they'll do the pub then they're away in these cars. They're well organised, they know what they're about.

(Female area officer)

They are organised in that you have a core of twenty to twenty-five year olds telling fifteen and sixteen year olds what to do. They have a gang of eleven and twelve year olds running around after them, and they introduce the eight and nine year olds to it. But its not as sinister as people make out. *(Male beat officer)*

Many of the young people interviewed shared this view of 'football casuals' as a organised practice replete with hierarchical structures of decision-making. Such perceptions are moreover central to the distinctions young people make between different collective internal practices:

A: There's a monthly thing in the C.C.S.. Everybody puts money in a kitty and it goes towards fines, bail an that. The thing is the top men don't do anythin at all, they just basically run the place. They get all the others to dae the stuff.

IL: But how do you go about organising all these young people all over the place?

A: Well, likes of football, just basically everybody who's a C.C.S. member just meets at the football, newsletters are sent out to each other. They've got campaigns, they had a campaign to get members. And they had something saying to younger members, 'do not carry any weapons' like knives an that. That's quite sensible, but these guys are carrying baseball bats and the top man carries a shotgun (...) I know that the top men in the C.C.S. are all wealthy guys, have jobs wi banks and things like that.

IL: What do they get out of it then?

A: Money. It's money, but they dinnae get involved. The run the place, but if there's something they want done they get somebody else to do it for them.

(17 year old male, Gorebridge)

A: I know the 'casuals' is an organised gang, it's not just hearsay.

IL: In what way is it?

A: It's like thirty people get together and say we're going tae fuckin Motherwell this week. So that thirty people will tell their pals and they'll tell their pals. It's all organised. Then they'll all meet up at the end of the week and go to Motherwell and start a bit chaos and all come back and say, 'Did you see what I done to so and so?' That's only impressing. I bet he's got sixteen stitches, and all that shite. It is an organised thing.

IL: What about some of the police sayin that they put money together to pay their own fines, videoing their fights and showing them....

A: Of course it's true man, if you dinnae believe that you've no lived man. You have a word wi the 'casuals'Just go to any Hib's match, man. You can fuckin spot them....there's buses and everything, it's all organised. The polis are right, I'll give them their due. But the reason they're right is because they've got inside information. And I bet you fuckin anything you want that they've got plain clothes polismen amongst the 'casuals' acting, fighting, batterin.

(23 year old male, Niddrie)

There is little in these various accounts however to warrant the conclusion that 'football casuals' are a pernicious Weberian bureaucracy. Rather, they point towards an 'organisation' operating on the basis of a loose pattern of informal networks ('people will tell their pals and they'll tell their pals'). In this context, the perhaps more significant facet of the cascade of voices evoking 'football casuals' as a military style operation is that such (official and informal) images help sustain the existential identity central to the appeal of the 'casuals' as a collective internal practice. For it provides those who participate in the (often brutalising) activities of 'casuals' groupings with the sense of belonging and bravado that is an integral part of what group 'membership' means - an identity focussed around a series of activities and understandings that strongly associate young people with a particular football club:

IL: You used to knock around with them, the C.C.S?

A: Aye, Capital City Service. The Hib's 'casuals', the worst in Scotland.

B: Yeah, the worst in Scotland.

IL: Why do you say they're the worst?

A: They've got about a thousand members, probably more, they're basically an organised group. They're like Nazis.

B: Aye, they're like the British Nationals, ken, they're a group but they're organised. They've got newsletters an that. Basically it's a family that runs it, or they used to have a family that run it from Portobello or Prestonpans, one of them, and they're just all mental.

IL: Older folk like?

A: Aye, basically from about twenties onwards.

IL: How do you find out all this?

A: I'm a Hibs' supporter. I used to go tae all the games.

(16/17 year old males, Gorebridge)

From the standpoint of the prospects for democratic communication these related youthful identities have something of an ironic consequence. The collective practices and understandings young people develop as a response to existent institutional arrangements that preclude the voicing of felt experiences and concerns, tend to occasion defensive dispositions that render genuine mutual dialogue more difficult to accomplish. For in the absence of such arrangements processes of communication often amount in practice to little more than the symbolic display of the narratives of invulnerability and exclusion that emerge to make sense of youthful marginalisation. In the regard, the research process in many instances served merely to permit further communication of the (embellished) stories that sustain the prominence in young people's lives of such defensive dispositions.

Belonging and Exclusion: The Effects of Collective Internal Practices

These related collective practices and understandings are by no means central to the routines, identities and apprehensions of the majority of young people.¹¹ The interview accounts suggest however that collective internal practices generate effects stretching beyond the lives of those engaged in them. In the first place, the narratives that sustain such practices may assume a vicarious place in the understandings of other young people, and become a constituent facet of their own practical interpretations of both the locality, and other areas of the city (in so far as the interviews provided the occasion for such narratives to be constructed, they serve ironically to further the very social processes subject to investigation). In this regard, a number of youth accounts manifest a practical (and at times condescending) awareness of the collective practices of their contemporaries:

Ken, you'll have your groups, these folk they'll be showin off to them an that, tryin to make out they're big and trouble will start from there. (*16 year old male, Penicuik*)

They think they're hard. It makes them feel big and important.
(*18 year old female, North Berwick*)

IL: What do these groups fight over?

A: Just cos they think they're harder than them, because they're from a different area. Most of them are mindless idiots. (*16 year old male, Penicuik*)

Collective internal practices may also impact upon the lives of other young people in a more material sense, significantly colouring their perception and consequent use of local public places. Many young people's accounts testify to the ways in which such practices are liable to occasion personal anxiety and undermine a sense of well-being. Groups of youths 'hanging around' are, for example, considered by some young people to be a routine nuisance for those who come into contact with them:

A lot of 'casuals' hang around that launderette there. A gang of them. They're really nasty. They pass you and just bump into you....I go out on a Saturday and all of them are in town. You get a lot of them hanging round Waverley Market (*shopping centre*). Sometimes some of them are so stupid they just walk straight into you and that just fires it off. You've got to get out of there. (*16 year old male, Broughton.*)

¹¹ The group interviews tended in this regard to privilege existential identities that significantly depend on collective internal practices; for when faced with the confident and embellished assertions of their peers, those young people for whom collective internal practices are of little or no importance were often reluctant to talk about the constituents of their own youthful identities. This process was on occasions reinforced by the gatekeepers to the research. Despite my frequent retorts that I was not concerned with juvenile delinquency, or interested only in those who had experienced contact with the police, youth workers and teachers would often try and point me in the direction of those young people who 'had good stories to tell'. My attempts to arrange interviews at the youth project at which I volunteered for the duration of the research also met with instructive failure in this regard; one member of the group with whom I requested an interview - the only one to have entered higher education and to have experienced little or no adversary contact with the police - politely turned down my request on the grounds that he 'would have nothing to say to me.'

It is intimidating for people. I mean that's the central street if you're coming down from town and it is intimidating. And you sometimes get people, you know if you're walking, well unless you walk in the road you have to walk through them, and you get a certain amount of antagonism. (19 year old male, Broughton)

The impact of collective internal practices on other young people is but one consequence of the narratives of opposition and exclusion that constitute them. For such dispositions operate to position other youths either as 'insiders' or 'outsiders' - depending on their locality, or (relatedly) whether they 'belong' to a particular youth grouping. This dimension of youth social practices can occasion particular hostility and violence for those young people apprehended in some practically significant way as 'Other':

IL: What did you think of the area when you were at school?

A: I thought it was okay. Being at the (*private*) school it was different though, because you had to wear a uniform, people round here tend to think of you as a snob. I got mugged once and that was definitely because I was wearing a school uniform. That was the reason. (19 year old male, Broughton)

If I wear 'casual' clothes and they're 'casuals', they think I'm a 'casual' and they might think I'm from another team, like if they're Hearts they might think I'm Hibs. I wish you could wear what you want to. I can't without having to avoid trouble....They slash people. I got my jacket done. They just slashed it right round the back. Nothing happens because they never get caught. It's a stupid business in Edinburgh because when I was living in the States you never got this crap. You could wear what you wanted to. (16 year old male, Broughton)

A number of young people's accounts manifested similar anxieties about groups of 'casuals', with much of this concern revolving around more serious incidents of theft and violence. Perhaps in keeping with their more general disposition towards 'football casuals', this was the one aspect of youth victimisation towards which police officers evinced a marked sense of recognition. As one male area officer put it: 'they (*casuals*) pick on sort of teenagers, who have a nice jacket or basketball boots on and they'll steal them off their backs.' The following accounts represent examples of such violence, the latter coming from a sixteen year old male who had experienced a persistent campaign of intimidation from local 'casuals':

A: If you've got good clothes they'll try and steal them off you. If you're going about wearing an Armani t-shirt they'll beat you up and nick it.

IL: Physically take it off you?

A: They tried to do that to my wee brother and my cousin. My cousin's been beat up a few times because he wears all Armani clothes and everythin. (17 year old female, Dalkeith)

It's not funny when it happens to you. There was a gang when I caught a No. 22 to Canonmills and I walked about and I phoned one of my friends from the

phone box down there and two guys came up, three of them, sorry. I said 'Ally, I got to go a minute.' I said goodbye and crossed the road, three of them also crossed so I started walking faster and they walked faster. I was just coming round to the bend. They sprinted up, two of them chased me and one of them ran back. So I jumped into a hedge and I ran. I looked into a doorway and it was closed, and I didn't have a key. So I ran and I was just about to jump over the fence so I could run to the other side and the guy kicked me in the side. I didn't feel it until later I felt some kind of tingling, my whole hand was absolutely drenched in blood. They wanted my bomber jacket and I said 'no'. So two of them held on to it. I can't remember what happened. That's how serious they are. (*16 year old male, Broughton*)

Young people's accounts made much of the problems that 'football casuals' cause in Edinburgh's city centre. At one level, the anxieties occasioned by groups of 'casuals' may be viewed as a product of the routine use young people make of the city centre and the consequent frequency of their encounters with groups of 'casuals'. Such concern is additionally connected with the fact that the centre of Edinburgh represents a partially 'known' space, where the informal networks and local knowledge that provide for ontological security closer to home are correspondingly 'thinner'. In this context, groups of 'casuals' provide both a focus for more disparate concerns about the anonymity of public space and a central reason why it remains so unfamiliar:¹²

You've got the Hearts at one end you've got the Hibs at the other end, and you get people fighting in the middle all the time....Any time day or night you'd see them, you cannae miss them. Its like on Princes street ninety percent of people walking along are young 'casuals', and its like that anywhere in the town, in the city centre.
(*18 year old female, Craigmillar*)

A: I'd feel a lot better if the police just got big groups of 'casuals' off the streets, at least to places that are so popular. Coz if you're in the town or if you go for a drink and you see all these 'casuals' hanging outside a pub, you dinnae go into that pub. Things like that. It's not even just drinking, it's during the day as well. You see big groups of them hanging about, outside the Waverley Market. I wouldnae pass them. If there was three or four of them at the doors of Waverley Market, I wouldnae go in there. I'd be feared to go passed them.

IL: Is there places in the town you avoid for that reason?

A: There's certain shops I avoid. All the shops where the 'casuals' buy all there claes. I dinnae like the look of the people. You hear about them. Some o them are people who just dress up like that. It's just the claes they wear. But you dinnae think of that at the time. (*18 year old female, Niddrie*)

The final effect of (male) collective internal practices I want to consider concerns the adverse impact they have upon the lives and well-being of young women. During the

¹² The general perception among young people that Edinburgh city centre is modulated somewhat for those who establish a more detailed cognitive map of its people and places. As one seventeen year old male from Leith remarked: 'All you have to ken when you go up toon is the Hib's boys. Three quarters of the boys walkin about are all Hibs.'

course of the interviews, young women evinced a particular series of concerns (and understandings) with regard to groups of young males 'hanging around'. The following account for example details the problems occasioned for a young woman by groups of male teenagers while she was homeless and living rough in Edinburgh Waverley railway station:

You get your usual people that'll come up and start acting wide in front of you and that, and start threatening you. Just young people, people my age start threatening you, or they'll call you names, coz you've not got anywhere to stay....they just sit there and they make you feel small. Now and again they'll look fer a fight, they'll sit and threaten you or whatever, but oh, I dunno....Like they used to sit and call you prostitutes and all the rest of it, and I'd get dead angry fer being called a name like that, and they'd get dead angry and try to fight you, just fer stupid things like that....They think they're hard men and all the rest of it....I could usually rely on my mouth to get me out of trouble. But I've been hit a few times. Nothing serious, they used to just give you a slap across the face and walk away and leave you. They've got a certain respect, they would never....I don't think the people I ever met would ever really batter a lassie senseless.
(18 year old female, Niddrie)

Accounts such as this illustrate that young people's access to public space - though formally free and unrestricted - is in reality determined by a whole series of social processes that have to be reflexively monitored and accommodated. For young women, the social practices of their male peers - and the ever-present threat of male sexual violence more generally - represents perhaps the most significant factor conditioning the understanding and consequent use of public places. As Stanko (1990a; 1990b) points out, this threat lurks behind the more mundane forms of harassment young women experience in public places, and serves as the framework within which these encounters are routinely interpreted:

IL: Have you ever had hassle in a different area?

A: Hassle from saying stuff, just like 'come ere darlin' stuff like that. Wolf whistles, I hate them. You get that.

IL: Do you think it's any different for you being out than it is for young boys being out, boys of your age?

B: Aye, we get hassled more....They're quite crude to us and everything, they just shout abuse and everything.

IL: What about the rest of you, have you had hassle like that?

C: You get a few clowns.

IL: Does it bother you?

C: Sometimes it does, it depends what they're saying.

(16/18 year old females, North Berwick)

I was coming home one night. I was in a taxi but I only had a certain amount of money and I couldn't get right home so I had to get him to drop me off and...I stay in Magdalene but it's Portobello district and it was at Niddrie and I was walking past and there was a man at the bus stop....I kept walking and he was walking down the road just walking behind me sort of. He stopped someone else and I think he was just looking for a light. But he seemed to go everywhere I was going. Nothing happened but it really....

(17 year old female, Portobello)

These accounts proffer an illustration of some of the ways in which the collective internal practices that provide some young people with a positive identity become part of the backdrop that others have to accommodate if they are to 'go on' safely in public space. In this regard, youth practices take on a more strategic significance as routines for the production of personal safety. As regular users of public places young people individually and collectively become practical 'experts' in managing risk; developing a set of connected understandings and practices that position particular people and places according to their perceived danger, and regulate young people's mundane spatial movement.

Though much of the practical knowledge young people come to rely upon in this regard is shared, it is always also appropriated by particular individuals in discrete ways. Young people's accounts evince a range of individual internal practices routinely concerned to enhance personal safety in material and cognitive ways. One of the most prominent of these routines is avoiding sites of perceived danger, through for example, treating certain places as personal 'no-go' areas, or keeping a distance from groups of youths apprehended as 'trouble':

I never walk up Broughton Street any more. I've been chased up there twice. I always go round the back way to St. Andrews Square. It's not much safer.
(16 year old male, Broughton)

No, I've not had any hassle from these gangs. I just keep out of their way.
(16 year old female, North Berwick)

They dinnae really bother me, as I say I keep mysel tae mysel. I dinnae open my mooth, I dinnae go about tryin tae be wide an all the rest of it, you get no problems.
(17 year old male, Niddrie)

A number of youth accounts additionally demonstrate some of the ways in which - when the possibility of trouble is unavoidable - safety can be individually negotiated; for example, by employing the negative stereotype of one of Edinburgh's peripheral housing schemes to personal advantage, or by demonstrating a capacity not to be intimidated:

A: Some of them dinnae bother you, ken, when you tell them you're fae Niddrie.

IL: Some of the 'casuals'?

A: Or some of the other people. They think it's a rough place....you say your fae Niddrie and that and they dinnae bother. *(17 year old male, Niddrie)*

She can handle the 'casuals' nae bother....She was walkin doon Leith Walk and they were all standing, you know the corner, there's places where you can go and see them and look at these specimens. On Leith Walk, where the barbers shop is, by Tommy Youngers bar, just down there there's a road, that's where

they used to hang about, and I'm not exaggerating, there was twenty 'casuals' at least, twenty o them and they were all staring at Jane and she turned around and she gave this big statement: 'who the fuck do yous all think you are lookin at, have you seen enough, do you want to see more!' She pulled her skirt up, 'you sure you've seen enough now, coz yous are staring at me that much!' I said 'you better shut you're mouth or they'll all set about you.' They never said nowt to me. They must have thought that this lassies crazy.
(19 year old male, Broughton) ¹³

The following accounts additionally demonstrate in this regard how some young people manage the problems other young people occasion for them by refusing to be intimidated - an individual internal practice oriented to carrying on as normal:

IL: Do you avoid 'casuals'?

A: No. I make a point of not avoiding them, because I've mugged before by 'casuals' and to avoid being mugged I actually ran into a shop, and got wasted by three of them in a shop. So I figured if I'm gonnae get wasted in a department store, when there tons of people about to stop it, you're gonna get wasted anywhere. I feel uneasy about walking down carrying the guitar and seeing them and walking to the other side of the street. I don't do that.
(19 year old male, Broughton)

I think women dinnae report it because if those that are shouting at them find out they're going to do it even more, they ken they'll get a reaction. If you just leave it they think, 'We'll get nothin out of her, we'll try somebody else'. I just try and keep my mouth shut, or give them as good as I get! (18 year old female, North Berwick)

One significant feature of these various practices and understandings is that they serve as routines for managing (though not transcending) the impact that crime has upon everyday life. Such practices become infused with the mundane process of 'going on' with social existence in such a way as to minimise the intrusiveness occasioned by the dangers of public space - an effect achieved both by physically avoiding people and places apprehended as dangerous, and generating related dispositions that sustain a sense of security. In this regard however, such individual practices exist in a relation of tension with another disposition conducive to the production of safety: for it is individual isolation (being on your own) that most often undermines young people's feelings of personal security in public space:

IL: Why do you think you get chased then?

A: I'm not sure why I got chased. I'm not sure why they chase you.

B: It's purely because you dinnae come from that area.

A: It's usually because you're on your own. See if I wis in a group or a foot taller I wouldnae get any bother. (16/7 year old males, Bonnyrigg)

IL: Do you feel safe when you're out and about?

¹³ All proper names appearing in the interview accounts have been changed.

- A: During the day I'm all right, but at night I dinnae, no if I'm on ma own. I dinna feel safe anywhere on my own.
- IL: Does it matter where you are? Are there particular places you'd avoid or groups of people you'd avoid, things like that?
- A: No. I feel all right even if I'm wi one person. But if I'm by mysel in the dark I dinnae really feel safe. *(16 year old female, Leith)*

The collective use of public space - as well as being a focus for youthful identities - can in this context additionally be interpreted as a set of routines for sustaining personal security. Such practices serve to effect both safety and a sense of safety for young people in two associated respects. In the first place, 'hanging around' in groups provides young people with a very material collective means of generating security: safety in numbers (though ironically, such collective provision of personal security often simultaneously serves to undermine the well-being of others):

They was usually a lot of us during the day anyway that was doon there, and people get....when you see a big group of people hanging about the twenty four hour toilets you feel a wee bit apprehensive anyway. It's safety in numbers for us, and for them as well. There's always safety in numbers. I'd feel scared walking past them if I was by myself or if it was just me and somebody else, by I wouldnae feel scared if there was a big group o us. *(18 year old female, Niddrie)*

By providing a loose informal network for transmitting youthful experiences of relations in public, the collective use of public places relatedly enables young people to generate a shared practical knowledge of the local landscape and its dangers. Such practices equip young people with a set of informal 'rules' that each individual will interpret slightly differently, but which provide a sense of collective appropriation of public space. In this regard, many youth accounts alluded to the connection between a practical knowledge of the local area, its people and places, and feelings of personal security:

IL: Are there any places round here that you won't go, places you avoid?

A: No. We just ken everybody.

IL: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

B: Well it's good if you stay here. *(16/7 year old females, Craigmillar)*

IL: Is it a safe place round here?

A: If you ken people, if you've stayed here for a long time you're all right.

(16 year old female, Craigmillar)

IL: Can you remember what you thought about the area when you were at school?

A: I liked it then aye. As long you keep away from the junkies and that. But wi' being brought up in this area you ken all the bad folk and the good folk and they dinnae really bother you really, as long as you keep yerself to yerself.

(18 year old female, Craigmillar)

The connected collective practices and understandings that provide young people with a sense of security have however a number of significant adverse effects. In the first place, they depend largely on the oral reproduction of narratives about dangerous events, people and places - stories that become integral to the apprehension of public space and its attendant dangers. In circumstances where such narratives are dominant constituents of young people's knowledge of particular places, such accounts can easily take the form of 'atrocious tales' - rendering places symbolically more dangerous than they are in any material sense, and exacerbating perceptions of vulnerability and powerlessness:

IL: Do you find it safe walking about the streets here?

A: No, I hate walking about here, I dinnae walk about here.

IL: Why not?

A: Nothing's ever happened to me, its just the things you hear about happening though, make you a bit feared to walk about anywhere in case something does happen to yer. I mean it's not as bad as everybody makes out, but there is....I've been warned by the staff in here as well that there is a lot of bad people.

(18 year old female, Craigmillar)

The further contradiction of the security provided by the collective internal practices arise from their strong association with a loyalty to particular areas and people - a process that operates by defining the boundaries of the (safe) locality and excluding others from it. For the very practices that enable some young people to use public space and enjoy its freedoms simultaneously heighten the anxieties of others. What is more, in so far as these collective apprehensions cognitively divide the city up into 'safe' and 'dangerous' zones (as well as people deemed 'insiders' or outsiders') well-being is achieved at the expense of furnishing certain places no-go areas. Young people are rendered vulnerable by the very loyalty to people and place that is so important both to their identity and security:

IL: Is it a safe place to live here?

A: It is if you ken everybody.

IL: What if you don't?

B: You've had it!

IL: Why have you had it, just if your face isn't known? Why is that?

B: Because we might no like them. They're walkin about our streets and we dinnae ken them. *(16/8 year old males, Leith)*

IL: Do you get a lot of harassment from them? *(casuals)*

A: If it's a different area. In my area I know practically everybody. But in a different area I would. *(16 year old female, Portobello)*

IL: If someone from Muirhouse walked through Leith would they be safe?

A: If we ken they were fae Muirhouse they'd get battered.

(16 year old females, Leith)

The problematic and ultimately ironic consequence of collective internal practices in this regard is that young people end up informally policing each others use of city spaces, and

reproducing the very problems to which their practices are in part a response. As one twenty-one year old male reflected:

I think it's backfired on the whole lot o them because they cannae go anywhere and enjoy themselves now because they've all got to stay in Bonnyrigg and what have you. They cannae go doon to Dalkeith or anythin because if they did they would have to take a baseball bat or somethin like that, whereas if they hadnae started that in the first place you could have went doon and had a good laugh an that. It's totally backfired on them. (21 year old male, Bonnyrigg)

Is Crime a Problem for the Police?: Reporting Crime as a Social Practice

I'm not going to the police, they make it worse. (16 year old female, Portobello)

One of the most prominent substantive themes evinced in youth accounts concerns the reticence of young people to communicate their experiences of crime to the police - whether as victims and witnesses.¹⁴ In reflecting upon youth victimisation, it is thus important to avoid what might be termed a 'police-centred' approach to the issues: that is, one privileging the police - either empirically or normatively - as the central agency for dealing with (youth) victimisation, and postulating increased levels of reporting as the most appropriate policy objective.¹⁵ Conversely, it is important to avoid a critique by inversion that merely celebrates the informal practices young people use to cope in the absence of the police. With this in mind, the ensuing analysis will endeavour to distinguish between the specific and generic reasons why young people report so little of their experience of crime to the police; and explore both the enhancing and regressive consequences of the fact that so little youth victimisation is formally reported.

Any individual decision as to whether or not to report victimisation to the police is of course inscribed with a whole vocabulary of motives. However, in seeking to reconstruct the meaning of youth accounts on this issue, it is possible to make an analytical distinction between first, non-reporting that may be a *specific* consequence of existent police-youth relations and the resulting perception among young people that the police fail to take youth

¹⁴ These propositions reinforce evidence from national and local crime surveys that a significant proportion of both personal and property crime - with the exception of car theft - is not reported to the police; a finding that is even more strongly pronounced in relation to teenage victims (Anderson 1990a; Payne 1991; and in relation to young people, Anderson et al. 1990b: ch. 5).

¹⁵ Little substantive research has as yet been conducted on decisions not to report victimisation and their relation to alternative means of coping with crime - one, theoretically impoverished, exception is Shapland and Vagg (1988). However, what research there is remains implicitly police-centred; crime surveys for example ask people why they did not report their victimisation to the police, but never why they did - the implication being that reporting crime to the police is an obvious and unproblematic response to crime. Morgan and Zedner's (1992a) account of youth victimisation is also informed by such police-centredness in its assumption that more responsive policing will (and ought to) increase the use young victims make of a police service.

victimisation seriously; and secondly, that which is a product of the *generic* limitations of formal policing in securing young people's safety in public places.

One of the substantive themes most frequently recounted in youth accounts of policing concerns the association of the police with the routine supervision and control of young people's collective use of public space. Though it is often recognised that the source of police activity is a complaint from local residents, several accounts manifest an objection to what is still comprehended as an unwarranted police infringement on young people's use of local public space:

IL: Have you ever been moved on by the police for hanging about?

A: Loitering.

IL: How did you feel about it when they moved you on?

A: Aggressive. Because I live in the street, and I thought what right have they got because I live there. I just wanted to punch them.

(17 year old female, *Burdiehouse*)

The thing that annoys me is that you cannae walk doon Leith Walk without getting stopped by them. A persons check, or your pockets searched, or whatever.

(17 year old male, *Leith*)

IL: Why do they move you on if you're just standing around?

A: Because they think you're going to cause trouble.

B: They're just bein awkward.

IL: Do you think they're right to think that?

A: No really, because what are we supposed to dae, eh? There's nothing about for us to dae, we hang about the streets and they move us. What are we supposed to dae, sit in our hooes all the time, sit and watch the telly? (16/8 year old males, *Craigmillar*)

In this regard, routine attention towards young people 'hanging around' is often considered by young people to be a consequence of a police perception of such groups as 'trouble'. As one sixteen year old male reflected: 'If you hang about in a crowd and something happens, they'll automatically think it wis you because you're with that crowd.' Such understandings are thought to be reinforced when groups of young people on the streets come to be conflated with 'casuals':

IL: If you could meet the police and tell them what you wanted, what would you say?

A: I'd tell them to get off their high horse and stop accusing all young kids of being troublemakers, coz they no. Half of the kids on the town are barry (*good*) people, but because of all the trouble with the 'casuals' and that, all the young people are accused of being troublemakers. If you hang about in a group of people then you're a troublemaker. You might not have done nothing, you might have never offended the police on your life, but you're still classed as a troublemaker fer hanging about.

(18 year old female, *Niddrie*)

Though youth accounts by no means apprehend such policing to be always in principle illegitimate (see chapter seven), the dominant understanding of existent experiences is that such policing is in large measure both futile and out of proportion. Its overall generative effect in this regard is to occasion among young people a confluence of bewilderment, wry amusement and cynicism:

In Princes Street, they just move them from one end to the other end. They get down one end and the polisman shuffles them back up the other end.
(18 year old female, Niddrie)

IL: Do you ever get moved on by the police if you're just hanging about?
A: All the time. We always go back and they say, 'This is your last warning. If you come back you're gettin lifted'. So we just go back and if they do come they do come, but they never lift yer.
IL: Why do you think they keep moving you on?
A: I don't know.
B: It's a waste of time, because we just go back all the time.
IL: Why do you think they do it then?
B: Somebody's been phonin up.
A: They get paid for it, they're no gettin paid to go after big crimes, they ken all they've got tae dae to earn their money is move us on from a street, that's brilliant.
(16 year old females, Leith)

One of the most significant consequences of existent patterns of police-youth encounters is that they engender dispositions among young people that strongly associate the police with routine control. In the context of the (non) reporting of crime, this represents an important background factor (one reinforced in its turn by young people's paucity of experience of the police as victims of crime) against which the police are understood as largely irrelevant to the question of youth victimisation:

IL: Did you ever think of calling the police when you got bother from other groups?
A: Na. There was nae any point in calling the police. Because with us hanging down there anyway we were just classed as dirt, what they gonnae help us for.
(18 year old female, Niddrie)

Few of the young people interviewed had consequently called upon a police service as victims of crime. The accounts of those who had done so suggest quite strongly that the experience serves merely to reinforce existent predispositions:

A: Me and Julie, this lassie, we wis standin at my old bit. This flasher came past, he only had a jacket on and he kept flashin at us right. So we were near Leith Polis station and we ran doon and told them. They goes, 'You're just tellin lies, go home'. So I telt ma dad, and ma dad got on the phone and went mad at the polis and they came up and that. So they still said, 'We dinnae believe you' and then my dad's all for them, no believin us. But it was true, what would we make up a lie about a flasher for?

IL: Why don't you think the police believed you?

A: Naw, they didnae. They just told us to go away and that when we went down because they thought we were silly wee lassies.

(16 year old females, Leith)

IL: When you reported the incident (*being hassled by a group of 'casuals'*) to the police, what did they do?

A: Nothing....They just started smiling. They said, 'Okay, I'll put the word out, I'll see what I can do'.

IL: How did you feel they treated you?

A: They weren't bothered. They had more important things to do.

IL: Do you think they're right to feel like that?

A: No....They don't bother about it, they just laugh at you and bother with someone else. Then you feel really stupid when you walk out of the police office.

(16 year old male, Broughton)

One significant feature of the above account is that - in the context of institutional arrangements that preclude democratic communication between the police and young people - the officer's intention to do all that is occupationally possible ('putting the word out') is interpreted as a specific police failure to take the complaint seriously. In this context, the absence of sustained dialogue can additionally create a vacuum that is filled by more widespread popular dispositions about police shortcomings:

A: The police down our way are lazy. When you phone them up it takes them about half an hour to get there! If they're phoning about a fight they could be dead. They don't care.

IL: Has that ever happened to you?

A: No, but I've heard about other people. It seems that every time you want one they're busy doing something else. If it's something like a burglary or something, they're there in a flash. (16/8 year old females, North Berwick)

It was noted above that young people develop (collective) knowledge and skills that enable them routinely to 'go on' in public places by minimising the material and symbolic impact of crime, and it is in this context that the generic reasons for non-communication with the police need to be situated. Morgan and Zedner (1992a: ch. 2) point out in this regard that reporting crime to the police involves young people passing through a triple filter: (usually) disclosing the crime to an adult; having the adult inform the police; and persuading the police to take it seriously.¹⁶ The case may additionally end up in court where - in a setting apprehended as unfamiliar and threatening - young people are required to convince lawyers and a jury of the validity of their experience:

A: Aye. I wouldnae phone the police for anything. If my neighbours were getting attacked I'd maybe phone the police for that, but I wouldnae want to get involved. It's not worth it. Coz they make you feel in court worse than

¹⁶ Morgan and Zedner's (1992a: chs. 5-6) descriptions of young victim's experiences of the criminal justice system brings home the point about the amplifying effects of reporting crime.

what the criminals are? Bloody lawyers and that. It's not worth it. And besides you just get a lot of backlash for it? 'You grass and that, you grass'. Maybe your windees put in.

IL: Is that a real problem?

A: Round here it is. Everybody really keeps to everybody. If I phone the police I'd probably get a kick in. (*20 year old male, Niddrie*)

The reluctance to communicate experiences of crime to the police can be situated in two further contexts. In the first place, it may be viewed as the adverse product of the widespread belief that reporting crime (or 'grassing' as it is more commonly known) can occasion deleterious consequences. Stories recounting the brutal fate suffered by people who 'grassed' to the police surfaced frequently during the interviews. As one sixteen year old female put it: 'Grassin! That's the last thing you dae doon here, because what you see goin on will happen to you.' The importance of such stories is not so much their proximity to some external reality, but the extent to which they come to be central to young people's understandings of the dangers of public space. Such accounts function as narratives of atrocity serving to sustain beliefs about the amplificatory consequences of reporting crime:

A: Aye you cannae really grass people about here, coz you end up getting stabbed or someit.

B: If yer a grass about here....

A: They'd smash all your windees, petrol bombs through yer windees, kick your door in.

IL: Do you know anyone that's happened to?

A: Aye, this old guy grassed about something over there, old Billy. Got petrol bombs thrown through his windee, and got all burnt. Got ninety degree burns all over him. Ninety percent of his body got burnt. (*17 year old male, Craigmillar*)

The refrain against 'grassing' can additionally be interpreted as means to protect the collective loyalties upon which youthful strategies for safety rest. Collective internal practices can only sustain a sense of ontological security for young people if the informal understandings constituting them are harboured from outsiders. The non-reporting of crime is thus one of the few ways in which young people retain 'control' over relations in public in which they are minimally empowered. Indeed, perhaps the central feature of the youthful appropriation of public space is the requirement to safeguard shared informal knowledge from formal institutions - a practice that represents a kind of passive resistance to an institutional logic which seeks to colonise the social practices that permit young people to make practical sense of their marginalisation:

IL: What do you think of people who would tell the police?

A: They should get their throats slit!

IL: That's a bit drastic, isn't it?

B: Well, they wouldnae dae any more squealing.

IL: Don't you think it's a bit harsh?

B: There's a few people walkin about Lochend wi holes in them.

IL: How do you know that?

B: Because I ken the people and I ken who done it to them. (16/7 year old males, Leith)

The overall generic limitation of the formal policing in the context of youth safety is that its institutional logic - to apprehend and convict a culprit - runs counter to the practical logic of young people. By 'handing over' the problem to the police, young people risk magnifying the significance of the incident in their lives and have it take on an existence of its own; for by rendering young people dependant on the decisions of powerful others, involving the police makes the future unpredictable. In the context of asymmetrical social relations and institutional arrangements that preclude the collective communication of youthful experiences and concerns, it is this above all else that explains the practical objective of young people to minimise their contact with the police, irrespective of its nature - a disposition with considerable effects for the possibility of embodying mechanisms of mutual dialogue within institutional processes of police accountability.

POLICING YOUTH SOCIAL PRACTICES

I want now to shift the analytical focus towards the policing of youth social practices. The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate an interpretation of the accounts police officers proffer of the relationship between policing and young people in public space, and to situate these accounts in the organisational setting within which they are mobilised. In particular, I shall be concerned to effect a creative reconstruction of the meanings officers attach to discrete youth practices, so as to be able to apprehend how policing is oriented to either the routine control or pedagogic promotion of such practices. In so doing, the analysis endeavours to develop further an understanding of the 'over-control' and 'under-protection' of young people in public places.

The object of enquiry in this regard is to make some meaningful sense of the ways in which officers apprehend the connected questions of youth, crime and policing (particularly in relation to teenagers around the age of sixteen). In the context of democratic accountability, police accounts of these issues are of interest, not only for their propositional content, but also in terms of what they say about how officers communicate understandings of their work to a third party (in this case a researcher). In this context, reflection on the process of generating such accounts is as significant to the interpretation as the substantive themes evinced by them.

The chapter is organised around three themes:

- (i) an exploration the meanings that officers attach both to young people's collective internal practices and the policing of them;
- (ii) an analysis of police officers' understandings of questions surrounding youth victimisation;
- (iii) a delineation of police officers' perceptions of the non-communication by young people of their experiences of crime.

‘Piggy in the Middle’: Policing Collective Internal Practices

Most of the time we spend with youngsters is prosecuting them or moving them on from street corners. I don’t know if it does any good or not. (*Male beat officer*)

The accounts of police officers strongly suggest that young people occupy a significant place within routine police workloads - more so perhaps than any other social group. They additionally insinuate that the bulk of existent contact is taken up with either the control of petty acts of juvenile crime, or the mundane regulation of groups of young people ‘hanging around’ in public places. Police accounts evince in this regard a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the policing of collective internal practices. The interviews generated what can be viewed as two competing sets of themes among officers (and sometimes within the same officers), centred upon either general cultural perceptions of the relationship between youth and local social order, or more occupationally specific observations on the role of the police in regulating young people’s use of public space.

Competing Themes in the Policing of Collective Internal Practices

	Cultural Perceptions of Youth and Order	Perceptions of Occupational Constraints
<p style="text-align: center;">Orientations to (Paternalistic) Control</p>	<p>(a) Groups ‘hanging around’ are ‘trouble’.</p> <p>(b) Young people are in ‘moral danger’.</p> <p>(c) ‘Hanging around’ is a sign of ‘bad’ parents.</p> <p>(d) ‘Hanging around’ is ‘unproductive’ leisure.</p>	<p>(a) Public complaints must be dealt with.</p> <p>(b) ‘Hanging around’ is a threat to police control of public space.</p> <p>(c) Police task is to maintain order.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Orientations to Tolerance/Non- Intervention</p>	<p>(a) Young people on the streets are not a problem.</p> <p>(b) Young people want their independence.</p> <p>(c) Young people have nowhere else to go.</p>	<p>(a) Waste of police time.</p> <p>(b) Formal dispositions are futile and counter-productive.</p> <p>(c) Sours relations with young people.</p>

For the purposes of the enquiry at hand, these themes are of twofold significance: in the first place, they project two contrasting sets of images of local social ordering and the place of the police therein - one oriented towards the proactive regulation of the collective use of public space, the other anticipating more tolerant and non-interventionist resolutions; secondly, in so far as these contrasting dispositions can be located within a single occupational consciousness, they occasion a series of moral and practical dilemmas that officers have to make sense of and resolve on a routine basis. These themes are set out in the above table and elaborated upon in the discussion that follows.

The most prominent cultural proposition expressed in police accounts centres upon the perception that the collective use of public space is in some way or other illegitimate. At their most general, police officers' understandings constitute youth practices as a (symbolic) threat to the police's capacity to control public space, and manifest an objection to the collective use of public space *per se* - irrespective of its substantive consequences:

It doesn't do any harm for the groups of young people to be aware of when the police are in the area...I think that the police should move on groups from the streets, shouldn't just leave the kids. I'm not talking about speaking to kids and hassling kids but I think that if they're there, they should be made aware that the police are aware of their business. (*Male beat officer*)

A lot of them tend to hang about street corners in large groups which doesn't help. I'm not going to say we pick on them, but we try to move them on (....) Basically they're putting suspicion amongst themselves. (*Male area officer*)

Within this overall interpretive context, police accounts evidence a series of more particular concerns. In the first place, groups of young people 'hanging around' the streets are viewed by some officers as a mark of 'parental neglect':

But most of the decent people in Wester Hailes who are bringing up their kids properly, their kids aren't out there standing on street corners. They may be at the bottom of a stair, but it's usually their stair. (*Male area officer*)

There's little or no places that these people can go, and there certainly is a problem. Again, you've got to look at the point of view, what are the parents doing when these kids of thirteen and fourteen are hanging round street corners until two or three in the morning? (*Male beat officer*)

One of the most lamentable features of such 'neglect' for officers surrounds the lack of recognition it accords to the dangers of the streets, and in particular, the way in which public locales render young people susceptible to 'bad company'. Many officers evince in this regard what might be termed a 'rotten apple' theory of collective internal practices; such practices are viewed as a conduit within which one or two individuals are able to effect a negative influence upon an impressionable majority:

It's quite difficult because some kids won't pay attention, some families won't pay any attention, the kids are allowed to roam about. And I think that's the problem. They tend to roam about in groups and you always find that someone in the group has a bad influence on them, unfortunately. (*Male beat officer*)

The problem is there's a lot of parents about who are not interested where their kids are, that's really what it is. The mischief becomes so bad that it literally becomes serious.....like trying drugs and glue sniffing. All their pals have tried it, so they just have a wee go at it. (*Male beat officer*)

One important aspect of this individualistic articulation of youth practices is that it enables officers to render the 'problem' amenable to practical police intervention (and in the process obviate the need for more structural solutions). In this context, some police officers may adopt the role of 'surrogate parent', supervising young people's use of public space and promoting 'productive' alternatives to 'hanging around' the streets. As one male beat officer put it: 'I advise them to go home for their own good.' Such paternalistic regulation may be directed particularly to those young people viewed to be in 'moral danger':

IL: When you get called to calls like this, do you end up thinking 'Oh no, not another one?'

A: Not at all, every single call you go to is different. And if you think you can go there and prevent a crime taking place, or prevent some kids from coming to some social or moral danger, all to the good. (*Male beat officer*)

IL: Do you think the time you spend with young people is well spent, or do you think, 'This is a waste of time?'

A: No not at all, it's useful if we can help them channel their youthful exuberance in a productive manner instead of hanging about outside the chip shop.
(*Male beat officer*)

A further series of understandings among officers discern young people collectively 'hanging around' in public places as engaged in 'unproductive' leisure. In this regard, many police accounts evince a concern to control 'hanging around' by promoting what are viewed as acceptable social practices - such as local youth clubs, leisure centres or more private recreational pursuits (a perception that is especially pronounced among officers working in peripheral housing schemes conceived of as having abundant youth facilities¹). The reluctance of young people to take advantage of such opportunities serves to colour further many officers already dismal impression of public social practices:

They'll say to you, 'We've nowhere else to go, I'm bored, I've nothing to do'. But you must ask the question yourself, surely, if you've got a brain in your head, and there's half a dozen of them there, girls and boys, there must be something they can be doing. You might laugh in my face, but what's wrong with going up to one of their houses and having a game of *Monopoly* or something like that? Something along these lines, or a game of cards, a game

¹ As one officer commented: 'In a place like Wester Hailes you hear people saying there are no facilities, nothing to do. There's far more to do here than there is in some of the other areas.'

of chess....If you're bored, if you've so-called got nothing to do, you don't hang about street corners. I didn't hang about street corners.
(*Male beat officer*)

Taken together, these apprehensions project an image of legitimate youthful endeavour against which groups of youths 'hanging around' are constituted as 'out of place' and engaged in inappropriate conduct; an image that sensitizes officers to the regulation of such practices and the pedagogic promotion of what are viewed as legitimate alternatives. Situated alongside these themes however, there exist among some officers a range of understandings that anticipate a more non-interventionist approach to the policing of collective internal practices. Such conceptions testify to the importance of the street as a site of young people's autonomy, and conceive of 'hanging around' as a harmless and 'natural' feature of adolescence:

Kids are bound to want to go out and explore the streets on their own without their mum and dad trailing along behind them and it's just a matter of they want to go out and explore, do their own thing, which is fair enough. (*Male beat officer*)

It's fair enough if they are hanging around outside Drummond School and there are not residents where they are, that's fair enough. There's very few places for them to go. (*Female area officer*)

This appreciation of the problems of marginalised youth is often accompanied by personal recollections of officers' own teenage years. As one male beat officer reflected: 'When I was a laddie I used to spend half my time standing about on street corners getting moved by the police.' Such perspectives may even engender a kind of 'empathy from memory' with officers recalling experiences from their own adolescence to bring home the point:

I hung around plenty street corners when I was fourteen, you know. There's bugger all else to do. I can understand. Okay, let's face it. Youth clubs aren't everybody's cup of tea. They do a good job I'm sure for a lot of people, but some kids like their independence, they want to be free of some bloke walking about saying, 'Right, we're going to have a game of football now. You split into teams.' They don't want that. So they're going to hang about street corners. Quite honestly, if I see half a dozen fourteen year olds standing on a street corner and they're not doing anybody any harm, they're not making a nuisance of themselves, if they're just mucking about, fine, just walk past them. (*Male beat officer*)

There is little research testimony to suggest that the predominant cultural perception of collective internal practices as 'unproductive' leisure occasions the proactive policing of young people in public space. Most officers spoke in this regard of being 'too busy' to move on groups of youths, or of not wishing to generate for themselves unnecessary work. As one male beat officer put it: 'Trouble finds you quickly in this job without you looking for it; it's in moving them on for no apparent reason that you can actually find

yourself getting problems.’ As long as such groups are not apprehended as behaving excessively, officers it seems are content merely to ‘keep an eye’ on them - as one commented: ‘At least we know they’re there and they’re not up to mischief.’

The regulation of young people’s collective use of public space is most commonly initiated by a complaint from residents wanting something done about a ‘noisy’ group of local youths, and in this context, police accounts suggest that officers’ dispositions towards young people are of marginal significance in determining police action.² A requirement to act is engendered by a confluence of local public demands (the informal democratic structure) and an officer’s occupational desire to minimise the adverse consequences of their actions (the work structure).³ As one officer tersely put it: ‘We’re a disciplined body. If I don’t respond properly to a complaint I’m in the shit.’

In present organisational circumstances, ‘responding properly to a complaint’ is likely to mean at the very least moving on the group of youths concerned. For such a course of action represents the easiest way for officers to head off further calls from the complainant and any subsequent occupational comeback for themselves (such as trouble from their ‘bosses’). Thus in the following account an officer - having explained how he had come to know a group of young people subject to frequent nuisance complaints - recalls the following incident:

This woman complained again and I went up and they were just sitting there. So I radioed in and said, ‘These youths are not causing any riots, I’ve had a talk with them, they’re not making any kind of noise, I’m not moving them on.’ The next day I was hauled in front of the sergeant and he said to me, ‘What are you doing about it? Those youths should have been moved.’ I said, ‘When I got there there was no problem, it was all quiet; we have no authority to move them on if they’re not committing a breach of the peace or blocking the footway.’ And he said, ‘Well, I’m telling you to move them on.’ I said, ‘Well, I tell you what. You go and move them on, because I’m not’ and he said, ‘Well, I’m telling you, because the chief inspector says so.’ And I said, ‘Well you’ll be the right one to tell the chief inspector you can’t do that.’ And he said, ‘Well I’m telling you to do it.’ And I just walked out of the office. The following day I was up in front of the chief inspector, three days later I was back at Leith. (*Male area officer*)

Police accounts suggest that this situation can engender among officers a genuine occupational bind - one also experienced by officers ill-disposed to collective internal

2 Such demands evoke Bittner’s (1974: 30) classic definition of the police as the only agency empowered to deal with events involving, ‘something that ought not to be happening about which somebody had better do something now!’ The shortcoming of Bittner’s analysis in this regard is that it pays insufficient attention to the relationship between such mobilisation of police force and broader asymmetries of power.

3 These demands of influential local audiences may occasion the proactive policing of groups of young people in areas where there have been ‘standing complaints’ against them. By moving on young people ‘just in case’ officers can anticipate, and thereby reduce, the risk of (further) complaints about police inactivity.

practices, but who view the policing of them as futile (see below). For it places them in a position where they recognise the claims of both parties, yet feel compelled - irrespective of the justice of the situation - to move on the group of youths concerned. As one beat officer remarked: 'They may have a valid argument, but at the end of the day, if they're told to move then they've got to go.' What is more, many officers anticipate that - by being the 'piggy' that only catches the ball when one side throws it - their actions may serve to sour police relations with young people:

Okay, they're playing football in the street. We go along to these calls, I don't want to go, I don't want to stop kids playing football in the street. But on the other hand you get a sixty-five or seventy year old woman phoning the police and says, 'There are kids playing football in the street, I want them moved on.' We're just piggy in the middle, we're the suckers who've got to go along and say, 'Right boys, you can't play football here.' So no wonder a lot of them....I wouldn't say don't like us, but that's our job.
(Male beat officer)

The overall significance of this mixture of informal 'democratic' and organisational requirements is that it serves to reinforce (and render dominant) police apprehensions that are ill-disposed to young people's collective use of public space, and override (and render subordinate) the more non-interventionist approaches of a minority of officers. Thus even where police officers have some sympathy for young people and believe the complaint to be unwarranted, the organisational constraints within which they operate more often than not require that an officer's moral dilemma finds a practical resolution that adversely effects the interests of young people:⁴

You might know yourself that the kids aren't causing any hassle whatsoever but you have to look out for number one to a certain extent. If you go along and say, 'These kids aren't causing any hassle, I'm just leaving them where they are', they phone up here and say, 'I phoned the police about these kids, the policeman has come down and has done nothing about it.' A lot of hierarchy being the way they are, I'll be the one who gets into trouble. They're not interested in the fact that I say, 'Wait a minute, they weren't doing anything wrong, the guy who phoned up is just a pain in the arse.' Their argument is, 'They're obviously annoying somebody, so they've fulfilled the charge of a breach of the peace.' You can't win. We're in a very awkward position. I think it's wrong. We should be able to say these folk are causing no problem, we're leaving them where they are. But at the back of your mind you're always thinking, 'Well, if I do nothing here I'm the one who gets it in the neck.' Which is wrong, but it's the system.
(Male beat officer)

For the purposes of the present enquiry, these accounts prompt two reflections: in the context of police accountability (and notions of policing by consent), they strongly suggest

4 These accounts of the influence of both the democratic structure (the demands of local residents) and the work structure (the threat of disciplinary action) cast further doubt in this policing context on the 'subculturalist' thesis concerning the operational autonomy of police occupational culture.

that the local order maintained by the police is one partially validated by certain powerful audiences, rather than democratically negotiated by a range of social groups. Under the guise of responding to the express demands of 'the public', police practices currently reproduce - in one discrete but important sphere of public provision - the exclusion of certain marginal groups from the determination of how urban public spaces are to be used. In more concrete terms, the patterns of contact existent arrangements engender serve to reduce police-youth relations to a series of encounters characterised by the 'paradox of face' (Muir 1977: ch. 7); situations in which police officers are only able to 'communicate' one message ('move on'), and where mutual stereotypes inimical to the possibility of genuine dialogue are sustained.⁵

At first glance, police-youth encounters in public space appear to permit officers a wide discretionary judgement. A further series of themes within police accounts strongly suggest however that disputatious situations involving groups of young people are unlikely to meet with anything other than an informal resolution. A number of police officers intimated for example that they would consider enacting a formal charge (such as breach of the peace) only as a last resort - in circumstances where a group of youths persistently refuse to 'move on':

If they refuse to move, then you've got a problem and you have to be seen to be taking some form of action. Because if you don't that's going to encourage the rest of them to congregate at a particular trouble spot and the problems then could escalate.

(Male area officer)

IL: What if they're there half an hour later? What's your reaction to that?

A: Just move them on again. It wouldn't go on indefinitely. I would have to take some sort of action about it. Initially I don't note names and warn them, but it is an offence not to move on when asked to by a police officer in uniform.

(Male beat officer) ⁶

5 In the context of English inner cities, where police relations with the black community figure prominently in public discourse about policing, these interpretations may appear surprising. Though I can only speculate on this, it may be that with regard to the policing of black youths these constraints operate in a converse fashion - with the occupational culture evincing less sympathy for the plight of young black males, yet senior police officers being less willing (given tense police-community relations and greater political organisation around these issues) to respond so forcefully to the demands of local residents.

6 The interesting thing about this last account is that it is not an offence to refuse to move on when requested to do so by a police officer (Christie 1990). However, the officer concerned clearly believes it to be so and no doubt operationalises such perceptions in the policing of collective internal practices. The more general point about this is that it illustrates how the different dimensions of the legal structure function in opposite ways to facilitate the informal policing of young people. For while a series of constraints serve to make formal dispositions unattractive, the permissiveness - or even absence - of legal rules (coupled with the dynamics of the situation) enable officers to employ a range of informal resolutions without fear of comeback from the youths concerned. The paradox of this situation is that - in relation to the policing of social groups apprehended as 'police property' - the police are both more likely to envoke imaginary powers, and less likely to be brought to account for their 'exercise'.

Police officers' accounts intimate that in most cases a confluence of cultural dispositions and occupational constraints serve to render such formal determinations an unlikely occurrence. In relation to the former, formal modes of resolution are limited by a range of understandings that view such outcomes as both inappropriate, and likely to sour police-youth relations:

Basically I think that would be a bit harsh, locking them up for failing to move on at the request of the police. Only in excessive situations would we do that. We've got better things to do than locking youngsters up. (*Male area officer*)

If they came back time after time after time you would charge them or put something on paper as far as an obstruction was concerned or a breach of the peace. But it's not really worth it at the end of the day, you're just creating problems for everybody. The best solution is to try and iron it out as best as you can on the night, and deal with it from there. If you can build up some kind of trust between yourself and them things will work out better in the long run. If you keep on hassling them all the time they'll probably get worse. (*Male beat officer*)

One interesting feature of these dispositions is that they are reinforced - rather than negated - by the organisational constraints within which police officers work. Formal action is for example liable to mean paperwork for the officer involved; a consequence that both runs counter to a well documented tenet of police occupational culture, as well as amplifying the officers' chances of being rendered accountable for their actions.⁷ The requirements of an independent prosecution system (the legal structure) may additionally serve to dissuade officers from pursuing a formal course of action:

It's a vicious circle, unless someone actually point blank refuses to go. Fair enough you could say they were failing to desist but all policemen know that if you were to write that down on a bit of paper and send it to the procurator fiscal, it wouldn't wash unless you had something else to back it up. I think the courts these days are so busy that things like that will just get red-penned and thrown away. (*Male beat officer*)

I mean, at the end of the day I'd rather not do that, because it's a lot of work for me and a court would almost certainly just give them a warning or something. You don't want it to get to that stage. (*Male area officer*)

One further aspect of the legal structure encouraging the informal policing of young people is the organisation of juvenile justice in Scotland, and in particular the welfare-based children's hearing system (or panels).⁸ Police understandings of children's panels are

⁷ Police officers are in this sense concerned to maintain 'order' not only on the street, but also in terms of minimising the organisational consequences of their actions, a process Ericson aptly characterises as 'patrolling the facts' (Ericson 1982: ch. 1).

⁸ The children's hearing system was established in Scotland in 1968, to deal with young people under sixteen who are either engaged in juvenile offending (other than serious crimes such as rape and murder); truanting from school, or apprehended as in need of care and protection (because of parental neglect for example). The official objective of the panels is to keep young people away from the formal criminal justice system, and produce

particularly pertinent to the small minority of youthful offenders who officers believe to be in need of formal sanction. In this regard, the system's social welfare orientation is overwhelmingly viewed by officers as excusing those who should properly be held responsible for their actions (a disposition that is especially heartfelt in an organisation as imbued with classicism as the police):

I've seen a lot of fourteen year olds who are bigger than me, but they've got this, 'He's only fourteen, he's just a young boy and he comes from a broken home etc.' But to me that's not an excuse because I know a lot of people who come from broken homes and who don't commit crime, they would never dream of committing crime because they know the difference between right and wrong. It seems to get used too much as an excuse, and I think where as if we were to deal with the individual rather than trying to look at his social background, it would be much better. (*Male beat officer*)

Police accounts of children's panels significantly depend on their diagnosis of juvenile crime and appraisal of young offenders. As one female officer put it: 'What the panel at times doesn't seem to recognise is that some of the kids they are dealing with are tomorrow's major criminals.' In this regard, officers' understandings of the panels are constructed - to the exclusion of all else - around the paradigm case of the fifteen year old recidivist who receives a 'slap on the wrist' and leaves the hearing with a beaming grin on his face:

There's this sort of 'softly softly' approach. You get wee Johnnie breaking into half a dozen houses and he's only fifteen, so he goes up in front of the panel and they just tell him, 'Don't do it again.' And he goes away thinking, 'Well, that wasn't that bad, was it.' It's like the first offender syndrome. If you're lenient with them then they might go away thinking, 'That wasn't that bad, I'll just go out and do it again.' Or if you're hard on them, they might say, 'I'm not going to do that again.' (*Male beat officer*)

It is from these interpretive standpoints that police officers endeavour to make some practical sense of children's panels, and police criticisms consequently focus upon the perceived dearth of adequate powers available to panel members (what one officer referred to as a lack of the 'big stick'), as well as on the absence of sufficient gravitas in the proceedings. For both these reasons, panels are conceived of as unable to enact a deterrent effect upon the future behaviour of juvenile offenders:

I just think that the panel suffers from an inadequacy of comprehensive powers. They have certain powers, a supervision order, they can detain the kid in an

outcomes consistent with the 'needs' of the child. Aside from the legally-trained reporter who accepts and process cases referred to the system, and decides whether a hearing is required, panels consist of lay members recruited from the local community. I had not originally proposed to ask police officers about children's panels during the interviews, but they were raised by a number of officers during the initial phase three interviews and the issue was then pursued more systematically. This feature of the research process perhaps in and of itself indicates the prominent place the panels are accorded within the dispositions of police officers in Scotland.

approved school, they can send him to foster parents, whatever. They don't seem to have the big gun if you like. (*Male beat officer*)

I'm afraid I strongly feel that the children's panel system is not a deterrent for a child. Any child going to a panel they're not in fear of the members of the panel. They know that they can't get locked up. (*Male area officer*)

The cultural perception that the panels deliver insufficient punishment is reinforced by a number of more occupationally specific concerns. In addition to the time and paperwork it necessitates, referring a case to the reporter also serves to terminate police officers' (formal) involvement in the proceedings. As one male beat officer commented: 'That's it, I charge them and that's the last I see of them. I don't have any other role in the whole procedure.' Police accounts suggest that many officers find this state of affairs frustrating, either because it reduces the police role to what one described as a 'reporting agency', or because they believe a more active police involvement would be beneficial:

I feel it would do no harm if a police officer, one police officer, was part of the children's hearing system and can be there and seen as a member of the police force who is actually there in uniform, so that he can ask questions and to make sure that a child will not mislead the panel, as some of them are certainly capable of doing.
(*Male area officer*)

It is in these circumstances that many police officers come to view the processing of offenders under sixteen through the formal juvenile justice system as a pointless and even counter-productive exercise - especially if officers are dealing with those apprehended as youthful recidivists:

The time it takes for a police officer to submit a report regarding the particular incident where the accused is a child and that report goes forward to the children's panel, particularly if it's a kid who's been involved in quite a bit of crime before, the majority of police officers will say, oh, god, this is going to be a waste of time.
(*Male area officer*)

You're going in front of panels where kids who are fourteen or fifteen have been involved in quite a chequered career and they're getting away with it, you say what's the point. They're not solving the problem, just adding to it. (*Male beat officer*)

For all these reasons, police officers may opt to keep young people under sixteen out of the formal system and deal with the matter on an informal basis. For many officers such a course of action has the merit of both facilitating the delivery of an informal lecture to the offender consistent with an occupational definition of the offence's 'seriousness', as well as enabling them to monitor the progress of the situation over the coming weeks and months. It additionally provides an opportunity for officers to investigate the family

situation and appraise the chances of young people pursuing the 'right path' when they leave school:

I honestly just generally sit down and chat with kids really. Try and show them the error of their ways as it were. And I sometimes have followed up with a phone call to their parents, maybe six weeks later to find out what's going on. It's not policy but that's about all I can do. (*Male beat officer*)

Furthermore, by keeping young people under sixteen away from children's panels, and withholding what is viewed as the 'big stick', police officers are able to deploy the threat of a 'post-panels' criminal justice system as a 'bargaining counter' during the course of an informal disposition:⁹

I'll say to them, well, look, you're now fifteen years of age and committing a crime of theft. Next year or in four months when you're sixteen, you're going to be treated in the eyes of the law as an adult. Should you commit the same crime again I don't require to come up here to speak to your parents. I don't require them to be present when you are cautioned and charged. Do you realise that you can be detained or arrested and taken to a police station. (*Male area officer*)

If more can be done to educate them that, 'Look, if you're going to keep getting into bother you're going to end up getting locked up when you're older. You're under sixteen just now, but when you hit the magic sixteen that's when you get locked up. It's not very pleasant inside a cell.' (*Male area officer*)

What tends to emerge from this confluence of understandings and constraints is a system of *informal* policing, both of young people's collective use of public places and of much petty juvenile offending. Police accounts suggest in this regard an overall concern to monitor collective internal practices, and encourage where necessary alternative and more 'wholesome' ways of passing the time - practices oriented above all to keeping young people both spatially and socially 'in place'. For the purposes of the immediate enquiry, the significance of such pedagogic policing concerns the way in which it enables officers (whether implicitly or explicitly) to 'communicate' a message to young people about the norms of local public order; the places they can and cannot use; the people they should and should not be seen with; and the role of the police as ultimate arbiters of acceptable behaviour (cf. Cohen 1979: 131).

The final tension evinced within police accounts of collective internal practices concerns the ways in which officers comprehend the role of the police in relation to such practices. One of the most common refrains of police officers is that the routine policing of groups of

⁹ These accounts indicate in this regard that one of the chief (unintended) consequences of a welfare-based juvenile justice system in Scotland may have been to de-criminalise the policing of young people in public space and replace it with a system of routine moral supervision.

youths 'hanging around' is largely a waste of police time.¹⁰ For the most part, officers view the policing of problems arising from groups of youths 'hanging around' the streets to be little more than an exercise in practical managerialism. As one commented: 'At the end of the day we'll just keep them happy for that night.' Even at best, the policing of such practices is viewed as merely keeping the disputation within acceptable bounds:

IL: Does it (*moving on groups of youths*) ever solve the problem?

A: No, I don't think it's going to solve the problem at all.

IL: What does police intervention achieve then?

A: I don't know. It's all part of it. The police are there and the youngsters know the police are there. If the police weren't there I would probably think the situation would be a lot worse, because they would be able to do what they wanted and they would know that no-one could do anything about it. If we know they're there and they know we're there, it keeps things at a good level. (*Male beat officer*)

Police accounts commonly apprehend present policing practices to be no more than a crisis intervention that moves the problem elsewhere and provides local residents with a temporary respite from local youths. As one officer put it: 'I don't think it ever really solves the problem, it just moves it somewhere else.' Some officers even view such intervention as counter-productive - serving to amplify already existing tensions by providing young people with a reason for occasioning further 'trouble':

It gets their back up and I know how I would feel if I was getting hassled like that. I'd want to go somewhere else and I'd start gathering somewhere else and then the police would come along there and shift me from there. And I would say, 'Well, I'll go and stand here.' And I would go and stand there and eventually get shifted from there. And eventually I would get so fed up I'd just keep moving and I would make a point of being boisterous. (*Male area officer*)

If we say we've had a complaint and they say, 'That's that old so and so from whatever house.' I say, 'No names, no packdrill, you either button it and go away.' You wait ten minutes later, then the window's been tagged and they're off. Then you've got to try and find them, so sometimes it can just antagonise the situation by going in there trying to deal with it. (*Male beat officer*)

As the above accounts suggest, an integral feature of the apprehension of police intervention as counter-productive is the sense that current policing practice serves to generate resentment among the youths concerned. As one female officer remarked: 'They think we're just coming and telling them to shift, not listening to anything they say.' Many police accounts evince in this regard an appreciation both of some of the youthful dispositions that such policing generates, as well as some of its consequences:

10 One aspect of revolves around the perception that young people are practically attuned to the limits of such policing and rarely heed police instruction. As one officer commented: 'A waste of time definitely. It's in one ear and out the other, unfortunately. Even things like just telling them to move on, they'll be back in half an hour because they know the score. They've done what you've asked and if they come back again all you can do is start from scratch.'

I would resent it as a young person. If I was just standing there with a group of my mates, just chatting maybe, having a laugh, telling stories, whatever they're doing and a cop comes up and says, right, move on. Why? What have I done? You're obviously going to resent it. (*Male area officer*)

Yes, even though we try and explain to them why we're doing it, because a complaint has been made. They I think, generally speaking, think that we are doing it off our own back and it obviously doesn't help the relationship between the police and youths.

(*Male beat officer*)

The perception that police action does little to solve the problems that arise in relation to groups of youths 'hanging around' represents perhaps the widely held of all the police dispositions that anticipate a more non-interventionist practice. They have however to be read alongside an equally strong set of understandings that view the regulation of youth practices as properly a police task. A police-centred understanding of the 'problem' of groups of youths 'hanging around' represents a fairly stock theme within police accounts; surfacing most commonly in refrains such as: 'if the police don't do it, who's going to?'; 'the shit stops here', and 'somebody's got to keep the peace.' Such perceptions demonstrate the extent to which officers - by situating youth practices within an occupational lexicon signifying 'disorder' - are able to generate the negative and somewhat resigned conclusion that no other agency is capable of undertaking the required task - that of maintaining order:

A: If they cause a nuisance you've just got to say, 'Enough, time to go, goodbye' and so on. And they'll be muttering under their breath at you that you're an old sod or whatever, but you've just got to accept it. It's what the job is.

IL: Do you think it solves the problem?

A: No, not in the slightest. Moving the kids on from street corners and telling them to stop playing football? Not in the slightest.

IL: Do you think it's a police job?

A: Well, moving them on if they're causing a nuisance, yes, but again that's what we're here for I suppose. (*Male beat officer*)

The above account encapsulates perfectly the ambivalent character of police dispositions towards the policing of young people's collective use of public space. Such ambivalence couples a sense of *futility* with regard to police engagement with the issue, with a *fatalism* about the prospect of any more embracing (non police-centred) solutions. This dilemma is presently resolved in practice by an organisational requirement to 'do something now' in the face of the demands of local (and influential) police constituencies. The main outcome of this resolution however is to turn what is in effect a series of disputes about the legitimate use of local public space into a problem of 'law and order'. Once transposed into this interpretive frame of reference, the issue not only permits of no mediated resolution,

but is liable to sustain further relations of hostility and distrust between the police and young people.

Policing and Youth Victimisation

I don't think it's too much of a problem, not victimisation of youngsters, not really. (*Male beat officer*)

Police accounts of youth victimisation intimate strongly that officers minimally come into contact with young people as victims of crime requiring a police service. In an occupational culture that attaches great weight to practical 'common sense' such patterns of (non) contact are of some note, and officers' understandings of youth victimisation reflect in large measure this paucity of experience. The dangers confronting young people in public places are not for the most part apprehended by officers as a problem of significant proportions - or at least are not constituted as an integral part of an organisational reality oriented to responding to manifest demand:

IL: How much of your time is spent dealing with young people as victims of crime?

A: Victims. Oh....not very often.

IL: How big a problem would you say it is?

A: I don't have figures to hand obviously but from my own experience I wouldn't say we get more kids being the victims of crime than people in all other age groups, you know. I wouldn't say we have much to do in that way although obviously if they do report a crime, we would make investigations into it. (*Male beat officer*)

It isn't a problem because you know it goes on, but it's not reported to us as often as it obviously is happening. So unless we're told about it we're not going to look for victims. (*Male beat officer*)

Situated alongside these dispositions there exists a series of accounts that betoken orientations of a more cautious temper. Such accounts tend to be more cognisant of the fact that only a small proportion of the harm young people experience in public places is reported to the police (see below). As one officer commented: 'If they're not going to report it then we don't know exactly what's happening out there. We only hear about a very small percentage of it.' Recognising their ensuing dearth of grounded knowledge, several officers evince a more modulated approach towards the relevant issues - dimly aware of the existence of a problem, yet unsure of its magnitude and significance:

It's hard to say whether it (*youth victimisation*) ever all comes to light. This is the problem. A lot of it's probably happening. I mean, how much crime goes undetected? How much crime goes unreported? I don't know. (*Male area officer*)

IL: How big a problem do you think it is, young people's victimisation?

A: I think it's worse than our books show, definitely (...) Just talking to the kids in general, they're very loathe to report things. Okay, it's maybe only minor assaults, or wee sort of battles in the street, but they won't report it to us because there's gangs involved and they're afraid it'll go further.
(Female area officer)

Only a small minority of police accounts demonstrate any marked recognition of youth victimisation as an issue of concern. The solicitude of these officers towards the issue can be viewed as a product both of a more embracing occupational disquiet about the risks of Edinburgh city centre (especially at night), and the fact that this is perhaps the one locale in which officers are likely to encounter youth victimisation, irrespective of whether or not young people report it:

When you've got such a large number of young people coming into town, a certain percentage end up being victims, obviously. Again, assault and robberies, that kind of thing. There's a tremendous amount of fear within young people in the town centre of groups of gangs and the young people tend to be very very wary of these people.

(Male beat officer)

IL: How big a problem would you say young people's victimisation is?

A: I'd say it's a major problem in Edinburgh....I get the impression that people walk about Princes Street during the day and think this is a lovely town, lovely city, no violence here, you don't get any dossers, you don't get any tramps here. I wouldn't go up the town myself after ten on a Friday or Saturday night, I really would avoid it, unless I was working. I would make a conscious effort to avoid it....if you're going up town when you're sixteen wearing a nice leather jacket, people will rob you of that leather jacket. It's not an epidemic yet, but it's not far off it.

(Male beat officer)

One interesting and significant feature of police understandings of youth victimisation concerns the extent to which officers distinguish between 'legitimate' and 'disreputable' victims of crime.¹¹ Young people have in this regard conventionally been positioned outside the boundaries of what Christie (1986) terms the 'ideal victim'. Both public and criminological discourse about crime and the youth question have tended to view young people as 'trouble', as opposed to regular users of public space vulnerable to its attendant risks.¹² It is against this cultural backdrop that police officers come to apprehend the question of youth victimisation and forge occupationally relevant bifurcations:

11 The category 'victim' is seldom a clear and unproblematic one. Whether in terms of the individual reporting of crime to the police, or the place of various collective experiences on crime prevention policy agendas, the status of (legitimate) 'victim' is one that has to be earned, and the ease with which this can be accomplished varies among social groups. Some such groups - elderly woman being a prime example - fit easily into dominant conceptions of the 'ideal' victim, while others - for example, rape victims or young male victims of assault - experience much more difficulty in acquiring such a status.

12 With the important exception of child abuse, the recent upsurge in criminological and policy interest in victims of crime have largely ignored the question of youth victimisation. In a policy context, the recent Victim's Charter (Home Office 1990) makes conspicuously little mention of young people's experiences as victims of crime (Morgan and Zedner 1992b). (It should be noted however that the current sweeps of both the

I think the company they keep has a lot to do with it...If they say, 'I was out on the piss looking for a fight and got jumped', tough shit. But if the guy's walking along the street and he gets jumped for no apparent reason, the guy's not been in bother before and not looking for trouble, then of course your attitude to him is going to be different. It's difficult to keep a straight attitude to everybody once you've found out the circumstances or the background to it. It's not easy to keep the same attitude towards them all.
(*Male beat officer*)

One of the chief consequences of the police's routine experience (and understanding) of youth as 'trouble' is to significantly colour officers' apprehensions of young people's safety. In relation to their cultural perceptions of youth and social order, it means that officers effect a practical assessment of the validity of young people's experiences of crime according to the legitimacy of their use of public space. Police accounts more particularly suggest that officers situate youthful victimisation within the context of an occupational register concerned largely with inter-area rivalries and fights. One important consequence of such positioning is its contribution to a perception of youthful victimisation as mere 'kid's stuff' - trivial incidents (encountered during a passing adolescent phase) that have few either immediate or lasting effects upon young people's lives (cf. Anderson et al. 1990b: ch. 2; Morgan and Zedner 1992a: ch. 3):

A: I suppose you get them complaining about each other in terms of petty assaults and things like that, but these are the kinds of things that you don't submit reports about. Kids will be kids. Probably sometimes wrong, because no doubt there will be times when it's probably more serious, but you just treat it as though it's just kids and I think most of the time it's just kids being kids.

IL: How big a problem would you say it was, young people's victimisation?

A: It goes on, there's no doubt about it. Probably to most kids it's not a problem, or they get over it, but there's no doubt there are people who will be affected for life. That age shapes how you're going to be when you're older. (*Male area officer*)

IL: Would you say that was a big problem, young people's victimisation?

A: I wouldn't say it's a big problem, no. I think there's more inter-school rivalry than anything else. In most cases, it would be by youngsters from a different area or locals doing it to youngsters from a different area passing through. I wouldn't say it's a major problem. (*Male beat officer*)

Police accounts additionally suggest that such understandings may lead officers to view the deleterious consequences of young people's related collective loyalties and rivalries as in some way or other the responsibility of those involved (as Christie (1986) notes, an 'ideal

British and Scottish crime surveys encompass, for the first time, sub-samples of under sixteens.) In the criminological field, two recent exceptions to this general lack of concern include Anderson et al. (1990b); and Morgan and Zedner (1992a). The latter largely descriptive account is limited to youthful victims who report their victimisation to the police, and problematically relies for the most part upon the understandings of parents rather than young people themselves.

victim' must neither be complicit in the circumstances leading up to the offence, or have prior knowledge of their assailant). Youth victimisation may in this regard be perceived by officers as a further consequence of 'hanging around' with those deemed to be 'bad company':¹³

I would say that it (*youth victimisation*) is a problem, but it's a problem of their own creation. They tend to hang together with groups, maybe not large groups, a dozen kids together, the age group between fifteen and eighteen. Now these gangs hang about together all the time, but they're also fighting each other. (*Male beat officer*)

They know what their friends are like and what's going to happen when they get involved with that type of people, it's going to lead to crime, to somebody getting hurt. If they go out with so and so and they know he's a bit of a tough nut, situations arise where they get involved in fights or gang fights, and they're not as tough as he is and they get a doing or end up doing somebody in or having to do something they wouldn't otherwise do to prove how tough they are, that they're part of the team or the gang.
(*Male beat officer*)

The process of practically distinguishing between legitimate and disreputable victims operates in two further ways that are worthy of comment. In the first place, a number of police accounts suggest that officers' occupational understandings of victimisation are gendered in significant ways. Some of these accounts understand the risks of public space for young women to be entirely the responsibility of potential male assailants. As one male beat officer comments: 'The reason for violence is always the fact that it's the assailant, the guy that attacks the woman, it's not her fault, it's his fault.' More commonly however, such accounts evince a concern to 'educate' female teenagers about the dangers they face, or, by positioning their safety in the domain of sexuality, view young women as in some way responsible for their plight:

A: From a male's point of view, some of them I would say are asking to be sexually harassed because of the lengths of the skirts. You could turn round and say it's just the fashion, but they have to sort of come and go a bit and remember that because they're a young lady they're going to be a bit vulnerable there. Because basically it's the animal instinct in the guy.

IL: Do you think it's right that girls should have to worry about what they're wearing when they leave the house?

A: No, I don't think it's right, but there again one has to sort of not dress too over the top. I'm talking about bordering on the tarty sort of level. I'm not saying they should have to say, 'Oh wait a minute, I'd better not put that on I might get raped', but then again, they've got to have a wee bit of decorum as it were. Maybe it's my old fashioned point of view, but then again they've got to watch, because there are these sexual deviant types out there,

13 By contrast, a minority of police accounts significantly understand such collective practices to be an integral feature of young people's safety in public places. As one commented: 'I don't really think it's quite a big problem because mostly the kids will hang around in their own groups. It's very seldom you're going to get kids victimising themselves who are members of the same peer group.'

I'm not talking about guys like you and I. You've got to think about the weirdos. *(Male beat officer)*

The process of bifurcating victims according to their perceived responsibility for the incident can operate to the advantage of some youthful victims of crime. In particular, police accounts evince some sympathy towards those who are 'innocently' damaged by the collective internal practices of their peers. As one officer remarked: 'They're people who never have been in groups and they're looked upon as soft targets if you like. They go up the town and for one reason or other they get filled in by somebody, usually groups of youths.' Such sympathy may additionally be extended to include those victimised for wearing the 'wrong' clothes, or for being in an area to which they do not 'belong':

IL: Do you think young people bring these sorts of things on themselves?

A: Very seldom, I would say. As I said before, just probably what they're wearing or what area they come from is more to do with it than anything else.

(Male beat officer)

IL: Has your experience been that young people are ever to blame for their own victimisation?

A: Some might do....they go into an area that maybe is outlawed to them because they don't come from that part of the scheme. You still have that going on. You're a Niddrie, or a Bingham or wherever. What are you doing in this area, you don't belong here. *(Male area officer)*

Kids probably from the good class areas like Craiglockhart are more likely to be victims rather than the accused because many of the young kids there get picked upon. I probably have more cases of kids being assaulted for their pocket money or pushed off their bicycle and their bicycle stolen rather than them being the accused. Some of your streetwise kids from Wester Hailes will certainly pick upon these kids from the good class areas. *(Male area officer)*

As the last account suggests, current patterns of police-youth contact (and the perceptions of young people as 'trouble' that accompany them) constitute an interpretive lens through which police understandings of youth victimisation are presently filtered. While this can operate to the benefit of those apprehended as 'innocent' victims, it serves for the most part to adversely affect the interests of young people vis a vis policing. For it both minimises the overall impact that questions of youth victimisation have upon the police's occupational consciousness (and policy agendas), and undermines the claims that young victims are presently able to effect over police time and resources.

Police Perspectives on Reporting Crime

There's an unspoken law, you don't 'grass'. Every youngster you get in now, they don't 'grass', that's what they'll say to me. (*Male beat officer*)

The above considerations intimate that an integral feature of police officers' approach to questions of youth victimisation is their lack of practical knowledge of young people requiring a service as victims. The overwhelming majority of police accounts display in this regard a grounded recognition that most of the crime young people experience is not reported to them, and note what they view as a generalised reluctance among young people to communicate information to the police:

I think quite often you're banging your head off a wall sometimes asking them, although we do always ask, but nine times out of ten you know what the answer is going to be before you ask the question, you know. (*Male beat officer*)

I honestly can't remember the last time any youngster has volunteered any information to me regarding an incident. (*Female beat officer*)

In reconstructing the meanings of police accounts of this issue a number of contrasting strands can be identified. Some accounts for example discern youthful non-communication in generic (as opposed to police-specific) terms, and are cognisant of the reasons behind young people's decision to keep their experiences from the formal gaze of the criminal justice system. Police understandings of this generic non-reporting are dominated by two themes - fear of reprisals, and inconvenience and intimidation at the hands of the courts - corresponding to experiences perceived to happen most often to 'innocent' victims:

If a child is the victim of a crime or has witnessed a crime, he doesn't want to come forward and tell the police, because they know fine, they're either, one, scared of retribution or, two, they're going to spend days on end sitting in a court room. Who can blame them? (*Male beat officer*)

A: You go and talk to them, 'What did you see?' 'I didn't see anything.' 'But that's your mate lying there.' For several reasons, you don't want to be a 'grass' and they're also scared of the person who's done the initial crime, they could be the next one. Or if they've got to give evidence in court, they hate going up to court and I can't say I blame them. It's a total nightmare up there.

IL: Do you find it frustrating?

A: Yes, but you can also understand their attitude. If you live in this area and you witness something, 'If I tell anyone I'm going to get a doing, my tyres are going to get slashed, my family's going to get victimised because I spoke against that guy for doing it.' It's going to make you think twice. Of course you can understand it. (*Male beat officer*)

In relation to fear of reprisals, many police accounts manifest a further appreciation of the everyday reality of young people's lives. As one officer remarked: 'They go to school with

these people. They are walking along the street every day and they'll see them, so whoever it is they grass on is going to bump into them sooner or later.' In particular, they understand that in circumstances where young people are in proximate routine contact with one another, the consequences of involving the police can be both immediate and recurring:

When you approach a victim of a crime and ask them if they know the identity of the persons, nine times out of ten they do but they are very reluctant to come forward and volunteer any information because they're terrified of the reputation these gangs have....Edinburgh being a small place, young people want to concentrate in the town centre, St. James (*shopping*) centre, Waverley Market, the Bridges, wherever, and they know if they turn round and shop people who assault and rob them, they're terrified they're going to meet them again, there's every likelihood that they're going to rub shoulders with them again in the future. This is where the tremendous fear is.
(*Male beat officer*)

In this regard, many police officers share concerns that are prominent in the accounts of young people. They recognise in particular that reporting victimisation to the police can - by evoking reprisals - amplify the consequences of the original incident:

In certain circumstances when the police get involved it just makes the problem worse....I've seen it happen where he (*the offender*) just goes back and assaults the person again. Whereas if the police aren't involved they might not. What does the victim do in those circumstances? (*Male beat officer*)

I'll never, ever pressurise anybody into being a witness. They've got to live there twenty-four hours a day. It's not easy, if the you're frightened about people nearby or in the area. I don't think you can browbeat them into it (...)
We can't protect them twenty-four hours a day, however much other people may say so. I think that's a fact of life. (*Male area officer*)

With regard to the prospect of appearing in court, police accounts evince some considerable sympathy both for young and adult victims alike. An integral feature of such sympathy is that officers recognise much of the frustration and anxiety that accompanies both milling for long periods in and around courts, and the ensuing experience of proffering evidence. This occupational disquiet is easily transposed into an empathy for 'innocent' victims and witnesses who might suffer a corresponding fate:¹⁴

There's definitely an intimidating thing about going to court. I still feel sometimes, I feel sick before I go into court, it's a horrendous thing, I must admit. As soon as I stand up in the witness box I'm fine, but the feeling before you go into court is horrendous, it's not a nice feeling at all. The whole thing about officialdom, for a lot of people it's too much hassle for them. (*Male beat officer*)

14 It is noticeable that no officers express analogous concern for victims and witnesses who may have to endure a similar process inside the police station. Police officers effect in this regard a cognitive distancing of the police from other institutions of criminal justice constructed as an 'obstacle' to the process of prosecution.

These dispositions - rooted as they are in experiences with which officers condole - evince a certain appreciation of young people's decisions not to involve the formal criminal justice system in their lives. They must be situated however alongside a further series of understandings that attach the phenomenon more closely to young people's discrete youthful experiences of the police:

It's a possibility that they don't want to help us, even stemming back from our younger days if you kept getting moved by the police you'd not bother telling them: 'I saw nothing, I turned my back at that particular moment.' (*Male beat officer*)

You hope that someone will step in and give you a hand. But if that person walking along the street had dealings with the police before and they weren't treated very well, they might say, 'Stuff them' and walk off. (*Male beat officer*)

A number of officers associate non-reporting of crime in this more specific regard with a passing adolescent phase during which young people do not want to be seen to be helping 'authority'. While comprehensible when viewed from a police standpoint, the effect of such an understanding is to render youthful perspectives both transitory and not in need of any serious consideration (enacting in the process a police variant of popular perceptions of many 'youth' issues), as well as rationalising a paternalistic desire to 'educate' young people about the importance of helping the police:

I think with young people there is an attitude that you don't want to be seen talking to....I think it comes down to authority figures. I think people go through a stage where they think they're rebelling against authority, they might never actually do it, and the police come top of the league as far as authority figures are concerned, then you work your way down to social workers etc. So I often think maybe it's a thing against authority, they don't want to be seen co-operating with the authorities.
(*Male beat officer*)

Young people's reluctance to communicate information to the police is in this context apprehended as a problem in need of some remedial attention. In particular, it is experienced by many officers as a source of considerable vexation - both in terms of the impediments it places in the path a successful prosecution, but also because of the limited steps officers may invoke to overcome their predicament:

It can be quite frustrating, yes, because it makes our job a lot harder, you know, and you are maybe looking to solve a crime which you want to solve because every policeman, no matter what some people say, they always want to get to the bottom of it, you know. There's nothing better at the end of the day than getting whoever has committed the crime and put them in front of the court. So, obviously, every obstacle that's put in your way, whether deliberately or not, by these people makes it more awkward and obviously that's frustrating. (*Male beat officer*)

It's upsetting because as I say, if I think it happened to them they'd be only too willing to help, you know. I mean there's nothing you can do. Obviously you can under criminal justice if it's a serious enough crime, but if it's sort of trivial I don't think the fiscal would bother. You could get their names and addresses and give them to the fiscal and get the mighty weight of the law down on top of them. But if you did that for every instance, the fiscal service is snowed under as it is. They would be tearing their hair out even more if you decided to do things like that. It's annoying. *(Male beat officer)*

The corollary of this frustration is that many officers take a dim view of young people's reluctance to pass on information to the police and attempt to promote reporting as a social practice. Such pedagogic policing - oriented to steering young people out of what one officer described as their 'socially unaware phase' - can be pursued both informally by 'becoming known' to young people through routine contact, as well as by means of formal programmes such as schools liaison schemes. Such endeavours tend in this instance to be viewed by officers as anticipating a return to halcyon days when young people knew and respected the 'local bobby':

In that way the kids actually do see you in a different light and then they realise you're just another member of the human race, you're not the pig as they all refer to you as. I know fine that I can get information from the kids that I've got to know fairly well. The kids have on occasions asked to see me because of something that has occurred but that has only happened through hard work by myself in getting to know the kids.

(Male area officer)

I refer back to what I was saying, becoming an identifiable character with the young people, and if they feel they can trust you they will then impart their knowledge to you. *(Male beat officer)*

This is why we're trying to get back into the schools. Certainly, for a long time there was a gap there was a period where we weren't going into schools and speaking to kids. We would go into the classrooms and give talks, they can ask us questions about anything. That was missing for a long time. They didn't know us, they didn't know that you can go and speak to the police and they'll do whatever they can to help you. Hopefully that's all going to change.

(Female area officer)

These police-specific perceptions ultimately appear to hold a stronger place in police officers' dispositions than those evincing a sympathy for young people's decisions not to report crime (though police accounts also suggest an ambivalence among many officers towards the relevant issues). Police officers retain in this regard a police-centred interpretive grasp on the problem of youth victimisation - not surprisingly perhaps in an organisational culture where arrest and prosecution is so highly prized. This understanding manifests itself most evidently in police officers' belief that reporting crime to the police is

beneficial, and that young victims render themselves a disservice by keeping quiet about their experiences of crime:¹⁵

If they're reluctant to report it, that person or persons who have committed that crime have got away with it and the victim's then out of pocket or he's been injured. I mean they're the losers, we're not the losers, I would say, as such, albeit we haven't got the person for the crime but that's a numbers game in some respects, but the victims themselves are the losers because they're not willing to come forward. (*Male area office*)

This police-centred understanding of youth victimisation (and reporting) further serves to reinforce the dominant negative view among officers of young people's collective internal practices. Already situated in a register of experience and apprehension signalling 'trouble', such practices additionally come to be viewed in this context as an obstacle to police efforts to tackle juvenile (and other) crime. As one officer disparagingly put it: 'Oh yes, this is the thing. You can't grass on your mates, and all this.' In this context, many police accounts demonstrate the strenuous efforts some officers employ to break down this wall of youthful silence about crime. A number of officers suggested in particular that they endeavour to elicit information outside of situations characterised by the 'paradox of face', where young people feel obligated to display their invulnerability vis a vis the police in front of their peers:

But I think if you get a young person on a one-to-one basis, or two of them, any more than that and they're not going to speak to you at all, because they're going to try and live up to their friends, this code of not grassing and things like that (...) If we know they're part of a group that hang about, we can go to their house and speak to their parents, ask them if they know anything, what happened, and generally they're not too bad. If their parents are there they encourage them to speak as well. (*Male beat officer*)

They all do it. They'll all grass, but they just don't want to admit it and they don't want to be seen to be, so you've got to attack it in a different way now. You've got to make sure they're not seen to be a grass when they're actually doing it. (*Male beat officer*)

Such dispositions may of course hold a rational kernel situated in officers' routine experiences of groups of youths (many young people can, for example, generate excitement by 'acting up' in front of their contemporaries). However, by taking such a universally negative view of these youthful understandings, dominant police perceptions fail to recognise the ways in which collective practices and loyalties both strategically protect and existentially empower young people in situations of routine danger and

15 The majority of police officers thought that the chief service the police could offer young people as victims of crime is to arrest and prosecute the culprit. As one officer commented: 'As far as giving them support as victims, the only way we should get involved is try and detect the offenders.' The reading of youth accounts presented in the previous chapter suggests that this preoccupation is one of the main impediments to young people reporting crime, for it is the process of prosecution that serves most to amplify the consequences of victimisation.

structured marginalisation. As such, they serve as practical testimony to the fact that - in circumstances that permit little sustained communication outside the context of fleeting street encounters, and where officers evince an associated understanding of young people's collective use of public space as 'trouble' - broader appreciations are difficult to develop and sustain.

The chapter begins with a detailed analysis of the contemporary situation facing young people's social practices. The purpose of the chapter is to offer a reading of both youth and police practices of everyday social practices, with a view to exploring how the relationship between them is shaped by the differential nature of all-white and multi-ethnic communities that accompany various post-school trajectories. By drawing the accounts in this narrative form, the chapter explores the different ways in which young people and police officers make practical sense both of young people's emerging use of public space, and their consequent experiences and understandings of crime and justice. In this context, the analysis is particularly concerned with the impact of different youth identities, the nature of police-youth relations and the possibilities of democratic representation.

The chapter focuses itself in this regard with young people's and police officers' accounts of youthful practices where streets become contested terrain, and with accounts how frequently they are shaped within a process of ongoing change, rather than one of structural determinism. The 'contested' nature of such practices furnish the relevant conceptual accounts with a non-linear character that contrasts sharply with traditional youth-practice models of relatively collective identity practices. The analysis thus emphasises the role of the contemporary for democratic representation of both the professional practices of police and youth practice of resistance from school, as well as their interrelationships.

The chapter is divided into two main sections:

- (i) an exploration of how various vocational paths from full-time education are understood by mapping the relationship between youth social practices;
- (ii) an exploration of how police and youth interpret their actions in the context of young people's experience of the police.

YOUTH SOCIAL PRACTICES IN TRANSITION

I propose now to shift the substantive enquiry towards an analysis of the consequences that transitions from full-time education have upon young people's social practices. The purpose of the chapter is to effect a reading of both youth and police accounts of existent social practices, with a view to apprehending how the relationship between them is shaped by the differential access to allocative and authoritative resources that accompany various post-school trajectories. By situating the accounts in this interpretive frame, the enquiry explores the different ways in which young people and police officers make practical sense both of young people's changing use of public places, and their consequent experiences and understandings of crime and policing. In this context, the analysis is particularly concerned with the impact that different youth transitions have upon police-youth relations and the possibilities of democratic communication.

The chapter interests itself in this regard with young people's and police officers' accounts of youthful transitions whose ultimate destination remains uncertain, and such accounts consequently need to be situated within a process of ongoing change, rather than one of practical reflection. The 'unfinished' nature of such processes furnish the relevant contemporaneous accounts with a conjectural character that contrasts sharply with (especially) youth understandings of erstwhile collective internal practices. The analysis thus endeavours to explore the consequences for democratic communication of both the propositional character of police and youth accounts of transitions from school, as well as their indeterminate nature.

The chapter is divided into two main sections:

- (i) an exploration of how various vocational paths from full-time education are understood as reshaping the relationship between youth social practices;
- (ii) an elucidation of how police and youth accounts make sense of the changing nature of young people's experience of the police.

'Ragged' Transitions and Changing Social Practices

Everybody wants tae better their self, everybody. They all want to be better than the next, it's all wrong. It's competition. Keeping up wi each other, man, it's raj (*stupid*), it disnae make sense. (23 year old male, *Niddrie*)

Youth accounts strongly intimate that, for many young people, the most urgent effect of leaving full-time education is to rupture both materially and symbolically their reliance upon collective internal practices. For school provides the principal institutional mechanism underpinning the collective use of public space, and its removal serves to fracture the informal loyalties and understandings that sustain such practices:

IL: What sort of places did you used to hang out?

A: Doon by the old railway. They've made it into a park. We used to go there.... We used to drink there and everything. We used to sit doon, have a laugh and that. It wis barry (*good*).

IL: What's different now, why don't you go down there any more?

B: We've all split up, everybody's all split up. If you go doon just yoursel it's no so good. (16/18 year old females, *Leith*)

The further material consequence of leaving school is that it brings with it responsibilities - such as those of work and family - that render collective practices both more difficult to pursue and less homologous with young people's concerns. As one sixteen year old female remarked: 'The 'casuals' are all settling doon and having bairns and that.' Even the most 'diehard' members of the 'football casuals' are perceived in this context to grow out of such practices - a perception tempered however by the realisation that a new cohort will emerge to replace them:

There's a guy in Penicuik called Crazy, that says it all (...) He was really pretty bad. He was sort of the top man and he was pretty young for a top man. I think he wis aboot seventeen when he wis top man. He's nineteen now and he's totally given up, just like that. He's in a job now, and he doesn't want tae lose it through a stupid fight. But when all that generation leaves you get the others comin up and they'll start joining. Then say they leave the next one will come up, so there's always going to be 'casuals'. There's always gonnae be groups like that. (16 year old male, *Gorebridge*)

Youth accounts additionally suggest that these material changes are accompanied for many young people by a developing sense that 'hanging around' the streets is culturally inappropriate. As one twenty year old male reflected: 'I think I grew out of that years ago. It's kids stuff.' One illustrative feature of this disposition is the incredulity young people express towards those deemed to persist unduly with such youthful endeavours:

IL: Do you still spend a lot of time hanging about the streets?

All: No.

A: I ken a boy that does it and he's twenty-three years old, a boy called Tommy, have you ever heard of Tommy and John.

IL: Do you think he's a bit old to be doing it at that age?

A: Well, do you no? (16/18 year old males, Dalkeith)

One interesting and significant dimension of this symbolic fragmentation of collective internal practices is that young people 'grow out' of the petty delinquency that can make 'hanging around' in public places such fun. As one twenty-one year old male recalled: 'We used to be a wee bit wild you know, me and my pals, we used to smash windees, kick in cars, put darts in car tyres, broken bottles, things like that. We used to do that, but that was in the past. Now I've grown up a bit. It's just calmed down.' One aspect of this learning process is the practical cognisance that - once you pass sixteen - such delinquency is likely to occasion a more serious and formal response from the criminal justice system - a prospect which seems out of proportion to what young people apprehend as trivial occurrences:

IL: When you say getting into crime, what do you mean?

A: Just breakin into places an that. No shops an that, warehooses. For a laugh, like....

B: We stole a big charity bottle once, we wernae proud of that like. It wisnae actually oot a church, it wis a church's bingo place. It wisnae nothin tae brag about. We got charged for that.

IL: So what's the difference when you get to sixteen?

B: Because you're older, you dinnae dae wee bairnish (*childish*) things, and you get put away, no one wants to be in jail, no danger. (16 year old females, Leith)

A: I used to be a thief like but I stopped when I was sixteen. Fifty-four charges between when I was thirteen and sixteen, but I've never been in trouble since.

IL: Why?

A: Well when you're thirteen to sixteen, you ken you're just going to go to the panel, 'slap, slap, don't do it again you naughty boy' all that kind of shit. But once you're over sixteen ken, you just end up in Glenochil or Saughton.

(17 year old male, Niddrie)

From the standpoint of democratic communication, the importance of these accounts concerns the extent to which they evince a more distant and reflexive series of dispositions towards collective internal practices - dispositions suggesting that older teenagers may be more willing to engage in mutual dialogue about relevant issues than youths whose identities still depend upon collective loyalties and understandings. Such reflections additionally suggest that these youthful identities are both transitory and possessed of an illusory coherence. Defensive loyalties to place and football club - and the narratives of exclusion which surround them - may it seems be a product of what Matza (1990: 50-9) once described as the 'situation of company'. Thus as one erstwhile 'casual' reflects: 'I've nothin against other teams really, its just that you're with a group and if you dinnae go you're called chicken an all that, so you just tag along; I never actually got into fights.' In

this regard, the following account offers an illuminating retrospective on the informal pressures that provide collective internal practices with their apparent and fugacious unity:

It's a very hard place to make pals in, unless you've got the reputation of being a fighter. If you've got a reputation of being a fighter, everybody wants to be your pal. But if you're just a fuckin idiot, everyone just ignores you - 'Oh he's raj him.' It's the same everywhere, the same at school, it all starts when people are young. That fuckin word 'coward' should be taken oot the bible an all. Young laddies getting called cowards - 'If you don't dae it you're a coward.' It should be taken out of the dictionary, that word, because there's no such a thing as a coward. A coward is an intelligent person as far as I'm concerned. It's your brain tellin you no to dae it. But other people are tellin you to dae it, so you fuckin just dae it to be in the gang an that. It's all wrong, it's all wrong. (23 year old male, Niddrie)

The fracturing of collective internal practices instances the onset of a more general differentiation of young people's experience. The most significant determinant of such differentiation concerns the fact that the transition to full-time employment that marked much of the post-war period (for young men at least) has been fractured, and replaced by a series of 'ragged' transitions (Wallace 1987). It is now increasingly possible to speak analytically of a divide between what might be termed *inclusive* and *marginalising* transitions from school (that is, full-time employment or education for some, coupled with intermittent and uncertain periods of work, training and unemployment for others), the effect of which is to surpass the age-related marginalisation of 'youth' with a process of differential access to allocative and authoritative resources (Giddens 1984: 33). This analytical distinction serves - for the purposes of the present enquiry - as a way of obtaining an interpretive hold upon various youth transitions, and a device for making some meaningful sense of youth (and police) accounts of such transitions and their effects.

(i) The Meanings and Effects of Inclusive Transitions

For a majority of young people, a range of individual external practices offer an educational or vocational path out of school that transforms their relation to existing social relations and institutional arrangements in significant ways. Such practices provide - either through access to work, or further and higher education - a transition from school holding out the prospect (either imminently or in the future) of greater access to allocative resources. For some, individual external practices involve an intermediate passage to further and higher education, and a number of youth accounts suggest that this individual external practice is pursued with a clear and long-term anticipation of the future:

IL: What do you want to do when you leave school?

A: I plan to do one of two things. To get a degree in Physics and Computer Science or to get a degree in Aviation.

IL: How long have you wanted to do that?

A: It'll take about three years but I've not got bad grades. (16 year old male, Broughton)

IL: What have you been doing since you left school?

A: I went to the U.S. for a couple of months, came back and started uni....I went to a fee paying school so its all geared towards going to uni. I'm doing History and Philosophy. (19 year old male, Broughton)

An important characteristic of higher education is that it delays the acquisition both of the possibilities and constraints connected with employment. In this sense, the pursuit of such education represents less of a radical break than other youth transitions, in so far as the informal (collective) networks and practices associated with school are easier to sustain:

IL: How has your social life changed since you left school?

A: It's not really changed a lot. When you're in sixth year you tend to keep together and it's the same crowd I hang out with. The guys who are in the band I'm in are older than me, so I've known them for a couple of years, so I hang out with people who are a couple of years older than me at least. I still go to the same pubs, it's not really changed. (19 year old male, Broughton)

This temporary suspension of economic security is compensated for in a number of ways. Not only is such independence traded against the prospect of a more prosperous future career, it is also coupled with an increasing measure of social and cultural autonomy. For while further education constitutes a 'limbo-land' between school and employment, it tends to be both a product of choice, as well as an opportunity for young people to develop and sustain new social practices and existential identities. Many of the immediate difficulties associated with such identities revolve in this regard around obtaining access to cultural outlets (such as pubs and clubs) that are off-limits to young people under eighteen, or of finding facilities appropriate to an interim status:

IL: How has your social life changed since you left school?

A: More clubs and stuff, but not that much. But you've got to be eighteen to get in or twenty-one. There's nowhere for under eighteens. (...) I'm sixteen and I dinnae look any older, and so it's hard for me to go places where all my friends are going.

IL: Do you think there's enough for young people to do round where you stay?

All: No, no, no.

IL: What sort of things would you want that there isn't at the moment?

B: More social clubs for young people. Discos where you dinnae have all the wee bairns runnin about. Folk over sixteen and under eighteen can get intae withoot all the wee bairns running around. (16/7 year old females, Gracemount)

Student identities have for these reasons the same 'inclusive' quality as those of young people whose social practices come to be structured around full-time employment. The prime importance of work is that it provides young people with the key to a range of allocative resources and the resulting prospect of independent consumption. Such

resources may serve additionally to permit access to autonomous domestic space, and the security and autonomy such space provides enables young people to reduce their reliance upon public space, and develop (positive) individual practices and identities around the domestic sphere.¹

Youth accounts suggest that the prime force of the disciplinary routines of work is to condition in significant ways the meaning of 'free-time' and temporally circumscribe the consequent use of public space. One of the pivotal effects of this process concerns the enlarged importance that comes to be attached to the 'weekend':

IL: How do you find your lives have changed since you left school?

A: I've changed what I do at weekends and that now, cos the weekend is more important cos I'm workin.

IL: In what sort of ways?

A: Well, you sort of look forward to weekend, whereas at school you got out at four o'clock and had the rest of the day. Now it's five o'clock you get out of work and you get home about five-thirty and have your tea and only have a few hours.

(16 year old male, Penicuik)

This temporal focusing of the use of public space is accompanied by a simultaneous expansion and contraction of the spatial use of city spaces. Young people's use of urban public places tends to encompass a more regular use of the city centre (for the purposes of work, consumption or entertainment). As young people's use - and cognitive maps - of the city consequently expand, so the 'locality' comes to occupy, both existentially and strategically, a less prominent position in the experiences and understandings of older teenagers. This process is accompanied moreover by the almost complete termination of a dependence on the unstructured use of public space (the streets are transformed in this regard from a site of compensatory entertainment to one used for mere functional passage), as young people's social practices are undertaken in a more circumscribed range of sites - such as pubs and clubs:

IL: How much has your social life changed since you left school?

A: I go to some night clubs on a Friday, Saturday. Go to the pub. I just go out wi my mates.

IL: Do you go into the city centre at all?

A: On a Friday night I'll go to a pub then I'll go to a club, same on a Saturday. And on a Sunday I'll just stay in bed. That's my weekend for you.

(17 year old male, Fairmilehead)

1 While access to autonomous private space is important in this regard irrespective of gender, its meanings and consequences differ markedly for young men and women. In relation to crime, the acquisition of private space considerably reduces the likelihood of victimisation for men, while placing women in an environment where they are perhaps more likely to experience violence (Kinsey and Anderson 1992: ch. 4).

For the purposes of the enquiry at hand, I want to focus analytical attention on two features of these accounts of inclusive transitions, and raise a number of questions about their relationship to existing youth practices and understandings. It should be noted in the first instance that this confluence of work routines, autonomous private space and access to leisure facilities, serves to limit young people's reliance on the routine dependence on public places and consequently tempers their experience of some of its attendant risks. In particular, it eliminates many of the mundane risks connected with young people's erstwhile collective internal practices and cumulatively reduces a central component of young people's experiences of routine victimisation in public places. As one twenty-one year old male reflected: 'I used to get bother, but no now. If you're sixteen, seventeen, eighteen bracket then you do get a lot more bother than you do now.'

This time-space concentration of the risks of public places is born out by a reading of pertinent evidence from recent crime surveys. The Edinburgh crime survey found for example that a disproportionate amount of offences against the person are concentrated in the city centre, an overwhelming majority of which (for example, 85% of assaults) occur after nine o'clock in the evening (Anderson et al. 1990a: ch. 5).² The latest sweep of the British crime survey (Scotland) largely echoes this picture, finding that the victims of offences against the person in public space are usually young and male, with sixteen and seventeen year old males most often the victims both of assault (29% of victims) and threatening behaviour (14%) (Kinsey and Anderson 1992: ch. 4).³

The British crime survey also explored - in a manner relevant to present concerns with inclusive and marginalising transitions - some aspects of the relationship between class, place and male violence. In the first place, it found the incidence of using public places to be related both to age and affluence - with 45% of males earning between £10-20,000 per annum having 'very active' social lives (defined as going out three or more times a week), compared with 34% of those under £10,000; and that those with 'very active' social lives are three times more likely to have been a victim of an offence against the person (12%) than those who venture out infrequently (4%).⁴ It was the nature and impact of these offences however (rather than their incidence) that suggested the most pertinent class

2 The victims of personal crime were most commonly found to be men between the ages of sixteen to thirty; though it should be noted that 66% of young women had encountered harassment by men while out in the city centre (experiences that were far more evenly distributed throughout the day).

3 In total, 51% of male victims of these offences were under twenty-five, compared to 32% of women. A high proportion of this male violence took place in the street (25% for men, against 9% for women) or places of public entertainment (18%, compared with 9%). The survey additionally found that in 80% of cases, women victims of assault and threatening behaviour were attacked by men, and that the majority of female victims knew all (71%) or some (7%) of their assailants. 24% of these incidents took place inside the home.

4 In total, 50% of those in the higher income bracket had been victims of offences against the person, compared with 26% of those in receipt of a lower income.

distinctions. For those earning between £10-20,000 were more likely than those on a lower income to be victimised by an unknown assailant, outside the immediate vicinity of their home; and less likely to be either the victims of incidents involving a weapon, or have occasioned serious injury or lasting emotional effects as a result of their experiences (Kinsey and Anderson 1992: 44-6).

These findings suggest that one of the chief criminological consequences of inclusive transitions is that young men at least come to experience routine danger most frequently at the hands of strangers, in city centre public spaces, during weekend nights out. It is in this context that older teenagers are required to revise their pre-existing youthful understandings of the city to accommodate new dangers and experiences.⁵ As collective internal practices recede in importance from young people's lives, they leave behind a reservoir of memories and apprehensions about public spaces and their attendant risks. To this received understandings young people attach new meanings and forge new collective and individual routines for coping with danger - such as going out with friends, avoiding 'dangerous' streets, pubs and clubs, and taking taxis home (cf. Anderson et al. 1990a; Stanko 1990a).⁶ This process gives rise in its turn to a practical consciousness that manages newly discovered sources of 'trouble' by merging residual understandings of the city with new experiences and apprehensions of risk:⁷

We dinnae go up Rose Street, coz we had a bit of trouble there with some guys. We got jumped. He wanted my leather jacket. It was 'casuals' ken, Hib's 'casuals'. I was walking down Rose Street and the guy came up to me, and just kicked me right there and I folded. He's trying to get my jacket off me. I got up and said, 'I'm no wanting any trouble', started walking away. So me and my mate started walking away and he starts following us, trying to push us. He was drunk. My mate said just go away before trouble starts ken, and he's turned round and punched my friend in the jaw. Then he punched me and

5 One of the most interesting facets of youth accounts in this regard is their suggestion that childhood and adolescent experiences may play a significant part in constituting emerging 'adult' dispositions towards the city, and represent central building blocks in how urban spaces are re-made and re-imagined during the life-course. (Stanko 1990a: ch. 4). This issue cries out however for systematic research (and a methodological imagination) oriented to exploring the ways in which people's personal histories and future aspirations determine perceptions of urban well-being, safety and order.

6 It should again be noted that the fear of sexual assault radically alters the meaning of city centre spaces for women, thereby conditioning their movement through them.

7 Two important points should be noted about the relationship between crime and the use of public places - one methodological, the other substantive. In trying to determine the relative place that crime and policing occupy in youthful experiences and understandings two research options present themselves: one is to talk generally about relevant issues and enable interlocutors to raise such concerns as and when they see fit; the other is to enquire more directly about issues of crime and policing. For reasons of research economy, the present enquiry opted for the latter and it ought to be noted that such a strategy runs the risk of privileging the significance of crime and policing in young people's lives. It may well be that anxieties about crime and policing represent a minor constituent of many young people's decisions about whether or not to use public places. The more substantive concern falls beyond the remit of the present enquiry but remains worthy of comment. For it is important both for sociological and criminological research into public provision and the use of city spaces to take seriously the positive attractions offered by the private sphere and its pleasures, and not merely to assume *a priori* that a failure to take advantage of public amenities (because of anxieties about crime or not) necessarily represents some kind of failure of modernity.

kicked me in the head. I got up and Tony, my friend, tried to grab the jacket off him, cos he was trying to get me jacket and he slashed the jacket, wush! It was a nice jacket, fifty odd pounds, just slashed it. So I went to this skip, cos they wouldnae stop following us - about three or four of them. We weren't wanting trouble ken. I went to this skip, got this big corner of pavement. He wouldnae go away, so I said right I'll fight you, and I chucked this thing at im and it hit him in the leg. And C.I.D. were across the road watching, so we got charged with it, me, Tony and Sam got charged with assault. He got what he deserved. We got a good hefty fine.
(20 year old male, Craigmillar)

The second consequence of inclusive transitions is of a somewhat different (though related) order, and concerns the manner in which - in the context of existent social relations and institutional arrangements - conventional economic transitions privilege the practices of consumption (access to allocative resources) to the exclusion of questions of citizenship (access to authoritative resources). Successful external individual practices largely constitute in this regard a move towards what Habermas (1975) terms 'civic privatism' - a term referring to how increasing access to autonomous domestic space, independent consumption and cultural facilities, serves to compensate for the limited opportunities existent liberal democracies offer their citizens to participate meaningfully in institutional processes of public decision-making (vis a vis the police and other public services).

It is in this interpretive context that it is necessary to situate the alienation from the political process evinced by the overwhelming majority of youth accounts. As one eighteen year old tersely put it: 'What politics, it's rubbish man. It's a load of crap.' Such cynicism is demonstrated most prominently in youthful apprehensions of conventional party political processes - whether national or local:

IL: Did you vote in the last council elections?

A: No. It's not worth it. I won't be voting again either.

IL: Does it make any difference who you vote for?

A: No coz she always gets in anyway. I hate her. She needs a bomb stuck up her arse.

IL: What about if the Labour party got in. Would that make any difference?

A: Na, coz they're even worse. (21 year old female, Craigmillar)

IL: What about national politics?

A: Just all half wits, dreary old men shouting yeh! yeh! yeh! I certainly don't have a lot of time for any of them. They just talk a lot of drivel. There's nothing that really affects me. (20 year old male, Niddrie)

Such understandings are additionally reinforced by the more specific impression that young people's concerns are excluded both organisationally and symbolically from the political process - a perception strongly manifested in the received youthful reflection of one eighteen year old female that: 'Nobody's prepared to listen; they think we're all the same. You're all classed as riff raff.' The effect of this dominant apprehension is that any

youthful interest in politics comes to be tinged with the recognition that young people lack any 'political clout':

Who's going to listen to you if you're sixteen years old? All right, you're sixteen, you've got nowhere to go, what can we do about it? And it's not just hanging about the streets, it's a lot of things (....) You could write to the council, to your councillor. He'll listen to you, fair enough but there's nothing you can do. A lot of sixteen year olds demanding rights and stuff they're going to say: 'So?' If we had somebody on our side who was powerful it would maybe help. (*16 year old female, Portobello*)

In this context, inclusive and marginalising transitions alike constitute a passage into the mechanisms of 'thin' democracy (Barber 1984), and youth accounts can be interpreted as evincing a practical cognisance of the effects of existent mechanisms of this character. For they demonstrate above all that by the time that young people acquire the political rights associated with formal citizenship, the exclusions of 'youth' may have already engendered among many a marked apathy towards existent political institutions and processes.

(ii) The Meanings and Effects of Marginalising Transitions

It's alright round here if you got a job. If you havenae got a job, you start going a wee bit crazy. Folk on the b'reau (*social security*), they'll go downhill, they'll steal, things like that. That's what worries me. (*20 year old male, Craigmillar*)

The contemporary demise of full employment has meant that increasing numbers of young people leave school facing the prospect of intermittent periods of unemployment, training schemes of casual work.⁸ In this context, individual external practices - rather than transforming significantly young people's status vis a vis existing social relations and institutional arrangements - serve largely to accommodate them to the material position of their parents, and reproduce existing patterns of economic and social inequality (thereby rendering them 'internal' in their effects). Such post-school trajectories function in other words to surpass the age-based exclusions of 'youth' with a class-based deprivation both of allocative and authoritative resources, and it is within this interpretive frame that it is necessary to locate youth accounts of this process and its effects.

⁸ Since the Conservative government withdrew social security from sixteen and seventeen year olds in April 1988 (Harris 1988) youth training schemes have become a compulsory part of the transition from school for young people unable to find work. The official objective of youth training is to provide young people with the (transferable) skills necessary for them to be 'flexible' commodities in a retracting labour market (the assumption being that youth unemployment is a product of supply side deficits), and its legitimating rhetorics maintain that individual young people can - as long as they are sufficiently single-minded - equip themselves for the most adverse economic circumstances. Phil Cohen (1984; 1990) has argued that this 'new vocationalism' is integral to a process of separating the notion of 'skill' from specific trades and replacing it with the concept of abstract and transferable skills - the effect of which, he contends, is to diminish the power of the collective worker and increase that of the symbolic individual.

The overriding consequence of youth unemployment is to defer the economic independence proffered by work and position young people in a 'suspended animation' that prolongs their dependent adolescent youth. In contrast to the positive 'limbo-land' of further and higher education, unemployment brings forth a period of sustained uncertainty that holds out few prospects of a different let alone better future. By withholding the key to financial independence, youth unemployment both minimises the opportunity for young people to secure a separate personal household -thereby prolonging their dependence upon parents (cf. Wallace 1987: ch. 4), and precludes young people's entree to the domain of independent consumption (Willis 1984a):

Money is the in thing. Without money you're nothing. (23 year old male, Niddrie)

A: £29.50, then £33.00! Slave labour.

IL: Do you have to pay digs and that?

A: A tenner. And I've got five pound for my catalogues, an that.

B: My mum disnae take digs fae me.

IL: Are you still staying at home?

C: Aye. (17 year old females, Craigmillar)

Y.T.S. its just to get young folk off the street and onto Maggie Thatcher's slave labour. £28-50 a week! What could you buy with £28-50? (17 year old male, Craigmillar)

The exclusion generated by such poverty is perhaps one of the most immediately felt consequences of youth unemployment. For it deprives young people of access to a range of amenities that the transcendence of an age-based marginalisation would otherwise open up to them (and to which their peers may now have obtained an income facilitated access). A number of the accounts of unemployed youth evince a particular concern with this facet of economic marginalisation:⁹

IL: Is there anything to do for young people round here?

A: They've got the complexes like Megabowl and that down there. That's nae good to us, we're only making £29.50 a week. You can spend that in twenty minutes down there, ken what I mean. (17 year old male, Craigmillar)

It's shockin, there's nothin in it for any person here. What do we dae? Come up here (*the unemployed club*) every Wednesday, that's it. (19 year old male, Niddrie)

9 The deprivations of unemployment can be accompanied by a further cultural disadvantage. As one twenty year old from Niddrie commented: 'The worst thing is people's attitude towards unemployed people. They think we don't want to work, we're lazy, dole scivers. I think the attitude should change.'

The economic and cultural marginalisation associated with youth unemployment imposes significant restrictions on young people's access to all kinds of city centre facilities (in Edinburgh, such prohibitions are intensified by the spatial segregation of the city, and the concentration of unemployment and poverty in the city's peripheral housing schemes). One principal effect of this spatial isolation is that the 'locality' continues to occupy a prominent place in the lives of many marginalised young people - both as the site of mundane activities and as an integral part of their reconstituted youthful identities.¹⁰

One significant correlate of this geographical isolation is to restrict young people's social practices to local entertainment facilities. Evidence from the latest British crime survey (Scotland) again make suggestive reading in this context, finding that male victims of assault in receipt of less than £10,000 per annum are more likely both to know their assailants, and to be attacked in the immediate vicinity of their home. In 32% of cases of threatening behaviour for example, victims in this income bracket knew the offender well, compared with 2% of victims earning more than £10,000. What is more, poorer victims of offences against the person are also more likely to be involved in incidents occasioning either serious injury or greater emotional impact (Kinsey and Anderson 1992: 44-6).

These findings intimate that one of the criminological consequences of marginalised transitions is to render young males more likely to occasion (serious) violence in local public spaces. For though the relationship between poverty, unemployment and violence among young men is complex, one plausible interpretation of the above evidence is that male violence in poverty is both a product of - as well as a contributor towards - the pressures of coping with economic marginalisation (cf. Campbell 1993):

People have got a lot of problems. Like if I go out and drink, it's just to forget for a wee while, have a good time, just dinnae think about all you're problems, just drop them just fer the one night. Just get drunk. But then you start remembering things, coz when you're drunk you get all sentimental and you start thinking about it, and then one thing leads to another and you get arguments breaking out, and then suddenly because you're drunk, you get aggressive, your moods change really fast when you're drinking. That's how fights break out, and then things get thrown about the place, and if somebody gets scaled accidentally, then there going to get up and punch you. It just happens.

(18 year old female, Niddrie)

10 One adverse economic consequence of the externally apprehended relationship between identity and locality concerns the increased difficulty that young people from Edinburgh's peripheral schemes experience in obtaining work once their place of origin becomes known to prospective employers. As one seventeen year old recalled: 'My mate went up for a job interview and as soon as he says he wis fae Niddrie they said, 'We'll get in touch.' But he's never heard. Its just where you come from. If you come from Niddrie, it's got a bad reputation....But you cannae judge a book by its cover, you cannae tell what a person's like just by where they come fae, ken whit I mean?'

Some youth accounts also suggest that youth poverty and unemployment can occasion a range of 'retreatist' individual internal practices (Merton 1968: ch. 4), focused on the leisure pursuits of the home and engendering an increasingly privatised and isolated existence (the ironic consequence of such privatisation being that it serves to remove - young men at least - from public places in which they are likely to experience victimisation):¹¹

IL: Is there enough to do round here?

A: Nothin but sport, pure boredom. That's what's caused all the drugs, nae place to go or anythin.

IL: How do you pass the time?

A: Watch the telly, that's it. (*19 year old male, Niddrie*)

IL: What sort of things do you do in your spare time when you're not here?

A: Lie in my bed.

IL: Has your life changed at all since you left school?

B: From bad to worse.

IL: Why do you say that?

B: Oh, just that there's nothing to dae about Niddrie. You just need a bit mair money an that. (*16/18 year old males, Craigmillar*)

A further and perhaps related feature of this spatial confinement is to engender among some unemployed youth a prolonged dependence on collective internal practices and the unstructured use of public space. In the context of unemployment, 'hanging around' in groups in the streets and shopping centres provides an additional means both of passing the time and generating the occasional excitement. However, as class-based exclusions supersede those associated with age, the meanings of these related collective practices change in significant respects. Instead of being about 'messaging around' with friends, or the adolescent exploration of urban spaces; hanging around the streets or browsing around the citadels of urban consumption become 'culturally inappropriate' means of killing endless time (Willis 1984b):

You dinnae ken how bored you can get just walkin about all day. It's unbelievable. You start getting into a certain frame of mind where nothin matters.

(*18 year old female, Niddrie*)

Youth accounts finally intimate in this regard that, for some young people, the economic and social pressures of marginalising transitions can engender a more serious involvement in crime of various kinds. Such involvement can be interpreted as a range of individual internal practices oriented to coping with structured exclusion from allocative and authoritative resources. In the first place, a number of accounts suggest that the use of drugs can represent one means of surviving the monotonous routine that so often

¹¹ Youth accounts suggest that this reliance upon the private sphere is reinforced for some unemployed young women by the difficulties of freeing themselves from the responsibilities of teenage parenthood. As one eighteen year old commented: 'I got these two. It's hard getting baby sitters fer two babies.'

accompanies such exclusions - though not one without considerable adverse consequences upon young people's lives:

- A: If you're in Bingham and you want to be somewhere else, you just hallucinate. We were in Bingham but I though I wis in Niddrie. God, it's barry (*good*). There was this hill right, and it wis a big high hill and this escalator took us up the hill. It wis barry. And then we thought we seen a barbed wire fence but it wisnae, it wis just in our imaginations. Just when went doon. It wis barry.
- B: I just smoke hash and that's enough for me. And drink. Drink and smoke it at the same time, that's awful.
- C: It's fuckin horrible. You feel like you're being sick and cannae stop. You've nowt left in your stomach and you're trying to be sick. (*16 year old females, Niddrie*)

For some marginalised youth, the local drugs market holds out the prospect of acquiring material resources not open to them through conventional routes. Thus as one twenty-three year old commented on the drugs market operating within one of Edinburgh's peripheral housing schemes: 'They're local people. It's people from outside who are supplying the stuff, it's local people that are dealin it and taking the fuckin drugs. It's like a fuckin supermarket isn't it? You've got to go to shops to buy your food, you've got to go to some houses to buy drugs.' For some, such trafficking may constitute the only available means both of acquiring the trappings of material success and earning the 'respect' that is deemed to accompany them - even if this betterment is secured at the expense (and hostility) of others:

Drug dealers are respected by a certain majority of people because they've got a nice car, a nice house, they've got plenty money. It's how much money, not who you are. You're street-wise, put it that way, you're street-wise if you've got plenty money. You're fuckin betterin yourself and all that shit, ken what I mean? It's all wrong. There's ways of earning money legal but you can earn a fortune out o drugs if you go about it the right way. But they should all be hung, drawn and fuckin quartered as far as I'm concerned. The whole lot of them. The bastards, especially hard drugs.
(*23 year old male, Niddrie*)

Some youth accounts additionally intimate that utilitarian crime provides an individual internal practice with which young people are able to manage their structured marginalisation. In this context, an engagement with increasingly serious forms of economic crime may again serve as a means of easing - and perhaps even transforming - material disadvantage:¹²

12 The experience of either being involved in - or benefiting from - economic crime can evince contrasting responses from young people. For some, it can generate a host of moral dilemmas and require the mobilisation of a range of 'techniques of neutralisation' (Matza 1990: ch. 3). As one eighteen year old recipient of stolen goods put it: 'I dinnae ken, there's a split sort of loyalty here. I can go out and I ken people I can buy claethes dead cheap, cos they came off the back of a lorry as they say. I mean that's good for me in one way, but ken it's not right to go stealing and breakin into things in other ways.'

Cheque books. Even when they've been reported stolen. Me and this lassie Julie, we went down to Cameron Toll (*shopping centre*), and took oot something like £1.500 in instant credit in Dixons. We also took them to London wi us as well, coz that's the easiest place in the world. You know the change bureau, well see if you keep a cheque under £50 they dinnae phone up. It's their own stupidity. And you get to know all this. Like you go into a shop with a visa card they phone up after £50, you get to know it all. (...) You usually just buy things with the books, like tvs and videos and anything that's easy to sell. Cos then there's no comeback sort of thing. (*19 year old male, Broughton*)

The final individual internal practice oriented to coping with material exclusion is evinced by a single account of male prostitution generated in the interviews. An involvement in prostitution can be interpreted in this context as representing a practice of 'last resort' - only entertained following a whole series of 'ragged' post-school uncertainties:

I went on a Y.T.S. catering, I was on that for about eight months and then I packed it in. Then I went back to the voluntary, then I got E.T. when the E.T. came in, but it was just slave labour again, I wasn't treated with any respect so I packed that in. I've had odd jobs like in chip shops, looking after an old man who was disabled, looking after bairns. When I moved into Leith I started dabbling in drugs or prostitution as well, like going up the hill, and I still do it, like Monday was the last time I was up there.
(*19 year old male, Broughton*)

Against the backdrop of these alternatives, prostitution is apprehended as just another job, and one moreover that offered good working hours and the occasional 'perk' (such as meals out, or the intermittent acquisition of expensive clothes). However, the account also evinces a grounded recognition of the limited capacity of such practices to transform material circumstances. Indeed, such work had bought with it considerable adverse consequences for the young person concerned, both in terms of violence from pimps and having to endure unwanted clients and activities. Prostitution can thus be interpreted as akin to other individual internal practices oriented to 'surviving' in the city, in so far as it represents a coping practice that itself has to be coped with: the 'solution' ultimately becomes the problem:

A: When I'm up that hill when I get in the cars, It's like, 'I must be something else' ken what I mean. I know he's just thinking o me as just another....not even thinking o me as a face probably, but you have to get a wee bit of a good expectation when you get in the car sometimes. Think to yerself, 'I must be amazing.' You have to coax yerself up sometimes. And sometimes yer just think, 'Ah! I can't be bothered wi it.'

IL: What do you do when you feel like that?

A: You just go through with it. You just shut yer eyes. Sometimes I just stop halfway through and say: 'Stop, I cannae handle this let me out the car.'

(*19 year old male, Broughton*)

Policing and Youth Transitions

I want now to focus attention more directly on the relationship between policing and youth transitions. One of the most immediate effects of the fracturing of collective internal practices is that it serves both to reduce markedly police-youth encounters in public places, as well as reshaping their character in significant respects. The nature of these shifts can be gauged in part from recent survey evidence of both adults and young people in Edinburgh (Anderson et al. 1990a: ch. 5; Kinsey 1992: ch. 2):¹³

Young People's Adversary Contact with the Police

	Moved on/Told off	Stopped and Q'tioned	Stopped and Searched	Stopped in a Vehicle	Arrested/ Detained
U-16	44	25	13	-	10
16-30	-	9	4	18	-
Male U-16	55	31	19	-	13
Male 16+	-	10	4	18	-
Female U-16	32	19	6	-	7
Female 16+	-	2	0.5	7	-

These findings are echoed in a number of respects in the accounts of police officers. Many such accounts indicate, not only that older teenagers occupy a less prominent place in routine police workloads, but also that police contact with young people in public space becomes increasingly concentrated in both space (the city centre) and time (during Friday and Saturday nights):¹⁴

Normally prior to nine o'clock you'd be busy with say ten to sixteen year olds. After that time, maybe the sixteen to twenty-one year olds. They don't seem to appear a great deal earlier, I mean, they're there but they're not really causing us a problem.

(Male beat officer)

Up the town, on a Friday, Saturday night there's very often youngsters, sixteen to seventeen up to early twenties who are out and they get a wee bit too much to drink and get into trouble. *(Female area officer)*

¹³ The data for over sixteens is drawn from the Edinburgh crime survey and covers contact occurring in the twelve months prior to the interview; under-sixteen contact with the police covers a corresponding nine month period. No comparative data is available for three of the categories.

¹⁴ Among young people over sixteen, 49% of those stopped and searched and 47% of those stopped and questioned, were apprehended in Edinburgh city centre (Kinsey 1992: ch 2).

Police accounts demonstrate in this regard a more specific apprehension of the way in which transitions from school bring forth a significant differentiation of the nature and meaning of police contact with young people. In particular, they evince an experiential recognition that, in the years following the end of full-time education, the police encounter the majority of young people on a less frequent basis, while engaging in contact of a more serious nature with a small minority:

What you find happens is that around twelve, thirteen, fourteen there's usually a mass of them and they're playing football, hanging about the street, maybe involved in petty shoplifting, which is a silly phase they go through, a bit of bravado. But when they get into their later teens, you are dealing with a hard core if you like, because you get the same ones over and over again. They tend to be the ones that have diversified from being just a nuisance to breaking into cars or stealing cars, or breaking into shops etc., so they've gone towards a criminal life if you like. (*Male beat officer*)

The remainder of this chapter is concerned with this process of differentiation. It explores how officers apprehend inclusive and marginalising youth transitions, and how various post-school trajectories transform young people's experience and understandings of policing. The explication accords particular attention to the ways in which the mix between the service and control dimensions of policing experienced by younger teenagers is displaced and (partially) reconstituted along class lines.

(i) Policing and Inclusive Transitions

As an organisation with strategic objectives, the police occupy a distinct position with regard to youth transitions - particularly in relation to teenagers who are apprehended to be on the verge of crime, yet still capable of being 'saved'. In this context, police accounts demonstrate that officers mobilise a range of formal and informal strategies aimed both at promoting individual external practices and securing the production of 'good' citizens. The formal dimension of this pedagogic process is encapsulated in schools-liaison schemes, and more particularly, in the person of the juvenile liaison officer, one of whose tasks is to steer young people away from 'trouble' and onto the 'right' path out of school:

My job is to give them a talking to, try to point out the seriousness of their actions. I have their parents present always, and we have a very high success rate. It gives the children a chance to tell me their problems and it gives the parents a chance to bring up anything that's happened since the last offence. (*Male juvenile liaison officer*)

In their routine contact with young people, police officers may also employ a range of more informal pedagogic strategies (see the discussion in chapter five). Those apprehended to

have a minor investment in crime are particularly targeted in this regard, and proffered with what one officer described as 'general common sense guidance' about their future:

I normally stress to them, 'now look, this time next year you'll be looking for a job. Would you employ anyone who has committed a crime of theft? Would you then regard them as trustworthy?' They obviously answer, 'No, I wouldn't.' Well, then I would say, 'Well why should someone employ you if you've had a previous finding of guilt for theft or a previous conviction of theft.' If the kid is just on the fringe of crime, I would say there's a good chance of that kid listening to you. (*Male area officer*)

In advocating the virtues of individual external practices, officers are engaged in a process of bifurcation - selecting and then focusing upon those thought amenable to what is deemed as good advice. As one officer put it: 'If I feel that they're receptive, I'll have a go. There's others just won't listen so I wouldn't waste my breath to be honest.' Officers thus operate with a series of working predispositions that function to distinguishing the 'good apples' from the small minority who may lead them astray:

A: There are occasions when you're dealing with kids who are just starting out in crime, say, or have just done something stupid. You help them.

IL: What does that mean in practice?

A: You can advise them. Quite a few of the kids we get go into shoplifting, for example, because the other kids in school do it. It's well worthwhile taking a bit of time out to chat to these kids. I think quite a lot of them listen to what you say. We're talking about kids here from respectable backgrounds and going to good schools.

(*Male beat officer*)

In an occupational context concerned predominantly with the 'trouble' generated by adolescent males, this pedagogic process tends to be oriented to steering young men away from crime. Young women presently feature in police consciousness largely in relation to their impact on the behaviour of their male peers, and in this regard, police accounts evince a marked shift in comprehension as a consequence of youth transitions. Among younger teenagers, police understandings strongly focus around the perception that girls are in some way or other implicated in the activities of boys:

I must say I don't have a lot of dealings with young girls, but I can guarantee that the guys that are with them will be committing some crime. They'll have knowledge of it but they'll not be taking part in it as such. (*Male beat officer*)

The number of fights you go to where there's a couple of guys fighting and there's women there egging them on. It's because of these women that these guys are fighting. And that's the worst, because you get there and the women turn on you. And the two poor guys knocking lumps out of each other because of this woman are the ones who are going to get arrested because they're fighting in the street, yet it's the women who have caused it. (*Male beat officer*)

The effect of transitions from school in this context is to alter the occupational apprehension of young women away from that of *agent provocateur*, towards one of 'civilising' influence - hastening the path of disordered young men towards an inclusive transition. Young women remain nevertheless fixed in the police world according to their impact on the actions of young men, rather than in terms of their own experiences and concerns:

In my experience it's amazing the calming effect, especially for guys, young lads that have been involved in crime, it's amazing the transformation when they get a woman and get involved and have a family. It's amazing the calming effect the woman can have. Even the big so-called hard men. (*Male area officer*)

In the context of the present enquiry, a number of important points can be furnished about the meanings of these accounts: in the first place, it is evident that police officers understand such pedagogic practices in an instrumental fashion - as a one-way process of instruction aimed at the production of specific ends, and oriented towards young people perceived for the most part as empty vessels into which 'good' advice can be poured. More substantively, it is ironic to note that an institution (and occupational culture) that prides itself on a down-to-earth pragmatism operates with a series of voluntaristic and idealised conceptions of how young people can become productive citizens.

Perhaps the most significant policing effect of inclusive transitions is that young people begin to see the control dimension of police practice recede in importance from their lives. As their unstructured dependence of public space decreases, and is redirected towards the use of specific cultural amenities, their contact with the police is rendered both more incident-related and less concerned with the routine moral policing of the streets: in short, older teenagers are reconstituted by officers as sporadic 'offenders' rather than routinely 'offensive' (Ericson 1982).¹⁵ In this regard, one consequence of inclusive transitions is that young people may generate different meanings vis a vis their adversarial contact with the police in public places. A number of youth accounts suggest for example that those young people who continue to encounter sporadic trouble with the police may - in the context of the newly acquired disciplines of employment - come to view the experience both as chastening and not to be repeated:

I wis comin oot the a pub we used to drink in and I wis walkin doon the road and we were singing and that and I wis shouting 'Pigs' and they got oot the car and started chasin me. It wis snowin an that and I thought, 'Well, I can either

15 The one dimension of inclusive transitions likely to intensify police-youth contact revolves around the access young people acquire to the use of cars (see above table). One twenty-one year old male reflects on his experiences of this change as follows: 'I've been stopped and I'm no jokin, in ma car at least about twenty-five times and telt tae bring up ma gear up tae the polis station. A young policeman that I ken and I got talkin tae kept saying to me, 'Get rid of that car.' He thought I shouldnae be in that car because I wis too young to drive a car like that. But I'd passed my test and paid ma insurance, and I had as much right to drive on the road as anybody else.'

keep on runnin' and I thought I'd get away fae him, but when you've had a good drink, ken, I wis feelin a bit worse for wear. So I said, 'Right, I'll just pretend that I fell.' They took me to the cells and I spent the night in the cells. Never again, Jesus! There was this boy sittin greetin (*crying*) all night, I wis goin spare. I had my work in the morning. Three o'clock in the mornin they let me oot. (21 year old male, *Gorebridge*)

The concentration of police-youth contact within discrete locales and on more specific incidents may additionally contribute to this changing attribution of meaning. Thus a number of youth accounts suggest that contact with the police experienced during weekend nights out may occasion both more 'respect' from the officers concerned, as well as a grudging recognition of police legitimacy on the part of young people:

IL: Did you explain to the police what happened? (*He had been attacked by 'casuals' and retaliated*)

A: Aye, but they didnae belief us. He hit me first, but the police didnae see that. So we got charged for it.

IL: How do you think the police treated you?

A: They were good. They werenae good at first, but that's to be expected. They were expecting trouble from us. Cos we got in a taxi and drove away, got stopped up the road by the police. We got taken to the polis station and they were alright. They were a wee bit ignorant at first. But we got talking to them. They never done anything violent or that. We were let out in the morning and that was it. I've not heard nothing since.

IL: Do you think the police should be involved in something like that in the city centre?

A: Of course. Like I'd want them to be there, ken if I was getting battered, I'd want them to split it up. I'd want them to stop it. Some o them are alright, some are then aren't. (18 year old male, *Craigmillar*)¹⁶

Inclusive transitions may also have a number of consequences for young people's understandings and use of policing as a service. For as collective internal practices fracture, and the control dimensions of policing recede in importance from young people's everyday lives, the specific reasons for not apprehending the police as a service decline in significance. Moreover, as young people come to acquire the material trappings associated with employment (and are constituted as part of the 'silent majority' so central to the legitimation of police policy and practice), they may become increasingly willing to mobilise 'abstract systems' of protection such as the police (Giddens 1990).¹⁷ One particular irony of inclusive transitions in this context is that young people may come to

16 Compare the character and understanding of this incident with the account of a skirmish experienced by the same individual some three years earlier: 'I was coming from a football game, I dinnae support football, I'd just been to this one game, this was years and years ago, I was ready to cross the road, they said, 'You're going in the back of the van.' I said, 'What have I done?' 'Nothing, but you're goin in the back of the van', and he started hitting my elbows against the parked car - bang! bang! - kept hitting them. I was fifteen at the time. They put me in the back. Took me up to the High Street and they kept trying to charge me. But they wouldnae touch my mum, And she came up and proved it and I got let away.'

17 Though a range of generic reasons for not reporting crime may persist, as might (young) people's reliance upon informal mechanisms for the routine production of personal security (cf. Shapland and Vagg 1988).

demand the routine control of the very social practices that used to be so central to their lives and identities:

A: I mean there's young guys playing football, playing till one in the morning outside the hoose, and I'm in my bed trying to sleep. I'll shout at them and sometimes I phone the cops, cos they winnae move ken, they'll just stay and give you abuse. They won't give me abuse, but they'll give other folk abuse, young women and that. And the cops come and they do get moved, but there always there the next night.

IL: What should the police do in that situation?

A: Just talk to them, cos they've got a wee bit of authority, so they move. Or if there no moving, they get done with loitering - loitering with intent, or breach of the peace.

(21 year old male, Craigmillar)

(ii) Policing and Marginalising Transitions

The flip side of the pedagogic promotion by the police of individual external practices is the positioning of some young people as unreceptive to the police message. A number of police accounts suggest in this regard that officers understand youth transitions in terms of identifying those young people who are not 'listening' to police admonition, and earmarking them for closer - and increasingly formal - attention:

You go home with them and see their parents and sometimes you feel as though you have a chance there. But I would say in the majority of cases, you feel as though that's it, we've dealt with them, they've been reported or whatever and before you know it, they'll be back up again. *(Male area officer)*

I give kids a lot of advice regarding their future but there's some of them you'll find that their future is bleak and they will continue to commit crime and in another few years they will definitely be in some form of penal institute whether it's Polmont or Saughton. *(Male area officer)*

A minority of police officers evince a complex understanding of both the reasons for - and consequences of - marginalising youth transitions, as well as displaying some appreciation of the problems they engender for young people. As one officer commented: 'There's not a lot, especially for the fifteen to eighteen age group where they've just left school. They've still got all their friends around, but they haven't got jobs. That's a very difficult time for them. There's that gap of a few years where they get a wee bit lost.' Such empathy is even on occasions accompanied by a apprehension of youth crime and disorder situated beyond a narrow a 'law and order' paradigm:

A: These Newcastle riots the other day, there's this whole Government thing saying, 'They're just hooligans, that's the end of it, full stop.' That defeats the purpose of actually trying to find out why it happens, because it's just putting it into black and white. Yes, maybe they're young hooligans, but why are they young hooligans, why were they chucking bricks?....I don't want to sound like I maybe should go and work in the social work

department, coz I don't. But I'd say ninety percent of the people that I arrest and detain, are okay. I understand quite a lot of them steal stuff, it doesn't excuse it but you can see it, understand why they do it.

IL: Why do you think it is then?

A: Theft? Social problems, there's no doubt about it. And because they live in a shitty place like Craigmillar where, because of a lack of investment, lack of resources, they live in this shitty place and that's what they get into because everybody else is doing it. So it's no good saying they steal because they're drug addicts so they're bad people. We know a lot of drug addicts are bad people. But there's a lot of MPs that are bad people; places like Niddrie or Craigmillar don't have a monopoly on bad people (...) You've got to address the root cause. There's no point in just saying, 'They're just all buggers and they should be locked up.' As I say, they are little buggers, but why are they little buggers? You've got to ask yourself why they're doing it. (*Male beat officer*)

Such dispositions represent a minority theme within police accounts of this issue. Police officers more commonly come to apprehend the criminological consequences of marginalised youth transitions in a very occupationally specific (and classicist) manner; viewing the changing forms of police-youth contact in terms of individual choices and failings (understandings that render the police's job vis a vis unemployed young offenders both meaningful and palatable). Thus the marginalised youth who come to occupy a central place within routine police workloads tend to be perceived by officers as a small 'hard-core', increasingly set in their (criminal) ways and unwilling to heed good advice:

I can't think of one person who I've spoken to who has done an about-turn and gone the right way. Once they're in, they're in deep. They'll not change their ways. That's young folk as well as older people. It's quite disheartening. (*Male beat officer*)

You're wasting your time, you're never ever going to convert them. (*Male beat officer*)

These perceptions involve officers bringing to the fore a range of understandings (regarding, for example, class locale and parental background) that are held in abeyance while young people are 'growing up'. As youth social practices are no longer registered in terms of the 'natural exuberance' of adolescence, a small 'hard-core' of young offenders are re-positioned by officers as the (now) 'responsible' products of local criminal families:¹⁸

With certain families you can see it happening. You can see where the big brother's seventeen, the younger child's three. The older one's been committing crime and you can see the younger one coming up, by the time he's ten he's been charged with a couple of offences. I've seen it in one family,

18 In this context, the practices of working class teenagers may be understood by officers as fragmenting into a broader class culture that is hostile and anti-police. As one female officer remarked: 'We're the bad people in the world. It's just the way the kids have been brought up, if you like. They don't like the police in this area. You get the occasional ones who are for the police, but a large percentage don't want to have anything to do with the police.'

every one of them has come to the notice of the police year after year. It starts off with running away from home, then minor crime, then more serious crime. (*Male beat officer*)

Quite often their parents are in trouble with the police themselves, you know. Quite often. You get families....we can trace it right up to maybe a grandfather being a persistent, not so much serious offender, but forever getting in trouble with the police. (*Male beat officer*)

As police officers come to view these 'regular faces' as a small 'hard-core' of serious offenders, so the dominant themes that inform the routine policing of younger teenagers are stripped of their paternalism, and marginalised youth are reconstituted as 'police property' in a more unqualified fashion. In this context, the demise of the children's panels can have a particular - both instrumental and symbolic - significance. In a situation where juvenile 'offenders' may have already acquired a considerable 'informal' record in the eyes of police officers (one that, unlike its formal counterpart, is not wiped clean at sixteen), a sixteenth birthday can be an event of some import in the lives of many excluded youth - a moment whose force is appreciated by both the police and young people alike:

You've got to realise that you get some people at fifteen who are hardened criminals. Nobody will admit this, but people in the system are marking time waiting for them to reach sixteen. (*Male juvenile liaison officer*)

A: Ken whit they done? They ringed his sixteenth birthday on the calendar so they could get him in and leather him, I'm tellin you it's the truth.

IL: How did you find that out?

A: Because they telt him, 'Wait till you're sixteen you wee bastard, we're going tae kill you!' (*16 year old females, Craigmillar*)

The effect of marginalising transitions upon the pattern of police-youth contact may also signal a shift in the understandings of young people towards the police. A number of youth accounts for example made reference to what is apprehended as the increasingly stringent regulation of young people's use of public space. This intensification of police control is particularly likely to affect the minority of youths who persist with collective internal practices past the age of sixteen. For in the context of marginalising transitions, groups of older (unemployed) teenagers 'hanging around' tend to be understood as 'out of place' by police officers, cognisant both that young people ought to have 'grown out' of such practices, and that they lack the disciplines of work:

A: They shouldnae be doing the things they are doing. You could be standing at the corner right not bothering anybody and they come along and its, 'Fuck off away fer here.' But you're not doing nothing. They're treating you like shite.

B: But we are shite to them. (*21/2 year old males, Wester Hailes*)

Marginalising transitions may also lead new meaning to be ascribed to existent policing practices. Thus for example, what police officers understand to be appropriate and occupationally-based precautionary routines may - in the context of the asymmetries of power engendered by marginalising transitions - come to be viewed by the youths concerned as undue harassment:

I was doon Milton Road last week, Duddingston Road, outside the big hooses. I stopped in ma van to check a noise out, what happens? Polis stopped right behind me, never said what's wrong wi your van - 'What are you doing stopping in a neighbourhood like this?' ...They asked me where I come fae first and I told them I stayed at Niddrie Marischall - 'Oh aye, what are you doing stopping at this particular house?' I said, 'If you think the hoose has been broken into, go and check it.' And they did! That wis as soon as I mentioned I wis fae Niddrie. (23 year old male, Niddrie)

Not all young people who experience marginalising transitions from school find their contact with the police exacerbated. Young people who adopt 'retreatist' individual internal practices for example are able to insulate themselves in large measure from such contact. 'Retreatist' social practices are especially likely to occasion diminished contact with the police in this regard, both in so far as they signify a resigned accommodation to existent social and moral order (rather than a symbolic threat to it); and because by engaging their leisure pursuits in the private sphere, young people avoid situations where they are likely to be considered 'out of place.' The police in these circumstances have neither reason nor opportunity to 'remind' marginalised youth of their class predicament:

IL: Do you think the police treat people differently here?

A: The police are never away from here. But I've never had any dealings with the police so I couldnae really answer that....I just keep myself to myself. (20 year old male, Niddrie)

A: I've been in quite a few fights like but no since I left school. But that's all stopped now.

IL: What's changed since you left school?

A: Suppose you mature when you grow up do you know? I still like to have a laugh and that. I like a smoke o the hash, but as long as the polis dinnae find out it dinnae bother me. (18 year old male, Niddrie)

The coercive dimensions of policing are by contrast likely to intensify for those who engage in individual internal practices oriented towards more serious forms of crime. The process of transition can in this context involve marginalised youth in learning to cope with routine experiences and problems that most of their contemporaries will never come to witness - such as police stations, courts and penal institutions.¹⁹ In these circumstances,

¹⁹ The following accounts of police stations involve young people talking about their personal experience and can be analytically distinguished on this basis from the more general 'horror' stories about police stations that circulate among young people. These experiences are however transmitted in narrative form and may

young people acquire a practical knowledge that endeavours to make sense of a cumulatively more serious enmeshment within the criminal justice system - including, for example, an experiential recognition of the material isolation and powerlessness associated with the police station:²⁰

There was four of them all questioning me at the same time all related to one another. It was like they'd put all these questions into a hat and they'd all pulled them out. Four of them firing questions it was like fuckin *Mastermind*. Very intimidating. We were in this wee square officey thing in St. Leonards right. You were the only one on that side of the desk and these other four were on the other side, like an audience. All sitting in front of you all firing questions at you. Very, very intimidating (...) They can be bastards if they want to. Like when they've got you in that police station, you're powerless, there is nothing you can do. Nothing, zilcho. They can do away with you like that and nobody would know. They could cover it up nae bother. You're in there on you're own. (19 year old male, *Broughton*)

One further consequence of the prominent and intensified place that the police come to occupy in the everyday lives of marginalised youth is that an understanding of policing as a force comes to govern youthful thinking and practice, and in this context, the specific reasons for not mobilising the police as a service take on an amplified force. For while young people who experience inclusive transitions are increasingly understood as 'respectable' complainers, marginalised young people - as they descend into the category of 'police property' - remain illegitimate victims in the eyes of the police. Among some, a practical cognisance of this is a consequence of a fleeting experience of the police as victims of crime:

See I was in a fight...on Thursday right, it was like three Glaswegian boys and they said, 'how you doing big man' and they started going on and a fight broke out, but when the polis came in right, I was the one with all the cuts on my faces, but I was drunk, and I was told to, 'fuck off, before we charge you wi breach of the peace and that' and my girlfriend was there and I had other witnesses, cos I was just sitting there with ma girlfriend, and they came in a started mouthing off. But when the polis came in they told me to fuck off or I was getting lifted. But if I go and punch somebody, they're going to believe that person before they believe me cos I got previous. But on Thursday, I should have got them charged...I dinnae like the polis.
(22 year old male, *Wester Hailes*)

consequently come to condition the overall 'picture' of policing held by a wide range of teenagers (see chapter seven).

²⁰ Even in a location where the asymmetries of power are as marked as they are in a police station, the 'dialectic of control' (Giddens 1984: 16) between officers and suspects is never entirely elided; for the latter can develop both a knowledge of, and mechanisms to influence, the actions of their guards. As one nineteen year old put it: 'You get the good cop and the bad cop, the one that's givin you the fags and the one that's shouting at you. Everytime. No matter if you go in twenty-five times in a day it's always the same, always, always, always. And you just sit there and laff coz you're so used to it: "So you're the good cop and you're the bad one, so can I have a cigarette now then please." They just laff at you and they just stop their wee act. But you've got to let them know that you know or they'll just continue it. Sometimes you just play along wi it, sometimes it's good. You do get a laff when you play along.'

These respective accounts provide a limit example of the ways in which marginalising youth transitions generate connected experiences and dispositions that render young people and police officers increasingly and mutually 'Other' - thereby placing further barriers in the path of democratic communication. For when the inequalities occasioned by existent social relations engender experiences that place increasing strain on police-youth relations, apprehensions supportive of mutual dialogue are difficult to sustain. On the one hand, a small number of 'hard-core' offenders are increasingly constituted within police understandings and practices as an object of regulation; while youth accounts testify in a similar manner to how the police come to be viewed as one of young people's routine problems. In the context of poverty and unemployment, these problems demand not merely democratic communication with the police, but a transformative eclipse of the police's prominent place in the lives of marginalised youth.

The chapter is particularly concerned to scrutinise both the empirical possibilities for generative communication, and the understandings of its nature. In particular, it examines the ways in which the police and youth accounts of subjectivity, while in relation to one another, also serve to reproduce and reinforce of how existent institutional relations produce discourses and stereotypes that hinder mutual dialogue and collaboration. In this regard, the chapter brings into the possibilities of collective critical practices and serves as a bridge, at between the substantive chapters of Part Two and the preliminary of Part Three.

The chapter is divided into three sections:

- (i) an exploration of young people's 'political philosophies' of policing, focusing on youth accounts both of the police function, and of 'good' and 'bad' policing;
- (ii) an analysis of police accounts of the nature and meaning of communication with young people, and the ways in which these accounts are produced;
- (iii) an exploration of young people's meanings of the possibilities for relations and dialogue via a via the police.

YOUTH, POLICING AND COMMUNICATION

I want now to bring to the fore a number of substantive themes that have been alluded to at various points during the previous three chapters, and render more explicit connections between the explanatory and normative dimensions of the substantive enquiry. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on youth and police accounts with a view to eliciting the prospects for - and obstacles to - mutual dialogue between young people and police officers. Within this interpretive frame, the analysis explicates the ways in which young people understand policing as a social phenomenon, as well as exploring how - in the context of current social relations and institutional arrangements - young people and police officers apprehend the nature and meaning, both of existent and prospective communication.

The enquiry is particularly concerned to scrutinize both the empirical possibilities for democratic communication, and the consequences of its absence. In pursuance of the former, the analysis explores the reciprocities evinced in police and youth accounts of relevant issues; while in relation to the latter, it endeavours to make some meaningful sense of how existent institutional relations generate dispositions and stereotypes that render mutual dialogue more difficult to accomplish. In this regard, the analysis brings forth the possibilities of collective external practices and serves as a bridgehead between the substantive enquiries of Part Two and the prescriptions of Part Three.

The chapter is divided into three sections:

- (i) an exploration of young people's 'practical philosophies' of policing, focusing on youth accounts both of the police function, and of 'good' and 'bad' policing;
- (ii) an analysis of police accounts of the nature and meaning of communication with young people, and the possibilities it offers;
- (iii) an elucidation of youth understandings of the possibilities for redress and dialogue vis a vis the police.

Young People's 'Practical Philosophies' of Policing

Anybody who says we dinnae need the polis is a fool. Because you need the polis, you need the fuckin fire brigade, you need the ambulance, because if there wisnae people would be kickin in doors and rapin people. Murders, stabbings, rapes, pillaging, gang bangs and everything. You need the polis, there's nae question about it. As much as you hate them, you need them. (23 year old male, *Niddrie*)

I want in this section to effect a creative reconstruction of youth accounts of policing that is able to transcend the common sense notion that young people are blanketly 'anti-police', and explore instead their ambivalent and contradictory understandings of the police as a social institution. In so doing, the analysis is concerned to situate the propositional content of youth accounts within the context of the social relations and institutional arrangements about which they attempt to make some practical sense. It is divided into three sections each covering a discrete yet related dimension of the issue at hand: namely, young people's accounts of the police function, and their experiences and apprehensions both of 'good' and 'bad' policing.

(i) Minimal Policing?: Youth Perceptions of the Police Function

Notwithstanding young people's routine adversary encounters with police officers, and their practical aspiration to minimise their contact with the police, youth accounts overwhelmingly evince an acceptance of the police as an institution. For some, such dispositions are indicative of a Hobbesian world-view and a cognate belief that the police are required to hold the social together. As one seventeen year old male put it: 'If there's no polis force man, all the shops would be getting panned and people would be stabbing each other to death and all the rest of it.' More specifically, the police are deemed necessary both to save young people from themselves, and to protect offenders from the retaliation of the public:

A: I think you'd be in a sorry state without them. I could take that thing there the now and have it. The police are mair a deterrent than anything else, I would say. Imagine it without the polis.

B: There would be riots every day. Sex abuse. (18/21 year old males, *Bonnyrigg*)

IL: Do you think we need a police force then?

A: Oh aye, definitely. Coz if I got into a shop and stole a bike if their wasnae a police you could just chop my head off....Oh aye we definitely need the police. Just to control the public if anything else. (20 year old male, *Niddrie*)

The question of the police function evokes however a certain ambivalence among young people, for the seemingly arcane nature of the issue jars with the grounded logic they

employ to make sense of their relevant experience.¹ Young people apprehend policing in terms of the concrete and particular, and their perceptions of the police are filtered through this interpretive grid. The abstract question of the police role thus surrenders to the contradictions, ambiguities and aporias of practical consciousness:

IL: Do the police ever do any good?

A: Maybe if they went on strike?

IL: You think it would be a better place if we had no police at all?

A: Yeah, well maybe no. There would be a lot mair killings and what have you. But there's far too many of them. There's mair in Leith than what there is in Drylaw and Gayfield put together.

IL: How do you know that?

A: Well, put it this way, you walk doon Leith Walk during the day and see at least twelve plain clothes walkin about.

IL: Do you know their faces?

A: Aye.

IL: Do you think we need a police force?

A: We need a police force, but no as many as what there is.

IL: What do you think they should be doing then?

A: I don't know, I just think there's far too many in Leith. (*17 year old male, Leith*)

The divergence between the nonconcrete problem of the police function and an (either residual or ongoing) experience of routine adversary contact generates among young people a number of tensions. Youth accounts suggest for example that the perceived necessity of the police is both somewhat grudgingly acknowledged; and accompanied by a sharp distinction between the generalised acceptance accorded to the institution, and the unacceptability of many of its discrete practices - an abstract recognition of legitimacy is countermanded by a continuing practical apprehension of the police as enforcers of un-negotiated order in public space:

I think we need the polis, it disnae matter what they're like, if they're bent or crooks or whatever, you need them. Bairns get raped, people get stabbed. You need the polis for that. But for how they treat the working class people, man, it's bad. There's nae gettin away fae it. We're just dirt to them, that's what we are. (*23 year old male, Niddrie*)

IL: Do you think we need a police force then?

A: If there wis nae polis this place would be runnin wild.

B: You can say you can have a police force, but there's some things they shouldn't be able to do, like hit people with truncheons and stuff. (*17/18 year old males, Mayfield*)

Youth accounts suggest in this context that young people most readily associate the police with serious disruptions to social life that do not form part of mundane experience. As one nineteen year old female put it: 'You need them to catch people, murderers, those who

1 To believe it might or should be otherwise is to fall foul of the 'scholastic fallacy' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 123).

abduct kids, break into houses, things like that?’ In this regard, young people’s practical understandings of the police are informed by an experiential logic that endeavours to minimise - both materially and cognitively - the place of the police in their lives:²

IL: If you could meet the police and tell them what you thought of them, what sort of things would you say?

A: I’d have a field day. It wud be all cursin and swearing, definitely.

IL: But if the police said to you, ‘What exactly do you want us to be doing?’

B: I’d just say nothing. I dinnae want anythin fae yers.

IL: But you said you need a police force.

B: Aye, only for stuff like murder, house break-ins, shop break-ins....rapes and what not. (*16 year old females, Leith*)

This confluence of understandings indicates that young people hold what might be termed an ‘agency of last resort’ interpretation of the police, a prime example of which is evinced by youth accounts of when invoking police assistance might be considered. These accounts testify to a fairly consistent series of thresholds beyond which the youthful reticence to communicate experience to the police (discussed in chapter four) may be transcended. They suggest for example that the police are deemed necessary to deal with offences - such as murder or child abuse - apprehended as particularly serious. For the disruption occasioned by such offences, it might be said, fractures social routines and undermines the predictability of the future sufficiently to require formal police intervention:

I’d never grass anybody, unless it was a ‘beastie’, someone that’s touching bairns and that. (*21 year old male, Wester Hailes*)

I wouldnae report anyway....child murders or abuse, child abuse I’d phone for that, I think everybody would phone for that....that’s what I’d phone the police for, nothing else. (*20 year old male, Niddrie*)

Youth accounts further suggest that the police are apprehended as necessary to ‘repair’ incidents whose injustice is deemed to necessitate the intervention of an authoritative external force. In some such cases, young people’s understandings manifest a related practical sense that the police are necessary to act on behalf of the injured party and generate an equitable resolution:

IL: What if you saw someone being raped or murdered?

A: If it wis anything to dae wi rape or that aye, I think I would. But just kids breakin in and that....If I seen a guy getting assaulted I wouldn’t. If I seen a lassie gettin hassled wi guys, ken what I mean, I would say something then.

(*16 year old female, Craigmillar*)

² An illustration of this was provided by one (unsuccessful) attempt to arrange an interview at the youth project where I was volunteered during the fieldwork. One young male responded to my request by informing me that he ‘preferred not to think about things like that.’

If one of my family got done in by somebody I'd report that, but if it's something like if a guy was beaten up by another guy, that's fair enough, one to one, but say it was a group jumping somebody one of your pals, I would report it.

(16 year old male, Gorebridge)

The foregoing accounts suggest above all that the police are bracketed off within youth understandings to areas that young people rarely experience; and that the research process engenders reflection upon matters that are largely peripheral to youthful apprehensions. These proclivities prompt two reflections: they suggest, first of all, that the notion of policing as a service falls for the most part beyond young people's very practical grasp of policing (and that youthful understandings are as a consequence thinly imbued with the rhetorics of crime control that are so central to police legitimisation claims among 'respectable' social groups.) Such interpretations also prefiguratively indicate that reforms oriented to increasing face-to-face communication between young people and the police may not - in isolation - be either feasible, or effective in eliciting youth concerns vis a vis policing.³ In a context where young people associate the (positive) role of the police with incidents that do not impinge upon their everyday lives, and aspire to minimise their contact with the police irrespective of its nature, it is fecund to think about police accountability in a manner that decentres the police as the locus of social order.

(ii) Invisible Discourses: 'Good' Policing, 'Good' Officers

One central feature of youth accounts of policing concerns the distinctions they forge between 'good' and 'bad' policing, and 'good' and 'bad' officers.⁴ In terms of their propositional content, young people's understandings of 'good' policing take a number of forms. Most concretely, these accounts manifest descriptions of the kind of instances in which the policing of collective internal practices is considered appropriate. Some young people suggest for example that the behaviour of the youths concerned (such as causing trouble for others) may legitimately occasion police intervention - a disposition most frequently voiced either in relation to 'casuals', or by young women's accounts of the problems caused more generally by groups of male adolescents 'hanging around':

I think they should be able to move them on if there is a really big group hanging about one shop, or not even a really big group. If there's three or four people hanging about in a quiet place, or not letting people past, then they

3 My only attempt to arrange such a meeting during the research met with instructive failure when none of the young people turned up. The local youth worker informed me that an 'acid house' party had been organised for the same evening. This should not be interpreted to mean however that young people do not have criticisms of the police; merely that they are unwilling to give up their 'free' time to voice them, especially in forums (such as that generated by the presence of a researcher) that offer no prospect of influencing police practice.

4 'Good' and 'bad' are used here merely to describe the evaluations of policing used by young people themselves, and imply no value judgement on my behalf.

should be able to move them on. And like if there is big groups of 'casuals' at the end of Princes Street shouting and bawling, I think they should be moved on as well. (18 year old female, Craigmillar)

IL: If you speak to the boys they say, 'We just get hassle from the police when we're not doing anything.' Do you think they're right to say that?

A: No, because usually if they're hanging about in a group and you walk past them you get hassled and shouted at an that. (18 year old female, North Berwick)

Youth accounts additionally indicate that - even in circumstances where young people apprehend police intervention as justified - they still believe there to be limits on the appropriate courses of action open to the police. 'Good' policing in this context is generally taken to mean officers talking to the youths concerned and appraising themselves of the particularities of the situation, rather than merely moving young people on in a routine fashion:

IL: What do you think they should do in situations like that?

A: Just go and have a look and see if there's anything really wrong, because there's folk who phone the police just because there's a group, not because they're doing anything. They see there's somebody smoking a cigarette, 'Oh, it must be drugs' or a guy wi a can o juice, 'Oh, alcoholics.' There's folk like that.

(16 year old male, Gorebridge)

In addition to accounts of the policing of collective internal practices, young people also articulate a number of more generalised claims about the substantive content of 'good' policing. Many of these understandings centre around an aspiration to see more police officers patrolling on foot in public places. As one nineteen year old female remarked: 'I'd like to see more polisman around the streets, not so much here but in the town. Around pubs and discos, and especially at night where there's trouble.' In some cases, such perceptions are buttressed by a practical understanding of the limits of car patrols, shaped by young people's experience as regular users of public space:

A: I think they should concentrate a lot more on the streets, instead of zooming about in their cars. I think we should have em back walking the streets. There should be a lot more than just the one or two.

IL: Why would that make things better?

A: Because you hear things on the streets that you dinnae hear stuck in a car driving past. If you walk on the streets you dinnae get a chance to miss much, you're seeing everything that passes you, everything that goes on. People hanging about on corners. In cars you dinnae do that. (18 year old female, Craigmillar)

The research process prefiguratively suggests in this context that institutionalised arrangements for eliciting the experiences and claims of youth vis a vis the police would not merely generate a succession of atrocity tales, but might furnish positive accounts of what

acceptable policing ought to consist.⁵ It should be noted, however, that these accounts of 'good' policing are overwhelmingly fashioned from hypothetical constructions of what 'good' policing might be, rather than from recollections of its occurrence; and it seems likely that such accounts are constructions of the interview situation that do not circulate routinely among young people outside of this setting. For they represent anticipations of 'good' policing that rest uneasily alongside experiential narratives of mundane youthful experience of the police - experiences that have a far greater role to play in enabling young people to make sense of policing as a social phenomenon (see below).

In the context of the (thin) existing arrangements for rendering the police accountable, accounts of 'good' policing remain an *invisible discourse*; lacking any vehicle for legitimate institutional expression. These (more positive) understandings are consequently accorded little opportunity either to break down mutually hostile stereotypes engendered by current patterns of police-youth contact, or to contribute in any meaningful way to public deliberation about police policy and practice. It is against the backdrop of these circumstances that such accounts continue to exercise a marginal and subterranean force within young people's lives and understandings.

Youth accounts additionally suggest that young people forge a practical distinction between 'good' and 'bad' police officers. Such accounts evince a dominant understanding of 'good' officers as those who refrain from the use of physical violence. In the words of one sixteen year old, a 'good' officer is: 'just somebody that's fair wi you. Somebody that listens to reason. Just somebody that listens to you and disnae try and gie you a slap.' As this account also positively intimates, such officers are viewed to be those with whom it is possible to strike up a dialogue, and whose actions are premised upon their knowledge of young people, rather than sweeping generalisations about local youth:

A sergeant that I ken, he's brilliant wi us, ken. But he disnae pick anyone up in the streets for any reason at all. He's a really good guy, but the majority of the folk, the bring them in fae places in the town and they dinnae really ken anybody, they see somebody that looks like a troublemaker and pick them up. But like the policeman Joe Smith, he kens everybody, and everybody kens what he's like. If he sees somebody in the street he'll say, 'He's a

5 This claim does not allude to my capacity - as an individual researcher - to initiate and sustain dialogue, but is a reference to the social conditions that make communication possible. One of the conditions that I regularly had to meet during the interviews was to assure young people that I was not a police officer, or associated with the police in any way. (During the introductory exchanges, I consequently laid much stress on convincing respondents that the purpose of the interviews was to elicit and discuss their experiences and opinions on matters of crime and policing.) This suggests that the possibility of genuine dialogue is tied up with the establishment of trust between the respective parties, as the transcendence of defensive dispositions (among both young people and police officers) is most often accomplished when relations of trust are generated and sustained. The research further intimates that any institutionalised dialogue between the police, young people and other social groups would best be mediated through an external and autonomous agency (so as to avoid reproducing the 'paradox of face' in the context of communicative forums).

troublemaker but he doesnae dae things like that ken.' So he kens everybody and what they're like. You can talk to him.
(16 year old male, Gorebridge)

Unlike weakly persuasive accounts of acceptable policing, the 'good' police officer is often inscribed on young people's collective memory in a fairly powerful manner. For against the backdrop of existing institutional arrangements, and the experiences and dispositions they engender, 'good' officers can make a lasting impression on young people simply because they stand out as an exception:⁶

A: Only a couple of polis, they talk to you man, but not the bums who go about in the cars, but you get some good ones. That Jim man on the beat in Craigmillar, he used to talk to you.

IL: What made him so different from the rest o them.

B: Cos he used to talk to us, ken he never treated us like a piece of shit like the rest of them....He's just like one o the boys, but you get polis who come up to you, 'Right see you up the street right you're getting lifted.' (17/8 year old males, Craigmillar)

Youth accounts suggest however that young people's apprehensions of the 'good' officer are inseparable in a number of respects from a more general evaluation of the institution of which such officers are a part. The decision to move a popular constable for example is often interpreted by young people as part of a Machievellian plot to deprive them of officers who become overly affable. As one eighteen year old female reflected: 'When we first moved into Greendykes we had a friendly polisman, but he became too involved and too friendly wi some of the people in Greendykes so he was shifted.' In this context, 'good' officers may serve by default to indict further 'the system' within which they operate:

A: There was this polisman used to be in Broomhouse, like he got taken away from Broomhouse cos he was too good.

B: Who was that?

A: Barry. He was a really good polisman, like he used to sit and speak to you, like 'Got any problems and all that.' So he used to give you time, like he's come to the door to collect your fines and he say, 'Aye next week but dinnae let me down and that.' But he got moved from Wester Hailes to a desk job.

C: Aye and Tony he was a brilliant old cunt.

B: And Stevie he's good.

A: But they've shipped them all out. (20/22 year old males, Wester Hailes)

One further consequence of this conflation of individual and institution, is that officers who attempt to empathise with young people are often understood to be 'after something'. As one sixteen year old female commented: 'The only one I like is Jim McQueen. He's in the drug squad. But what he does is get on the good side of yer and then he'll say, "Have you

6 Recent research on police-schools liaison schemes has found for example that officers who go into schools are not perceived by young people as typical of their colleagues (Hewstone and Hopkins 1991).

heard of anybody been selling tablets an that?" He gets in your good books and then tries to find out information. Apart from that, he's an all right guy.' In this context, 'good' officers can engender a mixture of amused tolerance, suspicion and cynicism:

IL: Do you ever get good and bad police officers?

A: No, some try to keep in wi you for a wee bit.

IL: How do they do that?

A: Stand roond for about an hour having a laugh.

IL: Do you put up with them?

B: Some of them you can put up with, some of them are just tryin tae pick your brain. They're fishing for information.

IL: Don't they realise you know what they're up to?

A: Some of them realise, but some keep coming back. (*16/17 year old males, Leith*)

The endeavours of 'good' police officers may be interpreted in part as an attempt to bracket off asymmetrical power relations between young people and the police by personalising them; or cast in Weberian terms, to turn the relationship into a charismatic one based on the attributes of the individual officer. Notwithstanding any virtues that accrue as a consequence of such efforts, the work of the individual 'good' officer is currently both constrained and undermined by the institutional conditions within which they operate.⁷ For in the context of a system of accountability that offers no institutional opportunities for good relations between young people and the police to be negotiated and sustained, 'understanding' officers compensate for, without ever transcending, the resulting structural mistrust: they represent the 'good apples in the bad barrel.'

(iii) Investments in Bitterness: 'Bad' Officers, 'Bad' Policing

Resting alongside youth accounts of 'good' policing practice, are a number of currently more dominant understandings of what are considered to be 'bad' officers and 'bad' policing. The central point about 'bad' police officers is that - unlike their positively apprehended counterparts - such officers are viewed by young people to be far more emblematic of their routine experience of the police. In this regard, the predominant negative theme evinced by relevant youth perceptions is of capricious officers who are understood to 'act smart' because of their uniform:

IL: How should things be different from how they are at the moment?

⁷ Thus, in so far as 'understanding' officers build up good relations with young people, they may increase their expectations vis a vis the police; and if (or when) these expectations are dashed (by a negative encounter with another officer for example) the 'good' officer may be held personally responsible for having let down the youths concerned. In these circumstances, police officers may in turn resent the fact that their efforts to appreciate young people's plight are thrown back in their faces, something that serves only to generate disillusion and further marginalise the effects such sympathetic perceptions have within the police organisation. (For a compelling analysis of the limits of this kind of benevolent authority see, Sennett 1980: ch. 2).

A: No so cheeky, no sae nosej.

B: And no sae wide, because they're a bit wide fer ma likin. They think they're it because they've got uniforms on. (*16 year old females, Leith*)

IL: What bothers you most about them?

A: The way they think they're the law. They think they can dae whatever they want, because they've got a uniform on. (*16 year old male, Leith*)

Youth accounts relatedly discern a series of understandings of what are viewed as 'bad' police attitudes and associated practices. Many of these apprehensions centre upon what are perceived as ungrounded police stereotypes both of young people and the areas in which they reside. As a twenty year old from one of Edinburgh's peripheral housing schemes put it: 'They treat everybody the same, coz of where you stay....they think oh you're just a vandal and a thief. And nine times out of ten they're wrong. But you just get tarred with the same brush. That's what wrong wi them.' For some, the correlate of this attitude is seen to be a marked police reluctance to communicate with local residents:

They dinnae bother aboot the scheme. Whit happens when a car come down Niddrie? Do they come oot the car? If there's a gang o people standin there, what happens to the polis, what do they do? Stop and pull doon their windaes, that's it, they'll no come out and talk to you. (*23 year old male, Niddrie*)

Much of the substantive material for young people's understandings of 'bad' police practice is provided by the policing of collective internal practices. At the level of police policy, many practical youth understandings evince a sense that the police devote excessive attention to groups of youths 'hanging around', and that it ought properly to be accorded a lower priority (see also the discussion in chapter four). In particular, police understandings of the problems occasioned by local youths can generate among young people both incredulity and bewilderment:

IL: The police would say it's young people hanging around that cause all the bother and they get complaints from neighbours.

A: That's wi folk comin out of pubs totally pissed, it's not the folk that hang about the streets all night, other folk comin out of pubs and all that shit, there's a lot of fights and everythin. (*16 year old male, Penicuik*)

IL: The police say they get calls off the neighbours and they've got to do something.

A: Calls off o neighbours because of a load of kids hanging about the streets? Why can they no go and catch real criminals, ken whit I mean? (*18 year old male, Craigmillar*)

Some of these youth misgivings are more directly focused upon the situational manner in which collective internal practices are policed. Relevant understandings refer in particular to the language used by the officers concerned (and the attitude it bespeaks), as well as the

differential and seemingly arbitrary outcomes that result from the (similar) actions of each party:⁸

The way they talk to you and that ken. You get stopped and that and they tell you - 'You've got an attitude problem.' It's the way they speak to you ken. It's not as if they cannae say, 'Can I question you just now would you mind stepping in the car' Down here it's - 'Get in the car or you'll get nicked.' That's what's its like down here, that's what it's like. Polis think just coz they're polis officers they can do anything they want....but they cannae. (18 year old male, Niddrie)

A: I dinna think it's right we get charged for hittin polis an that but they dinna get anythin done tae them if they batter us.

IL: Has that happened to you?

A: Ah wis daein somethin wrong and the polis come. They were bein cheeky and I wis bein cheeky back. This polis wifey started to be wide, so I just hit her because she wis bein smart. So she started hittin me back and the polis guy started on me tae so I got taken away and charged with assault for hittin the polis wifey and the guy. But nothing happened to them for batterin me. (16 year old female, Leith)

One interesting and significant feature of these accounts of 'bad' policing is that - unlike cognate apprehensions of acceptable policing - they are assembled from narratives of experience: they take the form, that is, of stories recounting incidents that happened either to the youths themselves or to their peers. It seems likely in this regard that accounts of 'bad' policing both circulate widely among young people, and occupy a prominent place in young people's overall 'picture' of policing. Such dominance would appear to suggest that the dispositions engendered by current patterns of police-youth contact have a lasting impact on young people - serving as a collective memory to be drawn upon when the occasion demands:⁹

A: They just victimise young people, that's what they do?

IL: But the police would say this group of young people was 'hanging about' and we had a complaint.?

B: I used to stay at Craigmillar, and there was about four of us at the bottom of the stair just talkin to each other and naebody complained and the polis car comes up and says right you go that way, you go that way, you go that way. They can't go about tellin you what to do.

8 These accounts - along with those that demonstrate a 'demand' for a police service (see above and in chapter six) - suggest a division of youth opinion vis a vis the police along both gender and age lines; with young women who experience the impact of collective internal practices, and older teenagers who have 'grown out' of them, more supportive of police action in this sphere. In addition to demonstrating how what some young people apprehend as 'good' policing can generate negative experiences for others, these fractured dispositions serve also to indicate both the complexities entailed in incorporating the views of the 'public' in police decision-making (as well as the difficulties associated with the notion of policing by 'consent'), and the futility inherent in ill-considered and untheorised calls for democratic 'control' of the police.

9 In this context, the research process takes on a more complex relationship to the institutional arrangements it endeavours to prefigure. For while the interviews enable young people to voice their experiences and concerns vis a vis the police, they also - because of the institutional vacuum in which they occur - facilitate the transmission of stories of 'bad' policing to other young people, thereby contributing to the very social conditions they seek both to explain and transform.

IL: What if the police are dealing with complaints from local residents?

A: Oh that's pish man.

IL: Do you think it is?

A: They just say it, coz we're just standin like and they come up and tell you to shift and they come and sit somewhere else, and they come back and tell you to shift again. Eventually you get done and you ask them what you're getting done for and they dinnae say. (17/8 year old males, Niddrie)

Narratives of 'bad' policing can be related both to specific and generic elements of policing. In the first instance, they enable young people to make sense of a routine experience of the police that all too often appears to be both arbitrary and beyond their control. The chief consequence of such experience is that many young people acquire an *investment in bitterness* - whereby 'bad' policing is rendered as the most appropriate grid through which to understand policing as a social phenomenon. Such apprehensions also serve, however, as a more generic reminder both of what the police are empowered to do if they so chose, and of young people's limited capacity to bring such action to account. Narratives of 'bad' policing function in this more general sense as an index of powerlessness, and it is more important for young people to make sense of this powerlessness than to concern themselves with abstractions about what 'good' policing might entail:

If there wis five houses broken into, I'd get charged for it, even though I didnae dae it. It's just that you're fae here and you get charged fae the polis, if anything's gone wrong, you can get charged for anything. They call it the powers, they just want tae clear their books up so they just charge you for it. They've got that stop and search, they can pull up anybody at random. You could have a haversack walking along the road and they could stop you - 'I want to have a look in your haversack.' They've got the authority to dae anything they want, man. (23 year old male, Niddrie)

The marked centrality of 'bad' policing within youth understandings of the police can be viewed in part as consequential upon existing institutional arrangements, and the patterns of police-youth contact they engender.¹⁰ For these understandings represent one of the ways in which young people come to terms with institutional conditions that preclude democratic communication between themselves and the police. What is more, in the absence of such communication these stories of 'bad' policing are reproduced among young people without meaningful challenge, thereby sustaining youthful dispositions that render mutual dialogue more difficult to realise.

The powerlessness young people feel in relation to the police is symbolised most starkly by the police station, and it is in this context that the many 'horror' stories about

10 Though it may well be of course that - given the police's role as the institutional locus of the state's monopoly of coercive force - stories of police malpractice would remain predominant in shaping (young) people's understandings of even the most legitimate and responsive police service.

such locations manifested in youth accounts of policing must be situated. In terms of propositional content, these (often third-hand) narratives centre most often upon incidents in which police officers are alleged to have meted out serious violence to young suspects. As one seventeen year old male put it: 'They just take you into the cell and if they know they've no got enough evidence to charge you they gie you six hours anyway, so they'll just gie you a lickin intae the bargain.' The frequency with which such 'atrocities' arose during the interviews suggests moreover that they may be widely diffused through young people's oral culture - a culture that presently provides an environment within which such stories are able to flourish:

A: St. Leonard's Street station is getting a right reputation, I dinnae ken if you've heard about that. There's three people died since it opened. Johnny was one of them, a boy fae Muirhouse. A boy fae Tranent, what wis his name?, Tam's brother, he died in the polis station. He wis a junkie (....) There's a case going on aboot that the now, tryin tae sue the polis. There's another one, what's his name. He died in St. Leonard's Street polis station. If you get lifted now....it's just since that St. Leonard's Street opened, cos the High Street an that was okay. And fair enough, you'd get a wee bit of a skelp. But St. Leonard's Street station, every fuckin young laddie round about says you get battered. I've seen people wi black eyes when they come oot the station.

IL: How do you hear about these things?

A: The word on the street's never wrong. If there's word on the street something's happened, everybody adds his piece to every story, they all add their ain wee bit. But you say to yourself, well, the guy did get a kickin but maybe he's exaggerating what happened. St. Leonard's Street police station is gettin a really bad reputation and it's no been opened that long. (23 year old male, Niddrie) ¹¹

Many police officers manifest both an appreciation of the fact that stories of violence in police stations appear to have such a wide currency among young people, as well as a sense of the damage they exact upon police-youth relations. As one officer lamented: 'Even now, you get a young person in the police box and they think they're going to get a doin. They look around as if to say, "When's it start then." It's sad, very sad.' Police accounts also proffer a number of grounded explanations for the resonance obtained by these stories. Some officers for example suggest that while such narratives may have a kernel in actual occurrences (as one put it: 'I'm sure a few of them have had a thick ear from time to time'), they tend to be greatly exaggerated by the time they solidify into local folklore:

11 Compare this account with a the following officer's reflections on the same police station: 'There was a thing in the paper recently, somebody writing in and complaining about St. Leonard's, saying that everybody who was brought in there was beaten up and all the rest of it and this friend had told him that this happened. I think the bosses fall down here because they never seem to challenge these things, they just let them go. St. Leonard's has got cameras everywhere, anyone they've brought in there there's no way anyone's going to do anything to them, and yet the bosses never kill these rumours straight away, they just sort of ignore them.'

It's like a popular myth and I think it spreads so fast because everybody's always heard a story of somebody who knew somebody, who knew somebody else, who was taken into a police station and had a bad time, and he went into complain about something and was told to piss off. It's like Chinese whispers, it just gets bigger and bigger.
(*Male beat officer*)

A number of police accounts maintain, in a slightly different vein, that these youthful atrocity tales permit young suspects to use the experience of detention to augment their reputation among peers - something that requires the construction of a heroic story of enduring - and surviving - police violence:

They'll go back to their mates and say they've been knocked about by the police, just for the image to their cronies. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred it isn't the case at all, but it's the macho thing to say, 'The police gave me a doing.' It doesn't happen.
(*Male beat officer*)

The final response to such accounts manifested among police officers points to the circumstances in which the alleged incidents are supposed to have occurred, and denies their historical authenticity. As one officer commented: 'The thing is, you come into this place, there's video cameras everywhere, you've got everyone and their brother looking over their shoulder and you daren't raise your hands to somebody.' Such dispositions are often accompanied by a will to question - and correct - the truth of young people's assertions:

A lot of them have got a great mistrust in us. I had a lad speaking to me the other night, he hated the police and I asked him to explain why and it was things he had been told third-hand. And I went through every incident he was talking about and nothing was a personal experience, it was a case of what he had heard about and I was able to refute everything he said. He was a wee bit stunned. (*Male beat officer*)

While police accounts of this issue have a certain plausibility (telling 'good stories' may well provide some young people with a means to enhance both peer and self-esteem), they tend to efface the question of why these tales (and not others) are able to resonate so widely and influentially among young people.¹² In particular, these occupational apprehensions neglect (perhaps understandably) to ask why such accounts are able to have an impact upon youths who have never been near a police station. In resolving these questions, it is possible to suggest that 'horror' stories about police stations circulate, not because they reflect young people's experience in any unmediated fashion, but because they allude to collective concerns and anxieties about routine policing, and remind young people that the police are the (thinly accountable) locus of coercive social power. In this context, policies

12 It might metaphorically be said here that just as some fires are able to take hold in the surrounding environment (while others meet resistance and die out), so some narratives about local police practice find a culture that is only too willing to believe and transmit them: stories of police violence are, it seems, of this kind.

oriented to convincing young people of the inaccuracy of such atrocity tales are somewhat misdirected, for if they represent a symbolic vehicle for expressing a more generalised distrust of the police, their suaveness will only diminish when police practice as a whole acquires some legitimacy in the eyes of young people.

Communication with Young People: Police Perspectives

You're probably saying, 'Why doesn't the police go in and speak to the sixteen to twenty-one year olds?' The thing is, do the sixteen to twenty-one year olds want to speak to the police? You'll probably find they don't unless they are in a church fellowship group. (*Male area officer*)

A number of police accounts manifest the view that increased communication with young people would be a desirable objective. As one beat officer remarked: 'If they've got gripes, fair enough. They're bound to have. It's a case of talking to the kids in these groups, they've got a mistrust of us and we've got to earn their trust, and the only way we can do that is to go and speak to them.' Such communication is apprehended for the most part by officers as likely to improve police-youth relations on a fairly general basis:

What I would say is talking does help, there's no doubt about that. If you get up a dialogue, it's better than seeing some guy in a black uniform, he's pissed off, he's walking along with a big glum face. That doesn't do any good to anybody. And that's what a lot of people actually see. Or they get somebody winding down the window and saying, 'Come on, stop hanging about street corners, away you go.' So maybe if you started to talk to people it would help. (*Male beat officer*)

A particularly significant feature of this aspiration is the perception that enhanced dialogue may help transcend the hostile dispositions generated by routine street encounters. For police-youth relations shaped by the 'paradox of face' are viewed by many officers to occasion among young people a partial and inaccurate perception of the police - viewing their role exclusively in terms of coercive control:

The trouble is that most of the kids that we come into contact are doing something wrong, like the kids who are hanging about street corners causing a nuisance to local residents. You come into contact with them not because you're stopping for a friendly chat, but usually because you're asking them to keep the noise down or go away and find somewhere else to stand. (*Male beat officer*)

The only perception the kids have of the police in general they see police cars whizzing about with a blue light, stopping on a street corner, picking on (as far as they can see) kids for no apparent reason, without appreciating the full scenario. And they look upon us as the enemy, shall we say, or the aggressors. (*Male beat officer*)

A number of police accounts evince in this context a belief that communication ought properly to involve the police both opening themselves up to criticism from young people and responding to it (as well as seeing young people do the same). They additionally appreciate that genuine dialogue needs to take place in settings where it is possible to neutralise asymmetrical power relations, and thereby dissolve the 'paradox of face' that pervades police-youth encounters on the street:

You couldn't stand on a street corner with a group of fourteen year olds and get stuck in, that looks terrible, they're questioning your authority. But if you go into a controlled environment like a school, and just sit there, have a forum of ten, fifteen, twenty of them and just let them have a go at you and try and answer that way, that might be a good start. Because they're getting the opportunity without the fear of getting themselves arrested or a foot up the backside to have a go at the police, and then maybe you will find out what the problems are. If there are any great problems you'll have a better chance of finding out what they are, and it gives us a chance to answer them...If you want to try and foster proper links with that age group I think you should be prepared to go into their environment but not to preach. (*Male beat officer*)

The aspiration among some officers for greater dialogue with youth must be situated alongside a range of organisational and ideological constraints that presently stand in the way of such communication. The police are not an organisation primarily oriented to engaging on a routine basis in dialogue with the 'publics' they serve. One consequence of this is the occupational perception of many officers that the day-to-day pressures of the job preclude the possibility of communication outside of sporadic encounters. For in the context of present workloads, taking the time either to talk to young people, or to reflect more broadly on the issues at stake, is consigned to the realm of indulgence:

You don't have the time, because I work in a busy area I don't have the time to actually think about these things in depth. All I do is do what I've got to do, I get the necessary details, I go through the necessary procedures, submit the reports and that's it finished. Because I can be doing two or three a week. So there's no time to actually consider what's happening, consider what they've done or think about it. Maybe it's not the right way, but it's not my problem. (*Male area officer*)

The current organisational ethos of the police also engenders among officers a number of insular and defensive dispositions towards their work. Most police accounts evince a police-centred understanding of the criminal question that is in many respects inimical to the possibility of genuine dialogue with various 'publics'. In particular, occupational concerns about inadequate staffing generate a host of anxieties about a perceived police inability to control the locality:

The bosses haven't got a clue what we do, of the problems we have down here. Morale's rock bottom in this service. We've been 'losing the place' for a while now. People know it but there too scared to tell anyone. Like you've got a lot

of people promoted to sergeant who know all the problems with command and control. But they tell you to 'shut up' if you say anything. Nobody wants to be the first to say it coz they'll get labelled 'troublemaker'. (*Male beat officer*)

One Thursday night, during the festival I may add, so it was more densely packed than it normally is. There were five police officers to cover that area. Now there's only so much the police can do (...) We had five police officers on that night...there was an acting inspector, there was myself as acting sergeant, and there were three constables. So what do you do? What can you do? (*Male beat officer*)

The final organisational impediment to improving dialogue (and relations) between the police and young people appears, paradoxically, to be the existence of particular jobs and units devoted to the task, such as area constables and community involvement departments. Police accounts suggest that one of the unintended consequences of specialist units has been to minimise the importance that 'frontline' officers attach to improving community relations (thereby ignoring the extent to which youth perceptions of the police are shaped by routine experience, and not by occasional meetings with 'community' constables). For many officers perceive the task of improving communication with young people to have been hived off to community involvement, and as consequently not impinging on their routine work:¹³

I'm not really a community type policeman. We basically get a call, we go and attend to it and deal with it as best we can. Where as you get the other type cops who you'll be speaking to, Bob McDonald for one, who are area constables and they go round the schools and try and develop a better relationship between the kids and the police.
(*Male beat officer*)

Police accounts further manifest a whole range of understandings that serve as an ideological barrier to mutual dialogue with young people. One of the most forceful of these perceptions concerns the binary distinction officers make between individuals it is possible to talk to and those it is not. At one level, such differentiations are forged around the perceived depth of young people's involvement in crime. Firmly on one side of the police binary divide are those young people (whose number may vary from officer to officer) viewed as belonging to a hard-core minority of 'troublemakers'. For many officers, such youngsters are apprehended as totally 'Other' and beyond the pale of any rational discussion:

13 One important facet of these perceptions can be discerned from the often vehement criticisms some officers voice of the community involvement department. As one commented: 'A lot of the problems I can see with the community involvement is that they've got the wrong people in there, they're not forceful enough with the message they're trying to get across. The people who go in there very often, I wouldn't call them policemen, that's all they're suited for, they wouldn't make it as policemen as such. To me they never give it to the kids straight, they try round about ways and fancy wee messages.'

These kids, if you go up to them and say 'Get lost', they don't take any offence, that's the language they get at home. So you can go up to them and say, 'You lot, fuck off'. That may sound dreadful, but that's the language they use and understand, they don't think that's bad language. If you're speaking to a French person you wouldn't speak to them in another language, likewise English. They don't understand us sitting here speaking, that doesn't make sense to them, maybe in here they would, but not out on the street, that's not their language. They don't understand 'please', they just understand 'get lost'.
(Male area officer)

A lot of the ones you deal with you can't speak to them rationally. All they're interested in is f'ing, c'ing, they just don't take a blind bit of notice of you anyway. Absolutely no respect for the police in general and authority as well....Some of them are quite far gone. So these are the ones we deal with quite a lot and I don't think I would really be sitting discussing an awful lot with them. I've tried it in the past. You sit and talk to them and you can talk until you're blue in the face. You let them out of the door, do them a wee favour and they're back in in half an hour, done something else. (Male beat officer)

The converse of these occupational understandings is the belief that communicative attention ought properly to be directed towards those who are hovering on the brink of crime, yet still amenable to police advice - or as one officer laconically put it: 'The ones out there who are saveable.'¹⁴ For this discrete group of youths, the objective of police 'communication' is to dissuade them from following in the footsteps of their peers:

Some of them are quite receptive to speaking once you sit down (...) A lot of these kids who roam Princes Street are not by any manner of means bad kids or criminals. They have just maybe never had any contact with the police whatsoever and they learn street habits from other kids they meet up town who're maybe more inclined to be criminal than they are. (Male beat officer)

I wouldn't blame them a hundred percent for the situation that they find themselves in. Living in an area of high unemployment doesn't help and a lot of these youngsters are very easily led, they vandalise property and steal things, not because they want to, but because their friends are doing it, so they think, 'Oh, we'll do it as well.'
(Male area officer)

Police accounts intimate that officers also fashion this bifurcation more generally along lines of age. Many officers for example evince the view that by the time young people reach the age of sixteen, they are set in their ways and not amenable to any positive police influence. As one officer put it: 'I'm afraid by the time they get to the teenage level I think their ideas are already painted in their heads and I don't think you'll change them.' The consequence of this is that the majority of officers aspire to focus police communication on

14 A number of officers suggest in this context that current organisational practices are addressed to the wrong audience. As one officer remarked: 'You've got to target a section of them. What's the point of targeting people that like the police or accept the need for a police service? And what's the point of targeting jail bait? So you've only got that one wee section, maybe just one half of the down side.'

the younger age group, and imbue them with the appropriate message. This orientation is favoured ideologically because the next (currently pre-delinquent) generation holds out the prospect of some hope for the future. As one officer put it: 'The ones I would want to target would probably be starting about eight till about twelve, I feel that's about where they're starting to turn, and just try and get them on our side.' In more practical terms, such endeavours provide police officers with what appears to be a less challenging task than engaging in dialogue with 'difficult' teenagers:

By the time you reach third or fourth year at school, they're not going to listen to you. It doesn't matter what you say to them, if they're on the right track they're on the right track. They're not going to listen to you anyway. What you have to do is catch them before they go on to the wrong track, at primary school. If you can catch them then and get some ideas into their heads, they'll know you are there are you're not this nasty person who goes around locking people up all the time. Then it's obviously going to catch a few of them. There are still going to be one or two who are going to go astray no matter what you say to them, but if you can catch them before they get into the bad attitudes and mixing with older ones where it's all show and bravado.

(Female area officer)

A minority of officers manifest by contrast a conspicuous preference for communication with older teenagers. As one beat officer put it: 'It's not until they hit sixteen and think, "Oh, I've got my exams to sit." Maybe then you'd be able to talk to them again. When they're starting to get responsible, because they're having to think about what they're going to do with their lives.' Among some officers, this disposition is accompanied by often stringent criticism of the emphasis that the organisation currently places on communicating with young children:

What's the point of going along and talking to a group of five year olds? Anyone can go along and talk to a group of five year olds and they'll listen to you (...) I think it's just the easy option, to be honest with you. Which is maybe understandable, because why knock your head off a brick wall if you think that's what you're going to do. I think if they targeted the early teens a lot more, perhaps you would be able to foster a greater understanding. The problems we've got on a Friday or Saturday night dealing with folk on the streets, they never understand how we feel. *(Male beat officer)*

Police accounts evince two further themes that shape in significant respects officers' understandings of existent (and prospective) communication, and stand in the way of collective external practices. In the first instance, officers primarily perceive communication as a process of talking to *individual* teenagers, and largely fail to appreciate that young people share collective experiences and interests with regard to matters of crime and policing (interests that an organisation premised upon formal individualism finds it difficult to embrace). Secondly, police understandings predominantly view communication as a one-way process of 'getting the message across'

to young people and enlisting support for the police - what one officer described as: 'Trying to give them some guidance in the rights and wrongs from our point of view.' Dialogue with young people consequently amounts at present to little more than a monological encounter in which there is only one voice - that of the police:

I think it's a case of every little helps, if you maybe keep pounding away the message may get through to some of the people, or most of the people. But if they just take one or two points on board, it helps. (*Male beat officer*)

If you're getting through to a few of them, that's a few more people on your side. That's what it's all about, trying to get them on your side, trying to get them to report things. It is difficult, but if you can catch them young enough where there's not all this bravado (...) But it has to start at a young enough age where they're not already blinkered or their opinions haven't been formed by older people, because you do get that.
(*Female area officer*)

From the standpoint of police accountability, this conception of 'communication' has a number of significant implications. It signals, first of all, the enactment of a paternalistic and proselytizing power in which officers endeavour to facilitate (for young people's own good) a conversion from one form of life to another. In so doing, officers' understandings implicitly assume that policing is a fixed and predetermined phenomena, and that dialogue can proceed without in any reciprocal changes in police policy and practice. Communication currently represents in other words a process of coopting the support of social groups perceived to have difficult relations with the police, rather than one of engaging young people in mutual dialogue about issues of crime and policing.

Communication with the Police: Youth Perspectives

The police can do what they want as long as they don't worry me. And they do what they want anyway. So all your opinion polls and your charts and that'll not make any difference to them. (*20 year old male, Niddrie*)

A number of youth accounts evince an aspiration for more communication with the police, or at the very least a hope that the police will 'take more notice of what teenagers say'. As one sixteen year old male requested: 'Ask them to understand us more instead of jumping to conclusions that we're all violent alcoholics.' In this regard, young people's perceptions of such communication are tied up with the prospect of breaking down police stereotypes of 'youth', and of enhancing mutual understanding more generally:

I think they should try and talk to the kids, at least. If they try and talk to them, they may get some sort of a response (...) You know if there was some kind of liaison or communication between the police and them. If they were there a bit more often the police could see their problems and there'd be a better

understanding of them, they wouldn't just think, 'Well that's pigs fer yer.' (19 year old male, Broughton)

The aspiration for mechanisms of communication in which young people will be taken seriously has however to be located in the context of their experiences and received understandings of the police. The predominant form of such experience - adversarial encounters in public places - currently proffer young people little opportunity to persuade police officers of the legitimacy of their actions, and for the most part, the police are apprehended as able to enact an unimpeachable capacity to determine situational reality:

If there was a group of ten folk in the main street and a polisman came and says, 'He done such and such.' But if he never done such and such, they'd rather take the polis man's word to him and his ten pals. I dinnae think that's right, ken. The polis man's always right and the teenagers round the streets tell lies and everything all the time, so they never believe what a teenager says, things like that. (16 year old male, Penicuik)

A number of significant consequences flow from existent relations of this nature. Most immediately, they engender circumstances in which one of the few forms of 'communication' available to young people is some kind of situational defiance - a response liable merely to reinforce negative police stereotypes of 'youth' (cf. Sennett 1980: ch. 2):

A: I got kicked out of the place, searching my bag and everything in front of god knows how many people. Because I was sitting in the cafe, she accused me of loitering....You're trying to explain to them, 'What else am I supposed to do, I'm just sitting somewhere warm', I mean I did have money and I was buying tea and chips and that from the cafe. I sat there fer ages fair enough, but I was still buying things. I could understand if I wasnae. Na, I couldnae understand it if I wasnae either. I told them that I didnae have nowhere to go, nowhere at all and she said, 'I'm sorry but you just cannae stay here.' I said, 'But why?' and the poliswoman was getting really cheeky....she told me to empty my bags and I said, 'No empty it yourself' and she said, 'Empty it or I'll drag you along to the station by your hair.'

IL: What did you do?

A: I just emptied it, I opened the bag and tipped the whole lot on the floor. Right at her feet. She wasnae happy wi that either and I got a mouthful of abuse fer that as well.

(18 year old female, Niddrie)

The dynamics of these encounters - and the limited opportunities for communication they permit - may also serve progressively to atrophy any residual sympathy young people have for police action, and set in train a chain of amplification in which negative stereotypes and assessments are reinforced:¹⁵

15 The situational binds in which young people get trapped, and the actions and dispositions they produce, are encapsulated perfectly in the following reflections of one sixteen year old male: 'A lot of them do get hassle but they provoke us, ken. They come up and make smart comments and we're just stickin up for ourselves. And they say, 'Dinnae give me lip.' And they start swearing at you. And if you start swearing back they pick you up for bad language, disturbing the peace and that. You'll get done for anything if you've had a bad night.'

A: We used to just run aboot the place. We werenae doing it to begin with we were just sitting about. But when they started threatening us, taking us in to get stripped searched and all the rest of it, we didnae have to sit there and take that off o them. We werenae doing anything. We had nowhere else to go.

IL: Did you ever explain that?

A: Aye. They just said it's not our fault. Basically it's nothing to do with us. We cannae help it, we're just doing our job....Cheers! What can you say?

IL: Why do you think the police bothered you so much?

A: I think there is a lot of trouble down at the train station anyway. With people stealing. Like you get your wee paper shop, people do steal out of there, fair enough, and I can see their point that they're wanting us out the way. But I didnae think they had to do it the way they did it and use the attitudes they did use. We were troublemakers after a while, we caused trouble fer them.

(18 year old female, Niddrie)

The overall generative effect of these experiences is to reinforce among many young people a practical sense that their youthful utterances have only a weak perlocutionary force in determining the outcome of any situation. As one twenty-one year old female put it: 'You cannae tell them that they're in the wrong. They dinnae like it when you tell them that they're wrong.' It is in this context that young people develop grounded dispositions that substantially negate any prospect they hold out for genuine communication with the police - confining it to the realm of an unthinkable future:

IL: If you could meet the polis and talk to them about what they should be doing, what would you tell them?

A: I'd tell them to stop harassing people, telling them to move on. You're just standin there talkin' to your mate and you get told to shift and all that shit man. But there's nothing you can really say to the polis. There's not much you can do about them is there? *(17 year old male, Niddrie)*

IL: Do you think the police ever listen to what you say?

A: No. To them we're undesirables.

IL: Do you think they should listen?

A: Aye, everybody's got a matter of opinion. *(17 year old male, Leith)*

Youth accounts manifest a resigned acceptance of the police's capacity to define and control young people's actions in public places - a practical disposition close in tone to Giddens (1991: 110) formulation of fatalism as: 'a repudiation of a controlling orientation to the future in favour of an attitude that lets events come as they will.' Such fatalism amounts in this context to a shared understanding that enables young people to make sense of an institution that appears beyond their control - a 'making sense' most frequently evinced in the refrain that 'you can't beat the system':

IL: Have you ever had a bad time off the police?

A: Well, when I was younger I got a right kicking, that's when I wis fourteen or fifteen. I wis what you call a tearaway! I wis tryin tae beat the system.

The dog patrols used to come up here, eh... You'd get dog handlers, they used to come up here to have a square go wi the young guys, when we were young. They used to just come up to have a square go. Some of it's hard to believe but it happened.

IL: You say you used to try to beat the system, do you still do that?

A: Oh no, you cannae beat the system. It's impossible, there's too many of them.

IL: What do you mean by them?

A: The polis. It's like fighting an army. You cannae beat them. And if you complain against one they just get their pals tae harass you. (23 year old male, Craigmillar)

These apprehensions of the character of police power are most concretely expressed in young people's understanding of police complaints. A meaningful opportunity to complain about police malpractice represents the mode of accountability voiced most often in youth accounts (demonstrating a comprehension of an accountable police force as an institution that 'sticks to the rules'). At the same time however, these accounts suggest a marked unwillingness to complain about perceived police malpractice. For some, such reticence can be interpreted as part of the generic judgement that such of course of action is 'not worth it' - serving only to disturb further already disrupted routines:

IL: Have you ever thought of complaining? (*about being regularly stopped in a car*)

A: I did think about complaining. I've thought of going in and sayin, 'This is the twenty-fifth time, police harassment and all that sort of thing.' It's mair bother than it's worth.

IL: Would it do any good if you did?

A: It's just the system, if you can't beat them, join them. (21 year old male, Bonnyrigg)

This reluctance to complain about police malpractice can also be viewed as part of a more specific belief that their complaints will not be listened to. As one seventeen year old male put it: 'Complain to who? Who'd believe you? It's my word against theirs in it. They're gonnae believe them before they believe me.' Such understandings manifest an appreciation of many of the difficulties young people face in charging an institution perceived as policing itself; a recognition that leads some to view an external and independent body as the only means by which it may be possible to render police practices accountable:

You imagine six policeman coming to your hoose battering the fuck out of you or in the station, you try to charge six polis, whose word are they going to take, theirs or ours? You've nae chance. You're up against the system, you've just no chance. It's the cops against the cops. It's like brickies and labourers and scaffolders, they all stick together eh, they're all relying on each others' safety. It's the same wi the polis. They're relyin on each other. You cannae beat the system. (23 year old male, Niddrie)

- IL: Would you ever complain, like about that time at the station? (*she had been required to empty her bag in the railway station cafe*)
- A: Aye, I was very annoyed about that. I didnae think about complaining. There's no point in complaining coz there's been too much trouble down in the train station fer anybody to listen. But they should be somebody there who will listen, not a police officer, but maybe some other sort of person doon there to listen to complaints like that, a councillor or something. Coz you cannae really go to a polisman and say this other polisman battered you, ken what I mean when you work wi them, they're just no goin to listen to you. (*18 year old female, Niddrie*)

Any demand for, or movement towards, greater institutionalised dialogue is always already rooted in particular social contexts permeated by discrete collective patterns of memory, learning and experience (Benhabib 1986: ch. 8). These youthful dispositions towards the available means of communication and redress vis a vis the police suggest that an inchoate hankering for enhanced dialogue is largely negated by the (lasting) defensive proclivities generated by existent relations between young people and the police. Current patterns of police-youth contact all but reduce the opportunities for discourse to sporadic public encounters, governed by the 'paradox of face' and productive of mutual suspicion and hostility. This situation demonstrates, ironically, how an absence of the relevant conditions of possibility for institutionalised communication generate connected experiences and understandings that render genuine dialogue more difficult to accomplish. As one nineteen year old male astutely surmised: 'They've got an image to present to us, so we'll be bastards back to them. So it's really a no win situation I think. We'll never solve it.'

RETHINKING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Planned indirect control can of course be looked for change. But critics that technology is feasible to establish alternative tasks is not practical task. For defenders of the status quo, Werts and JH, can argue that really "there is no alternative". And if there is an alternative, then ultimately there is no change. (Lynch 1990, 3)

Many of the foregoing observations into problems have rested on the contention that current poor relations between young people and the police are a consequence of the death of traditional mechanisms for generating and enforcing communication. This concluding chapter pursues further this counterfactual claim by examining the increased difficulties involved in establishing such a democratic accountability in a world of policing. In so doing, it employs the concept of the institution(s) of communication to inform a discussion of the kinds of collective political practices that may facilitate innovative public deliberation of police policy and practice, and resolve some of the problems identified by the research.

Part Three

The Institution(s) of Communication

The question of police accountability is always tied up with a certain vision of what political society's duty has "good life" and is, which represents a conception of how institutional and social relations would be arranged. An alternative conceptualisation of the issue consequently entails reflecting upon questions of justice, legitimacy and consent which are central to the development of a democratic polity. While most of the conversation about police accountability has tended to affect these questions (cf. Johnson and Cramer 1984), much recent conceptual work on democracy has appeared at a level of abstraction that all too often produces "solutions" that do little more than re-describe a series of existing problems.¹ Thus if the full benefits of a constitutional shift like the change in social and political theory is to obtain, then a consideration needs to be provided for a manner of action with the notion of institution-building.²

The ensuing discussion is organized around four questions which, taken together, represent four connected steps of taking democracy seriously in the realm of policing; the first two, centered in a broad sense with the construction of "procedural democratic arrangements," the latter two with their operation. They can be listed as follows:

¹ A good example of this is provided by the recent books of J.H. Garvey and Kruse (1987, 1989) and Kruse (1991) with regards to "black democracy." The authors each has been critical of "proceduralists" regarding of the relationship between the state and civil society. The former book of J.H. Garvey (1987) has largely avoided questioning the traditional state-civil society "division" that occurred in each country.

² The term "institution-building" is derived from literature now employed throughout the work in a number of different fields. For a recent discussion see, Lawson (1992), "The Institutional Society," *Journal of Economic Surveys* (1992).

Chapter Eight

RETHINKING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Pure and indirect critique can of course be forces for change. But critique that intimates no feasible or attainable alternative fails in its practical task. For defenders of the status quo, warts and all, can argue that really 'there is no alternative'. And if there is no alternative, then ultimately there is no critique. (Dryzek 1990: 31)

Many of the foregoing substantive interpretations have rested on the contention that existent poor relations between young people and the police are a consequence of the dearth of institutional mechanisms for generating and sustaining communication. This concluding chapter pursues further this counterfactual claim by examining the issues and difficulties involved in embedding lines of democratic accountability in the realm of policing. In so doing, it employs the conceptual and substantive enquiries conducted hitherto to inform a discussion of the kinds of collective external practices that may facilitate reflexive public deliberation of police policy and practice, and resolve some of the problems identified by the research.

The question of police accountability is always tied up with a certain vision of what political theorists call the 'good life' - that is, with a particular conception of how institutional and social relations ought to be arranged. An adequate consideration of the issue consequently entails reflection upon questions of justice, legitimacy and consent - issues that are central to the overall character of a democratic polity. While most of the conversation about police accountability has tended to efface these questions (cf. Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984), much recent conceptual work on democracy has operated at a level of abstraction that all too often articulates 'solutions' that do little more than re-describe a series of taxing problems.¹ Thus if the full benefit of an engagement with the concepts of social and political theory is to obtain, their consideration needs to be grounded in a concrete concern with the problem of institution-building.²

The ensuing discussion is organised around four questions which, taken together, represent four connected ways of taking democracy seriously in the realm of policing; the first two, concerned in a broad sense with the constitution of prospective democratic arrangements, the latter two with their operation. They can be listed as follows:

¹ A good example of this is provided by the recent concern of Held (1987) and Keane (1988; Held and Keane 1984) with questions of 'double democratisation'. For while this work has been extremely suggestive in its rethinking of the relationship between the state and civil society (and informs much of what follows here), it has largely avoided confronting the problems that specific institutional domains may occasion for such notions.

² The term 'institution-building' is borrowed from Janowicz who employed it throughout his work across a number of different fields; for a recent selection see, Janowicz (1992). Cf. in a criminological context, Dahrendorf (1985).

- (i) what is the proper functional scope of institutional arrangements for rendering the police democratically accountable?;
- (ii) at what institutional sites should such arrangements be located?;
- (iii) what conception of public justice should inform democratic decision-making processes?;
- (iv) how might the experiences and concerns of different social groups be incorporated within democratic institutional arrangements?

I propose in what follows to discuss these questions at decreasing levels of abstraction, and with increasing reference to issues that pertain in existent police-youth relations. In so doing, I am further concerned to engage with the issues they raise at two distinct levels. The strong claim organising the analysis is that *any* proposals for rendering the police democratically accountable must address themselves to these questions and attempt to think through the problems they raise, for such problems require resolution if democratic policing is ever to be realised. The second and necessarily more tentative objective is to sketch - in the form of anticipated institutional designs and practices - some answers to these questions oriented to resolving current policing problems in a progressive direction: that is, in ways that involve the maximum public discussion and consent vis a vis matters of policing.

The deliberations of this chapter are designed to render proposals for the democratisation of the police that are both principled and workable; that is, a theoretically informed series of ideas capable of intervening in current debates about the future of British policing. Such proposals are not however proffered as a utopian blueprint to be accepted or rejected *en bloc*, but rather, they endeavour to explicate an 'enlarged way of thinking' (Arendt 1961: 220) about some of the issues that have long been central to the vexed question of police accountability. This 'enlarged' thinking is though avowedly utopian in a somewhat different sense; for in pursuing certain imaginative possibilities and reflecting upon their potential, such deliberation becomes an active agent in the relativisation of the present and the anticipation of different futures (Bauman 1976; Young 1992).

Questions of Scope: Democratic Accountability and the Limits of Policing

In recent years, the contours of public discourse about policing in Britain have changed markedly, from an erstwhile concern with the question of 'who controls the police?' (Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984; Lustgarten 1986), towards a more pronounced managerialist focus upon issues of effectiveness, consumerism and quality of service

(Woodcock 1991; Home Office 1993).³ While these developments are not without virtue (particularly in their more positive emphasis upon the character and possibilities of policing policy and practice), they have been accompanied by a significant de-politicisation of debate about policing and the almost complete eclipse of the previously dominant concern with the prospect of democratic accountability (cf. Kinsey et al. 1986).

One of the central contentions of this thesis is that if existent police-youth relations are to be enhanced, it is necessary to redeem this lost concern with democratic accountability. A rekindling of interest in questions of democracy must not however lose sight of the emerging thematics of recent years; nor must it reproduce a formerly rather discrete and police-centred focus on the issue of 'control'. Rather, any engagement with the problem of institution-building in this sphere must situate the problem of democracy in a framework concerned more broadly with the structural limits of policing and police reform.

Many of the accounts and interpretations elicited in Part Two generate in this context a series of chronic questions about the character and possible limits of democratic communication between young people and the police. They point in particular to the ways in which an institutional embedding of such communication needs to be coupled with a realisation that, while existent inequalities may occasion practices that the police are called upon to deal with, such issues permit of no policing resolution. For policing and its reform are structurally unable to transcend the questions of social injustice and exclusion that generate many of the current tensions in police-youth relations. Three examples can be proffered of the different elements of these boundaries - the first two evidencing explicitly the structural limits of policing, and a third illustrating the importance of recognising the point beyond which even responsive policing can become counter-productive:

- (i) one of the main forms of routine adversarial contact between young people and the police occurs when groups of youths are 'moved on' from public places. Such contact presently generates a confluence of (often lasting) bewilderment, cynicism and fatalism among the young people concerned, and contributes much to their overall 'picture' of policing. Many police officers moreover conceive of such policing as little more than a temporary palliative and as a consequent waste of their time, yet feel organisationally compelled to respond to public complaints about noise and nuisance. As a result, what is in effect disputation about the legitimate use of public space is enacted as an issue for the police, and 'resolved' by routinely imposing an un-negotiated order that adversely affects the interests of the youths concerned, and significantly undermines police-youth relations. The ensuing difficulty in this regard is not so much the way in which such policing is currently

³ A review of some of the (recent) shifts in the problematics of police research can be found in Reiner (1989).

conducted, but the fact that groups of youths 'hanging around' are thought of (and acted upon) as a policing problem at all. As such, progressive solutions point not to the better or more democratic policing of young people's collective use of public space, but to the *depolicing* of such use. The issue requires to be reconstituted outside of existent 'law and order' paradigms and subject to processes of mediation in which the interested parties can endeavour to negotiate resolutions that do not constantly threaten to criminalise the social practices of young people.

- (ii) The practical understandings of marginalising transitions evinced by youth and police accounts demonstrate how economic and social exclusion may impact in significant respects upon police-youth relations. These accounts suggest that one of the consequences of youth unemployment may be to intensify adversary contact between young people and the police, and reinforce negative dispositions that considerably short-circuit the possibility of any kind of sustained communication. In the context of the problems generated by youth unemployment, police-youth relations are placed under immense strain and democratic policing is constituted among marginalised youth as of secondary importance. A resolution of such problems requires not so much better policing, but the development of economic and social conditions that enable the police to recede from the currently prominent place they occupy in the lives of many marginalised youth. For in the absence of such conditions the police are apprehended as a constituent of existent problems, and not as a part of any solutions.
- (iii) It was suggested in chapter four that one of the ways in which young people manage (though never transcend) the attendant risks of public space is through the enactment of a range of collective and individual routines for securing personal safety. Given that the object of such practices is to manage the impact of victimisation on the youthful use of public space, it was further intimated that young people report so little of their experience of crime to the police partly because it threatens to amplify the consequences of crime. To the extent that these practices evince a practical apprehension of the generic limits of formal policing, police policy and practice must take care to avoid (in the name of responsiveness) colonising such informal routines, and supplanting them with a police-centred logic concerned with the primacy of formal intervention. Rather, any prospective arrangements for democratic policing must *decentre* the police by recognising both the limits of formal policing in ensuring youth safety, as well as the self-policing functions of indigenous collective practices. They ought in particular to distinguish between the enhancing and brutalising dimensions of such practices, so as to enable forms of policing capable of building upon the former.

These examples testify to the importance of formulating an approach to the question of police accountability that recognises the secondary nature of criminal justice system in sustaining social order, and thus avoids viewing democratised policing (however necessary, and however legitimate the outcomes) as a panacea for the problems which the police are currently enacted to deal. Institution-building in the sphere of policing demands cognisance both of the impact broader economic and social inequalities have upon the character of policing, and of exactly what policing reform may or may not be able to achieve. In particular, it needs to couple a 'politics of fulfilment' oriented to realising the ideals of democratic accountability, with a 'politics of transfiguration' that endeavours to essay liveable social relations in which the police have a minimal instrumental and symbolic force (Benhabib 1986: ch. 8).

In rendering these qualifications about police reform, it is equally important not to lapse into the fatalistic position that 'structures will be structures' (Unger 1987a: 5). For in so far as it 'denies that we can change the quality as well as the content of our formative contexts' and holds that these contexts 'impose on our practical, passionate, and cognitive relations a script that we cannot easily rewrite', such 'structure fetishism' (ibid: 205) is liable forever to postpone the prospect of institutional change and dissipate imaginative possibilities.⁴ Once at work in the realm of policing, such proclivities project a notion of institutional change limited to suggesting that radical reform in the character of the police is dependant upon (and must consequently await) broader economic and social transformations.

In a more substantive vein, structural fatalism effaces the fact that - even in the context of marked economic and social division - there pertain distinct policing possibilities with the capacity to impact in forceful ways on (young) people's lives. Policing practice has an autonomy from political and social spheres that enable it to generate varying degrees of responsiveness to, and legitimacy from, different social groups; and in this context, discrete police reform - despite the determinations within which it operates - is capable of generating 'a difference that makes a difference'. Thus to return to the examples delineated above, there are many more responsive ways of policing the youthful collective use of public space than currently obtain; similarly, young people's reluctance to communicate information to the police is in many ways a product of a specific police failure to take seriously the issue of youth victimisation - a failure that effectively denies young people the option of a formal police service, and places immense strain on their indigenous routines for coping with crime. Young people remain 'over-controlled' and 'under-protected' as users of public space at least in part because of the paucity of institutional mechanisms

⁴ Unger evidences as examples of such fetishism both the law-like explanations and politics of certain varieties of scientific marxism, as well as the joyless reformism of social democracy.

through which their experiences and concerns can be entered into the formulation of policing policy, and enhanced lines of democratic communication might do much to ameliorate this situation.

In contrast to structural fatalism, Unger (ibid: 4) proffers a more felicitous conception of institutional change committed to the view that: 'the components of an institutional and imaginative order are only unevenly and loosely related. They can be replaced piece by piece rather than only as an inseparable whole.' In the context of the immediate enquiry, such a position - one close in tone to the 'utopian realism' associated with the politics of collective external practices - may be said to accord the sphere of policing an autonomy that enables it to serve as a site as well placed as any to enact local transformations that can prefigure the onset of participative institutional arrangements.

In terms of the concrete problem of institution-building, this perspective offers a cogent conceptual warrant for institutional arrangements that can facilitate the democratic negotiation of *specific* policing concerns; the merit of such police-specific institutions being that they can engage with spheres of autonomous police operation in ways that avoid the often unwieldy character of existent multi-agency forums (Sampson et al. 1988). The chief limitation of police-specific arrangements, by contrast, is that - on their own - they may serve to exacerbate public expectations of the police and isolate 'policing' problems from their external determinations. Such institutions might therefore be empowered to develop lines of communication with local and national multi-agency forums, so as to enable a concern with policing policy and practice to be coupled with a broader deliberation about questions of crime prevention from which the police have been decentred.⁵ They might additionally be constituted to confront the troubled question of the role of the police, and to take practical heed of the ever-present connections between matters of policing and broader questions of economic and social policy.⁶ In this manner, a specific concern to engender democratic communication between - among others - young people and the police, can be conjoined with an attempt both to address the 'impossible mandate' (Manning 1977) with which the police are currently hoist, and to promote economic and social conditions in which they can become, 'a demystified, mundane institution of government, not sacred totems of the collective conscience' (Reiner 1991b: 236).

⁵ It might be advantageous in this regard to transform existent police authorities into 'community safety committees' with a more encompassing remit for co-ordinating local crime prevention practices (Loveday 1992; cf. Locke 1990: ch. 7). It should be noted here that the relationship between police-specific and multi-agency forums is something of a zero-sum game, the benefits of one being obtained at the expense of the other. The relationship between the two should thus be properly conceived of as one of 'trade-off' and not as a starkly posed 'either-or'.

⁶ A failure to confront the essentially contested nature of the police service, and make sense of the connections between policing and the broader social conflicts that impact upon it, is one of the chief aporias of recent managerialist concerns with 'consumerism' (Reiner 1992b).

Beyond Localism and Centralism: Institution-Building and Institutional Sites

With the above considerations firmly in mind, I propose in the rest of this chapter to address more directly the problem of institution-building in the realm of policing. I want in particular to delineate the broad contours of a set of institutional designs and practices for rendering the police democratically accountable. These elaborations will be structured around a proposal for a *police commission* (cf. Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984: ch. 6) - constituted as a 'hybrid institution' (Fuller 1978: 394-404), and operating autonomously of the structures of local governance.⁷

Building upon the critique of 'constabulary independence' outlined in chapter three, it is anticipated that a police commission will have vested in it many of the capacities and responsibilities presently bestowed upon chief constables and police authorities.⁸ In the first instance, the commission would have conferred on it both a legal responsibility to enforce the law, as well as an obligation to interpret the general legal duty of the police. More specifically, it would take responsibility for the development and enactment of policing policy and practice in all areas of police competence beyond which the law ceases to provide officers with guidance (Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984: 170-6). Such a commission would in this regard 'be a body of a new type that bestrides the conventional division of non-elected judicial offices and elected offices of the executive' (ibid: 174). This confluence of roles would engage the commission in the formulation, implementation and revision of public policies for the enforcement of the law that discrete police forces would be required to operate within; as well as requiring the more proactive task of generating and sustaining critical public deliberation about relevant matters of policing. The commission would, in other words, operate as something akin to a *continuous public enquiry* into matters of policing.

The prospect of a police commission raises the spectre of a disputation that has long been central to debates about British policing: that between central and local forms of police organisation, and the appropriate sites for instituting mechanisms of public accountability. This debate has in recent years found something of a *de facto* resolution in the progressive amalgamation of forces; the increasing influence of central government over police policy and practice, and the eclipse of local police authorities (Brogden et al. 1988: 71-4; Reiner 1991a: ch. 11). Such developments do not in themselves however elide the principled question surrounding the respective merits of local and central regulation (indeed, in many

⁷ Precedents for such an institution are, in this respect at least, provided by bodies like school boards and local health authorities.

⁸ As mentioned above (see note five), police authorities may best be re-constituted within the institutional scheme elaborated here as local 'community safety committees'.

ways, they invest the debate with heightened urgency). It is thus within this long-standing line of argumentation that I shall initially situate my concern with the institutional contours of a police commission.

The proponents of local forms of policing and local political processes of regulation may cite in their favour a familiar litany of substantive claims. These include - at the level of principle - an enhanced opportunity to facilitate public participation in decision-making, as well as the occasion to 'tap the experientially-grounded knowledge of people in the everyday lives and utilise their energies' (Doyal and Gough 1991: 307). These forms of decision-making are in this respect more likely to be responsive to local demands, and able to deliver services sensitive to the expressed needs of diverse public audiences. In particular, local forms of public provision are better suited to remedying some of the limits of representative democracy, and taking account of the experiences and concerns of hitherto excluded groups such as young people. In more practical terms, localised practice manifests a capacity to respond quickly and with minimal constraint to changing circumstances; and enables poor decisions to be rectified before extensive damage accrues (ibid: 306-9).

Centralised service delivery and regulation, by contrast, is alone possessed of the necessary scope and resources to ensure the provision of properly co-ordinated universal services. In particular, it is able to take advantage of greater economies of scale, as well as providing basic entitlements that can compensate for asymmetries of power and wealth between localities, and mediate uneven service provision. Moreover, through the articulation of universal rights and minimum national standards of service, central provision can safeguard generalisable interests (Habermas 1975: 111-8), and secure protection for groups (such as local youths) who might otherwise constitute vulnerable minorities (Lustgarten 1986: 177-9; Doyal and Gough 1991: 300-5).

A peremptory glance at the respective merits of local as against central modes of regulation indicates how the different traditions proffer distinct possibilities for service delivery and accountability, as well as compensating for their respective dangers and lacunae. On its own for example, local participation and service delivery may serve as a fig-leaf to mask the continued marginalisation of - for example - young people, and can exacerbate still further existent powerlessness. It can also provide for the perpetuation of 'local tyrannies' and encourage insular dispositions towards relevant issues. Conversely, central (and bureaucratised) mechanisms of control may easily become aloof from service users; inhibit creativity and change, and as a consequence, engender institutional environments in which 'the rational evaluation and subsequent improvement of services becomes impossible' (Doyal and Gough 1991: 306; cf. Hoggett and Hambleton 1987).

It seems, once again, that one is confronted with a zero-sum game in which the advantages of one site of accountability are purchased at the expense of another. In these circumstances, the long-standing debate about localism and centralism in British policing is unlikely to find satisfactory resolution in the triumph of one pole. Policing as an institutional practice is constituted with both (inter) national and local dimensions, and the institutional arrangements for democratic accountability must be cognisant of these dispersed territorial sites of operation. The pertinent questions consequently concern the relationship between various levels of control, and the appropriate division of responsibility between them.

The residual strength of this binary confrontation derives in part from a tendency to apprehend institutions as sovereign bodies exercising exclusive lawful authority over a discrete decision-making domain.⁹ One route out of the self-perpetuating impasse generated by this opposition is to reconceptualise the question of police accountability in *federal* terms; the significance of federal arrangements being that they situate sovereignty - not within discrete institutions - but in the rules that coordinate the relationship between overlapping institutional sites. Thus, drawing upon recent deliberations on the prospects for democratic governance in the context of globalisation (Held 1992), it is possible to envisage a series of institutional mechanisms consisting of 'multiple systems of authority bound by fundamental ordering principles and rules' and enacted through 'a common structure of rules for action to which assent has been given.' (ibid: 226). In the realm of policing, such federal institutional arrangements hold out the prospect of building productive tension and conflict into processes of accountability - conflict that has a number of distinct advantages:

It is dangerous to concentrate all power over a particular service at any one level of government. Permanent, institutionalised tension between different levels of the political process is as firm a guarantee against the abuse of power as democracy can devise (Lustgarten 1986: 178).

Such possibilities require in the present context a 'dual political strategy' (Doyal and Gough 1991: ch. 14) oriented to the enhancement of both central and local mechanisms of accountability. This strategy involves both a democratic overhaul of existent institutions of central regulation, coupled with a radical decentralisation of power that establishes in the sphere of civil society democratic institutions for the communicative negotiation of matters of crime and policing (Held 1987: ch. 9; Keane 1988: ch. 1). In this regard, it may be possible to envisage a police commission operating at a number of semi-autonomous yet overlapping sites; that is, in institutional locations that both correspond to distinct levels of

⁹ The tendency is perhaps evidenced most strongly in relation to the nation-state, an entity whose attachment to indivisible sovereignty accounts much for the 'thin' character of global mechanisms for democratic decision-making, such as the European Community and the United Nations (Held 1992).

policing practice, and maximise the 'access points' through which the commission could enact its deliberative functions (cf. Giddens 1990: ch. 5).

I have neither the space, competence or desire to provide here a detailed elaboration of these federal designs and relationships. I want instead merely to illustrate some of the principles involved by sketching in broad terms the appropriate division of responsibility within a federally-constituted police commission. I anticipate such a commission functioning at three discrete yet related levels - national, regional and local:

- (i) a national police commission might exercise its executive and judicial functions in relation to two specific aspects of policing and its regulation. First, it would have responsibility for spheres of police operation with national and (increasingly) international dimensions (Walker 1991b; McLaughlin 1992). Thus for example, it might initiate public debate, formulate police policy and monitor policing practice in relation to issues such as the control of drugs and organised crime. It may also undertake, where appropriate, more sporadic enquiries into matters of policing whose significance or implications have national reverberations - such as police use of firearms, or public order policing. Secondly, it might also assume responsibility for overseeing policing on a national basis and ensuring minimum universal forms of provision; taking on in particular the task of establishing national standards of service within which regional and local police commissions would be required to operate (so as to prevent the development of 'local tyrannies'). It would report on an annual basis both to Parliament and to regional police commissions.
- (ii) regional police commissions would mirror geographically the scope of the police forces for whom they are responsible. Given the importance of taking decisions in forums that permit maximum public representation, it is vital for the bulk of decision-making (about, for example, styles of policing and resource allocation) to be conducted at this level. In relation to local police forces, regional commissions would be responsible for routine formulation and enactment of policing policy, and for issuing guidance (both proactively, and on request) to chief officers on matters of law enforcement. Such commissions might also be charged with the task of facilitating public enquiries into matters of policing both in general terms, and (when they arise) on specific local issues. Annual conferences of regional commissioners may also be held to discuss and disseminate 'best practice' guidelines. Regional commissions would report annually both to Parliament, as well as to the national commission and appropriate local commissions.
- (iii) local police commissions would be enacted as a forum for reflexive public discussion of specific policing problems that escape the detailed consideration of regional commissions. Within the confines of regional policing policy, such forums might be

empowered to take decisions (at, for example, sub-divisional or basic command unit level) on local policing matters, and they would in this regard be accorded a sphere of autonomy within which experimental practices could be enacted. Local forums might also be able to prepare submissions to regional commissions regarding policing policy and resource allocation, thus enabling them to act as a conduit for generating and articulating local concerns and opinions. Such commissions might additionally serve as participative forums for initiating more general deliberation (on perhaps a multi-agency basis) upon matters of crime and policing, as well as on the broader impact of economic and social policy on the locality. They would submit an annual report both to the relevant regional commission and to appropriate agencies in the locality.

Regulating Majority Rule: Public Justice and Democratic Decision-Making

One of the central issues with which any proposal for police accountability must deal is to avoid licensing forms of police practice whereby the demands of the majority come to undermine the legitimate rights and interests of unpopular minorities. To a great extent, the doctrine of 'constabulary independence' effaces these concerns behind the rhetorics of 'professional' judgment and formal legal equality. The accounts discussed in Part Two suggest quite strongly however that existent relationships between between legal, work and democratic 'structures of control' (Grimshaw and Jefferson 1987) enable influential public audiences (the 'informal' democratic structure) to employ the police as a means to maintain an un-negotiated order in which young people's collective use of public space is significantly curtailed. Present arrangements for rendering the police accountable may permit, in other words, the very 'tyranny of the majority' that the language of formal equality claims to preclude.

A number of commentators on policing have seen in the prospect of proactive democratic regulation of policing, the distinct possibility that these local tyrannies will be reproduced and even exacerbated (Lea and Young 1984: 270). It is this concern, for example, that underlies Reiner's (1992a) consistent contention that - whatever their principled worth - proposals for enhanced democratic accountability are of limited prudential value in ensuring forms of policing practice that both recognise and protect the rights of marginalised social groups. For Reiner (ibid: 216), the problem of policing in a liberal democratic polity is how to protect vulnerable minorities from police oppression sanctioned by 'communal morality', a problem he argues, that 'limits the potential of "democratic accountability" as a panacea against abuse.'

Given the concern of this thesis with the condition of (unpopular) groups of youths who all too often find themselves at the receiving end of majoritarian dispositions, such reservations have to be taken seriously. However, while I concur that 'stronger' democracy is by no means an elixir for tarnished police-youth relations, I do want to maintain that democratic accountability - by enabling mutual dialogue about matters of crime and policing to occur - represents one necessary step towards the enhancement of such relations. Reiner's concerns serve though as a useful reminder of the hazards of democratic communication, and I want therefore to delineate a conception of a police commission that is capable of eliding them.

One of the most propitious ways of dealing with these problems (aside from the establishment of minimum national standards of provision) is to inject into the debate on democratic accountability a concern with questions of justice. It is to the credit of Jefferson and Grimshaw (1984) - in one of the most ambitious and suasive discussions of police accountability to have appeared in recent years - to have done precisely this. In *Controlling the Constable*, they articulate an understanding of justice in terms of that which 'guards the rights and common interests of all' (ibid: 157), and go on to propose - rightly in my view - a conception of *public* justice concerned with the question of:

How *all* citizens within a democracy can have their interests in the legal operations of the police recognised; (and) how all individuals as democratic citizens may gain a 'fair' share of the limited police attention available. (ibid: italics in original)

In setting out proposals for police reform, Jefferson and Grimshaw fashion a further distinction between individualist and socialist conceptions of public justice. Individualist public justice is concerned to enact forms of policing practice that engender 'equal protection by law and equal subjection to law' (ibid: 161); the equalisation, in other words, of both the offender and victimisation rates of different social groups. Socialist justice, by contrast, takes heed of broader economic and social inequalities, and endeavours to (re)allocate the 'public good' of policing in such a way as to compensate for these inequalities. Such distributive justice thereby takes account of both the social impact of victimisation and the social conditioning of offenders, and orients police practice towards a disproportionate reduction in the offender and victimisation rates of powerless social groups vis a vis more advantaged groups (ibid: 163).

Jefferson and Grimshaw evince a clear preference for a police commission whose decision-making is informed by a socialist conception of public justice. Though I have much sympathy with this formulation, it manifests a host of conceptual and practical difficulties. In terms of the latter, it remains unclear exactly how, and to what extent, a principle of compensation might operate. What economic and social disadvantages, for

example, are to be accommodated?; does such a principle warrant the complete non-policing of certain social groups?; how, in such a process, are the competing claims of class, gender, race and age to be weighed? More significantly, a conception of distributive justice tends in this sphere towards a certain police-centredness. Instead, however, of being cast as a solution to problems of crime, the police are reconstituted here in the structurally unlikely role of a crypto-socialist institution at the forefront of efforts to effect radical social change. The very virtues of socialist understandings of justice are thus rendered in the realm of policing as a considerable weakness.

In the light of these various observations, I want for the moment to accept the spirit of Jefferson and Grimshaws' enterprise (that the deliberations of a police commission be informed by a conception of public justice), but to recast such a principle in terms of the respective virtues of procedural and substantive justice; that is, justice conceptualised as maximising the opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making processes, or justice concerned with generating outcomes from such processes that guard the rights and common interests of all.¹⁰

A procedural conception of justice manifests a number of philosophical and practical merits. In relation to the former, maximum public participation can be viewed as a necessary component of the democratic legitimacy of decision-making processes; for if any ensuing decision is to be just, 'everyone who follows it must in principle have an effective voice in its consideration and be able to agree to it without coercion' (I. M. Young 1990: 34). Furthermore, such participation is a vital ingredient of a polity that fosters in its citizens individual and collective autonomy (Held 1987: ch. 9; Gould 1988: ch. 11). Participative structures are, in both these senses, intrinsically connected to a developmental understanding of democracy as a collective learning process in which discursive skills can be cumulatively acquired and enacted; and it is in this context that young people might be able to 'mature' into the institutional practices of participatory democracy.

In a more practical vein, procedural justice manifests the capacity to enhance the quality of democratic decision-making. In the first place, it maximises the amount of practical knowledge and social experience to be entered into the reasoned production of decisions. What is more, participation is potentially able to augment understanding of complex political choices; reduce intolerance and generate more accepting dispositions towards the claims of others (Phillips 1991: 43; Manin 1987). It may thus transform collective and

¹⁰ It should be noted in this regard that - while procedural and substantive justice have discrete spheres of reference - they are not hermetically sealed categories. For these two versions of justice both shade into one another (in so far as rights of participation for example can be viewed as matters of substantive significance); and exist in a relation of some tension (substantive outcomes being able to undermine the right to participate in decision-making processes).

individual interests from pre-given and frozen positions towards contingent apprehensions that are in constant flux (Barber 1984).

In the discrete realm of policing, these reflections on the claims of procedural justice are of twofold significance: at the level of principle, they indicate some of the ways in which concepts of public participation are fundamentally connected with the possibility of policing by consent, as well as the extent to which such deliberation is a necessary part of any policy-making process that lays claim to the mantle of legitimacy. More concretely, participative decision-making holds out the prospect of diverse social groups being able to enter into the formulation and monitoring of policing practice in communicative forums that can transcend entrenched dispositions and mutually hostile stereotypes.

A distinctly procedural understanding of just decision-making demonstrates however a number of forceful aporias. Most significantly, it forgets that democracy is not merely a developmental process for enhancing collective learning, but also a problem-solving mechanism for the production of practical decisions. Thus as Beetham (1993: 61) notes, 'the point of participation, surely, is to have some say in, and influence upon, collective decisions; and its value is principally to be judged by how far it contributes to this end, and for whom.' In this context, procedural justice evinces two specific shortcomings: first, democratic processes on their own provide little or no indication of what decisions are required to be taken, and how they might be reached; an overarching concern with procedural rights, in other words, 'cannot provide content and guidance for the exercise of those rights' (Mouffe 1992: 7). Secondly, a procedural exclusivity that remains entirely neutral with regard to outcomes forfeits the capacity to distinguish between different substantive decisions, and is consequently unable to prevent such decisions from themselves undermining universal rights to take part in communicative political processes (Baynes 1988).

It is in the transcendence of these shortcomings that the virtues of substantive justice can properly be seen to lie. In positive terms, substantive conceptions of justice are able to ground decision-making processes by providing a 'regulative ideal' around which they may cohere. For such an ideal serves as a common objective that furnishes both an incentive for social groups to participate, as well as a stimulus to richer and more informed modes of discourse. In a more prescriptive vein, a conception of justice concerned with outcomes confers upon decision-making processes a set of 'rules of the game' that can remove certain items from the discursive agenda, in order both to protect certain marginalised social

groups from (for example, racist and sexist) oppression at the hands of the majority, and enable deliberative processes to survive in a democratic form.¹¹

Substantive conceptions of justice must nonetheless be handled with some care. For not only is it difficult - in the context of a modernity characterised by the experience of warring 'gods and demons' (Lukes 1982) - to come to a consensus on such propositions prior to discourse; but substantive principles of justice also carry profound anti-democratic resonances. The greater the level of anterior constraint placed upon practices of democratic deliberation, the more the impetus towards them, and the possibilities manifested by them, are lost. As Benhabib (1992: 81) succinctly puts it: 'the attempt of a political theorist (*read criminologist*) to provide citizens with a normative yardstick (is) a preemption of their right to democratic politics.'

In the light of these reflections, I want to suggest a police commission that operates according to a hybrid principle of public justice; one coupling a strong procedural element with a number of minimal substantive constraints. It is anticipated that such a principle shall operate at all three levels of the commission, and that a failure to abide by it will render its decisions open to proceedings for judicial review.¹² This conception of justice can be formulated in the following way:

In conducting its deliberations, the police commission shall at all times be concerned to:

- (i) elicit and take account of the views of all individuals and social groups likely to be affected by the relevant decision;
- (ii) arrive at the decision that secures the broadest level of public consent without (a) prejudicing the fundamental active rights of any affected individual or social group, or (b) being disproportionately detrimental to the other interests and aspirations of such individuals and groups, in such a way as might prejudice the future operation of decision-making processes.

The first component of this conception of justice is intended to protect procedural universality by enshrining within the workings of the police commission what Thompson (1990: 325) calls a 'principle of non-exclusion'. Such a principle endeavours in the present context to secure rights to participate in decision-making processes both for the police, and for social groups currently excluded from the formulation of policing policy and practice (such as young people). In this regard, this principle of public justice operates to

¹¹ Some inviolate restrictions are - despite the paradoxes they entail - necessary on these grounds because: 'If there are no substantive constraints on what can be introduced into a practical discourse, what is to prevent the outcome from conflicting with some of our most deeply held moral convictions? What is to prevent the participants from agreeing anything or, more plausibly perhaps, never reaching any general agreement at all?' (Baynes 1988: 304). Thus, while these constraints can never be placed entirely beyond the reach of communication, in so far as they represent necessary (social and constitutional) conditions for the practice of democracy, they must be relatively immune from change (I. M. Young 1990: 93-4).

¹² The significance of subjecting the commission's decisions to judicial review is that such review proffers an added level of protection for vulnerable minorities, by removing the ultimate decision in cases of conflict from forums that operate a majoritarian principle of decision-making.

compensate - at the level of public participation - for broader economic and social inequalities (cf. Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984). For it would be enacted as part of a democratic political process that 'uniquely equalizes the formal powers of individuals in society, in contrast to the greater inequality of resources which derives from the market or from the claims of technical competence' (Rustin 1985: 38).

The second component of the above formulation is designed to provide both a positive criteria for coming to a 'good' decision; and a set of substantive restrictions that modulate a majoritarian principle of decision-making in certain significant respects (cf. I. M. Young 1990: 107). These restrictions are designed to preclude entirely decisions that prejudice the active - or option - rights of citizens (such as those that may be constitutionally entrenched in a bill of rights)¹³, while also requiring commissioners to be sensitive to the impact of their decisions on the interests of all those affected by them.¹⁴ As such, they would represent an integral part of a policy-making process that enables young people - along with other interested parties - to voice their experiences and concerns, while protecting them from the adverse consequences of a economic and social marginalisation determined elsewhere, but always in part enacted through the practices of policing.

Towards Discursive Policing: Modes of Representation and Institutional Methodology

This final section is concerned with the question of how such a hybrid principle of public justice might be enacted in practice; or, in other words, with the means by which reflexive public deliberation about matters of crime and policing can be generated and sustained on a routine basis. Such questions traverse two issues that are all too often treated separately, but are more properly considered as constituent parts of an inseparable whole. They raise, first of all, the issue of which social groups and interests are to be represented within institutional arrangements for rendering the police accountable. Relatedly, they demand consideration of the various institutional methodologies that might be mobilised in order to elicit the views of different constituencies.

In public discourse about questions of police accountability, the second of these thematics has hitherto been much neglected (cf. Jefferson et al. 1988). One consequence of

¹³ Golding (1984: 122-3) defines this class of rights as those that 'correspond to a sphere of sovereignty in which the individual is morally free to act on the basis of his (*sic*) own choice' (cf. Plant's (1992) analogous distinction between classical and welfare rights.) Though in other spheres of public provision a broader formulation that encompasses welfare rights (or what Golding calls 'claims of entitlement to goods') may be preferable, in the present context, a substantive constraint on decision-making limited to active rights best accords with the structurally limited competences of policing (see above).

¹⁴ In particular, it is intended to engender reflection upon decisions whose impact may be to undermine the confidence of affected parties in the integrity of the commission's decision-making processes. The now infamous 'Swamp 81' operation conducted prior to the Brixton riots comes to mind as a pertinent case in point of such decisions.

this has been that questions to do with the formal constitution of democratic decision-making bodies (such as local police authorities) have come to assume an undue significance. For in a democratic polity where participation is a discrete all-or-nothing matter, it becomes of immense importance for different social groups to endeavour to have their interests directly represented on the appropriate decision-making authority. In this regard, one significant facet of a policy-making process understood as a set of participative and deliberative practices, is that it may diminish the overarching importance that has come to be attached to questions of institutional composition and representation.

The requirement for representative institutions capable of rendering the police accountable remains nonetheless of pivotal importance; and free, direct elections serve - in a democratic polity - as one of the most salient means for the production of such institutions. Elections have the principled virtue of according equal weight to all those concerned with the actions of the relevant constituent body, thereby precluding the decisions of such bodies from being determined by the express demands of the most active, articulate or merely noisy (Phillips 1991: 162).¹⁵ In this regard, institutions of representative democracy help to establish democratic practices that can guarantee political equality in material circumstances - such as the economy of time, and the complex character of modern social formations - that inhibit full democratic participation (Beetham 1993). One necessary, if insufficient, condition of democratisation is thus the extension of representative electoral processes to a greater number of the institutions of both the state, and of civil society (Bobbio 1987: 56; Keane 1988).

In the light of these reflections, I want to suggest that the police commission - notwithstanding its judicial character - be constituted at all levels primarily through the periodic election of lay members (Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984: 170-6).¹⁶ In and of itself however, the electoral process does not guarantee a universal articulation of interests within policy-making forums.¹⁷ Such exclusions are especially pertinent in relation to a prospective police commission; for many of the marginalised groups who constitute the 'routinely policed' (Lee 1981; Jefferson 1990) are also most likely to be those who are under-represented within formal democratic institutions. Young people, for example, are currently excluded from voicing their experience in such ways, first by reason of age, and later (the youth accounts discussed in Part Two appear to suggest) through connected apprehensions of cynicism and disaffection. In this context, democratisation confined to

¹⁵ The Conservative government's recent proposals for police reform (Home Office 1993) make conspicuously little mention of the importance of police authorities being (electorally) representative and accountable bodies.

¹⁶ The commission might in this regard be supplemented by a secretariat capable of conducting research and providing lay members with support, information and (legal) advice.

¹⁷ Local and national representative institutions have, for example, long under-represented the interests and concerns of social groups such as women (Phillips 1991: ch. 3), blacks and youth.

augmenting electoral mechanisms for representing the concerns of young people may serve merely to reproduce current exclusions.

These exclusions may, in many respects, best be made good by enacting the principle of public justice through more proactive and participative means (see below). There remain however, a number of possible ways of addressing the issue at the level of representation, by writing in procedures that will ensure on the police commission a balanced composition of interests. Two of these may be particularly worthy of consideration:

- (i) it might be possible to set aside places on the commission for certain presently excluded social groups. The grounds for such ring-fencing would, of course, be open to dispute, but they might include either documented disaffection from the formal political process; a history of poor group relations with the police, or disproportionately high levels of victimisation. The representation of such groups on the commission could then be ensured by means of 'elections within elections' for a specified number of seats. Thus for example, it might be possible to establish (on regional and local commissions) a number of 'youth seats' through which (young) people could stand for election among a sub-population of sixteen to twenty-one year olds (cf. I. M. Young 1990: 184-90).
- (ii) It might, relatedly, be conceivable to reserve a certain proportion of seats on to which representatives of particular social groups or organisations could - for an apportioned period - be co-opted. Such a principle has long been recognised within the structures of local governance (Gyford 1991: 55-9), and currently obtains - in relation to magistrates - on police authorities in England and Wales.¹⁸ In terms of a police commission, the process of co-option might be structured by a principle of democratic compensation, operating to secure a voice for those social groups and interests who are under-represented through the electoral process. This again might enable the co-option of individuals (or professionals such as youth workers) to represent the interests of young people. Such processes of course raise all sorts of difficult questions regarding the 'representativeness' of the individuals and groups concerned (Jefferson et al. 1988).

In order fully to make good the principle of public justice, it is necessary for the police commission to deepen the mechanisms of electoral representation with a whole series of institutional methodologies that seek, relatedly, to elicit the views of relevant parties, and to

¹⁸ The recent white paper on police reform in England and Wales (Home Office 1993) proposes to extend the practice of co-option by increasing the numbers of central appointees on local police authorities, a move defended on the ground that it will bring forth 'people with the experience, skills, motivation and energy which the authority will need' (ibid: 21). In this regard, these proposals can be viewed as an integral part of the emergence of a 'new magistracy' (Stewart 1992: 7), a move that betokens an increasingly depoliticised and managerialist approach to public life, rather than a concern with questions of democracy, representation and accountability.

foster reflexive public discourse about matters of crime and policing. In this regard, the election of police commissioners signals in many ways the commencement of a democratic process (rather than its conclusion), during which different social groups would - depending on the issue at hand - be encouraged to participate. In undertaking this deliberative task, the role of the commission (at all levels) would be to articulate a *modus operandi* that incorporates a multiplicity of institutional methodologies, and encourages an 'open, participatory, reflexive and, above all, *experimental* approach to all practices' (Jefferson 1990: 144; italics in original).

The corollary of such an approach is that, quite properly in this context, the 'music of the future' cannot be composed in the present. I consequently want to conclude by doing no more than indicating a number of the ways in which the police commission may discharge, methodologically, its designated remit. For this purpose, I shall draw upon some of the problems in existent police-youth relations identified in Part Two, and explore how the development of a *discursive* approach to questions of youth, crime and policing may permit their progressive resolution. I shall confine myself in this regard to the prospective workings of regional and local police commissions.

In formulating proposals for policing policy, regional police commissions would be required - in order to fulfil the principle of public justice - to seek the views of a whole range of affected interests; a task for which number of general procedures may be put in place. Such commissions may for example:

- (i) draw upon existing resources of criminological research, or commission new research (such as crime surveys) on the distribution and impact of crime and policing problems in relevant areas;
- (ii) invite written submissions from local groups and organisations, and undertake a series of open meeting in places of collective association and organisation within the locality - such as schools and workplaces (Jefferson and Grimshaw 1984: 177);¹⁹
- (iii) meet with, and invite submissions from, the relevant police force at the level of both senior officers and police constables (through, for example, the local police federation, or forums at local police stations);²⁰
- (iv) take advantage of local communications media to foster public discussion about crime and policing;

¹⁹ An analogous process to that envisaged here has recently taken place in Northern Ireland. The independent Opsahl commission - named after the Norwegian lawyer who chaired it - conducted nineteen full days of oral hearings on Northern Ireland's futures. The commission spent the first two months of 1993 travelling around the province eliciting opinion from all sides of the political and religious divide, finishing - interestingly for present purposes - with two 'school assemblies' in Derry and Belfast. Sporadic reports of these proceedings can be found in the magazine *Fortnight* from January-April 1993.

²⁰ The local police could in this way be included in deliberations about local police policy in a context in which their 'expertise' is subject to democratic debate, and thus not privileged.

(v) initiate local 'notice and comment' procedures about prospective policing policies.

The youth accounts discussed in Part Two indicate however that - with regard to young people - regional police commissions might have to mobilise more proactive and specific methodologies. In the first place, these accounts - supported by other recent criminological research (Anderson et al. 1990b) - suggest that young people have disproportionately high levels of contact with all dimensions of crime, perhaps most significantly in relation to victimisation. They also intimate that young people occupy both a prominent and structured place within police workloads and understandings; being understood and acted upon most often as 'trouble', yet largely unrecognised as victims of crime who might have demands to make of a police service. Perhaps more significantly, youth accounts further suggest that - despite being one of the social groups who are most likely to be affected by the substantive outcomes of deliberation on policing policy - young people currently express little confidence in the workings of formal political institutions.

In these conditions, the police commission might have to think imaginatively about ways of ensuring the inclusion of youth voices within decision-making processes. They might, for example, take steps to enable groups of young people to talk among themselves as a constituency before making an entree into wider forums of policy deliberation (cf. Fraser 1992). This could be accomplished by the commission providing a range of allocative resources (such as materials, information and advice) to local schools, colleges and youth organisations in order to facilitate the production of 'youth submissions' to the policy-making process. Such resourced enhancement may permit the transcendence of some of the isolating individual social practices evidenced in Part Two, by engendering reflection upon *shared* youth concerns vis a vis questions of local policing and public safety; a process that thereby enables young people (and other marginalised groups for whom cognate practices might be enacted) to 'gain a sense of collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of the society' (I. M. Young 1989: 261-2).

One of the prospective merits of local police commissions is that they can generate a more discrete problem-solving emphasis towards the problems of crime and policing that obtain within particular localities. In this regard, the accounts elicited in Part Two suggest that local police commissions would be confronted with troubled police-youth relations, laced with both a history of pre-existing conflict and a mutual expectation of further tension. The role of local commissions in these circumstances might be to foster forms of police-youth contact outside of situations marked by the 'paradox of face'. They may, for example, act as an independent 'go between' on local policing issues, endeavouring initially to ascertain the concerns of either 'side', and, if and when appropriate, enacting local forums of deliberation and decision in which asymmetrical power relations can be

neutralised (forums in which the commission adopts the role of structured mediation, bringing the parties together around a common agenda).

In this context, the interview process prefiguratively suggests both a range of possibilities, as well as a number of caveats that ought to be heeded if such deliberation is to avoid becoming a 'dialogue of the deaf'.²¹ In substantive terms, the research intimates the significance of the commission (and the police) recognising the collective experiences of young people in relation to matters of crime and policing. It further, and relatedly, evinces the importance of both taking seriously the collective practices and understandings of young people (and enacting solutions that build upon their progressive dimensions), while seeking to engender critical reflection on the brutalities they occasionally enact (such as inter-area violence). In a more procedural vein, the research process indicates the salience of local commissioners developing communicative processes that are situated in locations where young people routinely cohere, and proceeding in (flexible) ways that recognise the privileging of 'the informal' that occurs within youth social practices (Willis 1977; 1990).

The process and substance of the research additionally intimates some of the ways in which police officers - far from being merely an obstacle to enlightened police reform - may provide a potential resource upon which deliberative problem-solving mechanisms can draw (cf. Goldsmith 1990). Many current defensive dispositions can be viewed in part as a product of officers' location at the bottom of a hierarchical organisation in which they feel under pressure both from 'bosses' and various external audiences. In this context, local commissions may seek to facilitate both (internal) collective communication between officers of different ranks on local policing problems, as well as enabling officers to enter into deliberation with groups of local youths on matters of common concern. For drawing officers into local processes of problem-solving (mediated by an elected local police commission) in which their opinions are sought, may serve both to enhance generally the role of the police officer, and transcend the defensive dispositions generated by an exclusive concentration upon situational policing routines.

The substance of police accounts suggests in this context - albeit in a grounded and inchoate manner - that some officers both aspire to enhanced communication with young people, and hold a series of understandings that would be amenable to some progressive

²¹ It should of course be noted that such deliberative processes may amplify existent frictions in police-youth relations (by, for example, enabling the exchange of mutual 'horror stories' and thus reinforcing negative dispositions). For no counterfactual reform initiative can completely preclude the possibility that it may fail (progressively) to change the social relations it sets out to transform; or that it may change such relations for the worse. In the 'open systems' (Bhaskar 1986) with which social research is confronted, counterfactual solutions will always contain both a progressive potential and the seeds of degenerative possibilities. In this regard, sociological attempts at institution-building can merely accommodate the unpredictable nature of the contexts with which they engage, and endeavour to formulate proposals that are more likely to occasion progressive outcomes.

resolution of existent police-youth problems - most prominently, in the depolicing of young people's collective use of public space. In an organisational context in which such proclivities are rendered largely silent, the importance of local communicative processes in which police officers are included is that they bring forth the possibility (and it can be put no more strongly than that) of negotiated agreements about police practice that can co-opt the support of the officers required to implement them. They thus hold out the prospect of overcoming a rank and file culture that is often apprehended (Holdaway 1983) as a severe barrier both to democratic accountability, and to the prospect of policing practice that respects the legitimate concerns of all social groups.

The overall significance of these anticipated institutional methodologies is that they may enact processes that enable the articulation of young people's felt needs and experiences, and permit their incorporation within the policy-making processes of the police commission. As such, they may come to form part of a set of social relations and institutional arrangements that go some way to alleviating many of the problems that currently obtain in police-youth relations; as well as superseding the manufactured 'public' opinion of a 'thin' democracy with a discursive public sphere that is capable of proffering notions of policing by consent with some genuine substance.

APPENDIX AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appendix and Bibliography

Field Data: Preliminary Police Interviews

The first series of interviews were conducted in May and June 1994, part of a research project on multi-agency policies for young people in the United Kingdom. Conducted by the Peter Langford Project (Stoney 1997), David's research supervisor, police officers were approached by Richard Kinty (the Ministry researcher) in their workbooks in central Edinburgh. The randomly selected sample consisted of eighteen beat officers, six area officers, and three community involvement officers (including one juvenile liaison officer). Of the eighteen beat officers, five were stationed at St. Leonard's police station in Edinburgh's Southside, six at Gayfield Square in the city centre, and the rest at Haymarket in the city's West End. Two solo officers and one community involvement officer were also selected from each station.

For the purposes of the research on multi-agency policing, officers were asked about their perceptions of the police, their contact with, and disruption to, voluntary, statutory and voluntary agencies, drug misuse, the health care system, as well as their understanding of crime problems in central Edinburgh (such as women's perceptions of victims of sexual violence). Within this broad scope, a range of more discrete questions were included in the interview schedule: officers' perceptions of young people and their experiences of policing young people in Edinburgh's city centre; this involved asking them to respond in particular to some of the findings contained in surveys of both the public and

Appendix

INTERVIEWEES AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

The central theoretical purpose of this thesis - exploring the possibilities of communication between young people and the police, and the consequences of its absence - renders 'semi-structured' interviews the most propitious method of substantive enquiry. For the accounts produced in such interviews enable the exploration both of the propositional content of the experiences and dispositions of young people and police officers, as well as the reciprocities and divergences in their respective outlooks. What is more, in the context of a prefigurative methodology that positions the researcher in a mediating position between a particular social group and a state institution - the interview method best permits the construction of a counterfactual dialogue between youth and police accounts. To make good this mediating role, the research process was conducted in three phases, with reflection on the substance and process of each series of interviews being used to inform the construction of the next.

Phase One: Preliminary Police Interviews

The first series of interviews were undertaken in May and June 1990 as part of a research project on multi-agency policing being carried out at the University of Edinburgh for the Safer Edinburgh Project (Kinsey 1992). During this phase, twenty-seven police officers were interviewed (by Richard Kinsey, John Mulvey and myself) in three stations in central Edinburgh. The randomly selected sample consisted of eighteen beat officers, six area officers, and three community involvement officers (including one juvenile liaison officer). Of the eighteen beat officers, nine were stationed at St. Leonard's police station in Edinburgh's Southside; six at Gayfield Square in the city centre, and three at Haymarket in the city's West End. Two area officers and one community involvement officer were also selected from each station.

For the purposes of the research on multi-agency policing, officers were asked about their perceptions of the police function; their contact with, and disposition towards, statutory and voluntary agencies (for example, the social work department), as well as their understandings of crime problems in central Edinburgh (such as women's experiences as victims of crime). Within this broad remit, a range of more discrete questions were included in the interview schedule on officers' perceptions of young people and their experiences of policing youth in Edinburgh city centre; this involved asking them to respond in particular to some of the findings contained in surveys of both the public and

police officers in Edinburgh (Anderson et al. 1990a; Kinsey 1992). For the purposes of the present enquiry these questions were designed to generate a series of ideas about the relationship between policing and youth which could be pursued further both in interviews with young people, and in the second phase of interviews with police officers. The schedule for the preliminary interviews is listed below:

Phase One Police Interview Schedule

How much do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement:

Teenagers hanging around the street are one of the biggest problems for residents in central Edinburgh?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

What sort of problems do young people hanging about the streets cause? What sort of problems do you people face? What can police officers do to reduce these problems?

According to the Edinburgh crime survey, 40% of police officers and 11% of the public think that teenagers hanging around the street are a 'big problem'.

How would you account for the difference?

The Edinburgh crime survey showed that young people are most likely to be victims of personal crime and to witness crime. They are also most likely to be stopped and searched, or stopped and questioned, by the police.

In your experience, would this be more true for some groups of young people than for others? If yes, for whom? Why should this be the case?

The findings of our research show that the police see young people as the section of the population least willing to cooperate with them.

Why do you think this is the case? In what ways are they uncooperative?

Can you suggest ways in which relations between the police and young people may be improved?

Phase Two: Youth Interviews

The interviews with young people were all undertaken between June 1990 and July 1991. Thirteen individuals were selected from the sample drawn for the Edinburgh crime survey (Anderson et al. 1990a) and interviewed between June and August 1990. All these interviews took place with respondents living in Craigmillar (one of Edinburgh's three peripheral housing schemes), and Broughton (a mixed residential area situated just to the north of the city centre). The remainder of the interviews were obtained by approaching five youth clubs (including the youth project at which I volunteered between September 1990 and April 1992); two colleges of further education; three youth training centres and two unemployed clubs - institutional locations intended to represent a range of post-school

economic and social trajectories. In each case, I explained my objectives to teachers and youth workers and specified the number of groups I wanted to interview. In particular, I emphasised that it was not a project on juvenile delinquency and that I was not interested in talking exclusively to those who had experienced 'trouble' with the police. The young people interviewed were selected by teachers and youth workers in the institutions concerned, and interviewed at those locations in groups of between two and six.

The resulting sample encompassed the following subject positions:

- (i) ninety-nine young people were interviewed, sixty-one males and thirty-eight females. Five of the total sample were fifteen, being included in groups selected at youth clubs; the majority of the remainder were aged either sixteen (forty-three) or seventeen (nineteen). Of the rest, twenty-four were aged between eighteen and twenty, and a further eight between twenty-one and twenty-three.
- (ii) The sample was drawn from a range of locations across both Edinburgh and Lothian region. Within Edinburgh, the majority of the sample lived in the mixed (though predominantly working) class areas of Broughton, Leith and Portobello in the north of the city; the housing schemes of Wester Hailes and Craigmillar, and the mainly working class areas of Mayfield and Gracemount in the south. Outside of Edinburgh, the bulk of those interviewed lived in small towns in East and Midlothian - such as Dalkeith, Gorebridge, Penicuik and Haddington.
- (iii) In terms of post-school trajectories, forty-one of the sample were in full-time education of one kind or another: three of these were still at school; thirty-one were pursuing vocational qualifications at college, with a further six studying for 'highers', and one at university. Of those who had left education, seven were in full-time employment; thirty-one were on youth training schemes and seventeen were unemployed at the time of interview. A further two were female single parents, and another was undergoing a community service order.

The interviews focused on young people's changing use of city spaces since they had left school; their experiences and perceptions of safety and anxiety in the city, and their contact with the police as 'service users'. They also enquired into young people's adversary experiences of the police, and explored further some of the ambiguities and contradictions of youth experiences and dispositions towards the police and their role. In either case, an attempt was made both to pose to young people a number of the relevant findings from the police interviews, and to explore the changes that had occurred in their experiences and understandings in the period since the end of full-time schooling. Finally, the interviews

were designed to explore young people's apprehensions of politics and the political process.

At all times, the interview schedule was used as a 'guide to discussion' rather than a list of questions that was adhered to strictly. It is listed below, together with a short questionnaire that was completed by each respondent:

Youth Interview Schedule

Section one: life since leaving school

What have you been doing since you left school?
What changes in your life have you experienced since you left school?
What have been the biggest problems you have faced?

What sort of job did you want to do while you were at school?
Have your expectations changed since then? If so how?
What do you think of your job?
How do you see your future job prospects?

How has your social life changed since you left school (i.e. friends, places you go etc.)?

What is it like for people your age living in this area?
Can you remember what you thought about the area when you were at school?
How have your views changed?

Is there enough for people your age to do in this area? What facilities?
would you like that this area/city centre has not got?
How often do you visit other parts of Edinburgh? What for? Which ones?

Do you think young people living in other parts of Edinburgh have more or less opportunities than people living in this area? In what ways?

Do you think the police treat people from other parts of Edinburgh differently?

Section two: safety and victimisation in public space

Have you ever witnessed or been involved in a fight when you have been out? What happened?

Did the police come? Would you have wanted them to? Why not?
Should the police be involved in incidents like fighting?

If yes - at all times? Under what circumstances? Should they wait until somebody has complained? Can they make the situation worse?

If no - what never? What if somebody was being seriously hurt? Should the people just be left to get on with it? What if you were being hurt?

If a friend of yours was being badly hurt would you call the police? Why not?

Why do you think fights break out in pubs and clubs or on the streets? Is it just drink? What else? Do they mainly occur between strangers? Is where people come from important?

What if you were coming out of a pub or club and were messing around or having a laugh, and the police moved you on, or told you to go home.
How would you feel? Is it right that the police do things like this?

What if a local resident had been annoyed by the noise and had called the police. They can't just ignore it, what do you think the police should do?

How do you think the police feel doing that sort of thing - moving on groups of young people at night, things like that? After all, many of them are the same age as you.

How safe do you feel when you are out in the city centre?
Have you ever been frightened or worried by groups of young people while you have been out? What happened?

How safe do you think it is for young women out on their own? Why is it unsafe?

Ask women:

The Edinburgh crime survey showed that a lot of young women had experienced sexual harassment when they were out, yet very few of them reported these incidents to the police.

Why do you think this is?

How would you like the police to respond to problems like this? Would it make any difference if you could report it to woman police officers? Why?

Do you ever feel bothered or worried by groups of young men while you are out (for example, fighting)?

How do you think the police should deal with situations like this? Should they be involved?

Would you like to see more police officers patrolling the streets on foot? Why? How do you think it would make things better?

Section three: perceptions of crime, witnessing and reporting

In this area and in the city centre you often see groups of young people hanging around on the streets. They are mostly your age or a bit younger than you.

Have you ever spent time hanging about on the streets? Why? Why do so many young people spend their time doing this? Isn't it pretty boring?
Do you still spend any of your spare time in this way?

If no - why don't you do so now? What's changed? What do you remember about it?

The police say that that young people hanging around are a big problem for them and local residents. That they are responsible for a lot of petty crime and nuisance (vandalism, noise, annoying local residents etc.)

Do you think the police are right in saying this?
Should they be spending their time moving on groups of young people? Why not?
Isn't it a waste of time (the police think it is)?

What things do you think the police should spend their time on?

Did you and your friends get up to these sorts of things while you were at school? Do you remember what it was like?

What about now? *If no* - why not, what has changed?

Talking to children still at school, they seem to feel very strongly about not reporting things they have witnessed to the police. Not 'grassing' people up.

Do you think they are right to think this?

When you were fifteen or sixteen would you have reported somebody vandalising a bus shelter to the police? What about somebody attacking an old lady?

What about now? Have your views changed? Why wouldn't you report things? What sort of things do you think should or should not be reported to the police? Would it make any difference if you knew the person involved?

The police would say that if people don't report things they can't solve the crime. What do you think of this? How else should crime should be dealt with?

Section four: perceptions of policing

Have you ever had a bad time off the police? What happened? When did it happen?

Has it affected the way you think about the police? In what ways?

What do you think of the police in general? What should the police be for? Do you think the police are doing this job properly? Why not?

Can the police ever do any good?

If yes - in what sort of ways? What things should they concentrate upon?

If no - do you think we need a police force then? Why not? What if a young girl attacked? Selling drugs? Controlling pollution? Do we need a police for this sort of thing? Who do you think should deal with these things?

What sort of things do you think the police should be involved in? (e.g. talks at youth clubs, patrolling the streets at night, miner's strike etc.)

When do you think it is right for the police to stop/question or move on young people?

For example:

(i) If a group of young people were hanging around on the streets should the police move them on?

(ii) What if your granny had complained to the police that the young people were a nuisance. What should the police do?

(iii) What if they were being abusive or threatening other people, or fighting outside a pub?

What do you think its like being a police officer? After all a lot of them are about the same age as you? What sort of problems do you think they face doing their job?

What sort of people do you think become police officers?

Do you know anybody who have joined or wants to join the police? What do you think of them?

What do the police think about young people in this area? Why do you think they hold the views they do? Do you think they are right/fair to think like that?

Can you remember what you felt about the police when you were fifteen or sixteen? How have your views changed since then?

What would you tell the police if you could talk to them about the problems you face?

What else do you think could be done to improve relations between police and young people?

Section five: conceptions of accountability and politics

Do you think young people have any rights against the police?

If yes - what are they *If no* - what should they be?

In general, do you think that society is fair to young people?

If not - in what ways isn't it?

Do you think people about your age have an opportunity to put their views across?

Do you think that people about your age have any influence on the decisions that affect their lives?

If no - why do you think that is? Is it right? When do you think they should? What things would you have more say over?

What are the most important (political) issues for you at the moment? Why?

Are you involved in the next any local organisations? Which ones?

Do you think the local council listen to the problems of young people?

What would you like to see the council doing for people your age?

Do you/will you vote in the next council elections? Who will you vote for? Why?

What do you think they will do for you?

Do you know who your parents vote for? Do/will you vote the same way? Why?

What about the political parties and politicians generally, do you think any of them want to change or improve things for young people?

If yes - in what ways? *If no* - why not?

Do you think it makes any difference which political party is in power?

Youth Self-Completion Questionnaire

Could you please complete the questions below. Your answers are for research purposes only and will not be passed to anyone else.

How old are you?

Are you male or female?

Which area of Edinburgh do you live?

How long have you lived there? (to the nearest year)

What school did you go to?

What are you doing at the moment? (working; at college; Y.T.S.; looking for work)

If you are working, what job do you do?

Are either of your parents working? (Yes/No)

Mother

Father

What do they do?

Mother

Father

Phase Three: Police Interviews

The second series of interviews with twenty-two rank and file police officers was carried out - exclusively for the purposes of the present enquiry - during a three-week period in September 1991. The interview sample comprised of eighteen male and two female officers, divided by role into thirteen beat officers, seven area officers and two juvenile liaison officers. The interviews were undertaken in police stations throughout Edinburgh chosen to dovetail with the areas of the city in which the interviews with young people were carried out; three of the stations being located in Edinburgh's peripheral housing schemes (Craigmillar, Drylaw and Wester Hailes), two in the central area of the city (St. Leonards and Gayfield Square), and one in the largely working class locale of Leith.

The purpose of these interviews was twofold: in the first place, they were designed to explore police officers' understandings and experiences of young people both as offenders, and as witnesses and victims. In terms of the latter, they attempted to explore officers' perceptions of young people's reluctance to report crime, as well as their understandings of the police role vis a vis young people as victims of crime. The interviews were also concerned in this regard both to engage in dialogue with officers about some of the thematics generated in the youth interviews, as well as to enable them to put forward their ideas on existent and proposed policing practices in relation to young people and crime prevention.

All the officers were notified of the interviews in advance by means of a letter from force headquarters, and were forwarded an outline of the proposed research written by myself. All the interviews took place at the relevant station. The interview schedule is listed below:

Phase Three Police Interview Schedule

Age / job / area/ sex / station / years of service

Section one: young people and police practice

Our research has shown that police officers spend a lot of their time dealing with young people.

How much of your your daily work involves dealing with young people?

In what situations do you most frequently come into contact with young people?

For example - property crime, disorder on the streets, car theft etc.

Relative to the time you spend with other groups of the public, do you spend a lot of time dealing with young people?

Do you think a disproportionate amount of your time is spent dealing with young people, or is it time well spent? Why?

Section two: policing and 'under -protection'

How often do you come into contact with young people as victims of crime?

How big a problem would you say young people's victimisation is?

The research we have conducted suggests that young people are far more frequently victims of crime than adults.

Does this surprise you?

In your experience what sort of crimes are young people most often the victims of?

How much are they to blame for this? Do they bring it on themselves?

Section three: policing and 'over-control'

In this area and in the city centre you often see groups of young people hanging around on the streets. Talking to police officers in previous research, they felt that they were placed in something of a bind: they felt that moving on groups of young people was a waste of their time, but they had to do so in response to complaints from local residents.

Do you find this the case?

If a group of young people are hanging around the streets, under what circumstances might you move them on?

What if they said they were causing no trouble to anyone?

If you moved them on and they were back at the same place half an hour later, what would you do?

Should the police be moving on young people, if nobody has complained about them?

In your opinion does police intervention solve the problem? Has it ever made it worse?

It could be argued that this type of policing is the greatest cause of resentment of the police among young people.

Do you agree?

In your opinion is it the police's job to deal with this problem?

If not - whose job is it?

Section four: young people, reporting and communication

Talking to young people, they seem reluctant to report their own victimisation, or crimes they have witnessed either to the police, or other adults. There appears to exist a culture of 'not grassing'.

Why do you think this is? Do you think it matters?

Do you think the type of policing we have just been discussing can contribute to young people's under-reporting?

How do you think young people can be encouraged to report crime/their problems to the police and other agencies?

Section five: young people and police services

Do the young people you deal with have a proper understanding of your job?

Do you think they understand the help you can (or cannot) provide?

What would you tell young people if you could talk to them about the problems you face as a police officer?

Would it improve your relations with young people if you were able to do that?

Do you think the police could do more to help young people as victims of crime? If so what?

If you were devising a scheme in relation to young people and crime prevention, what sort of issues would you concentrate upon?

What do you think of the initiatives that have been taken already? What have been the successes and shortcomings of these schemes?

(i) junior crime prevention panels; (ii) police liaison with schools and youth clubs.

A lot of different schemes have been tried in recent years, not all of which have been successful.

Can you think of anything you have tried in your work with young people that you feel has been successful? Can you tell me about it?

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