

THE OCCUPATIONAL CULTURE OF URBAN POLICING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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SUMMARY

The Occupational Culture of Urban Policing: An Ethnographic Study

This thesis is based on ethnographic data gathered by the author during his period of service as a police officer working in an inner city area. The research described concerns an analysis of the occupational culture of urban policing.

First, literature on the sociology of the police is reviewed. Particular attention is given to recent Marxist analyses of the police and more classical work by William Westley and Jerome Skolnick. The former research is criticised for its lack of attention to the occupational culture, the latter for presenting ambiguous evidence as if it were plain. The thesis is then placed within the context of the sociology of the police and the recent history of British policing; particular attention is given to the development of 'professional policing'.

Three substantive issues then form the major focus of the thesis. First, changes in the occupational culture since Dr Maureen Cain completed her research are described and analysed. The important changes of Unit Beat Policing and the professionalisation of the police are given particular consideration. Further, knowledge of the occupational culture is advanced into new areas; techniques of control, spatial and temporal perception and police use of 'verballing' and physical force are analysed.

Secondly, criticism is made of Manning's recent work on policing in Anglo-American societies. It is argued that Manning provides insufficient data to sustain his thesis and differences between the British and American settings are outlined. Using Schutz's theory of relevance, data are used to chart primary and secondary aspects of the British occupational culture; this offers a new perspective on urban policing.

Thirdly, the thesis deals with the notion that policing is 'socially constructed'. Manning's research is of further interest at this point. His thesis is criticised, not least for stating that policing is socially

constructed, without demonstrating how that construction is achieved in the course of routine police work. Data gathered during the author's period of fieldwork are used to describe features of police work which sustain lower ranks' definition of their task.

Overall, the thesis demonstrates the continuing dominance of lower police ranks, who maintain freedom from legal and organisational constraints to practise police work as they define it.

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NOTE

Some of the research reported here has been used in previous publications, the bibliography cites these fully. The fact that I had not been a full-time postgraduate student with time to publish before I was appointed to my present post meant that I had to 'publish or perish'. I think a small amount of this early work will be recognisable to the discerning eye but it is, I feel, substantially revised by its placement within this broadly based study.

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Thanks are due to many people who have assisted my research. The staff of the Department of Sociology at the University of Lancaster set me on my way as an undergraduate. During the period of fieldwork a number of police colleagues were of support, though they did not know it. Since leaving the police service, academic colleagues have been most encouraging and kind, particularly colleagues concerned with the sociology of the police. I hope to name them when this thesis is published. The staff and trustees of the Nuffield Foundation have been exceedingly generous in awarding me a social science fellowship which has enabled the write-up of this thesis. The staff of my present university department have been both supportive and encouraging. Finally, my family - Hilary, Ruth and Ben - have never known me so busy or encountered the lasting grumpiness of busyness. Their tolerance and love have meant a very great deal.

CHAPTER 1

THE SOCIOLOGY OF POLICE WORK

Introduction

The data for this thesis were collected during two of my eleven years' police service: between October 1973 and August 1975. During this time I worked as a police sergeant in one of Britain's metropolitan forces, being posted to uniform, supervisory work at a station situated about five miles from a metropolitan city centre. The methodology of the research was covert, participant observation involving close documentation of a wide range of police practices¹.

More than five years have elapsed since the completion of fieldwork; further research on the British and American police has been published during this period. Some of this more recent work bears a close relationship to the original intentions of the research reported here. However, the more general intellectual themes pursued in British sociology, particularly in the area of the sociology of deviance and social control, have tended to move away from my major theoretical and methodological emphases. Despite these changes, it is argued that the original intentions and subsequent findings of my research are as pertinent as ever; indeed, they demonstrate that many criticisms and prognoses made by recent commentators on the police are premature.

For example, in a recent paper, 'Current trends in the sociology of police work', Dr Maureen Cain argues that research on the police can be divided into five 'phases', each chronologically situated and circumscribed by changes in the political situation in which they were written, as well as ideas of the previous phase. A basic development in sociological research on the police is identified. This has moved research away from an emphasis on individual civil rights (though these are important at any phase), towards organisational, community oriented and, finally, large-scale issues of the relationship between the police and the political state. Questioning the notion of a homogeneous clustering of agencies

of state control serving the interests of an equally homogeneous ruling class, Cain directs attention to the development of research concerned with the 'macro-structural' issues of 'what class, group or institution does in fact "sustain" the police'². Such research would build on studies that have concentrated on the smaller-scale, organisational level of analysis. Indeed, Cain argues that the organisational level of analysis is not of primary importance - it is 'the icing sugar on the cake'. Priority should be given to research dealing 'with fundamental issues, with the chemical processes which make the cake possible at all'³.

A broader theoretical definition of policing is suggested: 'Police then, must be defined in terms of their key practice. They are appointed with the task of maintaining the order which those who sustain them define as proper'⁴. Historical research, combined with an analysis of the relationship between changing patterns of policing and changing patterns of economic structure, enhance the means by which 'the organisational studies can be re-cast into the new intellectual context, and their value if anything enhanced thereby'⁵. Cain continues: 'But I don't want to end with the usual call for more research because this paper has demonstrated that we have quite a lot already'⁶.

Cain's argument is consistent with one strand of intellectual thought developed in sociology during the last few years - the attempt to develop a Marxist theory of deviance and social control⁷. Her thesis displays one of the major problems of that approach. The desire for theoretical clarity refers her back to the organisational studies she is so keen to criticise. It is feasible to define 'police in terms of their key practice'. However, the concept of 'key practice' can only finally be determined by an empirical analysis of the police at work, ideally by an ethnography.

Similarly, it may be that what Cain calls 'the chemical processes which make the cake possible at all' are to be found in social processes located outside the institutional organisation of policing. However, if this is so, evidence of the relationship between the police and other institutions will finally be a matter of empirical judgment,

involving an evaluation of evidence from, among other sources, participant observation of the police. In short, Cain's argument that sufficient organisational and ethnographic studies have been completed, enabling researchers to begin the really important work of social-structural analysis, is premature. Even if we agree that the virtually metaphysical propositions she advances are important, studies at the organisational level are utterly crucial if her theoretical propositions are to be underpinned and evaluated with evidence.

A further difficulty raised by Cain's paper concerns the assertion that we now have a considerable amount of researched evidence of police work to re-interpret within a Marxist framework. We do not. Minimal evidence of British policing is available and there is most certainly insufficient to propose its re-evaluation; much of it is dated. Indeed, the pioneering work of Banton and subsequent doctoral research by Cain were completed over ten years ago. Dr Michael Chatterton has also observed policing in an urban area in the mid-sixties. Recent work by Peter Manning is, when subjected to detailed analysis, found to be based on a modicum of direct evidence of British policing⁸. The re-interpretation suggested by Cain would be a strained and lean exercise.

No doubt Cain is assuming that scholarly studies of the American police can be placed alongside British research. The concept of 'Anglo-American policing', recently expounded by Manning, implies correspondence between British and American work. However, and as some evidence to be introduced at a later stage suggests, such a judgment is premature. Apart from the inadequacies of studies which have been published, including those listed as 'classics' - by Westley and Skolnick for example - far too little attention has been given to the careful evaluation of ethnographic evidence when comparative assessments of police work have been made. Banton has pointed to the limitations of Westley's thesis when it is placed within the British context but subsequent researchers, and this is not just a problem confined to the theoretical perspective Cain represents, have proceeded without sufficient care⁹. Far closer observation of police work is required before comparisons can be made with safety and a concept like 'Anglo-American policing' sustained with confidence.

These difficulties - the need for continuous building of evidence from organisational studies, insufficient research to permit revaluation and the problems of making comparisons between policing in Britain and America - form the initial justification for this thesis. Part of its value lies in the data it adds to highly insecure foundations, laid by sociologists employing similar research methods but working within very different systems of policing. Cain's recent description of how a sociology of the police should proceed is judged to be inadequate and will not be followed.

The neglect of the police in British sociology

The lack of research on the police and a tendency towards over-ambitious, speculative work, represented by Cain, is largely explained when broader aspects of the development of the sociology of deviance and social control are considered.

Throughout the 1960's much attention was given to what has been summarised as 'the labelling perspective'¹⁰. Finding its foundations in the theoretical orientation of symbolic interactionism, the labelling perspective was employed to explicate the relationship between agencies of social control and the creation of deviants. Edwin Lemert's proposition that 'social control leads to deviance' provided the fundamental orientation of research¹¹. Clearly, if an emphasis is placed on those who enforce rules, as well as those against whom rules are enforced - if it is to be on agents of social control rather than, or as much as, those who negate such control - the police could be seen to be extremely important. The police mediate between the law and institutions of social control; they construct official rates of deviant activity and sustain boundaries of moral tolerance in relation to particular acts; they assist in the moulding of public conceptions of imputed suspicion, immorality and criminality. A mapping of their activities through methods of observation could bring much evidence to bear on academic debate and policy issues.

Tension between an emphasis on fieldwork methods and a more reflective, theoretical stance became evident amongst the membership of 'The National

Deviancy Conference'¹². This somewhat diverse group of sociologists found initial agreement in the ideas of labelling theory and its associated injunction to 'appreciation' of the deviant, as David Matza put it. In essence, there was little difference between the offending deviant and 'Everyman'; the imposition of a stigmatising label differentiates the deviant and is of primary importance¹³.

Two papers on the police appeared in the first published collection of proceedings from the conference. One was from Maureen Cain's thesis, later written into book form. The other illustrates an increasing lack of appreciation of the relations between agents of social control and potential deviants. In his paper on the relations between the police and drugtakers in an area of London, Jock Young argues that the police amplified and sustained an escalation of drug use, forcing illicit and exploitative dealings in drugs, the creation of a protective sub-cultural web by users and the movement of some users from marihuana to heroin¹⁴. He analyses the relations between these parties in terms of a systems model of 'deviancy amplification'. The humanizing appreciation of both deviant and agent of control is removed; in Young's account, the policeman is reactive, an anonymous 'strawman' in an equally anonymous system of exchange relationships. Emphasis on systematic relations between the police and the drug user took priority over sensitivity to social processes within the systems being described. The complexity of the worlds of controller and controlled as intersections of a sometimes shared, sometimes hostile arena of negotiation were neglected. The police were, to parody Young's own phrase, 'mute translators of fantasy into reality'. The translation was clear: the system (later to become the capitalist system) determines behaviour and with it the subtlety of consciousness disappears. The police were neglected. In fact, they were largely neglected because of an evangelistic response to Becker's rather over-simplified question, 'Whose side are we on?'. The answer was clear: 'The underdog'¹⁵.

The publication of 'The New Criminology' moved analysis of the police further away from sensitive, participant observation, designed to render an understanding of policing in action, towards theoretical, social structural analysis¹⁶. This offered little or no likelihood of assembling

evidence of how police personnel understand their work, the world around them or themselves. Geoffrey Pearson's general criticism of this approach seems an understatement. He writes, 'Cardboard, wooden figures exercise something called "choice" in the face of something called "restraints" and that is all'¹⁷. The theoretical insights of 'The New Criminology' have been useful, but when pitted against the actual worlds of deviants and controllers their accuracy remains unresearched and the study of the police as an agency of control is neglected.

Young's later paper, 'Working Class Criminology' is illustrative here. He makes some assertions about the relationship between the police and the working class without a shred of supporting evidence. Young writes:

'The criminal statistics represent the end-results of the deployment of social control agencies by the powerful. The policeman on the beat, the courts, the social worker are all geared into this process in the sense that their areas of discretion are usually within the parameters their bureaucratic controllers permit. It is only in atypical situations that the idiosyncratic values and ideologies of particular social control agencies assume paramount importance. To see each sector as conflicting over fundamentals is misleading and is a product of the kind of pluralism which cannot distinguish differences of emphasis from differences in objective position'¹⁸.

Of course, Young is solely dependent on a prior theoretical analysis for his statements and their empirical accuracy remains a matter of speculation; one presumably accepts the logic of his prior analysis as sufficient validation of the conclusions drawn. Taunts like 'the powerful', 'their areas of discretion are usually within the parameters their bureaucratic controllers permit' and 'it is only in atypical situations that the idiosyncratic values and ideologies of particular social control agencies assume paramount importance' cannot be evaluated without some evidence gained in some sort of observation of the police at work. These criticisms of Young's work are substantially the same as those prompted by Maureen Cain's article. It is not possible to determine, as she put it, 'the chemical processes which make the cake possible' without pitting relevant evidence against tentative theory. If any of the statements made by Young are to be verified, research methods of the type employed in my own study are crucial. As it stands, 'The New Criminology' is a blind alley.

'The New Criminology' was not the only current theme of the sociology of deviance and social control at the time I began my research. Another strand of thought moved away from what was considered to be a lack of theoretical and methodological sophistication to analyse the lexicon of linguistic and other rules used in social interaction.

The insights of phenomenology were used to press for a closer analysis of the actual linguistic processes employed in the labelling of a person as deviant and the 'commonsense', 'taken-for-granted' assumptions the members of institutions make about their work¹⁹. In America, Aaron Cicourel and Harvey Sacks have demonstrated how a stock of knowledge, quite distinct from legal or administrative edicts, sustain the practice of competent policework. These researchers focussed on police decision-making about the status of a possible juvenile offender and how patrolmen typify persons and places as 'normal' in the course of routine patrol work²⁰.

My thesis is not concerned with charting the precise directions in which ethnomethodological study has proceeded. Broadly, and most certainly in Britain, its practitioners have tended to be concerned with the minutiae of encounters, neglecting an appreciation of the broader setting of interaction, for example, in spatial, temporal, and dramatic aspects, being content with an exclusive interest in language. The promise could have been a close ethnography of policing in a host of settings. However, rather than turning outwards to theoretical issues which beg empirical evidence, as evidenced in 'The New Criminology', ethnomethodologists turned inwards to a highly selective approach which also resulted in a great deal of theoretical exposition and some empirical work, but nothing on the police. Again, this strand of development has left the field of research on the police wide open.

Research in context

I began my fieldwork in 1973, within the intellectual climate that has been described. Finding the 'New Criminology' lacking in empirical detail, but perceptive in pointing to the important concept of 'power' in an analysis of an institution like the police, I was concerned to

document how the police actually use their access to various forms of power during their daily work. However, I was more persuaded by the phenomenological perspective which argues that interaction is based on the meaning of rules and that the researcher of an institution like the police should attempt to document those meanings. Importantly, the social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz underpins this argument²¹.

Schutz directs our attention to what he terms 'the life-world' or 'the natural attitude of everyday life', within which meanings are constructed and sustained. The everyday world presents us with a massive and profound permanence; it is commonsense - the world as it appears to be. Importantly, 'typifications', that is rounded descriptions of typical persons, events and so on, provide a stock of knowledge to permit the members of organisations to handle a range of situations. From this perspective, the researcher is required to document meanings found in typical interpretations of events and then to discover how those meanings are continually re-constituted. Though in a rather straightforward fashion, Phillipson and Roche suggest that a piece of research employing the phenomenological perspective should follow two definite, if exceedingly complex, operational edicts. The first, 'it is necessary to get back to the phenomenon'. The second, 'to show how the phenomenon is built up'²².

My initial intention was to begin documentation of the meanings of policework to the officers I worked with. This would and did lead me into a consideration of how they actually performed their work in a variety of contexts. Throughout - and the enterprise will be described in far greater detail in our discussion of research on the police - the attempt was to understand policing from the standpoint of police officers and to move from that point to an analysis of how they constructed and sustained their definition of police work. Such an enterprise went beyond the speculative theorising we have criticised. Furthermore, the concern to document the meaning of policework avoided the trap of ethnomethodology, permitting a more broadly conceived research intention than concentration on linguistic utterances.

In many ways this project is similar to the work of the 'Chicago School'

of sociology which has led to the documentation of a rich variety of occupations²³. Their concern with ethnography and the meaning of work is shared. However, there will be more stress on an analysis of work within organisations, informed by Schutzian phenomenology, than is the case with the Chicago School. This means that as well as considering the meaning of work as it is performed, we will also document the manner in which very basic features of time and space are organised by policemen. It also means that an attempt will be made to portray the relevances of peripheral and central concerns as they are found in the social world of the policemen studied. Such a strategy moves analysis away from a homogenous 'Flatland' of relevancies suggested by Cain and Young, to a charting of the topography of policing²⁴.

Summary

At this early stage of the thesis we have established the place of the research to be reported within general trends current in the sociology of deviance and social control before and during the period of fieldwork. Importantly, the strictures of 'The New Criminology', with an accent on prior theorisation and an inadequate empirical base influenced the decision to engage in an ethnography of policing. Ethnographic techniques were employed to map the topography of 'commonsense' policing, using aspects of Schutzian phenomenology and the associated perspective of interactionism to do so.

The theoretical base on which the research began was therefore somewhat diverse and tentative - it remained so. It is of course founded upon the assumptions that man attributes meaning to the objects and events around him, that the designation of such objects and events form the basis of a constituted 'stock of knowledge' from which the social world is constructed and maintained, even though that construction requires continual maintenance. Importantly, it was assumed that police personnel create and sustain their own definition of policing, which can be compared with and pitted against other, rather different definitions relevant to other groups and institutions within and outside of the immediate context of police work. This is to assert that men, here policemen, have some measure of autonomy enabling them

to free themselves from structural constraints in order to construct their own understandings of the world, their work and themselves. However, theoretical assumptions are not the only factors that lead me to this position; empirical research on the American and British police also gives good reason to adopt such a view.

Previous research - the American police

A basic division between studies of the American and British police is made because a direct linking of different pieces of research, completed in very different settings, is dangerously misleading. Furthermore, a broadly chronological approach tends to ward off the temptation to discuss the British and American police in thematic terms, as if categories of meaning are as central or peripheral, as homogenous or diverse on either side of the Atlantic.

A chronological cataloguing of studies of the police, bearing little relation to the concerns of this thesis would be ritualistic rather than instrumental. My research was initiated to contribute to the literature of police work which has focussed on the organisational and occupational-cultural constraints placed upon the actual performance of routine policing. This means that some areas of publication - on police unionism, training, police history, for example - are not given a great deal of coverage, if any²⁵.

A useful starting point can be found in a range of studies of police discretion completed in the early 1960s. These emphasised the inevitable discretion available to police as they enforced, or more interestingly chose not to enforce the law. The low visibility of police work on the streets, problems of adequate supervision of low level ranks and, more importantly as far as these writers were concerned, the mandate to full enforcement of the law provided a framework requiring the inevitable use of police discretion. Joseph Goldstein, one of the writers in this area, argues:

'The mandate to full enforcement under circumstances which compel selective enforcement has placed the municipal police in an intolerable position. As a result, non-enforcement programmes have developed under cover, in a hit-or-miss fashion, and without regard to impact on the overall

administration of justice or the basic objectives of the criminal law. Legislatures ought to consider what discretion, if any, the police must, or should, have in invoking the criminal process and what devices, if any, should be designed to increase visibility and hence reviewability of these police decisions'²⁶.

In pointing to the 'reviewability of these police decisions', Goldstein reveals an underlying legalistic and organisational model to which the police should adhere. It is assumed that some post-hoc mechanism of review could adjudicate on the circumstances leading to the enforcement of the law and thereby enable a comparison between actual police practice and the requirements of law. In fact, Goldstein and others who hold similar views are arguing that discretionary freedom can be limited by means of a set of rules which will constrain police action in a post hoc manner.

Such a notion bears similarity to the model of formal organisation evident in Weber's classic writings on bureaucracy²⁷. The performance of particular duties by organisational personnel are related to the rules of the organisation - in Weber's case, the formal rules of a bureaucracy. In other words, ideally, behaviour is controlled by the formal rules of the organisation, any departure from those rules being understood as a deviation from normal practice. The freedom of personnel using particular rules within organisations, in the case of the police, the law, is admitted. However, such an admission requires an attempt to recast police practice in as precise a relationship to the formal organisational map as is possible.

There might be a fundamental error of philosophical anthropology here. Man is seen as more determined by legal and other organisational rules than one who makes and acts on an interpretation of those rules. However, evidence provided by studies which pointed to the apparent inevitability of police discretion stimulated further work. This focussed on the conflicts between organisational rules and the law. It was asserted that deviations from organisational rules might be more adequately understood as a necessary accommodation to conflict than acts of culpable indiscipline.

Two classic studies, respectively by William Westley and Jerome Skolnick, demonstrate the effects of conflicts arising from the organisation of policing. They emphasise the important relationship between the police and the public policed as well as other agencies of social control²⁸. Here, the police organisation is understood as an arena within which various definitions of proper practice are moulded to formulate a working model of policing, which is related to perceived demands made upon the police. From this perspective, the deviations which Goldstein observed could be more properly understood as normative examples of proper practice which are resistant to change, not least change designed to ensure compliance with legal directives.

William Westley sought an explanation of why the police of a small American town policed in the aggressive fashion he observed. This directed him to two areas: first, the patrolman's experience of the public he polices and, secondly, his related response. This response crystallises a diverse range of experience into a recognisably practical array of methods for the performance of police work - the rules and associated practices of the occupational culture. Westley writes,

'Our thesis is that the customs of the police as an occupational group give rise to a distortion of statutory law, so that the law in force, as it affects the people of the community, can be said to arise in part from the customs of the police'²⁹.

Importantly, Westley located the genesis of many police attitudes and associated strategies for action in the relationship between the police and the public which is policed. The experience of public hostility to their work, which rank-and-file officers articulated, is of fundamental importance to his thesis. It is argued that those sections of the public who came into contact with the police presented themselves in a manner which generated a reciprocal hostility from police officers. Westley writes,

'Mostly, he (the policeman) meets them in their evil, their sorrow, and their degradation and defeat ... He sees this public as a threat. He seldom meets it at its best and it seldom welcomes him. In spite of his ostensible function as protector, he usually meets only those he is protecting them from, and for him they have no love'³⁰.

The public is the policeman's enemy.

This perception of threat is supported by researched evidence of the attitudes of a variety of groups of people living or working in the town studied. Such attitudes had important consequences for the manner in which the police worked. They responded with sustained secrecy and solidarity, placing the public at a distance. A sense of danger pervaded policing, evoking an accepted range of aggressive tactics, not least the use of violence. Together, these features freed the police from a sense of dependency upon the public. Cynicism was central to the police understanding of the public ...

'To them he is the law, the interfering one, dangerous and a source of fear. He is the disciplinarian, a symbol in brass and blue, irritating, a personal challenge, and imminent defeat and punishment. To him they are the public, an unpleasant job, a threat, the bad ones, unpleasant and whining, self-concerned, uncooperative and unjust'³¹.

This portrait of disharmony will be questioned as an adequate assessment of the evidence Westley presents. However, before moving to that particular criticism we notice the freedom the police observed by Westley found within their organisation. The discretionary deviations from proper legal practice which Goldstein demonstrated, are now understood as part of a coherent occupational culture which, from the perspective of the lower ranks, is normative. The police organisation is not so much one of legal and administrative rules to which police actions approximate, as it is a series of interpretations by lower ranks which vie with legalistic and other rules. The norms of policing are not derived from legal criteria of competence; in Westley's work the focal relationship is that between the police and the public.

Central to the occupation and, therefore, to the policeman's self-image, the perception of a depraved public forms the basis of the occupational culture '... so that the law in force, as it affects the people of the community, can be said to arise in part from the customs of the police'³². The reviewing of police practice along the lines suggested by Goldstein now takes on a rather different complexion. It would seem that the police, notably lower ranks, have freedom to determine their own definition of policing, the precise relevance of legal rules to police action being far from clear.

Jerome Skolnick's Justice Without Trial acknowledges a debt to the ground prepared by Westley³³. Skolnick was also interested in the images of policework he found in the force he researched. However, whereas Westley had supposed that the relationship between the police and the public formed the significant variable to which the police responded, Skolnick looked at some dilemmas faced by the police when they enforce the law. He argues that the fundamental tension between law and order, that is to say the requirement of the police to enforce the law and also to remain within restrictive procedural boundaries while engaged in such enforcement, presents policemen with a conflict of interests. Are they to work within the rule of law, following legal direction at every point of detail, or are they to arrest using the law as circumstances dictate? Skolnick suggests that the latter option is chosen, providing the background to what he calls 'The Policeman's Working Personality'³⁴. In order to resolve the tension cited, officers foster certain affective and cognitive tendencies. Each trait is dependent on different organisational specialisms for emphasis but all relate to the core of policing as it is performed in Westville, the town researched and, by implication, urban America.

Skolnick's initial link with Westley is found in police perception of danger and a hostile working environment, invoking a strong sense of police authority. Such affects encouraged a pervasive suspicion of the public; more particularly, they moulded a shorthand sketch of the 'symbolic assailant', providing a rough working guide to the expected outcomes of encounters between the police and the public. The symbolic assailant, 'that is, persons who use gestures, language and attire that the policeman has come to recognise as a prelude to violence'³⁵. This perception of the world as a dangerous place throws the policeman into a situation of isolation and the necessity of firm support from his colleagues. Political and emotional conservatism are fostered to secure a sense of purpose and authority.

Other features of the police organisation refine and strengthen this 'working personality'. For example, the pressure to produce high arrest rates as a measure of adequate performance, the low visibility of many contexts within which policing is performed and the more general managerial style of rational business requiring quantitative

results are important. These combined to create and sustain a body of knowledge which is specific to the lower ranks' view of their work. The sophistication of this knowledge should not be underestimated. Skolnick describes the police officer thus: 'the policeman as craftsman rather than legal actor, as a skilled worker rather than as a civil servant obliged to subscribe to the rule of law'³⁶.

Like Westley, Skolnick draws us away from the legal base of policing, and, indeed, from the managerial policies of the force researched. Faced with a range of conflicts, the police neutralise legal constraints in order to produce a clear-up rate of offences, presented to senior officers and members of the public as a measure of efficiency. Skolnick argues that such measures gloss over the craftsmanlike means by which they have been constructed. The freedom Goldstein and Westley document is utterly central to policing in America,

'In sum, neither philosophical principle nor personal prejudice should be taken as the most significant factors for understanding police conduct on the job. Their actual behaviour seems to be influenced more than anything else by overwhelming concern to show themselves as competent craftsmen'³⁷.

The combined researches of Westley and Skolnick form the backbone of American research on the police. They certainly outline the manner in which the police in one town and, in Skolnick's case, the work of a narcotics squad, use their freedom to determine the content of practical policing. However, these research findings are ambiguous and their hasty application to policing in Britain should be stalled. Indeed, the foundations which these scholars laid down may not be as secure as those following them have thought.

Returning to Westley's thesis, we note a number of difficulties. First, the time at which his research was carried out coincided with the appointment of a new police chief who was conducting a 'clean-up' campaign, given fuel by considerable publicity in the local press. Clearly, whilst it can be recognised that this situation was an extremely difficult one for Westley to control, it should have prompted caution when he interpreted his data. It should certainly provoke scepticism on the part of those researchers who use Westley as the

firm basis of further research³⁸.

Secondly, the samples of members of the public interviewed were extremely small and the interviews were carried out by what Westley describes as extremely inexperienced interviewers. This means that the evidence used to make a connection between the public's perception of the police and the police perception of the public is fraught with difficulty. Importantly, it is difficult to understand the precise nature of the contact between Westley's sample of policemen and their public.

The problem is clearly demonstrated in the use of evidence to establish the sense of danger apparently experienced by policemen. If we accept the negro population as the group most likely to be hostile towards the police and then turn to the evidence Westley presents, an ambiguous rather than clear situation is encountered. There is certainly no evidence of a blanket condemnation of the police by negroes and, indeed, no justification of reciprocal hostility by the police. Of the sample of thirty-five negroes interviewed, nine thought the police were doing 'an excellent job', seven 'a fair job', eight thought them rude, seven corrupt and a further seven thought the police were controlled by the political machine. Four stated that the police had no authority.

Clearly, some replies have been divided into more than one category and it is therefore not possible to establish the internal consistency of each interview. Nevertheless, the interpretation Westley places on these diverse replies is questionable. Remembering that the most significant numerical indicator of the negroes' perception of the police indicates a largely favourable view, we find Westley concludes:

'It is that among even the more prominent negroes rough treatment at the hands of the police is not unusual and that in the negro community no love is lost on the police force'³⁹.

In fact, this conclusion seems to be more firmly based on what he calls the 'stories which typify the type of experience that passes by word of mouth through the negro community' than the formal evidence presented⁴⁰.

These data should be placed alongside the very strong evidence of 'anti-negro' feeling among the large police sample interviewed. Only 24% of this sample expressed positive sentiments towards the negro population.

If we turn to the social worker sample, we find that only fourteen interviews were undertaken and from this small number the conclusion is drawn that social workers condemn the police⁴¹. In fact, that condemnation relates to graft and corruption within the relevant force, which may or may not spill over into attitudes towards particular areas of police practice of direct relevance to social workers. A diversity of attitudes are evident, criticising the police as 'unscientific', 'uneducated', and 'spending time on petty things'. Not only are these replies difficult to interpret under the blanket term 'condemnation', but they are also difficult to square with Westley's statement that 'Although they (the respondents) have all heard bad stories, they also know of cases in which the police are solicitous and helpful'⁴². This leaves the relationship between police and social workers as less than clear yet, throughout, Westley chooses to present his ambiguous evidence as if it were perspicuous.

Similar remarks could be made about the other two groups Westley interviewed, the lawyer and union official samples. On the one hand we have a very mixed set of responses which are indicative of a range of attitudes to the police. On the other hand we have a framework of attitudes of a sample of policemen who, there can be little doubt, perceive the public as hostile. Westley might wish us to accept his evidence as a framework, a loosely constructed framework of interpretation, but that begs rather more questions than it answers. For example, how and why, within a framework of utter ambiguity, do the police construct a sense of hostility and condemnation? Instead of directing his attention to this major issue which the evidence suggests, Westley assumes the security of his data and proceeds to outline the correlates of a perception of danger - secrecy, isolation and so on. This leaves us with the question of how the police construct a sense of hostility from the vast range of diverse experiences encountered during the course of their routine work.

We have noted that Skolnick acknowledges a debt to Westley, but in many ways it is a shame he did not research the relevance of Westley's findings to a uniform patrol unit rather than the specialist, vice squad he observed. There is actually very little evidence presented by Skolnick which demonstrates the 'Working Personality' being moulded in the course of routine policing; he remains highly reliant on Westley's work, with all the ambiguities it presents.

However, there is some evidence from Skolnick's thesis to suggest a useful link between criticism of his own and Westley's work. Accepting the pervasive danger in policing, he hints that there might be some evidence to suggest that this sense of danger is a desirable feature of the police environment - that it is a stable element of the occupational culture. In other words, if a sense of danger was not present police officers might not perceive themselves to be performing 'proper police work'⁴³. Danger may be a feature of the occupational culture which is, in some measure, a selected construction of experience rather than a contingency continually facing officers in the course of their work.

The evidence leading to this suggestion is found in Skolnick's interviews with Westville police. When asked which job they would most like to have in the police department, 50% of the large sample named the job of detective, 37% patrol work, 8% and 4% respectively named the juvenile and administrative sections. These preferences can be read in terms of the diminishing levels of danger they present to the personnel involved - the task of detective is more dangerous than traffic officer, yet it is more prestigious and desirable. This occupational characteristic of danger would therefore seem to be a feature which is at once threatening to the police but also a circumstance which is prestigious and virtually desirable.

If it is feasible to argue that danger is sustained by police action - and from an assessment of two of the major pieces of research on the American police it is suggested that such an argument is perfectly feasible - further research should concentrate on the content of the occupational culture and how it can be understood as a 'social construction'. The requirement is that of a basic ethnography of

urban policing tying together the various features of the occupational culture and relating them to an overarching, theoretical scheme concerned with how the occupational culture is constructed and sustained.

The Occupational Culture

Many studies have focussed on the content of the occupational culture of policing. For example, Harvey Sacks points out that policemen suspend principles of trust which are basic to interaction⁴⁴. This violation of trust is associated with the continual surveillance of the area being policed, to identify objects and persons who appear out of place. Suspicion is an important feature of the occupational culture pervading encounters with the public, thereby invoking the sense of hostility which Westley and Skolnick have discussed. Whether hostility begets hostility is a matter of dispute and an issue ripe for research.

Other studies, by Neiderhoffer and Wilson for example, suggest the police are cynical about their work⁴⁵. Wilson argues that cynicism is especially noticeable amongst sergeants, where the gap between expected and received deference is considerable. It is also particularly prominent in police departments which emphasise the importance of attaining a specific number of arrests or summonses from operational personnel. Such an expectation is thwarted by the supposedly menial 'service work' required of the police. However, Manning has pointed out that John Van Maanen's research suggests that cynicism amongst the American police is not so much directed at their own work performance as the policies of senior officers and the public. This means that the definitions of policing found in policy directives are not rated highly by patrolmen. They reward an attitude of cynicism which is continuous with a commitment to the techniques and attitudes of the occupational culture⁴⁶.

A further feature of the occupational culture concerns respect for the police, especially in street encounters between the police and a suspect. Piliavin and Briar indicate that the outcome of such encounters are moulded by the demeanour and associated deference

exhibited⁴⁷. Respect from suspects is further related to a more general experience of control over the area policed⁴⁸. Importantly, this sense of control relates to the emphasis on crime and 'crime fighting' found in the occupational culture. Real police work is crime work and, to a lesser extent, the pursuit of persons who have broken the criminal law.

These features - suspicion, distrust, cynicism, a concern for demeanour and control, not least in crime work - are features of the occupational culture noted in the context of American urban policing. Interestingly, many of the assumptions lying behind these traits have been thrown into dispute by other research which has sought to demystify the police role. For example, the stress on crime work and control is questioned by the finding that a significant amount of police work is concerned with what has been called 'peace-keeping' or 'service work'⁴⁹. The assumption that the police are engaged in crime work which they control and initiate is questioned by Reiss's study, which clearly asserts that the police are massively dependent on members of the public to alert them to crime and the arresting of offenders⁵⁰. Greenwood suggests that even those most revered agents of detection, the detective branch, may not do very much of the traditionally conceived work of criminal investigation. Detectives are also dependent on members of the public for information leading to the arrest of offenders⁵¹. The assumption of control is questioned by the projected figures of 'unreported crime' - figures which, although challenging police competence, do not seem to point to an obvious total breakdown of social control in American society⁵².

Research of this type opens up the gap between the evidence and stated conclusions found in Westley's and Skolnick's research. It would seem that patrolling officers and, though perhaps in a rather different fashion, senior officers sustain a definition of policing which is at variance with evidence drawn from other sources. Importantly, in America, low-level ranks sustain their definition of policing by exploiting the contingencies of policing - necessary discretion, low visibility and an ability to retain information from senior ranks.

This latter point, the retention of autonomy from the directives of

senior ranks, is well documented in Skolnick's work and has been asserted in a range of organisational studies⁵³. Bittner's work on the policing of a skid row area demonstrates how the patrolmen he observed policed according to their own 'common-sense' notion of policing in order to retain 'order'. This notion of policing cuts through formal legal and other operational definitions and directives of proper police work⁵⁴. Further, Jonathan Rubinstein's ethnography, City Police, contains a mine of information on how lower ranks subvert the controlling powers of their superiors. Indeed, Rubinstein suggests that senior officers accept the secrecy and freedom of lower ranks because it prevents them from dealing with difficult problems of illegality. He writes of collusion between patrolmen and radio dispatchers:

'The autonomy of the districts has been ended, but the squads preserve considerable privacy and freedom to conduct their work without fear of damaging disclosures and unanticipated interventions from outside the district or, even worse, from outside the department. The need for the absolute cooperation of the men in doing their work, and keeping prying outsiders (and some insiders) in the dark, has compelled administrators to allow adjustments and collusions between men on the street and their dispatchers'⁵⁵.

From the large amount of research reviewed it can be seen that legalistic and formal-organisational notions of control of the police are highly questionable. Lower ranks unfetter themselves from legal and organisational constraints. The occupational culture of policing contains central and peripheral definitions of policing and associated strategies of action. Manning expressed this in the following way:

'Policing tends to be shaped by adaptations made by actors to structural patterns, to the reality they perceive, construct and maintain. The organisational reality, by which is indicated what must be known and assumed as taken for granted about the organisation and the world by any competent member, is known only in the breach, or when one demonstrates that he does not possess it ... (however) the organisational reality is not a homogenous thing that admits to no exceptions, vagaries, or alternatives because it is a set of ideas, feelings and assumptions about social reality assisting in the adaptation of officers to the complex and shifting uncertain occupational environment in which they find themselves. It is to a large degree situationally specific, rather than a set of unalterable rules, principles or norms'⁵⁶.

In fact, Manning's suggestion is programmatic rather than an assessment of previous research. American research has produced a framework describing some characteristics of policing and outlined some of the structural features which have led to their formation. However, the bulk of the American research we have considered directs us to the possibility that definitions and practices of American policing are sustained by policemen in spite of evidence from a range of studies which might well negate their own understanding of their work. In other words, the occupational culture has achieved a certain autonomy which is continually reconstructed and sustained by a range of techniques used in the course of routine police work.

More specifically, at the moment American research offers a portrait of some of the features of the occupational culture and ethnographic detail of the highly dynamic, contextual features of police work. The relationship between the situational and the residual, the relatively static and dynamic, needs to be researched within an ethnographic study of routine urban policing. We need to know how the occupational culture is sustained during the course of routine police work. As we review the British literature we will notice that these same questions are raised. Indeed, the need for an ethnography of contemporary urban policing in Britain is urgent - not simply to challenge the hasty assumptions made by scholars like Cain and Young but in order to revise and consolidate the small amount of research already available.

The British police

Despite the confidence of sociologists like Maureen Cain and Jock Young, indeed, despite the importance of the police in our society, we have very little detailed information of how policing is actually performed in Britain. That which is available is either rather dated or partial. This means that a review of published research cannot progress along a diversity of studies similar to the American literature. However, research does lead one to a common point: the need for an ethnography which offers a comprehensive description of urban policing.

The study which provided the initial impetus to sociological research

into the British police was Michael Banton's 'The Policeman in the Community'⁵⁷. With the skills of a trained anthropologist, Banton describes different aspects of policing in a Scottish city, making a useful distinction between 'law enforcement' and 'peace-keeping'. He relates these two emphases found in policing to the homogeneity, or density as he would put it, of the community which is policed.

This distinction is pertinent for American literature documenting the the large amount of police work concerned with a variety of tasks apparently unrelated to crime. In this country, Punch and Naylor have pointed to but by no means been able to explain or, indeed, adequately describe such requests for police assistance. Documenting requests for police assistance in three communities in Essex, they found that over half the calls made to police stations were concerned with 'peace-keeping'. Punch has written:

'In effect, policemen frequently have to act as untrained and temporary social workers, vets, mental welfare officers, marriage guidance counsellors, welfare officers, accommodation officers, home helps to the infirm, and also as confidant and counsellor to people alone and in need of guidance'⁵⁸.

Although the separation of these two aspects of policing, 'peace-keeping' and 'law enforcement', might not be as secure as Banton first believed, the distinction did offer the possibility of research to document the content as well as the form of policing⁵⁹. Furthermore, we shall see how Maureen Cain took up Banton's suggestion that styles of policing can be related to different types of community structure.

Banton also questioned the relevance of American research to the British context, being particularly sceptical about Westley's assertion that the American police are utterly isolated from the community they serve. He argues that, when compared with the British police rather than other occupational groups in American society, American officers are rather less isolated than their British counterparts. Further, Banton argues that, because they are supported by a firm base of disciplinary supervision, the British police are not as likely to employ illegal techniques as their American counterparts. Indeed, because of the greater acceptance of the law as representative of societal consensus and the police as enforcers of that law, policemen do not need to

band together to isolate themselves from criticism. Banton writes,

'Though policemen in Britain sometimes refer to members of the public as civilians, this usage is misleading for they do not draw a hard and fast line between themselves and the public'⁶⁰.

This warning for hesitancy when making cross-cultural comparisons has not been heeded in research, neither have many of the suggestions Banton makes about policing been subject to critical scrutiny. For example, we shall have cause to quibble with his remarks about the separation between police and public, which may have been relevant to a Scottish city in the early 1960s but seem to bear little resemblance to the policing of an urban area in the 1970s.

Just after Banton completed his fieldwork, Maureen Cain began her questionnaire and participant observation study of the differences between rural and urban policing⁶¹. One of the major objectives of this doctoral work was to investigate Banton's argument that the role of policeman can be related to the type of community in which it is performed. Cain was interested in who defines the police role and to study this particular issue she researched reference groups of relevance: 'the community', 'the family', 'senior officers' and 'colleagues'. We are only concerned with Cain's discussion of urban, or city policing as she calls it. Within that setting she finds that it is the group of colleagues who formulate and sustain an adequate definition of police work for their purpose of policing the urban population.

Cain found that the constables who worked in her urban sub-division were primarily oriented to crime-fighting, a task which formed a very minor part of their working day. The act of making an arrest for a criminal offence was the central act of 'good policing' and the primary example of proper police work. However, because this was an infrequent occurrence, drunks tended to be arrested to foster the partial experience of authentic policing. The primacy of arrest was related to the need for action which the constables expressed, the chase and capture, the fight and scuffle before an arrest being equally central to the constables' definition of police work. Such

acts maintained their self identity, reinforcing their definition of themselves as police officers who performed what they understood to be 'real police work'.

Time between bursts of action, defined by the officers as boring times, led them to seek places where they could get a cup of tea, sleep or chat with members of similar occupations or colleagues. Cain called such behaviour 'easing'. Because 'easing' was contrary to the internal disciplinary code of the force, lower ranks were dependent upon each other for the retention of secrecy. 'Easing behaviour' increased the interdependency of the work group.

Secrecy was therefore necessary to protect individual officers from the possibility of internal discipline and also to shield them from public accountability. The capacity to circumvent formal legal rules was thought to be desirable, and in order to retain the importance of this attribute the protective secrecy of the work group was secured. Cain argues that this definition of police work resulted in a poverty of accountable relationships between the police and the community which was policed: the work group provided the primary source of role definition.

City policemen had a very limited knowledge of their various publics, making divisions between broad categories of age and sex. The designation 'immigrant' was also noted, as was a distinction between 'roughs' and 'respectables'.

Cain's work will form a major focus for subsequent chapters. The initial value of her work is in outlining the occupational culture of policing in urban Britain. However, her research was not directed towards a thorough description of the occupational culture and we have noted how she now feels that such work is of a very secondary nature. It should also be noted that her work was completed in an organisational context that has now been surpassed by 'Unit Beat Policing' and the increasing emphasis on the police as a profession. These related changes in the policing of urban Britain might well have affected elements of the occupational culture she outlines - this issue is a major area of

my research. However, Cain did establish that the lower ranks were able to sustain their definition of policing, the colleague group being the most important constraint on the definition of the police role. The contemporary relevance of this finding is a matter for further research⁶².

Two recent studies of the British police, by Michael Chatterton and Peter Manning, have developed our understanding of policing⁶³. Both are critical of conceptualising an organisation as a set of formal rules, to which actual behaviour approximates. They adopt a conceptualisation of an organisation as a series of interpretive rules-in-use which forms a basis of knowledge from which 'practical policing' is achieved. This is not to concentrate on the divergence between the official and unofficial rule books but to search for the meanings of rules as they are used by the policemen observed. In fact, Chatterton's thesis can be read as an empirical testing of Bittner's model of an organisation. The major concepts employed are those cited by Bittner - namely, 'competence', the 'gambit of compliance' and 'corroborative reference'⁶⁴.

This conceptualisation is allied to 'the action perspective' which, Chatterton points out,

'required us to examine the meanings and uses of this blueprint of the goals and rules of the Division as these were manifest in the action and interaction between Divisional personnel and their various publics'⁶⁵.

Policing is therefore a highly contextualised activity in which rules are used and, if need be, later interpreted in terms of the formal directives of the organisation.

To demonstrate the potential of this approach, Chatterton follows the process of creating a statistic of arrest from the knowledge used to assess both the competence of the complainant and, if need be, a Sergeant's assessment of the competence of an officer making an arrest. Further discussion is concerned with the relationships and therefore tacit understandings between men and supervisors under the 'Fixed Points System' of patrol. Here, the use of rules as 'accounts' places police action within a framework of acceptable, disciplined

conduct. Interestingly, though maintaining the appearance of authority and compliance with formal rules, supervisory officers were party to the translation from actual to reinterpreted accounts.

Chatterton also extends the discussion of policing from the streets into the chargeroom, where the use of relevant occupational knowledge is employed by the team of officers working there. The assessment of appropriate action by a Sergeant faced with the decision of whether to charge a person arrested by one of his officers is shown to be based on a corpus of knowledge of policing designed to render the uncertainty, possible accountability and diversity of routine police work manageable for all practical purposes. This knowledge contrasts with relevant legal and administrative directives.

Chatterton's thesis leaves no doubt that lower ranks rely on a body of commonsense knowledge to guide their work. Peter Manning goes beyond this point to discuss the historical development of Anglo-American policing. He documents changes from a police mandate to prevent crime and disorder with consent from the public, and without violence, to a situation of policing characterised by legitimised violence, a focus on crime control rather than prevention and the use of law which protects particular rather than general interests⁶⁶. The external appearance of Anglo-American policing is rather different from its internal reality and this tension leads Manning to organise his mass of material around the 'dramatic metaphor'. His book Police Work is really an exploration of this perspective, it is not an ethnography.

Eight structural characteristics of policing are cited, among them the appearance of neutrality when the actual law used favours the powerful, the provision of law to deal with tasks required of the police when law itself is insufficient, the assumption of guilt of arrested persons and those against whom they assemble evidence and the need to use the law, yet to be constrained in such use by procedural controls. These continuities of uncertainty are mediated to the social psychological level, found in secrecy, mistrust, breach of trust - all the features of the occupational culture other researchers have revealed.

The handling of this discrepancy between appearance and reality is based on the division between senior and junior ranks, where different bases of knowledge are used to shield internal divisions as well as relationships with other institutions and, more generally, the public. Powerful imagery, with all its technological, bureaucratic measures of efficiency and features of accountability is employed by the police to overlay the actual practices of lower ranks. Manning argues that these practices cannot be controlled by senior officers.

It is difficult to know how to read Manning's book - is it to be read as a study in organisational theory, speculative theory or a partial ethnography? The sheer ambition of the project attempted is laudable but leads to a tenuous linking of many different findings from many different research projects, as if they can all be easily related to illuminate Manning's new understanding of the police. In fact, these diverse studies do not permit a reinterpretation which is novel because Manning is unable to use them to assist data of policing-in-action based on his own fieldwork. He points to the possibility that much of policing is symbolic rather than instrumental (if such a rigid distinction is feasible anyway), and begs a further study to demonstrate how, in contemporary police work, personnel actually employ mechanisms of dramatic performance. In short, we return to the need for an ethnography of urban policing which not only researches the content of the occupational culture but also how the notions of policing found within that occupational culture are sustained in the course of routine policework.

The present research in context

My own research began from a consideration of Maureen Cain's thesis; Chatterton and Manning had not published their research findings at that time. Cain reported a situation existing some eight years prior to the beginning of my work and was carried out in the context of a system of policing which had been superseded. Furthermore, and associated with this new system of policing, the notion of a professional police was gaining ground in Britain. These changes required description and their implications for policing at various levels of the force

I researched required analysis.

My methodology was rather unusual being that of covert participant observation while employed as a police sergeant. From this stance I was able to observe policing on the streets and in the station, enabling me to document the effects the new system of policing had on the occupational culture. Cain's division of the population policed seemed rather limited and following Westley's intention I wanted to document how the police perceived the population of their geographical area and a variety of techniques of policing were utilised to control that population. Special attention was paid to the use of a range of techniques of control used by the police, including physical force. This prompted some comparisons with American policing, Rubinstein's ethnography being of importance at this point.

When Chatterton's and Manning's work came to my attention it was obvious that both were highly relevant to my own research. However, on closer reading, Manning's thesis begs empirical evidence to validate it, not least if the notion of Anglo-American policing is to be sustained. The relationship of my own work to Manning's is best described as a critical elaboration of his theoretical framework using data from an ethnography of urban policing.

Chatterton's ethnography shares my own concern to document the meanings of police work to lower ranks. I adopted a similar organisational model to his, attempting to document policing in action. However, I was not so constrained by Bittner's conceptualisations, finding greater utility in David Silverman's definition of an organisation, with its emphasis on rationalities rather than rules. Silverman defines an organisation as:

'a multitude of rationalities each of which generates the "in-order-to" motives of the participants and allows them to make their own sense of the actions and intentions of others'⁶⁷.

Importantly, this definition did not tie me to the notion of police work as 'rule based', which begs the researcher to stipulate rules and their application in a variety of contexts - something neither Chatterton nor Manning actually do.

A concentration of rules neglects the broader clusterings of motive, strategy, tactic, intent and justification which forms a rationality or 'world-view' found in policing. This broader perspective permits documentation of central and peripheral aspects of the meanings of police work, it encompasses the meaning of time and space, techniques of control, the manner in which the 'commonsense of police work' is sustained during routine police work. It requires more detailed description than the rule based study but, of course, does not prevent analysis on the basis of such description.

This thesis, then, is an ethnography of an urban police sub-division at work. The research it describes has several objectives. First, an attempt is made to offer a fully detailed description of the occupational culture of urban policing, bringing previous research in the area up to date. Emphasis will be placed on what I will call the core of the occupational culture, from which emphases of style and specialism depart. The characteristics documented form the normative starting point from which Hilton's lower ranks judged the adequacy of police action in particular contexts.

Secondly, particular attention will be paid to two important changes in British policing since Maureen Cain completed her research over a decade ago. These are Unit Beat Policing and the professionalisation of the police. Their effects on the occupational culture will be described and analysed.

Thirdly, and this is a secondary but not unimportant objective, criticism will be made of attempts to compare American and British research of the police. Of particular importance here is Peter Manning's recent research on the notion of 'Anglo-American Policing'. This notion and Manning's work in general will be subject to considerable criticism.

Finally, areas of policing previously unresearched will be described and analysed. This adds to our knowledge of contemporary policing and also permits an analysis of how urban police work is constructed in the course of routine police work. It is one thing to state that

policing is socially constructed but quite another to describe precisely how that world is constructed. However, before we proceed the research must be placed within the context of the recent history of the police.

Notes and references

- 1 For a full description of Hilton, the police sub-division researched, and the methodology of the research, see Appendices I and II.
- 2 Cain, M. (1979) 'Trends in the sociology of police work', Internat. J. of the Sociol. of Law, 7: 143-167. Similar comments could be made about the Centre for Research on Criminal Justice (1975) The iron fist and the velvet glove - an analysis of the U.S. police, California: Centre for Research on Criminal Justice. Also see Jefferson, T. (1980) 'Review of S. Holdaway (ed), The British Police', Brit. J. Criminol., 20 (2): 178-81, where wide-ranging conclusions are drawn from a modicum of supporting evidence.
- 3 Cain, M., op. cit., p.157.
- 4 Cain, M., ibid., p.158.
- 5 Cain, M., ibid., p.162.
- 6 Cain, M., ibid., p.163.
- 7 For example, Taylor, I., P. Walton & J. Young (1973) The new criminology: for a social theory of deviance, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
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CHAPTER 2

POLICING IN THE 1960S AND 1970S

'I suppose you could sum it all up by saying that in Britain certainly, and I have no doubt elsewhere, the time has come when the police are abandoning their artisan status and are achieving by our ever-increasing variety of services, our integrity, our accountability and our dedication to the public good, a status no less admirable than that of the most learned and distinguished professions. The constable of 1829 and 1929 would have regarded that objective as a dream unattainable as the climbing of Everest. For the constable of 1975 it is clearly a visible peak which he is rapidly climbing'¹.

This assessment of the British police is from an address given by the Chief Officer of the force researched. It sets the focus of this chapter, which is concerned with a discussion of the notion of 'professional policing'. The historical context in which such an understanding of policing gained popularity amongst senior officers will be outlined and differences between the British and American situations evaluated. An analysis of the evidence made available in Manning's study leads us to conclude that the notion of 'Anglo-American policing' is highly questionable. However, within the British context, the implications of 'professional policing' for patrol work will be discussed, together with an explanation of particular features which were implemented within a new system of policing called Unit Beat Policing. This was the system of policing used at Hilton, the station where my research was carried out.

The designation of the police as a profession is not a contemporary notion, developed in the last two decades; Banton points out that the American police began to debate the idea in the 1930s and in 1948 Sir John Moyland, a past Chief Officer of the research force, maintained that the police had become a profession². However, while this remains the case, the increasing use of the idea and its consolidation within various aspects of policy became apparent in the 1960s and 1970s. Such a consolidation was not, as T.A. Critchley suggests, primarily

a return to the first principles of policing, neither was it a response to a crisis within the structure of the political state³. Indeed, it was not primarily a response to pervasive 'uncertainty', which Manning places as the heart of his analysis but which could mean anything; rather, it was a response to the perceived erosion of the status of the police, not least the status of senior officers and, by implication, recruits who would eventually be promoted to high rank in the service. Consolidation of the notion of the police as a profession represents an attempt to retain parity of status with those who could challenge police action and members of organisations with whom the police have to negotiate.

The formulation of an adequate definition of a profession has long occupied the attention of sociologists. In his discussion of the relevance of such debate to policing, Michael Banton points out that little can be gained from an attempt to place the particular characteristics of police personnel and the work they do within a framework of objective criteria modelled as the ideal of a profession. In his estimation, the British police demonstrate some of the characteristics of a profession and some of a bureaucratic structure of work and organisation⁴. Indeed, little can be gained from such an exercise, but that does not prohibit an investigation of what the Chief Officer quoted meant, when he argued that the police are now a profession.

The understanding of a profession informing this and subsequent chapters is one placing stress on a profession as an honourific symbol which enhances the status, authority and power of a group whose membership, in a process of acquiring such attributes, perceives itself to be a profession. Such an understanding contains elements of Becker's and Johnston's discussions of the subject⁵.

Manning employs a similar definition which, he argues, embraces British and American policing. However, he describes the authority and power such a designation affords the police, within a general discussion of the 'presentational strategies' they use to gloss over their inability to fulfil the objective of crime control. The professional label presents a symbolic imagery of stability and

competence, in the face of a reality of uncertainty and incompetence⁶.

Whilst we agree with Manning that senior officers tend to use the notion of profession as a symbol to enhance their authority, status and power, we do not assent to his apparent neglect of the instrumental aspects of organisational policy. To describe the British and American police in terms which emphasise the symbolic character of professionalisation is to describe a framework lacking content, and, therefore, instrumental effects accompanying the use of such a symbol. Similarly, to describe Anglo-American policing in terms of a gloss of bureaucratic competence symbolising efficiency and authority is to fail to identify particular aspects of bureaucracy exploited by senior officers to enhance the status professionalism can afford. Furthermore, such a perspective overlooks the instrumental effects of policies associated with the process of professionalisation⁷.

The use of powerful symbols to shield the reality of police work does not mean that material policies based on ideas associated with professional policing cannot be identified in British policing. Indeed, we will identify some of them in the force researched and evaluate Manning's thesis in their light. However, at this point it is necessary to outline the particular features of professional policing identified within the British context. All were present in the force researched, a force which could fairly be said to be the most consciously 'professional' in Britain. Although exhibited in a vivid fashion in my force, all metropolitan and many county forces in Britain have established similar policies based on the elements of professional policing as outlined here.

The creation of professional status in the British police

One important aspect of the erosion of police status and authority in Britain is found in the termination of the Trenchard Scheme, which permitted direct entry of recruits drawn mainly from public school, university and/or military backgrounds into the officer ranks of the police service. Many of the Chief Officers of the research force had been recruited from this scheme; indeed, Lord Trenchard, who introduced

it, was a Chief Officer of the force. Such officers were afforded the status of militaristic competence.

By the turn of the fifth decade of this century the scheme had ended and during the following ten years it was known that the majority of Chief and senior officers trained by Trenchard would retire. The introduction of a similar scheme, permitting the bulk of senior officers to enter the force at a rank above that of Constable, was unacceptable to the Home Office, senior officers and the Police Federation. How could the status 'Trenchard men' brought to the service be retained? Policing no longer rested, as my own Chief Officer argued, 'on the creation of a socially acceptable status designed to equate the police with the armed forces'. The association of the police service with a militaristic, hierarchical organisation and command of policing was to change. The crucial aspect of 'acceptable status' was to remain but now to be found in the creation of an elite of professional police-managers⁸.

During the early 1960s police manpower had dropped to a low level and concern was expressed about the problems of stimulating recruitment. Importantly, the unexceptional quality of many recruits entering the service, not least their educational competence, was the subject of comment. Clearly, this situation had implications for the status of future senior officers. In the research force, manpower was assessed at 20,240 in 1921, 19,650 in 1939 and 18,987 in 1965, despite increases in the total population living and working within the area policed⁹. Such a lack of personnel added to the overriding erosion of police status and authority.

A further matter of relevance is the circumstances leading to the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Police, finally reporting in 1962¹⁰. A number of cases which seemed to place the accountability of Chief Officers in doubt had received national publicity and the more general issue of the accountability of the British police became central to the Commission's business. However, it was not a need to 're-think first principles' which resulted in the formation of a Royal Commission; rather, the Royal Commission sensitised the police and the Home Office

to the issue that the status and authority of Chief Officers, and therefore all ranks, could and was being called into question. The Police Act of 1964 established a procedure for the proper investigation of complaints against the police by members of the public. This had implications for police practice but it had only a part, a small part, to play in the formation of a notion of the police as a profession. The Royal Commission and the subsequent Act of Parliament were sensitising rather than re-organising features.

A number of criminal trials which received national publicity also contributed. Importantly, revelations of malpractice and violence during the interrogation of some suspects by the Sheffield C.I.D. and the culpability of senior officers in that matter, combined with the Challenor case of perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, to throw increasing doubt on accountability and methods of policing¹¹. If the supposed rigidity of police discipline could no longer be assured by quasi-military modes of command, where might an alternative base of internal disciplinary control be found ?

Within this context where the status of the police and, consequently, their authority was being called into question, senior policy-making officers and lower supervisory ranks were increasingly required to negotiate with more highly educated and 'professional' personnel from organisations having a common interest in matters allied to police work. Conditions of economic growth during the 1960s facilitated an expansion of social work services, race relations organisations as well as important advances in areas like traffic control and radio communications. The distanced authority of the militaristic, 'Trenchard officer' held little credibility in a negotiating situation with those questioning police policy. A new basis of status and authority was required if the police were to negotiate with some measure of authority and success.

These data point to an erosion of status, previously ascribed to an officer corps with a particular background. The consolidation of a notion of the police as a profession was based on an acquisition of characteristics achieved by officers within the service, rather than those ascribed or achieved prior to recruitment. The essential change

was the education of a well-qualified body of police-managers who supervised a less well educated but internally accountable work force. The professionalisation of the service rested, in the first instance, on the induction of senior and intermediate ranks into the tenets of professional policing. They would then gradually remould the attitudes and actions of their subordinates into this understanding of police work. The process was to be one of gradual, disciplined education rather than militaristic imposition.

Professional policing rests on a number of interrelated features. First, a body of knowledge drawn from a range of academic disciplines was applied to operational policing. Although diverse and never placed within a single, standard text, police management and operational practice were to be based in a sound corpus of academic knowledge. Eventually, elements of such a corpus were included in the basic training of all recruits. However, perhaps more importantly, during the early years of the 1960s, courses for supervisory ranks held at the National Police College, Bramshill, concentrated on a body of knowledge required to create a professional management. A former Dean of Studies at the College has described the curriculum in terms which stress the professionalism academic knowledge enhances:

'The subjects offered at Bramshill are divided into two main groups: professional studies and academic studies. This is not to say that the two are mutually exclusive. In a very real sense all studies at the college are professional studies in that way they are all related to police needs. Often the dividing line is obscured - is the history of police 'academic' or 'professional' ? Even more often the two approaches are made together, as in the study of race relations or management science'¹².

This body of knowledge embraced both the law enforcement and peace-keeping functions of policing, recognising their equal importance. The Officer in Charge of Training within the research force put it,

'As society develops its understanding of human problems and the expertise to deal with them, it is important that the police become even more social service minded for they are the best eyes and ears we have got'¹³.

Crime work was not neglected but these social service aspects, known as demanding if not highly prestigious elements of police work, were fully recognised and acknowledged. Indeed, it was argued that their

competent handling required the use of professional skills.

The development of a diverse corpus of knowledge strengthened the specialisation of the service. Although a feature of bureaucratic organisation, specialisation more than any other aspect of bureaucracy was incorporated into the notion of professional policing. The specialisms in which officers were employed enhanced police status when liaising with the representatives of allied organisations. For example, in the research force, specialist departments concerned with traffic management were involved in negotiation with engineers and other specialists from national and local government. Community relations officers liaised with the officers of the Community Relations Commission and its related organisations - so one could go on. No doubt, the increasing specialisation of the force assisted planning and the effective use of resources, but, as the Chief Officer quoted at the beginning of this chapter also argued, 'our variety of services brings us a status no less admirable than that of the most learned and distinguished professions'.

Technology was employed to rationalise and create a more effective police service. The computerisation of traffic control, telecommunications at central and local levels of the force, the collation of criminal records and criminal intelligence - these types of development harmonised with specialisation and the use of particular knowledge. Efficiency was improved as was professional competence of the service. Such competence seems much broader than the 'crime-focus' of police technology which Manning cites as central to the American context. In Britain, the use of technology as an indication of professional status is associated with a wide variety of police services.

If a corpus of knowledge can be said to facilitate the specialisation of the service, so it can also be related to the more general tasks of supervising routine operational work by officers of intermediate rank. The research force was at the forefront of this aspect of professional policing. Management was no longer associated with militaristic command. Discipline remained but it was to be effected more by persuasion, consultation and encouragement, fuelled by ample

communication, than blind obedience to an authoritative command. Although supervisory ranks retained responsibility for the actions of those working under their command, subordinates were granted an acknowledged freedom to participate in the decision-making tasks of the group. Replying to criticism (from the Police Federation) of what is popularly known as 'man-management', a past senior officer of the force researched outlined the principles of management upon which the service was to develop. His article covered the topics of leadership, motivation, morale, delegation, communication and training. Of leadership he wrote:

'Studies have shown that a democratically led group may become highly disciplined and efficient. Under democracy, the will of the group dominates and social pressure will force individuals into line. In other words, the discipline is from within the group, that is to say, self-discipline. Such self-discipline is easier to maintain than a forced discipline under autocratic rule where the force must be wielded from outside'.

He continued that the respect of the vast majority of good citizens would be lost 'if we do not maintain the highest possible standards of personal integrity, willing service and professional skills'¹⁴. An effective managerial structure and practice is integral to the notion of professional policing.

Although discretion is fundamental to law enforcement and other aspects of police work, the development of a professional force has led to the notion of what we call 'informed discretion'. Specialist knowledge and technological innovations are associated here. The Sheffield and Challenor cases have been mentioned as factors which prompted a review of police powers related to the questioning of suspects. Changes were made to prevent the possibility of officers breaching rules concerning the securing of evidence after arrest. Emphasis was placed on the rule-of-law which the police would respect, despite their belief that many of the powers they possessed and restrictions they observed when dealing with offenders hindered the dispensation of justice. Bad law would not be made to work. Bad law would be shown to be so and the police would lobby for legal change. The Chief Officer received national publicity for his remarks on this point, and in his autobiography he crystallised his ideas:

'The police alone see the whole crime reported to them, most of which never reaches a court and they are no longer the semi-literate, unthinking mercenaries of long ago. No discussion of criminal justice can be complete without their participation, far too long delayed'¹⁵.

The right to participate was based on professional knowledge and its associated status.

As particular attention was paid to the questioning process and the importance of the rule of law, so the use of powers of arrest and questioning mingled with specialist knowledge. The method of investigation advocated emphasised a slow build-up of evidence, if necessary using specialist and technical aids to provide evidence of guilt before rather than after arrest. On the one hand, criminal intelligence units were established at national and local levels. These were briefed to collate specialist information on known and suspected criminals, using technology to achieve that end. The Chief Officer described central force activity:

'We decided that it would be worthwhile to discover everything we could about their movements, their associates, and their weaknesses simply as an insurance against the probability that they would commit further crimes. Thus the description 'target criminals'¹⁶.

Technological aids were fully employed to assist in the gathering of criminal intelligence; a new Home Office Police Research and Planning Branch, with one of H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary as its head, was formed in 1963 and a subsequent Home Office Report, published in 1967, encouraged Chief Officers to stimulate interest in and the use of technology for traffic, crime and intelligence matters¹⁷.

On the other hand, the police recognised that many of the problems they dealt with were social problems. It was argued that police officers make judgements about such matters which are as competent as those made by social workers and probation officers. One of the senior officers in my force argued that the police

'are what might be described as social diagnosticians. Their role is to recognise social crises or their incipient causes and to activate other social agencies where expertise is needed. As yet the formalisation of the role of social diagnostician has not been fully developed but it is in this field that the police should be expected

to continue to operate. In a society where social welfare services are rapidly developing the police should seek to help more in the field¹⁸.

The implication of these ideas is that when police officers exercise their discretion to enforce or not to enforce the law, they do so on the basis of knowledge which has either been established prior to arrest, possibly with the use of 'neutral' technology, or from an assessment based less on commonsense than an understanding of the diagnostic practices of the social services. In the former instance this means that the likelihood of abuse to suspects is reduced, evidence is gained prior to rather than after arrest. In the latter case it means, for example, that when negotiating with social workers taking a child into care, decision making by the police is backed by a specialist and professional expertise, retaining parity with the social worker. In short, discretion is professionally informed.

Within the research force, recognition was not just given to institutions with an allied interest in policing but it was realised that

'our effectiveness depends greatly on the extent to which we can achieve the trust of the courts, the press and the public. This in turn depends on our willingness to be accountable and to deal effectively with our own wrongdoers. It is essential also that this willingness be made clear to the public'¹⁹.

The police, not least the research force, were to demonstrate that they were not a closed, unaccountable organisation, shrouded in secrecy. A special squad of police officers was formed to investigate serious complaints against officers made by members of the public. The successes of this squad, particularly their investigation of the C.I.D., received what the Chief Officer regarded as welcome publicity from the national media. The numbers of officers suspended from duty and prosecuted or dismissed for irregular conduct indicated that the police were a profession of the highest ethical standing and worthy of public support.

Associated with this policy was another which opened up police activity to press reporting. The Chief Officer explained,

'if the force as a public service is to be properly accountable for its actions the public has the right to the fullest possible knowledge of its activities'.

Lower ranks were given the responsibility of informing the local press directly on minor matters and the national media through a central press bureau. The militaristic and somewhat restrained approach to publicity was literally removed overnight and the responsibility afforded all ranks demonstrated the notions of trust and delegation found in police management. The Chief Officer wrote:

'So far as possible I wish the force to speak for itself and the result will be to place more authority and responsibility upon all officers. The new approach to dealings with the news media will of course involve risks, disappointments and anxieties; but officers who act and speak in good faith may be assured of my support even if they make errors of judgment when deciding what information to disclose and what to withhold. I fully accept that if new measures are to succeed in their objective some mistakes will be made in the process' ²⁰.

We have noted that the features of professional policing we have outlined were a response to a perceived loss of police status and authority, not least to the ending of the Trenchard scheme and the subsequent loss of officers recruited through its programme. The notion of a professional police has been developed to retain the status and authority of the police, enabling them to negotiate and sustain their perceived policy objectives. The means of retaining status were, first, the creation of an elite of highly trained police-managers who, using all the techniques of management science, foster a sense of professionalism amongst the rank-and-file. We have established the process by which professional policing became a reality. Its central features, illustrated by quotations from the most senior officers of the research force, informed the framework of policy at the station researched. The question of whether they actually realised their objectives in the actual practice of operational policing is another matter and will be discussed in following chapters. That apart, there is no doubt that the senior officers of the force recognised and based their policies on the major tenets of professional policing.

Professional policing as a feature of the Anglo-American police

We have already discussed some of the ambiguities of Manning's description of Anglo-American policing as 'professional'. Before continuing with

our analysis of how features of professional policing in Britain have been placed within a particular system of patrol, namely Unit Beat Policing, it will be useful to discuss Manning's and other work further in the light of the evidence we have already produced from the British context.

Manning includes 'professionalism' in his list of the features of 'Presentational Strategies' found in Anglo-American policing²¹. This is consistent with his thesis that policing is highly dramatic, ridden with discontinuity between appearance and reality and therefore to be understood as a highly symbolic activity. However, his stress on the symbolism of policing tends to neglect the reference point of particular symbols, in this case policies based on the notion of professional policing. Policing is not wholly symbolic; it also has instrumental features and some of these instrumental features have been listed in our discussion of the creation of policies of professional policing within the British context, importantly in the research force.

This is not to deny the power of the professional symbol. However, it is clear that Manning has failed to consider that professional policing can be related to actual instrumental changes in the managerial structure of British policing, not least in wide-ranging policies. For example, he does not document the body of knowledge on which professional policing is based and link it to managerial practice, relations with the national media, criminal intelligence, community relations work, and so on. Similarly, he cites bureaucratisation of the police organisation as a general feature of Anglo-American policing which simply presents the appearance of efficiency and order. Yet within the British context it is a particular feature of bureaucratisation, namely specialisation, which has been appropriated to signify the professionalism of the service. The instrumental consequences of this are the presence of a multitude of special units, departments and sub-departments, all having an effect on police work. This is not to argue that their effects are continuous with the objectives of policy making officers, neither is it to deny that professional policing is a highly powerful symbol which enhances

status. However, Manning's neglect of the content of professional policing and omission of evidence from the British context (in fact, he does not offer any direct evidence from any forces in the United States) render his assertion that professionalism is an identical feature of policing in both societies rather fragile.

Apart from the differences in the content of what might be thought of as similar general themes - professionalism and bureaucracy, for example - more substantive differences between the British and American contexts can be identified. Manning argues that secrecy pervades Anglo-American policing, particularly the area of investigation of complaints against the police by members of the public²². While it is true that attempts to introduce an independent element into the procedure for investigating complaints against the police by the public were strongly challenged by British officers, professional policing entails the most thorough investigation of errant officers and much publicity about the service's success in such work. Secrecy might prevail in the details of such investigations, it might be said to be a major 'presentational strategy' of the manner in which British police investigate complaints. However, this is a rather different matter to the total imposition of secrecy Manning supposes. He cannot adequately explain the establishment of specialist departments within British police forces which are solely concerned with the most rigorous investigation of complaints against the police.

If we accept Manning's account as an accurate portrayal of the American setting - and there is very little evidence produced to substantiate it as such - it can be argued that British policing is more concerned with relations with the news media, community relations and internal accountability than can be said of the American service. Again, this is not to argue that such policies have the desired effect, or that lower ranks adhere to them. It is simply to point out that differences between the two societies have to be noted if the notion of 'Anglo-American policing' is to be sustained in a sensitive manner.

Manning further asserts that corruption is rife within the American service. He evidences the symbiotic relationship between the police

and other sectors of the criminal justice system²³. We have noted that professional policing in Britain is designed to hound the corrupt officer. The Chief Officer of the research force received national publicity for his statements that the manner in which the criminal trial is conducted is closer to a game of skill and chance than the establishment of truth and guilt. This is an entirely different situation to the manipulation of the American criminal justice system by the police, which Manning argues is aided by the mystifying cloak of professional policing. Professional policing in Britain is a wedge to prise open such matters, not a cloak to mystify and protect.

These two points, lack of attention to the content of what might appear to be similar features and the substantive differences between policing in the two societies, throw doubt on Manning's thesis. He describes the American context, though he does not produce any first-hand evidence from a general or particular study of an American police department to support his conclusions, and then assumes that it applies to Britain. It is more often the case that little correspondence can be established.

A further ambiguity arises from his text when he outlines the features of what he calls, 'The Premises of the Police Administration Theory'²⁴. It would seem that these premises lie behind the policy decisions of senior officers, though again no empirical evidence in support of his argument is provided. He writes,

'the administrative theory is the basis on which police administrators rationalise policing in operational terms, it has a reality and is a constraint upon the allocation of resources and the distribution of personnel and equipment and should in some sense reflect the most veridical knowledge available about the theory and practice of policing'.

Such a theory is centrally concerned 'with the symbolisation of relationships between the organisation and the environment'²⁵. How this administrative theory is to be related to the 'presentational strategies', not least 'professionalism', which he discusses in an earlier chapter, is not clarified. The distinction between 'presentational strategies' and 'relationships between the organisation and the environment' would seem to be so similar as to be merged,

but that is a matter of speculation which Manning should have made clear.

If the administrative theory of policing is essentially a range of policies based on symbolic presentational strategies, those strategies are more than symbols for they have an instrumental reference point - for example, technology has some effect on crime control, data collection and radio-communications. In other words, although its objectives might not be met in practice, the administrative theory has an instrumental content which Manning should recognise.

A further issue is whether this administrative theory can actually be located in British policing. First, it is argued that

'policing has a product, variously defined as "justice", "law and order", "crime prevention", and "law enforcement", and often glossed by criminal statistics ...'²⁶.

Manning argues that a rational organisational system assists this aim: policing is characterised by information flowing between supervisors and subordinates and police planning can have actual effects on internal organisational practice. Some of these features can be found in our discussion of professional policing. However, we have also noted that much of the British debate about professional policing is concerned with the relationship between the police and allied agencies, seeking to work in a joint, if not always harmonious relationship, to control crime and create social order.

Furthermore, although some of the points Manning describes are of importance, not all of them are apparent in this country. For example, the measurement of police effectiveness is a matter which the American police have refined with considerable sophistication. One of the remarkable features of British policing is its lack of any systematic evaluation of policy and failure to promote full discussion of its objectives. Certainly, at the time Manning carried out his own research and I completed mine, no programmes of evaluation were being carried out in this country. Indeed, the one British paper on this issue is clear that the police do not approximate to the rational systems model and that effectiveness research should be initiated on that basis²⁷. Again, we find Manning looking to the

American setting to assess what does not pertain to Britain; his discussion of professional policing is ambiguous and lacking evidence, his understanding of Anglo-American policing less than precise.

Before moving to further discussion of the research force, it is worth commenting on Skolnick's observations in this area for he also argues that,

'professional policing is increasingly typified by obtaining newer police cars, a higher order of technical equipment or of recruiting men who have to their credit more years of education; what must occur is a significant alteration in the ideology of police, so that police "professionalism" rests on the values of a democratic legal order rather than on technical proficiency'²⁸.

Much of Skolnick's argument is consistent with developments in British policing during the last two decades. However, it should also be noted that the investment in technology found in the British context is not unconnected with the importance of policing within the rule of law. This is a further feature marking American policing off from British. Our discussion of British policing demonstrates the links between the use of technology to assist the assembly of evidence prior to, rather than after arrest. Such a use is intended to diminish the possibility of abuse to suspects and therefore the abuse of the rule-of-law. Senior officers are able to argue and demonstrate that the police have acted according to law but remain hampered in their task of establishing sufficient evidence to substantiate guilt. From such a base they can argue for legal revision. Again, we find that when evidence from both societies is considered easy comparisons between Britain and America are less than satisfactory.

Having thrown doubt on the notion of Anglo-American policing we can now proceed to analyse the British context by demonstrating that the central features of professional policing have definite instrumental features. They are found in a system of police patrol, indeed, that used at the research station. The system is Unit Beat Policing²⁹.

Unit Beat Policing

Unit Beat Policing is not a highly rational system of patrol developed in a purposeful manner on the basis of professional principles. In short, there is no evidence of a clear 'fit' between formally stated principles of professional policing and this system. However, developed in the mid-1960s, with full knowledge of the availability of technology and the virtues of specialisation and management skills, this method of patrol demonstrates a link between policy ideas and their implementation in actual patrol work³⁰.

Unit Beat Policing requires each police sub-division to be divided into 'Home Beats'. A 'Home Beat' is policed on foot by a Constable whose special responsibility lies with the building of links between the police and the local 'community'. Liaison with schools, social service agencies and other organisations on his beat form his area of 'specialism'. Such work assists in the retention of public confidence and accountability, an idea central to professional policing in the research force. The notion of specialisation is clearly evident.

This officer has a further responsibility for the collection of information on known and suspected criminals. The report which advocated the implementation of the Unit Beat System in all forces put it that he is 'the eyes and ears' of the car beat drivers and liaison detectives³¹. As such, he assists in the formation of knowledge which enhances the practice of 'informed discretion'. Indeed, part of the Unit Beat System involves the establishment of a collated bank of information on local patterns of crime and criminals, to which the Home Beat Officer is expected to contribute.

During each shift of eight hours, Panda cars, small vehicles manned by a constable, patrol the sub-division. Each car is in contact with the sub-divisional station via a personal radio system. Requests for police assistance are relayed to these Panda units through this system. Here, the notion of specialisation is emphasised in patrol work, Panda drivers being involved in reactive policing, having contact with the public when an actual request for police assistance is made.

Panda drivers are supplemented by other vehicular patrols which are also in contact with the local base station through the personal radio system. However, these units are also in radio contact with the force headquarters information room, which is linked to the national '999 emergency' system. These units share the work of Panda patrols but deal with more urgent matters.

Other available manpower is employed on foot, their work supplementing the duties of Panda patrols and Home Beat Constables. All officers carry a personal radio and are in constant, direct contact with their station. Technology and specialisation are therefore central to Unit Beat Policing.

The report which encouraged Chief Officers to introduce this means of patrol stressed the managerial benefits which might improve the morale of the work force. Of the Home Beat Officer it states,

'we should expect to elevate the status of the beat constable in a way that would bring out the best qualities of a policeman - self discipline, personal initiative and discretion - and challenge his intelligence, as well as his maturity and common sense, from the outset'³².

By implication all patrolling officers would experience a greater sense of involvement in their work, not least when listening to the whole activity of policing of the sub-divisional area, through use of the personal radio. Commenting on beat patrolling under existing systems it was argued:

'There are probably many young policemen who find it difficult to derive much interest or satisfaction from working their beats in the traditional manner in urban areas. - The work might be more readily tolerated if the conditions of service provided some measure of atonement for the boredom, but they do not'³³.

The working party went on to suggest that more recruits, not least those with good educational qualifications, might be attracted to the force through the involvement and responsibility unit beat policing offered.

The place of the Sergeant was particularly important, and in his thesis Michael Chatterton has documented how Sergeants adapt to Unit Beat policing by the adoption of a number of styles of policing.

The report indicated that the Sergeant would cease to be a militaristic leader but assume a new role of leader and organiser, requiring the skills of management science. Indeed, the working party suggested that there might be a case for changing the Sergeants' badge of rank because of its military overtones.

The implications of professional policing for patrol work

Although the precise implications of professional policing and the associated system of Unit Beat Policing have never been detailed, it is possible to map out some of their implications for the practice of policing by lower ranks. In order to illustrate these implications, Cain's description of urban policing will be taken as a point of comparison and therefore as representative of the occupational culture of urban policing prior to the professionalisation of the service and the introduction of the new system of patrol.

In the next chapter we note that many of Cain's findings which were relevant to policing by lower ranks within an urban context over a decade ago remain highly pertinent to policing in the 1970's. However, we must first outline the possible changes which might be expected from the implementation of Unit Beat and, therefore, of professional policing. This permits an assessment of their effects and whether lower ranks have retained their autonomy.

The substance of Cain's findings have been reported in the previous chapter. Here I wish to demarcate the possible consequences of the features of professional policing. First, the action orientation, the centrality of 'search, chase and capture', the fight and the use of 'extra-legal techniques of control', which figure so prominently in Cain's account, should diminish. The professional model recognises the importance and prevalence of 'peace-keeping', the building of consensual police/public relations, it stresses the slow build-up of evidence before arrest. These features should lead to a less hedonistic, action orientation and a more conciliatory practice of policing by lower ranks.

Secondly, it follows from our discussion that greater importance will be placed on the strengthening of existing, and the building of new relationships between the police and the community policed. The 'easing behaviour' which Cain identified should provide one means for such work. Indeed, the stress on individual responsibility associated with the managerial emphasis of professional policing might well reduce easing behaviour. It could provide lower ranks with a definition of policing in which all their work, crime and service functions alike, is integrated.

Thirdly, the appreciation of the rule-of-law, of increased liaison with allied statutory agencies and contact with the community policed, implies a less secretive, autonomous and interdependent work group than that which Cain found.

Fourthly, extra-legal techniques of policing, particularly those relevant to questioning and charging processes within the police station, should be the exception rather than the rule.

Fifthly, if peace-keeping and crime aspects of policing are recognised as equally important, the exclusive crime focus which Cain identified should be balanced by an appreciation of the breadth of the police role. Arrest and 'clear-up' rates should not be the sole or primary indicators of effective policing.

Finally, the sense of policing a population which is utterly ignorant of the contingencies of police work should be replaced by an appreciation of diversity and an attempt to gain co-operation and consent. Policing should attempt to be integrated with other mechanisms of social control.

Summary and discussion

Clearly, the dominant features of professional policing can be seen in Unit Beat Policing, the system employed in the research force and at my station. The formal organisation of the force was highly specialised. Most senior officers were committed to the development of an open and accountable police service and to a range of

community relations policies. Central and local services employed a wide range of technological aids to assist all aspects of policing. All personnel who were promoted, attended courses which included elements of management science. In short, the force was organised as a highly professional body.

It is of significance that most senior officers assented to the notion of professional policing ; their policies demonstrated such assent. However, we have noted that, although the instrumental aspects of these policies had effects within the organisation, at this stage it cannot be argued that the status, authority and power which professionalisation confers resulted in a more accountable force. A discussion of this matter can only proceed after we have considered the manner in which lower ranks practised their work. At this point, the measures taken to translate the ideas of professional policing into policy have been noted and, importantly, we have established that they are distinct from features of American policing, assumed by recent commentators, particularly by Peter Manning, to be very similar.

Our discussion has also placed the context of the present research as one distinct from that in which Dr Maureen Cain completed her own work some ten years earlier. The system of policing she observed was one of fixed beat patrol, similar to that employed in the city where Banton's work was completed. Cain's discussion of the occupational culture of urban policing will be used as a point of comparison for the features of the culture found at the research station. Such a comparison will enable us to assess whether Unit Beat Policing has altered the occupational culture of urban policing.

Furthermore, in her study Cain does not account for the implementation of any of the ideas of a professional police. In a later paper on police professionalism she comments that, while the opportunity for the professionalisation of the British police remains a possibility through the indirect influence of an increasingly large number of supervisory officers trained at the National Police College, who filter their professional knowledge to lower ranks, the impact of this process is uncertain. The professionalisation of the British

Police, she suggests, may be more a mystification to shield increasing control of the police by the Home Office and other state institutions. Members of these bodies have the power to define the content of a body of knowledge and practice which could be called 'police theory'³⁴.

In a more recent paper she has argued that the power of the lower ranks to retain their autonomy is waning. The reason for this is the professionalisation of the police³⁵. However, this view is tempered in her latest paper where she argues,

'Line policemen - some patrol men, CID officers and security police - are not put in positions which would render them easily vulnerable to public pressure. They are structurally capable of disregarding public feeling if necessary without a crisis of conscience'³⁶.

Our discussion of the policing of an urban police sub-division ten years after Cain completed her work, after the introduction and Unit Beat Policing and the notion of professionalism, will permit us to assess these various comments.

We will also be able to put Chatterton's remarks on the occupational culture within the recent history of the British Police and so be able to compare our research findings with some of his research of an urban area. Importantly, because Unit Beat Policing had only recently been introduced into the sub-division he researched, it will be possible to take a much more long-term view than was possible in his research. We will also be able to continue our discussion of the notion of Anglo-American policing, though at this stage, with regard to the practices of the lower ranks. Overall, we will, after a lengthy analysis of the occupational culture of urban policing, be able to assess the changes brought about by policies of professional policing.

Notes and references

- 1 Mark, R. (1977) Policing a perplexed society, London: George Allen & Unwin, p.42.
- 2 Banton, M. (1964) The policeman in the community, London: Tavistock, pp.109-10.
- 3 Critchley, T.A. (1978) A history of police in England and Wales (rev.edn), London: Constable, p.267. Also, with reference to

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- 4 Banton, M. (1964), op.cit., pp.105-110. For an example of the 'trait approach' to the study of professions, see Greenwood, E. (1957) 'Attributes of a profession', Social Work, 2: 44-55.
 - 5 Becker, H.S. (1977) The nature of a profession, in Sociological work: method and substance: 87-103. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, and Johnson, T. (1972) Professions and power, London: Macmillan. Clearly, the following discussion of symbols demonstrates the use of such an understanding in a tentative fashion. Symbolic and instrumental emphases are difficult to separate.
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 - 7 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, pp.129-30.
 - 8 Mark, R. (1979) In the office of constable, London: Fontana/Collins, pp.89-98 presents some evidence of this.
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 - 10 Royal Commission on the Police (1962) Final report (Cmd 1728), London: HMSO.
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 - 16 Mark, R., *ibid.*, p.312.
 - 17 Home Office (1967), op.cit., pp.67-106.
 - 18 Alderson, J.C. (1973), op.cit., p.45.
 - 19 Mark, R. (1977), op.cit., p.49.
 - 20 Mark, R., *ibid.*, Appendix.
 - 21 Manning, P.K. (1977), op.cit., pp.127-138.

- 22 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, pp.231-232.
- 23 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, pp.232-233.
- 24 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, p.211.
- 25 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, p.208.
- 26 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, pp.211-217, outlines the administrative theory.
- 27 Clarke, R.V.G., and K.H. Heal (1979) 'Police effectiveness in dealing with crime: some current British research', Police J., 52 (1): 24-41.
- 28 Skolnick, J.H. (1966) Justice without trial, New York: Wiley, pp.238-239.
- 29 See Alderson, J.C. (1979) Policing freedom, Plymouth: Macdonald & Evans, for accounts of how elements of professional policing have been developed during the 1970s.
- 30 Home Office (1967), *op.cit.*
- 31 Home Office, *ibid.*, p.142.
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- 33 Home Office, *ibid.*, p.116.
- 34 Cain, M. (1972) 'Police professionalism: its meaning and consequences', Anglo-Amer. Law Rev., 1 (2): 217-231.
- 35 Cain, M. (1977) 'An ironical departure: the dilemma of contemporary policing', in K. Jones et al. (eds) The yearbook of social policy in Britain, 1976, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
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CHAPTER 3

THE STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF SPACE

Having placed the research within its historical context, we are now able to proceed to a detailed analysis of the occupational culture of urban policing. The 'occupational culture of policing' has formed the focus of much research. Indeed, we have noted that the two most recent pieces of work on the British police, those by Chatterton and Manning, are investigations of the rules which structure the occupational culture. In his study of the policing of the inner city of Amsterdam, Dr Maurice Punch questions Westley's notion of a solidaristic police culture, suggesting that there might be 'a universal police code with considerable correspondence across cultures but that within that, considerable national and local variations may appear'¹. Chatterton's work includes the detailing of knowledge relevant to the demands of policing as they are perceived by lower ranks, including the different styles of patrol adopted by Sergeants within the Unit Beat System. Manning has argued that senior, policy-making officers employ a very different definition of policework than lower ranks. He suggests that the occupational culture or 'organisational reality', as he calls it, is an accommodative response by lower ranks to the professional framework of policy determined by senior officers².

The occupational culture of urban policing is not a homogeneous clustering of values, norms and actions to which all police officers assent. Rather, it is a series of conflicting perspectives, cohering around some central values and associated actions, but also containing more peripheral features relevant to the rank, specialism or personal morality of the particular officer³.

We are reminded that the notion of 'the occupational culture of policing' to be used in this study draws on Silverman's definition of an organisation as

'a multitude of rationalities each of which generates the "in-order-to" motives of the participants and allows them to make their own sense of the actions and intentions of others'⁴.

Emphasis is placed on the central or core meanings shared by lower ranks, remembering that the knowledge on which lower ranks base their practice of policing may be in conflict with that accepted by the senior policy-making officers referred to in the previous chapter.

Although aware of the conflictful character of the occupation, sociological research has not attempted to analyse the relative importance of various features of the occupational culture. The following discussion begins to do this, using Schutz's theory of the structure of relevance. We begin with a discussion of the meanings of space to the patrolling officers who were observed. Schutz argues that 'spatial knowledge' represents one of the most fundamental structures of knowledge a phenomenological study can recount.

The meanings of space

Social scientists researching 'social space' have generally not heeded Donald Ball's suggestion that

'a fundamental task of "micro-ecology" is to seek out the functional relationships between microspace, social actors and their space related conduct and experience within it, and the selves and identities so generated and maintained or altered'.

Research into perception of and behaviour in space have been largely separate enterprises.

On the one hand, a considerable amount of work has been done on the relation between 'personal space' and the maintenance of personal identity. Such work tends towards an emphasis on behaviour in certain spatial areas. On the other hand, geographers and environmental psychologists have carried out a considerable amount of work on 'mental maps'. The emphasis of this work is on perceptions of space, insights having been gained into the content of knowledge of routes, buildings and areas in cities⁶. What is required but lacking is research on the central sociological issue of the relationship between particular social groups and the functional meanings of their knowledge of space. If the meaning of space is related to

the function of that meaning and, ideally yet methodologically complex, action, the possibilities of documenting the topography of space are enhanced. Without a consideration of the functional meanings of space, representation tends towards a one-dimensional 'Flatland' of knowledge rather than an intricate contouring of relevancy.

In a fairly recent article, Paul Rock has argued that the moral values of those who belong to deviant groups are stratified in terms of their importance. Similarly, it is argued that the study of the meanings of space requires

'a progressive stripping away of layers of meaning in an attempt to lay bare the physiology of a moral system. It would proceed on the assumption that it is possible to discover tiers and clusters of meaning, each with its own contours and each related to some larger principle of stratification'⁷.

This argument is based in the phenomenological perspective of Alfred Schutz who has directed research towards a description of the mundane aspects of social life, the everyday or 'life-world' which is taken for granted as given⁸.

The 'lifeworld' is the reality to which all experience is referred, all perceptions made accountable. Schutz writes,

'The world of daily life is given to us in a taken-for-granted way ... The province of meaning of this world retains its accent of reality as long as our practical experiences confirm its unity and harmony. It appears to us a "natural" reality and we are not prepared to give up the attitude that is based upon it unless a special shock experience breaks through everyday reality and induces us to transfer to another province of meaning'⁹.

The stripping away of the perceptual structuring of the 'lifeworld' is fundamental to phenomenological research.

The lifeworld is not a 'Flatland' but contoured along temporal and spatial dimensions. Spatially it radiates from the self, 'the place in which I find myself, my actual "here" is the starting point for my orientation in space'¹⁰. The world within actual reach is contrasted with less immediate and therefore more anonymous zones, beyond presence and influence. Knowledge of these more distant

zones is less detailed and rigid than more intimate areas, yet clearly available to any enquirer.

'At the highest level of social anonymity and, at the same time, "objectivity" a world becomes constituted which is potentially accessible to everyman who is "willing, fit and able"'.¹¹

Schutz therefore relates perception to knowledge, linking various zones of space with associated types of knowledge. For example, detailed 'recipe knowledge' is more relevant to zones immediately surrounding the person than the anonymous zones which are perceived in more rigid categories. His theoretical discussion organises space in terms of its proximity, its relevance to the person - the closer one is to the individual the more immediate, relevant and adaptable the knowledge. Conversely, the further one moves from intimacy, knowledge becomes more anonymous, rigid and taken-for-granted. This leads us to a description and analysis of police meanings of space which unifies meaning, function and action within a topographical scheme. We avoid a typification of the occupational culture as if it were a 'Flatland' of knowledge.

Spatial meaning in police research

In my force, as is generally true of the Anglo-American police, responsibility was organised in spatial terms. Although invested with a warrant to exercise legally constituted powers throughout Britain, the primary jurisdictional reference point is the police sub-division, a geographical area within which individual policemen are posted to a tour of vehicular or foot patrol. Within the smaller area of the beat or vehicular patrol, officers are available to deal with any incident requiring police attention and presence. Clearly, the police of the research station provide an example of an occupational group with jurisdiction over a prescribed spatial area.¹²

Studies of the police have not neglected the meaning of space entirely. For example, Stinchcombe has argued that the legally determined status of place as being 'public' or 'private' gives rise to certain styles of police action. Such a suggestion remains utterly speculative until

it is related to the meanings of space found in the occupational culture¹³. An assumed alignment of the legal and occupational meanings of status and place fails to deal with the manner in which legal categories are filtered through the occupational culture. Alignment may, as Chatterton has argued in respect of the breaking of internal organisational rules, be an elaborated presentational account¹⁴.

Other American work has consistently pointed to 'danger' as the pervasive meaning of space and also to the importance of territorial boundaries surrounding the geographical arena of police activity. In his study of an American police academy, Harris writes of the recruit,

'His responsibilities lay within these territorial boundaries and the responsibilities seem to contribute to the recruit's sense of vulnerability to forces beyond his control'¹⁵.

These 'forces beyond his control' are danger and hostility, the factors cited by Westley and Skolnick in their studies of American urban policing¹⁶. In both of these studies we recall the notion of the police occupying dangerous territory. Here we note the one-dimensional representation of danger which risks the distortion of describing the occupational culture as a 'Flatland' of danger rather than a contoured and clustered series of central and more peripheral meanings.

Rubinstein's ethnography, 'City Police', is the one example which moves away from a one-dimensional view of spatial knowledge¹⁷. He documents patrolmen's knowledge of the area in which they work, importantly, the manner in which vehicular systems of patrol render certain sorts of spatial knowledge highly relevant. Only those areas where cars could be driven were of sufficient importance for the acquisition and retention of detailed knowledge.

A perception of danger is not absent from Rubinstein's work. As they patrol, officers scan buildings for snipers; as they stop suspect vehicles they check their holsters; as they walk round a street corner they are aware of their restricted vision. However, unlike the studies already discussed, the emphasis in this research is that of a highly contextual notion of spatial perception of which danger is but one aspect. Rubinstein describes the patrolman cruising in his car:

'Once he has named a place his opinion assumes precedence in determining what is going on there. He cares less about who is there than where they are. He does not make evaluations of the people at each corner every time he cruises past, but makes assumptions about them based on his conception of the place'¹⁸.

Although Rubinstein documents a range of spatial meanings, including some emphasis on 'danger', the relationships between and functions of these meanings are unstated. Furthermore, because his work lacks any theoretical underpinning, the police world appears as a contextually determined culture which is utterly episodic and fragmented.

Research on the British police offers a modicum of data on spatial meanings. Cain indicates that the police she observed perceived their territory as oppositional and Lambert suggests that there may be a war-like meaning attributed to the area policed¹⁹. This leaves us with a division between those studies which document spatial knowledge as if it was one-dimensional, that is to say, singularly pervasive, and other work, notably Rubinstein's, which is so contextually based that its multi-dimensional features are legion. The requirement is that of a study which describes spatial knowledge, relating its central and more peripheral meanings to each other, thereby placing the one and multi-dimensional emphases we have noted in proper perspective.

Hilton Sub-Division

The geographical area policed from Hilton, 'the ground' as it was called, was perceived as 'territory'. Hilton's policemen possessed it, it belonged to them and members of the force who worked at adjoining stations had no rights of entry and patrol unless by invitation, by the implied co-operation of Hilton men or by unavoidable pursuit of a suspect onto 'the ground'. If staff from the neighbouring station of Bluecoat were seen patrolling Hilton's ground it was likely that comment would be made over the personal radio system, shared by Hilton and Bluecoat. During a tour of night duty a Bluecoat P.C. was seen 'poaching' on Hilton section. A Hilton officer transmitted his comments over the personal radio system,

permitting all officers on the subdivision to hear him: 'Get off our ground ... what are you doing on our ground?' The reply came, 'If you had enough policemen to police it, I would'²⁰.

Similarly, it was assumed that other agencies - social work teams, fire brigade personnel, local authority officials - had no prior right of control over and intervention in Hilton's territory, without acknowledgement of primary control by the police. Despite its obvious impossibility and continual denial, prior police control was assumed and Hilton sub-division was a territory in which jurisdiction and the assumption of control coincided²¹.

This perception of the spatial area of Hilton sub-division as a 'controlled territory' formed a central organising principle of meaning. Its importance and centrality was symbolic as well as instrumental; it was denied by continual disorder and crime, denied by any possible external criteria of validation. What, then, were the functions of this assumption of territorial control?

Ardrey has pointed out that territorial control is related to identity²³. In the broadest sense, control over Hilton sub-division helped to sustain an identity of policemen'ship related to that task within its defined geographical boundaries. The diversity of policework, involving a significant amount of service and peacekeeping tasks, conflicts with the patrolman's emphasis on crime work. Furthermore, the imprecise mandate afforded by the legal system couples with this emphasis to generate conflicting demands. In relating territorial control to identity, the task of policing Hilton was made more coherent and precise. The role of the policeman was anchored within a territorial area, secured as his own, where conflicting demands could be rationalised.

Closely related here is the relationship between territory and task. The claiming of a 'territorial imperative' imposed a unity on the myriad of tasks which constitute policework. Disparate elements of an imprecise role, requiring work of a diffuse and sometimes conflicting character, were defined in terms of police relevancies

rather than the relevancies of those who make requests for assistance. Policework becomes identifiable, referable, traditional, routine and of importance to self.

Finally, control of territory can be understood as the creation of a framework of meaning which makes sense of the negation of control. Violation of control can be understood as a challenge to the police and their symbolic status as guardians of the stability of the State. On the one hand, a rationale for policies which use the imagery of war against crime is generated and on the other hand a world requiring vigilant control is a world which sustains the myth of crime-fighting, search, chase and capture, the action orientation and hedonism of the occupational culture. 'Control' was therefore one of the central meanings of police perception of territory.

A related and equally central meaning of space and those within it was that of 'the invitational brink of chaos'²⁴. Unlike American studies which emphasise danger, Hilton's police perceived space, place and population as part of a world which was potentially erupting into disorder and chaos. This was not a conspiratorial view but one in which space and those who inhabited it were on the inevitable brink of chaos, saved only by the presence of the police.

While patrolling with an Inspector, we passed a group of people standing on the footway. He commented, 'You can't rely on people behaving themselves nowadays. You know, any small thing triggers them off. It's really frightening'²⁵. Constables perceived the world in a similar fashion. During a conversation between two constables and myself, a third P.C., senior to his colleagues, joined us from his car patrol. He commented:

'Yes, it's like a grave out there. (Pause) It's odd, this place is. You can go weeks really quiet, nothing happening at all, then all of a sudden, whoosh, it all happens, all hell lets loose.' The conversation shifted to a story about a prisoner being hit while held in the police station for questioning. I asked a rhetorical question: 'I don't agree with all that (using physical force during questioning). When policemen start taking the law into their own hands there is a great danger of law and order breaking down?' The Constable replied, 'Well, it has broken down, hasn't it?' He gained support

and verification from a colleague, 'Yeah, it's broken down. It's absolute chaos out there'²⁶.

Despite the initial comment that 'it's really quiet', it was also possible for officers to hold the very different belief that 'it's absolute chaos out there'. 'Chaos' has the same meaning as the indication from the inspector that 'You can't rely on people behaving themselves nowadays'. Hilton sub-division was at the invitational brink of chaos; its police had a licence to intervene, preventing a slide into total disorder.

It should be stressed again that this was not a conspiratorial view. Chaos was linked to a characteristic naivety amongst the population. Describing a Constable who was thought to be poor at his work, a Sergeant remarked,

'Well, he's just like a member of the public really, isn't he? He just doesn't think before he does anything. He's got no ability to weigh anything up at all. He's just like a member of the public'²⁷.

Chaos and naivety went hand-in-hand, the police rationalising disorder into control, chaos into order.

These two central meanings - control and chaos through naivety - formed the stable background relevancies of the policemen's spatial map. They sustained basic occupational values and beliefs, pervading all assumptions about the sub-division and the nature of policing within it; when all other meanings were stripped away, these two principles remained. All other spatial meanings were referable to their commonsense nature, which could not be negated by contradictory evidence. To Hilton's police, 'It's like a grave out there' was consistent with 'It's chaos out there'. Control and chaos were both the legitimation of and response to the maintenance of a primary reality. Techniques used to curb the potential for complete disorder also confirmed that chaos.

Here we locate Schutz's notion of primary reality or 'life-world', which formed the basis of police meanings of space within Hilton sub-division. The primary reality of chaos and control typified what was secure and taken-for-granted. Chaos and control underpinned all

other zones and contextualised places within the spatial area of the sub-division. The anonymity and inviolable character of the 'life-world' provided a source of knowledge for Hilton's policemen which was adequate for all practical purposes and the basis of all spatial knowledge. They were the central axes of spatial meanings.

Space and place - spatial sites

Schutz links perception to the pragmatic features of knowledge. Knowledge of space and particular places within it meant that police patrols could respond to requests for assistance with proficiency. This was particularly so for the men who staffed the mobile patrol vehicles²⁸.

There seemed to be some status attached to knowing one's way around the ground. Most of the Constables at Hilton had not completed more than five years' service and very few of them possessed the very detailed knowledge which Bittner noted amongst the skid-row patrolmen he observed²⁹. However, if a call for assistance was made then the officer receiving it over his personal radio was expected to be sufficiently knowledgeable to know its location, without asking the communications officer at Hilton for guidance.

A call to a break-in at an Old People's Home on Hilton section was transmitted over the personal radio system. The Constable who accepted it was patrolling in a police car and asked for guidance to the location. Another officer interjected before the assistance could be rendered, 'You want to learn your ground.'³⁰ 'Since when?' 'Since you have been on the area car.'

Knowledge was also necessary to sustain the hedonism of policing. Knowing a location meant being able to get to the action and involvement in the immediacy of excitement.

A call was broadcast over the central force radio to the effect that a police car was chasing a suspect vehicle and assistance was required. It was soon reported that the suspect vehicle was stationary and that no further assistance was required. A few minutes later a further cancellation of the request for assistance was made by the crew of the police vehicle first involved. 'There are lots of vehicles racing around and we have more than enough already.'³¹

Sometimes knowledge of location was secondary to the fun of racing to it.

A well-known company had two stores on Hilton section and during the early hours of night duty a report that a person had been seen in one of the premises was received. The crew of the area car were sitting in the station at the time and as a cry of 'whopee' went up they ran to their vehicles and sped from the station yard. After a short time the crew of a Panda car who had heard the call and also raced to the scene made radio enquiry, asking why there were no other vehicles at the location of the call. In fact they had gone to the wrong branch of the store - action having taken priority over location.³²

Knowledge of space was therefore important and associated with the values of action and hedonism contained within the occupational culture. Furthermore, knowledge of how to get to an incident provided a basis for the attribution of status. This attribute is to be associated with the value of fast driving, which also served as a basis of status amongst the lower ranks.

Once the primary reality of chaos and control were realised, research into the other contours of spatial perception took a more contextual form. It has been pointed out that many of the officers did not have the detailed knowledge possessed by Bittner's patrolmen and whilst there was some suggestion that beat patrols, particularly those who were unable to enjoy the hedonism of vehicular patrolling, mapped the ground in terms of areas of action and calm, these more diffuse spaces tended to be organised around particular spatial sites. However, within the primary reality, particular places stood out - buildings, groups of buildings, small areas - as space to which particular meanings were attributed. Sometimes the meanings were rather general, on other occasions they were highly specific. Knowledge of such spaces and places formed the contours of the spatial map which each of Hilton's patrolling officers possessed in some measure.

Sites of danger

Any place, any area within Hilton sub-division could become a place of danger. At times, for example, during a period of I.R.A. bombings

of British targets, the whole of the sub-division was pervaded by a sense of danger. Apart from this extreme situation, danger was not a constant background perception of the territory, a feature which distinguishes the British and American contexts, as well as providing an indication of the structuring of central and peripheral aspects of spatial meaning.

There was just one place which meant constant danger, demanding vigilance by the officers who visited it. This place was a hostel for homeless black youths, many of whom had convictions for criminal offences. It was noticeable that visits to the hostel threatened danger - this was even the case with trivial requests, like the delivery of a message which might mean entry into the spatial boundaries of the place. For example, before a night duty parade a P.C. was requested to enquire about a missing girl who frequented the hostel. He asked for the area car crew, a further two officers, to go with him³³. Again, another Constable was requested to go there and make a routine enquiry³⁴; he asked, 'I've got an enquiry at the Black House, Sarge, all right if I take somebody with me? It's not that I'm a coward, but ...'. Similarly, a young black couple were seen arguing near the house and the car crew in the vicinity thought that they might have to enter the building. They asked over the personal radio, 'There is nothing urgent but we're probably going to have to go into the Black House and may need some assistance'³⁵. Black youths were thought to be particularly dangerous wherever they might be but their presence in space did not provoke the immediate assumption of danger. The 'Black House' was a site of continual danger and therefore marked out from the primary reality of chaos and control.

We have noted that general areas of action and calm provided a background to these particular sites, though they were more diffuse than the primary reality and the sites themselves. However, the areas of action - that is to say the calls for assistance might well entail dealing with truculent people, crime work or a challenge to police authority - did cohere around particular sites of activity, in this case a site of continual danger. I asked a P.C. where the busy parts of the sub-division were to be found. 'The top end really, up the

top end of — Road, down the other end, — Park and the 'Boar's Head'.³⁶ It is interesting that each of these areas - 'the top end', 'the other end' - were the locations of particular sites. The meanings of such sites spread into the surrounding area, creating pockets of action and calm. However, action was the predominant focus, these were the areas referred to. An 'interesting' or 'good' sub-division is one where action takes place; spaces devoid of action are semantically neutral.

Sites of trouble

Michael Chatterton has pointed out the internal and external dimensions of trouble in a police organisation³⁷. 'Trouble' is related to the possibility of error in police action and the need for an account in response to a complaint. This point was found to be highly pertinent when understanding the meaning of sites of trouble on Hilton sub-division. Trouble meant opposition to Hilton's police, not simply opposition to the practice of policing but also opposition which could result in a complaint against the police by a member of the public who had power to do so in an authoritative fashion. This was one type of challenge to control Hilton's police did not welcome - it affected all ranks but was more relevant to the senior officers of the station.

The local Law Centre was one site of trouble, an immediate reference point for the Chief Superintendent who, when welcoming me to Hilton, stressed its opposition to police. Assessing the credibility of a local black youth leader, he described him by stating that, 'He's not anti-police because he walked out of a couple of meetings which have recently been held by the Law Centre'³⁸. Of course, the Law Centre was typified as 'trouble' because its staff of legal assistants and solicitors had frequent contact with persons who wished to complain about police action; they knew how to make complaints against the police and had some measure of knowledge of how to break into the protective secrecy of the work group. The problem was not that the staff of the centre knew how to make trouble by complaining against the police. They also frequently asked permission to see clients in the cell or charge room area of the station soon after an arrest had been made.

Another place of concern to the Chief Superintendent was the local stadium of the First Division football team. The problem here was the high visibility of police procedure, particularly when the match was being covered by national television. The Chief Superintendent's reputation was staked on the retention of order at the match. During my first day of duty at the station a colleague explained,

'After you have been here for a bit, Sarge, you will find out that everything revolves around — (names the ground) ... If you make mistakes down here you might as well leave the subdivision or resign'³⁹.

At times, quite stringent precautions were taken to mark out an area of trouble. For example, a woman who lived in a ground floor flat made an allegation of sexual liaison with a number of officers stationed at Hilton. The Superintendent placed a note book for the station officer to report any telephone conversation he had with her, the same was done for the telephonist. Warnings were placed in the supervisory officers' 'informations' pointing out the trouble which could arise if the woman telephoned the station and that if she called to the flat, an officer should ensure that he was accompanied by a colleague. As soon as the allegations were withdrawn the attention given to the flat was neutralised and its meaning ceased to be 'trouble'.

In all these examples we find the possibility of persons who are outside the police organisation causing trouble for supervisory officers by making complaints against Hilton's police or, in the case of the football stadium, by giving wide coverage to a potentially disorderly situation. Spatial areas, buildings and arenas were prescribed and attributed with the meaning of 'trouble', sometimes continually, sometimes for varying periods of time. Here, the occupational characteristic of low visibility is reversed and high visibility is created by 'civilians' who played an important part in the structuring of the meaning of space.

Although lower ranks did not like having complaints made against them, and knew that the Law Centre was a place from which complaints and critical comment on the public came, they did not designate it in the same rigid fashion displayed by senior officers. Lower ranks,

Constables and Sergeants, defined 'trouble' with other relevancies in mind. 'Trouble' meant a short skirmish, a scuffle with drunks, an argument which bordered on physical contact between police and public. The formal description of this type of 'trouble' was that of 'a disturbance'. There were places in the area of the sub-division which were frequent locations of trouble of this type - public houses for example. Again, the busy public houses were places where the meaning 'trouble' spilled into the area surrounding the public house itself. This is to be noticed in the description of the busy parts of the sub-division by the Constable reported in a previous section.

Trouble was not always avoided. A P.C. broadcast over the personal radio:

'It looks like there's going to be trouble at The Castle. Could a couple of units get along there? There's nothing happening at the moment but there might be trouble in a bit of time.' Personnel who had been to the scene returned to Hilton after a short period and informed other P.C.s, 'You didn't miss much at The Castle. It was all over by the time we got there.'⁴⁰

The point to be made is that 'trouble' of this type offered the opportunity to enjoy a scuffle, to arbitrate authoritatively and perhaps make an arrest for a minor offence. The occupational values of action and hedonism are closely related to the designation of space as a site of trouble.

Sites of trouble were less rigidly typified than sites of danger - largely because the perceived risk to personal safety was not so acute. However, although trouble could be fun, it was also a cause of considerable concern to lower ranks. This was particularly noticeable when the personnel of organisations who controlled a space within which the police occasionally work, redefine it as 'trouble'. For example, the local hospital casualty unit was a place which called on the police to deal with a variety of incidents. During the evening and night shifts it was likely that drunken persons would be removed from the unit, disputes resulting in physical injury to one of the parties involved would have to be settled and reported. The staff of the unit welcomed Hilton's police into their area to do such work. However, if the relationship between police and hospital personnel

was soured, the trouble of action should change into the trouble associated with the accountability of the force.

After dealing with a number of people taken to the casualty unit of the hospital to receive treatment for injuries that might have been inflicted whilst they were in custody, the hospital staff appeared to resent police presence. A Constable reported that a doctor commented when he received a patient, 'Is this another person been beaten up at Hilton police station ?'⁴¹.

On another occasion a person who had been struck on the head with a truncheon was admitted to hospital from police custody. He was under the usual police guard at the hospital and during one tour of 'guard duty' the officer telephoned the station to inform them that some people were wanting to visit the injured man. They seemed highly excited and likely to cause a disturbance. Having dealt with the situation, the officer returned to Hilton and explained, 'The hospital are very "anti" at the moment with this bloke being beaten up. They won't cooperate at all because they don't like what's happened to him. He's only got a few bruises on the top of his head.'⁴²

The difficulty experienced in such places can be related to an imposed meaning of trouble, replacing a more usual understanding. Police action is constrained, viewed with suspicion and the freedom found within the occupational culture is highly restricted.

We have noted two meanings of trouble which relate to particular spatial sites on Hilton sub-division. The one is more relevant to senior officers who have to investigate complaints about police conduct; the other associated with the hedonistic, action orientation of lower ranks. Both designations are related to the occupational cultural characteristics of, first, the risk of informal practices leaking into visibility and, secondly, the interdependency of the work group becoming strained. We also note that the typification of 'trouble' is more flexible than that of 'danger' and even more so than the axial meanings of the primary reality.

Sites of work

A new Sergeant had been posted to the sub-division and I was driving him around the area on his first day of duty. As we passed one of

the hospitals he asked me, 'Do we take the casualty?' S.H.: 'Yes.' Officer: 'Oh, that's work then'. Later that morning, another Sergeant was describing the area to him. Part of the description referred to the fact that 'We've got two hospitals which cause a lot of aggravation'⁴³.

Why had the Sergeants designated the hospitals as 'sites of work' and 'aggravation'? It has been noted that hospital casualty departments involved the police in the reporting of accidents, sudden deaths and a host of other incidents. The citing of hospitals as places of work was connected with the writing of reports on these incidents, work regarded as trivial and frequently avoided by Constables. The Sergeants were faced with the problems of getting their officers to report incidents properly and to ensure that criticism of the handling of the incident was 'covered'.

Constables might accept work at the hospital to get into a warm place but they would then employ a tactic to avoid the work required of them. The station officer would be informed that there was no cause for police action, or, in circumstances where the comforts of the hospital were not required, arrival at the hospital would be delayed until the aggrieved party had left.

Mump Holes

In her research on urban policing, Maureen Cain describes places within the inner-city area where patrolling officers could rest from work, drink tea or chat with the staff of cafes, pubs and service organisations, to relieve the tedium of beat work⁴⁴. Manning describes the use of these places as compensation for being a low-ranking officer⁴⁵.

Policed by a system of vehicular patrol, 'mump holes' - places where an officer can obtain free drink or time during patrol - seemed to be unnecessary at Hilton. In part, 'mump holes' were not used because it was difficult to hide a distinctive police car and vehicles were warm and dry during cold and inclement weather conditions. Constables took lifts and 'rides' with colleagues in order to break the monotony

of beat patrolling and, when coupled to the frequent tea breaks in the station, as well as the scheduled refreshment period during each shift, the need for extra resting places was minimal.

Ignorance of 'mump holes' was the source of this comment by a Sergeant as he passed the whole relief walking to their beats after he had 'tipped them out of the nick at 6.30 a.m.'. He compared Hilton to a neighbouring station where he had served:

'When I was at Queen's Square and it was early turn, we had a full breakfast and a couple of cups before eight and it was then time for tea at nick. Our blokes don't even know where to go; Tom might, but he's the only one'⁴⁶.

Some of the older P.C.s knew of mump holes, the more experienced used their facilities in secret. However, it was common knowledge that the casualty units of the hospitals, certain public houses and service agencies would provide rest and refreshment, free from the supervision of senior officers. Yet use of these places also implied a reciprocal exchange; nurses, caretakers, publicans and shopkeepers require occasional but prompt assistance with disorderly customers, patients or whatever. The facilities afforded the police offered some personal contact and experience of background information, which prompted police service when it was required.

Some 'mumps' were not used for rest but buying goods or services at a discount. Orders for fish and chips and other 'take-away' foods were given over the personal radio on late and night duty shifts. Discount varied but there was knowledge of who was 'G.T.P.'⁴⁷ (Good To Police), and such establishments were patronised. Again, the relationship with the staff of these places was not without implicit obligations.

At times the generally positive meanings attached to 'mumps' could change to 'trouble', causing conflict amongst the ranks. One Christmas a relief visited all the public houses on the sub-division to collect a 'gift'. When other officers discovered this they voiced critical comments. 'When a publican comes in here wanting something it's me who has taken the drink, not just — or anyone else, it's me'⁴⁸.

It can be seen that the staff of Hilton used 'mumps' for a variety

of purposes and probationer Constables learnt about them. However, at Hilton they did not have the importance which has been attached to them by other students of the police, save where discount was given on food. Even here we find the designation of particular places as 'safe mumps'. Vehicular policing has reduced the need for relief from boring foot patrol duties. Nevertheless, we have noted how particular places are marked out as 'mumps', indicating one more aspect of the spatial topography of Hilton sub-division.

Sites of interest

Before every shift of officers left the station to patrol they attended a parade, one part of which consisted of the Sergeant reading items from the parade book. A predominant number of such entries were about premises left insecure at night, the addresses of persons away for long periods of time and leaving their houses unattended and information from residents and other officers providing details of activity which might be suspicious and requiring police attention.

Every week a bulletin of crime information was published and this also contained information of addresses of local criminals, places where crime was being committed and so on. For the enthusiastic officer, knowledge of these sites of interest could have provided a mine of detailed information for use in his daily work. However, it was noticeable how few officers recorded any of the information given to them or studied the information bulletin. These were sites of interest which could have provided background information of use before attendance at a particular place. Knowledge of this type offered the possibility of an account if it was alleged that information had been given to the police about a particular place and they had done nothing. As such, the meaning of these places was peripheral to the immediate concerns of patrol work.

The precise meaning of places which might be of interest in the investigation of crime was private to the officer concerned. He would rarely share such knowledge amongst his colleagues for fear that they might make an arrest and take the credit for it. C.I.D.

officers* would not brief their uniformed colleagues about places of interest - the meaning of these places was private, only of interest to those who possessed the particular knowledge.

Constables with a considerable number of years' service were proud that they possessed a great deal of spatial knowledge. Younger officers accumulated knowledge of routes to particular places but lacked more detailed knowledge of their content - the names of inhabitants, their reputations, and so on. Such knowledge was dependent on a high degree of involvement in the occupation and considerable length of service.

All these sites - of danger, trouble, work, mumping and interest - were situated as buildings or more general places within the primary reality of chaos and control. Yet they were more peripheral, more clearly designated than the primary reality, being dependent on considerable knowledge of the sub-division. However, although these sites were sharply defined as particular places, their meaning was open to evaluation and change. This was not so with the primary reality, which remained fundamental and inviolable.

Home territories

Spatial perception cannot be restricted to the designation of existing buildings and areas. Spatial locations can be constructed from areas which, to the outsider, appear utterly diffuse. To the insider who uses the space and possesses relevant knowledge, the same area can appear bounded and pregnant with meaning. We refer to the creation of meaningful space, a dimension of mental mapping neglected by social scientists but very relevant to the policing of Hilton.

Researchers of the British and American police have noted the secrecy and interdependency of the workgroup of lower ranks⁴⁹. One reason for the existence of such features is the retention of a web of secrecy around practices which breach legal rules. The police station, not least the cell and charge room area, is one such place where

legal rules are broken and discussion of these areas will be contained in a later section of the thesis. In this section we will deal with 'home territories' described by Lyman and Scott as 'places where regular participants have a relative freedom of behaviour and a sense of intimacy and control over the area'⁵⁰. At Hilton, Sergeants and Constables created 'home territories' out of available space, in order to secure the freedom and privacy they believed necessary for effective police work. If it was not feasible to get a suspect to a police station and private space was required, those officers with adequate occupational knowledge would create such space. There were no facilities like those found by Sudnow during the course of his participant observer research of a hospital. He reports that policemen would take suspects to a room in the casualty unit and then question them and, staff alleged, beat them. A nurse is quoted, 'The cops wouldn't dare do that on the streets where they could be seen, so they come in here where they think no one will say anything'⁵¹.

An incident which involved myself and a colleague is illustrative of the creation of a 'home territory'.

We had stopped two males suspected of theft. As they walked along the pavement we noticed that one of them was carrying a radio. Initial questioning of the two proved unsuccessful and they were brought together by the police car. One of the suspects, a youth, began to cry and my colleagues said to him, 'Look, sonny, you can stop turning those tears on because you are lying. As soon as I get you in the back of that car you are mine and I'll find out where that radio came from'⁵²

Privacy and secrecy were assured in the police car where a 'home territory' could be created, if only for a brief period of time.

On another occasion I was patrolling in a vehicle being driven by this same colleague.

We came across two P.C.s who had just arrested a black youth for possession of an offensive weapon and a minor assault on police. The youth was quiet after arrest and placed in the back of the P.C.'s patrol car, for transport to the station. My colleague drove to the station at speed, explaining in a rather dramatic manner, 'We'd better get down to the station quick so that they don't beat him to death'⁵³.

Cars were 'home territories' in two senses. First, they offered

secrecy and security from others who were in open space. Secondly, they were secure from the gaze and control of senior officers.

A Sergeant from another station situated a considerable distance from Hilton made this second point clearly and also suggested that an element of culpability might be present. Constables present their supervisory officers with accounts of reasonable police action, supervisors knowing or suspecting that the law and/or organisational rules have been breached⁵⁴. I asked him what he did about P.C.s who used physical force on prisoners.

'Well, we don't have any of that in our station at all. I've told 'em that I won't have it. I'm not worried about what happens on the way to the station but once we're in the station that's it, nothing happens'⁵⁵.

Cars were certainly known as secure and safe places.

A P.C. was relating an account of an incident during which a suspect had to be questioned. 'Yes, that P.C. from — Division said, "I better have a word with this bloke", and we put him in the back of the car. The W.P.C. who was sitting in the front said, "Well, I think I had better go now".'⁵⁶

Similarly, on another occasion, after the arrest of a youth who had assaulted a W.P.C., an officer recalled,

'I put — (the W.P.C.) in our Panda; she was saying, "Don't hit him" to — and — (names of officers). We said, "Get in there and keep quiet". He was put in the R/T car and — continued'⁵⁷.

These spatial areas were not a part of the natural or 'built environment' but aspects of the structured meanings of space recognised by officers stationed at Hilton. The creation of home territories can be related to the use of techniques of questioning and persuasion which extend the legal boundaries of action afforded the police. Like sites of trouble, danger and work, the use of home territories required officers to have a very specific and recipe-like knowledge of the occupational culture, most certainly more specific and recipe-like than their knowledge of the primary reality of policing. Knowledge of how to create a home territory and the limits of acceptable action within such space is the result of a considerable period of learning within the occupation. Once learnt, the occupants of a home territory are partially freed from possible restrictions

placed upon their actions by others. Power is maximised, freedom created and the work of policing sustained by the methods of those who performed such work on Hilton's streets.

Body territory

The final meaning I want to consider is that associated with the body, the area immediately around it as well as clothing and associated accoutrements. To the police officer, body territory is sacred; the sacred is not to be profaned. The sanctity of uniform and body territory concern both the personal safety of the individual police officer as well as the stability of the political state, symbolised by the office of Constable⁵⁸.

Again, this is a spatial area to be distinguished from the built environment but of the utmost relevance to policemen who regard the violation of body territory as tantamount to insurgency. The pervasive meanings of chaos and control become immediate and critical when violation endangers the physical and symbolic space of and around the physical self. While at the Training School a Sergeant who was on a course with me commented, 'If anyone touches a policeman he deserves to be hung'. At Hilton the assumption was made that if an officer was assaulted physical force would be returned, even if that force was a token to reinstate the sanctity of the symbolic self

On one occasion I noted that a prisoner had become violent in the charge room of the station and assaulted a Constable by throwing a chair at him.

I asked the Sergeant who had been on duty as station officer at the time of the incident, 'What state was the prisoner in?' Sergeant: 'not bad, really; there was a token but he wasn't really beaten up, not by any means'⁵⁹.

A symbolic token could and often did extend to aggressive instrumentalism, considerable force being used against an offender. However, the immediate point to be made is that an important spatial meaning, a sacred area, was that of the body which, if violated, was restored to sanctity by the return of force.

Because a policeman's body is infused with symbolism, its potency as a vehicle of meaning can extend beyond the skin and clothing of the physical form itself, to equipment associated with policing - the truncheon and police car, for example. Using such accoutrements, the space police officers occupy can be transformed into an area under control. The driver of a police car would cruise past a group of people standing on the footway and stare at them rigidly. Such action was sufficient to extend control from the body into the relevant space. Some officers left their truncheon on the dashboard of their parked and unattended patrol car; this was noticeable amongst uniform officers working in plain clothes for a temporary period. Others would leave a police cap or helmet on the back seat or rear parcel shelf of their private vehicle. First, this may have indicated that they expected favourable discretionary treatment if stopped after committing a traffic offence. Secondly, such use of uniform and other instruments symbolised that the space surrounding the object was under police control. It was almost as if the police officer owning the items was present and controlling the space. As such, the items conveyed the meaning of police controlled space within which autonomy from legal norms could be exercised.

The area around the policeman's body is respected by members of the public. This becomes obvious when one changes from uniformed patrol to plain clothes work. On the first occasion I worked in plain clothes after a period at university I walked along one of Hilton's major routes, a road busy with shoppers. It was immediately obvious to me that I was having to avoid pedestrians by altering my own route, rather than the expectation that pedestrians would alter their route to avoid me. I noted in my diary, 'You tend to expect cars to stop for you when crossing the road. One expects pedestrians to get out of the way'⁶⁰. The space around the policeman is usually free from violation. Body territory, capable of extension by the use of police equipment, is an area of relative freedom and control, reinforced as such as the patrolling officer moves through others' space.

In our analysis of the meanings of space we have moved to the manipulatory area surrounding and including the body. Here we note

that the police expect freedom from violation, a feature research has shown to be a common characteristic of membership of Western societies. However, the symbolic status of the policeman as guardian of the state renders his body sacred. As sacred, the violation of body territory evokes more than flight or verbal recrimination; the use of physical force is a frequent police response to reconstitute the sanctity of that space.

Summary and discussion

In this chapter we have described the spatial environment of Hilton sub-division as it was perceived by its police. Basing the analysis on Schutz's general comments on space and Rock's associated but more specific argument that it is necessary to document the contoured diversification of perceptual systems, data have been presented to demonstrate the structuring and function of spatial meanings. Throughout, it has been impossible to separate the meaning of space from the occupational relevancies of those who occupy and use that space. Space was not perceived in itself but in relation to its occupancy by various types of people. For example, the Law Centre would have been of less relevance if its staff had been solely concerned with civil law. Their handling of criminal cases brought them into potentially conflictful relationship with the police, creating the designation of the staff as potential 'trouble' and the Centre as a 'site of trouble'. It was this particular function of the Law Centre which contoured its boundaries with a particular meaning. The numerous offices of solicitors who were not concerned with criminal work or civil liberties were perceived as neutral and unspecified areas of space.

We have also noted some variation in the meaning of spatial sites in relation to the occupational relevancies of officers who hold particular rank. The Law Centre remains a fitting example, being highly important to supervisory staff with a responsibility for the investigation of complaints against the police, but of less relevance to Constables. Public houses were of minimal routine concern to senior officers but 'sites of trouble' to lower, patrolling ranks. The contours of the spatial map related to rank and its particular

relevances. Specialism was a further important relevancy. The spatial map of the Sergeant who dealt with illegal immigration enquiries differed from those working on 'vice'. Constables with a particular interest in stolen vehicles structured their space in a different fashion from those with an interest in traffic offences.

However, and of more importance was the contouring of the primary or core reality of chaos and control within which other, more particular sites were designated. The pervasive meanings of chaos associated with the need for police control formed the fundamental assumptive framework of all perceptual structuring of space within and, indeed, beyond the subdivision. The notion of control rendered the imprecise and confused mandate of policing a more rational and identifiable occupation, both in terms of the objective requirements of the job and its subjective aspects of occupational identity. The notion of chaos which begs police control formed the basic structure of the 'life-world' and, as such, was incapable of falsification. All situations were interpreted in terms of such basic meaning - we recall that even periods of inactivity were consistent with a world on the brink of chaos. To accept this description of the world is to accept the 'commonsense' of policing and therefore what was taken for granted by Hilton's police. The stability of the occupation and its practice depended upon it.

Within this primary reality we have noted more specific spatial sites around which meanings were clustered - for example, sites of trouble, danger and work. It should be pointed out that while the meaning of such sites appeared to be denotative, in fact a particular designation drew various meanings together, each associated with emotional and cognitive elements of policing. This connotative aspect of meaning rendered the discrete experiences of policing into a stream of consciousness which, when reflected upon, related differing and discrete emphases into a coherent whole. Our research has identified the immediate denotative reference of particular sites; such identification in the mind of the police officer does not negate a secondary, contextual designation of another category - the hospital could become dangerous, the 'Black House' could be dangerous and also mean 'work' .

The meanings of particular sites were related to the problems of policing identified by lower ranks. Of course, any building, any area could have been attributed with the meanings of danger or trouble; such designation would be contextual and brief. The sites identified in this chapter were of a permanent character, sometimes clustering other meanings around them but always retaining their basic designation. The imagery of 'mapping' is perhaps instructive here because, as the contours of the earth's surface are in flux and flow around their basic stratified form, so these spatial sites moved from back to foreground, were moulded with other meanings, yet always retained their basic semantic structure.

It has been argued that research of spatial meanings has neglected the creation of space by members of groups. The police on the research division created home territories to secure privacy and a freedom of action - motor cars and vans were frequently employed for this purpose. Considerable knowledge was required to know how and when to create space, involving the use of a very different type of recipe knowledge than that associated with the principal meanings of chaos and control. Indeed, as we have moved away from the primary reality of chaos and control, we have seen how knowledge became increasingly detailed, adaptable and recipe-like.

Throughout our discussion, a close relationship has been maintained between spatial meaning and the sustaining of the occupational culture of policing. The central axes of meaning can be related to the central problems of seeking rationality and identity within an occupation lacking a clear mandate of theory or practice. Spatial perception is one part of the process of the construction of a stable and unified conception of policing.

This chapter has begun to extrapolate some of the features of the occupational culture, importantly, how it pervades the most basic structuring of spatial maps. We note how the creation of space was related to the features of secrecy and interdependency, 'mump holes' were associated with the definition of non-crime work as work of minor importance. Sites of danger and trouble were described in relation to

the action orientation and hedonism of policing. When placed against the changes which professional and Unit Beat Policing were expected to create, we see at this early stage of analysis how much of what Cain found over a decade ago remains highly relevant today.

We have extended the scope of research on the occupational culture to spatial meanings. Importantly, we have begun to bring British work up to date and have been able to offer a theoretical framework within which data on the meanings and structuring of space can be ordered. It has been possible to make a link between the work of Westley and Skolnick, who argue that spatial meanings are pervaded by a sense of danger and hostility, and the highly contextual work of Jonathan Rubinstein. Ethnographic data has been used to structure spatial meanings in terms of their place within the 'life-world' of policing as well as the multi-dimensional contouring of that world.

However, our data does not permit us to suggest that identical spatial meanings are found in Britain and America - the notion of Anglo-American policing is still less than satisfactory. The fundamental distinction to be made is that of the apparent over-riding importance of danger to American police, which is to be contrasted with the predominance of chaos and control in Britain. This might, as Skolnick suggests, result in the use of less physical force in Britain - but such a suggestion is open to empirical study because it implies that the use of such force is simply related to perceptions of danger. In a later section we will see how this can be questioned.

Here, we have analysed the spatial map researched by observation of Hilton's police. We can now proceed to analyse another basic organising feature of the 'lifeworld' cited by Alfred Schutz, the structure and meaning of time.

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CHAPTER 4

THE STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF TIME

This chapter is concerned with a description and analysis of how Hilton's police structured the meaning of time. Clarity requires a separation of this discussion from that of space, even though such a separation is somewhat inappropriate. The spatial and temporal meanings of the 'life-world' are closely interwoven; my spatial location begs consideration of when I am, where I am.

In spite of its fundamental importance, students of the police have not concerned themselves with the analysis of time. Most of the empirical literature mentions the shift-work timetable of a particular force or department and some of the features of police work which might dominate a relevant period, but goes no further¹. For example, in his ethnography, Rubinstein argues that each day of the week and shift invokes particular background meanings. He writes,

'The policeman's expectations of particular tours and times often fail to materialize, but the belief in the generalizations which are used to characterize them is not shaken'².

The initial requirement is that of a study to document the manner in which police structure time in the course of their work, as well as the meanings contained within such a structure. Although powerfully constrained by time, we note that a variety of meanings are given to the eight hours of a working shift and the following sixteen hours off duty. We also note the pervasive character of the occupational culture which moulds particular meanings; previous research on the occupational culture of policing may be relevant at this point.

Time is a continuous process - 'a stream of consciousness' as Bergson puts it³. We are aware of an incessant movement of interspersed events drawn together in a tenuous unity. Time cannot stop, it forms an unrelenting flow of consciousness, requiring the interpretation of discrete moments of experience which have passed or are passing through consciousness. We cannot retain the past or the future, only the

present which is falling away into the past. Reflection on retained and reproduced experience is therefore a fundamental feature of the structuring of time. Our knowledge of events - what Schutz has termed our 'stock-of-knowledge-at-hand' - enables us to select, typify and, importantly, anticipate how events are related to each other, how the meaning of a particular moment is determined, and so on. Knowledge binds the stream of consciousness together, providing form and content, structure and meaning.

Two basic features of temporal experience follow. First, time is a highly subjective category. That is to say, time is apprehended within consciousness and meaning is attributed to it in a moment of reflection. Thus, the meanings which can be attributed to any one period of time are various, possibly bearing little relation to the apparently objective base of formal clock time. What some experience as hours may, to others, be minutes. The formal timetable of a work organisation can be speeded up or slowed down, particular periods can be designated as work or non-work time. Different ranks can attribute different meanings to the same period of formal clock time. Such a diversity is to be documented.

The second basic point is that meanings of time are related to relevant knowledge. The occupational culture of policing, rich in detailed knowledge, provides a basis for temporal meanings. We have already noted that lower ranks, not least Sergeants and Constables, have considerable freedom to redefine the formal requirements of policy. This is no less the case in relation to the structuring of the time than it is to any other feature of policing.

We are therefore concerned with an ethnography of police time, documenting sequence and duration, the importance of particular times, how time is created and sustained and how the formal organisational timetable relates to that of lower ranks.

The formal timetable.

The formal timetable of the force of which Hilton was a part provided

a framework within which meanings were constructed. Three working shifts each of eight hours' duration ensured a continuous, twenty-four hour service. These were 'early turn', 6 a.m.-2 p.m., 'late turn' from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., and 'nights' from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Car crews began work one hour later than their foot patrol colleagues but all officers were expected to be at work - 'on parade' - a quarter of an hour before the beginning of each shift. During this time they attended a parade where they were nominally inspected, posted to a particular patrol, allocated a time for their refreshment break and briefed with relevant information. This extra quarter of an hour duty ensured that the sub-division was policed between each shift.

At Hilton, the shift system was worked in a four week cycle. A week of night duty was followed by late turn, Tuesday being the day off. An early turn week followed, with Thursday leave. The third week of the cycle, called 'Spare Week', involved day duty, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. or 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday, a late turn on Tuesday and early turn on Thursday. This permitted a long weekend break from 2 p.m. Thursday, until work resumed at 10 p.m. on the following Monday.

This, then, was the formal timetable with its focus on the continuous policing of the subdivision. Here it bore resemblance to many other organisations operating a system of continuous service or production, save that the definition of the product of police work was less than clear⁴⁴. However, a number of meanings of time were associated with this timetable. For example, all officers were expected to wear a watch and, on occasion, members of the public would ask for an indication of the time. The wearing of a watch and being employed as a public servant stresses the necessity of awareness of time in effective police work.

The force published a recruitment pamphlet, current during the period of research, the front page of which contained a photograph of a police car travelling at high speed. The text explained,

'Sometimes the action has all the drama of a high-speed chase. Sometimes it is the exacting task of investigating

a difficult case until it is solved. Whatever it is - a family quarrel, a major crime - the policeman must be ready to take immediate action. The officer on the beat isn't just a man in uniform. He's an expert, trained to accept responsibility ... to observe and analyse. He makes his own decisions on the spot - interprets his powers of arrest - and acts on them'

These references to 'take immediate action', 'observe and analyse' and 'to interpret powers of arrest' emphasise the importance of the police officer being vividly aware of his environment during his work.

Time is now.

An awareness of the present is closely related to the sense of emergency which informs much police work. Calls for assistance from members of the public are assumed to be requests for a prompt and, at times, urgent response. It will be remembered that the photograph on the front of the recruitment pamphlet showed a police car travelling at high speed, presumably to the scene of an emergency. The relationship between response time and citizen satisfaction, much debated in American research, is highly ambiguous⁵. However, a stress on the police as an emergency service orients policemen towards an awareness of the present and the need for a speedy assessment of the situation confronting them. An economical use of time is thought to be a crucial factor in efficiency and effectiveness.

The accuracy of recording events and their retention in memory is important for another reason: time is of evidential value. All messages for police service, all written reports, all arrests and summonses are marked by the time of their occurrence. The precise time at which an incident occurs and the time of police arrival at it may be of vital importance when evidence of guilt is evaluated at a later date. Again, time is a feature the police have to be constantly aware of. Present time may be evaluated at a later date.

Finally, time is important to the police because the office of Constable is held continuously. Although placed 'on' and 'off' duty at various times, every officer retains his powers of arrest and has to be constantly ready to exercise them. A policeman is never off duty, work and leisure are easily fused and this tends to

distinguish him from the members of other occupations. The shift system adds to the sense of occupational identity. Policemen are available after 'normal office hours' when others can forget their legal responsibilities. This point was emphasised by an officer who was returning some lost property to its owner.

'I'm sorry but your property is in the admin and they go home at 5 o'clock and they have the keys ... (This officer goes to see if he can find a duplicate. Another officer continues): 'You see, we have civilians now who do this work for us. So we don't have the property at hand in the station office'. Enquirer: 'What do you mean, 'civvies'?' Officer: 'Well, civilians in the administration unit. Once upon a time, about four years ago, policemen used to tap out on the typewriter and do office work but that's been taken over by administration civilians - civil servants - so that the policeman can go and fight crime on the streets. The problem is they all go home at 5 o'clock and lock everything up, so we can't get to anything and that's where the system falls down'⁶.

These features of time were constant. Policemen were expected to assent to the shift system, to be highly aware of the present, to document their actions with accuracy and so on. However, lower ranks did not accept the formal timetable without question; rather, they exploited it for their own purposes. Nevertheless, the rigidity and disciplined control implicit within the shift system represent a common feature of work within industrial society. Despite the stress on 'managerialism' rather than militaristic command we have documented as a feature of professional policing, assent and compliance by lower ranks to the formal timetable indicated their consent to the ranked power structure of the organisation⁷. The formal timetable represented 'management time', against which the performance and loyalty of lower ranks could be assessed.

Lateness for duty at Hilton was not regarded as a problem of lost production or wages but of disrespect for the hierarchy of command. Some allowance was made for lateness on early turn, at other times it proved to be a matter of concern to supervisory officers.

A particular constable was late for two days of night duty and a Sergeant commented that he would 'sign his book if it happened again'. A constable reinforced the suggestion, 'If you are late for two days running on early turn you

expect a bollocking from the skipper; he's (the P.C.) been late for two days and if he got away with it then anybody could'⁸.

Acceptance of the shift system meant acceptance of managerial authority.

Although constables used the eight hours of each shift in a highly discretionary manner, supervisory officers understood an abuse of time to be a lack of commitment to their authority. For example, constables were posted to traffic patrol during 'spare week' and two officers were suspected of drinking while posted to this duty. The Inspector commented that they were abusing the freedom given to them and, by implication, his authority.

'I'll speak to him about it next week. But we'll have to watch him. It's just that you can't trust them. They're so immature. They're so immature. They're like children. You try and give them some free rein but you just can't trust them, can you ?'⁹

The close association of time and authority meant that supervisory staff could use time to control their subordinates - to encourage and reward no less than to discipline. Reward could be made by giving time to an officer, stating that he had worked for a longer period of overtime than was actually the case. Refusal of overtime provided a means of disciplining a difficult officer. An officer who was thought to be troublesome arrested a person for 'criminal damage' and he suggested to the station officer that further enquiries should be made before the case went to court. The arrest was made on night duty and he said that this meant it was only possible to complete enquiries in the morning, (Tuesday), meaning the accused should be bailed to appear at court on Wednesday.

The Inspector overheard these comments; 'I suppose that you are on weekly leave on Wednesday ?' P.C.: 'As a matter of fact, I am'. Inspector: 'No, he can go to court on Tuesday, and you can do the enquiry tomorrow'. The Inspector was aware that the constable was able to claim double overtime, plus a further day off if the court case was heard on Wednesday. The Inspector commented later, 'You have got to watch —— (names officer); he will try that sort of trick very often. He won't put himself out unless there is something in it for him'¹⁰.

This was so, despite the fact that other officers who were not thought to be troublesome tried the very same 'trick' without comment from

supervisory staff. Time was one means of managerial control, used to assert authority and power.

This point was reinforced when a new Inspector joined the relief. She told the constables that if they were to attend court after a tour of night duty they could go home at about 4 a.m. and still claim the maximum amount of overtime due, as if they had worked a whole shift. A Sergeant commented that the discipline of the relief was threatened. 'Were does it stop ? I mean, once you start it you don't know where it will stop, do you ?'¹¹ The control of time by supervisory staff meant control over the workforce of constables and although considerable freedom was given to the lower ranks to work as they pleased, an alteration in the formal timetable risked a breakdown of disciplinary control.

The formal timetable was therefore 'management time', all ranks having to imply their assent to it. However, some of its features were manipulated by lower ranks in order to render their work more purposeful and predictable¹².

Work and non-work time

As I began to document the meaning of time it became clear that this fundamental means of organising our experience of the world could not be analysed in the same manner as spatial perception. However, it was obvious that some of the more basic features of 'formal time' - the organisational framework we have outlined - were exploited by Hilton's police in order to structure, maximise, create and economise their own definition of time. These features will be dealt with in terms of their relevance to the intrinsic and extrinsic features of police work.

One central meaning formed the definition of 'work time' - it was time as 'action'. Exploiting the necessity of vivid awareness of the present and the occasional, emergency character of policing, action formed the fundamental meaning of work. Real work was time spent on crime, the sensation of speed provided by fast driving,

the fight and scuffle, ideally before making an arrest. When these features were present, time passed quickly, work was being done, policemanship was being accomplished. Although it might seem that such a meaning is natural and obvious, this is not the case. The meaning is entirely selective and, as we shall see later, constructed and sustained by a variety of means.

One of the important findings from studies of the police is that, despite the emphasis on 'action', the actual circumstances of police work are slow and bereft of activity. Cain describes the early and late turn shifts as involving officers in about 1.75 work tasks per shift. Night duty consisted of two or so hours of activity, followed by virtual inactivity¹³. Although it was not possible to carry out a similar analysis at Hilton, it was clear that constables were not engaged in highly exciting, action-oriented events during every working day. The mobile patrols certainly had more opportunity to involve themselves in action than their foot patrolling colleagues, but their work was certainly not a continuous series of calls requiring urgent activity. As one officer put it, 'Yes, it's odd, this place is. You can go weeks really quiet, nothing happening at all, then all of a sudden, whoosh, it all happens, all hell lets loose'¹⁴. Policing is slow, spasmodic, largely concerned with mundane incidents. Yet for lower ranks, fast time - action - formed the basic meaning of work time.

In fact, a police officer who merely stands on a corner, drives his vehicle along a road or patrols on foot with no particular destination in mind is engaged in the task of policing - he is working. As far as Hilton's police were concerned, such work was not time well spent, it was not work time. The driver of a Panda patrol radioed Hilton, asking if there was any work to be done. The radio operator told him that nothing needed attention and he received the reply, 'Oh thanks, I'm bored. There's nothing to do'. A Sergeant on duty as Station Officer heard this remark and went to his transmitter to inform the officer, 'Well, do some police work then'¹⁵. Time spent looking for, and time without action was not real police work; without action time dragged, it was boring.

In part, the expectancy of work as a time of action was dependent upon other people being on the street. Like the black ghetto dwellers observed by John Horton, for the police,

'Time is alive when and where there is action. It picks up in the evening when everyone moves on the street ... On the street, time has a personal meaning only when something is most likely to happen at night, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. Then people are together, and there may be bread to take and bread to use'¹⁶.

This meaning of 'street time' is pertinent to policing, for officers are similarly dependent on people getting onto the streets, for then 'there is action to take and action to use'.

Expectations of action on night duty were high, not least after public houses closed. Late turn offered a variety of work and some hope of action. The early turn shift was very different for, although large numbers of people populated the streets, expectations of action were low. Early turn was mundane, tedious, perhaps an opportunity to catch up on administrative tasks built up during the other shifts. Action was therefore the central meaning around which the formal work timetable was re-organised; police felt they were working when involved in the hedonistic, action oriented events which made time go quickly.

Although this was the dominant meaning, we have noted that the actual characteristics of police work indicate that it is spasmodic and unspectacular - anything but action oriented. Tension between this dominant definition and the actual conditions of policing were resolved in a number of ways, including the management of time.

Easing

We have discussed one aspect of easing in a previous chapter on spatial perception. Easing was also of importance to the management of time, for it neutralised slow time which would not be restructured into a faster sequence. Easing filled gaps between work, giving meaning to the quiet and unexciting periods between discrete tasks.

Cars and radio communications offered Constables work conditions which kept them warm. During the first hours of early turn, the evening of

a late turn shift and throughout night duty, the drivers of Panda and other patrolling vehicles would give their colleagues a lift, relieving the tedium of boring actionless work. Such activity was rarely the subject of comment by a supervisory officer.

Similarly, it was recognised that some periods of the day were devoid of action and supervisory officers permitted 'easing' in the station. Although it was not possible for constables to remain there for unlimited periods of time, a cup of tea was usually taken in the station from about 6.00 a.m. to 6.30 a.m. and a lengthy break was scheduled for about 4.00 a.m. On Sunday the P.C.s were permitted to remain in the station for long periods and allowed to wash their private cars in the station yard. A P.C. on our shift was permitted to bring breakfast foods to the station when we worked early turn on a Sunday. His job was to cook a large breakfast for the whole relief, a task which occupied him and one or two colleagues for the whole of the shift. Such time was understood as non-work because few people were on the streets.

Certain times of the year were similarly designated as times of official easing. Christmas is a fitting example because it marked a time when officers went to work but their period at the station was not considered to be work time. At Hilton, officers remained in the station throughout the eight hours of a shift on Christmas day, some were allowed to go home early. This situation was accepted by the supervisory staff because it gave them control over the constables, who were prevented from sneaking into a public house for a drink, going home unofficially, and so on. Little work was expected at Christmas. As one officer put it, 'It's nearly Christmas so nobody is interested really; nobody wants to do any work so it's a bit of a waste of time'¹⁷.

Easing was therefore non-work which awaited action to provide a sense of real police work. 'Spare Week' was especially difficult in this respect because it required officers to work without a clearly formulated brief between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on two days of the week. One of the Constables defined it as 'B.O.F.O. Week' (Book On, Fuck Off Week), indicating it to be time which did not involve the action of

real police work. A Sergeant became concerned about the situation and established a car squad to deploy the officers. During the two days they patrolled in a police vehicle and removed cars found in obstructive positions. Such activity heightened the officers' consciousness of time, providing the fundamental meaning of action.

The Sergeant in charge of the squad came into the station and mentioned to a colleague, 'Oh, it's lovely out there, it's lovely out there. They're all running to their cars and driving them off. It's lovely'. He was followed by a Constable, 'I see how Traffic Division get a thrill out of this, it's great, isn't it? It's great fun having them removed. We must have got the Chief £35 today; £7 a time, it's great.'¹⁸

The non-work definition of spare week had been changed to that of work because the meaning of time had been changed to one of 'action', stimulating a sense of hedonism.

Of course, Spare Week and any other time which appeared to be quiet could have been used in an entirely different manner. For example, the stress on building consensus in police-public relations, central to 'professional policing', could have led officers to a variety of work with people who frequented the sub-division. Easing was non-work, usually spent in motor vehicles which offered the opportunity of action. Easing could have been exploited to build up contacts with the public - it was not. It was 'time out', non-work which, as we have noted, could be changed to work by the creation of action.

Maximising time

Although action and a heightening of a consciousness of time was partly dependent upon people being on the streets, officers at Hilton also structured time in order to maximise a sense of speed, action and excitement. The slow and boring aspects of routine policework were speeded up into a fast, action-oriented sequence of events by using the technology of Unit Beat Policing, particularly cars and radios.

During tea breaks, conversations about cars provided a constant

source of interest; stories of police cars chasing other vehicles were commonplace. During patrol no opportunity was lost to speed time up by fast driving, thereby sustaining the central meaning of action.

The Dog Handler who worked with our shift patrolled in his purpose-built van. He was called to search an insecure premises and arrived after a short period of time, stopping with a squeal of breaks. As he got out of his vehicle he said to one of the P.C.'s present, 'That made them get out of the way at German House (a roundabout several miles away). We were over there you know when we got your call. Not bad, eh?' He wore a wry smile on his face.¹⁹

German House was too distant to be covered in the time and the officer's banter reflects the value and enjoyment of a fast drive.

The enjoyment of a fast drive, like that just described, restructured time.

After a fast and at times dangerous drive to an emergency call, the location of which was so far from us that it did not warrant our attention, I asked my colleague who was driving, 'The only reason you drove like that was because you wanted a fast drive?'. He replies, 'Yes, well, it's a bit of fun, isn't it? It all makes for a bit of excitement and gets rid of headaches. It's all very exciting. And a fight is a good call, isn't it?'²⁰

Such restructuring maximised the speeding-up of time to create a sense of action and excitement.

When coupled to personal radio communication, the use of vehicles offered considerable opportunity to maximise excitement. If a radio message from the station sounded exciting, a fight for example, it could be passed to all officers who had a receiver in their vehicles. The tendency was to broadcast all calls which sounded exciting or to call for assistance at the slightest hint of trouble. This use of the radio maximised speed and hedonism. It also emphasised and heightened a sense of interdependency amongst colleagues - the very feature of the work group which Cain documented. For example,

following an incident during which a P.C. hit a coloured youth with his truncheon, a telephonist who had worked at Hilton for a considerable number of years commented to me, 'Since the old personal radio came in, I think that instead of talking their way out of trouble like the old coppers did and getting by that way, they just

pull their truncheons out and shout for assistance on the P.R. They don't talk their way out of it at all. They just ask for assistance and get their truncheons out²¹.

This structuring of time enhanced a sense of excitement and action and increased the protective interdependency of the work group. Any opportunity to speed time up, to maximise excitement and action, was exploited. At Hilton, the technology of routine policing had been redefined to facilitate such maximisation.

Creating time - speed

Some periods of the day - the hours between 3 and 6 a.m. for example - were so quiet that it was not easy to maximise time. During such times officers frequently created speed, again by the use of motor vehicles.

I was patrolling with a colleague at about 3 a.m. when we saw the area car, driven by a member of our shift. The Sergeant positioned his car behind and then in front of the other vehicle, encouraging a chase. The following twenty minutes were spent racing round the streets, the car at the head of the chase signalling left to turn right, driving on the wrong side of the road and so on²².

The use of vehicles in this manner created a sense of speed, action and excitement; consciousness of time was heightened.

Another means of creating time as speed and action was by story-telling. Studies of the police have mentioned the story-telling, joking and banter which are typical of life at a police station. At Hilton, it was noticeable that stories were told at quiet times and that these stories often related to car chases or other incidents containing an element of action and excitement. Drama, elaboration and embellishment were used to change narrative from mundane description to a series of significant moments which might confront the police officer at any time. Quiet and boring aspects of policing - non-work - were forgotten as a plethora of tales were recounted to the assembled relief.

A favourite time for stories was the 4 a.m. tea break, when the

whole relief was gathered in the station office.

On one occasion three stories of chases were told in succession. The first concerned a driver who sped away from a police vehicle, a long chase ensued until the offending vehicle crashed. When questioned, the driver said that the only reason he was trying to get away was that he thought he would be booked for speeding. This was followed by another officer who related a chase during which the bandit car attempted to get between a lamp post and the building line. A flash of sparks went up and the car carried on. He then continued with a further tale of a P.C. who used to be on his shift. He was sitting in his car when he heard a radio call involving a chase in another part of the city, some considerable distance from his current location. 'In ten minutes he was the second car in the chase, which was on '3' Division. Nobody can overtake Pete. The only time someone overtakes him is when he prangs it.'²³

Such stories could be multiplied; why were they so popular and why were they told during quiet periods of time? It is suggested that when the action orientation of policing cannot be realised, when time is slow, stories like those mentioned serve to remind officers of what they believe policing is really like. Time is re-structured by bringing the past into the vivid present, enabling the reflective linking of discrete events to negate the dull and boring aspects of work, replacing them with the action and hedonism of real police work. Time is created.

Although it is not possible to know the accuracy of accounts presented to the relief, there is some evidence to suggest that considerable elaboration was taking place.

The Inspector in charge of the relief and a Constable were involved in the arrest of a youth who had stolen a motor car. The Inspector said that 'We got behind him and I thought we'd let him have a go. Sure enough, away he went. So we had a chase.' The Constable gave his account later, 'I told him (Inspector) to stay behind him because he wanted to stop him and I said he might have a go, and he did. We got alongside and away he went. We chased him all the way down Low Corner and round until he stopped'.

Three months later these officers referred to the chase again, throwing doubt on their initial account. The Inspector repeated the story to the whole relief - once more during the early hours of the morning when the relief were gathered to drink tea - and after he had completed

it he added, 'It must have been the only chase where we slowed down to avoid overtaking him'²⁴.

The inference from these data is that the chase was invoked, constructed by the officers who, virtually encouraging the car to appear to be speeding away, manoeuvred their vehicle to avoid overtaking. When the story was told, all the elements of action, speed and excitement were emphasised. Officers listened, as they did to similar stories, and details were not questioned. However, we can fairly deduce that the embellishment and elaboration of the central themes of the story functioned to sustain the action orientation, the speeding up of time and the excitement of real police work. Elaboration did not matter, accuracy was not the central feature of the story. The fundamental point was the capacity of the teller to heighten experience of the present by recalling the past. The quiet, non-work aspects of policing were infused with meaning as time was speeded up and the primary meaning of 'action' invoked.

Interestingly, the structuring and meaning of time was related to the 'stock-of-knowledge' contained within the occupational culture. Easing, the interdependency of the work group and action have been noted as fundamental features of the occupational culture. At Hilton, lower ranks retained freedom to re-structure and create meanings of time, which were closely related to the traditions of the occupational culture.

Slowing time down

Time could be slowed as well as speeded up. A Constable who wished to avoid reporting a trivial incident would try to ensure that it had ended or another officer arrived at the scene before he had to deal with it. The following request was broadcast over the personal radio system:

'John, could you go to outside the hospital where you'll meet Mr — who, according to the message we have got, says he has an accident report to make. Could you go along there? It's probably non-reportable anyway.' 'Yes, okay, any transport,' 'If you walk he'll probably have gone by the time you get there.' 'True.'²⁵

Incidents might be accepted by P.C.s at times when they could be used to advantage. A Constable who found himself posted to an unsuitable refreshment break would take a call involving work which spoiled his meal break, meaning that he had to take a later and preferred hour.

Time was slowed down in a more fundamental manner to control difficult suspects, especially when they were being questioned. Police have legal power to enforce their own definition of time on others; an arrest means that a suspect's time is totally controlled by the police. In the incident during which the car removal squad speeded their work up we noted the relationship between control and time. The hedonism of police work is closely related to the experience of control over territory and time.

Two men were arrested for the offence of criminal damage and further evidence was required to secure their guilt. The officers who questioned them told them, 'I tell you that you are going to stay here until you tell us who it was with you and broke the window with you'²⁶.

Similarly, another P.C. informed his station officer, 'I'll tell him that he's going to be kept here until he tells us the truth.' Sergeant: 'Well, he's going to be kept here anyway.' P.C.: 'I know, but I'll tell him anyway.'²⁷

Such techniques were also observed outside the confines of the station. The threat of the police returning to a house at any time, unannounced and with the power to constrain those within the premises, strengthened the ability to control. The following is an account of an incident when two Negro men and their female friends were being questioned in a house where it was believed a person wanted on warrant was staying.

One of the men was asked, 'Come on, what's your date of birth? If you are not wanted, then you've got nothing to worry about. You give your date of birth.' The man said nothing and after what must have been several minutes the officer said, 'Well, I can stand here all day waiting for your name and address. I want your date of birth first of all. What is it?' The man gave the information and a check was made over the personal radio. He was not the wanted man and without comment the officers left the room

for the stairs. One of the girls shouted, 'Well, don't come back, will you. He's not here.' P.C.: 'Yes, thanks very much. Yes, we'll come and see you again next week if you like.' We left the premises and the door was slammed behind us.²⁸

The capacity of control of space and time, to slow time down to the pace of the officer rather than the suspect was a powerful technique used by officers to assert their authority and power.

These examples demonstrate the manner in which lower ranks sustain their autonomy over the conditions of policing. They slow and control time to enhance their legal powers in what they understand to be difficult situations.

Creating time - an economy of arrest

So far, our analysis has been primarily concerned with intrinsic aspects of police work. Most occupations are organised around intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and in this next section we consider the structuring of time to provide monetary reward for officers. Overtime could be created by making arrests at the right time; there was a certain satisfaction in making an arrest, it was good to 'feel a collar'. It was also preferable to earn some extra money from an arrest.

The end product of policing is notoriously difficult to define, a feature which separates it from those studies of the use of time in piece and hourly paid work²⁹. The formal timetable provided officers with an indication of when they should be at work and how they should retain an awareness of time. It did not actually define the nature of work time for them; it did not tell them what they should do when at work. However, and despite the emphasis on 'peacekeeping' and 'service' aspects of policing in the professional model, most senior officers, relief Inspectors and Sergeants agreed that 'arresting' was time well spent. This is not to say that they found all other activity pointless; time spent arresting people was another aspect of the formal timetable exploited by the lower ranks who knew that whatever else they might do, they would not be criticised by senior

officers for spending time on such an activity.

I arrived at Hilton for my first tour of duty, a night shift. A colleague met me in the station office, introduced himself and took me to the Charge Book where all records of persons arrested and charged are kept. He said, 'This is quite a good relief really. You can see they do quite well - we have had lots of crime arrests this night duty'³⁰. I was station officer on another tour of night duty and suddenly bombarded with a series of drunks I had to charge. Later, the Inspector said, 'Sorry about that but I gave them a bit of a roasting on parade about not doing any work'³¹. On one of the few occasions the Chief Superintendent wrote in the parade book he told his subordinates that our station,

'has taken over half the total of crime arrests on the whole of the Division during the past week. This is only done through hard work and the staff are to be congratulated for their efforts'³².

These comments from supervisory officers indicate the assumptions they made about time well spent. Constables knew that the making of arrests served as a primary indicator of their competence and busyness. They exploited such assumptions to increase their wages.

The incurring of overtime meant that it was possible to take time off at a later date or ask for that time to be paid at a lucrative level of remuneration. During the period of fieldwork the national economy was running at about 25% inflation and this added to the incentive to create overtime. If an officer made an arrest and went to court on a rest day, overtime was calculated at a higher rate than if he attended court on any other day. In addition, the officer was granted an extra day off duty in lieu of that lost through court attendance but, in fact, only partly worked.

Late turn duty, which followed night duty, meant officers took Tuesday as their leave day, an unattractive day when sleep had to be adjusted. A day off at the weekend permitted an officer to be with his family. Officers tried their hardest to make an arrest on the Monday following night duty in order to go to court on the Tuesday,

thereby cancelling their leave for another, more preferred date. After completion of a late turn on Monday, I made the following entry in my fieldwork diary:

'The object of many P.C.s today is to get an arrest so that they can cancel their weekly leave - Tuesday, tomorrow. Sergeant — has already had his cancelled by Sergeant —, who has bailed a man arrested on Saturday, to appear at court on Tuesday. This is contrary to force regulations. P.C. — is at Coroner's Court and — has had his leave cancelled. A call came over the radio which sounded as if a suspect was illegally on premises. The R/T car acknowledges and — (who has already cancelled his leave) says to the crew of the car, 'Don't you go. You've already had your leave cancelled' - intimating that someone else should benefit from the arrest'.³³

At 9.35 p.m. on that same day a Sergeant and P.C. arrested two men for gross indecency. Although it was not possible to infer that this arrest was made to ensure the cancellation of weekly leave, a few days later I questioned the Constable about the matter.

I asked:

'I don't know how you could stoop so low (sic) to arrest for gross on Monday. It wouldn't be because it was your weekly leave the following day, would it?' P.C.: 'No, that's nothing to do with it Sarge. It's an offence against the Crown and there's a power of arrest for it and I simply arrested.' S.H.: 'I know Sergeant — (the other officer involved in the arrest). Who was the victim of the crime?' P.C.: 'What?' S.H.: 'Who was offended by the crime? There is no victim.' P.C.: 'Well, I was. I was offended and it is an offence.' He smiles (sic again!) I say, 'I know Sergeant — better than that.' P.C.: 'Yes, all right then.' S.H.: 'Did they plead guilty?' 'No, remanded to an A.R.D.'³⁴

This meant that overtime would be calculated at $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the usual remuneration.

Two points can be made from these data. First, time was structured to maximise and create overtime hours. If an officer had a warrant for the arrest of a suspect he would try to execute it before his day off. In the following example the officer arranged for his colleagues to execute it, permitting them to gain overtime because they made the arrest and also for him to attend court to give

evidence of the original offence. The suspect was not at home on the first visit to his house, and the officer explained:

'I went up there tonight and had a look in his room. He's definitely not there.' 'Jim — will be disappointed. He wanted his weekly leave tomorrow cancelled.'³⁵

The second point is that particular offences, likely to take place at predictable times and places, provided the opportunity to make a good deal of overtime — they were 'good earners'. The local first division football ground was one such place, public toilets where homosexual acts took place throughout the day was another. At the football ground a special squad of officers was employed to patrol the terraces, looking out for 'hooligans'. This provided a ready source of income for the officers so employed. Juveniles were merely cautioned and removed from the ground, adults were charged and taken to court, providing overtime for the arresting officer. The age of an offender mattered to an arresting officer:

'I'm at court on Tuesday. I got hold of old — and was chucking him out when I said, "How old are you?" He said, "Seventeen". So I said, "Right, you're nicked". I have been waiting for him to come seventeen for a long time. He's at court on Monday for T.D.A. so I have to go to court on Tuesday.' This meant that extra overtime was incurred.

On another occasion I overheard the following conversation at the local Magistrates' Court. The officer had been employed at the football ground:

'I hear that they're going to remand this lot. Ching ! (Makes noise of cash till). The old money comes rolling in, doesn't it? I'm rest day today; I'm doing football tonight so that means fourteen hours. Great !' Another P.C. commented, 'All you think of is money. You're like the rest of us, you just think of the money. I'm getting a fair bit of overtime out of this as well.'³⁷

A Sergeant on my relief had the special duty of 'alien enquiries' allotted to him. This required him to investigate and arrest persons suspected of breaking their conditions of stay in this country — work that provided a ready source of overtime. I questioned him about his use of arrests to maximise overtime and his reply provided evidence of the manner in which time is created and some justification

for doing so:

'I'm going to nick a couple of aliens on Monday' (Tuesday being his day off). S.H.: 'So you're not going to complain about the unions asking for more wage rises; that's inflationary?' He replied, 'No, I'm being extra productive if I do that and production does not cause inflation.'³⁸

The national economy was certainly a factor in this 'economy of arrests'. After the announcement of what was considered to be an inadequate pay rise, a P.C. commented to a group of colleagues,

'Yes, I'll have to do a Smith now.' Another officer continued, 'Yes, I think that the villains had better watch out now. I've got to get rid of my overdraft and my mortgage will be finished in one more year's pay. So I think the villains had better be watching out.'³⁸

P.C. Smith was an officer whose arrest work centred around the careful calculation of overtime.

Other officers did not use arrests to create time, they would volunteer to attend an incident that required reporting and ran over into an overtime period. One put it to me that:

'I have to get all the overtime I can. The wife is pregnant now and that means £70 a month won't be coming in, so it's going to be pretty tight. I do all the 'footballs' I can, then if there is a sudden death going at about two o'clock, I try to get in on that and get a couple of hours overtime out of it. The trouble is that it makes you tired and some days you come to work feeling so tired that you are really irritable.'⁴⁰

There did not seem to be a quota restriction operating at Hilton.

One sergeant told a P.C. that:

'If the population of — (names city) knew that policemen arrested people because of the card (overtime payment card) they would be shocked, wouldn't they?'

'Yes, it's terrible really. I've made sixty hours out of this one already. Everything revolves around the card. It's like a cash register really.'⁴¹

Officers were only denied overtime when they had shown themselves to be lazy, denied managerial authority or maximised their overtime without supporting the relief in its routine work.

In this discussion of the maximisation and creation of time we note

the extrinsic rewards which are relevant to policing. The occupational knowledge which places a primary emphasis on arrests, rather than on any other aspect of policing, combined with the difficulty of evaluating the product of police work to exploit the opportunities provided to demonstrate that Hilton's police were working. The formal timetable was restructured to maximise and create overtime, which was later converted to wages.

Summary and conclusion

The structuring and meaning of time by Hilton's police has now been described and analysed. Throughout our discussion two themes which run a thread within every chapter have been prominent. The first is that the police, importantly the lower ranks, exploit the freedom they realise within the formal structure of urban policing to determine the character of policing. Policing is defined as an action oriented, highly hedonistic occupation. Its primary feature is the activity of making an arrest. These characteristics are emphasised to enhance the intrinsic satisfaction and meaningfulness of urban policing. But we should relate intrinsic features of police work to the monetary, extrinsic features resulting from the creation of overtime to increase wage payment. Officers organised their arrests to maximise and create extra time for their own benefit. At Hilton, policing was constructed through a manipulative restructuring of the formal timetable of the occupation.

The second theme is that the restructuring of the formal timetable leads to a consideration of the occupational culture. Many of the features of policing which have been outlined in this chapter are to be found in Cain's study of the occupational culture which, we remind ourselves, was completed prior to the Unit Beat System and the development of professional policing. The occupational culture remains a residual stock of knowledge which informs the practices of policing by lower ranks. Indeed, we have been presented with ample evidence to demonstrate how the features of Unit Beat Policing and, therefore, professional policing have been used to strengthen and further extend the practice of policing as it is defined by

lower ranks.

The most basic aspects of human experience - space and time - were structured by Hilton's police to secure their definition and practice of urban police work. In demonstrating this we have extended previous studies of the British police and strengthened the available evidence which assert the pervasive nature of the occupational culture.

Notes and references

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- 6 F.N. 314:5.
- 7 Thompson, E.P. (1967) 'Time, work discipline and industrial capitalism', Past & Present, 38: 56-97.
- 8 F.N. 119:3.
- 9 F.N. 288:5.
- 10 F.N. 166:7.
- 11 F.N. 611:1.
- 12 Ditton, J. (1979), op.cit., mentions this within the context of a bakery.
- 13 Cain, M. (1973), op.cit., pp.53-64.
- 14 F.N. 612:4.
- 15 F.N. 558:6.
- 16 Horton, J. (1967) 'Time and cool people', Transaction, 7: 5-12.

- 17 F.N. 401:2.
- 18 F.N. 592:2.
- 19 F.N. 432:2.
- 20 F.N. 634:1.
- 21 F.N. 615:7.
- 22 F.N. 292:8, and 304:10.
- 23 F.N. 432:4.
- 24 F.N. 231:3, and 434.
- 25 F.N. 331:6.
- 26 F.N. 494:4.
- 27 F.N. 495:5.
- 28 F.N. 577:1.
- 29 Ditton, J. (1979), *op.cit.*, and Roy, D. (1954), *op.cit.*
- 30 F.N. 213:1.
- 31 F.N. 180.
- 32 F.N. 290:3.
- 33 F.N. 312:3.
- 34 F.N. 325:6.
- 35 F.N. 303:7.
- 36 F.N. 546:2.
- 37 F.N. 552:1, and 546:2.
- 38 F.N. 228:9.
- 39 F.N. 677:2.
- 40 F.N. 128:4.
- 41 F.N. 509:1.

CHAPTER 5

THE POLICE STATION

Having documented the meaning of space and time, we now move to an analysis of the spatial structure of Hilton Police Station. Particular attention will be given to the manner in which officers adapted and managed space and time within the station, to strengthen and sustain their definition of police work.

Hilton Police Station is situated on a busy but secondary road, located in a fairly central position in relation to the whole of the police sub-division. The administrative and operational work of policing the area was based at Hilton and its architectural design reflected these functions. Before discussing the meaning and use of the space within the building, it is necessary to describe this formal design.

The station is three storeys high. The top floor comprised office accommodation, a snooker room and two canteens, one for officers above the other for those below the rank of Inspector. The first floor was entirely office accommodation for the administrative unit, C.I.D. and senior officers of the station. It should be noted that the basement area contained a parade and locker room for Constables and Sergeants. Officers 'paraded' there fifteen minutes before each shift, for briefing and posting to patrols.

The ground floor was the most important area in the station because all routine, operational work, including the questioning of suspected offenders, was carried on there. As members of the public entered the station from the main street entrance they found a small foyer, bounded by a glass partition, with a door leading to another waiting area. The internal wall of this area contained a glass cabinet, housing trophies won by members of the station for sporting achievements and other leisure activities. This wall, much of it glass, bordered the station office and it was just possible to see through it into

a part of the office. An enquirer had not reached the public enquiry desk or counter until he had passed through yet another glass door. Once at the counter, enquiry could be made of the policeman on duty in the station office who, if need be, could take the enquirer into a more private interview room leading off this area. Alternatively, a locked door could be opened to let the enquirer into the station office. A point to be made is that it was not possible to hear what is being said by police within the station office unless one was at the public counter; neither was it possible to see into the whole of the station office from any part of the public space of the station. If necessary, a member of the public could be moved from the counter area into the more secluded space of the waiting or ante-room, enabling arrangements to be made within the 'police side' of the counter before that person entered such space.

When one stood at the police side of the counter one was in the station or front office. At Hilton a newly-constructed open plan office had recently been built. The operational area had been constructed by building a wall of fitted desks and cabinets within the larger space of the old office. Police personnel working in the station office could see the public counter and side corridor of the office through windows, those to the public counter being of a 'one-way' type preventing members of the public seeing into the operational area.

The Station Officer, usually of Sergeant rank, sat at a desk in the centre of the office. He had sole command of its operations; a console of telephone and telecommunications equipment was situated in front of him. Using this equipment he was able to contact and direct any patrolling officer who carried a 'local' radio receiver, as well as having potential contact with force head-quarters radio systems and the national telephone network.

The Station Officer faced a wall bounding the police side of the 'counter'. A 'reserve' or communications officer, who dealt with all telephone and teleprinter messages to the station, sat at a desk built into the wall. The assistant station officer, whose

primary work involved dealing with enquiries at the public counter, sat alongside the reserve officer. The civilian telephonist was intended to work in a separate room but she moved into the station office after complaining of boredom. She assisted the reserve officer with his work.

This office within an office was intended to be 'out of bounds' to all other staff, unless they had a specific enquiry with the station officer. However, in practice, partly because P.C.s tended to come straight into the office from the street, many officers entered the station office during a tour of duty - to write reports, make enquiry, use a telephone or to chat with colleagues.

The main doors from the station office lead to the yard, where vehicles were garaged, and to the charge room. An arrested person would be brought by vehicle to the yard, which was not overlooked by any other property, taken to a door leading into a short corridor to the charge room. As the arresting or escorting officer went through the door he operated a bell which sounded in the station office. The station officer then went to the charge room to receive the arrested person. For reasons of safety and security the charge room was sparsely furnished. A desk was situated in the middle of the room. The suspect sat or stood on one side of the desk while the station officer administered the enquiry from the other side. If a suspect was not seated on this chair he would sit on a fixed wall-bench. The whole of the charge room was grubby and musty. The only notice displayed was one informing prisoners of their rights to consult a solicitor, to fingerprinting and so on, but few would have noticed it without keen eyesight. They would have to ask permission to read it before being allowed to do so.

A door led from the charge room to the doctor's room. Here, a couch, table and chair were used to examine injured or ill persons held in custody and to take blood samples from persons arrested for drinking and driving offences.

Two other wooden doors led to detention rooms. These doors had small

glass quarter-lights which could be blocked from the charge room by a small inset panel. Detention rooms were used to hold suspects securely during questioning and if security was required during the investigation process. They contained a toilet, flushed from the charge room, and a wooden bench. The walls of the two detention rooms at Hilton were covered with graffiti.

More secure and long-term accommodation was available in the male and female cells, which were entered by a passage leading from the charge room. The cells had large, heavy doors; they contained a wooden bench with a mattress and blankets. At Hilton the cell area was very musty and the bedding somewhat basic. After being put in a cell a 'prisoner' was locked in and a wicket gate in the main door secured, the cell passage door to the charge room was then locked. After being locked up, the only communication with police was by way of a buzzer which sounded in the station office. However, if prisoners shouted loudly or hammered on their cell door, they could be heard in the station office and charge room, as well as in the station yard. If questioning took place in the detention or cell areas and voices were raised, it was possible to hear what was being said in the charge room. However, this whole area was very secure from public hearing and gaze. It was a secure place within a secure building.

The function and meaning of space

This description coincides with the formal operational demands of policing. Of course, the functional designation of the spatial areas within the station determined the type of administrative procedures taking place within them. Persons were charged in the charge room area, enquiries from members of the public were made at the station counter, and so on. However, this formal operational and administrative map which has been drawn is not entirely consistent with the 'cognitive maps' of the police who worked within and used these areas.

Our analysis of the function and meaning of space within the police station will be informed by Goffman's dramaturgical perspective in which he uses the theatrical metaphor to discuss the organisation

and presentation of self-imagery¹. Goffman argues that individuals working in organisations present themselves as representatives of a somewhat idealised order. The order is managed as a 'front' with an appropriate setting, appearance and manner. But the front, the idealisation, is very different from the back region where the real practice of the organisation takes place. Clearly, if an unknown or untrusted person can move from a front to a back region, then, depending upon his status, considerable preparatory management is necessary to sustain the imagery of the 'front'. The setting, appearance and manner of the back region must be normalised with a 'rhetoric of legitimation'² in order to sustain the continuity and preservation of official imagery. The dividing lines between front and back regions can be slight and entry from one to the other unsuspecting. Management is dependent on what Goffman calls 'team-work', a set of individuals who cooperate in staging a supported image based on information concerning the ideal and deviations from it³.

Manning's study of policing as a highly dramatised occupation is relevant here, not least in directing attention to, if not providing ethnographic evidence of, a contradiction between the public or front imagery of policing and the more private or back region of the lower ranks. The former is an imagery concerned with authoritative legality, the latter, though authoritative, is less bound by legal constraint and therefore necessarily private.

This contradiction between the public and private regions of policing poses particular problems within the police station, where comparatively formal boundaries demarcate spatial areas that can be classified as front and back regions. These areas and associated problems of management are highlighted when a person asks to enter or arrives in the private space where 'back-region' policing takes place. Any member of the public could walk to the station office counter at Hilton, but from that point it was impossible to go into any other area without the permission of the station officer or his authorised representative. The station office counter was a public or front region where explanations of police activity could be

provided for enquirers who may or may not accept their validity⁵. Our description of Hilton Station emphasised that, as one moved away from the public counter into the station office and then through into the charge room and cell area, so one moved further into a private or back region. Here, police controlled space, free from the ears and eyes of members of the public; some conversation in the station office could be heard at the public counter but the charge room and cell area was sealed from public gaze. The important work of questioning and charging persons accused of offences against the law was carried out here. Control over private space was highly valued by Hilton's police.

The police are accountable to the public they serve, this is a central feature of the rule of law. Accountability becomes highly personal when complaints are made against individual officers, as it does when members of the public request permission to penetrate the private space of the charge room and cell area.

Three groups of people are able to request entry into private, police controlled space. First, there are those who wish to provide some service to a person in custody: friends, relatives, solicitors and, more rarely, doctors and social workers. The consent of both the officer in charge of the case and the detainee is necessary before the transition into private space can be made, permitting time for any necessary back stage preparations to be made.

An alternative and unintentional incursion into private space might be made without permission being given. A member of the public standing at the public counter could hear conversation between police officers who were in the station office. Such conversation might concern private matters, causing a problem of management if the stranger's presence was realised.

Secondly, there are those who are invited into police space by the police themselves; they enter with some warning and are able to anticipate the activity they might find there. However, their early arrival could disturb or delay police activity thought to be inappropriate

in the presence of such a person. A regular visitor of this type was the police surgeon, a title given to a small number of medical practitioners who were on call to visit the station to examine and treat all persons in custody who appeared ill or injured, or requiring examination for evidential purposes.

Finally, and moving away from the external accountability of the police to their internal accountability to senior officers, it was possible for a senior officer to walk into a situation where back-region practices were taking place. I am thinking here of the Superintendent or Chief Superintendent who had overall responsibility for the running of the station but whose immediate intervention into its day-to-day work was fairly unusual. These officers rarely went into the charge room or cells, they never watched or supervised the questioning or charging of suspects. Their intervention was likely to be into the appearance of order and efficiency within the station office. It is with this aspect of the use of spatial areas within Hilton Police Station that we move to more empirically based analysis.

The station office

The station office was the operational core of the building; the station officer having full charge of all work carried out there. At a busy station like Hilton the job was extremely demanding. It was not unusual for books and papers to be strewn over the station officer's desk, several telephones to be ringing and the personal radio operating simultaneously. Add to this the similarly busy work of the reserve officer and the intervention of colleagues for advice, reference to a book or simply to chat during a break from patrolling, the station office frequently had the appearance of being out of efficient administrative and managerial control.

During periods when few demands were made on the station officer, for example, in the early morning on a night duty shift and during tea breaks, the station office became a gathering place for the whole relief. This meant that officers would be sitting on desks,

cups were left in the office - the appearance was that of anything but an efficiently run operational office. Members of the public could not see into the station office if they walked to the counter but senior officers could make a visit at any time.

Such visits were rarely a surprise for due warning was given to enable the setting to be staged. It was known that the Chief Superintendent or Superintendent arrived at the station between 8.30 and 9.00 each morning and his first task was to check all entries in the books used by station officers during the previous twenty-four hours. Before his arrival the station office was tidied, cups and other evidence of tea drinking removed and all staff were kept out of the office until he left. The appearance was one of tidy efficiency and managerial control as he was greeted, 'All correct, sir'. Yet the Chief Superintendent must have known that this was merely a presentation for his benefit; he knew that tea was drunk in the small 'writing room' adjacent to the office. During the course of an interview, a young probationer constable called this room 'the tea room'. The practice continued but clearance was always made before the Chief Superintendent entered the relevant space.

Every weekend the whole of the division was supervised by one senior officer of at least Chief Inspector rank. On Sunday morning this officer toured the whole division to visit every station, sign the occurrence book and perhaps look at some of the other major records of the weekend's work. Sunday morning was generally a time when P.C.s washed their private cars in the station yard, the station office was very untidy and the atmosphere relaxed. Before the senior officer's arrival it was usual for a telephone call to be received from his base station or from a station which knew of his impending visit. The station was tidied, cups disappeared, officers removed their private vehicles from the yard and the station officer ensured that they went on patrol. The appearance changed to that of managerial efficiency.

It was rare for such a visit to be made during the late shift from

2.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., but one Sunday a Chief Inspector from a neighbouring station entered the station office without prior warning at just past 2.00 p.m. All the relief were drinking tea and a television was on in an adjoining room. As soon as the officers noticed his arrival they began to look busy; one picked up a piece of paper and walked through the office, another grabbed a car log book and made an entry, a Sergeant went to the duty slate. Within seconds the office was cleared and became a 'front region' - the Chief Inspector said nothing⁶.

Clearly, senior officers were part of the team who managed the presentation of ordered supervision. They knew that they could betray their subordinates but they served as both audience and actor during the presentation of normality, bridging the discrepancy between front and back regions. There were occasions when officers were asked to account for their presence in the station and times when the Chief Superintendent found fault with the administration of the station office. However, within the accepted framework of legitimate use, senior officers expected a presentation to be sustained and acted as both audience and actor if they realised that insufficient warning had been given to construct an imagery of operational efficiency. If indiscretion was found during a set visiting time, failure to prepare a front was the source of criticism.

A further situation which required team management could arise in the station office. A member of the public at the station counter could overhear conversation amongst police in the body of the office and therefore learn about private aspects of policework. For example, two Constables were asking me and another Sergeant about a case which involved a girl who had purchased a stolen car. They were arguing about their right to arrest her, and during the discussion a member of the public came into the station and was able to hear what was being said. The Constables did not realise their indiscretion and an Inspector who noticed the 'stranger' intervened.

A P.C. disagrees with the suggested arrest of the girl.
'No, you're on dodgy ground there.' Colleague: 'We've had more dodgy jobs than that in the last fortnight. Blimey, we've got a power of arrest.' At this point the

Inspector intervenes, 'Sh, sh, sh, ...' but the officers don't seem to understand him. Sergeant: 'She's not a criminal. What do you want, just a red ink stop, do you want to bring her in for that?'. 'No, Sarge, she's got a nicked car. She's got to be interviewed and brought in.' The Inspector intimates his unease: 'Sh ...', and the P.C.s leave the station.⁷

This example demonstrates the tentative character of the team and, importantly, how the highest ranking officer, the one who must take ultimate responsibility for his subordinates, invokes team discipline. The conversation was probably incomprehensible to the person at the counter, he might have not been listening - sensitivity to the risk of the public front being breached was heightened by the presence of a stranger. The station office, with its front and back regions posed problems of spatial management; it was a boundary between senior and junior ranks, between the public and police. As such, the analysis of the station office demonstrates the relevance of understanding the changing meanings and management of action and talk within specific spatial arenas.

The charge room and cell block

As one moves from the station office to the charge room so one moves into more private and secure space. Suspects were brought here after arrest, they were searched and all property was removed from their person, to be kept in the safe custody of the police. They were questioned and detained until evidence had been gathered to substantiate an offence. If that was done a charge was put to them and they were either bailed or housed at the station until the next court sitting. The charge room was therefore a place where considerable legal control over persons was given to the police. The assumption made by Hilton's police was that, once in custody, a person was not just under the legal control of the police but, more than this, control meant submission to all action officers felt appropriate. This meant deference, quietness and compliance with searching, questioning, movement within the charge room and composure. The assumption was that persons in the station were 'prisoners' - that was their designation, not 'suspect', 'detainee'

or 'person arrested'.

When secure from the presence of strangers the charge room was a permanent 'home territory'⁸. Indeed, when policemen referred to 'the station' they usually meant the charge room. To take someone to the station was to take them into police control; once in that control, as a Sergeant from another station described,

'As a general rule it has been my experience that in a police station a person gets as good as he gives. If he is co-operative then the police are okay with him; he he is not co-operative then he gets it'⁹.

The station is the charge room and a place where control can be maximised. This is not to suggest that any action was condoned within the charge room - there were rules of conduct. The point is that control was possible without the likelihood of an intervention from a stranger; officers felt 'at home' when they brought a prisoner to Hilton.

If an arrest was made at a location just beyond Hilton's boundaries then, contrary to the official rule, the prisoner would be returned to Hilton station. This boosted the station's arrest figures; it also maximised control over the charging process. P.C.s knew their own supervisory officers and colleagues who might assist at some stage of the procedure; they felt the control which they could exercise ensured their safety. The importance of control was focussed on the charge room for if control was tenuous on the streets it was assured there; if it was resisted the officers knew that they were relatively free to redress the balance; 'giving as good as they get' was how the Sergeant put it. Prisoners who did not show their assent to police control would be told, 'You're in a police station now, you know' - the control of the charge room was the central meaning of the whole station.

The charge room was also a public place and, although it has been pointed out that persons had a legal right to see their friends and clients there, many officers resented intrusion. At a divisional instruction class where a number of Sergeants were gathered for instruction on recent legislation and matters of particular interest

to the division, the Community Liaison Officer raised the issue of the staff of the local Law Centre seeking access to the charge room and cells. He explained that if a person from the Law Centre asked to see someone who was detained they should

'tell the prisoner that they have arrived and ask if he wants to see the person from the Law Centre. We have had cases where the solicitors are not wanted, so then you can tell them to leave, but you must ask the prisoner first'.

Rather different comments follows:

P.S.1: 'If the governors had backed us up against these people first of all and said "no", we would have stopped all this business.' P.S.2: 'I think the best way to deal with this is to say that the prisoner doesn't want to see the solicitor.' Chief Inspector: 'Yes, but you must ask the prisoner first.' P.S.2: 'Yes, that is what I mean, the prisoner doesn't want to see you.' Others were less severe: 'I have had these people come in and have found that the best way to take the wind out of their sails is to say, 'Yes sir, if you would just take a seat I will tell the person that you are here. They don't know what is going on.'¹⁰

One night duty a youth was arrested for the possession of what was suspected to be illegal drugs. He telephoned a legal representative and asked for his attendance. I told my assistant station officer this and he said, 'I suggest that he doesn't get past the front counter'. The Inspector who was present said, 'What's wrong with him then, got weird ideas hasn't he?'¹¹ If some officers thought that the charge room was utterly private others, like the Inspector and Sergeant just quoted, thought that, in accordance with their legal right, access should be granted to solicitors. However, another incident in which the Inspector was involved suggested that, although he was willing to allow solicitors into the charge room, he took precautions to manage the setting before access was granted.

A P.C. was about to arrest a juvenile who had come to the station with his father and a solicitor from the Law Centre. They are sitting in the foyer, out of hearing of the conversation taking place between the Inspector and P.C. in the station office. The Inspector said, 'Caution him. Tell him what you know and tell him you're arresting him and caution him again. Do it all properly, just do it all properly.' He then glanced towards the people in the foyer and the boy

was arrested. As the parties moved to the charge room I heard the solicitor say to the youth, 'All right, don't answer any questions from now on, okay'¹². He also knew of the changed meaning once the spatial boundary was crossed.

The presence of a solicitor ensured the correct arrest and charging procedure; the Inspector took care to maintain a common front.

It was rare for solicitors to arrive at the station soon after an arrest was made, allowing time for the preparation of a front. A more likely person to enter the charge room was the police surgeon, who had to be called if a prisoner was injured. This rule was kept rigidly because, once called, a doctor took responsibility for any deterioration occurring in the physical condition of a person during their period of detention. Three doctors were regular callers at Hilton and they were known by the officers on duty, particularly by the Sergeants who served as station officers. On the one hand, the surgeons were not strangers and it was known that they were generally sympathetic to police. On the other hand, they were not employed by the police and could cause considerable trouble if they entered a situation of illegality or questioned how and when a prisoner sustained injury. Management was necessary before the doctor entered the charge room but this was a situation which seemed to require less formal management than was so with a solicitor.

I noticed that any prisoner with a facial injury caused during an arrest and who had blood on him was asked to wash at an early stage of his detention - this made the injury look less spectacular. A check might be made on what the doctor could find if he examined a prisoner who alleged assault during arrest. After a black youth had been arrested a scuffle had taken place but it seemed that very little force had been used by police. His mother and sister came to the station and alleged that he had been beaten up, requesting a doctor to see him. They saw the youth and although he had no apparent sign of injury his sister said:

'Look at the bruises and cuts on him. Look at them. Tell him you've been beaten up, come don't be frightened, tell you've been beaten up. Who hit you, which one was it?' Shouting followed and a fellow Sergeant said he would get a doctor. It was obvious that there was no

injury to the boy but despite this my colleague turned to the P.C. who made the arrest and asked, 'I'm going to get a doctor to examine him just to make sure nothing goes wrong at court. We won't find anything, will we ?'
P.C.: 'No, I only struggled with him in the street, trying to arrest him.'¹³

The question was asked in case any unseen injury had been caused, enabling any necessary management and accounting of the situation to be prepared before the doctor's arrival.

The presence of a doctor did curb some illegality. It was sometimes the case that officers dealing with a suspect in the charge room found that the doctor had been let past the station counter and interrupted their enquiry. After an arrest which involved a vicious fight, during which the suspect was hit across the head with a truncheon, the prisoner was told to wash blood from his face and to answer questions. Two C.I.D. officers who were in charge of the case but not present at the arrest or reception of the suspect, came into the charge room and one of them began asking questions. At that moment the divisional surgeon walked into the charge room. Later, the comment was made, 'What a bastard that the doctor had to walk in at that time'. The inference was that his presence within the usually private space of the charge room inhibited aggressive questioning¹⁴.

On another occasion a doctor walked in on a similar scene. Officer: 'If Dr — hadn't come in just then he would have got it.' Was he (the suspect) taking the piss ?' 'No, not really. He was just awkward. He was all right when he first came in but then he had the blood sample taken he got really difficult and awkward. He had another go just as he was leaving the station.' 'Yes, he knew he couldn't get hit when the doctor was there and it was the same just then. He knew he could get to the door and get out quick.'¹⁵

It is clear that the private and secure 'home territory' of the charge room could be challenged by the divisional surgeons. Whilst they were generally tolerant and used to examining prisoners with injuries sustained during arrest, it remained the case that when in the spatial area of the charge room police action was kept within particular defensive boundaries. The data presented indicate a change of action found necessary when a 'partial stranger' who is

not fully committed to the 'police team' enters private space. More trust was extended to the doctor than to the solicitor because the solicitor had a closer link with the accountability of the courts; however, as far as our discussion of the meaning of space within the station is concerned we have shown how a back region of privacy requires management to create and sustain an appearance of legality and legitimacy.

There were two groups of people who had access to the charge room, whose status shielded them from knowledge of police action which might border on the illegal. These were suspects and supervisory officers. Once in the charge room, a suspected person was taken to a supervisory officer who heard the evidence of circumstances surrounding the arrest in the presence of the suspect. This procedure was open, enabling the suspect to answer any relevant questions or comment on the evidence given. However, the procedure changed character if the arresting officers thought that their arrest was 'dodgy'. A 'dodgy' job was one where the evidence surrounding the arrest was thought to be slight or an arrest had been made because of the behaviour of the suspect during initial investigations, rather than the presence of evidence of another offence. The precise meaning of 'dodgy' is not relevant here, the point to be made is that the open procedure of investigation in a charge room would change to a more closed one when a 'dodgy job' was being handled.

Part of the move to 'closed awareness' involved the creation of private space within the charge room¹⁶. The arresting officer would speak to the supervising Sergeant as he walked into the station office and get close to him with his back turned to the suspect. Alternatively, he would wait until the Sergeant was standing behind the charge room desk and then lean over the desk to create a situation of privacy. Further, the arresting officer could indicate his wish to move from the charge room to some other place. This move helped to increase a suspect's sense of uncertainty; it also created spatial privacy and secrecy.

After arresting a number of juveniles for creating a disturbance in

the street, the principal arresting officer began relating his rather tenuous evidence to the Woman Inspector supervising the charge. He began, and then she suggested (!), 'Shall we go out of here'; the discussion moved to the station office¹⁷. Privacy and protection were ensured by moving into a new spatial area. Some supervisory officers allowed the whole charge room to be 'free space', remaining in some other part of the station until they thought any possible illegality had ceased.

A station officer knew that a person who had assaulted two officers and had been involved in a vicious fight with the police was about to arrive at the station. I asked the telephonist who was on duty at the time if she knew how the station officer dealt with this situation. 'Well, he was playing cards and when all the commotion was on down in the charge room he just continued playing cards, and said, "We'll wait until it's all quietened down", and then he went down and dealt with it'¹⁸.

Deliberate exclusion from space ensured the privacy of the officers in the charge room and avoided a compromising situation for the Sergeant.

If illegal techniques were to be used, two basic spatial areas were considered suitable. One was the detention and cell area, the other, which we will consider first, was the creation of private space within the charge room.

Five youths had been arrested for breaking into a shop. They were arrested and brought to the station for questioning and charging. It was not possible to split them up by putting them into separate cells or detention rooms, so the arresting officers created privacy within the charge room. [In my initial description I pointed out the short corridor leading from the door of the station yard to the body of the charge room. If some prisoners were sitting on the bench in the charge room they could not see along this corridor.] While the boys were being questioned I walked into the charge room and noticed that those seated on the bench were looking very frightened, far more frightened than when they first came into the station. As I moved further into the charge room and was able to see along the corridor, I noticed one of the arresting officers standing there with one of the suspects. I asked, 'What are you doing?' 'Well, he's just answering a few questions for me, Sarge.' My intervention stopped what I later learned to be unorthodox questioning of the youths.¹⁹

Space had been created within the general area of the charge room to increase control and privacy.

A more usual ploy was to take the suspect from the charge room to the cells or detention rooms, away from the presence of other prisoners. If other prisoners were in the charge room, or some other reason had made questioning imperative, the Station Officer frequently initiated a move of location. Several prisoners arrested for a single offence could be segregated in order to enquire into the correspondence between their accounts of an incident. The use of isolated space increased the power of the police, reinforced the captive status of the suspect and was, in itself, a strategy of control.

Isolation was used to increase the likelihood of confession. A Sergeant explained as he locked a suspected illegal immigrant in a detention room, 'She's a liar, I want the truth to sink in a bit'²⁰. Even well-known 'professional criminals' from the area were placed in isolation.

Such a suspect asked a Constable, 'What's all this about ?' Officer: 'I don't know, he'll (the officer in charge of the case) be down to tell you in a minute. I don't know what it's about, mate. All right, just sit there for a moment.' The suspect was put in a cell. The arresting officer then telephoned his headquarters office to establish the evidence to permit the suspect's continued detention. There seemed to be little, and it was suggested that he be taken to another station for questioning. 'Oh well, that's all we've got is it ? Well, I think we will just take him to Greenway and let him shit himself on the way over there. That's all we can do, isn't it ?'²¹

Sometimes threat of isolation was sufficient.

A Detective Constable took a juvenile to the door of a cell passage and explained, 'That's where we put naughty boys like you (detention rooms). But we put men, naughty men, in there, those cells there. Do you want to go in one of those cells ?' He then took the boy to the door of a cell, returned to the charge room and a confession was soon obtained.²²

Isolation was also made if submission to police authority was not forthcoming.

Some juveniles were arrested for causing a disturbance

in the street; a Sergeant dealt with them after arrival at the station. One, a tall youth who was later found to have nothing to do with the incident, appeared to be complacent. The Sergeant told him, 'No, you don't sit down in here (the charge room), and you had better wipe that smile off your face or I'll do it for you. Come on, we had better deal with you in here'. He took the youth to a detention room.²³

The threat of spatial isolation and the legal right of the police to use space in this manner permitted one technique of control.

Once in a detention room or cell, privacy was afforded the officers questioning. The cells and detention rooms were known to be 'free territories' where extra-legal techniques could be used.

Some officers thought that the amount of abuse towards prisoners had diminished recently; they were discussing this point when one said, '...considering the number of people we get through here I've seen very little of it'. After mentioning a particular officer, another explained, 'That C.I.D. bloke always hits them, gives them a clip round the ear.' 'Yes, thumps them, but that's about all. It always used to be that if you sent for the C.I.D. the prisoner would get thumped around the cell but it's not like that now.'²⁴

Although other data challenges the accuracy of these comments, their reference to the spatial siting of violence was confirmed.

Two suspects had been stopped and arrested. They were each found to have the same amount of cash on them and it was thought that they had committed a burglary. Separated in different cells, they were 'questioned' by two officers. During the questioning I went to the charge room where the station officer, a Sergeant, sat typing some forms concerned with the case. I could hear noises of a person being hit and 'Tell me where you got that money from, stop lying and tell me where you got that money.' The Sergeant talked to me, making no reference whatever to the obvious illegality of what was going on in the cells.²⁵

During her research, Maureen Cain found a similar distancing by a supervising officer. She quotes him:

'But then, from the charge room to the cells he had a chance to get his own back and I don't blame him ... I'd do the same. These people have got to be taught, you see.'²⁶

Other documented incidents established the safe character of cell and detention room space, if not for actual violence against suspects,

then to threaten them.

A Sergeant was standing outside a detention room talking to officers who had arrested two youths suspected of taking a motor vehicle. He said, 'I don't think they're going to come across with very much. We'll have to give them a bit of the 'old uppity'.²⁷

At this stage the question of what actually happened is not of primary relevance, the point is that cells and detention rooms were known as places where the police were able to free themselves from legal and organisational rules. It was the use of techniques which bordered and sometimes crossed lines of illegality that resulted in supervisory officers knowing what was taking place but not being present. Any later account of action within private space was then a matter for as few people as possible; error and contradiction could be avoided and the continuation of a 'front' of legality and managerial control maintained.

Finally, I want to make brief mention of the use of space during questioning. It was most noticeable that officers would move towards suspects and remain close to them during the questioning of a suspect of their own sex. Research tends to confirm the sanctity of personal space and my study indicates that policemen are highly sensitive to its invasion²⁸. Hilton's police used the invasion of another's personal space as a technique of questioning, combining it with their legal power to prevent a suspect's free movement in space. As closure was located around the suspect, so police practice was shielded from immediate accountability and control was maximised.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the police station as a spatial arena within which 'fronts' were managed. To discuss 'fronts' is to discuss the meanings of space and functional relationships between meaning and action. Hilton's police understood the station as the centre of their sub-division; it was a 'home territory' where techniques contained within the occupational culture could be employed with maximum freedom. Legal powers permitted the detention of suspects in the station and such power enhanced freedom to extend

practices of interrogation beyond formal legal boundaries.

The importance of 'informal techniques' and the ability to discuss them freely necessitated the creation of areas of public and private space within the station. Persons who worked outside the police organisation and supervisory officers within it could invade these private areas to check and ask for an account of police action. The station office represented a border between the public and private arenas of the station and it was here that we found the discipline of a front of legality being invoked by the Inspector in charge of the relief. Leakages of informal 'back region practices of policing' were shielded from the public and senior officers, the latter appearing to be implicitly involved in the creation of a front of efficient and supervised legality.

As we moved further away from the station office to the charge room and cell areas, so privacy and control by the police became the fundamental functional meaning of the analysis. In this space, where the most powerful rights given to the police were exercised, we found a protective shielding of practice. Furthermore, those who had a legal right to gain access into such private regions entered into a managed contrivance of legality, which presented them with an appearance of legitimation to gloss over what had taken place before the stranger's presence. Informal practices of investigation were suspended or prevented. When physical force was used, supervisory ranks were shielded from direct involvement in the 'questioning' but, as our research has demonstrated, they formed part of the team which needed privacy to enhance control and freedom.

Protective secrecy, 'team management' and the creation of free space to practise policing as it was defined by the lower ranks of the force became increasingly important in the charge room and cells. Where privacy could not be ensured by movement into a particular room, private space was created. This was facilitated by movement into personal space or the assistance of a supervisory officer who would absent himself from audible and visual presence.

The police station is an example of a spatial arena divided by its occupants in public and private, front and back areas. The consequences of action within the station becoming visible and the traditional importance of freedom and control, found in the occupational culture, maintains a functional relationship between spatial meanings and action. Many of the features of time and space documented in an earlier chapter were sustained and strengthened in the police station. Indeed, as space within the police station became increasingly private, so the occupational culture of urban policing was sustained.

Notes and references

- 1 Goffman, E. (1969) The presentation of self in everyday life, Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- 2 This term is taken from one of the very few studies of the use of space within buildings: i.e. Ball, D. (1967) 'An abortion clinic ethnography', Social Problems, 14 (3): 293-301.
- 3 See Goffman, E. (1969), op.cit., pp.83-140.
- 4 Manning, P.K. (1977) Police work: the social organisation of policing, Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press.
- 5 For a discussion of 'accounts' in police work see Chatterton, M.R. (1979) 'The supervision of patrol work under the fixed points system' in S. Holdaway (ed) The British police: 83-101, London: Edward Arnold.
- 6 F.N. 253:1.
- 7 F.N. 337:2.
- 8 This notion is taken from Lyman, S.M., and M.B. Scott (1967), 'Territoriality: a neglected sociological dimension', Social Problems, 15 (2): 236-249.
- 9 F.N. 145.
- 10 F.N. 154/155.
- 11 F.N. 148:3.
- 12 F.N. 242:2.
- 13 F.N. 624.
- 14 F.N. 135.
- 15 F.N. 383.

- 16 Although the notion of 'awareness context' is not used in dept at this point it should be recognised as derived from Glaser, B.G., and A.L. Strauss (1967) 'Awareness contexts and social interaction', Amer. Sociol. Rev., 29: 669-679.
- 17 F.N. 201.
- 18 F.N. 615:7.
- 19 F.N. 603:3.
- 20 F.N. 413:5.
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- 22 F.N. 278:1.
- 23 F.N. 201:1.
- 24 F.N. 117:2.
- 25 F.N. 445:2.
- 26 Cain, M.E. (1973) Society and the policeman's role, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p.162.
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CHAPTER 6

POLICING THE POPULATION

During our discussion of the meaning and structure of space and time, it has been necessary to make continuing reference to the occupational culture of urban policing. These basic categories of time and space are pervaded by values and associated strategies of action lodged in that stock of knowledge called the occupational culture. A stress on control and potential chaos, on hedonism and action, periods of time being defined as 'non-work' yet begging the construction of excitement, secrecy and interdependency amongst the work group, a premium placed on the control of territory and individuals - these are some of the core elements of the occupational culture dominating the manner in which Hilton's police understood their work and the context within which it was performed.

This chapter continues to describe and analyse how meaning was constructed but the emphasis is on typifications of the population policed from Hilton station. Although Hilton sub-division formed one small part of a vast metropolitan area, through which many thousands of people passed every day, its transitory situation did not prevent officers from constructing a mental map of the population to guide their work.

The average number of contacts between Hilton's police and members of the public in a given period of duty could not be documented. However, it is safe to assume that during each tour of duty patrolling officers talked with a number of people and, more importantly, visually scanned hundreds more. Despite the fact that the police are highly dependent on members of the public to provide them with information about crime and the identity of suspected offenders, the patrolling officer still places importance on his proactive role¹. It does not matter if the proactive or reactive role dominates, the basic point is that the patrolling officer who drives around the streets of his sub-division or deals with an incident to which he has been called, is confronted with ambiguous information. As he

patrols the streets he scans the area around him for signs of actual or possible cues of disorder. When he attends the variety of incidents comprising police work he is required to sift often conflicting and highly ambiguous information, drawn from a variety of sources in a short period of time. Some assessment of antecedent evidence has to be made as well as a decision of the appropriate action to take. Importantly, the officer considers the implications and consequences of that action, including the possibility of having to account for it before others - for example the court, senior officers and complainants against the police.

Ambiguity typifies the situation confronting the police officer working amongst a potentially disorderly population². However, an officer dealing with an incident cannot allow ambiguity to persist. The occupational culture stresses decision making on the basis of definite information, which is final and secure. During the two years of research only a small number of post hoc disputes about the suitability of particular courses of action arose between officers. These were of particular importance because they revealed implicit factors involved in routine aspects of decision making. Further, they exposed the tentative and risky character of such decisions, not least the possible consequences for the officers involved. In a later chapter (chapter 7/8) we will see how officers employed a range of 'techniques of legitimation' to verify the appropriateness of particular decisions and substantiate the fact that it was possible to make decisions within this highly ambiguous situation. Risk, indeterminacy and the revision of decisions already made were glossed over with a sense of certainty and security, enabling the 'commonsense of policing' to continue as the basis of routine work.

It is therefore not my intention to describe an agonising process of highly articulate choices being made by intensely discerning police officers employed on routine work. Rather, policing is straightforward and speedy work in which quick and decisive decision-making is of the essence. Supervisory officers were constantly criticised by their subordinates for their failure to make and support their decisions. This has been noted by Manning and Chatterton in separate metropolitan

police forces³. The root of such criticism is found in the distancing of senior officers from the ambiguity of streetwork and the pressure to make decisions with speed. Again, both Manning and Chatterton emphasise that patrolling ranks feel senior officers do not understand their work, despite the fact that they have all served in the lower ranks.

Studies of both the British and American police emphasise that officers use a form of perceptual shorthand to aid them in the course of their work⁴. Typical characteristics of groups of people are drawn together to render ambiguity and complexity manageable. Sociologists with an interest in the news media have stressed the 'one-dimensionality' of much media based knowledge; the diverse characteristics an individual or group actually display are denied as stress is laid on one newsworthy aspect of their character⁵. Police officers work with a similar shorthand of typifications; rough edges of complexity and ambiguity are refined and/or neglected, enabling policework to proceed on a sure footing. As that work proceeds so the occupational culture is sustained, strengthened and legitimated. Such knowledge is to be conceptualised as processual and, in part, 'situationally justified'⁶. However, to the officer employed on patrol work it is dogmatic and massively certain.

Our discussions of space and time have demonstrated aspects of such knowledge and these are interwoven with our analysis of the population policed. We have seen how places and times are attributed with particular meanings to serve the interests and contingencies of work performed by patrolling officers. A further aspect of this same subject is that of typifying the population policed, by which we mean the possession of knowledge about the types of people with whom Hilton's police could expect to deal in the course of their work. It is concerned with the probable response of such types of people to police action, both in the short and longer term, the types of disorderly events they might be involved in, and how they might frustrate or assist police activity. As we have already pointed out, a mental map of the population policed makes the task of police work manageable and secure.

The following data are from a police sergeant who did not work at Hilton but who describes the basic necessity of such a map. He articulates the problems of moving from one police division to another, which has a very different type of population.

'It isn't like — where you knew who you were dealing with. At — you are working in an upper class area and you don't know who you are dealing with. The rich expect far too much from you and the weirdos, they expect a lot too. You really don't know who you are dealing with when you stop them. It's a difficult job to do, not like — where you knew who you were dealing with.'⁷

A probationary constable, again on a course at training school, emphasised the importance of gaining knowledge of the meaning of the population when he commented on the problems of stopping suspects in the street.

'At night times things are different, you are doing crime work then. I have done a few stops at night. Mind you, I don't agree with stopping everyone in sight, that's bad for the image of the police. My colleagues tell me that you get a nose for this sort of thing but I haven't got that yet. There is an old boy who I stopped early on in my probation and I suppose that every probationer has stopped him. He's just a bloke who likes to take a walk at night and I know him quite well now.'⁸

These data link the meaning of the population to that of time. The following data on the same theme demonstrate the relationship between the spatial and population maps.

A new Sergeant had recently joined Hilton and I was driving him around the area. We passed a building nearing completion and he asked its purpose. I explained that it was a new hall of residence for students attending the local polytechnic. He asked, 'Do you get many left-wing activities up there then?' We continued the patrol and as we drove along a particular street he asked, 'Is this the West Indian Quarter, then?' S.H.: 'Not really. I think they probably mostly come from — ground. But they don't tend to live in any one part.' Officer: 'Oh, I saw some shops back there which had West Indian names and oriental foods. I thought perhaps they lived around here?' ... (later) 'I suppose you get a lot of trouble with the Irish. They move around and you can't trace them. What do you do with breathalysers?'⁹

In these data we notice how time and space are closely related to the meaning of the population policed. Importantly, it is clear

that from the earliest moments of taking up duty, as all these officers were doing, the temporal, spatial and population maps have to be learnt. Ambiguity and uncertainty are rendered into workable typifications. Allowance is made to permit variation related to the specialist departments working from the local station and the emphasis an individual officer places on particular aspects of his work. However, at the basis of these variations a number of core elements are found, from which variations diverge. Our concern is with this basic map and the meanings attached to it.

Meanings of the population in previous research

Previous research in this area leads us to a similar conclusion to that identified in the chapter on the meanings of space. A neglect of mental mapping leads to the presentation of a one-dimensional view of the population or failure to find common elements within what seems to be a highly diverse and contextual scheme. For example, Westley tends to place the police meaning of the local population in one-dimensional terms. We have already pointed out certain problems of interpreting Westley's data as evidence that the groups of the population he questioned perceive police hostility. His findings are ambiguous. However, from this inadequate base Westley proceeds to argue that the police reciprocate public hostility by attributing the public with the status of 'enemy'. There is some evidential basis of this conclusion but it is not as secure as Westley supposes. First, he draws on the findings of a sample of 85 police officers, 73% of whom stated that they thought the public of Westville were 'against the police or hated them'. This unified collation of what must be a diverse range of attitudes is highly unsatisfactory. Westley obscures the more precise relationship between differing attitudes, ranging from hatred to suspicion, each possibly related to a particular aspect of police work.

Other evidence indicates that the typical incidents police are involved in - traffic cases, those involving businessmen, sex cases, family quarrels and criminals - present the appearance of a world of opposition and hostility. This combines with his division of the population into

groups who have differing degrees of respect for the police. Clearly, Westley is departing from his more usual and straightforward one-dimensional view of the meaning of the population. He writes:

'The public is prepared to interpret police actions as evil and threatening; the police are prepared to see the public's actions as hostile, suspicious, derogatory and unco-operative. These, then, form the frames of reference in which each of the parties will act and interpret the actions of the other. They form the substance of conflict'¹⁰.

Remembering that Westley's evidence of the public's attitude towards the police is less than secure, as well as the similar problem with the data of the police attitude towards the public, the conclusion that hostility and opposition typifies the police perception of the public appears less than certain. My evidence suggests a more complex situation than this, 'chaotic naivety' being the basic meaning of the population, from which other meanings stem.

Skolnick's study of policing does not include a coverage of the manner in which the police perceive their population. Rather, he describes the image of a 'symbolic assailant', to which the police respond:

'The policeman, because his work requires him to be occupied continually with potential violence, develops a perceptual shorthand to identify certain kinds of people as symbolic assailants, that is, as persons who use gesture, language and attire that the policeman has come to recognise as a prelude to violence'¹¹.

However, in his brief consideration of differences between the American and British settings we find the element of danger giving way to a more sophisticated and discriminating discernment amongst British policemen. He writes:

'The British policeman's ability to make fine social discriminations, plus his training in etiquette, enable him to distinguish not only among those who are more likely to commit crimes but also among those who are likely to report procedural irregularities'¹².

We will understand the pertinence of such a comment when data from Hilton are analysed. However, although Skolnick's remarks are helpful, it is obvious from the research at Hilton that policemen were not simply concerned with 'symbolic assailants', neither were they wholly concerned with the potential of a person or group to make complaints about police action. The greater emphasis on danger and

violence within the American setting tends to divert a characterisation of the British context away from its rather more wide-ranging base. Again, research in this area needs to resist the emphasis on one-dimensional analyses to place greater stress on the topography of mapping.

When we turn to Rubinstein's ethnography we find the same lack of cohesion evident in his discussion of territory. He makes the useful connection between spatial and population mapping but does not attempt to draw the various elements of the population map into any analytic whole. He writes,

'The patrolman's knowledge of people develops haphazardly. He is constantly reading bits of information about people he meets which he uses in making judgments about them if he encounters them again. He remembers places where he has had trouble or where trusted colleagues have met resistance. These recollections can affect his attitude towards the people he meets even before his arrival at the scene'¹³.

Overall, the American literature suggests that the construction of maps relating to the meaning of the population and, indeed, the relationship between such a map and the dimensions of time and space, is common to both societies. However, the pervasive sense of danger continually stressed in studies of American policing and an associated concern with the dangerousness and potential violence of the population, diverts attention away from considering this as a primary reality, against which other meanings are to be understood.

This research also reveals a measure of conceptual confusion between the manner in which the police typify the general population policed and the mapping of those with whom they actually come into contact and to whom they apply particular techniques of control. Although these two maps are related, it is necessary to separate them for the purposes of analysis. The former, the population map, tends to be less revisable, more generalised and rigid than the latter. Westley seems to fuse these maps, as do Rubinstein and Manning.

Furthermore, there is little attempt within the relevant literature to relate the meaning of the population to the occupational culture.

Westley argues that the public are hostile, the police respond in a particular manner. Skolnick argues in a similar fashion, although he lays greater stress on the conflicting demands of police work. Rubinstein adds little analytical and theoretical content to his rich ethnography. Our discussion of Hilton will indicate that the occupational culture is a source of knowledge which shapes the meaning of the population rather than being shaped by their actual characteristics.

From his research of a Scottish force Banton argues that the sharp division between the police and the public, emphasised in American work, is not present in Britain. He writes,

'Policemen in Britain sometimes refer to members of the public as civilians. This usage is misleading for they do not draw a hard and fast line between themselves and the public'¹⁴.

This draws our attention to the lack of a sense of dangerousness and potential for violence to be found in Britain. Cain did not take up this particular point, but in her discussion of city policing she emphasises the police's lack of detailed knowledge of the population policed, together with the stress on arresting as a prestigious activity, which does not encourage the fostering of such knowledge. The population was divided into the categories of 'roughs' and 'respectables', women, again subdivided into the rough/respectable categories, immigrants and criminals. Attitudes towards these groups are discussed in a brief fashion but stress is laid on a general point concerning the tenuous relationship between city police and the community policed¹⁵.

Finally, Chatterton and Manning have identified the importance to police of knowledge of people as a means of deciding appropriate courses of action. Chatterton's fine discussion of how a Sergeant decides to accept a charge includes, together with a consideration of time and space, the type of person involved. However, there is no discussion in his thesis of the more broadly based meaning of various sections of the population policed.

Drawing heavily on Chatterton's work, Manning has argued that,

'The policeman possesses what might be called "recipes" for the sequence of conduct that he will engage in. They are composed of typifications of events, persons and places that organise his cognitive world and mobilize his potential for action'¹⁶.

In the London subdivision he researched, Manning found that police knowledge of the population tended to be cynical, distrustful and negative. However, and recognising that Manning does not claim to present an ethnography, when we attempt to determine the precise character of this knowledge, we find a list of various meanings which is not subject to rigorous analysis.

Manning does make the important point that,

'People are expected to fill these categorical niches and fall into line with the commonsense police theory about human nature. The observed facts are assembled under the umbrella of a commonsense theory. The facts are not taken as a means to disconfirm the police theory of human nature'¹⁷.

He further argues that the occupational culture is a reservoir of knowledge forming a major determinant of the meaning of the population policed, rather than being determined by the actual characteristics of that population. However, and as is so often the case in his work, the general point is not verified by evidence to confirm its relevance to the context of actual police work.

None of the researchers mentioned in this section make a distinction between the meaning of the population policed and 'prisoners'.

'Prisoners' will be dealt with in the chapter on 'techniques of control' because they did not stand out as a homogenous group within the local population; they were a ubiquitous type.

Hilton - the population policed

Hilton's patrolling officers did not attribute hostility and dangerousness to the population they policed. This distinguishes our British context from the American setting in that, despite having to face some dangerous situations, involving risks to personal safety, particular experiences of danger were not broadened into a pervasive sense of dangerousness and hostility. We will note later how, in

particular contexts, various groups were marked out as 'dangerous' but, using topographical imagery to organise our data together with Schutz's theory of relevancies, it is clear that such a meaning stood out from a primary reality of a different character.

The primary meaning of the population who were resident or passing through Hilton sub-division was that of a people who lacked guidelines of proper conduct. They risked continual chaos, which formed the basic reason for policing the area. This meaning is obviously close to that relating to space and naturally so, for, as we noted, the spatial and population maps are closely related. However, here stress is placed on traits of the whole population, who exhibit a state of virtual 'fallenness'. Man does not really understand the nature of his fellows, their gullibility, lack of stability and commonsense. Recall the Inspector already quoted who, while merely patrolling his area, remarked,

'It's really frightening, isn't it, to think that there are so few policemen around and you can't rely on people behaving themselves nowadays? You know, any small thing triggers them off. It's really frightening.'¹⁸

His fear was not of violence and danger but disorder - quarrelling, 'messaging about', the absence of proper guidelines for behaviour. In the same chapter we also noticed that Constables shared such a view, believing that Hilton sub-division was virtually chaotic, despite the fact that nothing requiring the immediate attention of the police was obvious to them. These meanings of space relate to those who inhabit that space, providing a background of meaning to other more particular typifications.

Such a primary meaning is informative. To police officers, it indicates that those who continually risk disorder need to be prevented from reaching the brink of chaos. A range of techniques of policing is required to fulfil such a task, the law is not sufficient. Furthermore, the information which the police officer employs when engaged in the prevention of disorder is superior to that available to the population policed. This is not because such knowledge has legal backing but suggests that a population risking continual disorder requires some residual common sense. That

common-sense is the stock of knowledge police officers have about the fundamental characteristics of human nature, remedies for particular ills, the likely outcome of certain lines of action and so on. In short, such an anthropology permits the police to employ techniques of control which are not strictly related to any legal code but which, nevertheless, permit manipulation and control. Importantly, they legitimise the employment of the occupational culture, for this is the common-sense knowledge 'the public' do not possess but always need.

Ironically, 'police commonsense' is private knowledge which cannot be shared with or acquired by other groups - it belongs to policemen. To rank-and-file officers, police work is not so much concerned with the education of a naive public as it is the prevention of their decline into complete chaos. This means that the primary manner in which the population is perceived is unchanging. The public are not reformed by police action but restrained from the likelihood of disorder. If the population responded fully to police action, reforming their potential for chaos, typifications of the population and, importantly, associated strategies of action, would change and, in some cases, particular strategies would cease to be of any use. The educational process would be complete. However, the primary reality we have charted negates its completion.

This point is made because it is necessary to stress that the fundamental philosophical anthropology underlying the policing of Hilton served to preserve the occupational culture. As Manning argues,

'People are expected to fill these categorical niches and fall into line with the common-sense policy theory of human nature ... The observed facts are not taken as a means to disconfirm the police theory of human nature'¹⁹.

Indeed, the primary reality cannot be negated and, that being the case, the traditions of the occupational culture form a starting point of competence by which policing is judged. Further, because the police theory of human nature is private knowledge, yet potentially open to continual challenge, it has to be shielded by some measure of protective secrecy. In this sense, the occupational culture, including typifications of the population, is self-validating,

contrary evidence being neutralised and/or negated. The interests of lower ranks are continually served by the preservation of typical images of individuals and groups.

From this perspective it is possible to understand why many of the typifications of the population are related to the protection and exploitation of particular elements of the occupational culture. A number of groups working in Hilton sub-division had potential power to uncloak and demystify occupational knowledge, rendering the common-sense of policing highly suspect. It will be seen that such groups were typified to shield and protect the police work group. Similarly, other groups offered officers the possibility of exploiting key elements of the occupational culture - enhancing action, excitement and hedonism.

Of course, different groups and the typifications they provoked occupied very different situations of power within the social structure making them more or less dangerous to the police. The power of the lower ranks is not greater than but assimilated into the structure of power of the whole of British society. Lawyers and solicitors, doctors and social workers had greater potential and actual power than black British people; the former were more open to police typifications incorporating likely challenge to police action, the latter could be exploited. The occupational culture of policing is obviously part of a wider structure of power which, though not utterly rigid, did constrain the manner in which Hilton's officers mapped their local population. Yet, at root, the basis of policing at Hilton was constructed on a foundation of knowledge of the utmost relevance to the practical concerns of lower ranks.

'Blacks', 'Challengers' and 'Disarmers'

The background or 'primary reality' which has been described was made more particular by the selection and typification of a number of groups. I have concentrated on what appeared to be the most significant groups from observation of Hilton's police, as well as the general themes of Westley's research which, as we have noted, highlight some of the differences between British and American forces. The presentation

of such typifications in this chapter is not designed to place them along a continuum, measuring their relative importance to a single criterion. Rather, they are grouped around the one or more elements of the occupational culture to which they refer, as well as their relationship to the power structure of the community policed. The key cultural elements of relevance were the actual or potential lack of control a group displayed, their possibilities for enhancing excitement and challenge, their power to demystify the occupational culture, with its interdependency and secrecy and, finally, their situation within the power structure of the local community.

From this analysis three major groups emerge from the mass of available data. First, 'Blacks', notably black British but also other immigrant groups, secondly, 'Challengers', who can cause the police to account for their action, thirdly, 'Disarmers', who, through popular morality and the subsequent trouble they can initiate, present the police with particular dilemmas.

'Blacks'

The population of Hilton sub-division contained a large black British and West Indian section. When I first arrived for duty at Hilton I had some idea that the officers working there would select that group as one of particular interest; previous research on the police had noted this point²⁰. During my first night of duty, I asked the Constable assisting me in the station office about the 'coloured people' living in the sub-division. His reply at this very early stage of research summed up many features of the manner in which 'blacks' were 'mapped'. He explained,

'There's quite a lot of feeling against blacks here. You wait till we come day duty and you will see how many of them there are here. It's very difficult to deal with them because as soon as you talk to them they accuse you of victimisation. You get really annoyed sometimes, really boiled up but you have to keep cool and not show it or they have got the better of you. It's very difficult like that here. ... P.C.s around here don't like them, they always seem to campaign if anything happens, they go to the Law Centre down there. You see, there are people like —— (names constable), he says that he had no prejudice when he came here but he has different ideas

now. We had all those burglaries, they came from the Black House up —. This week, last night, we had some and you might remember that Sergeant — sent some P.C.s round there straight away but they didn't go there.²¹

'Blacks', meaning black British and West Indians, were viewed negatively, usually described by a derogatory term - 'coon', 'nig-nog', 'spade', 'black', 'razor blade', 'nigger', 'wog', 'animal'. Of course, these terms were not derived from the police world, they form common parlance within our society and here we find the clear inter-relationship between the typifications of the population policed and the broader social structure. The generally negative features expressed are related to the position of black people within the power structure of British society. For example, when discussing the possibility of a coloured constable working at Hilton an officer put it that, 'No, we don't want a Coonstable here. Can you imagine, half the relief would have to protect him if he went up the flats'²².

A Sergeant was selling his house, in part because he felt that he didn't want to live next door to his coloured neighbours; 'You might call me a racist bastard and I know I haven't got a logical argument but I'm not going to live next door to them ... People on the other side of the road, racist bastards, leaving their cars out the front of his house and so on and are really trying to upset him. Well, I'm not racist. It's just that I think they're very nice people but I don't want to live next door to them. I know you can say that I'm wrong but that's the way I feel.'²³

Generally, then, officers did not tend to see their attitudes as any different from people who lived at Hilton or in the areas where they lived. This, however, tells us little about the more particular manner in which attitudes were moulded.

The initial quote taken from my first duty at Hilton indicated that feelings of mistrust and dislike amongst 'blacks' were reciprocated by the police. It was not unusual to hear officers make derogatory remarks about black people. As I rode in a police car with two Constables, one saw some blacks: 'Look at those niggers, I'd like to hit one of them tonight'. The other responded, 'Yes'.²⁴ On another occasion a Sergeant commented on a black canteen assistant employed at Hilton, who had annoyed him,

'It's funny, these blacks. They're anti-authority. As soon as you say something to her she gets really annoyed and up-tight. We wouldn't get that up-tight if somebody says something to us.'²⁵

Such data is illustrative of the perceived, reciprocal dislike and suspicion of both parties.

It is difficult to assess the actual dislike black people would express towards the police if given the opportunity - it was in their interests to keep such feelings private. However, on some occasions feelings were expressed. For example, after charging a youth with possession of stolen property, an offence for which there was sound and credible evidence, he told the arresting officer who was present in the charge room, 'If you hadn't nicked me for that you would have got me for something else'²⁶. A similar setting evoked a more general remark from a suspect for criminal damage, who was referring to the likelihood of a witness testifying for him: 'He's a white man. He won't help us. We're black.' The officer replied, 'If you don't shut up, I am going to get upset.'²⁷ Attitudes like these were found amongst both parties to the relationship; it was not simply a case of the police attributing characteristics for which they had no evidence of reciprocity. I cannot assess which was the more provocative source of discontent - that is not the purpose of the analysis. Rather, reciprocal feelings of distrust were one aspect of a mapping of blacks as a group disliked by the police.

Dislike was substantiated in the minds of Hilton's police by a suspicion of disorder, crime and a potential for violence amongst black people. They defied the primary occupational value of control. Blacks did not threaten to expose the actual practices of policing employed by officers; they did challenge the police claim to territorial control and, as such, served as continual evidence of the need for officers to employ their own particular practices. Again, I am not able to assess the precise involvement of blacks in crime and other matters requiring police attention. However, and there can be no reason to suppose that Hilton was atypical, studies of the amount of crime committed by black people, though difficult to assess, tend towards the conclusion that they are not

over represented in criminal or other activities of concern to the police²⁸.

Despite this, officers at Hilton indicated that they believed the contrary to be the case. They brought blacks within a scheme of continual suspicion. While patrolling with an Inspector during the early hours of the morning, we passed a black youth walking along the footway. The Inspector slowed the car down, 'These coloured people certainly ask for trouble. They seem to hang about and look suspicious'²⁹. He believed this, despite the fact that white youths in the same setting were of no interest to him. Other officers blamed blacks for a good deal of the peacekeeping work they were involved in.

A Constable argued, 'Yes, it's the R.C.3s around here which cause most of the trouble with disputes and things. You can almost bet that on a Sunday afternoon you'll be called to a domestic dispute of some sort. If we didn't have those disputes then there'd be very little to do around here, I reckon.'³⁰

Another common assumption made was that blacks, particularly black youths, tended to be greatly involved in crime. Commenting in a general manner, the constable cited early in this section went on to mention another officer who had been influenced by his experience of policing Hilton. We are reminded that this same officer claimed to have changed his attitudes about blacks. He was standing in the station yard when he heard a lot of shouting in the cells. He asked a colleague, 'Is it a drunk?' Colleague: 'No, five for G.B.H.' Officer: 'A coon'. Colleague: 'No, Irish'³¹. His assumption was that blacks committed violent crime. An Inspector, not the officer quoted earlier, also demonstrated this view after attending a club frequented by large numbers of black people, at which a police officer had been assaulted. Several officers from Hilton attended the incident and when they returned to the station the Inspector commented, '... mind you, the reason we need dogs for the coloureds is because they're so bloody violent and that's why you want them'³². Opinions sometimes took a more extreme form. One officer suggested that, instead of probationary constables carrying out a small social studies project on an aspect of their sub-division, 'I could write a thesis. Exterminate

all the niggers and you wouldn't have any problem. Just exterminate all the niggers.³³ This extreme view with, to the officers present, its humorous aspect, was symptomatic of the general suspicion of black people, beliefs about their involvement in crime and their potential for violent behaviour.

Involvement in crime prompted just one feature of police control. It was thought that blacks, like all people, were likely to lapse into disorder but when they did so were particularly difficult to control. After a colleague had failed to investigate an allegation of assault with sufficient diligence, the officer dealing with the case commented, 'Well Sarge, it's not really for me to legislate. They were a couple of coons shouting at each other and it's difficult in those circumstances I suppose.'³⁴ The remark made by the officer about disputes involving blacks on Sunday afternoons made a similar point.

Finally, blacks were thought to be able to exploit their feelings of dislike of the police in drawing on the assistance of the local law centre and/or community workers from a hostel for homeless black youths. The officer quoted, who summed up the general situation, mentioned how blacks went to the Law Centre if they got into trouble. Such assistance could render police secrecy vulnerable. He also thought that many black youths committed crime under the cover of the protection offered by the hostel and much criticism was directed towards the black community worker who ran it. A Sergeant expressed the general view of the station when he was asked by the Clerk of the local Magistrates' Court what he thought of 'The Black House'.

Officer: 'Well I know — (the person who ran it) very well and I find him okay but when you are arguing with him he is only willing to go so far. It's like an extreme political argument or a religious one. You can't go any further. Mind you, it's a 'Fagin's kitchen' down there. We had a juvenile in from there the other week and we cleared up half our crime book with the breakings he had done.' Clerk: 'Yes, but he has a point of view to put across. He is very helpful to us down here and will stand bail and get the boys to court ...'
Officer: 'Yes, I know that and he is perhaps coming round to our way of thinking.'³⁵

Interestingly, this Sergeant thought the community worker was changing his own views by getting boys to court and ensuring they kept bail. The suggestion is that typifications of mistrust and involvement in crime, which we have already documented, remain accurate. A black person does not act as the court clerk suggests; he alters his mind towards the police view. Typifications of blacks are not adjusted as contrary evidence is obtained, they remain secure while the black moves his views towards the police view of distrust requiring control.

A similar point is made by other data. An Inspector made some comments about a Police Community Liaison Officer who had given evidence of character for a black youth charged with robbery.

'Yes, this is what I mean when I say that some have gone over to the other side. We should not treat anybody, be they black or white, with preference. If we do then we get away from the idea of equality for all and the police giving equal treatment to both black and white. And we can't allow them to say that they are arrested just because they are black. If we allow that, then we forget that the law has to be upheld and the respect it deserves given to it. If anyone fails to give a lack of respect or breaks the law he must be arrested'³⁰.

It was certainly unusual for a police officer to give positive evidence of mitigating character; our intention is not to judge the issue. Despite the novelty of the case, it is suggested that these data are further indication that typifications of blacks were not fundamentally altered by any extraordinary event, whatever credibility the event might have. Revision was understood as a matter of 'going over to the other side'.

These, then, are the characteristics moulding the typification of blacks - their dislike of the police, disorderliness and proclivity for crime, violence and the exploitation of their supposed grievances by drawing on the facilities of the Law Centre, Community House and, as the final data suggest, some Community Relations Officers. The view is certainly predominantly negative. We also have a small amount of data which suggests the relevance of this typification to the occupational culture of urban policing. Having established 'control' as central to that culture, we can understand how the meaning of

blacks served to prompt the necessity of continued control, using all the sub-cultural techniques of routine policing. Further, because the meaning was overwhelmingly negative, it also permitted the exploitation of challenge, hedonism and action - those who were likely to cause disorder offered an opportunity for police activity.

A final datum adds to the point that officers seemed to find enjoyment in dealing with the potentially disorderly.

A youth club catering for blacks had recently opened on the sub-division. On two evenings each week it catered for these people and despite the large number of youths attending there was very little need for police supervision. One particular night, a Friday, the night duty shift were drinking tea and a probationer constable mentioned that he thought the club should be supervised. At that stage I walked into the 'tea room'. The Inspector said, 'Right, we'll go down there tonight and turn a few of them over; if they are shouting and mucking about we will nick a few.' A Sergeant who had been out of the room entered and one of the P.C.s said to him, 'We've got permission to beat niggers tonight, Sarge; have a few tonight Sarge.'³⁷

A dislike and distrust of blacks is certainly expressed in this episode but, more than this, it indicates the enjoyment and exploitation of an opportunity for involvement in a scuffle or fight, during which the action orientation of the occupational culture can be sustained. It would seem that the typifications of the occupational culture are categories into which information is moulded. The occupational culture is a shared series of meanings which sustains yet is also sustained by the cognitive map we have documented.

'Challengers'

The term 'Challengers' refers to those groups with potential power to challenge the assumption that Hilton's police had the right to control persons held in custody or concerned with other areas of police work. Importantly, these 'challengers' could pierce the protective shield of secrecy and interdependency found in policing. Two main groups were relevant: lawyers and doctors. A third, social workers, were of less importance but nevertheless had potential to question police action.

Lawyers were of particular importance because they could unmask police practice and articulate the grievances of less authoritative clients. Being able to expose police practice to public view, lawyers prompted the police to 'cover themselves' if a potential complaint arose³⁸. The Inspector in charge of a relief was particularly aware of this danger, as this comment demonstrates:

'Yes, I see. There are some people who you would get a solicitor for and make entries in the O.B. because you know that they would complain against you. There are others you would not bother with. Each case had to be dealt with on its own and you need experience to know what to do.'³⁹

The important point in this remark about 'commonsense' is that the Inspector begins from the assumption that the making of a complaint against the police is the factor which determines whether or not a person should be permitted to see their solicitor. The status of the solicitor as a 'challenger' is therefore of particular importance.

A Sergeant who had arrested two persons suspected of overstaying their residence in this country went to the canteen to purchase a meal for his 'prisoners'. One of the detainees was requesting the presence of his solicitor, a request the Sergeant did not want to grant. He was asked why he was buying the food - 'You're going to get him a meal Sarge, you must be getting soft, you must be cracking up?' Sergeant: 'I'm backing it both ways. It may be that his landing conditions are O.K. so I'm backing it both ways.'⁴⁰

The meal was intended to placate the request for the solicitor, who could challenge the investigation of the suspect in the police station.

Similarly, after two Temporary Detective Constables had arrested two suspects for attempted burglary, the Inspector on the relief asked them,

'I hope you have checked to see who his solicitor is. Is it an M.P. ? We'll be getting a one-docket from the House of Commons. Officer: 'We'll just change our evidence if it is.'⁴¹

Other officers were less discreet when a prisoner asked to see a solicitor.

A number of Irish persons charged with Grievous Bodily Harm were in the cells. A Sergeant went to check their condition and when one of the prisoners shouted through the wicket gate he was punched. Prisoner: 'I want my

solicitor.' 'You don't get anything,' replied the Sergeant. He later advised his Constable, Assistant Station Officer, 'Right, check them every half an hour and if you get a chance, give them a thump.'⁴²

The nature of the offence against this prisoner was certainly a factor in the Sergeant's response. However, the request for a solicitor which challenged police control was also an important factor.

Officers did not like solicitors being given permission to enter the station - this was mentioned in our discussion of the meaning of the police station. The following remark from an investigating officer expressed the implicit feeling of the officers at Hilton.

It refers to a request made by a person during questioning;

'That one really got up my nose. He was within an ace of getting his head slammed up against the wall. Who the fucking hell does he think we are? "I want my solicitor." He'll want us to get the fucking Law Centre down here soon. They make me fucking sick.'⁴³

Solicitor or lawyers could potentially challenge the police's assumption of control and were therefore viewed in a negative fashion.

However, in these last data we find another element which concerned Hilton's police. Solicitors could act, as officers put it, as a 'mouth piece', articulating a suspect's challenge to police action.

This was one of the reasons for the Law Centre being represented as a troublesome place. Two black youths had been arrested by an officer from Hilton for obstructing the highway. They pleaded 'Not Guilty' and were represented at the Magistrates' Court hearing.

The arresting officer expressed his view:

'If it was you or I we wouldn't be represented. It's amazing how they get represented.' Here, resentment is expressed against black youths but the lawyer who is acting for them by articulating their questionable challenge to police action is also pertinent. Again, before a case at the Crown Court was heard the arresting officers commented, 'M's on legal aid, isn't he?' 'Yes, he got it through the Law Centre. Alright, isn't it?' 'Oh, crooks anonymous.'⁴⁴

Solicitors from the law centre acted for those who were disorderly, in doing so they were contaminated by the supposed criminality and guilt of their clientele, making police work all the more difficult.

This mistrust of the lawyer helped to create the courtroom into an arena in which a lawyer often attempted to unmask the credibility of a police officer's evidence, while the police officer maintained his protective shield. The game-like character of the court was not entirely disliked by officers. One expressed this view:

'Were you questioned very rigorously?' Colleague:
'No, not rigorously but aggressively. I thought the barrister was a bit obvious. He said it was all fabrication.'⁴⁵

In another example two officers commented on a lawyer's performance, 'You'd have thought that he was trying a murder charge, wouldn't you, not a breach of the peace'. In effect these officers allege that the defending lawyers were insufficiently subtle in their questioning, thereby overplaying the game of the court hearing.

The Stipendiary Magistrates before whom cases were taken could also be 'challengers'. However, because cases from Hilton went to the same court, where the same Magistrates usually sat, officers had considerable knowledge of how their presentation of a case would be received. Taking a case, not least a 'dodgy one', to a 'foreign court' involved the risk of unmasking.

Two of Hilton's officers had arrested suspects for attempting to take a motor vehicle. Their colleagues discussed the arresting officers' unwillingness to construct the evidence in order to gain a conviction: 'And it is a foreign court anyway, so there we are, you see, he doesn't believe in that sort of thing.'⁴⁶

Whilst officers held generally negative views about defending lawyers, they also enjoyed the challenge the court room offered.

A Constable was telling two Sergeants of a performance in court when he disarmed a lawyer by asking, 'If I may refer to my original notes?' The Sergeant replied, 'You ought to be an actor, you are in the wrong job.' Constable: 'You are dead right, that's what it is. That's what it's all about.' Other Sergeant: 'That's it, that's our stage. That's what it's all about, you've got to be a good actor.'⁴⁷

The potential challenge to and unmasking of the police officer, both in the police station and courtroom, resulted in lawyers assuming typifications of importance.

Doctors were thought to have a similar capacity to unmask police action; this was noted in the chapter on space. If a person was injured while in police custody or as a result of some sort of police action, that person had to be examined by a doctor, who could enquire into the manner in which harm had been done. The effective burden of this potential to make police accountable for their actions fell on supervisory staff, usually sergeants acting as station officer. Constables occasionally commented on remarks made by doctors at the local hospitals, expressing the view that they could be challenged by them. One doctor was reported asking, 'Is this another person been beaten up at Hilton Police Station?' Similarly, on another occasion an officer warned:

'The hospital are very 'anti' at the moment with this bloke being beaten up. They won't co-operate at all because they don't like what's happened to him. He's only got a few bruises on the top of his head.'⁴⁸

This last incident, stressing the potential for a doctor to monitor police action was the subject of comment by another officer:

'... the hospital took photographs of him you know, not the defence. The doctor measured every single cut on his face and put it on a picture of the face and they took photographs - not the defence.'⁴⁹

Doctors were not characterised in the firmly oppositional terms applied to defending lawyers. In part, this was because the hospital doctors would also check on the health of any person thought to be ill and requiring treatment in a hospital, moving responsibility from the station officer to the hospital staff. However, the notion of opposition arose when doctors went beyond what the police considered purely medical duties, to make a judgement about police action.

Some evidence suggested that any apparent interference in police work was resented.

After a boy had been taken to the paediatric section of a local hospital because it was alleged that his father had beaten him, a doctor asked the Inspector dealing with the matter, 'If the police take initial action on these things then I understand that it becomes a police case and that is something which is not often liked because if it's shown to be a mistake not the fault of the parent of the child who's suffered injury there is unnecessary stigma?' Inspector: 'No, I don't think

that's the case at all. We aren't big ogres you know. We've been doing social work before the social services ever began and we're quite capable of doing it and we're quite capable of using our discretion in the matter and I don't think there's any stigma in going to court now in this day and age ...' The doctor listened and said that he was only seeking information, not opinion.⁵⁰

Whatever our reaction to these data, the point to be emphasised is the threat to the controlling influence of the police, which the Inspector seemed to place at a premium. He summarises the more general belief that police have the right to control what they consider to be their own affairs and doctors should not interfere with that right. The fact that the police could be challenged by doctors resulted in the features of relevant knowledge we have documented.

Similarly, the right to intervene in police affairs and so possibly challenge decision making processes was of relevance to the police's understanding of social workers working at Hilton. On the one hand, social workers were thought to affect police action by default. They were rarely available to assist when the police required them and when they did assist they were thought to be somewhat uncooperative.

As one Sergeant put it, 'Fucking social workers. They never deem anybody and you can never get hold of them anyway because all the nutters we get are outside office hours. So they never do anything.'⁵¹

Another officer put it that,

'I should think that Social Services up there have just about had enough of her because they (the police) phoned up a social worker and for one of them to get up in the morning is quite something. I don't think he realised there were two 2 o'clocks in the day.'⁵²

On the other hand, social workers were thought to be ignorant of the conditions of police work. Although they were not mentioned by officers with anything like the frequency of other groups, they were felt to be a group who were ignorant of the character of people whom both they and the police had to deal with. This was inferred when an officer expressed his sympathy with a person he had arrested and was called a 'social worker';

'I feel sorry for him. He's not a villain. He doesn't do thieving out of villainy. He just doesn't know why

he's done it.' Other officer: 'Blimey, we've got a social worker here.'⁵³

Two Home Beat officers were discussing the bad housing and difficult living conditions existing on the sub-division. A Constable who had been listening to them said, 'Bloody social workers'. Pleasure was therefore expressed at court when an officer considered a social worker did not support his client but argued that punishment was required. This view echoed a broader perspective about police decision-making.

A Constable argued, 'Social workers introduce a lot of greys into the situation. Years ago things used to be black or white and you knew where you stood. Now there's lots of grey and you don't know where you are. I think we ought to get back to be policemen. I mean, look at Home Beat men. They are supposed to be social workers and not policemen.'⁵⁴

As a more senior officer had put it, 'Theories are alright but they don't work in practice.'⁵⁵

Social workers did not share the basic assumptions underpinning the commonsense theory of policing. As such, and remembering the likelihood of their being able to make decisions about individuals the police had an interest in, they could challenge police handling of particular cases, introducing, as the officer put it, 'grey into the essentially black and white situation'. This was the challenge to policing at Hilton.

'Challengers', noticeably doctors, lawyers and social workers, were regarded as groups who could unmask police practice, revealing and interfering with the freedom afforded by cultural techniques of policing. Clearly, these groups could question the autonomy of police decision-making. The source of this power can be related to their position within the broader social structure.

However, when lawyers have been considered, particularly with reference to the court hearing, officers seemed to attribute a sense of challenge to the situation. This should not be overdrawn but it is feasible to argue that such challenge, together with the

risks of unmasking it could involve, sustained the oppositional, control-based character of the occupational culture. As we noted in our discussion of the typification of 'blacks', the population map is ordered by the occupational culture.

'Disarmers'

'Disarmers' were the members of groups who could weaken or neutralise police action because, to the police, their status was one of ambivalence. The police found it necessary to take some action against them but that action had to be tempered. Their frailty, age and/or the sympathy which those monitoring police action might have for them could provoke the accounting of police work.

Again, we find the police are not isolated from broader social trends. For example, women were a group who could soften or neutralise police values and actions relevant to men. When in custody, although subject to a measure of control, it was noticeable how police officers did not attempt to secure the absolute control of women, which they found necessary when dealing with men. Women were frequently arrested for shoplifting and there was a period when officers were highly critical of the local store detectives for prosecuting women who had stolen goods of a very low value. However, the treatment of women held in custody for any offence was always 'soft'.

A young woman was arrested for theft and it was also found that she was also wanted for questioning by the Special Branch. The station officer allowed her to sit in his chair at the Charge Room desk and when he wanted to use it he asked a Constable to get her another. This was done despite the girl being of black British origin, a suspected thief and political activist.⁵⁴

An Italian woman was arrested for criminal damage. She was exceedingly abusive and uncooperative toward the arresting officer but, nevertheless, he remained calm. He brought a cup of tea to the charge room and placed it on the desk at which she was sitting. The woman knocked it off the desk. The officer said, 'Look, love, don't be stupid. I was going to enjoy that cup of tea.' He went to get another cup and the same thing happened. He remained calm.⁵⁷

Although precise, matching data involving men is not available, sufficient evidence is accessible to establish the assumption of virtual, absolute control over a recalcitrant prisoner held in the station and immediate correction of non-cooperation by one means or another. Certainly, it is safe to conclude that if a man had knocked the tea over he would have been 'corrected' by his officer. Further, if a man had sat in the station officer's chair he would have been ordered to sit on the bench provided in the charge room or placed in a detention room.

There were occasions when women were involved in a scuffle with police but they were not subject to the use of physical force.

An Inspector arrested a woman who was obstructing him while he administered a breath-test to her male companion. After she had been brought to the station and charged, he told a group of officers: 'It's a good job she's a woman. I haven't been nearer hitting a woman for years. If it hadn't been a woman it would have been assault on the police and Sergeant ——— would have been making an entry in the O.B.'⁵⁸

In this apparently most provocative of situations the woman was not subject to the use of physical force.

There was even some suggestion that women should not normally be prosecuted for motoring offences.

After a Constable had reported a woman for such an offence a colleague asked, 'You haven't reported a woman, have you, that's a bit strong, isn't it?' 'It was dangerous turning against the sign at that bloody junction.' Other constables joined in the questioning.⁵⁹

The reasons for women being typified in this way are associated with more general ideas about their culpability, weakness and dependence within our society. However, remembering such notions, officers were disarmed from using the full range of techniques or control available when dealing with men. They were also disarmed because the sexual attraction of women risked potential allegations of misconduct against officers. A very small number of women were known for their sexual advances towards the police. One woman prompted the comment: 'Most P.C.s won't go there on their own because she usually appears at the door in a frilly nightie.'⁶⁰ In the chapter on space

we noted how a woman making allegations of sexual liaison with police officers was marked out as dangerous and extraordinary steps were taken to ensure that no further allegations could be made. Many of the terms used to refer to women carried a sexual connotation - 'slag', 'nigger bait', 'tart'. Care to avoid exploitation and subsequent trouble had to be considered.

The ambivalence surrounding women presented Hilton's officers with a problem of management. Interestingly, women were a group who could disarm police action because they were attributed with a particular status. As such, they were important to the perceptual map of the population.

The other group who could disarm police action was children. In part the capacity of children to disarm the full 'commonsense' of policing was due to uncertainty about their culpability. Hilton was a poorly kept area, children often played in the streets and were highly visible to patrolling officers. In part, though by no means was this a strongly held view, the behaviour of children was believed to be the result of a failure by parents to control their children.

'It's living around here and growing up in a bad family'.

'The way parents treat the kids round here is criminal, yes, criminal. My kids would never be allowed out on their own at that age, never.' 'Some people say that the parents can't control the kids. I don't know, I think they can.'⁶¹

These remarks from patrolling officers demonstrate the dilemmas which could disarm police action in particular situations. The issue was one of the blame and accountability to be attached to a child's conduct. It was a significant question mark against action, not a total constraint.

Further, if total control of children who were likely to require the attention of the police was necessary, officers wondered if their action would be 'backed' by senior officers and the juvenile court. A juvenile bureau scheme was in operation in the research force. This supposedly 'soft' manner of dealing with children, which was both authoritative and legitimate, added to officers' frustrations. Although the officer to be quoted did not work at

Hilton, his remark nicely conveys the situation prevailing at Hilton. He refers to the bureau scheme and its disarming effects: 'If you are dealing with a leary and insolent young brat, do you put that down as information?'⁶² In the station, and more generally as a section of the population, children could raise more question marks about the appropriateness of police decisions and action than other groups - this was the reason for their incorporation in the population map.

We do not suggest that children who committed offences and came into police custody were immune from physical force. We will see that they could be given 'one sharp slap around the left ear', 'Give 'em a thick ear' - but this is different from the range of techniques applicable to adults, and it stems from the disarming capacity of children. The question of total culpability and a lack of support, together with some perceived public sympathy which might be afforded children, disarmed the police. This continued to be the case even though some officers thought children were becoming increasingly crafty.

'They know all the tricks of the trade. You've got fourteen year olds coming in here who know all the tricks before you get them in.' 'Yes, they're trying to outwit you more. They're getting much more subtle.'⁶³

Such subtlety was all the more serious for Hilton's officers when the disarming effects of children were taken into consideration.

Summary and discussion

We have now documented some of the central features of what I have called the population map. The function of that map has been described in terms of its relevance to the ambiguous information presented to Hilton's police in the course of their work. Thus, it is closely related to the meaning of police work to the lower ranked, operational officers, particularly their protection from accountability.

Using the imagery of topography we have noted the primary or background reality of a chaotic, potentially disorderly population. This facilitated a view of policing concerned with continual vigilance to save the errant from complete disorder. When placed within the

framework of legitimate discretion afforded the British police, we can understand how a variety of techniques, some not entirely within the confines of the criminal law, are basic to good police work. Police work is not a case of applying particular laws to particular offenders, of giving good and well verified, principled counsel to those who require education. Rather, the primary reality confronting the operational officer at Hilton was that of potential and continuing disorder which required a whole range of techniques of control to prevent a drift into chaos. Because the occupational culture, with its central value of control, is utterly basic to urban policing we also observe how the population map is closely related to the spatial and temporal maps. The fundamental features of the occupational culture are the basis of all cognitive mapping of the sub-division.

When we considered the contours constructed upon the primary background of potential chaos, we were again confronted with typifications which could be related to the practical contingencies of police work, as they were defined by operational ranks. Given the anthropology lying behind them, importantly, the assumption that many differing techniques of control are necessary to policing, protection from unnecessary interference in the highly practical activity of police work had to be secured. In part, the typifications of doctors and lawyers were based on this characteristic of the occupational culture. Similarly, the meaning of children and women suggested officers realised that their freedom was limited by the constraints of popular morality, no matter how nebulous a notion that constraint might be. Further, the typification of 'blacks', with its generally negative character, was related to the broader social structure and the relative powerlessness of black British people. Yet, when drawing on the services of lawyers and others who could articulate their grievances, the challenge of blacks was seen as virtual exploitation. Blacks could then challenge the freedom of officers to practise their work as they desired. The population map was therefore not entirely isolated from the broader social structure but vied with it to retain its autonomy. Officers neutralised and negated various constraints imposed on them in order to secure their autonomy.

We have also noted that the typifications cited were utterly fundamental. They were background assumptions from which other information of particular cases was moulded. The occupational culture was of such centrality that typifications of the population of Hilton sustained and strengthened it. For example, in the section on 'blacks' we saw how a negative attribute of lawlessness was attributed to that section of the population, yet the challenge of controlling it and hedonistic aspects of involvement with disorder - the very attributes attached to young blacks - were valued, for they made policing interesting, action-oriented work. Similarly, although lawyers could expose the manner in which investigations of suspects had been conducted, there was a sense in which the drama of the courtroom was a challenge, for it involved risks of exposure as well as an opportunity to manage the setting of the courtroom to advantage⁶⁴.

We have also made some distinctions between the American and British contexts. Westley has again been criticised for his tendency to portray a one-dimensional view of the population policed. Certainly, the notion of a chaotic, disorderly population found in this study is to be contrasted with the manifestly dangerous view held by the American police. We have also been able to give some credibility to Manning's suggestion that the occupational culture forms an initial framework of assumptions for police typifications.

As far as British research is concerned, we have modified Cain's conceptualisation of the population policed and wedded it more firmly to the values of the occupational culture. In part, this was possible because Cain did not distinguish the contours of police perceptions of the world. Michael Banton's suggestion that the British police do not draw a hard-and-fast line between themselves and the public is also questioned. We have not found evidence of a separation based on danger - the dominant finding of American research. However, our evidence suggests a demarcation between the British police and the public. The police possess stability, control and self discipline; the public, naivety, the potential for disorderliness and 'fallenness'. More particular distinguishing features were placed

against this background.

Any sociological attempt to analyse the richness of social relations is doomed to be over-rigid. The typifications presented here do not cover all the groups with whom Hilton's police had contact: Indians, Greeks, the Housing Association, shop keepers and so on. Further, the possible categorisation of individuals between and from one category into another has to be recognised. Anybody could be a potential 'challenger' or 'disarmer' - the intention has been to discuss those groups consistently selected by Hilton's personnel. Officers also added fine detail to the back and foregrounds discussed - for example, tarts, 'a nice bit of stuff', kids, juveniles, were details added to the general typification of women and children - and so on. We beg a full lexicon but, again, this was not our purpose. Basing our description and analysis in ethnographic data we have mapped how Hilton's police typified the population policed and how that understanding can be related to the occupational culture.

Notes and references

- 1 For a discussion of the distinction between reactive and proactive policing, see Reiss, A.J. (1971) The police and the public, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- 2 Of course, this is not confined to police work. Other, similar emergency services work in such settings.
- 3 Chatterton, M.R. (1975) Organisational relationships and processes in police work: a case study of urban policing, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Manchester, and Manning, P.K. (1977) Police work: the social organisation of policing, Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, both refer to this issue.
- 4 Again, see Chatterton, M.R. (1975) op.cit., and Manning, P.K. (1977) op. cit., for this.
- 5 For example, Young, J. (1971) The drugtakers, London: MacGibbon & Kee.
- 6 This notion is found in Manning, P.K. (1977) op.cit. He draws on Bittner's work.
- 7 F.N. 140:2.
- 8 F.N. 141:1.

- 9 F.N. 267:5.
- 10 Westley, W. (1970) Violence and the police, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, pp.48-108.
- 11 Skolnick, J.H. (1966) Justice without trial, New York: Wiley, p.45.
- 12 Skolnick, J.H., *ibid.*, p.67.
- 13 Rubinstein, J. (1973) City police, New York: Ballantine, p.186.
- 14 Banton, M. (1964) The policeman in the community, London: Tavistock, p.118.
- 15 Cain, M.E. (1973) Society and the policeman's role, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.112-119.
- 16 Manning, P.K. (1977) *op.cit.*, p.236.
- 17 Manning, P.K., *ibid.*, p.237.
- 18 F.N. 341:11.
- 19 Manning, P.K. (1977), *op.cit.*, p.237.
- 20 Clarke, J., et al. (1974) 'The selection of evidence and the avoidance of racialism: a critique of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration', New Community, 111 (3): 172-192; also Banton, M. (1973) Police community relations, London: Collins.
- 21 F.N. 116:2.
- 22 F.N. 209:3.
- 23 F.N. 586:2.
- 24 F.N. 119:1.
- 25 F.N. 357:7.
- 26 F.N. 470:2.
- 27 F.N. 494:4.
- 28 Clarke, J. et al. (1974) *op. cit.*
- 29 F.N. 177:5, and Cain, M.E. (1973) *op. cit.*
- 30 F.N. 612:4.
- 31 F.N. 122:3.
- 32 F.N. 617:10.

- 33 F.N. 473:3.
- 34 F.N. 156:4.
- 35 F.N. 161:8.
- 36 F.N. 199:1.
- 37 F.N. 435:2.
- 38 The role of divisional surgeon is described in Chapter 5.
- 39 F.N. 199:1. O.B. means the station diary in which summaries of all important incidents occurring on the sub-division were recorded.
- 40 F.N. 273:2.
- 41 F.N. 132:6a.
- 42 F.N. 121:1.
- 43 F.N. 456:4.
- 44 F.N. 298.
- 45 F.N. 217:1.
- 46 F.N. 442:10.
- 47 F.N. 685:1.
- 48 F.N. 599:5.
- 49 F.N. 604:3.
- 50 F.N. 243:3.
- 51 F.N. 234:2a - 'deem' means place a person in mental hospital care.
- 52 F.N. 377:11.
- 53 F.N. 265:3.
- 54 F.N. 237.
- 55 F.N. 205:2.
- 56 F.N. 409:8/410:12.
- 57 F.N. 431.
- 58 F.N. 488:5.
- 59 F.N. 152:2a.

- 60 F.N. 330:4.
- 61 F.N. 685:2, 190:4 and 575:5.
- 62 F.N. 142:3.
- 63 F.N. 590:1.
- 64 See Carlen, P. (1976) Magistrates' justice, London: Martin Robertson, which discusses this point in a broader context.

CHAPTER 7

STRATEGIES OF CONTROL

Having charted the manner in which Hilton's police mapped the population, we now discuss a range of strategies of control they employed to enable them to operationalise their understanding of good police work. The strategies focussed sharply on the notion that 'prisoners', that is persons taken into police custody, are the main clientele of the police. For this reason the chapter begins with a consideration of the meaning of the term 'prisoner', together with the associated 'figures' emphasis found at Hilton.

'Prisoners' have not been included in the population map because, although they were of relevance to it, their importance included but also exceeded that of the other typifications we have documented. The meaning of 'prisoner' bound central elements of the occupational culture together in a rigorous manner. Some officers working at Hilton had considerable knowledge of local offenders. A variety of terms were used to describe them - 'slags', 'villains', 'toe-rags' and so on. However, the embracing designation was that of 'prisoner' or, perhaps, 'bodies'.

The term 'prisoner' does not just refer to a person who has been taken into custody for a criminal offence. As Cain found in her study, the arrest of drunks and persons responsible for minor public order offences was also considered a meaningful activity¹. The experience of action, challenge and, most importantly, control, was generated when such arrests were made - the occupational culture was sustained. Arresting a prisoner was the primary act of good police work.

However, in spite of the value of an arrest for any offence, officers recognised that some prisoners were more prestigious than others.

A Constable was making great play about an arrest he had made; 'I had to arrest somebody yesterday you know'. The Sergeant who listened to him challenged: 'A juvenile?'

P.C.: 'No.' P.S.: 'Old age pensioner ?' P.C.: 'No.'
P.S.: 'Female shop-lifter ?' P.C.: 'No.' P.S.: 'Drunk ?'
P.C.: 'No. Pecuniary advantage, actually.' The
Constable redressed the balance by asserting the
control he exhibited: 'We got into the station and he
called me "son". So I had to hit him, I had to teach
him the error of his ways.'²

Here the Sergeant suggests that certain types of prisoner are less prestigious than others. However, the central point is that the challenge to control made by any prisoner is of importance to the police. A prisoner functions as a visible reminder to the police that they work amongst a population which demonstrates potential and actual disorder. In fact, the experience of policing a disorderly population is summarised most vividly by the arrest of a criminal offender, to which other arrests are compared. This is not to neglect the peace-keeping aspects of policing but, as other studies have demonstrated clearly, crime-work dominates the understanding operational ranks have of their work³. Crime work, centrally, the act of making an arrest, is interpreted as the act keeping chaos at bay. The centrality of 'figures of arrest and charge' as a measure of police performance adds evidence to the police view of prisoners as a pervasive type. This aspect of policing will be considered before further assessment of the meaning of 'the prisoner' is made.

Figures

Prisoners are 'bodies' that can be counted; they represent a measure of police performance to sustain the notion that a disorderly world requires police control. When I arrived for my first tour of duty at Hilton, a colleague emphasised to me the number of charges taken at the station during the current administrative year. This was a good indication of the importance of 'prisoners', once translated into a measure of performance.

After returning to work from fourteen days holiday, another colleague told me, 'Yes, you are station officer for most of this week. We took a right hammering over the last fortnight; we have really put a lot of bodies in the charge book. A lot of grief, but you can see we're on 2,100 charges,

pretty good really. We've been really busy.'⁴

Although drunks added to the charge figures and, therefore, the rated performance of the station, there was some doubt about their relevance.

The same Sergeant was talking to a junior C.I.D. officer: 'They took ten charges last night, so they must have been pretty busy.' C.I.D.: 'Well, I suppose they were drunks.' Sergeant: 'No, there was some drugs in it as well, we're up to 2,300 charges already .' C.I.D.: 'That's busy is it ?' Sergeant: 'Yes.'⁵

Probationer constables were required to submit to their supervisory sergeant the number of arrests they made during each month. Such figures indicated the determination and competence of each probationer. If they were short of arrests, probationers might ask to be employed on the van patrol during night duty, which offered the opportunity of making arrests fairly quickly⁶.

When employed on a special squad, officers believed that the number of stops of suspected persons and, more crucially, the number of arrests made, demonstrated their busyness and competence. A constable who had recently been seconded to work on a squad established to combat a large number of car thefts taking place in Hilton, put this view. I asked him if he enjoyed working on the squad.

'Yes, you have got a lot more freedom when you are doing that. But it is not like beat crimes where you have a bit of a lazy time because you have got a diary to fill in and you have got to justify yourself and there is only one way to do that. That is to get out and do stops and to nick people.'⁷

Similarly, the crew of the plain clothes patrol car, known as the Q Car, were constantly watching the number of arrests they made, aware of the importance of this measure of performance⁸. 'Figures', then, were a primary measure of the competent performance of policemen by individual and special squads of officers.

This measure of competence also extended beyond the individual and to group comparisons between Hilton and other stations -

'It's not as busy as this place, not on figures anyway.'
Again: 'I was station officer at — last night. We're
200 up on their charge book already this year and
about a hundred up on breathalysers.' S.H.: 'Yes, it
is pretty quiet down there really.' Officer: 'No,
they had more charges than us last year but this year
it is different.'⁹

The importance of figures as an indication of the status of the station was also found in the following data when an arrest was made by Hilton officers on the neighbouring section of Bluecoat, meaning that the prisoners should have been taken to that station.

After the arrest of two youths, the following conversation took place over the personal radio system. The driver of the police vehicle said, 'Two bodies coming to Hilton.' A C.I.D. constable intervened, 'They nicked it from Hall Road so they might as well go to Bluecoat, then it's a straight red-inker.' (Arrest recorded). A Hilton P.C. interjected, 'If they come to Hilton we can both have one.'¹⁰

These prisoners were brought to Hilton with the approval of the station officer, despite the greater administrative work involved. One of the reasons for this breach of rules was that the figures were increased by bringing the prisoners to Hilton; the competence of the officers and the whole station was enhanced.

Arrests also meant that Hilton's officers were able to work overtime and increase their wages. Figures of arrest were important in this respect and its repetition here, after initial documentation in the chapter on time, reminds us of the extrinsic rewards arrests brought to operational ranks.

We should confine our attention to lower-ranked, operational officers. They knew that their supervisory officers also found much gratification in the figures of arrest and charge they generated. For example, one night duty I was suddenly bombarded with a series of drunks whom I had to charge. The Inspector supervising the relief explained, 'Sorry about that but I gave them a bit of a roasting on parade about not doing any work.'¹¹ This tendency did not stop at the level of intermediate rank. It was rare for the Chief Superintendent of the station to write in the Parade Book, which was a register of information read to patrolling officers when they paraded for duty

at the beginning of each shift. However, on the very few occasions when such entries were made, the topic was generally that of crime.

One Chief Superintendent wrote:

'Hilton has taken over half the total of crime arrests on the whole division during the past week. This is only done through hard work and the staff are to be congratulated for their efforts.'

A previous Chief Superintendent made rather similar comments:

'It has not gone unnoticed that over the past two or three weeks a lot of good work has been put in by a lot of Officers in the field of crime. Many good arrests have resulted and obviously this gives me cause for great pleasure. The officers concerned are to be congratulated on their efforts and I know that they will continue as there are many more wrong doers who have yet to be brought in.

'The Detective Chief Inspector is also appreciative of the efforts made and wishes to be associated with my remarks.'¹²

Senior officers knew that any reference they made to 'figures' touched a central feature of the occupational culture and offered an opportunity to motivate the lower ranks. The status and competence of their own station was established by this work, largely carried out by lower ranks, on whom they were dependent¹³. These officers also knew that the manpower strength of their station would be preserved if it could be demonstrated that considerable crime and disorder was present in their sub-division. Yet, it was also true that 'figures' indicated that the staff of a station had the ability to challenge criminal and other disorderly behaviour.

It was not possible to obtain clear data on this point from Hilton's senior officers, but, during the course of a discussion of the issue with the officer in charge of a neighbouring station, such an explanation was forthcoming. I pointed out that one of the most senior officers of the force was arguing that the peace-keeping work of policing was of considerable importance and should be considered alongside crime control. He replied:

'Well, he (the senior officer in question) has never been a working policeman in this force and it might be all right to say these things in — (names previous city force of senior officer), where the pressure is not on, but it is quite another thing here. Anyway,

he is not really helping things. You see, the reason I worry about the charge figures at this station is because if they drop we get less men allotted to us next year, so I try to keep them up. This is the Chief Officer's policy, so you see how — makes us do this sort of thing. He is in it as much as anyone.¹⁴

Clearly, for this and other senior officers, the dilemma of developing an adequate measure of performance was determined by the Chief Officers of the force. Figures of arrest and charge were a thread running through all levels of the force, offering a performance measure available to those requiring an indication of police effort and effectiveness.

Figures, the translation of prisoners into a measure of performance, also had a number of other functions. As several commentators on the British Police have noted, figures of charges rationalise the diversity of police work into an identifiable, referrable and practical task¹⁵. It should also be stated that such a rationalisation sustains a sense of occupational identity and status. Prisoners - figures - forge a strong bond which preserves the central notion that policing is concerned with the prevention of potential chaos. At one and the same time this highly available and tangible measure enhances the view that disorder is rife but also that the police are able to counter the chaotic drift the figure represents. Prisoners therefore served to fulfil the broader function of sustaining the occupational culture.

Prisoners as types

Having established the central importance of prisoners, we can now discuss further characteristics Hilton's police ascribed to this typification. It should be noted that the word used to describe a person held in police custody was 'prisoner', not suspect or detainee. The assumption lying behind the use of this term was the necessity of retaining control over an offender, just as a prisoner is confined after conviction and sentence. Further, it suggests that the police assume a suspect's guilt. The other frequently used term, 'body', suggests impersonality. It tends to facilitate the use of a number

of techniques of control denying the motivation, account and humanity a detained person might reveal.

First, prisoners are evidence of the denial of police control. When held in custody, they must assent to the constraints imposed on them by police officers. With the rejoinder that police action can be disarmed - for example, by a woman held in custody - the initial assumption about a prisoner is that he or she will submit, verbally and physically, to the directions of a police officer. If that submission is not evident, redress is required.

The assumption of control and that of assent to control is found in the following example, when a prisoner attempted to escape from custody but was captured. The Sergeant on duty at the time recalled,

We had one escape from the nick and I was station officer and I had to stand between the prisoner and my relief. When he was captured they all wanted to kick his bollocks off, and that was my relief I might add. They were like a pack of animals wanting to get at him.¹⁷

The Sergeant involved was protective because he was responsible for the physical safety of the prisoner. However, and as the following data illustrate, control is still assumed, even though a Sergeant may agree with a prisoner that the evidence presented against him is trivial.

A squatter had been arrested by two C.I.D. constables and a uniformed P.C. for possession of a controlled drug. A minute trace of an unknown substance in a used syringe was involved. The Sergeant turned to the officers, all being in the visual and verbal presence of the prisoner, and said, 'What's all this shit? You're not interested in that, are you? You're not seriously interested in that?' One of the detectives said, 'No, I'm not interested in it at all but it was found there and we have to find out what is going on.' Another constable said that he would complete the administration of the charge. The Sergeant looked at them in disgust and began to leave the charge room when the prisoner said to him, 'Now, you're surely not going to do me for that? I'm trying to get off the stuff and you won't help me at all if you do me for that. It's as offensive to me as it is to you.' The Sergeant said, 'I don't know what I'm going to do but I'll make my own mind up, thank you.'¹⁸

We notice how the assumption of control extends to a situation where

a supervisory officer actually believes the action taken against a prisoner is inappropriate.

Running away from a police officer was immediately assumed to be a denial of control rather than a symptom of fear or guilt. Two constables discussed an arrest: A: 'I trust they have been suitably spoken to?' B: 'No, not a thing, they didn't run away or anything.'¹⁹ Other documented incidents verify this comment. Prisoners defy control, they require police action to restore orderliness. In this highly immediate and visible fashion the background of a world on the verge of chaos is strengthened and sustained.

Secondly, prisoners are the property of those who have arrested them and, in the first instance, it is the prerogative of the arresting officer to ensure their submission to control.

Two constables arrested two youths for suspected rape. One of the officers described the arrest: 'I found them and put them in the back of my Panda, then ——— comes up, leaps out of his Panda and gets in the passenger seat of mine. He turns round to them and says, "I'm arresting you for rape". That was it, he wasn't anywhere near.' Later, after the youths had been questioned, the officers redistributed their property: 'Right, decision time, who takes what?' The officer making the initial arrest said, 'I take the rapist and you take the other one.'²⁰

A prisoner is the property of the arresting officer.

This sense of property also meant that an arresting officer should have information about what was happening to his prisoner, whilst held in custody and questioned by other officers. In part, information that physical force had been used on a prisoner was necessary because a subsequent account of police action might be required at court. However, being property, a prisoner should not be questioned without the knowledge and permission of the arresting officer, that is, the owner of the property.

Two men had been arrested for taking a motor vehicle and it was suspected that they had also committed a burglary. The Station Officer asked a constable to assist in what became violent questioning but, before it began, he ensured that the arresting officer was present. 'I think

— (the officer arresting) should be with you when question the prisoner.' In fact, although the arresting officer took his colleague to the cell where the violent questioning was to take place, he did not remain there during the interrogation and this was the subject of comment by another constable. 'Old — didn't half hit the prisoner yesterday. — was in the canteen while — was thumping his prisoner.'²¹

Occasionally, a person was held in custody, waiting for officers from another station to collect and take him to the area where his offence had been committed. In such cases the prisoner was considered to be the property of that station. An officer who had talked to such a prisoner thought he might be able to obtain some useful evidence by further questioning. However, he also recognised that the prisoner was the property of another station.

'I wish it was our job 'cause I reckon given an hour or so I could work the oracle on him. His bottom lip is trembling and he's got something to hide. I just wish it was our job so I could do a little bit of investigation on it.'²²

These assumptions of control and property tended to create a situation where submission to control and truth were virtually synonymous. Certainly, submission to police control by a prisoner was of greater importance than the legal rules concerned with detention and questioning. In the chapter on the use of space within the police station the point was made that controls were employed to make it difficult for non-police personnel to gain easy access to persons held in custody. That point can be related to the assumptions of control and property described here. Officers believed they should be able to deal with their prisoners as they wished; rules like the Judges' Rules were of little relevance to their work. Indeed, it was very rare to hear somebody being cautioned when an arrest was made or before questioning began. The necessary caution was used when a charge was put but that part of the administrative process marked the end of investigation.

The ambivalence expressed about Judges' Rules was also found in the following data, where British Transport Police Officers brought an arrest to Hilton. The Station Officer dealing with the charge made

comments about their conduct. 'Right couple of lawyers we have got out there. They are trying to decide who cautioned him before he was arrested ...'²³ In later sections of this thesis the use of verballing (attributing false and incriminating statements to a prisoner) and physical force are documented as techniques used by the police to obtain a confession or conviction. The assumptions of control over prisoners and their designation as property combine to permit the evasion of legal rules designed to safeguard the process of arrest and investigation²⁴.

These, then, were the fundamental characteristics Hilton's police ascribed to prisoners. Prisoners were evidence of disorder begging control; they were the property of the arresting officer and legal rules concerned with their questioning took a secondary place to the primary occupational value of control. Of course, fine distinctions could be made about particular prisoners - some people who were arrested had the capacity to disarm or challenge police action. When such people were arrested, and it was a rare occurrence, different techniques were used, making the commonsense assumptions usually employed all the more visible to the researching observer. For example, in the chapter on the police station we noted how a juvenile accompanied by a solicitor was cautioned when arrested (pp.126-7). In the chapter on the population, detailed data of women held in police custody demonstrated how the assumption of control was neutralised in such circumstances.

The discussion presented in this chapter has been concerned with the core of the occupational culture as it applies to prisoners. Throughout the thesis, particular meanings attributed to discrete aspects of police work have led us back to other features of the occupational culture. To the police, prisoners suggest a lack of control, which enhances the sense of challenge, action and hedonism also found in the occupational culture. Again, we note how the interlocking parts of that culture are interwoven and sustained.

Strategies of control

Having established the importance and fundamental meanings of

'the prisoner', our discussion moves to the strategies of control used by Hilton's police in the course of their work. The description and analysis made will concentrate on the strategies of control, that is to say, techniques Hilton's police employed regularly. Less attention will be paid to tactics, the adjustment of strategies to meet particular contexts of police work. The data to be used are drawn from crime and arrest related incidents. My rank of Sergeant made it impossible to obtain data on peace-keeping methods. A Sergeant simply did not attend and supervise such incidents. Though unfortunate, this limitation had to be accepted. The following is therefore the beginnings of a lexicon of strategies of control used by Hilton's police in the course of their routine police work, both on the street and in the station.

In their useful commentary on this aspect of policing, Manning and Van Maanen have cited some of the key features of an encounter between a police officer and a citizen. Time, place, the problem of police authority and control, the demeanour of the citizen in relation to age, sex, situational identity and danger are documented as features affecting the action a police officer will employ²⁵. The individual style of the officer involved should be added to this list²⁶. However, the catalogue of relevant criteria Manning and Van Maanen present says little about the character of the strategies of control employed.

Manning has argued that much of police work is symbolic rather than instrumental. We have already had cause to comment on this aspect of his work when discussing the tenets of professional policing. The symbolic emphasis of a number of strategies of control used by Hilton's police will be demonstrated. However, Manning argues a largely theoretical case that policing is a highly symbolic activity. His research is not based in an ethnography and examples of how symbolism is employed by police during routine work are absent from his research report. The requirement is that of an ethnography to add evidential content to theoretical inference.

Skolnick has argued that,

'A key distinction between the English and American policeman is that the former tends to be more discreet in an interactional sense as well as discrete in an administrative one, thereby avoiding the censure that is often the lot of an American policeman.'²⁷

This remark might be related to Banton's discussion of policing, where he comments:

'If the British Constables were to patrol an American town the public would probably think them stuffy and unfriendly; they might resent their detachment, preferring the American style policeman who seems 'human' and approachable.'²⁸

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between these two analyses. However, the element of danger, which most American commentators cite, would seem to be of prior importance to the 'human' and approachable stance Banton describes. Manning and Van Maanen comment:

'... as Rubinstein notes, the police do not feel comfortable in any encounter until they are assured that their physical safety is not in danger.'²⁹

My research indicates that the element of danger found in the American setting was not a dominant factor influencing strategies of control used by lower ranks at Hilton. Further, the more discrete style of the English officer, which Skolnick points to, was not immediately obvious. Indeed, neither was the detachment between the officer and his public, which Banton found in a Scottish city force, evident in quite the same measure.

In the area of arrest and crime related work, the dominant meaning of 'chaos begging control' prompted a range of symbolic and instrumental strategies with an overriding emphasis on direct, virtually aggressive control. A high degree of subtlety was not immediately apparent, suggesting that the system of Panda patrolling, staffed by Hilton's relatively young patrolling officers, had diminished some of the perceived need for and use of a highly discriminatory and sensitive lexicon of strategies³⁰. Evidence of this point was available from personnel who had worked at Hilton for a number of years, spanning the introduction of Unit Beat Policing.

Following an incident during which a P.C. hit a coloured youth with his truncheon, a telephonist who had worked at Hilton for a considerable number of years made the following comments: 'Since the old personal radio came in, I think that instead of talking their way out of trouble like the old coppers did and getting by that way, they just pull their truncheons out and shout for assistance on the P.R. They don't talk their way out of it at all. They just ask for assistance and get their truncheons out.'³¹

Constables with considerable service at Hilton made similar remarks. Importantly, some of the Home Beat Officers, whose specialist work could broadly be called 'community relations', felt that the generally aggressive character of much policing by younger officers left much to be desired. Two of them were discussing the issue in the course of a long conversation during which the ineffective juvenile court system and Unit Beat Policing were considered as causes:

'I can tell you, I hear more young men around this station talking about summary justice than I've ever done.' 'Yes, I agree with you, but more and more young men here are hitting people because they don't think it's worth doing them at court.'

Later in the discussion: 'Yes, you're dead right, that's another old chestnut. The blokes here just don't know how to walk a beat, they never get out and meet anybody. They don't know how to talk to anybody. I think it's terrible. There is a proper way to walk a beat you know, there's a proper way to do it but do they know, no they don't. They want to ride around in Panda cars and they don't want to get out and walk around, meet people and talk to people. They just haven't got a clue.'³²

These criticisms point to a declining subtlety and sophistication in strategies of control. The officers discussing the issue were not 'mealy mouthed'. For example, they did not consider the use of physical force was always inappropriate; other data confirm that. However, they were concerned about the dominance of aggressive strategies, whatever their cause.

Their remarks beg a consideration of five main strategies of control documented at Hilton. It is emphasised that many and various tactics were employed by the officers as they worked with one or more

strategies of control. The following is a broadly based analysis, to which more particular contextual detail could be added.

Symbolic strategies

A number of commentators have made the point that the police are a highly visible symbol the political state³³. A uniformed constable standing on a street corner or an officer driving in a marked police car are representative of the pervasive character of state control. It is difficult to assess how far Hilton's officers were conscious of this point. Nevertheless, evidence will be presented to demonstrate how the uniform and other accoutrements of policing were used in a symbolic manner to assert police control.

Rubinstein³⁴ reminds us that in the American context the night-stick or truncheon (a shorter version than used in Britain) is certainly not used in a wholly symbolic manner. We must remember that the distinction between symbolism and instrumentalism is tenuous and analytical. However, an emphasis on symbolic control can be seen in the placing of a uniform cap on the rear seat or parcel shelf of an officer's private car. This was done to display to the public and other officers that the space within the vehicle and the external area it covered were infused with the power and authority of the absent officer. Any potential intrusion into that space was subsumed under the visible symbol of police control - a cap and badge.

On one occasion a uniformed officer, temporarily employed on plain clothes duty, parked his private car outside the station. He left his truncheon on the rear seat of his vehicle, symbolising the car as police property.

An Inspector noticed the truncheon and was concerned about the Sergeant abusing his authority. 'I don't know what he is trying to prove but there's a Paddy going to nick his truncheon which is on the back seat round there.'³⁵

Clearly, the use of these symbols of control was thought to have limits; the main point here is that the Inspector knew the Sergeant was using a truncheon to symbolise police control.

A marked police car could also be used in a symbolic manner. Panda cars were distinctively marked with an illuminated sign, 'Police', on the roof of the vehicle.

During a night duty shift I patrolled as a passenger in a Panda, driven by a constable. We patrolled a well-lit street without the 'Police' sign illuminated. A car tried to overtake us at what the constable thought was an inappropriate moment. He switched the 'Police' sign on and said to me 'I'll just let him know what's what.' Later, he was patrolling with the sign fully illuminated. He noticed a vehicle being driven in an erratic manner and commented that the driver might have been drinking. As our car was positioned behind the suspect vehicle the illuminated sign was switched off, making it virtually impossible for the suspect to realise the identity of the vehicle following him.³⁶

The marked police vehicle was being used in a symbolic fashion, first, extending control beyond the spatial boundaries of the car itself and, secondly, contracting those boundaries to symbolise 'normality'.

Symbols extend an idea, principle or some other notion beyond particular restrictive boundaries, to a more extensive terrain. Symbols attempt to penetrate physical and psychological barriers. In the following data the symbolism of a uniform was used to extend police control from the bodily frame, beyond a police vehicle, into a distant spatial area. Using visual gaze, an officer could attempt to extend his uniformed self and, therefore, its symbolic attributes of control, to infuse a particular spatial area or circumscribe a group or lone individual³⁷.

At 3.30 a.m. I was patrolling with a uniformed officer who was driving an unmarked police car. A coloured male was walking slowly along the footway of a well-lit major route. The officer slowed his car to walking pace and on two occasions passed the man at this speed, gazing at him as he passed. The officer commented, 'These coloured people certainly ask for trouble from us. They seem to hang about and look suspicious.'³⁸

On another occasion the driver of a police vehicle noticed a group of children playing on a building site. He drove his vehicle past the entrance to the site at a very slow speed, gazing at them to ensure they realised his presence³⁹. In these two examples, the tactic of 'gaze' was used to extend the symbolic power of a uniform

and police vehicle into an area beyond the immediate location of an individual officer. In another incident the use of a vehicle was again combined with uniform and gaze to enhance symbolic control.

We noticed a vehicle that was 'double parked'.
— (officer) chose to draw up behind it and flash his headlights many times. The vehicle did not move and so he rang the bell on our car. The offending vehicle moved off and we eventually went past it very slowly. As we do so the officer, wearing his cap and full uniform, glanced carefully at the driver.⁴⁰

Symbolic strategies also prompted the use of uniform as a means of pretending that officers were acting in a particular manner when, in fact, they knew full well that they were using deception. For example, a person telephoned Hilton to complain that a locked, unattended vehicle was obstructing the entrance to a private garage. In these circumstances there was little the police could do, save the unpopular and boring task of waiting for the return of the offending driver. Such action was unacceptable and in this particular case the officer who was asked to deal with the incident explained to his colleague that he felt little would be gained by his attendance. The colleague told him, Well, that doesn't matter. Just go along there and show the flag and tell them you can't do anything. Just show the flag.⁴² 'Showing the flag' symbolised police control within our society. Despite the cynicism lying behind such action, uniformed police attendance at an incident could be sufficient to demonstrate authority and control.

Instrumentalism and symbolism are difficult to separate. Evidence was obtained to suggest that a further ploy used by Hilton's police was to make an arrest as a means of symbolising control, even though there was virtually no evidence to warrant that arrest. It was suggested that 'villains' could be made aware of police power simply by arresting them. For example, a robbery occurred on the sub-division and a Sergeant suggested that the officer in charge of the C.I.D. was in favour of 'getting all the villains in the station. Just to let them know who's who.'⁴³ Other data verified the suggestion that arrests were made to symbolise police authority and power over those who could challenge it by committing serious,

planned crime. Such a strategy was possible because, as an instructor at the Training School put it during a discussion of the issue:

'... and — (names officer) doesn't get civil claims against him because they (professional criminals) don't know what he knows about them. If they start complaining then — would beat them at their own game and get them for other jobs which they were committing, and serious ones at that.'⁴⁴

Such arrests were possible because the immediate situation facing the police implied other areas of criminal activity. The particular, limited action of an arrest symbolised the possibility of further potentially wide-ranging police activity.

In these various ways symbolic strategies of control were employed, sometimes in denotative, sometimes connotative ways. Whatever the symbolism used, the design of the officers involved was one of control.

Strategies of containment

Strategies of containment can be related to our discussion on symbolic control. The difficulty of separating the symbolic from the instrumental is encountered again. Here, we deal with police action designed to limit a situation requiring a measure of control, but which the police cannot ameliorate completely. By employing strategies of containment to draw boundaries around particular behaviour, officers admitted the relative and tenuous nature of their control. It is this emphasis which distinguished these strategies from those typified by their symbolic quality.

The following data illustrate the difficulty of this separation. A number of 'dippings' were reported⁴⁵. The officer in charge of the C.I.D. allowed constables to work overtime, patrolling the relevant area in plain clothes. A Sergeant explained the strategy of containment employed in the context of discussing this C.I.D. officer:

'He's as good as gold, he's okay ... We had a lot of dippings up at — (names location) and he wanted to stop it

and after a few days it did stop. The word got round that we were up there. Mind you, old — had a couple (of arrests) of sus dippings so that soon got around.⁴⁶

We notice the implicit recognition that the strategy employed was not capable of ameliorating the offences. Containment by the presence of police served to offer temporary and partial control of the situation. The strategy was not wholly symbolic, it was not just a case of 'showing the flag'. Some arrests were made to ensure that the instrumental aspect of police control served to define a boundary of tolerance⁴⁷.

The fact that an arrest was made is of interest. In a rather different example, a youth seems to have been arrested as a token gesture. A situation requiring police attention could not be calmed and the only remaining remedy was to make a token arrest to contain the situation and, therefore, prescribe a boundary of tolerance. The incident was a party where one or more people were causing trouble. The police were called to eject the trouble-makers.

A constable recalled:

'Yes, we were there; — (names officer) went up there and was asked to evict a bloke from a party. When he got there the bloke took a swing at him and so — (officer) chucked him down the stairs and was going to nick him for drunk and disorderly outside on the street. Then a lot of them came down and had a go and the urgent assistance call went up three times.'

Later, I had an opportunity to talk to a youth arrested at this incident and charged with assaulting a police officer. I asked him what happened; 'I was just standing on the pavement.' S.H.: 'What do you mean, just standing there?' Youth: 'I was just standing there. They were having a fight with one of the blokes and I was just standing there and a policeman came over to the crowd and said, "You're mine, you'll do", and I got nicked and was put in the van.' Perhaps it could be argued that this is a highly partial view. However, despite the fact that the youth was known by officers at the station and had previous convictions, I accepted his account. Knowing the arresting officer, I repeated the account to one of his colleagues. He, in turn, repeated it to a sergeant and said 'That sounds just about right, doesn't it? Typical copper. That's just how it would have happened.'⁴⁸

This officer was amused but he was not jesting; his remarks suggest verification of a strategy of control which, leaving a disorderly

situation in progress, represented containment and a demonstration of police authority. Again, it should be noted that the instrumental and symbolic aspects of control are found in this one example.

Containment was also used to prevent an escalation of disorder.

Two traffic division officers had stopped a vehicle driven by two black youths, outside a club frequented by blacks. They suspected the car was stolen and brought the youths to the station for questioning. One of them explained, 'I thought that for their good and for ours we had better bring them in, Sarge. There were several others outside the club and it was getting a bit difficult.'⁴⁹

This action prevented and contained an escalation of disorder, but we should ask why these officers did not act in a similar manner to those who dealt with the disorderly party? An explanation is difficult; however, it is suggested that these specialist traffic division personnel were less committed to the values and associated actions of the occupational culture than their patrolling colleagues. They did not assert control or exploit the possibility of action and hedonism with the same vigour and determination demonstrated by their uniformed, patrol colleagues. Nevertheless, their action illustrated a further use of a strategy of containment.

Containment was particularly relevant to crimes without victims. A young C.I.D. officer came to Hilton to borrow a car he wanted to use in the course of a rather bizarre duty to which (sic) he had been posted. A man, who received national and rather intense local publicity about his witchcraft activities, was believed to be trying to perform ceremonies with corpses exhumed from a local cemetery.

The officer said that this man also '... kills cats and drinks their blood and the press give him publicity and the Chief Superintendent gets into trouble. Our job is really to get rid of him and strip him naked and send him over the fence or send him over on to ——— (names bordering sub-division) ground and get rid of him that way.'⁵⁰

Homosexuals engaging in sexual activity in public toilets were subject to similar strategies:

While on patrol with a colleague I passed a public toilet where homosexuals were known to congregate throughout the day and night. My colleague looked at the toilet building and said, 'There's a couple having a right old wank in there. Two heads very close together.' He said no more but when we soon passed another toilet, known to function in the same way, he mentioned a greengrocer who was known to visit the toilet frequently while on his way home from a wholesale market. 'I think I will have his van towed away sometime so that he will have to claim it. It will be a bit of a laugh anyway.'⁵¹

Here we have a further example of a crime without a victim; a situation which would probably not cease if an arrest had been made, one which was difficult to detect but about which the police felt they must do something. That something was the employment of a strategy of containment.

Arrest and/or detention were not the only means of containing a situation. When the police were faced with the dilemma that the effort they had to put into dealing with an incident exceeded the calculated outcome, they were prompted to containment. This was particularly the case when a considerable amount of writing was required in what the police felt to be a trivial incident⁵². Road traffic accidents were an example where an officer would, as one put it,

'usually try to square them up unless there is some allegation. In that one (refers to accident he has just dealt with) the damage is more than the cost of the fine so you pays your money and you takes your choice.'⁵³

Further, containment could mean restraint. In the case of a mentally ill person acting in a strange manner, it was clear that police action could not change the situation. The moral culpability of the person concerned was also in doubt. On those occasions when such persons had to be returned to their hospital it was noticeable how restraint rather than force was used: '—— (names officer) has the patter, he'll go with him.' In a similar situation, a supervisory officer told his constables, 'Just restrain him, just restrain him.'⁵⁴

All these incidents add evidence to the use of strategies of containment. They were employed in situations where police action was necessary but it was realised that such action would not have an ameliorative impact on the fundamental cause of an incident. Boundaries of tolerance and containment were drawn by the use of a strategy of control.

Strategies of 'con' and lying

The police are granted licenced access to private information about a citizen's life. This means that members of the public are uncertain about the type and amount of knowledge officers possess⁵⁵. A further strategy of control, apparent from the research at Hilton, played on this feature of uncertainty, allowing police officers to 'con' or lie to a member of the public. The distinction between a 'con' and a 'lie' is sometimes a fine one but the latter contains an element of malice and reprisal bordering the illegal, as does 'verballing', which will be discussed separately. The former is more, though not exclusively, concerned with the retention of 'face', of police competence and ability to exercise control.

People could be 'conned' to ameliorate a difficult situation. The local theatre held pop music concerts which attracted many people and it was not uncommon to see queues of young people waiting to purchase their tickets in advance of an event. On one such occasion I went to the theatre with an Inspector, who asked his constables to disperse a sizeable crowd because all available tickets had been sold. When the bulk of the crowd had dispersed, he told me,

'Oh well, they will probably only come back again but that has done the job for the moment ... They are very good in there, they have fifty tickets to sell and if any of the lads want one they will sell them, just ring up.'⁵⁶

Knowledge of future police action was also exploited to retain control. In the following example, the uncertainty of future police action was used to attempt to control a person who had been drinking alcohol before driving his car but who did not warrant arrest. The officer told him:

'Look Paddy, I'm going to give the number of your car to all the police cars in this area and you drive badly or are involved in an accident then there will be trouble for you.'⁵⁷

In fact it was not practicable for the officer to act as he said he would and no details of the incident were supplied to other officers - this was control by the use of the 'con'.

In a rather different way, police access to information could be used to move people from one location to another. Some black youths were seen walking towards a railway station where a large number of robberies and thefts, allegedly committed by such persons, had been reported. The van crew were called to the area and one of that crew noticed another group of youths standing by a bus stop outside the station. He said something to the youths and they dispersed, later explaining:

'I've found a good way to get rid of the niggers from ——. There were some of them hanging around the station and they said they were waiting for a bus. I asked them why they weren't at the stop and they said because it was raining. So I said that there was a bomb on the station and they cleared off double-quick.'⁵⁸

'Conning' was concerned with the visible appearance of competent policing, where the police felt that by taking a particular course of action their image of efficiency and management would be retained and enhanced. This was evident from a rather extreme example when a dog handler demonstrated how his dog followed a scent from a stolen vehicle. The officer in charge of the dog unit explained:

'Let me tell you one thing straight away. There is no need for a dog to go to the source, or the first point of the scent if it's going to pick it up. There is no need for 'em to put a dog in a car to have a sniff around and then go off to chase. You might get a dog handler doing it but we only do it because people expect it. People expect us to do that so we do it, just for a bit of a show. But there is absolutely no need for anyone to do it at all.'⁵⁹

An example like this is evidence of the highly symbolic nature of some policing. A 'con' was used to create a front of dramatic imagery, suggesting police action to be rather more competent than was actually the case.

Arrests were made by lying and conning. An officer held two warrants for a person; one had a condition of arrest with bail and appeared the more serious, the other could be paid on the spot. He explained: 'He can pay the money on the first one and he can be granted bail on the second ... Oh yes, but I'll show him the second one first.'⁶⁰ This strategy was designed to compound the apparent seriousness of the situation by making an arrest when, in fact, if a payment was made, it was possible for the whole matter to be settled without any such action.

Similarly, arrests could be made by telling people that they were merely required to come to the station, without any intimation that, once there, they would be questioned or charged with a specific offence.

A woman was arrested for assault and she challenged the arresting officer: 'Well, have I been arrested? Am I going to be charged? You only asked me to come down here to see about it. Am I being charged, then?'⁶¹ 'Am I staying in all night? I want to get back home.'

In fact, she was questioned about and charged with a substantive offence, the use of a 'lie' enabled the officer to make an arrest with the minimum of trouble.

Finally, a lie or 'con' could be used to protect a person from the possible reprisals of the individual about whom he had given the police information.

After a youth was arrested for a burglary I asked the arresting officer for the evidence of offence and arrest in the presence of the suspect. I also asked, 'Have you got a statement?' The officer mouthed silently, 'Yes, it was made by the other bloke.' After the suspect was put in a detention room he explained his unwillingness to provide all the evidence in the presence of the suspect: 'The other kid made a statement under caution implicating him. Would you like to read it?'⁶²

This officer used a lie to retain information and knowledge which should have been provided to the person arrested but was withheld because a reprisal was thought likely.

This third strategy, the use of a 'con' or 'lie' was founded on the special access to private knowledge which is granted to the police.

By withholding information, creating uncertainty about a present or future event or by the construction of an imagery of relevant, specialist though false knowledge, control was managed, maximised and sustained.

Strategies of verbal control and threat

In his pamphlet, 'The Functions of the Police in Modern Society', Egon Bittner argues that the central unifying feature of the police role is the capacity of an officer to use 'non-negotiably coercive force employed in accordance with the dictates of an intuitive grasp of situational exigencies'⁶³. In the most mundane of encounters, this potential access to force operates as a threat to strengthen the control an officer is able to exert in a particular situation.

'Strategies of threat' are based on the potential to coerce. When combined with an exaggeration of the knowledge available to a police officer, his legal powers and the means of making his intentions known, this strategy offers considerable scope for effective control. A threat was sometimes combined with a 'con' or 'lie'. This was because an intimation of the possible action an officer might take could or would not be realised. However, we will now consider the 'strategy of threat', recognising its basis in the potential for force afforded the British police.

Shouting at a person was sufficient to achieve control. Some youths were behaving in a disorderly fashion outside the local theatre and an officer shouted, 'Pack it up or you'll be nicked'⁶⁴. After dealing with a call to 'suspects in an empty house', the information log was marked up with the result: 'two satisfactory stops'. I asked one of the officers for a more comprehensive explanation. 'Well, I'll quote — (other officer) shall I? "Fuck off or you'll get nicked".'⁶⁵.

A threat was not always that of arrest; other means of control were also intimated. Within the space of thirty minutes an officer had stopped two drivers he suspected of driving after drinking alcohol.

The first was a woman who was cautioned, the second, a man who was also seen driving at high speed. As we were about to stop the second vehicle my colleague said, 'I'll give him a blow, just to show him'⁶⁶. Here the threat was related to the power of the police to prosecute but also to worry and deter future behaviour by an errant driver.

The use of non-negotiable force could involve the threat of physical force during an arrest.

After a rather long observation during the early hours of the morning, two constables watched a man go into a school playground and steal some milk. At some stage of the arrest he hid in the school grounds and the officer used a threat to finalise the apprehension. He recalled that he shouted, 'We'll put the dogs in after you if you don't come out'. 'Do you know, he jumped straight back out again.'⁶⁷

Similarly, while chasing a youth who had committed a burglary I heard a constable shout, 'If you don't stop son, I'll stick you.'⁶⁸ In these examples, threats made to an offender were directly related to other techniques employing physical force which, in some circumstances, the police were permitted to use. Their use was intended to enhance police power without actually employing the means of achieving it intimated during an encounter.

Because the police are one part of the total criminal justice system they are able to refer to the power of the judiciary to sentence and punish and make such reference relevant to their own actions.

Threats about the likelihood of a person receiving a particular sentence from the court could be made with effect. An Inspector and Constable were discussing a rather difficult traffic offence they were investigating. They required more evidence than was immediately available and thought about using a threat; 'We'll go along to him and tell him that if he doesn't give us the name he can get two years. Yes, that's good, we can do that.'⁶⁹

All of these tactical ploys have been subsumed under the strategy of threat. They need not refer to a particular legal power directly available to an officer. On one occasion I was with an Inspector who wanted to prevent some striking employees from blocking the

footpath and roadway. They were cheeky to him and he invited three of them to talk with him. They walked to the car and the Inspector opened a rear door asking them, 'Do you want a seat?'. Their response was to provide the information that their gathering was about to disperse - which it did⁷⁰.

The major feature of the strategy of threat was an emphasis on the potential of the police to employ a range of powers with punitive or other restricting consequences. Further or future police action, or, indeed, that by another institution of the criminal justice system could invoke greater control than presently realised. Often, a threat was also a 'con' but, nevertheless, its immediate reference point was the non-negotiable means of using power available to the police.

Strategies to educate and punish

This strategy proved rather difficult to document because there was a sense in which all strategies of control contained an element of education and punitive redress. However, the classification 'educate and/or punish' is retained because some data suggested that officers felt the use of punishment and education was sufficient action to control some incidents.

A constable was called to deal with a woman who had been stabbed in the hand by her husband. At a later time she went to the local Magistrates' Court and was advised to return to the police station for assistance to apply for a warrant of arrest. It was then discovered that the officer who initially attended the incident and recorded his action as 'Advice Given' had actually left the parties to the assault to realise the outcome of their actions and therefore educate themselves. Although on this occasion further action was required and there was little agreement that the officer's action was adequate, evidence of a strategy of education by default was obtained. The officer who was to deal with the application for a warrant for arrest put it, '... it's not really for me to legislate. They were a couple of coons shouting at each other and I suppose

it is difficult in those circumstances⁷¹. This datum is not definitive but it does suggest that the officer left the couple to realise the results of their actions because they failed to take note of whatever advice was given. The point is demonstrated with greater clarity in a rather different example.

I was patrolling with a colleague and saw four young people - two girls and two boys - arguing and scrapping on the footway. One of the males hit a girl in the face and her nose started to bleed. My colleague drove to them quickly and asked the girl for an account. He then turned to the boy and as his account was being given the girl began to shout and argue. The officer said, 'Look, I'll talk with you if you speak one at a time but if not, I'm wasting my time.' The boy started talking and the girl began shouting again. The officer said, 'Look, you obviously aren't going to tell me. If you want to get on with it, get on with it yourselves. I'm not bothered.' He then went to his car and as he drove away said to me, 'What's the point of me standing there and listening? I can't get anywhere when they do that, can I?'

Much later, in the early hours of the morning, another officer reported over the personal radio system that he might require some assistance to arrest a youth who, so a female told him, had threatened her with a knife. The officer who dealt with the initial incident recognised the parties concerned as those whom he had tried to control and he replied, 'No, we were there when the first blow was struck. It's just an argument between themselves. I don't know about knives but they'd been to a party and they're just having an argument. I'd leave it if I were you.'⁷²

The strategy of control employed here and in the previous example was that of leaving the parties involved to realise the consequences of their own action. By absenting themselves, the officers left the outcome of the situation to educate and/or punish those involved. Importantly, the decision to leave people to their own devices was stated at the time of the incident, verifying the use of education and punishment, here self-inflicted, as a definite strategy.

On other occasions, officers educated people by making them correct their actions. A school boy had been found writing on the wall of a cinema and the officers who caught him made him scrub the

wall with hot water⁷³. In this incident education and punishment were related in equal measure. Other uses of this strategy weighed firmly on the side of punishment.

A Frenchman was arrested by a dog handler. He pleaded that he could not speak English. The police dog was put in front of the prisoner to guard him and ... 'this bloke happened to pull a knife out of his pocket and point it at the dog. — (officer) got his stick straight out and whacked the bloke on the hand, saying "if you don't understand English, you'll understand that, won't you ?".⁷⁴

Although the nature of the punishment was less severe, the following account of the arrests of demonstrators who, interestingly, also refused to speak English, secures the notion of control by education and punishment.

'There was a bloody great puddle by the side of the road and when they were nicked they were swept right through this puddle. At the nick they refused to speak English so they just said, "Unless you speak English you don't go home", and they began speaking it straight away.'⁷⁵

These, then, were the five major strategies of control employed by Hilton's officers in the course of their work. Each strategy served to sustain police control over the population.

Points of comparison and summary

Before moving to the use of strategies of control within the police station, and two further strategies which border on illegality, that is 'verballing' and the use of physical force, it will be useful to draw together some wider points. This will collate our discussion and permit brief reference to other studies of relevance.

First, all the strategies documented are related to a view that the police have an innate and prior right to assume control over a population and territory. Here we find direct links with the primary reality of a world on the edge of chaos, inhabited by a gullible, naive population. This is a feature to which we have been virtually forced to refer time and time again. One officer put it, 'It all depends who is boss out there'⁷⁶, meaning that the

perceived sense of police control, which, as has been pointed out, is actually always tenuous and negligible, has to be continually affirmed and sustained as if it was secure. Another officer expressed this in a rather different way when he talked about 'blacks':

'as soon as you talk to them, they accuse you of victimisation. You get really really annoyed sometimes, really boiled up but you have to keep cool and not show it or they have got the better of you.'

In short, by one strategy or another, by one tactic or another, the appearance of police control is to be maintained.

Manning's discussion of the police-suspect encounter⁷⁸ suggests that the officers expect particular features to be exhibited if a successful outcome is to be identified. A far more detailed ethnography than that presented here is required if his suggestions are to be verified. However, it will be useful to present some evidence to verify some of his points and, therefore, some further features of the encounters described in this chapter.

Interpersonal control was basic. A person who had been arrested was to indicate, by demeanour and verbal tone, that such control was acknowledged. Officers were exceedingly sensitive to this point, as the following data demonstrates.

I was standing in the station yard, talking to a constable when the van drew up to bring a 'prisoner' to the station. I asked the constable the nature of the offence; 'I think it's a breathalyser.' S.H.: 'Is he stropky?' P.C.: 'Well, I don't know, I think he was playing up a bit.' The doors of the police van were opened and the arresting officer pulled the prisoner out of the van by his tie, he then pushed him round the side of the van. Having observed this slightly rough handling, a lack of assent to police control was verified. Quite spontaneously, the officer answered my question, 'Yes, he has.'

We have already noted how a suspect who ran away from a police officer was likely to be hit. In the context of a conversation about a scuffle between two black youths, one of whom ran away as police approached, an officer commented, 'I suppose he got a bit of summary justice?'

Another person who had committed an offence and run from an arresting officer had been punched in the mouth. As he sat quietly in the charge room he asked if he could wash his mouth with water. An officer went to him and said, 'What's wrong with you then?' Prisoner: 'Nothing.' Officer: 'What were you doing over there, running away?' Later the prisoner explained the reason for his injury. 'You know why I got this? I ran away, I say no more and that's where the matter ends.'⁸⁰

As Manning suggests, the use of proper tactics and closure were sometimes mentioned by officers. However, the sparse data which indicate the importance of such features were raised by officers with relatively long police service and the following comment on proper tactics comes from the officer who was highly critical of the somewhat aggressive manner of his younger colleagues. He refers to the arrest of a particular suspect;

'... if a P.C. had gone up to him and got hold of his collar and said, "You're nicked" there would have been trouble, a fucking fight. You have got to know these people and you've got to know how to nick them. You don't get any bother.'⁸¹

The use of proper tactics and closure to an incident can be related to the personal identification of an officer with an incident but it seems that such identification should not be overdrawn.

A constable had hit a man with his truncheon because he believed he was going to strike him. Colleagues of this officer seemed to agree with the victim's account, '... he (the P.C.) came in looking for trouble. I had to pick up the bottle to protect myself because he took his truncheon out of his pocket as soon as he saw me.' The comments by other officers suggested that the arresting officer had been too emotionally involved in the incident; '— (officer) gets in a state', and 'It's not personal, you know.'⁸³

Neither of the officers making these remarks objected to the use of force in other incidents. Their criticisms, which were generally accepted amongst their colleagues, were directed at the emotional over-involvement of this constable.

We have now been able to document some of the finer detail of tactics employed by Hilton's police. However, this is not the primary aim

of this chapter. First, the centrality and perceived characteristics of prisoners were documented, demonstrating how the use of charge figures served as a measure of competence. This measure functioned as a highly visible and ready indication of how Hilton's police faced a disorderly, virtually chaotic population but also made some impact on that situation. When arrests were made and charges put, the occupational culture was sustained and strengthened.

Secondly, extending this research beyond the available studies of policing, certainly in Britain and, to a slightly lesser extent, in America, a number of strategies of control have been described and analysed. This section has emphasised the difficulty of separating symbolic and instrumental aspects of police work, which Manning assumes to be a rather clear-cut issue. Indeed, although the classification of these strategies of control makes analytical sense, many of the examples given have been classified in terms of their emphasis within a particular strategy rather than their exclusive character. Throughout, characteristics of the occupational culture - control, hedonism, action and challenge - are woven into the strategies and tactics which have been documented.

Although it might seem that Hilton's officers were skilful and highly manipulative in the use of these various strategies, they should be placed within the context of evidence suggesting that a great deal of the sophistication employed by officers in past years had now disappeared. The major emphasis found in the nuances of each strategy was that of the sense of action, control and challenge officers experienced as each tactic was employed. Any distance of the police from the public, the impersonality which Skolnick and Banton have identified, facilitated freedom to exploit the manipulative strategies and tactics we have documented and so shield the occupational culture from penetration and exposure. Certainly, officers did not distance themselves in a highly self-conscious, impersonal and impartial manner. Rather, they required such distancing to free themselves from legal, organisational and other constraints which prevented or interfered with their rule-breaking and the occasional illegality of the strategies and

tactics employed.

In contrast to the American setting, their distance was not maintained to ensure protection from danger. Indeed, physical danger was of little concern to Hilton's police. Distance was maintained to foster and sustain freedom of action, permitting the occupational culture to serve as a primary reference point for routine police work. In the following chapter, we will document how that freedom was greatly enhanced in Hilton police station, not least when officers used strategies bordering on the illegal.

Notes and references

- 1 Cain, M. (1973) Society and the policeman's role, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.67.
- 2 F.N. 286:1.
- 3 Research by Cain, Lambert, Chatterton and Manning indicates that this would seem to be true of policing in Britain and America.
- 4 F.N. 213:4.
- 5 F.N. 254:4.
- 6 F.N. 290:3b.
- 7 F.N. 284:1.
- 8 F.N. 445:1 for example, but also see data from previous station.
- 9 F.N. 442:9 and 300:3 respectively.
- 10 F.N. 437:4.
- 11 F.N. 180.
- 12 F.N. 290:3.
- 13 Chatterton, M.R. (1975) Organisational relationships and processes in police work: a case study of urban policing. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Manchester, Chapt. 1 for discussion of dependency of senior officers on lower ranks.
- 14 F.N. 63/4.
- 15 Chatterton, M.R. (1975), op.cit., and Manning, P.K. (1977) Police work: the social organisation of policing, Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press.

- 16 In a recent paper John Van Maanen has argued that within the American context it is the 'asshole' who serves as an indicator of the critical status of the occupational culture; see Van Maanen, J. (1978) 'The asshole' in P.K. Manning & J. Van Maanen (eds) Policing: a view from the street: 221-238, Santa Monica: Goodyear.
- 17 F.N. 169:2.
- 18 F.N. 581:7.
- 19 F.N. 672:1.
- 20 F.N. 419:3.
- 21 F.N. 445:2.
- 22 F.N. 551:13.
- 23 F.N. 180:4.
- 24 Chatterton makes the point that the vague formulation of Judges' Rules and other related instruments is of great benefit to the police because they are enabled to employ their own techniques without a constraining framework against which their action can be judged.
- 25 Manning, P.K. (1978) 'Lying, secrecy, and social control' in P.K. Manning & J. Van Maanen (eds), op.cit.: 238-255.
- 26 See Chatterton, M.R. (1975), op.cit. for a discussion of styles of policing.
- 27 Skolnick, J.H. (1966) Justice without trial, New York: Wiley, p.67.
- 28 Banton, M. (1964) The policeman in the community. London: Tavistock, p.125.
- 29 Manning, P.K. & J. Van Maanen (eds) (1978) op.cit., p.218.
- 30 Interestingly, Punch, M. (1979) Policing the inner city, London: Macmillan, reaches this conclusion in relation to the Amsterdam force.
- 31 F.N. 615:7.
- 32 F.N. 604:3.
- 33 Bittner, E. (1970) The functions of the police in modern society, Washington: National Inst. of Mental Health, and Joseph, N., and N. Alex (1971) 'The uniform: a sociological perspective', Amer. J. Sociol., 77 (4): 719-730.
- 34 Rubinstein, J. (1973) City police, New York: Ballantine, pp.277-81.
- 35 F.N. 556:1.

- 36 F.N. 404:6.
- 37 See Goffman, E. (1971) Relations in public, Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp.69-71, for discussion of 'glance'.
- 38 F.N. 177:5.
- 39 F.N. 190:4.
- 40 F.N. 340:9.
- 41 See Manning, P.K. (1978) op.cit. for reference to 'showing the flag'.
- 42 F.N. 286:2.
- 43 F.N. 153:7.
- 44 F.N. 149:1.
- 45 'Dippings' are pickpocketing.
- 46 F.N. 152:2b.
- 47 Rock, P. (1973) Deviant behaviour, London: Hutchinson, pp.172-186.
- 48 F.N. 343:1.
- 49 F.N. 487:4.
- 50 F.N. 136:3.
- 51 F.N. 138:5.
- 52 See Chatterton, M.R. (1975) op.cit. for a discussion of the generating of 'paper'.
- 53 F.N. 159:7.
- 54 F.N. 478:4 and 136:2.
- 55 This point is also covered in Manning, P.K. and J. Van Maanen (eds) (1978), op.cit., especially the paper by Manning, op.cit.
- 56 F.N. 129:1.
- 57 F.N. 172:5.
- 58 F.N. 428:2.
- 59 F.N. 525:3a.
- 60 F.N. 186:1.
- 61 F.N. 377:11.

- 62 F.N. 271:1.
- 63 Bittner, E. (1970), *op.cit.*, p.46.
- 64 F.N. 253:2.
- 65 F.N. 375:7.
- 66 F.N. 291:6.
- 67 F.N. 293:9.
- 68 F.N. 366:4.
- 69 F.N. 267:6.
- 70 F.N. 504:10.
- 71 F.N. 156:4.
- 72 F.N. 549:11.
- 73 F.N. 505:13.
- 74 F.N. 553:2.
- 75 F.N. 173:2.
- 76 F.N. 570:3.
- 77 F.N. 116:2.
- 78 Manning, P.K. (1978), *op.cit.*, pp.238-250.
- 79 F.N. 245:4.
- 80 F.N. 547:5 and 702:7 respectively.
- 81 F.N. 657:1.
- 82 F.N. 628:1b.
- 83 F.N. 649:4b.

CONTROL IN THE POLICE STATION - 'VERBALLING'

In the chapter on strategies of control, illustrative data taken from examples of police work on the streets and in the station were used. This chapter is also concerned with strategies of control and, to some extent, adds to the lexicon presented. However, it is our further intention to place particular emphasis on strategies of control used within Hilton police station, especially during the questioning and charging process which took place in the charge room and cell area. This spatial area was one where lower ranks could exert virtual total control over prisoners. By drawing on the secrecy and 'team-work' character of policing, officers found support for strategies which bordered on illegality - for example, 'verballing' and the excessive use of physical force. This chapter therefore has a unity but at this early stage we point out that when the use of verballing in this and physical force in the next chapter are discussed, data will be used from incidents taking place both within and outside the station. This is done to extend our understanding of the tactical means employed to operationalise these strategies of control within a variety of contexts.

Control in the police station

We have already documented how the spatial area of Hilton Police Station was managed by the police officers working there. Doctors, solicitors and other persons were prevented from gaining immediate access to the charge room area and, therefore, persons held in police custody. Within the charge room total control of the prisoner was assumed. Space and time were 'managed' to secure that control; the charge room formed a spatial boundary, marking out an area of safety where the interdependent team work of policing proceeded in relative freedom.

Chatterton has described the equivalent of the charge room in the force he researched as a 'sanctuary'¹. Although the procedure for

accepting a charge he documented was very different from that used at Hilton, officers at Chatterton's station also assumed total control over a person being charged. He writes,

'Successful completion of the charging sequence, therefore, signified a co-operative prisoner who had been reasonable and accepted the authority of the police ... If the prisoner did not assent to police control, the procedure would stop and the prisoner placed in the cells'².

The assumption of control over prisoners was certainly found at Hilton and evidence from discussions among sergeants working at a number of stations in the force of which Hilton was a part indicated its general acceptance.

One sergeant argued, 'When I am charging people it's "at attention, no smoking, no messing around", oh yes.' Another expressed this view in a rather less dramatic, though no less direct manner: 'As a general rule it has been my experience that in a police station a person gets as good as he gives. If he is cooperative then the police are okay with him. If they are not cooperative then they get it.'⁴

There were no dissenting voices to balance these opinions.

The meaning of 'they get it' is broader than Chatterton's suggestion that an uncooperative prisoner is dealt with by exclusion to a cell or subjection to sarcastic remarks. The sergeant's remark that a person 'gets as good as he gives' suggests an element of bargaining but it should be noted that on some occasions, even when a prisoner was compliant and admitted his offence, physical force could be used against him.

An element of bargaining was found in the following incident, when a black prisoner was dealt with in the charge room. He was arrested (for a serious offence) by C.I.D. officers after they kept observation on a house for a considerable period of time. As they made the arrest a violent fight took place, during which the prisoner was struck on the head with a truncheon, sustaining injuries requiring hospital treatment.

The arresting officers were not present in the charge room when uniformed constables brought him there, handcuffed and bleeding profusely from his head wound. They threw him on the floor and encircled him. Although

it was impossible for the prisoner to do anything but submit to police control, the officers asserted their continuing dominance of the situation. As he groaned they watched and one said, 'We don't allow singing in police stations; shut up.'

After his face was washed of blood and he was placed in a chair by the charge room desk, the station officer attempted to clarify his biographical details. The prisoner was hesitant and the station officer began bargaining for information; 'Listen to me. I can tell you that there will be no physical violence offered to you in this station. I promise you that, if you cooperate with us. There will be no more violence if you cooperate.' Some details were forthcoming but there was still some uncertainty about the prisoner's name. An officer later came to the station office, where the station officer was now writing his report, and asked if the prisoner could smoke a cigarette. The station officer said, 'Tell him he can have one if he gives us his name'. A bargain was made and the man's correct name was obtained.

These data illustrate the two points we have made. First, even in those situations where a prisoner was unable to do anything but submit to police control, officers found it appropriate to continue to assert that control and, indeed, demonstrate it amongst the work group. Secondly, one strategy of retaining control was that of bargaining. The tactics of promising the cessation of physical force and permission to smoke a cigarette were added to the existing formal controls available to the police.

However, it should not be assumed that police officers involved in the investigative and charging process were relinquishing their control of a prisoner when they engaged in bargaining. We have already illustrated how, even when a station officer agreed with a prisoner that the evidence against him was trivially slight, overall control of the incident remained firmly in the hands of the police⁶. There was even some available evidence to suggest that, when taunted by a prisoner, dominance was maintained by neglecting that taunt. Something of this was suggested by the officer who maintained it was necessary to 'keep cool' when accused of discrimination by a black person. If an officer did not 'keep cool' the prisoner had got the better of him

and control was lost.

In the following example, an exceedingly abusive young man was taken to a cell by a constable, after being charged with drunkenness. As he reached the cell he said to the officer, who had a reputation for his use of physical force on prisoners, 'I suppose you are going to beat me up now?' In a disarming tone the officer said, 'No', and locked the cell door⁷. In this situation, redress of the balance of control by physical force would have amounted to an admission of a lack of command, forced on the arresting officer by the prisoner. Exclusion to a cell was considered to be sufficient action.

Exclusion not only permitted the display of police authority and power but could also facilitate the use of physical force. Supervisory officers knew this, as evidenced in the following example where two constables arrested a youth for assaulting one of them. When a sergeant patrolling with me heard of this arrest over the personal radio system he drove to the station at a fairly fast speed. He said, 'We'd better get down to the station quick so that they don't beat him to death'⁸. Other data demonstrate that the sergeant was not over-sensitive to the use of physical force on prisoners in other settings. The point to be made is that the police team had knowledge of how they could and did exploit the privacy of the charge room and cell area to use strategies of control bordering on illegality.

The privacy and 'team character' of policing permitted threats of and realised force to be directed towards prisoners. The barren nature of the charge and cell rooms, the search of one's person, and forced subjection to power and authority must have weighed heavily upon persons in custody. When threats were made within the confines of the station, the potential for the use of force by the police was considerable and certainly exceeded that which could be achieved on the streets.

Threats might be verbal and remain so. A drunk was shouting and

kicking the door of a cell. A constable went to the cell and shouted: 'Shut it or I'll come in there and sort you out'⁹.

Threats were occasionally realised.

As a sergeant took command of the station, his colleague told him, 'You've got five in for G.B.H. They have been thumped.' There was a lot of shouting from these prisoners and the two sergeants went to 'check' their condition, as was required by the regulations. The sergeant assuming responsibility for the station went to the first cell housing one of the five; the occupant shouted at him. The officer opened the small wicket gate located in the door and as the prisoner placed his face near to it, no doubt to abuse the officer, he was punched. The constable, assistant station officer, was instructed: 'Right, check on them every half hour and if you get a chance, give them a thump.' These prisoners continued shouting and one, a woman, who was locked in a detention room, broke the glass window in the door of that room, cutting her wrist with a fragment of glass.

This incident, together with the general disorder displayed, indicated to Hilton's officers evidence of a far wider disorderliness within society. Rather than comment in particular terms, general themes were drawn out by the supervisory officers concerned:

'We just don't have the facilities to deal with people these days. It will have to be back to the straightjacket and padded cells. We just don't have the facilities to deal with people.'¹⁰

In this incident, total control was attempted by the use of threat and force. When it was only partially realised, officers drew general rather than particular conclusions. Such a response facilitated a simultaneous explanation for the partial control which had been maintained and the continuing experience of dealing with disorder, the chaos so firmly rooted in the primary reality of routine policing.

Other means of assuming control in the station were also realised. The capacity of a prisoner to determine his or her physical movements was removed once they were in the privacy of the charge room. A police officer was able to direct where and when a prisoner stood, sat and spoke. All autonomy of bodily movement and self-expression could be subject to the most rigorous control. Again, it should

be stressed that these restrictions were made in an imposing and private setting.

A male who was suspected of committing criminal damage was sitting on a bench in a detention room. The arresting officer wanted to know who had assisted his offence. When I entered the detention room with him and began to ask a question it became obvious that I was not retaining the control this officer had been displaying. He shouted to the suspect, 'Stand up when the Sergeant is talking to you'. He then employed a tactic of impressing the right of the police to keep a suspect in custody until particular information was forthcoming. 'You make yourself liable to an offence if you don't tell us. I can tell you that you are going to stay here until you tell us who was with you and broke the window with you. If you don't want to tell us then you can take it all. That's all right. But it's up to you. You either take it all or nothing. But you are gonna tell us who that was anyway - you just stay here until you do'¹¹.

A number of strategies and tactics are evident in this one example. The first is the restriction of bodily movement and self-expression we have mentioned. Researchers have noted that a suspect's demeanour is an important feature of an encounter with a police officer on the street. In the more private setting of Hilton police station, officers were free to determine the character of demeanour in a most imposing manner¹². The further use of a threat and lie enhance police authority when the suspect was informed that he must tell the police the identity of his accomplice. Following that, he was warned that if such information was not forthcoming he would be responsible for his colleagues' offence. Spatial and temporal control and deprivation were then stressed to encourage the suspect to provide evidence.

A similar sequence was found in the following data, also primarily concerned with police control over the bodily movement and self-expression of a prisoner, this time a juvenile.

Several children and juveniles were arrested for causing a disturbance in the street. One, a juvenile, who looked older than the other suspects and who, it was later discovered, had nothing to do with the incident, stood by the charge room desk in what appeared to be a disrespectful manner. One of the investigating officers addressed him sharply and he was taken

to a detention room; 'Come here, lofty. No, you don't sit down in here and you had better wipe that smile off your face or I'll do it for you.' Later, when all the suspects were placed in a detention room, they were reminded, 'I told you all to keep quiet, don't you dare talk, nobody says a word.'¹³

Several strategies and tactics were used here - threat, spatial closure and so on. The main point made by these two incidents of police control within the charge room and cell area is that within these areas restriction of bodily movement and self-expression is impressed on suspects in an imposing manner. A number of strategies and tactics are employed by police within the station to secure the occupational cultural assumption of total control. A failure to control prisoners can be rationalised in terms of a perception of a chaotic and disorderly world, the remedy for such disorder being further police action.

It could be argued that it mattered little if prisoners were respectful, quiet and forthcoming with evidence. The strategies we have documented were concerned with the construction of an appearance of order; a tenuous symbolising of police control by dramatic action. That is partly true; however, it should also be recognised that the use of the strategies described was often directed towards the instrumental goal of obtaining an admission of guilt and a statement of confession. Whilst the creation of control was central to the handling of suspects in the charge room of Hilton Police Station, the strategies observed there were also designed to create uncertainty, a sense of powerlessness and, possibly, fear. Police officers required a prisoner to admit their offence and employed various strategies to assist them in that end.

The following example illustrates how control was realised in a highly dramatic fashion but ceased once a confession had been obtained.

After a short chase (there were suggestions that the pursuit was more imaginary than real), a youth was arrested for taking a motor car. Five officers came to the charge room with the prisoner and they encircled him as the arresting officer said, 'In future you stop, you stop. You've learnt your lesson now but when you're

told to stop, you stop.' The youth admitted his offence and, in a serious tone, one of the other constables said, 'It's really nice to hear someone admit nowadays. I reckon he ought to be given ten pounds out of the poor box.'¹⁴

The other officers present smiled but the comment was not intended as a joke. The investigating officer required more than assent to the control, which had been imposed on the youth in a highly dramatic fashion. He expected an admission of guilt.

It was necessary to inform the C.I.D. of all arrests made on night duty and for serious offences during other shifts. At Hilton the purpose of calling the C.I.D. was not so much to gain assistance to collect a variety of evidence but to obtain a statement of confession. One C.I.D. officer made this point when he was called to question a suspect during night duty. Rather than question for the evidence, this officer went to the suspect and obtained a confession. There was firm evidence of physical force having been used, and he advised the young arresting officer, 'Always get a statement under caution, always get a statement'¹⁵.

The imperative to gain a statement of guilt was present even when it was not strictly necessary.

The C.I.D. crew of a patrol car witnessed a burglary and also had the evidence of an independent witness who was present at the scene of the crime. Instead of assembling their evidence of the offence as soon as they arrived at the station, they began taking statements of confession from their prisoners.

When prisoners admitted their offence, C.I.D. officers tended to be solely concerned with obtaining statements of confession rather than collating the broader body of available evidence¹⁶.

This requirement of a confession, which was not peculiar to the C.I.D., was not wholly pleasing to all officers. The following data finalise the point being made, particularly the singular emphasis on a statement of confession:

'We had some for a snatch and it was really unusual because we got statements out of them. Even that nearly went bent on us because the C.I.D. insisted that we charge them all with theft. But in our statements

and their statements we found that only one was involved in the snatch and the other two were only there when he handed the money out. So we had to quickly charge them with dishonest handling. And they pleaded to it but it nearly went bent because of the C.I.D.'¹⁷

The implication of this comment is that the existence of a statement of confession was of greater significance than its content. A confession permitted what, at first sight, seemed the obvious charge but clearly, on examination, was found to be the wrong one.

Of course, the decision to take this action was not simply based on a failure to take note of the content of a statement. Other data suggest that admissions of lesser offences were accepted and more serious, though unadmitted, charges dropped because of the lengthy paper work involved in preparing a case for the Crown Court. The risks of jury trial were also of importance. This was clear from the following comment made by a constable:

'Well, I saw the D.I. and he said that since he's pleading to the criminal damage and offensive weapon it's not worth going for the aggravated burglary. You only had to go up to Sessions and you might lose it and all the work involved. It just isn't worth it. He said, "Take what you can get" and since he's having it we just charged him with the two.'¹⁸

The amount of 'paper' involved and a judgment about the nature of a hearing at a higher court were certainly factors to be considered. However, the central point remains that of gaining an admission of guilt rather than assembled secondary, but nevertheless important, evidence to place before a court.

Obtaining an admission of guilt - creating uncertainty and dependence

We have now related the police's assumption of control to the instrumental emphasis of obtaining a written statement of guilt. This seemed to take priority over the process of assembling evidence. Some prisoners refused to confess or provide any evidence of their guilt. We will now consider some of the strategies and tactics used to encourage suspects to talk about and admit their offence. My data do not permit the construction of a model or typology to

chart the exact ordering of and relations between different strategies relating to particular offences and prisoners. The methodology of such a project would require some means of recording many, sometimes illegal tactics in a highly detailed fashion. I was prevented from achieving such precision. However, it was possible to document some of the means employed to create uncertainty and a sense of dependency on the police, provoking a prisoner's verbal admission of guilt.

First, we re-emphasise the physical setting of the charge room where, as Chatterton writes, 'The prisoner could not have failed to have been impressed by the formality and the power of a scene which made them feel insignificant'¹⁹. Strategies of control should be placed very firmly within this context because, as they were used, so the formality and power of the physical scene was the more sharply focussed on the prisoner, creating uncertainty, dependency and fear.

The private character of the cells could be impressed on a suspect by the strategy of isolation. Spatial isolation was frequently coupled to the power of the police to detain suspects for considerable periods of time. The following examples illustrate this point.

A husband and wife were suspected of overstaying their permission to remain in this country. They were separated by the arresting officer and placed in the detention rooms. The officer then exploited the time element, explaining to a colleague, 'She is a liar and I want the truth to sink in a bit.'²⁰

An officer could tell a prisoner he would be kept at the station; 'I'll tell him that he is going to be kept here until he tells us the truth.' Colleague: 'Well, he is going to be kept here anyway.' Officer: 'I know, but I will tell him that anyway.'²¹

These data demonstrate how officers exploited their power, to create a sense of dependency in a prisoner's mind. The investigating officer could restrict a prisoner to a particular spatial area for an undetermined period of time, enhancing a sense of dependency on the police. Such a build-up of pressure also frequently involved the use of an aggressive tone of voice, abuse and sarcasm, as the

following data illustrate.

A young boy had been arrested for suspected theft and he would not admit to any offence. The station officer went to the charge room as soon as the boy was brought to the station and the arresting officer said, 'Sarge, this is the boy. I told him that if he tells us the truth and is a good boy then he can go home. He's got to tell us the truth.' The strategy of bargaining had no effect and questioning became more aggressive as the arresting officer was joined by a colleague. The officers moved very close to the boy as they accused him of lying and began a process of degradation. Officer: 'You're not a pretty boy, are you?' No reply. Officer: 'You're not a pretty boy, are you?' Boy: 'Yes'. Officer: 'I'll tell you something. You see that door over there? (Points to door of detention room) That's where we put naughty boys like you but we put men, naughty men, over there in those cells there. Do you want to go in one of those cells?' He took the boy to the doorway of a cell and, out of my hearing, said something. The boy soon returned and the officer said, 'Well, he's having it now ... Well, that's O.K., we will get a statement under caution from him.'²²

Isolation, threat, abuse and 'con' were used in this incident to enhance uncertainty, dependency and fear which the police hoped would lead to a confession.

The following data concern three youths who would not admit to the unlawful taking of a motor car. Again, we notice the use of spatial and temporal isolation to create uncertainty but in this example a threat was used in a rather more powerful fashion. When one of the youths said that he wanted to admit the offence he was retained in isolation and his admission was not accepted. The officer hoped his refusal to accept the prisoner's account of his offence would impose his power and authority to greater effect, ensuring a full confession.

After initial questioning the station officer told the arresting officers, 'I don't think they are going to come across with very much. We'll have to give them a bit of the old "uppity".' I left the charge room and have no evidence of what followed that statement. However, later the station officer said, 'I think we will go down and tell them (they were detained in detention rooms and a cell) what we can get them for.' The driver of the car soon told the station officer that he had given a false name and wanted to admit his fault. This was

thought insufficient because the officer required a full confession. He told the youth: 'Well, you keep on thinking about what you have told me and tell me the whole truth.' He shut the detention room door immediately. No confession was forthcoming and the dependency and power of the police was emphasised again. 'You see, time is on our side. I'm going home to bed soon and I can't be bothered with you being here. You²³ can stay here until as long as we have got the truth.'

Spatial and temporal isolation, threats and pointing out the consequences of an offender's action combined to create a context conducive to a confession of guilt. The strategies and tactics used are illustrative of how Hilton's police maintained and enhanced their control of poisoners held in the charge room and cell areas. If such strategies were unsuccessful, and more than one prisoner was held in custody, it was possible for an investigating officer to create further uncertainty by defining the context of the questioning as a 'suspicion awareness context'²⁴.

We have noted that the British Police are permitted access to private information about the individuals they deal with. That retention of information was used on the street to 'con' and 'lie'. Similar strategies were also used in the questioning process to create suspicion in the mind of a prisoner that officers had considerable knowledge of his identity, actions and motives, without revealing the actual, limited content of that knowledge.

Two youths were arrested, suspected of the theft of a radio found in their possession. Once in the station they were separated in different cells and when, after initial questioning failed to provide the necessary evidence, a C.I.D. officer was called. This officer moved very close to one of the suspects, invading his personal space, and said, 'Come on now, old son, you know about this radio; don't think I was born yesterday, 'cause I wasn't. It's better to tell me where it came from than having to tell the magistrates that you wouldn't say where it came from, now, isn't it?' The suspect soon confessed and was asked: 'And you are going to make a statement, aren't you?' He did.

The other prisoner denied his involvement in any offence and the C.I.D. officer went to him, creating suspicion in his mind. 'Look, son, he has told us where it has come from and that you knew it was nicked; come on now, you should tell us yourself.' The youth continued to

deny the offence. The officer continued, 'Look, I don't want to get angry because he told us what it's all about. I know it's nicked, you will stay here till we find out; it's only a matter of time.' A confession was soon forthcoming.²⁵

Although a number of strategies and tactics are evident from these data, the primary point is the creation of uncertainty and suspicion in the suspect's mind. The C.I.D. officer presented herself as if he knew more about the prisoner than he actually revealed. By the employment of this and other strategies, the context of questioning was changed from one of 'suspicion' to 'open' awareness. The uniformed officer who made the arrest later commented that the use of a plain clothes officer to question a suspect assisted the creation of suspicion and uncertainty;

'I think that they don't know what is happening when they have a plain clothes officer questioning them. They know who we are but they don't know who they are talking to when they have a C.I.D. in plain clothes.'²⁶

'Suspicion awareness' could also be maintained by providing a suspect with information about another officer who might be less charitable to his lack of co-operation than the one addressing him. This tactic was called 'Mutt and Jeff' or 'the Vicar and the Bastard'. The first police officer questioning the suspect would be aggressive and threatening. He would leave the cell or detention room, stressing to the suspect that his return would involve the use of physical force. The suspect would then be left for a short time, until a second officer, acting in concert with his colleague, went to him and kindly explained how nasty his colleague was and how, if he did not co-operate, the aggressiveness and potential violence of the other officer would be realised. It was hoped that such a strategy would invoke a confession. Here, suspicion and uncertainty about the behaviour of particular officers are exploited to gain evidence.

Other forms of 'suspicion awareness' concerned the ability of an officer to speak in favour of a prisoner when brought before the court. This could involve a bargain being struck to obtain a statement

of confession.

'No, Sarge, he's all right down there (in the cells), nothing is happening to him. Leave him for a bit because he is just opening up to — (names officer). We told him we could help him and he's telling — (officer) some names of people involved in the robberies. We know some already, but new names as well.'²⁷

The suspicion created in the prisoner's mind concerns the content of police evidence to a court, which could emphasise the defendant's character in a positive fashion and/or underplay particular details of his offence.

Stories of rather more elaborate incidents were sometimes recounted. For example, knowledge of a suspect's behaviour could be extracted in a devious fashion. A P.C. explained:

'I knew he had done a chap on our ground, so I nicked him for it and brought him in. I couldn't prove it so I said to him that there was some luminous paint on the roof within the last six months it would show up under the special lamp. So I went and got some crayon that — (names crime prevention officer) uses and rubbed it in my hands. Then I rubbed the charge room bench with it and said, "Sit down there ...", right where the crayon was. Then I touched him on the shoulder and rubbed my hand on his sleeve. Of course, when we came to put the jacket under the lamp it was brilliant. He couldn't believe it, he had to put his hands up. Yes, I did that one by subterfuge. Then I started on the cars; he wouldn't have it and I was with him from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. So I just let him go and told him to come and see me the next morning. In he comes and I just go through our crime book and clear up a load, seven pages of statement under caution by the time I've finished. Cars from all over.'²⁸

Allowing for some embellishment of the account, our basic point remains. The fundamental strategy used here, as in the other examples we have documented, was that of exploiting a situation of 'suspicion awareness'. Various tactics which intensified the context were employed until the 'open awareness' of a confession was achieved.

We have now described and analysed strategies and tactics used to question prisoners in the police station. Of course, much of our

discussion of 'strategies of control' in a previous chapter has proved to be of relevance. However, within the more formal setting of the charge room and cell area, strategies of isolation, threat, making clear the consequences of action, the use of 'con' and 'suspicion awareness' were combined. They symbolised police control in what was often a highly dramatic manner but were also used instrumentally to gain a written confession of guilt.

It should also be noted that, throughout our discussion, the assumptions made by the lower ranks contrast sharply with a model of investigation and questioning based on a slow build-up of evidence by, amongst other strategies, the careful questioning of a suspect. An attempt to gain a speedy confession of guilt, sometimes using strategies bordering on the illegal, took precedence over viable alternatives. Judges' Rules and other legal instruments were of little or no relevance to Hilton's officers and, of course, this meant that the indigenous policies of the lower ranks bore little relation to the chief officer's decree that 'bad law would not be made to work'. The strategies and tactics which have been analysed permitted control and encouraged confessions by prisoners. They also created a framework of freedom for the lower operational ranks to police as they believed they should conduct their work.

The sense of freedom to police in response to the contingencies of policework as they are identified by the lower ranks certainly permitted, as we have noted, strategies of control which bordered the illegal. Our discussion can now move to consider a strategy which was certainly illegal - 'verballing'.

'Verballing' and adjusting evidence

A verbal is an oral statement of admission or incrimination attributed to a prisoner, which is invented by the arresting officer involved in the incident. A verbal is a lie and its use in evidence is illegal²⁹.

In this section we will discuss the general theme of 'lying' more

closely but do so with a focus on 'verballing'. First, the discussion will deal with the acceptance and understanding of this strategy by police officers. Secondly, the justification for using such a strategy will be analysed, and, finally, those features of the occupational culture which make the practice possible will be outlined.

The initial data to be used are taken from the remarks of a sergeant who did not work at Hilton and, as other evidence suggests, would not construct evidence or lie in the witness box. However, he implies the general acceptance of lying amongst many officers and, by implication, verballing, when he describes a 'special', that is a voluntary, part-time officer; 'Now he is a good one, he's like a real copper. Get in the box and swear white is black and all that routine'³⁰. 'A real copper'; the description is perhaps overdrawn and exaggerated but the major point is that this sergeant expressed a general acceptance that some police officers would construct evidence and 'verbal' in the course of routine police work. Such a strategy was not extraordinary. Indeed, data drawn from a number of incidents involving a variety of officers indicated that verballing and other similar strategies were accepted as a routine aspect of police work at Hilton.

This general acceptance which facilitated the particular use of verbals was illustrated by a C.I.D. officer called to question a prisoner arrested by two uniformed constables for attempted burglary. We have already discussed the insistence of C.I.D. and other officers that a statement of confession or some other direct evidence of guilt took precedence over the assembly of carefully investigated, discrete pieces of evidence. This assumption was evident when a C.I.D. officer suggested to an officer in a tentative fashion, 'I don't want to push you or anything but I do think that we should have some verbal evidence to tie him up with the implement'³¹. Of course, this C.I.D. officer could not require the arresting constables to act as he wished and, perhaps, as he would in these circumstances. His advice was suggestive rather than mandatory. Indeed, there was sufficient evidence to charge and convict without

the 'verbal' he thought necessary. Yet, there was nothing extraordinary about his remark, it illustrated a general acceptance of 'verballing'.

In the following data I asked a colleague why a particular constable had been returned to patrol work after a period of duty with a special crime squad. I wondered if his replacement was due to a reluctance to 'verbal', here referred to as 'work the oracle':

'Was it that he was not willing to put the verbal in? To work the oracle?' He replied, 'It might have been that, it is necessary at times but I don't think that he had much idea about what was what - that's all.'

During this conversation I asked about the two officers replacing the constable. S.H.: 'Who selected —— for the squad?' Officer: 'The officer in charge did; he was allowed to have who he wanted and he chose —— and ——.' S.H.: 'They are likely to end up in the dock for perjury, aren't they?' Officer: 'Yes, I suppose they are, but —— had the free hand to choose who he wanted.'³²

Again, within this different context of a crime squad, staffed by uniformed personnel, comments by a uniformed officer imply an acceptance of the use of 'verbals' and false evidence. Indeed, other data suggested that the officer who was described as 'not knowing what's what' had a rather different and less adaptive view of police work than his colleagues on the squad, not least those who replaced him.

These data also suggest that, on some occasions here when a special squad is working, supervisory staff prefer to recruit officers who are willing to adjust evidence rather than those who are not. The acceptance of this strategy outweighed its rejection. A probationary constable indicated such a view when he described how he was forced, not to verbal, but to charge a person arrested in his presence but not by him.

'... They nicked a bloke for —— (names offence). I don't reckon that they (others present were also arrested) should ever have been nicked at all.' After arrival at the station, 'Sergeant —— told me that I had to have one of them. I said that I didn't nick anybody but he told me that I had to have one of them. I told him again but he told me that I was a probationer and that I needed them for figures and I couldn't afford not to take a body. I had to take him and that right

upset me, that put me back. It's just like — (names another officer). He was there and he keeps reminding me about it and taking the mickey. He says that you can't argue when you are a probationer. You have to do as you are told and take the bodies that you are told to take. It just upsets me.'³³

It was not possible to quantify the extent of the practice described by the officer. However, a further example taken from routine patrol work verified the view that some officers adapted their evidence to circumstances and that 'verballing' was accepted rather than rejected by colleagues who would personally not use such a strategy.

A young constable was known to act violently towards suspects and had a reputation for lying. Eventually, he was not allowed to work on the streets and a sergeant who was posted to this officer's shift explained, 'The blokes take the piss out of him so much, they joke about him. They say, "Are you going to get your truncheon out and hit him?" when he gets a body. So they all joke about him but they get on all right really. I mean, — is the only one who really has a go at him. He is a bit nasty to him. They just joke with him about his always getting his stick out all the time and all that. They will all work with him but he's not really liked that much, I suppose. He's not really liked on the relief.'³⁴

Despite this officer's behaviour, including his willingness to lie about the action described here, his colleagues offered him tacit acceptance. When these data are coupled to all the other data we have presented, it is possible to verify the strategy of adapting evidence to meet a particular circumstance, including the use of the 'verbal', as a stable feature of the occupational culture.

However, although there was considerable evidence of this practice, officers who refused to 'verbal' prisoners, that is to say attribute false statements of guilt and incrimination to them, were not harshly stigmatised by their colleagues. Disagreement on this issue was tolerated, as the following data illustrate.

Two officers from Hilton had disturbed some youths who were on the verge of stealing a motor car. They were arrested and taken to the local station, some distance from Hilton. During the arrest, reported over the radio system, several officers from Hilton joined their colleagues and discussed the issue when they returned. P.C.: 'Refused charge by the station officer over there. — (names officer) wasn't willing to say that little extra. They

were out to nick a vehicle all right, they admit it but they were just acting as look-outs.' Colleague: 'So he wouldn't say the old sparkler?' P.O.: 'No, he doesn't believe in that sort of thing, so it's fair enough. Only trouble was that I was about to take a statement under caution.' This officer then turned to another colleague and offered a further explanation; 'And it is a foreign court anyway, so there we are. You see, he doesn't believe in that sort of thing so, after all, that's fair, isn't it?' Colleague: 'Yes.' The officer who made the arrests soon returned to Hilton where his colleagues were still assembled. He was asked, 'What went wrong?' 'We came along a couple of minutes too early.' 'I suppose it is a foreign court.' 'No, — (names other officer involved) was of the same opinion as me, no, it's not just that.'³⁵

This incident was administered at a station where the officer was perhaps not subject to as much pressure as would be placed on him by his colleagues at Hilton. Further, he was liked by his colleagues, one of whom, it should be noted, offered him an explanation for his decision. However, the explanation had nothing to do with the basic moral principle involved but was concerned with the practical issue that the prisoners would have gone to 'a foreign court'. Certainly, this officer's colleagues expected him to adjust his evidence. This was also suggested in another incident involving a less popular officer.

Three men were arrested in the early hours of the morning for 'gross indecency'. There was little evidence against them and one complained bitterly that he had been arrested unlawfully. When I told another sergeant that there was insufficient evidence to charge them, he said, 'He (the arresting constable) will just have to change the evidence, won't he?' I said, 'No, he won't', but when he saw the arresting officer my colleague repeated his remark. The arresting officer declined his advice, 'I only see what I see'. In fact, the Inspector who dealt with the matter refused the charge but this did not prevent some of the constables who were present in the station expressing their views. 'He ... is a fool for not changing his story.' Another pointed to the fact that his colleague was not acting in a commonsense manner; 'I am not going to tell you what to do, I'm not going to tell you how to suck eggs, am I?'³⁶

The acceptance of 'verballing' and adjusting evidence has now been demonstrated. We have also noted that, although it was likely that an attempt would be made to influence an officer's decision, compliance

with this practice was not mandatory. Although many considered 'verballing' quite acceptable, dissenting officers, like this sergeant referring to his colleague who arrested many suspects for a particular offence, were able to withdraw their involvement in but not prevent the use of an illegal strategy. The officer noticed that a new sergeant was working with this officer and he commented, 'I see he has a new recruit to be sacrificed. He'll get wise, I gave up when he started passing me verbals'³⁷.

Legitimation

Why did officers act in this way? Is not the following comment from a sergeant who had served at Hilton for many years and was now in a specialist role, good reason to desist?

'Not me, if I get anything it is straight ... If you put words in people's mouths you are supporting bad law and there is no need for it half the time. Once these youngsters get into the habit of getting into that, you don't know where it is going to stop.'³⁸

Why did officers use illegal strategies? Although the data to be used in this section do not permit direct reference to the incidents we have already cited, it is possible to infer a number of more general relevant themes.

First, officers believed that, as it was formulated, the law did not permit them to work in a practical manner. By this they meant that a law should ensure the police a power of arrest, the ability to gain evidence and secure a conviction at court. When a verbal or other similar strategy was used, a prisoner's guilt was assumed and, therefore, so was a conviction by a court. These strategies conflated the criminal justice system into a single act where arrest, guilt and conviction were assumed. This legitimation or technique of neutralisation³⁹ enabled an officer to deny the legal constraints of the rule of law. His privileged knowledge of an incident, intensity of concern with what he considered to be 'justice' and, in the following example, duty, seemed to leave no realistic and available alternative course of action.

An officer explained: 'I verbal people and I think that it is justified. If we are given laws which can't be put into practice then we have to try and make them work and this means verballing. Look at 'offensive weapons', you are almost obliged to give the prisoner a verbal to get a conviction on that charge ... I take the oath but to me it might as well be swearing on any old bit of paper. It doesn't mean anything to me. I don't have to say that I believe in it. I know, but I think I am fair to people.'⁴⁰

A constable expressed a similar view: '... when you have a legal system that allows people to get off and makes you break the law to get convictions, then you have to be slightly bent'⁴¹. Interestingly, both these officers argued in terms of the moral responsibility for their actions being displaced upon a general and impersonal artifact - 'the law requires' and 'a legal system'. This general dissolution of moral responsibility suggests that any personal guilt was neutralised. The strategy was regarded as virtually inevitable.

A related point is therefore that officers did not consider this strategy was concerned with a total fabrication of evidence. They adjusted, refined and corrected the basic evidence which was available, rendering the prisoners' guilt more visible for the court hearing. Verballing and other similar strategies were, as some officers put it, 'gilding the lily'. They added necessary elaborated detail to basic evidence of guilt.

Officers believed that prisoners who were 'verballed' knew they were guilty and were not offended by the practice. I asked an officer how he managed to get evidence of gaming in a cafe frequented by members of a particular race;

'Well, you manufacture the evidence. Couldn't get in there. Only — (names race) are allowed in there so I manufactured the evidence. They pleaded guilty. They knew they were guilty. So that was that.' I contested the point and, after we were joined by another officer, was told, 'That's part of your job as a policeman. You ought to be prepared to do it.'⁴²

Vice offences were not the only cases where verbals were thought to be particularly appropriate. C.I.D. officers and others dealing

with professional criminals and/or 'villains', that is, persistent, cunning and dangerous offenders, were also singled out. After our colleague mentioned in the above data had joined us, the conversation turned to the work of a C.I.D. officer who had recently joined the station from a headquarters squad dealing with serious crime.

'It's because people like — are willing to put their necks out in court to get these blokes down, or else you'd never do it. They'd be laughing at you if you didn't do it. You'd never get anybody convicted.' I contested again, arguing that the law, not evidence, should be changed. This argument was countered: 'Law can't change that, it's part of being a policeman. If you know they're guilty there's nothing wrong and if you're not willing to do it you shouldn't be in the job.'⁴³

'Villains' were also mentioned in the next data by an officer who, with a colleague, arrested a man he described as a 'good villain'.

I was told, 'Now this is a case where a good verbal is needed — (name), and not out of place. He's a right villain, this one.' The suggestion seemed to be confirmed by the arresting officer: 'No, I'm keeping it nice and simple. I haven't given him any property in my verbal. I've just said that he was going to steal from the car.'⁴⁴

The means of legitimising these strategies are now clear. First, prior and absolute guilt was assumed. Secondly, a verbal was required if law was to be seen to work in a practical manner and convictions secured; officers made slight additions and adjustments to the available evidence. Thirdly, then, an officer 'gilds the lily' rather than 'propagate a totally new species'. Finally, in some cases, particularly those involving vice and 'villains', verbals were necessary and accepted by prisoners.

Of course, considerable personal risks of disciplinary action were involved for officers who used these strategies. However, some data indicate that officers felt they acted fairly and accepted these risks as an inevitable aspect of competent policing.

An officer explained, 'I don't care what you think — (name). I know we will disagree here but, you know, I somehow admire blokes who do it. You get real big villains and you know that they have done something

and the only way to get him down is to gild the lily against him, you know. I don't think blokes do it easily; they don't, they worry about it. They worry about it as the case is coming to court and they are glad it is over and it is not easy for anybody. They don't enjoy it but they think it is necessary to do it if they are going to convict these people and that is what they are going to do.'⁴⁵

The basic themes of legitimation are again evident in this datum. However, it would seem that the risks of 'verballing' and 'gilding the lily' were not entirely neutralised by the rationalisations proposed. Neither were they the sole means of rationalising police action in this matter. Other structural features of the occupational culture were of importance and we now turn to these.

Trust, team-work and secrecy

Three basic structural features of the occupational culture assisted officers' use of verbals and other similar strategies. These were trust, team-work and secrecy, the last having been cited by Cain in her study, the first suggested by Manning but not fully documented in his research.

If a 'verbal' was to be used, the officer who used it had to trust his colleagues. He had to be able to assume that, when he made an arrest, other officers realised evidence would be constructed and that the necessary corroboration and/or secrecy would be forthcoming. The following incident is concerned with an officer who found himself in such a situation but did not make an arrest because he knew that his colleague could not be trusted to support his use of a verbal. He explained:

'We found an axe under the front seat but I couldn't get him to say the right words and there was nothing I could do about it. — (names officer) is a bit naive.'⁴⁶

Similarly, if it was thought that a member of the public was not being truthful when giving evidence to an investigating officer, caution was displayed. It was not possible to assume the supporting trust of a 'civilian witness'. For example, a store detective who

worked at one of Hilton's departmental stores was criticised for the strategies she was believed to use and, therefore, the trust which a police officer had, unwillingly, to place in her. A sergeant discussed the point with a colleague;

'I agree, she doesn't see all that she says she sees. She stands by the door and looks at people going out and anyone who looks the type, she just stops them. Well, 99% of the time she's right but of course she's not right all the time.' ... 'Yes, where there's evidence I don't think you have got much choice but to take the charge but I refused one of them. As I say, I always take a personal interest if the person denies it.'⁴⁷

Women disarm the police; that has been noted. However, the caution expressed here indicated a lack of trust of this store detective, despite the fact that she seemed to behave in a similar manner to many of Hilton's officers. Trust must exist if a verbal or similar strategy is to be used.

For a similar reason, the presence of a civilian, here an interpreter who had been called by the police to assist them in an investigation, prevented verballing. An officer who has already been quoted in this chapter and who said he used verbals, remarked:

'... I know you might not agree with this but when you know that someone has done something wrong and you are questioning them, you can put the right answers down, put the right verbals in. But when there is an interpreter you can't do that.'⁴⁸

Trust was required because of the risk of exposing illegality at a court hearing. 'A "stitch-up" gone wrong' was how an officer described a case which received national publicity because an officer's evidence had been found to be false⁴⁹. In some circumstances it was thought to be preferable to work on one's own rather than assume any relationship of trust with another officer. This was implied in a comment made by a sergeant who was somewhat critical of the C.I.D. practice of getting a statement of confession;

'I don't think that it is a good idea to take the statement under caution. Just give them a verbal, that's enough. It's much better than a statment.'⁵⁰

Working on one's own and using a verbal as the basic evidence meant that the element of trust was not required. However, we have seen

that, where more than one person was involved in presenting evidence of guilt, 'trust', associated with the interdependent team work feature of police work, assisted the practice of verballing.

The second element was this 'team-work' character of policing, that is, the interdependency of officers of various ranks working on the one shift. An officer who made an arrest was required to take his prisoner to the charge room, where a sergeant or inspector, acting as station officer, heard the available evidence. All station officers had worked as constables, they knew about verballing and similar strategies and that some of the evidence presented to them was likely to be false. If they suspected false evidence was being presented they could investigate and refuse the charge; if they accepted false evidence then, by implication, they supported the use of a verbal.

Some station officers were happy to use verbals themselves, they were therefore willing to extend their licence to their colleagues. However, even when a station officer would not verbal he felt obliged to accept a charge where full but what he suspected to be false evidence was presented. The interdependency of the team had two effects; on the one hand it permitted trust between colleagues and therefore the use of a verbal in a context of safety. On the other hand, while allowing individual choice to use such a strategy, a demonstration of support for colleagues was also required if a station officer was to be seen to be a committed member of the police team.

A team is a group of people with a common commitment to the presentation of a particular appearance and manner. The following data suggest commitment can be expressed and retained by the formal but implicitly assenting manner of a station officer:

'If I do a job, it is straight. There is not any other routine. When I do it, it's straight down the line and that's the end to it. Mind you, if a P.C. wants to come to me with full evidence then that's it. Nothing I can do about that. As far as I am concerned my jobs are straight.'⁵¹

Other station officers, who might use a verbal themselves but not insist on their constables doing so, could indicate the need for further evidence, and therefore a verbal, before they accepted a charge. For example, and as the following data make clear, it was possible for a station officer to use evasive language, suggesting that he did not want to be told that a verbal was being used but, nevertheless, his lack of direction did not prohibit such a strategy.

The station officer had refused a charge of 'offensive weapon' for lack of evidence. However, as he made his written entry in the appropriate book, '... one of the P.C.s said to me, "There's evidence of drunk and dis, Sarge". I said, "As far as I am concerned I need evidence and you must give me the evidence, you've got to prove it in court and give me the evidence." So they gave me all the evidence, just like in training school and they did their reports perfect. So it's down to them as far as I am concerned. I don't know what happened in court.'⁵²

Another station officer clarified this point when he described how he dealt with a similar charge;

'I never tell the P.C. to verbal them. I just say, "Did he say anything? ... If they don't, okay, but never let the person leave the station without being charged".'⁵³

Again the implicit acceptance of interdependency, firmly noted by Cain a decade before my research, is identified at Hilton. It is of further interest that, in both the examples presented, station officers adjusted their usual informal approach to the charging procedure to a formal setting. For example, it was not usual for a station officer to hear all the evidence of an arrest for drunk and disorderly. The data suggest that a reversion to formal procedures protected a station officer who, at a later date, might be required to justify his action. However, the creation of a formal setting also permitted him to indicate to his subordinates that they could tender highly questionable evidence, as long as they did not reveal its source. The use of formal administrative rules was indicative of consent to depart from those same rules but also a warning that an arresting officer took full responsibility for his actions⁵⁴.

The structural dependency found on the reliefs at Hilton did not just extend from constable to constable and from constable to sergeant; Inspectors in charge of each relief were also included. Secrecy and interdependency of team work were closely related and the following illustrations tie Inspectors into the structural web of team work which has been described.

After a person had been charged with being drunk and disorderly I commented, in the presence of the Inspector in charge of the relief, that the man was not drunk. The Inspector said, 'you shouldn't be saying that out loud, Sarge, you shouldn't be saying that out loud.'⁵⁵

A rather different piece of evidence makes this same point. An Inspector was in the office with constables who had arrested a youth for taking a motor vehicle. He had been present at the arrest. One of the arresting officers said, 'See what I've put down for when he was nicked.' P.C.2: 'Oh, I heard him say that, oh yes.' Inspector: 'In between other things.' He laughed loudly. P.C.2: 'Did you caution him?' Laughter again. P.C.3: 'I'll say I did, I saw the boot going in. We were only one car's length behind him and before I could get out I saw six policemen had jumped on him.'⁵⁶

Inspectors were therefore not relieved of the obligations of team membership. Their rank and responsibility for the actions of subordinates meant that it was necessary for them to accept but not acknowledge verballing and similar strategies in an explicit manner.

Trust and the team-work character of policing at Hilton secured the interdependency of officers. It also meant that, when strategies and tactics of control bordered on illegality, officers would retain secrecy about their use. This value of secrecy has already been suggested by a number of data and is also implicit in the following examples. First, a sergeant indicated his trust and intention of secrecy to a constable, after he had charged a youth arrested for possession of an offensive weapon.

The prisoner, a black youth, had been found in possession of two long plastic sticks joined by a chain, which he secreted inside his trousers. I went to the charge room shortly after the charge was put and asked the station officer if the youth had the weapon to cause injury. He looked at me and said, 'I think he said that at one stage.' He then smiled. The arresting officer then

wrote his own 'good arrest report' for the divisional chief superintendent in which he recounted a stop and struggle, during which time he noticed a bulge in the youth's clothing. An officer who was present at the arrest also read the account and commented, 'Excellent detective ability, excellent verballing ability.' All laughed.⁵⁷

Other examples also indicated muted knowledge and acceptance of verballing by lower ranks, which implied that the appearance of corroboration necessary in a court hearing would be honoured. Clearly, any hint of a lie by an officer opened them to investigation and prosecution. A sergeant who had a considerable number of years of police service to his credit made this clear during a conversation with myself and another sergeant, who said,

'Yeh. He (S.H.) says you shouldn't tell lies in the witness box, the fucking idiot.' Colleague: 'Well, it's no good trying to do it because every time I try I go bright red. I'd hate to have a job at Sessions where I'd have to tell lies. I don't think I could do it. Well, I can't do it because I know as soon as it starts coming I go brilliant red. I can tell little ones, little white lies but I can't tell proper lies. As much as at times I would have liked to have told a lie, I just can't do it.'⁵⁸

Here, the suggestion is that the retention of physical composure ensured the secrecy of team work and the presentation of a united front.

If team discipline was likely to be broken or, for some reason, it required strengthening, remedial work could be carried out by rehearsing the context where a threat could be posed.

Two officers were sitting in the station office writing their notes for a court case due to be heard the following morning. Their evidence concerned an arrest they had made some time before the notes were compiled. Many of their colleagues were also in the station office. One commented to the other: 'I've got more in my book than you.' He laughed. The other officer held his notebook and showed a blank page. He said, 'Well, have you got the verbals?' Another officer said, 'I don't think I should be hearing this'. There was general laughter and another colleague asked one of the officers who was making his notes, 'Officer, when did you make these notes?' He answered, 'At the time, sir.' Further laughter followed and the officers completed their notes⁵⁹.

In this construction of the court hearing we find a testing of trust, secrecy and the teamwork of policing and, interestingly, when a breach was realised, repair work being done to secure a front of legality. The court room setting was evoked and an obvious question which a defending counsel might put to the officers was asked. Fun was certainly involved, but so was a reinforcement of the values of the occupational culture.

Of course, there were occasions when an officer was less than convincing in the court room. On one such occasion a constable gave evidence of a youth at a football match having said, 'Leave me alone, I want to get at them' before he was arrested for threatening the supporters of a rival team. Officers who were seated at the rear of the court looked at the floor, covered their eyes or 'cringed' as they heard this evidence, suggesting an 'overplay' which could expose the occupational culture. When a presentation of legality was spoiled, the gap between the appearance and reality of policing could become visible⁶⁰.

Summary

We have presented evidence from routine police work carried out at Hilton, which suggests that the strategy of 'verballing' and other similar means of attributing evidence of guilt to a prisoner was normative. Officers of all operational ranks began from the assumption that they could use such strategies, rather than that these were a deviation from the 'commonsense' of police work.

Several assumptions linking the normative character of verballing to routine policing were then discussed. The inadequacy of law, an assumption of guilt and the adjustment rather than total fabrication of evidence which was expected by some types of prisoner all contributed to the use of 'verballing'. Indeed, some of the data indicated how the risk and guilt arising in officers' minds was partly neutralised by their acceptance of the inevitability of using these strategies. Further, personal responsibility and culpability was displaced from the individual onto the highly

impersonal 'law' or 'legal system'.

Other features of the occupational culture assisted such legitimation, importantly, the implicit trust, secrecy and interdependent team work required of constables, sergeants and inspectors. At one point of our discussion, Cain's research which also documents the secrecy and interdependency of the work group was mentioned.

Despite the professionalisation of the force of which Hilton was a part, indeed despite the central features of professional policing that bad law should not be made to work and the firmly expressed intention to investigate and discipline errant officers, we have documented widespread and ready acceptance of strategies of policing which deny these features. Lower ranks still ensure trust, interdependency and secrecy to shield their practices from public view. In demonstrating these continuing features of policing we have presented more evidence than Cain made available. We have also added empirical data to Manning's theoretical argument that contemporary policing requires disciplined team work.

The occupational culture therefore remains distinct and, at Hilton, largely free from the constraints of senior managerial ranks. This will also be noticed as we continue our discussion, considering the use of physical force by Hilton's officers.

Notes and references

- 1 Chatterton, M.R. (1975) Organisational relationships and processes in police work: a case study of urban policing. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Manchester.
- 2 Chatterton, M.R., *ibid.*, p.380.
- 3 Chatterton, M.R., *ibid.*, p.377.
- 4 F.N. 144:8.
- 5 F.N. 134/5/6.
- 6 See incident reported in chapter 7, p.178.
- 7 F.N. 485:3.
- 8 F.N. 628:2.

- 9 F.N. 176:3.
- 10 F.N. 121:1.
- 11 F.N. 494:4.
- 12 For example, see Piliavin, I., and S. Briar (1964) 'Police encounters with juveniles', Amer. J. Sociol., 70: 206-214.
- 13 F.N. 201.
- 14 F.N. 231:3.
- 15 F.N. 118:2.
- 16 F.N. 208:3 for example.
- 17 F.N. 575:5.
- 18 F.N. 311:1; also see 210:11.
- 19 Chatterton, M.R. (1975) op.cit., p.296.
- 20 F.N. 413:5.
- 21 F.N. 495 and 437:5.
- 22 F.N. 278:1.
- 23 F.N. 213:2.
- 24 Glaser, B.G., and A.L. Strauss (1967) 'Awareness contexts and social interaction', Amer. Sociol. Rev., 29: 669-679.
- 25 F.N. 448:2.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 F.N. 470:2.
- 28 F.N. 448:1.
- 29 Interestingly, my definition is an adaptation of that given by Powis, D. (1977) The signs of crime: a field manual for police, London: McGraw-Hill, p.206. Powis, a senior police officer, is rather sensitive about the term, writing, 'it is often said that police invent them. However, they are usually not denied until legal aid is granted to criminals.'
- 30 F.N. 516:2b.
- 31 F.N. 194:1.
- 32 F.N. 641:5.
- 33 F.N. 665:1.

- 34 F.N. 696:1, my emphasis.
- 35 F.N. 442:10.
- 36 F.N. 701:4.
- 37 F.N. 431:5.
- 38 F.N. 668:2.
- 39 Matza, D. (1964) Delinquency and drift. New York: Wiley.
- 40 F.N. 169:2.
- 41 F.N. 477:3.
- 42 F.N. 519:1.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 F.N. 178:4.
- 45 F.N. 708:1.
- 46 F.N. 193:4.
- 47 F.N. 260:5.
- 48 F.N. 207:3.
- 49 F.N. 405:3a.
- 50 F.N. 113:1.
- 51 F.N. 523:1c. See Goffman, E. (1959) The presentation of self in everyday life, Harmondsworth: Penguin, for the notion of teamwork.
- 52 F.N. 468:6.
- 53 F.N. 177:1.
- 54 Bittner, E. (1965) 'The concept of organisation', Social Res. 32: 239-255.
- 55 F.N. 661:9.
- 56 F.N. 231:3.
- 57 F.N. 431:4. This report should have been compiled by the station officer.
- 58 F.N. 597:3.
- 59 F.N. 235:3.
- 60 F.N. 552:1.

CHAPTER 9

POLICE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE

A further strategy of control which could and, on occasion, did lead to illegality was the use of physical force. The decision to use the term 'physical force' in this section rids us of the more value-laden term 'violence' and is broader than Albert Reiss's use of 'police brutality'¹. Data will be used to describe how Hilton's police used physical force to control offenders and others with whom they had to deal. Importantly, the various meanings of this strategy will be documented, linking its use to the values of the occupational culture. It will be noted that, in some contexts, police officers used physical force for reasons which surpassed the immediate problem of restraining a recalcitrant and aggressive person. In these contexts an explanation for such a use of force is found in the structure and control of the occupational culture.

Use of physical force by the British police is permitted by common law. Indeed, we repeat Bittner's definition of the police:

'... the police are nothing else than a mechanism for the distribution of situationally justified force in society ... this is the primary determining feature when police are called to the diversity of service calls they are expected to attend'².

This strategy is therefore not merely a proactive instrument of state control for the retention of public order and crime. It is also central to reactive and peace-keeping aspects of police work.

Although the police are legally entitled to use physical force, the limits of its use are not defined; 'As much force as is necessary' was the formal instruction given to Hilton's police when they made an arrest. Clearly, the discretionary freedom afforded the British police permitted wide interpretation of this instruction. When we consider how lower ranks mould policy into their preferred strategies of action it is not surprising to find that they also adapt and exploit instructions concerned with their use of physical force. Once again, the occupational culture is a primary reference point for

our understanding of urban police work.

A personality characteristic

Placing our discussion of the police use of physical force within the context of occupational culture is to assume that sociological rather than psychological variables are of analytical importance. Although they have not been entirely conclusive, studies which have attempted to measure 'authoritarianism' amongst police officers, and therefore a tendency for individual officers to use violence, have concluded that the incidence of such traits amongst a controlled sample of police officers is not significantly higher from those of the general population³. For example, in an exhaustive review of the literature in this area, Lefkowitz argues that, on methodological grounds alone, extreme caution should be exercised in discussion of a 'personality type' prone to the use of violence being attracted to police work.

Some evidence exists to suggest that, in America at least, the use of physical force is a tendency fostered amongst police officers during training. Toch and Schulte⁴ found that a sample of American officers on initial training perceived potentially violent situations more readily than a control group of non-police subjects. Willingness to perceive a situation as potentially and actually violent increased during recruit training. Other work, by Teahan and Harris for example, indicates that any tendency by an officer to use force will not be sanctioned or discouraged by training schemes⁵.

Finally, further research by Hans Toch, during which in-depth interviews were conducted with a number of subjects identified as 'violent policemen', provides a preliminary typology of the officer who is likely to use physical force. Basically, such officers are said to be egocentric and insecure. However, despite the individualistic focus of this research, Toch concludes:

'Whereas the conduct of violent men amongst the police is at least partly due to personal characteristics of particular men, violence proneness in other officers is largely engendered by police organisation and by formal and informal indoctrination'⁶.

This suggestion is given credibility by Katz's small study of violence in an American suburban police division. Katz observed that officers who were prepared to use excessive physical force in the course of their work were ascribed a 'charismatic' status by colleagues⁷.

Remembering that no comparable British data is available, evidence from the American setting points to the possibility of a very small number of police officers who may be prone to a highly excessive use of force, the reason of this tendency being highly uncertain. However, such use should be understood against a background of acquiescence to, if not overt support for, colleagues who use the strategy of physical force. The occupational culture is a resource of values, associated strategies and tactics, providing a stock of knowledge of how lower ranks may use physical force in their routine work.

William Westley came to a similar conclusion in his research⁸. However, we have already had cause to challenge his basic argument that the strategies of control used by the British police are a response to danger found within the local population; that challenge remains. However, other secondary points made by Westley are of interest because he analysed some of the reasons for the use of force articulated by his sample of American officers. Seven basic reasons are given; disrespect for the police, necessary force used in protection, to obtain information, to make an arrest, to pursue a hardened criminal, use on a guilty prisoner and to punish sex criminals.

Interestingly, Albert Reiss also cites open defiance of police authority or resisting arrest as important reasons for police use of excessive force. He stresses the point that 'Open defiance of police authority, however, is what the policeman defines as his authority, not necessarily "official authority"'.⁹ The use of force on certain types of offender is also discussed by Reiss, as is the police station as an area of safety where these practices can take place in privacy, supported by a team of colleagues.

The trust, secrecy and interdependency of police work at Hilton,

verified in the context of 'verballing', are also of relevance to this discussion, affording officers the freedom to act excessively, particularly within the confines of the police station. However, we are unable to draw on British research for comparative or supporting evidence of police use of force. Cain does mention an Inspector who turned a 'blind eye' to one of his constables using the privacy of the police cells to hit an aggressive prisoner. Chatterton suggests that rumours about the use of force by the officers he researched could have been true, given the control they exercised over persons in custody¹⁰. However, no detailed evidence is offered by either author.

Emphasising the problems involved in making direct comparisons between studies, the body of research available suggests that it is prudent to look to the occupational culture as a starting point of analysis. The present research seeks to extend an understanding of how and why Hilton's police used physical force in their routine work by describing and analysing the variety of meanings attached to this strategy of control. All the available data is taken from situations where arrests are or have been made¹¹.

Retaining control and authority

The use of force to retain the control of and authority over a prisoner extends our discussion of 'prisoners'. My research does not permit a precise explanation of why verbal and other means of achieving control developed into the use of physical force. At this stage it is only possible to collate the broadly conceived contexts which precipitated the use of force by the officers involved.

First, force was used to retain and/or achieve respect from and authority over a prisoner. This authority was not to be found in statute or any other legislative code but the personal authority of the officers involved and, therefore, the respect they considered due to their occupation. This led to officers correcting or restoring a situation to what they considered to be acceptable control. Excessive force was not used in these contexts, which

distinguished them from incidents where, for example, an officer had been assaulted and considerable force was used to control and punish the offender. An officer from Hilton explained: 'We got to the station and he called me "son". So, I had to hit him, I had to teach him the error of his ways'¹². Another, a sergeant, referred to the use of force by an officer at another station who, it seems, had struck a prisoner now transferred to Hilton: 'He was given a lesson in how to be polite, which was nice of him considering that he was giving me the prisoner'¹³. This strategy of force to restore the authority of the police was described by officers who used it as 'a lesson' and 'teaching'.

Running away from an officer was also considered to be an indication of disrespect:

'There were two spades fighting - one was kicking hell out of the other. They ran off and one was caught.'
Colleague: 'Suppose he got a bit of summary justice then, did he?' This officer kicked his foot in the air.
'I don't know about that but I know the one who was caught was singing like mad.'¹⁴

A prisoner who had a cut to his mouth explained his injury, 'Yes, you know why I got this, I ran away. I'll say no more and that's where the matter ends.'¹⁵

This judgement was accurate, running away constituted disrespect for police authority.

Driving away in a motor vehicle from pursuing police officers also constituted disrespect for police authority. After a short chase, previously described in this thesis as a contrivance by the police rather than the youth arrested,

The officer brought the offender to the charge room and said to him, 'In future, you stop, you stop. You've learnt your lesson now, but when you're told to stop, you just stop.' The youth had a swollen lip and nose¹⁶.

'Running away' indicated to officers that ameliorative force could be used and that it was possible to extend that force beyond legally permissible limits. None of the incidents outlined featured opposition to arrest after the offender was caught. It could be argued that physical force put each offender in fear, thereby

preventing a further escape attempt. Such an argument holds a measure of truth. However, the personnel involved in these incidents also used force to ensure that police authority prevailed over a disrespectful prisoner.

Rudeness towards the police, continual shouting and a failure to be deferential to officers also warranted the use of force. A sergeant intimated as much when he described a juvenile he had recently dealt with and who, on this occasion, was accompanied by a solicitor:

'... he's not a kid, he's a little bastard. I'd like to thump his head in. He's a liar, he's rude, he's a villain, he goes out stealing, he goes out and does burglary, takes cars. Last time he was in here we had a hell of a time with him. He complained about me; mind you, he got a lot of aggro back.'¹⁷

Whilst lying and being 'a villain' were further reasons for using force, the rudeness of the prisoner also prompted this comment and the action suggested by the officer.

Other data verified the point. It will be recalled that a station officer hit a prisoner and advised his assistant to act in a like manner because of the noise that prisoner was making¹⁸. During the investigation of suspected theft of a van, a rather difficult prisoner suggested to a constable that he knew very little about motor vehicles. The prisoner was slapped round the face because he was 'cheeky'.

Similarly, a woman who was drunk and drugged struggled as some officers tried to remove potentially injurious rings from her fingers. As she resisted, a male prisoner who was sitting nearby commented that such firm handling was not necessary, the station officer referred to the jewellery and said, 'If it wasn't a girl we would just thump her.'¹⁹

These rather more direct and punitive measures concern the challenge a prisoner held in custody makes to an officer's control of the situation. Assent to police control within the charge room meant quietness, allowing the police to search one's person, answering questions quickly and without rudeness. Further, it meant respect for and submission to police authority. Once that respect was given, force was not used save in those situations to be outlined in later sections of this chapter.

Danger

Continuing reference has been made in this thesis to the British police's perception of the world as disorderly rather than dangerous, as the American context indicates. However, Hilton's police did experience some situations of danger and if danger was present when a prisoner was arrested or being pursued, it was likely that physical force would be used.

Officers expected and tolerated slight injury when making arrests. When a probationer constable suggested that his grazed knee, sustained while making an arrest, constituted a charge of 'assault on police' he was jokingly rebutted by a more experienced officer:

'What, you trying to swift bodies away now? Already, is he ...?' Another put it: 'Yes, but it is a bit of fun, isn't it - a struggle. I mean, you don't expect them to come quietly, do you? It's all a bit of fun.'²⁰

There were particular periods of time when the whole of the subdivision was pervaded by a sense of danger. One such period was after a number of bombs exploded near to the sub-division. Similarly, if a crowd of people were acting violently, officers felt that they faced danger but it was also the case that they entered these situations with a sense of bravado²¹.

After a very long car chase, some youths eventually stopped their stolen vehicle and were arrested by, amongst others, a constable from Hilton. As the radio commentary of the chase was broadcast, officers interjected to encourage those who made the arrests to use physical force, which was forthcoming. However, despite the very great danger in which a large number of officers were placed and the use of force as a response to it, the chase was experienced as an exciting and exhilarating event. The experience of danger, associated with the hedonistic and action orientation of Hilton's police, also sustained and strengthened these features of occupational culture.

Situations of personal danger where physical force was used after the actual period of danger had ceased were also documented. Of course, there were other occasions when officers were placed in immediate and real personal danger, when it was necessary for them to use physical force²². However, situations of perceived danger which resulted in police use of physical force also offered the experience of action, excitement and hedonism. Central values of the occupational culture were affirmed in such contexts.

Assault on police

Danger is highly personalised when an officer is assaulted. At Hilton, the denial of control and authority by a person who assaulted a police officer was met with physical force from the officer and/or his colleagues. Instrumental and symbolic emphases were fused when force was used in such a context. Whilst self-protection and more punitive reasons lay behind the use of force in these settings, the profanation of the virtual sanctity of the police officer's body acted to invoke a symbolic response, indicating the authority of the police to control and determine the actions of others. When force was used on a person who had assaulted a police officer, total police control and authority were symbolised - a view implied by an officer who commented, 'if anyone touches a policeman he deserves to be hung'²³.

If this remark stressed the instrumental use of force, the following comment by a station officer fused symbolic and instrumental emphases. I asked him about the physical state of a prisoner who had struck an officer with a chair. He replied, 'not bad really, there was a token but he wasn't beaten up, not by any means'²⁴. Although minimal force was used, 'a token' meant that its use also symbolised a wider context of police control. When another officer employed very considerable force on a prisoner who had assaulted him, he said, 'You're not going to get away with assaulting me without taking something yourself'²⁵. Again, the instrumental and the symbolic, the personal and the extra-personal are both found when force is used after an officer has been assaulted.

This action suggested that the use of force reaffirmed the solidarity of the work group, negating any challenge to the control it considered right to exercise. A prisoner responsible for assaulting two officers had been struck on the head with a truncheon. He lay on the charge room floor, surrounded by officers who continued to exercise total control over him. Others came to the charge room to look at him and merely stood with their colleagues. Why did an injured person lying on the floor of a charge room evoke such a response ?

It is suggested that the use of violence against the police threatened the occupational identity of each officer and, therefore, the solidarity of the work group. Violation of the group required the redress of force.

A woman constable had been assaulted by a youth. He was severely beaten by the officers who arrested him. One of them who was present at the incident recalled, 'She (the officer assaulted) said, "Don't hit him". We said (to her) "Get in there and keep quiet"'. The officer was taken to a police vehicle and her colleagues who had made the arrest returned to the prisoner 'and ... continued'. I asked for an explanation of this behaviour and he replied, 'Well, it's very closely knit, the police. If your brother or sister gets hurt you do something about it. It's like your brothers and sisters.'²⁶

Trust and interdependency - the total web of relationships found within the occupational culture - were reaffirmed when force was used after an officer had been assaulted. Reprisal played a part but so did the symbolic reaffirmation of occupational solidarity and identity.

It was noticeable that the redress made was not an equitable exchange. Police officers tended to return greater force than they received from an assailant. Station officers who were responsible for the safety of all persons held in custody were aware of this inequality and those who cared to do so took steps to ensure that they were able to exercise a measure of control over their subordinates. When a patrolling constable had been assaulted the supervisory officer who had to deal with the charge was patrolling with me. As we headed for the station he said, 'We'd better get down to the station quick so that they don't beat him

to death²⁷. This exaggeration referred to the force which the officer knew was likely to be used on the prisoner.

When a number of youths were arrested for an offence and they fought the police, their injuries of cuts and bruises to the nose and face were matched by small cuts, mostly to the hands of the arresting officers²⁸. A prisoner who had kicked an officer in the face was, as colleagues described, 'G.B.H.-ed'²⁹. In all the examples quoted an inequity of exchange was noted and, on occasion, this led to acts of brutality.

After an officer was 'bottled' in the face by a man who was later arrested, a colleague involved in the arrest explained that the prisoner was subjected to the following use of force by the staff of a neighbouring station. The data also illustrate a reaffirmation of authority and control after an officer had been assaulted.

'A bloke got a right spanking at — last night, a right pasting. A couple of officers had information that he was in a block of flats and so we went down there en masse and swept through the whole block, staircases, everything. He had put a bottle in this officer's face, the bastard. Sure enough, we found him and he had a hammering. Had to call the doctor, oh yes, call the doctor. He was in quite a state. Cold last night, wasn't it, freezing? He was naked in front of an open window and every time he moved he got thumped. Yes, a bit of rough treatment for him.'³⁰

One further datum demonstrated all the elements we have documented - the violation of an officer by assault which was redressed by the use of such force that an inequitable exchange was effected. The extreme, virtually bizarre behaviour by the police officers involved confirms the point that the complete denial of police control, which the use of force indicates, is met by redressing that denial with action to reaffirm the security of the occupational culture.

A man had been arrested for robbery, which some officers considered a trivial example of the offence. The prisoner resisted arrest and during the course of a fight was hit on the head with a truncheon, being rendered unconscious. One of the officers was bitten on the testicles and another punched. A total of about eight officers were present at the arrest. The prisoner was detained in hospital with head wounds.

During the time he was at the station and it was likely that action which reaffirmed the occupational culture would have taken place, it was recalled that the station officer -

'was playing cards and when all the commotion was going on in the charge room, he just continued playing cards and said, "We'll wait until it's all quietened down", and then he went down there and dealt with it.'³¹

The pause between a prisoner's arrival in the charge room and the station officer moving there suggests that force was used to affirm authority and control. Such an affirmation of occupational solidarity and identity outweighed the possible costs of legal accountability.

Physical force was therefore used when an officer was assaulted in the course of his duty. 'Assault on police' is a specific offence, usually invoking considerable penalties on sentence. However, those penalties were reinforced by police officers as they used physical force to reaffirm their occupational solidarity. This point will be confirmed further, as we consider the use of physical force when a suspect is questioned by police.

Questioning and confession

Our discussion of verballing stressed the importance investigating officers placed on obtaining a confession from a prisoner. Various strategies and tactics to achieve this objective have been documented. One further strategy of relevance was the threat and use of force. This means of obtaining evidence was accepted by Hilton's lower ranks but, like the similarly illegal strategy of 'verballing', dissenting officers were expected to use it in a routine fashion.

During a social studies lecture at training school, a group of sergeants were discussing Milgram's experiments on conformity and the instructor asked the class if they conformed to the use of 'violence' by colleagues. He asked: 'When somebody's getting a kicking in the charge room, what do we do? Do we conform or not?' One officer replied jokingly, 'It depends if we get a confession or not, doesn't it?' His colleagues laughed but the instructor asked again, 'Are you saying that somebody can be thumped to get a confession?' Officer: 'No, I'm against all that sort of thing.' Later, when the instructor used the phrase, 'when policemen thump people', he was interrupted by an officer: 'What do you mean, sir? All policemen?

I think you've given yourself away there. It's not all policemen.' The reproof was accepted; only 'some policemen' use force when questioning suspects.³²

At Hilton, there was a tendency to employ particular officers when prisoners were questioned, and it was likely that force would be used. These officers were willing to accept the risks of their action. We have noted how a prisoner was regarded as the property of the arresting officer and any force used on another's property should be with the knowledge and permission of the 'owner'. On some occasions C.I.D. officers were called to question a suspect and in the following data some uniformed sergeants, whose task it was to request such assistance, discussed the assumption that when the C.I.D. were called force would be used.

A doctor had complained about the number of injured prisoners from Hilton being treated at his hospital. A sergeant disagreed, 'Yes, that is a load of rubbish. Considering the number of people we get through here I've seen very, very little of it.' Colleague: '—, that C.I.D. bloke, always hits them, gives them a clip around the ear.' 'Yes, — (another C.I.D. officer) thumps them, but that is about all.' 'It used to be that if you sent for the C.I.D. the prisoner would get thumped around the cell but it is not like that now.'³³

This judgement was partly accurate; my data support the inference that particular C.I.D. officers used force. For example, before this reported conversation took place, one of the uniform sergeants spoke to me about one of the C.I.D. men mentioned, after he had 'questioned' a prisoner.

'Yes, he hit one of my prisoners not long ago; it's always best if you only hit your own prisoner. Mind you, I had a bloke in here at that time and I didn't lay a finger on him because I had had a few investigations against me and I didn't want any more trouble. You see, — (names officer) came along and just gave him a clip round the ear, not much, and the bloke admitted about eight offences in no time at all.'³⁴

However, other data suggested that the use of force by the C.I.D. was far more widespread at Hilton than the sergeants indicate. Furthermore, it was first assumed that force could be used to

obtain a confession rather than it should not be used. The following data suggest this rather more frequent use of force by the C.I.D. and its specific use to obtain a confession. These points were made during the course of a conversation with another officer who challenged the details of a national newspaper report, alleging particular maltreatment of prisoners by the police.

'I bet they did get a beating up from the police, they must have got a good hammering but, mind you, it is not all true. I mean, not all that about — (names illegal practice). I can't see policemen doing that and I can't see them being beaten up after they have made a confession. I mean, once they have made a confession they give them cigarettes, papers and food, whatever they want. You don't push it, you are great to them usually, you don't hit them after that ...' 'You can beat up a confession out of somebody but it's not right beating them up after a confession, you know that is not done.'³⁵

Physical force was routinely accepted at Hilton and used by particular officers when attempting to obtain a confession of guilt from a prisoner. The last section of data suggests that prisoners held for serious crime might be 'beaten up' to obtain a confession. Other data infers that, like a spoken language, physical force was measured, virtually punctuated to express police control and authority, which required a response of confession from the prisoner. Officers referred to the use of force on prisoners as, 'I trust they have been spoken to'³⁶. On another occasion, when it was thought that verbal questioning would be ineffective, it was suggested that,

'If you catch him, give him a right spanking because he has got to take all those others which we've had reported to us. If you don't give him a right spanking, he won't come across. So, that's what has got to happen.'³⁷

If verbal questioning failed, officers considered that it might be right to begin using force. In such a situation an investigating officer told his colleagues, 'I think they are not going to come across with very much. We will have to give them a bit of the old uppity.'³⁸ When an officer had been assaulted or a situation of danger had to be faced, physical force was used almost immediately but other contexts of questioning prompted a more measured judgment concerning its use, which combined with verbal means of investigation.

Indeed, physical force seemed to be an extension of verbal communication between the investigating officer and a prisoner. If an officer judged that evidence would not be forthcoming by using or continuing verbal talk, a move to the use of physical force was likely. The following, rather long data illustrate the point well.

'Look, many times I have known prisoners who have coughed to seven or eight jobs when they have been given a quick thump. They have been questioned for a long time and you get nowhere. Then you give them a quick slap and suddenly they sing to a whole load of other jobs. Some people respond to questioning and others to violence. A lot of them only understand and expect violence, then they sing.

'You might get four jobs knocked off and they won't say anything but you know they have done something. You have to pick out the one who has a low threshold to violence and often as soon as you intimate to him that you may use violence against him he sings. Then you go to the others and they start and you end up with the truth.'

This officer then went on to describe another case where, 'I talked and talked to this kid and then I took him to the detention room and gave him one sharp slap around the left ear and straight away he told me where the bike was. I was able to recover the property and give some poor kid his bike back and the suspect was charged with theft ... Mind you, I don't agree with the indiscriminate violence towards prisoners. There is a difference between giving someone a good slap and a hiding just for the sake of it. Neither am I in favour of getting evidence by putting someone in fear by the use of force.'³⁹

Other available evidence indicated that the first remarks made by this officer - that he would talk to question a suspect and then, perhaps, move to the use of force - are verified by a separate and temporally distinct incident. He had arrested a number of youths, suspected of robbery:

'So we did what I had been wanting to do for some time. Brought them in for questioning. They lied and so I changed my tactics and unnerved one of them who began to tell me about the jobs he had done and then he gave me names. When he had given us his bit I managed to unnerve another one and he started like diarrhoea. He just came out with everything and so it went on and we had several crimes cleared up.'⁴⁰

Like verbal language, with its stylistic and syntactic emphases, the use of physical force to question a prisoner had its similar

emphases. Although an arresting officer had faced danger when he arrested a person for possession of a shotgun, the following incident indicated that too much force could be used to extract a confession. When the arresting officer wanted to know who the shotgun belonged to, he 'smacked him (the prisoner) in the face', to which action a colleague said with humour, but not without some criticism, 'skilled investigation was it?'⁴¹ A more regularised approach was suggested, by a constable who argued that, 'No, right, if it was a stroppy 'Paddy' or a right tow-rag, he would get a right hander. But a kid, not that, just a slap round the face and "shut up".'⁴² Another officer suggested a similar syntactic emphasis, when he was falsely accused by a woman of assaulting her son as he arrested him. He told her:

'I can tell you that if he was a grown man and he put up that sort of struggle he'd have a black eye. But he's not, he's only a boy. What do you take me for? I wouldn't hit a boy like that.'⁴³

These diverse data suggest officers used an appropriate degree of force at an appropriate time, in relation to the manner in which they typified a particular prisoner. Physical force was not used randomly or indiscriminately during the questioning of a suspect. It was used in the pursuit of what the police considered to be justice and truth, requiring occupational, tactical knowledge to obtain that truth. Our analysis has identified what could be described as a 'grammar of physical force'.

Of course, most of the incidents described were illegal. We now consider how Hilton's police secured freedom to question prisoners and use physical force in the process of questioning. First, spatial isolation, that is, the movement of a prisoner into private space, guaranteed freedom. My data document the creation of such private space within a police car, by movement to a detention room, a cell, or by creating private space within the more open confines of the charge room itself. Any force used on a prisoner in private space was not visually witnessed by a supervisory officer, even though he might have some other knowledge of its use. In these circumstances, subsequent allegations made in court simply involved the prisoner and investigating officer, reducing any

likelihood of contradiction of evidence and risk of exposure.

Other evidence suggested that supervisory officers waited for a period of time before they went to the charge room where a prisoner was possibly being subjected to force. Again, this meant that officers could use force as they wished without supervisory officers witnessing their action.⁴⁴

Secondly, spatial isolation was strengthened by the interdependency and trust within and between the various ranks working at the station.

Two officers could be heard using physical force on a prisoner being questioned in the cell. As this took place, the station officer sat in the charge room, able to hear but not see what was going on. The Inspector in charge of the relief knew that force was going to be used but did not intervene to prevent its occurrence. Indeed, he was present as his officers discussed the incident and the trust and interdependency between them was clear. An officer related his use of force; 'Well, at least I know that my thumb is all right now.' Colleague: 'Didn't you feel any effects? I just had a bit of aching in my fingers.' 'No, didn't feel anything at all.' This officer then looked at the Inspector. 'Oh, hello Inspector; sh ...' Both laughed and the Inspector said, 'What?' P.C.: 'He didn't have anything to do with it. We were right away on our own.' Inspector: 'Well, did you want me there? You didn't, did you? Did you want me there?' P.C.: 'No, we were quite all right, thank you. We were quite all right.' Telephonist: 'He'd have kept away if he'd got any sense.'⁴⁵

There were occasions when physical force was used, causing injury which an examining doctor might discover. An officer recalled an incident where a prisoner had been severely beaten and badly injured but, even when a senior officer suggested he might need medical treatment, lower ranks simply denied that such treatment was necessary and a subsequent enquiry failed to establish how that injury was sustained⁴⁶. In the chapter on the police station we noted how doctors had restricted access to police controlled space. This situation created time to wash bloody wounds, cool tempers and establish a setting of orderliness.

Further security could be assured by hitting a person on a part of

the body which did not bruise easily: in the stomach, for example, or as some data indicated, by a quick slap around the face. One of the criticisms levelled at officers who used their truncheon on a prisoner's head was: 'Well, we have been involved in it for years but people, of course, are hit where it doesn't show, not like it did on that kid.'⁴⁷ A prisoner who had been arrested on many occasions told me that he had exploited his abuse by police officers by attempting to reveal their tactical use of force.

'One time I was up at — and the C.I.D. came in and hit me in the stomach where it couldn't be seen. So I just knocked my head up against a wall and cut myself all round the eye there, you can see the scar. You see, I've been nicked so many times I know all the different ways they get at you.'⁴⁸

If visible injury was sustained by an officer during an investigation or arrest, he could report sick. This drew attention to injury caused by a prisoner and emphasised its seriousness, offering some justification for the injury caused by the police to the alleged assailant. For example, an officer who had hit a man on the head with his truncheon was the subject of a serious complaint from a member of the public.

The officer investigating the complaint telephoned Hilton for initial information and asked the assistant station officer if the allegedly offending officer had reported sick. He was given wrong information and I corrected him, 'Yes, he has, he's gone sick this morning.' The investigating officer said, 'Blimey, I hope he has. That strengthens our case, doesn't it? He must have gone sick.'⁴⁹

The exchange of injury was equalised by the officer who was alleged to have used force. He reported sick, emphasising the nature of the injury done to him and the justification of the action he took against his assailant.

Interestingly, the senior officer mentioned in these data seemed to encourage and assent to the constable's action. This was another means of assuring security. A supervisory officer could 'cover' for an officer by constructing an account for him when official written reports had to be submitted. For example, I was told that an officer had damaged his thumb when he used force on a prisoner in the cells. I checked the official written report and noticed

that it stated the injury was sustained in a police van when the prisoner became violent⁵⁰. Other similar discrepancies were documented. By reconstructing and emphasising particular points to account for the illegal use of force, officers created a framework which made it possible for prisoners to be questioned freely.

Retribution

We have noted that officers used the term 'summary justice' to describe their use of physical force. The 'justice' referred to was retributive and there were two basic reasons for this. The first was the inadequate sentencing policy of the courts, the second, an intense identification by the police with the victims of crime and other disorder.

Officers felt that courts used their powers of sentence inadequately. A constable who was extremely reluctant to use force was discussing this issue with a colleague and in particular he felt inadequate sentencing by the juvenile court and the system of cautioning juveniles led to the excessive use of force by Hilton's officers.

'Well, what do you expect when the courts don't give proper punishment? I can tell you, a policeman comes to this station; the first one he arrests is a juvenile, or he soon arrests a juvenile because that is what happens around here. They either get a caution or they go to court and get fined a couple of bob. He soon thinks it's not worth it and the next time he gives the kid a bit of rough justice, a bit of summary justice. I can tell you, I hear more young men around this station talking about summary justice than I've ever done.'⁵¹

Punishment was meted by police officers because they believed that prisoners were guilty. Albert Reiss's argument that the police and the courts form a type of symbiotic relationship is relevant here. When force was used to punish a prisoner, just as when a verbal was used, arrest, trial and adjudication were conflated into a single act.

A station officer explained:

'I also think it is permissible to thump a prisoner and get justice. You see, we know the officer who brings the person to the station. We know some of the facts and, let's face it, we know that most people who are brought

to the station are guilty anyway. So what's wrong with giving them a verbal or adding some evidence ?⁵²

The assumption of guilt and police knowledge of how to deal with a prisoner permitted, in these data at least, verballing and the use of physical force. These background assumptions relate to the view that the courts were highly inadequate: '... there's no punishment in it ... they went out of court laughing. What can you do with that ? 'Give 'em a thick ear.'⁵³

The second reason for the use of physical force to punish a prisoner concerned the identification of the police with particular victims. One aspect of the 'dirty work' of policing concerned an officer witnessing the hurt and distress caused to victims of crime and disorder⁵⁴. During my research, officers expressed the view that squatters who had inhabited and badly damaged 'Aged Persons' flats, persons who had offended against children, 'right villains' and, interestingly, a person who damaged a number of motor vehicles without any apparent reason, were irresponsible, without good motive, and therefore to be punished by the use of force⁵⁵.

Hedonism

The hedonistic, action orientation of urban policing has been cited by a number of researchers and, as a good deal of our discussion indicates, was central to the policing of Hilton. Policing is a sporadic, quiet job with many mundane features. However, this essentially mundane context provided the basis for the reconstruction of an action-oriented occupation. At Hilton, the vehicular system of patrolling, together with the technology of radio communications provided considerable opportunity for sustaining action. As far as our present discussion is concerned, the use of physical force by officers also served to enhance this action orientation.

In part, masculine values of bravado and aggression are of relevance here. However, and more importantly for our purposes, on a number of occasions when force was used officers experienced excitement, fun and action. For example, when a call requesting police attendance

at a club frequented by young blacks was received and it was thought that a fight would take place, officers raced downstairs from the canteen shouting as if going into battle. When describing car chases which ended with force being used against a prisoner, excitement, action and fun were the major features emphasised. We have already analysed a chase where a prisoner had no opportunity to get out of the stolen car he was driving before he was assaulted by police officers for not stopping. Our evidence suggested that the chase had been virtually encouraged, it was certainly enjoyed and the use of force at its culmination was a means of sustaining the 'police-reality' of action. Force was used in another chase which had lasted for a considerable period of time and an estimated thirty police vehicles joined.

I listened to the radio commentary and when the offending vehicle stopped, the driver of one of the cars at the scene said, 'He's been arrested, as have the other occupants of the car. There is a bit of summary justice being handed out now.' Others joined in to encourage this use of force and headquarters had to warn officers that their remarks were being recorded and might be heard at a later date. One of Hilton's officers arrested an occupant of the offending car and I asked him how the arrest was made. 'Well, I had to climb on the bonnet of the car, Sarge, to nick him.' I asked, 'Well, how the hell did you climb on the bonnet; why did you have to do that?' He explained: 'The only way we could get him out was through the windscreen.'

S.H.: 'Through the windscreen?' Officer: 'Yes, we couldn't get him out through the doors because the police cars had hemmed them all in and — had rammed him. We just pulled him out by the front windscreen, it was broken with the truncheons that had been thrown at it. Well, one P.C. was trying to pull him out of the side window and the other two came out the back windscreen.'⁵⁶

In fact, the official written record of the injury - grazing to this officer's knuckles and a sprained elbow - were explained as the result of arresting violent prisoners.

Like many others, this chase indicated that the physical force used by police was a 'normal' aspect of the excitement and 'action emphasis' officers found in such incidents. The chase was enjoyed; a ridiculously large and needless number of officers joined it, the remarks over the radio system encouraged the use of force and the comments of the arresting officer, not least when they are compared

with the 'official record', indicated that the arrests need not have involved the use of any physical force by police. It is suggested that the use of force in these circumstances was an aspect of the more general hedonistic, action orientation to be found in the occupational culture.

It could be argued that incidents involving a number of officers in a high chase invoked excitement simply because fast driving over a lengthy period of time could be nothing but exciting. Other incidents where officers used force sustain our argument that action, fun and excitement were created by its use.

Two officers who had arrested a man, using force to do so, related their account of the incident with considerable humour. 'Oh yes, I was the one who held the poor man's arm up his back and stamped on his cigar because you are not allowed to smoke in the food department.'⁵⁷

When a man was being held by a number of officers who had used force to arrest him it was said, 'He was struggling so I just clipped him straight round the ear, punched him straight round the ear. Then he says, "Pack up, you are just enjoying this, just enjoying this, hitting me".' P.C.: 'Yer, right on, right on.' Colleague: 'Yer, right.' 'So I hit him again'. Colleague: 'Yes, come on you are enjoying this and I was, it was great.' P.C.: 'Right on'.⁵⁸

Using physical force was fun; officers gained a sense of excitement and enjoyment from it.

Excitement and action were closely related, we noted that point when discussing the car chases. Further data confirmed the view that officers who did not shy away from involvement in a fight sustained their definition of police work as one of action.

A number of gypsy caravans had to be moved from a site required for building. A 'Home Beat' officer explained, 'There was absolutely no trouble. No trouble at all. We went up there and saw their appointed leader and he said, "We will go quietly, if we have got to go. If you bring the old cops up here there will be trouble."' Another constable retorted, 'We should have gone up there then, shouldn't we ?'⁵⁹

The local first division football ground, which attracted large crowds, also offered the opportunity of the action of a fight. Before a 'local derby' match one of the officers on duty at the

football ground said that he was looking forward to 'a right punch up . It should be pretty good'⁶⁰. Other data indicated that disruption at the ground provided exciting work sometimes involving the use of force, which officers enjoyed.

In these various contexts, physical force was used by Hilton's police to sustain the occupational cultural emphases of hedonism and action.

Summary and conclusion

In the last two chapters, our discussion of strategies and tactics used by Hilton's officers to achieve control of prisoners in the charge room and cells, which led to consideration of the use of 'verbals' and physical force, breaks new ground in research of the British police. First, we noted that in both Britain and America a person held in police custody is required to assent to police authority and control. That authority is allied to but not continuous with formal legal authority permitting officers to use physical force and other strategies of control. We have documented in a clear manner how the authority of Hilton's police was heavily reliant on the requirements of policing as it was defined by lower ranks.

Although officers expected prisoners to respect their values and action, many of the strategies we have documented were employed to obtain a confession of guilt. A confession, converted into a statistic of arrest and charge, provided a primary indicator of effectiveness for all ranks. Importantly, senior officers identified the activity of arresting prisoners as a point of motivation for their subordinates and also a means of evaluating the status of their station. It seems that one of, if not the evidence required by Chief Officers who reviewed the manpower strength of each station was that of 'figures'. Arrest and charge figures served all ranks as an indicator of performance and effectiveness. The naive assent (if it was naive) of senior and chief officers to that measure could be interpreted to infer their assent to the illegality we have documented. This point assists an understanding of why

illegality amongst police persists after the introduction of 'professional policies'.

The emphasis on confession relates the use of dramatic symbolism to present an imagery of authoritative legality to the instrumentalism of obtaining an admission of guilt. The fusion of symbolic and instrumentalist emphases adds to our criticism of Manning's work. Manning has not explained how symbolism is used in routine policing and he has not considered the important relationship between symbolism and instrumentalism. It is clear that at Hilton symbolic strategies were employed to assert police authority, but these were irretrievably linked to the creation of uncertainty, fear and dependency in a prisoner's mind and the instrumentalism of obtaining an admission of guilt and subsequent conviction in court. Indeed, within the context of the questioning of a prisoner we find the political state is represented in an imposing and highly personal manner. As authority and power are presented in the cell and charge room, so the symbolic and instrumental aspects of state control are identified.

However, we should not suppose that symbolism was always employed to achieve the instrumentalist aims of the state. One of the important findings we have made is that physical force was used to enhance particular features of the occupation, lower ranks defined as important but which were somewhat peripheral to the objective conditions of police work. Action and hedonism are two such features. Officers used force to sustain their definition of policing as work embodying these features. When force was used in this way police work was simply being sustained, there was only the most tentative relationship of car chases and scuffles to the situation of the police within the British political state. We should be reminded that here we are not referring to what Cain has called 'the icing on the cake' but a central feature of police work !⁶¹

Indeed, the inclusion of the use of physical force to create action and hedonism broadened our understanding of the available evidence. We have found some continuity with Westley's American research.

However, we have related some of the meanings and uses of force more firmly to the occupational culture and also challenged his fundamental thesis that the occupational culture is formed solely in response to the perception of a population the police serve. The use of force to create action, hedonism and excitement, which were implied in many of the contexts we have documented, were unrelated to officers' perception of Hilton's population. Their concern was with sustaining the received traditions of policing.

Further, we have added complexity to Westley's analysis because our data suggest a grammar of physical force. The bland use of terms like 'police violence' or 'police brutality' distort the admittedly distasteful but, to the officers concerned, sophisticated means of using force. It seems that particular levels of physical force are applied to particular types of prisoner who have committed particular offences. This knowledge is acquired in the course of occupational socialisation. However, we also note that some of Hilton's officers were critical of their younger, less experienced colleagues who were apparently not familiar with this grammar. This might indicate that Punch's remark that urban policing in Holland is increasingly brash is applicable to Britain.

The strategies and tactics we have discussed concern the practical task of policing and, as such, deal with the problems Hilton's lower ranks believed they faced in the course of their work. Equally importantly, they sustained their perception of the world and the related task of policing. For example, the acceptance of police authority by a prisoner affirmed the need for police control of a disorderly world. The use of force to quell that disorder further enhanced a sense of police work as action. Our data have led us to the argument that the situations Hilton's police dealt with were the raw material from which the occupational culture was continually verified, affirmed and sustained. We now turn to discuss how Hilton's police used other aspects of policy and practice to construct and sustain their definition and practice of policing.

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- 11 Westley classifies the 'making of an arrest' as a separate category. The data of policing at Hilton indicated that this was too comprehensive as a meaningful framework. The restrictions of observing peace-keeping situations still apply here.
- 12 F.N. 286:1.
- 13 Violence data 2.
- 14 F.N. 547:5.
- 15 F.N. 702:7.
- 16 F.N. 231:3.
- 17 F.N. 242:2.
- 18 F.N. 121:3.

- 19 Violence data 4.
- 20 F.N. 669:1. The word 'swift' means to arrest quickly, with a minimum of evidence.
- 21 F.N. 440:6.
- 22 F.N. 553:2 and 584:1.
- 23 F.N. 146:10.
- 24 F.N. 474:5.
- 25 Violence data 3.
- 26 F.N. 134:5/6.
- 27 F.N. 628:2.
- 28 F.N. 357:8 and 580:5.
- 29 F.N. 602:2 and 205:1.
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CHAPTER 10

CONSTRUCTING THE REALITY OF POLICE WORK

In each chapter of this thesis an aspect of police work has been described and analysed. Particular attention has been paid to the provision of a rich description of the occupational values and actions of lower ranks working at Hilton. For example, we have documented the police meanings of time and space and related them to the contingencies of police work as they were defined by operational officers. Importantly, such meanings were found to be highly selective and particular, providing a 'stock of knowledge' used by officers to orient their action.

The policing of Hilton sub-division could have been carried out in many different ways. For example, there need not have been the emphasis on the control of space and persons held in custody; further, there need not have been the stress on speed and action. So we could proceed through the whole thesis. In short, Hilton's police officers selected and constructed emphases of meaning and action - the complex collection of values and actions we have called the 'occupational culture'.

Of course, the suggestion that police work is a social construction is not new. Indeed, the whole of Manning's work has been directed towards a theoretical discussion of the idea. However, despite its contemporary popularity and utility, we have little evidence of how lower ranks construct and maintain police work. This chapter is concerned with further documentation of some of the primary techniques employed by lower ranks at Hilton to maintain and legitimate their definition of police work. As such we are concerned to analyse how the structure of policing - the system of Unit Beat Policing for example - was assessed and adapted by lower ranks, enabling their priorities to replace those of Chief Officers and others working in a supervisory role. It is important to stress that lower ranks were not entirely free to construct a police-world wholly of their

own making - an impression that could be gained from a reading of Rubinstein's and Manning's work. It is preferable to conceptualise the remoulding or adaptation of policy by lower ranks.

Manning places a good deal of emphasis on ritual action as a means by which police dramatise and legitimise their belief in the necessity and permanence of the occupational culture. Ritual, he argues, stabilises meanings and rules of conduct:

'It encodes the social world as predictable, repetitive, subject to control and re-creation and establishes the continuing efficiency of precisely this response to the uncertain social world'¹.

However, several problems arise when we come to assess the evidence on which Manning bases his argument that the Anglo-American police ritualise their action to sustain a police myth. First, all his evidence is from American research; there is none from any British source, even though the book claims to be pertinent to both American and British policing. Further, the American evidence is primarily from a funeral of a police officer, which received considerable press coverage, together with comments on an American television series on the police. Highly dramatic events like a funeral may be ritualistic. They may be capable of symbolising a number of key elements of police work in a powerful fashion. However, the use of such evidence begs the question of whether routine police work is ritualistic and how mundane events are moulded by operational ranks to sustain their definition and experience of police work.

In their treatise, 'The Social Construction of Reality', Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman make a distinction between crisis and routine maintenance of particular social worlds². Manning's evidence refers to 'crisis maintenance' in the context of American policing, which is more dramatic than routine maintenance, often invoking ritual. Routine maintenance is concerned with conveying and sustaining institutional traditions on a routine, day-to-day basis, rendering the tenuous uncertainty of existence more secure. Like Manning, Berger and Luckman tend towards the theoretical, begging empirical evidence to support their arguments. Accepting their basic premise that reality is socially constructed, we ask how Hilton's police

accomplished the routine maintenance of their occupational culture ?

Unit Beat Policing - cars and radios

The use of police vehicles by patrolling officers formed one basis of the system of Unit Beat Policing at Hilton. At any one time several officers were employed to drive Panda cars and other vehicular patrols. These vehicles were used by officers to enhance their definition of policing as one of action, excitement, hedonism and concerned primarily with crime. The use of vehicles to this end was assisted by the radio network associated with Unit Beat system of patrol.

Critical of the manner in which constables tended to use vehicular means of patrolling, two Home Beat Officers commented,

'The blokes here just don't know how to walk a beat. They never get out and meet anybody. They don't know how to talk to anybody. I think it's terrible. There is a proper way to walk a beat and you know but do they know ? No, they don't. They want to ride around in Panda cars and they don't want to get out and walk around and meet people and talk to people. They just haven't got a clue.'³

The officers were correct; their colleagues employed on routine patrol work rarely wanted to walk a beat, preferring to drive or ride in vehicles. The reason for this was not so much one of laziness but that they used vehicles to enhance the experience of police work as they defined it.

First, cars were used to concentrate on 'getting work' - meaning arrests. When I noticed an officer, who should have been walking a beat, riding in a Panda car, I asked for an explanation; 'For work, Sarge, to get more work. I've checked around my beat and it is okay so I am trying to get some work'⁴. A young probationer Constable was posted by his Sergeant to the night duty crime car. The driver of the car was instructed, '—— (name) is your crew for the second half and for God's sake get him an arrest, he hasn't had any this month'⁵. Vehicles were used by all officers to enable them to perform what they considered to be adequate police work - cars were a means of getting an arrest.

Secondly, cars were used to enhance a sense of action and hedonism. When a car chase took place between the driver of a stolen vehicle and a police officer, there was a tendency for other police drivers to join the pursuit. Despite their inability to assist the leading driver and lack of advanced training which prohibited participation, officers continued to involve themselves in chases. Orders directed that an officer who was not an advanced police driver but who became involved in a chase was to pursue the offender until an advanced driver, using a more powerful vehicle, took charge. In fact, many untrained drivers persisted in chasing vehicles and the force issued an order forbidding the practice. It was read out on parade and the constables commented,

'Oh, it doesn't affect me much.' 'They might as well write that on the wall. Let's be honest, they might as well do that.' 'But if R/T drivers have no bottle then they'll get away from us. Keep a reasonable distance, that's stupid. If you've got an old P.C. trained 20 years ago and he's got no bottle then you've got to have somebody chase and to get it.' A Sergeant asked this officer, 'Well, would you try and overtake an R/T car if you were in a Panda or something?' P.C.: 'No.'

Sergeant: 'All this parading around in rows of cars is stupid. All you need is one or two cars chasing.'

P.C.: 'Yes, but some drivers won't go after them, will they?' The Inspector agreed with the Sergeant and said, 'It's not right that you should be chasing people around just to get the thrill.' P.C.: 'Yes, but it's fun, isn't it?'. The officers who had been listening laughed.⁶

When several patrolling officers arrived at the scene of a suspected 'break-in', one of Hilton's constables noticed a colleague's late arrival. He laughed and said, 'Last again then ... Last again, where have you been?'⁷ We have already documented how a sergeant and constable drove vehicles during the early hours of the morning as if they were involved in a chase. Further, we noted how, when I asked a Sergeant why he drove at speed to an incident when it was quite obvious that he could not get to the location in time to be of any use, he replied that it was fun. Fast driving created excitement and action. We have also documented how officers seemed to engage in a chase with a vehicle which was not attempting to escape from them.

Why did officers behave in this way ? It is suggested that this data leads us to the conclusion that vehicles were used to stimulate a sense of action, hedonism and challenge. The diverse nature of police work was adapted to maintain particular occupational values and action. Here we document the selective use of the technology of Unit Beat Policing to achieve this end.

This was no less the case with the manner in which personal radios were used. All officers carried a personal radio when they patrolled. A 'talk-through' facility meant that each officer's transmissions could be heard by the whole sub-division. During each shift of eight hours a great deal of information was passed from officer to officer, as well as from Hilton station to individual officers. If a particular officer wanted a vehicle stopped, if he wanted some advice or, more importantly, wanted some assistance with an incident he thought he could not manage, he would ask a colleague to come to his aid. Furthermore, if a message sounded exciting, a fight for example, it could be passed from those officers who had R/T sets in their vehicles to those who did not. The tendency was for all officers to broadcast potentially exciting calls or to call for assistance at the slightest hint of trouble. Hedonism and interdependence were closely related.

On one occasion I was station officer during a late shift. The communications officers, including a civilian telephonist who had worked at Hilton for many years, were in my office. A call was broadcast to all P.C.s via the P.R. system, by the P.C. who was operator on the R/T car: 'All units Hilton, call to outside —; woman being assaulted.' From my previous knowledge of police work I could find no reason for this broadcast and thought the incident trivial, expecting it to be over by the time any vehicles arrived at the location. There would soon be another call to turn units away. I said to a constable who was in the office, 'How the hell did policemen manage when they were without cars and radios ? It's crazy asking people to go on such a call.' The P.C. replied: 'So you would prefer to see a policeman get a hiding would you, Sarge ?'. I replied, 'No, but he won't get a hiding, will he ? All these technical aids make for bad policing.' He said, 'Well, there wasn't the crime before we had them.' The telephonist who had been listening butted in, 'No, but policemen had just as much to do and they didn't

get assaulted.' At this point another message was broadcast calling other units to cancel.

Following an incident during which a P.C. hit a coloured youth with his truncheon, another telephonist who had also worked at the station for a considerable number of years related the following comments to me, 'Since the old personal radios came in, I think that instead of talking their way out of trouble like the old coppers did and getting by that way, they just pull their truncheons out and shout for assistance on the P.R. They don't talk their way out of it at all. They just ask for assistance and get their truncheons out.'⁸

Both these incidents illustrate the enhanced hedonism and interdependence of police work personal radio communication has permitted. Hilton's officers maintained their definition of police work by adapting the technology of Unit Beat Policing to suit their own ends. As this was done, the occupational culture was maintained and strengthened.

The interdependency of teamwork

At many points of our discussion the interdependent, team-work character of policing has been evident. Of course, Cain noted the interdependency of the work group as a major feature of the policing at the urban station she researched; others have emphasised her point⁹. However, here we stress how the retention of an interdependent work group, involving all the operational ranks of Constable, Sergeant and Inspector sustained the occupational culture, particularly when officers used methods of policing bordering on the illegal.

Before we consider how team work supported the use of these techniques, it should be noted that the formal organisation of work at Hilton emphasised the notion of team membership. Before each tour of duty, officers gathered in the 'parade room' for a briefing by a patrolling Sergeant and Inspector who, as duty officer, had overall command of the relief during each shift. The militaristic emphasis sometimes associated with policing was not relevant to the briefings held at Hilton. Officers sat in a semi-circle, casually briefed by a Sergeant who had little concern for their demeanour. Nevertheless, the fact that the team assembled before each tour of duty emphasised that they were to work together. Officers received information

about their activities and shared anecdotes about their work. In the mundane setting of the briefing, the routine character of teamwork, together with its content of value and action, was maintained and strengthened.

A similarly routine feature of the maintenance of team work and, thereby, the whole of the occupational culture, was the use of police jargon and slang. Ethnographic studies of policing are replete with examples of police jargon: 'the nick', 'bodies', 'the ground', 'villains', so one could go on. The frequent use of such language continually emphasised officers' membership of and commitment to a team and related definitions of appropriate work. The constant hearing and use of this jargon was one further means by which the occupational culture was maintained. Language served to identify involvement in a particular social world and also sustained the ongoing existence of that world.

Police work took place against this background, operational ranks working together to affirm their implicit or explicit consent to the values and actions of the occupational culture. For example, although the Inspector in charge of the relief did not encourage his constables to use physical force when questioning prisoners, he did not attempt to prevent them using such force. Supervising officers, including the Inspector, knew that force could be used when prisoners were questioned. When two prisoners were hit by constables questioning them in the cells, the Sergeant station officer was sitting in the charge room, able to hear what was happening. Later, the Inspector was present when the officers involved discussed the incident. One officer suggested that the Inspector should not hear the conversation.

He replied, 'Well, did you want me to be there? You didn't, did you? Did you want me to be there?'
The telephonist advised, 'He'd have kept well away if he'd got any sense.'¹⁰

When we discussed how space within the police station was controlled, several pieces of data suggested that Constables, Sergeants and Inspectors formed a team to obstruct the access of solicitors, doctors and others who could probe police action.

We have presented evidence to suggest that Sergeants used 'verbals' and Constables in their charge knew they did so. Certainly some officers were known to be unwilling to 'verbal', others were thought unreliable in the witness box, likely to reveal the 'back-stage' of policing if placed under pressure by an aggressive counsel. However, verballing was still used routinely and an active attempt by supervisory staff to prevent such a strategy of constructing evidence was not apparent.

This teamwork structure of policing at Hilton has been discussed at many points of the thesis. Here, using a few examples of how teamwork was maintained and legitimised by the officers of a shift, we stress the maintenance and legitimation of the occupational culture. By various means all ranks tended to support the collective nature of police work, its interdependency and commitment to the use of a range of techniques of questioning, some of which bordered the illegal. Teamwork enhanced autonomy and secrecy, challenge and action - features of the occupational culture at variance with the formal organisational and legal directives designed to control routine police work.

Humour and story-telling - the use of narrative

One further means of maintenance considered particularly important but neglected by researchers of the police is the use of humour and story-telling; considerable attention will be given to it. Work on both the British and American police has revealed the frequent practice of story-telling amongst police but not subjected it to analysis. Chatterton has documented stories concerned with uniformed officers' images of the C.I.D., 'the good old days', 'an ability to talk people round' and 'fighting and making up'. He explains that the charge office was a centre of discussion of 'the job' and the importance of the group of working officers¹¹. However, neither he nor other researchers have extended their discussions of story-telling, relating this activity to the whole of the occupational culture.

As we present data on this topic, joking and story-telling will be combined; both were used as a form of narrative. Importantly, they referred to traditions of policing which, though tenuous, were made more secure by officers who used narrative and humour to describe their experience, laugh about their activities and so share their understanding of policing with colleagues. The combining of humour, joking and story-telling is not a difficult one to make. There were very few occasions when a story did not invoke laughter in a police audience. Most stories had a humorous content; humorous, that is, to those familiar with the world of policing. This makes it possible to use the term, 'police humour', because few jokes and stories told to colleagues were not concerned with some aspect of policing. The function of these forms of communication were intimately concerned with the officers' experience of police work which, in itself, makes our interest pertinent.

Like the sociological literature on the police, research on joking and humour is rather sparse. We are not concerned with research on joking relationships, and when that particular literature is put to one side we are left with research suggesting that humour, joking and laughter perform a number of functions. Tension release, self-aggrandisement, socialisation, the creation of consensus and relief of boredom are cited by prominent researchers. This research suggests that we should seek an explanation of 'police humour' and story-telling in terms of its function within the police organisation. Most of the research in this more limited area - and there is very little of it - relates humour to a work organisation. Rose Coser found that patients used humour and laughter to mediate the tensions experienced by patients and staff in a hospital. Donald Roy suggests that humour is used by low status workers performing monotonous tasks, to relieve their boredom. Humour would seem to be related to the tensions and contradictions experienced by the members of work and other organisations¹².

Most usefully, Mary Douglas suggests that joking, with no less an application to other forms of humour, contains two elements. First, a control is juxtaposed against that which is controlled. Secondly, the juxtaposition is such that that which is controlled triumphs.

Humour is therefore a mechanism mediating different levels of, in our area, organisational structure. It exposes the reality, that is adaptations to a formal constraining structure, made by those who work within it. Further, humour confirms the importance and dominance, indeed the supremacy, of this adaptation over and against the constraints of formal structure. Douglas writes, 'Jokes can be judged dangerous because they risk exposure to values and actions too precarious or sensitive to challenge'¹³.

It is clear that the extensive use of humour in jokes and story-telling, so common to the police, should be related to conflict between the values and associated actions of the occupational culture and those of the formal organisation as it is framed by policy, the law and other constraints on police action. When police officers use humour to tell stories they are engaged in maintaining and securing their definition of policing as the practical, common-sense means of performing the task of police work. This definition is compared with and triumphs over other definitions framed by formal police policy, law, the courts, and others who can legally constrain the practice of lower ranks.

As we classify various items of narrative according to their dominant themes, it will be noticed that exaggeration, dramatic inflection, a lack of accuracy and, very probably, untruth enters into them. The contexts in which they were told were invariably lighthearted. This was not sociability for its own sake, for the activity of using humour in one form or another maintained and legitimised the occupational culture in an intense fashion. In these contexts, lower ranks shared their definition of police work, pitting it against other potentially powerful definitions which could and, in part, did constrain their manner of work. In the apparent light-heartedness and informality of story-telling and humour, low ranked officers revealed the reality of how they performed their work and confirmed its importance. These were gatherings of the most crucial type where, as Ulf Hannerz, the urban anthropologist who has studied the notion of 'masculinity' in an American ghetto, argues:

'... definitions and evaluations of self, others and the external world are developed, maintained and displayed with greater intensity than in other interaction ... An individual's vision of reality is often a precarious thing; we can find comfort in the knowledge that it is shared by others, thus acquiring social anchoring in an objective truth'¹⁴.

Team discipline

Teamwork requires discipline and a measure of loyalty. At various points of this thesis we have seen how steps have been taken to ensure that the structure and unity of the police team is secured. However, teams are tenuous groupings and in the following data, a range of features stressing the fact of membership, the interdependency of individual members of the shift, supervisory staff and the possible risks of a breach of discipline are outlined.

First, we analyse humorous stories about the initiation of recruits. For example, a constable told the following story to his relief gathered for the 4.30 a.m. tea break.

'A P.C. had recently arrived at Hilton and was required to ride a cycle around an obstacle course in the station yard. We told him it was a test to see if he could ride a cycle in the force. We awarded him a certificate, 'Cyclists Union of National Transport' and down the side of the certificate were letters, C.U.N.T., in Gothic lettering. He showed it to his father, who was an ex-Chief Superintendent who realised it and didn't think it was so funny.'

This was followed by a story of another officer, who was required to complete a rather different test when he arrived at Hilton. He had to ride up a ramp towards a window and negotiate various obstacles. On another occasion he was informed that there were suspects on an island in the middle of a lake. He was told to run towards the island and, complying, ran into the water. Several other stories were then told and the sequence ended with a story about a P.C. who was asked to check all the Beleisha beacons in a particular road, in order to see if they were flashing in sequence. If they were not in sequence, the P.C. was to notice which lamp was incorrect and record its serial number, printed on the underside of the bulb. This meant that the officer had to climb the pole of the beacon. He

apparently did this and was watched by the whole relief.¹⁵

These narratives, though humorous and entertaining, emphasised that a new recruit was the member of a team. The bizarre tests officers were required to perform reminded them of the existence of a team, their membership of it and the power of colleagues to emphasise such facts. When recounted in stories told to the whole relief, these aspects of police work drew the response of laughter and appreciation. However, such entertainment also acknowledged and stressed the structure of the rank-and-file group and juxtaposed it against the formal organisational model.

There was certainly an emphasis stressed by all ranks that officers needed to be able to rely on each other. However, the notion of 'team' we have in mind here is one of supportive protection afforded officers who fall foul of discipline regulations or the law. In the next data, a conversation between an Inspector and a P.C. took place before a small audience of constables. A C.I.D. officer had recently been posted to Hilton and the discussion referred to him.

'—— (name) here was nicked by Bill. I reported the accident. We put him in the back of the car and said, "Well, you ought to go to hospital because if the doctor says you're unfit to take a breath test then you can't take one". But now he shouts his mouth off and says, "I don't want some coon bastard stitching my face up" and he just wouldn't have it. So he had to come to the station and he was done.' Inspector: 'Well, I know he holds no malice against you. He doesn't hold anything against you at all. We had one at —— (names former station) and we gave him a second breath test at the station, which was positive. Then he told us he was a copper. So we took another breath test and I got everybody out of the charge room and I said that was negative. Then I said, "You go over to that restaurant over the road and have a bloody good meal and then you drive home". You've got to go through the whole procedure, you know; you've got to go through it.'¹⁶

Here we find a tension between loyalty to the occupation of policing, not least to team membership, pitted against the requirements of the law. The narrative emphasises that, in this instance, no lasting grudge was felt by an officer who was given the opportunity to be drawn into the interdependent loyalty his colleagues wanted

him to accept but which he refused. Once that incident had been recounted, further narratives emphasised loyalty required by team membership and interdependency.

Other stories focussed on the support supervisory officers gave to lower ranks who breached a discipline regulation. A prisoner who was in hospital had asked to go to the toilet and then escaped from the officer guarding him by climbing out of the toilet window and down a drainpipe. The explanation given by the constable and corroborated by his sergeant was that the constable gave chase but slipped on a wet floor, which had recently been cleaned. This tale was told when the constable and sergeant involved were listening, together with an Inspector and two other P.C.s. One of those P.C.s said:

'He let him go, he lost him. We told a lot of lies about that, didn't we, Sarge? I mean, to get you off. I was supervising traffic points at the time.' All the officers laughed or smiled.

The interdependency of ranks was emphasised and evoked laughter. Again, the informal obligation of secrecy triumphed over the realised but secondary obligation to honour discipline regulations.

Team membership and commitment by all ranks was required, and when an Inspector failed to comply with the obligations of such membership a story was told by an officer who was present at the relevant incident.

'... Well, if you're going to start geeing people up and I had them all quietened down and was listening to what they were telling me. But she'll only listen to one side of the story, that's all she'll do. She came in, she heard somebody, who either looked the most respectable or somebody who's crying. She'll go up to them and listen to them and she just creates havoc and then pisses off. Well, that's bloody hopeless.'¹⁷

Similarly, the breach of team discipline is evident in the following story, told by a supervisory officer to a group of Sergeants:

'Did you hear about his job at — ? This is the honest truth. Two P.C.s at — nicked a ponce and they were giving their evidence about two toms with a customer. They call a defence witness and who should walk into the court but P.C. — and he says that the tom couldn't have been where the police officer said she was because she was in bed with him. He was transferred the same day.'¹⁸

Less spectacularly, humour was used to affirm the primacy of the occupational culture but when this was done in the hearing and sight of a member of the public, exposure and, presumably, possible sanction were risked. Discipline to heal the breach of team discipline was required.

Several police cars arrived at the scene of a call to a suspected 'break-in'. The informant who lived near to the relevant premises was present. Several cars, including the Inspector's vehicle, were at the scene and the incident was investigated. After a time, Hilton's R/T car arrived and one of the officers present shouted in a jocular manner, 'last again, last again'. Laughter followed but the Inspector quickly interjected, 'Keep quiet, keep quiet'.¹⁹

The laughter evoked by the officer's comment stressed the occupational features of hedonism and action. However, in exposing the occupational culture to public view a risk of, as Mary Douglas puts it, '... exposure to values and actions too precarious or sensitive to challenge' was realised. Further exposure was prevented by the Inspector's action.

Other data suggested that narrative and humour certainly sustained the value of action and the importance of affirming this value amongst the relief. It has already been argued that officers used vehicles to speed time up and, on occasion, car chases were more imaginary than real. When narrative about these incidents was recounted, the tenuous and elaborate nature of the reconstruction was occasionally obvious. Laughter was invoked in these settings. The creation of a world of action and hedonism by the use of narrative was realised by those present but humour mediated between the final elaborated narrative and the tenuous facts from which it was constructed. For example, after officers had taken part in what they described as a chase one told the story, emphasising what actually happened and included the humorous line, 'It must have been the only chase where we slowed down to avoid overtaking'.²⁰

On another occasion two officers were recalling how they had played a cat and mouse game, travelling back and forth along a road in pursuit of a car which they suspected was being driven by a drunken driver. One of the officers added that his colleague simply sat in

the passenger seat watching what was going on and made no attempt to leave the vehicle. The officer who was criticised used wry humour as he said,

'If you're not careful, I'll tell the true story. I'll tell the truth.' I asked, 'What's this?' The police driver said, 'I'm not worried. It doesn't worry me.' His critic then ended the exchange, 'Yes, I'd watch it because I'll tell the truth.' (Laughter)²¹.

We have suggested that humour functioned to mediate between the occupational culture and other features of the organisation. Humour and narrative made this relationship clear and in these last two examples an officer exposed the breach between an officer's account and the 'real' events on which it was based, which was then healed by laughter. As such, humour acted as a mechanism of tension-release and also maintained the dominance of the occupational culture. It would seem that humour makes the tension between different levels of organisational control explicit and provides a means of neutralising the tension between them, so permitting 'normal policing' to continue.

The relief - roles and rank

Although team work, interdependency and secrecy had to be maintained, it should be stressed that in any group of officers, a relief for example, tensions were present. Officers at Hilton who were not committed to using techniques of control central to the occupational culture and those who went beyond limits of tolerance were the subject of humour and narrative.

A probationer constable who did not use force on prisoners and was very restrained when he dealt with them was the subject of the following humorous comments.

P.C.: 'There's something wrong with —— (name) tonight, you know. There's definitely something wrong with him. He told somebody to 'fuck off' today. Then we had this 'suspect shout' and he's running along beside this bloke he knows, asking him when he's going out for a drink and there could have been this P.C. getting his head kicked in some way down the road. There's something wrong with —— (name).'²²

On another occasion, a sergeant used humour when commenting on this

constable's style of policing:

'Have you been beating up prisoners, then?' Another officer said, 'Yes, he has. I wouldn't mind so long as he didn't leave them paralysed in the corner of the detention room. Do you know what he (the prisoner) did to —— (officer)? He pulled his tie off. Just flicked it off when he went to speak to him.' Other Sergeant: 'Didn't that annoy you ...?' P.C.: 'Not really, Sarge.' P.S.: 'Well, don't hit him then.'²³

These officers used humour to assert the importance of values and actions this officer was not committed to, they expressed their own acceptance of them and affirmed their normality.

Humour was used in a similar manner to control an extremely excitable officer, who rushed to any incident and constantly expected to be involved in fights. He was in the habit of using the personal radio system to request colleagues to stop vehicles he believed were stolen. On one such occasion he received the reply, 'Is this a real chase or a —— (names officer) chase?' Limits of acceptable behaviour were charted by this joke and the role of the officer in question was defined, points also clarified by the following humorous data. The relief was gathered for the 4 a.m. tea break; all ranks were present. A P.C. began a story, making his first point to the Inspector in charge of the relief.

'You weren't here when it happened but it's the funniest thing I've heard. Old —— was sitting on the pan out there one night duty when he heard a chase coming down —— (names road in which station is situated). So he hoists his trousers up and the next thing we see he's standing in the High Road with his truncheon in his hand holding his trousers with his other hand. The car hadn't come down ——, it had turned off somewhere. When we asked him, he said, "Well, I thought they were going to come down here and I was going to throw my stick at the windscreen". He had his shirt on, no epaulettes, his trousers weren't done up and his shirt tails were flapping and he had his stick in his hand. He was ready to throw the stick at the car.'²⁴

This story clarified the officer's role and his colleagues compared their style of policemenmanship to his. Boundaries of tolerance were marked out which, as other data indicated, did not prohibit the quest for excitement by other officers but acted in a prescriptive fashion by defining limits of acceptable action.

Similar remarks could be cited about other officers. A constable prone to the frequent accounting of highly exaggerated narrative was 'sent up' with equal frequency: 'Tell us about it ... Dangerous, I bet. Great chase, eh?' Another officer who had a reputation for driving at great speed, whatever the nature of the call he was attending, was similarly subject to humour. Inspector: 'No 'suspects on' then?' P.C.: 'No'. Other P.C.: 'Your imagination then?' Inspector: 'But he was there first.'²⁵

Graffiti were another medium by which humour was used to circumscribe unacceptable behaviour. For example, a constable developed a reputation for using violence on prisoners. A cartoon was drawn on a door in a toilet, portraying the officer with a swastika on his forehead. His name and the words, 'Obturbanfurer — is a wanker. Ya Wohl' were printed above the cartoon. Sometime later an addition was made. A gun was drawn in one hand and a truncheon in the other. The caption, 'Did you say that kid stole some smarties? Let me sort him out' had been added²⁶.

In these various ways officers were the subject of narrative and humour. Roles were clarified, deviant behaviour prescribed and boundaries of tolerance marked out. Further, and as Hannerz argues with reference to a very different setting, listeners who were in sympathy with the basic issues of the narrative, compared their behaviour to that being described and so reaffirmed their own identity. The occupational culture was reified, strengthened and maintained.

Although supervisory ranks were an integral part of the police team, divisions of rank were also emphasised by the use of humour and narrative. Supervisory officers were reminded of their own misdemeanours. A constable asked an Inspector, 'Would you get me a meal, sir?' Inspector: 'I see.' P.C.: 'I'm always getting them for you, sir.'²⁷ When a constable used the personal radio network to ask a Sergeant to go to a particular address he received the reply, 'No, I'm off at — (Name's location) at the moment. Get somebody else to do it.' His location was some way from Hilton's

ground. The constable then asked a question on behalf of another colleague, '—— wants to know what you're doing at —— ?' Sergeant: 'I want to know what —— is doing in the station ? He can go and check the premises.'²⁸ When a new Sergeant arrived at the station and was seen patrolling with a Sergeant who had a reputation for 'verballing', a constable asked this latter officer, 'Are you patrolling with the new Sergeant ? Teaching him to bend the evidence.' 'Sergeant —— the swifter. Teaching him to give bent evidence.'²⁹

Senior officers could enforce formal organisational rules to discipline lower ranks. The use of discipline was also the subject of humour and narrative. One officer at Hilton frequently reminded his colleagues of how a senior officer had disciplined him for wearing a scarf under his uniform mackintosh. The officer refused to stop wearing the scarf and obtained medical evidence to justify his action. The senior officer was defeated and this sense of triumph - controlling that which attempts to control the lower ranks - formed a central theme³⁰.

A similar theme was found in the following data:

P.C.: 'Wouldn't it be nice to see him going over a red light just after he had retired ?' Colleague: 'Or before he had retired.' P.C.: 'I was in a bank up —— on one occasion and we had a Superintendent —— (name) here. He had left the job but he came into the bank and yours truly was standing at the counter. He told me that he hoped he wouldn't be here too long because he had his car outside on a yellow line. I said, "Look, gov'nor, your car is on a yellow line there and you'll get a ticket no bother." So he's straight out of the bank and moving it.'³¹

On another occasion, during a quiet Sunday afternoon tour of duty, several officers shared stories of the challenge lower ranks could make to their superiors. An officer drew on his experience of working at another station by telling a story about a sergeant who retired from the force and refused to move out of his police house. Senior officers attempted to get him to leave the house, but he still refused to move and waited until the local council evicted him. This challenge to senior officers ensured the local authority

housed the erstwhile Sergeant. This narrative was followed by another story about an officer who had recently retired from the force and who was suspected of an offence. Senior officers interviewed and asked him to go to the station with them. He refused, telling them that if they wanted him at the station they would have to arrest him. He knew they had insufficient evidence to do that and the senior officers were forced to abandon their enquiry³². Laughter followed both these stories.

In these contexts of humour and story-telling, the challenge subordinates could make to their superiors' action was clarified. Control was exercised over that which attempted to and ultimately could control lower operational ranks. Humour and narrative were invoked to assert the dominance of the rank-and-file definition of police work, strengthening and sustaining it.

Similar, though perhaps surprisingly few examples of humour concerning the different departmental specialisms present at Hilton were also documented. These data also confirmed the supremacy of the occupational culture over rival definitions of police work. In this section of the chapter, data document how the interdependent, team character of police work associated with the occupational culture is exposed, juxtaposed against the formal organisational model and shared amongst colleagues as a normative method of policing. The occupational culture is routinely maintained.

Action

Police work is sporadic. Long periods of quiet are interspersed with incidents of various kinds. It is interesting to note that one of the favourite times for 'story-telling' was the 4 a.m. tea break, when few demands were made on personnel. It was not uncommon for stories emphasising action to be told at this quiet time. These generated a definition of police work pulsating with action, challenge and hedonism. However, that hedonistic aspect was not always present in the actual circumstances of police work; it had to be maintained, partly by the use of narrative and humour.

Details of car chases were frequently shared and respect for the skill of 'bandit drivers' was expressed on occasion -

'He was a pretty good driver and he had his wrist in plaster when he finished as well. He was pretty good. He didn't hit any cars on the way round and he didn't have any crashes at all. So he did pretty well.'³³

'Bandit drivers' provided a sense of challenge to police action and involvement in a chase took priority over official orders to desist. We have mentioned that Force Headquarters issued an order that all except advanced standard drivers should not take part in a car chase. After the publication of that order a chase took place which formed the substance of a story:

P.C.: 'Oh yes, he put up a good fight'. S.D.H.: 'Well, did he stop of his own accord?' P.C.: 'No, only because a couple of cars were put across the road and he didn't have much choice. Mind you, there were lots of cars there, all chasing him.' Other P.C.: 'Yes there were cars everywhere, Sarge. Pandas, R/T cars, everything.' P.C.: 'Yes, that Police Order really went down well.' Laughter.³⁴

These officers used humour to juxtapose their definition of policing against an attempt to control their actions. Involvement in a chase and, we now demonstrate, the recounting of details of chasing, served to sustain the notion of policing as an action-oriented, hedonistic occupation.

Some data suggested that officers were aware that their appreciation of speed was a selective emphasis drawn from a diversity of experience. I asked two Sergeants if they had watched a particular television programme. One replied, 'No and you should have been watching your instruction class, "Flying Squad".'³⁵ Indeed, one officer suggested the image of the police work as highly action-oriented might coincide with public expectations: 'So I started to talk to them and tell them stories about the things they wanted to hear about - chasing people and so on and how we chase around and all that.'³⁶

Narrative was frequently elaborated with drama and a sense of action. Officers could reinterpret trivial offences in more serious terms. For example, a few days after officers had arrested a number of juveniles for causing a slight disturbance in the street, which

the duty officer thought a very serious matter but, in fact, ended without any offences being reported, the incident was described by one of the officers as 'an affray'. Other stories stressed excitement and bravado.

'Yes, but you can think it's quiet but I can tell you if you were station officer on a Bank Holiday like —— (names officer) was, and you expect nothing to happen and you have eighteen prisoners by midnight, then that's how this station goes. It was an affray. —— was the duty officer and —— (names prisoner) was in here and he'd already been pushed up against the wall by yours truly. Then Sergeant —— walks in with a gun. It was a shotgun they'd fired into a pub. He went up to —— and said, "Who had the gun?", and smashed him straight round the face and the bloke went up the wall and up the ceiling.' (Laughter)³⁷.

After attending a potentially serious disturbance at a club frequented by black youths, officers returned to Hilton and recounted the events in the following general fashion, stressing the danger of the situation and their bold manner of dealing with it. The dog handler then came to the station office; his dog was carrying a knitted hat in its mouth.

The Inspector asked, 'Is that the war trophy? Good boy.' P.C.: 'Yes, we brought it especially for you.' The Inspector then launched into a hostile comment on how 'it is necessary to use dogs for the coloureds because they're so bloody violent and that's why you want them. I can tell you I was at —— (names scene of violent demonstration) when we had the horses and I can tell you we were really pleased to see them.' Other stories of similar incidents followed.³⁸

Here, an incident which involved officers in action, which was potentially dangerous and violent, was infused with its latent features and extended to a more general issue. By the use of drama, exaggeration and the selection of evocative words the police world of speed, action and hedonism was emphasised and maintained. The fact that officers routinely constructed that sense of speed has already been emphasised and humour has been shown to act as a mediating mechanism between the rank-and-file attitudes and practices and more formal organisational directives which militated against it. The rank-and-file definition of adequate police work was sustained as the dominant practice.

Questioning prisoners

Many of the techniques and strategies used by officers to question prisoners were virtually illegal and certainly in conflict with legal and organisational directives . This very clear division between practice and formal policy was the subject of narrative and humour, as the following two data suggest. Constables were interviewed every year by the Chief Superintendent.

After such an interview a constable returned to his duty in the station and a colleague asked, 'How did you get on ?' P.C.: 'Fine, fine. Enthusiastic I am, you know.' Both parties laughed. One said, 'Yes, really enthusiastic.' Officer interviewed: 'Professional ability, nil. Appearance, nil, grotesque. Yes, but he can't half hit prisoners.' Both laughed.

On another occasion a Sergeant was talking to the Inspector in charge of his relief and he mentioned a notice advertising the annual force boxing tournament. Making reference to the name of the cup presented to the winner of the tournament, the 'Crown Cup', the Inspector asked his Sergeant: 'You haven't amended this notice yet ?' 'What notice, sir ?' 'The Brown Cup'. No, every time I get a drunk in I tell him to hit him but he won't do it.' Both laugh⁴⁰.

'Brown' was the name of an officer who was developing a reputation for using force on prisoners.

Both these data demonstrate clearly how humour mediated between the formal and informal practices of lower ranks, giving recognition to the values of the occupational culture by juxtaposing them against formal policy.

Other narratives were concerned with events where the police had used physical force on a prisoner. Again, these confirmed the importance of the occupational culture and permitted officers to share their definition of police work, so maintaining their values and practices.

P.C.: 'But who would have known that you could have seen — (names prisoner) from this very canteen ?' Another P.C.: 'Well, I must say I'm one of the few officers, the only officer at this station who was able to see — (prisoner) on the day he was nicked.' First P.C.: 'No, you weren't. I was one of the eight who carried him down the cell passage and threw him into a cell. Was

he in a fuckin' state ? I can tell you he really was, but he didn't get a doctor. Old — (mentions very senior officer on division) came in and said, "Don't you need a doctor for that man ?" I said, "Who needs a doctor ? What man, what state ?" Believe me, he lost the sight of one eye on that day and he was in a hell of a state, his face was terrible.' Other P.C.: 'Yes, — was gaoler on that day and he tells the same story.'⁴¹

This story was repeated on other occasions.

Other narratives were less spectacular than this but, nevertheless, sanctioned the need for and acceptance of using force on prisoners. For example, a sergeant who used to be stationed at Hilton and who employed force during questioning was mentioned;

'He was very fat and used to nudge a prisoner with his belly. He'd have a constable with him who would say, "Answer when the Sergeant speaks to you". The prisoners would be nudged all around the charge room.' (Laughter)⁴²

Here, the use of force on a prisoner was the source of amusement to the officers listening.

Interestingly, many of the narratives concerned with the use of force were told in a lighthearted fashion and stressed the element of hedonism. Several officers were in the station office for the 4 a.m. tea break. One addressed his colleague who had also been involved in a particular incident:

'I've decided that you bring me all the grief.'
'I don't bring you the grief.' 'Oh yes, I was the one who held the poor man's arm up his back and stamped on his cigar, because you aren't allowed to smoke in the food department of the store.' Colleague, using West Indian accent: 'But then it was the little one who held me.' (Laughter)⁴³

After two officers had arrested a prisoner who had put up a violent struggle and was pacified with a truncheon, one of them came to the station office and a colleague noticed that he had been bitten on the neck.

The injured officer said, 'A coon gave me a love bite on the neck.' As the prisoner lay on the floor of the charge room with blood oozing from his wound, a constable referred to his groaning with wry humour. 'We don't allow singing.' After the injured officer had received hospital treatment the night duty staff had arrived for

duty one of them asked, 'Who gave you a love bite, then? What happened to you? Don't forget criminal injuries.'⁴⁴

Both these data emphasise the association between the use of physical force and the value of hedonism. They demonstrate the mediation of tension between the use of force and the dangers faced by officers whose action could be exposed and disciplined. In both incidents the officers involved could have faced investigation and disciplinary action if it was thought that they used excessive force. Humour relates the permissible to the forbidden and normalises the use of force within a group context. The necessary use of physical force by the police is objectified and sustained.

Other data confirmed this analysis, though emphasis was placed on other aspects of the use of force. For example, the emphasis on control:

'I was there with —— (names officer) leaning on a support. A teenager told —— (officer) that he'd been leaning on the support and he wanted it back. —— (the officer) went wham. (Laughs) Did he give him a thump and this kid went tumbling down.'⁴⁵

In another incident an officer referred to his misuse of the grammatical rules which we have suggested were related to the use of force. He did so with a smile on his face, emphasising the humour of the situation to his colleagues.

'I hit one of them before I realised he was intelligent. I went the wrong way there. It would have been better to talk to him but I thought he was thick when I first stopped him.'⁴⁶

Throughout, we find that humour and narrative mediates between the rank-and-file acceptance of the use of force and the formal constraints imposed on the police by a variety of sources. Interestingly, the last data are concerned with a breach of the acceptable use of force defined by the body of knowledge found in the occupational culture. This suggests that the officer was attempting to use humour to redefine and affirm his acceptance of this knowledge.

Similar data were concerned with the use of 'verbals'. When an

officer returned to Hilton after a court case, a Sergeant asked him,

'Did you win then?' 'No, we lost!' Another Sergeant said, 'It's not a matter of winning or losing. Justice was seen to be done.' P.C. in case: 'Despite what I said.' Sergeant: 'Yes, despite my verbals; justice was done.'⁴⁷

Again, we notice the recognition and juxtaposition of the occupational culture and formal policy. This was also evident in the following narrative, related by a constable during a 4 a.m. tea break:

P.C. 'Do you know what the Detective Chief Inspector did before he joined the job? He was a fitter's mate. I like that.' Sergeant: 'Now he's a fitter.' Other P.C.: 'Yes, fit you up with anything. Keys, jemmy, colour T.V. set. But it worked the other week with those two. They told us the truth in the end. I had my removal keys and I started to divide them into two and put them in front of each of the blokes. They said, "You couldn't do that to us, would you?" I said, "Too right I would, and I'll give you three cars apiece in — Road". Then they started telling the truth. It works, you know, it does.'⁴⁸

Here we find the same juxtaposition but more emphasis is placed on the supremacy of the occupational culture — the officer finished his account, 'It works, you know, it does'.

Tension between the use of dubious evidence and the formal requirements of law was sometimes managed by rehearsal. These were highly amusing representations of the court room, where humour was used in its mediating role. An officer told a Sergeant about an arrest at which he had assisted, which was to be disputed at court.

'He (a defence witness) couldn't have heard what — (arresting officer) was saying to that bloke. I could see him from some way off and I know that from where he was, he couldn't have heard him.' Sergeant: 'Well officer, how do you know he couldn't hear? If you were some distance away it's quite impossible for you to say that.' P.C.: 'No it is not. I could see him quite clearly and I know in that crowd he couldn't hear what — was saying.' Sergeant: 'Come along officer, you're changing your story now. You know you can't say that at all and you're changing your story.' P.C.: 'The black nigger bastard.'⁴⁹

On another occasion a Sergeant and Constable were writing their evidence about an arrest they had made.

P.C.: 'I've got more in my book than you.' (Laughter)
Sergeant holds up blank page in his own book and says,
'Well, have you got the verbals?' P.C. listening:

'I don't think I should be hearing this. (Laughter again) P.C.: 'Officer, when did you make these notes ?'
Sergeant: 'At the time, sir.' (Laughter)⁵⁰.

When rehearsals of this type were presented, the dangers of giving particular types of evidence were stressed to the participants and audience. They normalised the procedures reported and asserted their dominance, here, within the court setting. However, as further data illustrate, boundaries of tolerance were stressed because the dangers of making an error were serious.

Two C.I.D. officers had arrested two youths for being suspected persons. One of them was permitted to telephone his solicitor and after he had done so an Inspector asked one of the arresting officers, 'I hope you have checked to see who his solicitor is; is it an M.P. ? We'll get a complaint from the House of Commons.' Officer: 'We'll just change our evidence if it is.' Inspector laughs and mimics arresting officer: 'We'll change our evidence.' (Laughs)⁵¹.

On another occasion, when a group of Sergeants were talking about the use of powers of arrest, one of them related a story about the dangers of 'verballing';

'I knew a C.I.D. Sergeant who had fitted a bloke up with an indecent exposure. They just stopped him as he walked around a corner and gave it to him. After the hearing this prisoner hung himself and now the D.S. is a wreck. He's had a mental breakdown and will never be the same again.'⁵²

Our data add to the themes already developed. Narrative and humour were used to maintain the occupational cultural values of the operational staff, in the wake of threat from other conflicting values found in policy and other edicts. There is a correspondence between many themes of the narratives about the handling of prisoners and particular problems of this aspect of police work which we have already cited in other chapters of the thesis. Such correspondence reveals the two conflicting levels of police organisation exposed by humour and its use to secure a tenuous reconciliation.

The population policed

Further correspondence between the particular meanings of the population

policed analysed in Chapter 6 and the content of narrative were also found. Importantly, these related to 'challengers', those groups of the population who were able to investigate police action. For example, a number of stories were concerned with lawyers and these stressed how their performance in court was called into question by a magistrate. As lawyers attempt to question police action, so magistrates were portrayed exposing the inadequacies of particular counsel. A constable referred to a lawyer:

'He stood up and before he said anything the beak said, "Can I tell you that you've got a hard job on. You're really wasting your time". So he let him go on a bit and then told him to sit down because he had heard enough. The barrister said that he had never been talked to like this before and never been told that he couldn't complete his pleading. The beak asked the usher for the Law Society's list and asked the barrister if he was on it. It was the 1972 list and he looked it through. Well, this bloke wasn't on it and so he says "I remand this case for a week to find out if you are qualified." You should have seen the bastard's face, poor sod. It just finished him.'⁵³

In a rather different context, when a solicitor employed by the force was talking to some sergeants, a laugh was gained from a 'slip' made by one of the audience as he asked a question. He simply said, 'When a defendant has got a mouthpiece; sorry, I mean solicitor.'⁵⁴

In each example, the meanings attributed to lawyers by the lower ranks seeped to exposure. Using narrative and humour, the power of the lawyer is challenged, as are the institutions within which they seek to question and control police action.

Similar themes were found in stories about social workers. Social workers were thought to be naive, easily 'had over' by villains, not least by juvenile offenders;

'One of the social workers was the custody officer. She had five young coloured kids in there who had been done for 'dipping'. So she had her handbag on the table, didn't she? Of course she had her purse nicked. Well, she couldn't understand this; couldn't make it out. We got the money back for her in the end but there you are, she left her bloody handbag on the table. Bloody marvellous, isn't it?' Other similar stories followed and the sequence was ended by an officer who put it,

'Yes, it's frightening, isn't it, when you see some of these social workers who are supposed to look after these kids, frightening.'⁵⁵

Other narratives stressed how magistrates did not believe social workers when they gave evidence and controlled their actions. Once again, the typification found in a previous section of the thesis was stressed - that of social workers as naive, inexperienced and ill-informed about the nature of man and the world in which he lives.

Finally, 'blacks' were the subject of frequent humour and narrative. Officers felt 'blacks' alleged police malpractice:

A constable noticed a black youth talking to a white girl while standing in a queue. Both were waiting to go into a public building, controlled by the police. The officer on duty at the door of the building stopped him and the officer watching observed, 'Why are you arresting me, officer? One law for the black man and one for the white man.'⁵⁶

As officers from Hilton passed through an area of black settlement on their way to a special function, one used a West Indian accent and joked, 'Look at that honky-tonk black man with his beret with a bobble on. What a lovely man he is with that bobble-hat on. Oh, this is a West Indian area, this is where we all live. The policeman is telling lies in court, he is not telling the truth.'⁵⁷

Again, we find the controlling of that which attempts to control the police. Interestingly, these final data reverse the use of slang - 'honky-tonk' was a term used by blacks to refer to white people. Attitudes we have already documented as part of the stock of knowledge available to operational ranks at Hilton were expressed in a group context to strengthen the normative assumptions of police work⁵⁸. Typifications of the population were maintained.

Sustaining the reality of police work

We have documented some of the major strategies used by Hilton's officers to maintain the occupational culture of urban policing. The first point to be made from our analysis is that Manning's argument that policing is maintained by ritualistic action is found wanting.

Humour and story-telling were certainly regular features of policing observed at Hilton. Similarly, it was usual and regular for the technology of Unit Beat policing to be adapted to the requirements of operational ranks. However, regularity cannot be equated with ritual, which requires a more formal context, carefully controlled by procedural rules. These features were not present in the incidents documented at Hilton⁵⁹.

It may be useful to argue that ritual provides one means of sustaining the occupational culture in times of crisis. Such contexts were not observed during my lengthy period of research. However, if one makes the distinction between the crisis and routine maintenance of values and action, considerable evidence becomes available. For example, we have documented how the technology of Unit Beat Policing was routinely adapted by officers to sustain a definition of policing concerned with action, hedonism and challenge. The teamwork emphasis found was moulded to maintain the routine interdependency of ranks and further used to shield practices which breached legal rules.

Considerable attention has been paid to the use of humour and narrative. Drawing on Mary Douglas's discussion of jokes and Hannerz's on myth-making, data has been analysed to document how humour and narrative exposed the division between the definition of policing shared by operational ranks and those found in organisational policy, including the law. Interestingly, this was done in a group context, where dangers of exposure were not great.

We have noted, therefore, how the interdependent team character of policing, the demarcation of roles and rank on a relief, together with limits of tolerance, action, hedonism, speed and challenge were all sustained by humour and narrative. In each of these areas officers used such genres to objectify their subjective experience of police work. The occupational culture was routinely maintained and legitimised as a primary reference point, personal identity was clarified - police work was constructed. That - the social construction of police work - lies at the heart of this chapter for, throughout, data have been used to extend previous discussions of the British

police by documenting how the occupational culture of urban policing is maintained.

Notes and references

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- 3 F.N. 604:3.
- 4 F.N. 180:3. See Chatterton, M.R. (1975) Organisational relationships and processes in police work: a case study of urban policing, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Manchester, for acceptance of accounts.
- 5 F.N. 118:4.
- 6 F.N. 354:2.
- 7 F.N. 198:2.
- 8 F.N. 615:7.
- 9 Cain, M.E. (1973) Society and the policeman's role, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp.147-222.
- 10 F.N. 452:2.
- 11 Chatterton, M.R. (1975), op.cit., especially pp.346-8.
- 12 For example, Coser, R.L. (1960) 'Laughter among colleagues; a study of the social functions of humour among the staff of a mental hospital', Psychiatry, 23: 81-95; also (1959) 'Some social functions of laughter; a study of humour in a hospital setting', Human Relations, 12: 171-181; and Zijderveld, A.C. (1968) 'Jokes and their relation to social reality', Social Res., 35: 286-311, Roy, D. (1960) 'Banana time: job satisfaction and informal interaction', Human Organization, 18: 156-168. My interest in police humour was aroused by Michael Banton, who suggested its importance during a conference on the sociology of the police a number of years ago.
- 13 Douglas, M. (1975) Implicit meanings: essays in anthropology, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.90-114.
- 14 Hannerz, U. (1969) Soulside: inquiries into ghetto culture and community, New York & London: Columbia Univ. Press; p.111.
- 15 F.N. 397:15.

- 16 F.N. 602:2.
- 17 F.N. 628:1b.
- 18 F.N. 512.
- 19 F.N. 198:2.
- 20 F.N. 432:4.
- 21 F.N. 451:1.
- 22 F.N. 233:4; also see Reed, M.S. et al. (1977) 'Wayward cops: the functions of deviance in groups reconsidered', Social Problems, 24 (5): 565-575.
- 23 F.N. 303:8.
- 24 F.N. 227:8.
- 25 F.N. 208:5.
- 26 F.N. 262:8 and 493:2.
- 27 F.N. 439:3.
- 28 F.N. 548:6.
- 29 F.N. 275:4.
- 30 F.N. 352:2.
- 31 F.N. 543:4.
- 32 F.N. 138:8.
- 33 F.N. 635:4.
- 34 F.N. 393:8.
- 35 F.N. 413:3. This programme frequently featured car chases.
- 36 F.N. 543b.
- 37 F.N. 614:5.
- 38 F.N. 617;10.
- 39 F.N. 361:13.
- 40 F.N. 122:6 and 361:13.
- 41 F.N. 602:2.
- 42 F.N. 117:1.

- 43 F.N. 474:4.
- 44 F.N. 134/5/6.
- 45 F.N. 219:3.
- 46 F.N. 474:4.
- 47 F.N. 190:2.
- 48 F.N. 222:7.
- 49 F.N. 578:2.
- 50 F.N. 235:3.
- 51 F.N. 132:6a.
- 52 F.N. 150.
- 53 F.N. 644:1.
- 54 F.N. 151:1.
- 55 F.N. 644:1.
- 56 F.N. 713:3.
- 57 F.N. 587:1.
- 58 It is recognised that the relationship between attitudes and actions is not always consistent. See James, D. (1979) 'Police-black relations: the professional solution', in S. Holdaway (ed): The British police: 66-82, London: Edward Arnold, for discussion of this point with reference to blacks.
- 59 See Goody, J. (1961) 'Religion and ritual: the definition problem' Brit. J. Sociol., 12: 142-164, for an introduction to the issues.

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH

In this final chapter three main areas of research will be considered in the light of the foregoing description and analysis of urban policing. The first is the notion of Anglo-American policing, the second, the professionalisation of the police, and the third, the contribution my research makes to the sociology of police work.

Anglo-American policing

The initial criticism of the concept of Anglo-American policing concerns its imprecise character; indeed, without a great deal of close ethnographic research its further use is unwise. Although Miller and Manning¹ have documented the historical development of policing in both Britain and America, they have not provided detailed evidence of how the historical context of policing in either society shapes current policy and practice.

This lack of detailed research is particularly surprising when Manning's recent research is considered. There, he attempts to sustain the notion that police work in Anglo-American societies is a similar activity². However, Manning presents a minimum of evidence of British policing to support this view, assuming the findings of American research sufficient to provide an adequate foundation to interpret the British context. This is to neglect important differences of police policy and practice in both societies. For example, and as our discussion of the development of professional policing has demonstrated, professional policing in Britain is not directly comparable to the broad development of American policies which are also called 'professional'. The use of technology in British policing is more comprehensive than in America. Computers and other technical aids are not just used in crime-related work, as Manning argues for the American context, but also cover traffic control, telecommunications, missing persons and the collation of records of many types, as well

as the pursuit of criminals.

In Britain, the development of a professional police has encompassed policies to expose particular areas of police work to public scrutiny. This contradicts Manning's assertion that secrecy pervades Anglo-American policing, particularly the investigation of complaints against the police made by members of the public. It may be true that the professionalisation of the British police is, in some measure, the creation of policies which enhance police secrecy. However, it is also the case that professionalisation has resulted in the establishment of specialist squads of officers employed to investigate such complaints in a rigorous manner. This important, if partial, rejection of secrecy is one implication of professionalisation, as are other policies concerned with the creation of the free exchange of information between the police and the media³.

There is little available evidence of the British police evaluating their practices in the manner Manning argues is typical of professional policing; he assumed the British setting to be very similar to America. We have pointed out that one of the remarkable features of British policing is the absence of policies to evaluate police effectiveness. Indeed, 'The Administrative Theory of Policing', which Manning argues is implicit in police policies found in both societies, is not evidenced in Britain. This and other points of detail made in earlier chapters indicate that police work in Britain and America are not directly comparable and, therefore, the concept of Anglo-American policing is fraught with imprecision⁴.

When we turn to studies that have concentrated on the work of lower ranks, similar difficulties are encountered. However, my research has assisted the clarification of points of comparison where future research could prove profitable. The distinction between the American setting which patrolling officers perceive to be pervaded by dangerousness and the British context, typified by disorderliness and imminent chaos, is of particular importance. I have developed an analysis of British policing on the foundations of Schutzian phenomenology, explaining how the range of police beliefs and

practices can be understood as primary and secondary relevancies of the occupational culture. If this theoretical perspective informed an American study, rather different research findings than those which are presently available might be forthcoming. As far as British research is concerned, the primary reality of the world as a place of potential disorder and chaos has been demonstrated to influence many different and, at first sight, apparently unrelated areas of police work. If the primary reality of American police officers' perception of the world is based on 'danger', distinct differences between British and American policing are and, if further research was completed, would increasingly be seen to be evident.

One of the interesting implications of the British police's perception of disorderliness is their use of a broad range of strategies and tactics to control the public they police. Jerome Skolnick suggests that this rich lexicon can be contrasted with the rather limited range of techniques employed by American officers. Skolnick tends to overstate his case, largely because he places too much reliance on William Westley's one-dimensional model of dangerousness. Jonathan Rubinstein's ethnography of urban policing, though lacking theoretical analysis, does suggest that the police of one American city possess a considerable array of techniques of control. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these techniques seem to find their primary reference point in the perception of the world as a dangerous place; again, the important distinction between British and American urban policing is encountered⁵.

A detailed ethnography of American urban policing would also permit further assessment of Michael Banton's suggestion that the British police do not draw a hard-and-fast line between themselves and the public. In our chapter of police perceptions of the public we found that Hilton's officers separated themselves from the public they policed, but this was to preserve their freedom to work as they thought appropriate⁶. It is certainly correct to argue that the British police do not regard themselves as a para-military force separated from and operating against a citizenry. However, while retaining their civilian status, British officers do separate

themselves from the population they police in order to maintain and utilise their rank-and-file definition of police work.

We have now re-emphasised some points raised by earlier sections of the thesis. The major issue here is to argue that the concept of Anglo-American policing, particularly as it is advocated by Manning and implied by Cain in her recent review of police research, is an imprecise and ill-used concept. My research offers a means of proceeding with detailed ethnographic work, using sensitive methods of description and analysis to document differences of police work in both societies.

Professional policing

The second area of research to consider is the professionalisation of the British police. This feature of policing, together with the associated system of Unit Beat Patrol, were the two important changes within the British police since Cain completed her work and I began my research. We have documented the features of professional policing and their implications for the practice of lower operational ranks. Furthermore, we have established that all these features were present in the force of which Hilton was but one sub-divisional area⁷. This has presented new evidence of the structure and content of contemporary policing. Previous comment has noted the professionalisation of the police but not offered an analysis of the consequences of professionalisation for policies and practice within a particular force. From our analysis of professional policing, and using Cain's research as a basis of comparison, we can assess the effects of particular policies on the manner in which patrolling officers carried out their work.

We question if the action-oriented, hedonistic emphasis of police work which Cain documented remains within the framework of professional policing. Is policing constrained within the rule-of-law, officers being reluctant to employ techniques of control which border on and are sometimes based in illegality? Has the interdependent secrecy of police work changed to a more open and accountable situation? Has 'easing' become one means, amongst others, to stress an understanding that policing is based on public support and the creation of consensus

between the police and the population they patrol ? Indeed, has the importance of arrest and other crime-related work been set within a broader understanding of police work, embracing peace keeping and other similar activities which form a significant aspect of the police task ? We ask, therefore, about the effects of the professionalisation of the British police on the occupational culture.

My research of Hilton sub-division documents the continuing dominance of the primary occupational values and strategies of action Cain found prior to professionalisation of the service and the introduction of Unit Beat Policing. Indeed, it has been established that, when the features of professional policing are coupled to this new system of patrol, the 'practical professionalism' of the work force is enhanced rather than curtailed. The use of technology - vehicular patrol and radio communications, for example - associated with professional policing has been exploited by Hilton's officers to heighten, sustain and strengthen their experience of policing as action oriented, hedonistic work. Further, radio communications have facilitated a greater interdependence between lower ranks than has previously been identified; officers at Hilton were able to involve themselves in any incident broadcast over the personal radio system which sounded vaguely exciting. Police vehicles provided an official means of 'easing', surpassing those contacts with the public which could have provided the basis of some consensual relationship between officers and the local population. 'Easing' has been changed to waiting in vehicles or at the station for real police work - that is action - to occur.

We have also documented how officers managed space within the police station, ensuring the continuation of practices located in the occupational culture; our analysis of time led to this same point. Within the privacy of the charge room and cell area of Hilton police station, officers were protected to work largely as they thought appropriate, many of their practices being highly questionable when judged against legal criteria. All officers of a relief, including supervisory staff, formed a 'team' to afford the protection

necessary to the continuation of these practices.

Little evidence of an emphasis on the creation of consensus between the police and public policed has been documented. Indeed, in our chapter on the manner in which Hilton's police perceived the population, we noted how typifications were moulded by the problems of retaining freedom from constraints designed to limit police action. Finally, the stress on specialisation found in professional policing and Unit Beat patrol - importantly, specialisms of routine patrol work and Community or Home Beat Constable - has tended to concentrate rather than diffuse the importance of crime work. Crime and crime-related work, together with incidents involving action, served as the primary definition of adequate and meaningful policing. The emphasis here was on police authority and control. Indeed, in our discussion of 'figures' we noted that, despite the importance senior and chief officers placed on the principle features of professional policing and their translation into a range of policies, the primary indicator of effective and competent policing was that of figures of arrest and charge constructed by Hilton's officers. In short, we note that the occupational culture of urban policing, as it is evidenced at Hilton, has been sustained by lower ranks, despite the introduction of many policies of professional policing. Indeed, considerable evidence has been presented to suggest that many of the features of the occupational culture Cain identified and those now documented in this research have been strengthened rather than weakened by professional policies. Given this analysis, we should ask what is the meaning and function of the notion of a professional police ?

We have already noted that Cain has argued that the professionalisation of the British police would restrict the use of 'extra-legal' techniques of control by lower ranks. That view is challenged by the evidence of policing at Hilton. She has also pointed out that, while the professionalisation of the British police remains a possibility through the indirect influence of a growing number of supervisory officers trained at the National Police College, who filter their 'professional knowledge' to lower ranks, the impact of this process is uncertain. Cain argues that the professionalisation of the British police may be little more than mystification to shield increasing control of

of the police by the Home Office and other state institutions. Members of these bodies have the power to define a corpus of knowledge and practice which could be called 'police theory'.

Skolnick and Lambert have rather different reservations. They note that the professionalisation of the service is developing around technical efficiency - the application of technology to systems of policing and the rationalisation of the administrative organisation of the service. This priority conflicts with a different notion of professionalism, identified by Skolnick, which is based on the protection of individual liberty. He writes,

'The problem of police in a democratic society is not merely a matter of obtaining newer police cars, a higher order of technical equipment or of recruiting men who have to their credit more years of education; what must occur is a significant alteration in the ideology of police, so that police "professionalism" rests on the values of a democratic legal order rather than on technical proficiency'⁸.

We have seen how Skolnick's projection has been partly confirmed in the British context of police work. However, although there has been an increased investment in the application of technology to policing, a less emphasised but not unimportant realisation of the importance of policing within the rule of law has also been witnessed. The use of technology coupled with the notion of administrative efficiency and the change towards the values of a democratic legal order are not necessarily exclusive. More importantly, the relationship between technological sophistication and legality represents the basis of a model of professional policing we have identified in the policies of the force of which Hilton was a part.

We have identified two basic notions of policing. The one, 'professional policing', is identified with the policies introduced to Hilton's force by Chief Officers. This could not be explained as the construction of a mystification in alliance with the Home Office. Indeed, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the professionalisation of the police is an attempt by Chief Officers to retain their autonomy from the constraints which that and other

institutions could place upon their action⁹. We therefore understand the notion of 'professional policing' to be symbolic, directed towards the retention of police power and authority. Symbolic, because the direct effects of professional policies are not realised in the practices of lower ranks and the term 'professional police' stresses the idea that, like all professions, the police are able to control their own affairs. Senior and Chief Officers oppose an independent element in the investigation of complaints against the police, the tape and video recording of interviews of suspects, the introduction of an independent, state prosecuting department and other measures designed to render the police increasingly accountable. These policies are resisted, despite the fact that senior officers cannot and do not control lower ranks to effect - a great deal of evidence has been presented to confirm that point¹⁰.

However, we have also presented evidence to suggest that professional policing, indeed, policing per se cannot merely be understood as symbolic activity. The policies of professional policing we have outlined were the instrumental consequences of the professional model and they had definite effects on the practice of police work by operational ranks. For example, officers knew that they risked rigorous investigation if they broke disciplinary regulations; the use of vehicles for routine patrol afforded the adaptations we have documented - and so on. These were some of the material consequences of the professionalisation of the service, perhaps not the intended consequences, but consequences nevertheless. Stress is therefore placed upon the acquisition of professional status by the police as a means of retaining their power and authority. This symbolic character of professionalisation is particularly important. However, our discussion also draws attention to the point that the symbol of a professional police has an instrumental reference point with material effects on the policies and practice of policing.

The dominant and other model of policing we have identified from our research of Hilton is at variance with the intended consequences of the professional model, it is the model to which lower operational

ranks were committed. This might lead us to argue that the professionalisation of the police is a calculated foil for the occupational culture; that senior and chief officers permit the practices we have documented and do so culpably. The retention of the figures of arrest and charge as the primary indicator of effective policing is of considerable importance to this point. This stress on 'figures' ran a thread through the work of all ranks, it was central to the policing of Hilton sub-division. Whatever else lower ranks might do, they knew that if they produced arrests and charges they would not be subject to criticism by supervisory staff. In turn, supervisory officers knew that their more senior officers would not assess their managerial capability poorly if they demonstrated their subordinates' success in tackling crime and other arrestable offences. Further, we have produced evidence to suggest that officers in charge of stations knew their manpower strength would be retained if they were able to maintain arrest and charge rates. Officers in charge of Hilton realised that they could motivate lower ranks by recognising and rewarding their work in this area. On the few occasions they made their feelings public, we have noted their remarks were confined to comment on the figures of arrest and charge. It is also clear that the maintenance of these figures increased the overtime and therefore the wages of lower ranks.

This emphasis on 'figures' tended to weaken the intended effects of a range of professional policies. Supervisory staff knew they were dependent on their subordinates for the production of arrest rates and, realising their dependence, were drawn into the structure of and commitment to that aspect of policing we have described as 'teamwork'. Indeed, the status of the whole force seemed to rest on the production of 'figures'.

Here we identify a link between the policies of professional policing and the practices of lower ranks. Sufficient evidence to argue that the chief and other senior officers had a totally cynical attitude towards the implementation of professional policies is not available. Some evidence suggests the opposite view. Nevertheless the traditional resilience of the occupational culture, reliance on subordinates to

produce a measure of effectiveness and the secrecy and isolation of much police work combine to render the intended consequences of the professional model largely ineffective. The major effect of the professionalisation of the police, recognising its primary symbolic and less dominant instrumental aspects, has been to provide a new organisational framework. Within this structure the definition of 'practical policing' associated with the occupational culture has been remoulded to the advantage of lower ranks.

This analysis has important consequences for policy to control the police and render them increasingly accountable to the public. If we argue that the occupational culture remains the primary determinant of police practice, any policy intended to change that practice is required to intervene and check and balance it. For example, if the charging and questioning processes are to be monitored effectively, solicitors or other legal officers will have to be placed within the contexts where persons are charged. Similarly, effective control of these procedures will also involve their statutory tape and/or video recording. Such measures do not assume the practices and values of lower operational ranks can be gradually changed by the supervisory influence of chief and intermediate ranked personnel. The traditions and web of established obligations between and within ranks are too tightly woven and obligatory to permit change by such means. Our ethnographic data has documented the context within which policy will be moulded by lower ranks and, therefore, how that is the initial and effective point of intervention. Interestingly, the ethnographic data presented throughout the thesis has proved an adequate basis from which to argue for specific policy intervention. Such a source of data is too rarely used to determine the content and implementation of policy.

The sociology of the police

Finally, we discuss the contribution my research makes to our understanding of contemporary policing, particularly sociological analysis of police work. We have confirmed what Cain identified over a decade ago and Chatterton began to verify within a more recent

research context: in an urban setting, the peer group of lower ranked patrolling officers is a crucial determinant of police action. The stock of knowledge which we conceptualise as 'the occupational culture of urban policing' remains a primary resource, though it is partially moulded by law, police policies resulting from internal and external sources and other constraints. We have documented how lower operational ranks of an urban police station mould and adjust these constraints to sustain and strengthen what they consider to be basic and necessary techniques of police work. This is so, despite important changes in British policing, namely professionalisation and Unit Beat Policing.

We are led to this conclusion by the analysis of data gathered in the research setting and an extensive literature review¹². In that review we noted how classic American studies by William Westley and Jerome Skolnick have not been criticised with sufficient vigour. The firm foundations they are frequently believed to have laid have been shown to be less than secure. For example, by careful evaluation of his evidence, we have argued that Westley's thesis of a police response to public hostility cannot be sustained with certainty. His data is ambiguous and it could be argued with equal force that the attitude of hostility found amongst the officers he researched was a selective perception and reconstruction of a diversity of experience, rather than a response to an objective situation. Westley's officers sustained their own definition of policing and the public they policed on the basis of a highly selective perception of their work, themselves and the social context within which it was performed.

We have also argued that the evidence Skolnick uses to establish his thesis that the police respond to conflict between the demands of law and those of order indicates officers' selective perception of the characteristics of police work. Many of his officers rated a dangerous aspect of police work more highly than a peaceful one and did this, despite their expressed concern about the dangerousness of 'symbolic assailants' and the territory they patrolled.

These classic American studies, together with other research we have

taken into consideration, led us to the British research on the police. A review of this literature also indicated that lower patrolling ranks construct and secure their definition and practice of police work within a framework of external constraints. Having established this apparently fundamental feature of urban police work, we have verified many of Dr Maureen Cain's research findings concerned with the manner in which lower ranks work, documented over a decade ago. We have placed these findings within a new setting of police work and, using new evidence, documented how values and actions of the occupational culture pervade many important areas of police work she was unable to research.

All the characteristics of secrecy, interdependency, action, hedonism and an arrest focus have been identified. Cain's description and analysis, and, indeed, that of the sociology of police work itself, has been extended to consider the meaning and structure of space and time, techniques of control used both within the station and on the streets, the use of physical force and 'verballing' by patrolling and other officers, and the dominance of arrest work. Importantly, we have argued that these are interrelated aspects of police work, their use in routine patrol work being firmly moulded by knowledge found in the occupational culture. The meaning and structure of space within the police station has been documented and analysed to link it to the use of physical force. The analysis of time related that basic aspect of our experience of the social world to techniques of control and the 'figures' emphasis of policing. The manner in which the population was typified concerned the capacity of various groups to constrain police action or offer the opportunity for the exploitation of 'trouble' or hedonism. My data and analysis of the content and relations between these aspects of the occupational culture advances the sociology of police work into previously unresearched areas.

Description of these various aspects of police work has been analysed from the perspective of Schutzian phenomenology. This analytical framework has permitted us to distinguish primary and secondary relevancies of police work, ordering various strata of meaning in terms of their centrality to the task of policing as it is defined

by lower ranks. It has therefore been possible to identify and criticise the 'one-dimensional' portrayal of urban policing found in American studies - the 'Flatland perspective', as Rock has called it. We have also outlined a highly contextual understanding of policing exhibited, for example, in Rubinstein's research. This too was criticised for its lack of attention to central and more peripheral aspects of policing.

Employing this topographical schema, we established the primary reality or relevancy of policing - 'disorder begging chaos' - and related other more peripheral or secondary relevancies to this inviolable primary perception of the social world. Such a theoretical framework has permitted the analysis of ethnographic data to strengthen the general argument that the occupational culture of urban policing is a pervasive determinant of police action. The analysis of space and time, both basic categories in which we organise the social world, has indicated that the occupational culture is of relevance to these most fundamental aspects of the 'life-world'

This is not to argue that all of Hilton's officers assented to the values and strategies of action we have presented in our analysis. Criticisms of patrolling officers were made by Home Beat Constables. During the discussion of the use of physical force and 'verballing' we noted how officers who refused to use these strategies or exceeded their normal use were tolerated by their colleagues. The description and analysis of urban policing presented in this thesis represents the model of police work forming the basis of 'normal policing', to which all variations are referred and compared. Variations in style of policing have been documented by Chatterton in England and Muir in America; these are based on specialism within the police service, rank and personal morality¹³. However, such variations, at Hilton at least, were judged from the perspective of normal policing - that is to say the model of 'practical policing' we have outlined.

The occupational culture of urban policing is not a basic resource of knowledge which harmonises the various practices of patrolling ranks. We have noted variations of style and morality; further, the

'practical professionalism' of the lower ranks vies with the constraints of law and police policy. Tension as well as harmony represents the context of urban police work. Silverman's definition of an organisation as a series of sometimes conflicting, sometimes harmonious series of 'in-order-to motives' is clearly pertinent to this situation.

Silverman's perspective could have prompted the adoption of a rule-based model of the police organisation like that employed by Michael Chatterton in his research. Chatterton's work was strongly influenced by Egon Bittner's theoretical discussions on the sociology of organisations. My ethnography differs from Chatterton's in that my understanding of the occupational culture places emphasis on the notion of 'rationality' rather than rule. The major point to be made is that Chatterton does not demonstrate how rules of policing are related to each other within the 'rationality' or 'world-view' of an urban police officer¹⁴. The concept of rationality denotes a framework within which rules and their use in the practice of policing are ordered. 'Rationalities' frame values and action, they relate what might seem to be discreet aspects of the occupational culture and other structural constraints.

It could be argued that Chatterton's understanding of 'rule' begs the broader perspective suggested. If, as he argues, rules of policing should be understood in their context of action, his analysis requires a statement of a rule and detailed evidence of its use in action, its context. Consideration of the context of a rule leads from one aspect of the occupational culture to another. For example, from the use of physical force in the questioning process to police typifications of prisoners and the possibility that a solicitor may wish to intervene in the questioning process, to figures of charge and arrest and, regressively, to the primary reality of 'chaos begging control'. We are therefore led from a 'rule' to its place within a 'rationality'. This understanding of the relations between various features of the occupational culture permits a more comprehensive analysis of policing than that afforded by the rule-based model of an organisation and, therefore, Chatterton's research.

Peter Manning's research, summarized in his 'Policework', is also of relevance here. The theory of dramatism has been utilised at various points of this thesis, for example, in the discussion of the management of space within the station. Further, the notion of police work as 'teamwork', which Manning also emphasises, has proved to be exceedingly relevant when discussing the use of physical force and 'verballing' and, more broadly, how the occupational culture is constructed and maintained. Manning's work is largely theoretical and my ethnography of Hilton sub-division has added empirical detail to these theoretical points. The inclusion of supervisory ranks within the structure of a team and evidence of how team discipline is secured in the course of routine police work is of particular importance. We have established that supervisory officers facilitated the practices of lower ranks, though their recognition and acceptance was frequently shielded by their use of obscure and evasive language to recall and evaluate particular incidents, deliberate absence or removal from the scene of improper conduct or, less frequently, by direct assent¹⁵. Other data have illustrated how officers use police vehicles in a dramatic fashion to control territory and persons and sustain the action orientation of policing¹⁶. These data add further empirical content to Manning's theoretical framework.

However, because his analysis lacks empirical content, being heavily reliant on the relevance of his theoretical base, Manning's understanding of policing as a symbolic activity is over-simplified. First, symbolism and instrumentalism cannot be distinguished with the ease Manning supposes. We noted this point in our discussion of professional policing and it is pertinent to data on the manner in which lower ranks practice police work. For example, we have documented a number of highly symbolic techniques of control employed when making an arrest and during the subsequent process of investigation. However, the instrumental and material reference point of these symbols is not just police authority but also the securing of a confession of guilt. We have also noted that arrests were made with symbolic and dramatic measure; their material reference point was the increase of wages paid for overtime incurred by attendance at a court hearing. In turn, arrests made by the use of dramatic and symbolic techniques

and for the instrumental end of extra wages, were later transferred into the symbolic measure of effective policing, that is, figures of arrest and charge. These data indicate that symbolism and instrumentalism cannot be separated with ease.

Secondly, symbols are connotative and denotative. This point is related to another concerning the inter-relationship between various aspects of the occupational culture and their relevancies to primary and secondary features of police work. For example, an arrest may symbolise police authority and control throughout Hilton sub-division and beyond - it is connotative. The same symbolic activity can also be denotative, related to the meaning of 'blacks', the education or punishment of an offender or some other secondary aspect of policing. Manning's analysis does not encompass this important use of symbols in routine police work.

A further and final aspect of Manning's work shared in this thesis is his use of the theory of 'the social construction of reality'. Manning places particular importance on ritualistic activity as a means of constructing and maintaining the structure of policing. Ritual is not defined by Manning and we have noted that the evidence used to argue his case is highly suspect¹⁷. We were not able to identify any behaviour at Hilton approximating to what anthropologists and sociologists of religion have traditionally defined as ritualistic action. However, this does not detract from the thesis that police work is a social construction and one of the important features of my research is a documentation and analysis of how policing is constructed and maintained in the course of routine work.

The occupational culture provided a source of knowledge to orient police action at Hilton and it was also sustained by that same action. For example, we have noted that the emphasis on figures of arrest and charge provided verification to officers that they made some impact on disorderliness occurring in their area. Despite that effect, other data indicate that the figures of arrest and charge also reinforce and maintain the notion that the world is a disorderly place and will remain so whatever the extent of police activity.

Similarly, we have documented how officers considered periods of time when the whole of the sub-division was quiet and orderly to be a setting where impending disorder and chaos could be discerned. These selective perceptions of the social world were part of knowledge lodged in the occupational culture. However, at the same time, they only constituted that culture when continually confirmed by officers. This is what we mean by the social construction of police work.

Other evidence of this point has been presented. Car chases which appear to have been forced on the driver of a suspect vehicle have been identified; officers regarded these chases as 'real'. We have noted how the technology of Unit Beat Policing was used to sustain the notion that policing is an action-oriented occupation; physical force was used to this same end. Officers argued that 'verbals' were a necessary, if regrettable aspect of effective policing, so sustaining the secrecy and illegality of their routine work. Particular groups within the population policed were typified in a manner which managed the constraints they could impose on the practice of routine policing, permitting that routine work to continue. Finally, we have documented how narrative and humour mediated tension between the occupational culture and other definitions of police work which could constrain and prevent rank-and-file action. Throughout the thesis, the content of the occupational culture and its maintenance by a selective discrimination of experience and the adaptation of legal and organisational directives has been analysed. Such an analysis has advanced the sociology of police work into new areas.

This analysis of the social construction of police work might mistakenly suggest that the occupational culture is unchanging. We have noted that the features of the occupational culture Cain noted have remained, we also extended her analysis. Indeed, it has been argued that many features of the occupational culture she identified have been strengthened within the context of Unit Beat Policing. Other features, 'easing' for example, have diminished in importance. This evidence suggests that new policies - here, the policies of professional policing - effect change in the occupational culture. That change is a process of remoulding and adaptation to the

constraints of policy and law. The core of the occupational culture is retained but innovative features also develop. These secondary features are eventually realised as novel elements of the 'commonsense of police work'.

Finally, this thesis has emphasised that an adequate sociology of police work must be capable of documenting the meanings of action and do so within an organisational context. We take issue with Maureen Cain's recent argument that sufficient research material exists to deal with, as she puts it, 'fundamental issues, with the chemical processes which make the cake (of policing) possible at all'¹⁸. We dissent from her view that research carried out at the organisational level of analysis deals with, again as she puts it, 'the icing on the cake'. Apart from the fact that crucial areas of police work, some analysed in this thesis, were totally unresearched when she made these remarks, we find that the American studies on which she must rely for her argument are very difficult to relate to the British context and less than secure when subjected to critical analysis.

The fundamental issues Cain refers to are 'what class, group or institution does in fact "sustain" the police', for these, she argues, are related to 'the processes which make policing possible'. At particular points in this thesis recognition has been given to broader social structural factors which constrain police work - for example, the power of the legal profession and the relative powerlessness of blacks has been noted. Further research might, though not without extreme difficulty, concentrate on an analysis of the relationship between the Home Office and senior officers in the negotiation of legal policy. Recent research by Doreen McBarnet has begun to document the freedom afforded police by 'case stated' and the rule-of-law itself¹⁹. This type of research leads to the central issue advocated by Cain. While the constraining influence of the law and other institutions of the state are not denied, the assimilation, accommodation and obliteration of these constraints at various levels and by various ranks of the police organisation is not an issue of secondary importance. This point is particularly

pertinent when we consider the evidence of how policing is constructed and sustained by the lower ranks. The manner in which lower ranked officers construct, sustain and continue their practice of policing would seem to be one of the important 'processes which make the cake (of policing) possible at all'. Research at this level of the police organisation is utterly crucial.

Cain's arguments are particularly noteworthy because they represent a general trend in the sociology of deviance and social control which was identified at the beginning of this thesis - the development of a 'New Criminology' based in Marxist theory. My research does not reject the essential place of sociological theory within an ethnographic study - that much should be clear. Nevertheless, throughout, an attempt has been made to sustain a tentative and cautious relationship between theory and ethnographic data. The tendency in sociological research to trivialise description of the social world has tended to over-value and inflate the place of theory. On the basis of the descriptive and analytical research reported here, it is argued that inductive research informed by rich ethnographic evidence represents an important way forward to the construction of a theoretical understanding of police work. Such a scheme enables the phenomenalism and essentialism of police work - the processes which make policing possible - explicable and verifiable²⁰. My ethnography of the policing of Hilton sub-division assists that development.

Notes and references

- 1 Manning, P.K. (1977) Police work: the social organization of policing, Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, chapters 3 and 4, and Miller, W.R. (1973) Cops and bobbies, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press.
- 2 Manning prefers the term 'Policing in Anglo-American Societies'. However, police work in both societies is considered under this single title.
- 3 For a consideration of this point, see Chibnall, S. (1979) 'The metropolitan police and the news media' in S. Holdaway (ed) The British police: 135-149, London: Edward Arnold.
- 4 See chapter 2.

- 5 See chapters 1 and 4 particularly.
- 6 See chapter 6.
- 7 Chapter 2.
- 8 Skolnick, J.H. (1966) Justice without trial, New York: Wiley, pp.238-9.
- 9 For example, in his autobiography, the Chief Officer of Hilton's force details his resistance to Home Office policy concerned with the Police Act 1976. See Mark, R. (1979) In the office of constable, London: Fontana/Collins, pp.216-7.
- 10 The exception to this point is the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Chief Constable, John Alderson. See Alderson, J. (1979) Policing freedom, Plymouth: Macdonald and Evans.
- 11 See pp.
- 12 See chapter 1.
- 13 Chatterton, M.R. (1975) Organisational relationships and processes in police work: a case study of urban policing, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Manchester, and Muir, W.K. (1977) Police: streetcorner politicians, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press.
- 14 'World view' is a concept used by Redfield, R. (1955) The little community, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press. However, I place more emphasis on the analysis of subjective attitudes than Redford. 'Rationality' is taken from Silverman, D. (1970) The theory of organisations, London: Heinemann.
- 15 See particularly chapters 5 and 8.
- 16 See chapter 4.
- 17 See chapter 9.
- 18 See chapter 1 and Cain, M. (1979) 'Trends in the sociology of police work', Internat. J. of the Sociol. of Law, 7: 143-167.
- 19 McBarnet, D.J. (1979) 'Arrest: the legal context of policing', in S. Holdaway (ed), op.cit., 24-40.
- 20 See Rock, P. (1973) 'Phenomenalism and essentialism in deviancy theory', Sociology, 7 (1): 12-129.

APPENDIX 1

During the period of research, 1973-1975, extensive housing redevelopment was taking place on Hilton sub-division. Rows of terraced houses had been demolished or boarded up to make way for council-house and flat dwellings. Although large areas of space were given over to building development, the sub-division was by no means under-populated. Assessment of the total population has proved to be a notoriously difficult task. However, a figure of 53,000 represents a reasonable estimate. About 20% of this figure were New Commonwealth immigrants, Cypriot and Irish people comprising about a further third of the population.

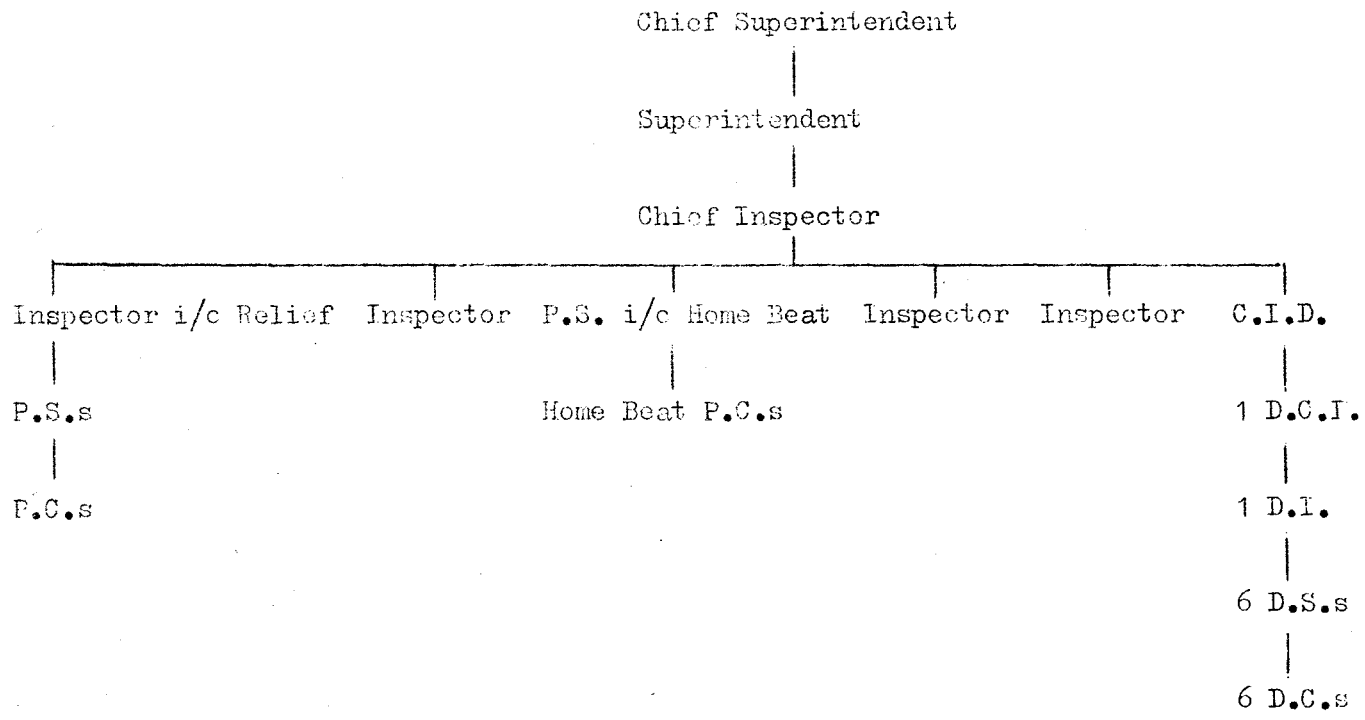
In 1971 housing conditions in the borough were described as the worst in the city. Only about 44.4% of households had exclusive access to the three basic amenities of hot water, bath and inside lavatory, compared with 51% in the borough as a whole.

A quarter of all heads of households were in the unskilled manual category and a fifth in the semi-skilled/personal service class. Wage levels can be assumed to be low and one central area of the sub-division was assessed to have one family in six headed by a single parent and 9% of families had four or more children.

Hilton, then, was an inner city area, exhibiting all the symptoms of deprivation. Play areas were sparse, the courtyards of large tenement flat blocks and the streets served as places for play. Dotted around the sub-division, voluntary action groups concerned with various social issues were in evidence.

Two major trunk roads to the city severed the sub-division, creating large and constant volumes of heavy traffic and noise. Small shops lined these roads, as did small factories, many making cheap clothing. One medium-sized shopping centre bordered part of a major route.

Hilton sub-division policed the whole of this area. The following diagram represents the command and rank structure of the police sub-division.



APPENDIX 2

'AN INSIDE JOB' - A CASE STUDY OF COVERT RESEARCH OF THE POLICE

In August 1975, after eleven years' service, I resigned from the British police. Departure was bound to be difficult, despite my looking forward to new work as a university lecturer. This chapter is concerned with the methodology of my covert research; work conducted in the course of employment as a Police Sergeant in a busy, urban police sub-division. First, the setting of the research will be explained, including the assumptions I brought to it. After this the methods used in the project, from access to publication, will be discussed. Particular reference will be made to ethical questions raised in the fieldwork situation and now, some four years after leaving the police service.

Ethics and fieldwork - some assumptions

I worked as a Constable for five years before secondment to Lancaster University. Study for 'A' level examinations and, later, undergraduate work in sociology combined with my commitment to Christian Social Ethics and, not unimportantly, marriage to a graduate in social science to spur my desire to understand the institution I had joined from secondary school and the nature of the social structure of which it was a part. Although the conceptualisation of many highly questionable police practices as 'the occupational culture of policing' was analytically helpful, my moral distaste for such practices was not dulled.

From an early stage, I learned two things about sociology. First, it is not a final arbiter in ethical decision making. Secondly, a direct fit between social policy and theoretical inference drawn from sociological research is rare. These statements might seem blindingly obvious - yet in much of our discipline a background of utopian simplicity lies behind a foreground of sociological complexity. However, totally 'value-free' sociology is a myth. I am aware that, if academic curiosity was a driving force behind my research, so that

curiosity was also tempered by moral concern to weigh police practice and, in the longer term, change it. The point is whether ethics are the tail that wags the researching dog; in participant observation, an issue decided contextually¹.

When I returned to my force from university I had ideas of beginning a research project but also felt some measure of commitment to the police service, for they seconded me to study and shared some part in the First Class degree I was awarded. I also thought that they would be interested in the skills I acquired during the course of my studies. In fact, the three senior officers of the division in which I was to work were uninterested in such matters; indeed, at initial interviews on return from university, it was clear that they knew virtually nothing of my background. They told me that there would be no time for 'research' and I should 'get into policing again'. For example, the officer in charge of my sub-division did not know I was joining his staff until he received a call from the divisional office telling him I was on the way to his station by car from the Chief Officer. He greeted me: '... the last thing I want is men with beards. I spend half my time telling men to get their hair cut', continuing, 'You will have no time for research, we have to get on with policing the ground and haven't time for experiments. What I want is people who can lead men'.

I left for my station feeling intense frustration, hurt and not a little anger. Despite having read numerous articles on the method of participant observation, not least, ways of gaining access to research, I found myself torn between opportunities for research and commitment to the police service. But such a beginning was parabolic; ethical decision-making is rarely a dispassionate, wholly objective enterprise.

It took some time to realise the pertinence of the senior officer's remarks that I should 'get into policing again', for they were urging me to rediscover the 'common-sense' of police work, the very theme of my research. This was also highly relevant to developments in published research on the police, and more generally the sociology

of deviance and social control. At Lancaster I made particular study of symbolic interactionism and Schutz's social phenomenology, together with the associated method of participant observation. My understanding of deviance and social control was greatly influenced by the 'labelling perspective', agreeing with Park's dictum - at that time in theory if not practice - that the sociologist 'should get the seat of his pants dirty with real research'².

In 1973, the year I rejoined my force, two strands of thought dominated discussions of deviance and social control. On the one hand a conflict theory of deviance, greatly influenced by Marxism, offered a placing of the labelling process within a social structural framework³. On the other hand, many were concerned with the issues raised by phenomenology and ethnomethodology, using the rule based character of social life as a starting point of analysis. Despite their potential for using sensitive fieldwork methods, both perspectives were dominated by voluminous theoretical discourse which rarely pitted itself against data from conversation, observation or any source other than armchair debate. As far as work on the police was concerned, it seemed that the use of participant observation to gather some empirical evidence was a basic and necessary feature if either of these dominant strands were to prove their relevance.

Research on the police led me to the same conclusion. Banton's pioneering study, conducted mainly by interview but also involving observation, had been published for some time. Maureen Cain's doctoral thesis, based on some of Banton's conclusions, was published in 1973. It indicated the defensiveness, interdependency, action orientation and virtual illegality of some central aspects of policing by the lower ranks of an inner city area. It was also apparent from Cain's report that, although researched several years before publication, her findings were highly pertinent to contemporary policing. While it was obvious that Cain had penetrated behind the 'front' of policing, more research of the occupational culture was required and, in order to do that, it would be necessary to document the handling of suspects in the charge room, their detention in the station, a far greater number of arrests and other 'crime-oriented' incidents than Cain had

observed. I was also less than satisfied with a remark that Cain had spent a good deal of time cooking meals for the officers in their canteen and resting in parked vehicles - it crossed my mind that some management of the researcher might have been going on⁴.

Although separated by a different structural context, American research also demonstrated the importance of attempting to document policing in practice. Westley had researched the use of violence by an American force and Skolnick the discretionary powers of a specialist vice squad. Virtually all the published research indicated that the legal framework of policing shielded a rather different practice and that it was the lower ranks who had the organisational power to work in the way they thought fit. I found myself in a situation where I could probe the occupational culture in a unique manner, adding to this body of knowledge⁵.

Two further points were important. First, a Chief Officer of my force interviewed me and suggested that I keep a diary which would provide a focus of interest during my routine work. I agreed with him but did not ask how that diary might be used. Secondly, after I registered as a self-financed, part-time graduate student at a major university, my supervisor supported my ideas of a covert project but warned me strongly that the police, along with the Roman Priesthood, were two occupations which, when studied by sociologists who have more than an intellectual curiosity in them, present sharp ethical problems.

I have now, so to speak, presented a case study in ethical decision making, articulating a number of personal moral values, the relevance of sociological research on the police, preferences in theory and social research methods and other information to aid the decision of what form my research should take. Six major options were open to me:

- A Seek the permission of the Chief Officer to research, giving full details of method and intention.
- B Seek permission as above, so phrasing the research description that it disguised my real intentions.

- C Seek permission of lower ranks, later requesting more formal acceptance from senior officers.
- D Do no research.
- E Resign from the police service.
- F Carry out covert research.

I chose the final option without much difficulty. From the available evidence, it seemed the only realistic option; alternatives were unrealistic or contained an element of the unethical which bore similarity to covert observation. I believe that my senior officers would have either refused permission to research or obstructed me. Option B is as dishonest a strategy as covert research, if the latter is thought dishonest. For example, if I were a Marxist and wanted to research the police and declared my Marxism I know that I would be denied research access; yet to 'front' myself in a different research guise is surely dishonest. Option C could not have been managed. D denies the relevance of my studies and option E would have been its logical progression - yet I felt an obligation to return to the police who had financed my study.

I chose covert research. My access to the police was not simply for the purpose of research, for I was and had been a police officer for a considerable number of years. Unlike Festinger, Humphries, Loftland or Rosenbaum, I was legally employed by the police, without funding from a research-oriented organisation and already very familiar with the institution I was rejoining⁶. Any deception involved at this early stage of access was moderated; indeed, I would argue that my course of action was the only viable one.

Further factors influenced and strengthened my decision. As a legally empowered police officer I was the member of a powerful institution of our society and I would, though not exclusively, deal with the less powerful. The argument that all individuals have a right to privacy, that is to say freedom from observation, investigation and subsequent publication based on the investigation is strong but it should be qualified when applied to the police.

Research and my previous experience of the police demonstrated the power of the lower ranks, not least their resistance to external control of their work. Any effective research strategy would have to pierce that protective shield if it was to be successful. That much is true of research on many organisations; however, the necessity of covert research is strengthened by the central and powerful situation of the police within our social structure. The police are said to be accountable to the rule of law, a constitutional feature which restricts their right to privacy, but which they neutralise by the maintenance of a protective occupational culture. When such an institution is highly secretive and protective its members restrict any right to privacy they already have. It is crucial that they are researched⁷.

It might be argued that senior police officers could use management techniques to change the practices found amongst lower ranks. Again, research and my own experience confirmed that in the police managerial control is minimal and it would be highly restrictive to place one's data in the hands of senior officers, believing that they could alter the practice of policing by the lower ranks. In these circumstances all ranks in the police restrict their right to privacy and the opportunity to deal with their own affairs. The covert researcher of the police has to be reminded that he is working within an extremely powerful organisation which requires its public and private practice to be revealed on the basis of first hand observation. In part, therefore, my covert observation was justified by an assessment of the power of the police within British society and their demonstrably secretive character.

This, however, is not to argue that covert research is ethical when conducted on so-called 'powerful groups' and unethical when the sociologist acts as 'zoo-keeper' of the powerless. Indeed, when one researches the police, data on the less powerful in our society, and not all of it entirely complimentary, is inevitably collected. For example, there were occasions when black youths falsely accused me of using violence against them. Research of less powerful groups by covert means can suggest rebuttal of 'commonsense' claims of their

behaviour. The major point is that an ethical decision should consciously take all the available evidence into account, explore all options and, as far as possible, the likely effects of research on the parties involved. We should remember Roth's point that the final objectives of research are rarely known at an early stage but, nevertheless, the onus is on the researching sociologist to demonstrate why and how they took the decision to research covertly.

Into research - defining the limits

Having made the decision in principle to conduct covert research, I had to face its practical implications. This was none the easier for my being a police sergeant, holding all the legal powers of that office as well as being responsible for the supervision of a large number of officers who would be working according to the rules of the occupational culture. I was not a sociology lecturer masquerading as a schizophrenic, alcoholic, millenarianist, pentecostalist or factory worker; I actually was a police officer who had no idea of when or if he would leave the field setting for other work. That, as will be seen, was the cause of considerable personal stress.

Although my research was the first to be conducted by a serving police officer in Britain, four American studies have been published by sociologists who joined the police: Richard Harris, George Kirkham, Jonathan Rubinstein and John Van Maanen. Harris researched a training school, Rubinstein was trained as a police officer but conducted his research as an unarmed civilian observer, as did Van Maanen. Only Kirkham entered training school and then acted as a police reservist, mainly to check his criticisms of the police against what he considered to be the reality. Neither Harris nor Rubinstein offer full discussion of their problems of observing police work. Van Maanen does give a comprehensive account of his research methods and states that he did not document incidents where the law was broken. However, he does not write of how he actually handled ethical problems. It is left to Kirkham, funded to write by 'Americans for Effective Law Enforcement Inc.', to explain:

'Once quick to drop critical barbs (about the police)
I now became extremely sensitive about such remarks -

and several times became engaged in heated arguments over them.'

In fact, although what Kirkham describes as central to policing could be an object lesson for academic criticism, he could equally have recalled his lectures on methodology - a better example of 'going native' could not be found. We are left totally unaware of Kirkham's limits of tolerance in ethical decision-making.⁸

Unlike experimental, questionnaire and other controlled methods, covert research is highly unpredictable; those who are being researched control the situation as much as the researcher. When the context of the research is the police, whose job is highly unpredictable and various, none the less so when the researcher is a serving police officer, the definition of limits of ethical tolerance is a highly significant matter. Codes like those recently adopted by the British Psychological Association deal with predictable and planned research, conditions which are not present in fieldwork - indeed, their absence is the very reason for naturalistic methods to be chosen.

As I began police duty I asked myself what I would do if, as happened to William Westley, a police officer hit a suspect in my presence? What would happen if, as happened to Skolnick, highly questionable techniques of securing an arrest came to my knowledge? These sociologists had to cope with such ethical issues but they were not police officers also fulfilling supervisory responsibilities.

I soon discovered that contemplating ethical problems which might arise spoiled my ability to document with detail. However, the police unknowingly provided me with a pilot study where I was able to learn how to handle such issues - or so I thought - before being transferred to another station and a substantive research project. My Chief Officer posted me to a small station where, with two other sergeants, I shared charge of about twelve constables. During my first week's duty I was station officer. A man was arrested for driving whilst unfit through drink and I dealt with the charge. He was exceedingly uncooperative and I suspected that sooner or later

he would be hit by a police officer; I took firm control of the situation. For a brief period the prisoner was alone with me, he standing and I sitting on opposite sides of a desk. Suddenly, he dashed for the door and, finding it incorrectly unlocked, ran for the street. I shouted and chased, catching him at the entrance to the station. As I brought him back other officers arrived. The rules of the occupational culture direct that such a negation of police control should be redressed with physical contact. I did not offer that contact and my colleagues saw that I did not. In this way I defined a limit of tolerance but only the most cursory of fieldwork notes were recorded.

Three nights later I dealt with a man who had threatened his wife with a pistol. He pleaded his innocence and a police officer kicked him on the backside, not with excessive force but just to remind him that his explanation was not accepted. I recorded this incident and omitted that the prisoner had been kicked; it was too sensitive an issue for me to accept.

These situations continued. I recorded in my diary:

It is still a problem working with another police officer who has very different ideas about civil liberties - patrolling with Sergeant X, in this case. Every time we stopped someone I had to manage a situation in which the possibilities of corners being cut were real. This causes a strain for the sociological observer.

That impersonal sociological observer was me and I had to realise that I was actually involved in grappling with these difficult ethical issues.

I also soon learnt that I was gaining access to and recording very private and, I do not use the word lightly, precious moments of people's lives. For example, I was called by two constables - as a result of their shock rather than for any other reason - to deal with the sudden death of a young baby. The mother was utterly distraught, hysterical with grief and she made some remarks about her marriage. Was I to record these remarks? No.

I remember wrapping the baby in a blanket and holding it in my arms

as, with two silent colleagues, I was driven to the mortuary. The attendant took the child and in a routine fashion 'placed' it into refrigeration. A colleague later said that he felt like 'putting one on the attendant for the way he treated the child'. I later classified the conversations about this incident in the terse category of jokes and stories, for it proved to be the genesis of an idea about the use of humour to manage the personal stress of police work. I should also add that incidents like this one reminded me of the demanding work required of the police and their humanity. Here, I take Kirkham's point as something the researcher needs to be reminded of.

During these first two months and thereafter I found that I was accumulating considerable amounts of data but could not make much sense of them. My academic supervisor was supportive and encouraging but I was very dissatisfied with my situation and applied for an academic job which, thankfully, I did not get. One of my former lecturers wrote to me saying, 'It's easier to sustain the effort when you know that your sentence is to end'. He also added that research was 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration. Indeed, it was, and I wanted an end to my sentence.

Much of my frustration was vented on the senior officers who were reporting on my progress and suitability for substantive promotion to Sergeant. I had demonstrated my values to the constables through my own example and when tea mugs belonging to the shift were changed we were presented with colours to suit our personality; mine was yellow. 'Why yellow?' I asked naively. 'Because you're scared'. This designation did not exclude me from hearing about others' work but it did exclude me from dealing with some of their work.

If the constables thought I was 'yellow', senior officers found me truculent and one reported that he doubted if my attitudes suited the police service. I later complained of his insensitivity to another senior officer. He put it that, 'You might disagree with Mr —, but do you disagree with 99% of the officers at the station?' We talked, and he later explained,

'There are two important things about police work. First, policemen must be willing to cut corners or else they would never get their job done. Secondly, it's because policemen have been happy to gild the lily that the law has been administered in this country'.

He was absolutely correct. I did disagree with him and he knew so.

A new officer soon commanded the division and I was transferred to another station. A colleague I had worked with told me I should have moulded my attitudes to suit my senior officers. Another thought my transfer was because I had not made enough arrests. However, I was posted to a larger station and placed under the supervision of an Inspector, working with three other sergeants and about twenty P.C.s. I saw this as an opportunity to build another research project and knew something of what was in store. The constables at this station worked in the same manner as those at my previous station. Furthermore, my feelings of frustration were now much tempered.

I was keen to tell my new colleagues of my opinions about the use of force, the manner in which evidence is used, the handling of suspects in the police station, and so on. This was done by engaging them in conversation about a particular issue or job they were dealing with, which I would then focus on as a means of making my views known. For example, one of the sergeants on my shift was known to use 'unorthodox techniques' when questioning suspects. I discussed this with him and his remarks conveyed a full description of what he was not willing to do, citing particular examples. This proved to be an exceedingly useful description because I was able to compare it with his subsequent behaviour and that of others. Fortunately, he enjoyed discussing issues and drew on my opinions about sociology. Unknowingly, he became a major 'informant' who was always happy to provide detail of what was happening to particular officers, in particular incidents, and so on.

I had defined my limits of tolerance, my immediate colleagues did not exclude me from information of their actions and I was able to keep on the fringes of incidents which I found questionable. It

was noticeable that P.C.s who brought a 'dodgy job' into the charge room would, if they had a choice, ask a colleague to deal with it; sergeants would also intervene and almost protect me if they thought that I would spoil or misunderstand a procedure they wished to control. They never intervened directly but there was this sense in which they protected me and, as they would see it, their subordinates who knew how they would like investigations to be conducted. The senior officers were pleased with my work as a sergeant, negating previous reports made on me but realising that I held rather different views than their own.

Stress - the life-blood of participant observation

In his account of research in 'Cornerville', William Whyte writes,

'I also had to learn that the field worker cannot afford to think only of learning to live with others in the field. He has to continue living with himself'⁹.

Ethical questions raised by covert research create a situation of stress within which the sociologist has to live with himself.

As a serving police officer I worked alongside others who did not share my assumptions and values, meaning that I was constantly hearing about and occasionally seeing practices which were personally offensive to me. Such, it might be said, is the nature of a nasty world; I had some direct responsibility for these matters for I was, I am again reminded, employed as a police officer. Sometimes stress caused by ethical problems caused me to avoid a particular situation. For example, following a television documentary about black youth, officers decided to supervise a local youth club as its members went home. Simply listening to the whole relief, including supervisory staff, discussing the situation so troubled me that I left the station in my patrol car and remained on patrol, unobtainable until I knew that I would not have to deal with any matter arising from their work. In fact, other duties prevented their suggested action.

Stress was also generated because colleagues did not always respect limits of tolerance. An officer might not be familiar with my

expectations of conduct in the charge room; he might lose his temper with a suspect, or use legitimate force on a person but exceed what I considered to be the proper limits of that force when being assisted by me. Such situations did arise and were dealt with by advice, admonition and so on. They were stressful.

Thirdly, and linked to the previous point, establishing a covert research role involves a constant process of self-reflection. Gold and others encourage us to consider a continuum with overt and covert research at either end¹⁰. In my research a constant triadic dialogue took place; that dialogue was a balancing of personal ethical limits with the aims of sociological research and my duty as a police officer. There were occasions when I forgot that I was researching. Indeed, I found that it was necessary actually to state my research interest to myself as I began my work each day. There were times when my administrative duties were spoiled because I was involved in remembering the minutiae of police action. Covert research involves a constant heightening of sensitivity to the possibilities of recording conversation, action or whatever - such activity is exceedingly demanding and can, after a time, become stressful.

There were other times when I 'went native' but when this happened I was often pulled back by a particularly distasteful event. I recorded one such moment after colleagues had been discussing race relations.

I reacted badly to the conversation yesterday and want nothing to do with such sentiments. I remember saying to myself, "Underneath, these policemen are ruthless and racist". I seem to have slipped into the mould easily during the last couple of weeks and wonder if I should have been so easy with my feelings. The balance of participant observation is one which can so easily be submerged and forgotten. Now it has been brought before me in glaring lights and all the old issues of ethics, when to speak out, how involved one should get, whose perspective one takes on, loom large.

Fourthly, there is the stress of 'being found out'. It has been argued that we all present 'masks' in the context of relationships with others. Covert research is merely making explicit what is present in all that we do¹¹. This seems to overstress the place of 'fronts' and the normalcy of secrecy and deception in relationships, which

should be sharply contrasted with the pervasive tension between the perception one has of oneself as researcher and, in my case, as a police officer.

I have a good memory for detail - the police taught me that. Each day I used an official form which any officer might carry in the station and used it to jot down my own shorthand notes. I kept this paper in the back pocket of my trousers and developed the habit of checking to see if it was secure. If I had to leave the station office or charge room to secure privacy for my shorthand, I was always listening for approaching footsteps.

One afternoon, while working in plain clothes, I got on a bus and wrote some notes. I looked across the aisle and noticed the night duty telephonist sitting next to me.

On another occasion while at the station I arranged a tutorial with my supervisor over the telephone. When returning to the communications room a constable said to me, "Switch that tape recorder off, Sarge." I asked, "What are you on about?" "Oh, nothing." I do not know what was meant and never found out but his remark caused me considerable anxiety.

The stress of covert research might resemble an element of masking in personal relationships but it is closer to experiencing a relationship with a person who is highly conscious of their self image and thereby over-sensitive to 'unmasking'.

Finally, friendships with colleagues are formed. When conducting research on the police, publication of sensitive data could result in their careers being ruined, the taking of disciplinary action against them and worse. Although I did not allow this to restrict the data I gathered, it remained with other factors to increase the stress of the research situation.

When these conditions are added to the sheer physical effort involved in shift work, with few days' leave each week, it should be obvious that the covert researcher can easily be overburdened by the task of policing, let alone the completion of demanding research. Illness through stress is documented as a regular feature of policing - the covert researcher will share in that aspect of policing.¹²

Stress in covert research cannot be avoided, it has to be managed to the advantage of the researcher. I used my situation to heighten my consciousness of what was going on around me, not least when potentially stressful incidents were likely to happen. For example, I was able to make a particular study of the police use of physical force, finding I could tolerate its use more satisfactorily by taking extremely detailed notes. This enabled me to check officers' attitudes against their action, while clarifying my own limits of tolerance.

Furthermore, as Bettelheim demonstrated in a far more extreme situation than my own, research can be a strategy for personal survival. After appointment to my lectureship at Sheffield, I was able to remain in the field for a further year. Knowing that I would be leaving for a base from which I could publish and, perhaps, also influence policy concerned with the police, I was able to understand my research as a means of making sense of my situation. We know from Bettelheim's publications that an indeterminate sentence in an extreme situation can, after a lengthy period, result in terrible mental distress. Yet the stress of that same situation can be used to the advantage of the researching sociologist, not least in enabling him to 'live with himself', as Whyte puts it¹³.

Validity and reliability

Criticisms of the unreliability of participant observer research are legion, economy of space prevents their full review here. However, the accuracy, validity and reliability of one's findings are of importance to ethics. Clearly, if a research method is shot through with error it is unsuitable for the documentation of any group of people. If the researcher is working alone, unable to hold research conferences with colleagues in the field and is, so to speak, an apprentice, the problems of reliability and representativeness are highly significant.

In contrast to the total research experience, recording data is an exceedingly mundane business. I worked within the general rules that

I should observe and record as much, even of the seemingly routine and insignificant, as was possible and as many officers in as many contexts as possible. A difficulty encountered early in my research was the apparent gap between my own rich experience of being a police officer and the flat, highly descriptive snapshots of that 'cine-film reality' within which I was living. In particular, it was difficult to record the often lengthy period between particular incidents. I had to learn to put that issue to one side as I documented all I could.

Despite this difficulty, participant observation is not an entirely random methodology. Published literature is useful to direct one's attention to particular topics and I found Maureen Cain's work exceedingly helpful because, although completed over a decade before my own work, it described a situation very similar to the one I found myself in. Yet, a number of officers told me that the force had changed during my period at university. I began by taking many of Cain's central concepts and developed themes from them. For example, having recognised that policing is a sporadic, essentially actionless job but, as Cain found, the lower ranks regarded it as highly action oriented, I documented how personnel constructed a world of action through the use of technology and other devices. This led me to a consideration of story and joke telling as a further means of sustaining the police world. In this way the 'mass of data' gathered as research rolled on.

Other factors are important. I spent two years in fieldwork which meant that I was not under pressure to gather data with a sense of urgency, ending up with a 'smash and grab' ethnography. Furthermore, documenting across time has enabled me to compare the attitudes and actions of individual and groups of officers in seemingly unconnected but, in subsequent analysis, interrelated events. Using a cross-indexed subject and individual officer index I am able to refer to the documented activities of each officer and those of others involved in the same or similar incidents, as well as evidence clustering around a particular theme, involving any number of officers on any number of occasions.

The use of a 'rhetorical question' became a most useful tool of analysis. If I was working on a particular theme I would test my interest by questioning a number of officers.

One Sunday night I was patrolling with a colleague when a call to a fight came over the radio. The location of the call was too far away and the incident too trivial for a Sergeant to attend but we drove towards the scene at high speed. I asked, "The only reason you drove like that was because you wanted to have a fast drive?" He replied, "Yes, well, it's a bit of fun, isn't it? It all makes a bit of excitement and gets rid of a headache".

This offered some verification of a theme I had been considering and I was able to continue developing it. Similar means were used throughout the research.

My academic supervisors were also very helpful because they were able to listen to my stumbling accounts of what I had found - more often than not, what I couldn't make any sense of - and suggested some lines of enquiry I might follow as well as encouraging the work. This helped me to clarify my ideas away from the immediate pressures of the field. It was therefore important to the validity of the research findings.

Knowing what colleagues think of you is not always pleasant but it is crucial to participant observation, for it permits the researcher to discriminate between reliable and unreliable details of evidence. This was fairly easy as far as senior officers were concerned because I was subject to routine probationary reports - although they understood my views to be different from their own, they thought I had proved myself an adequate Sergeant. Lower ranks would let some of their opinions be known in the course of work and usually in the form of a joke.

In response to two exceedingly conscientious British Transport policemen, a colleague remarked, 'Right couple of lawyers we've got out there. They're trying to decide who cautioned him before he was arrested. Must have a sociology degree from Lancaster'.

On another occasion a constable said to me, as he left the canteen, 'I'm going to get a spade now, Sarge'. He punched a fist in the palm of his hand.

These gave some indication of how to assess officers' remarks, together with verification from their attitudes and actions in other situations

and those of their colleagues.

On one occasion I used what Schutz called the 'member test of validity'¹⁴. I submitted an article on police/community relations to the Chief Officer for permission to publish but, without reason, he refused publication. I read some of the paper to colleagues, who disagreed with my statements that they did not find 'peace-keeping' aspects of police work important. But how one uses Schutz's test and assesses its applicability to any research setting is open to much questioning. However, I have had some exceedingly useful comments on the validity of my work from police officers engaged in extra-mural study. These officers have been from a different force from that where the research was carried out and have been most helpful in pointing to the applicability of my own ideas to another force area.

Finally, although I find Schutz's member test suspect, I rely upon my own membership of the police as relevant to the validity of my research findings. For example, after chasing a number of suspects who had committed a burglary, I returned home to my wife - I had been off duty, unloading shopping at the time I saw the suspects - raging at what I would do to them if I caught them. I was completely 'native', displaying all the attitudes of normal policing. In short, I experienced being a policeman and that was of use in realising the necessary empathy for participant observer research.

Into 'Civvie Street' - analysis and publication

Leaving the police - after eleven years' service - was comparatively easy but there was the nagging doubt in my mind that, if I published, those who had unknowingly cooperated in my research project could be hurt. Here, despite my criticisms of police action, I agree with Roy Wallis when he writes about his research on the Church of Scientology, 'It seemed to me that a sociologist owed his subjects an obligation not to cause them undeserved harm'¹⁵.

'Undeserved harm' is not easy to judge and the Official Secrets Act was partly designed to prevent such harm. However, as ludicrously

restricting as that Act is, I had no intention of submitting my data, containing countless examples of rule-breaking by police officers, to the Chief Officer. In this sense I was willing to protect those whom I had observed. Chief Officers of the Police are understandably proud of their ability to manage their force. However, my research, together with other work, demonstrates how the rhetoric of police professionalism embraced by these officers and the organisation of the police combine to prevent and, in some measure, shield lower ranks from effective management. If this was to be demonstrated in my research I had to circumvent the sanction of the Chief Officer, which is what I did.

All my publications have rendered the names and places of officers and location of incidents to anonymity. Suitable safeguards have been taken to protect the data itself. Again, this is to protect individual officers who need not be made an example for their indiscretion by the publication of research findings. This is not to deny their personal moral responsibility, neither is it to deny my own in this matter. However, I take the broader view that my research has relevance to the academic understanding of policing in Britain and, indeed, police policy in our society. I am therefore willing to submerge the moral responsibility of those involved in my research, in favour of a broader responsibility to influence change amongst the whole of the British Police.

These remarks might sound fanciful but I have found considerable interest in my research from the national media and policy-oriented research organisations. Retaining the anonymity of my subjects, I avoid publicity which will exploit the spectacular. For example, the publishers of my first article in an academic journal wanted to put a press release on it, which I refused¹⁶. Publication of another article in a policy oriented journal did stimulate interest, but that piece also managed to attract the imagination of sub-headline writers in the popular press¹⁷. Keeping such publicity to a minimum, I have also been able to use my research in conjunction with an independent research agency and given evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, using my data as the basis for that oral evidence. Furthermore,

I have acted as consultant and interviewee on a number of television and radio programmes, all concerned with police policy. I try to write to Members of Parliament offering assistance with questions they might be asking in the House. This type of work, alongside strictly academic publishing, is necessary if the moral responsibility of the researcher who has decided to submerge the culpability of those he has observed is to be taken seriously. I am certain that such responsibility is present in all research with implications for policy, it is particularly important in covert research on the police.

A more difficult matter of responsibility is found in relation to those who the police dealt with during the period of research and may have a grievance against them. I knew of no cases where my own evidence was sufficient to prove a complaint of illegality but any research on the police which pierces the gloss of police legality will have to cope with moral responsibility towards the offended. Obviously, romanticism should be avoided but, nevertheless, attempts to influence policy change are also carried out with such people in mind.

The impression may be given that I am only concerned with policy issues - this is not the case and my work cannot be interpreted as a vendetta against police policy. Damage done to the reputation of sociology has to be considered, for some members of that highly diverse group of practitioners object to covert research. It is difficult to know which particular group of sociologists one should take notice of, but if those who research the police are a pertinent reference group then I do not find criticism of my stance from them; neither do I find criticism of my methodology from editorial boards. Some could argue that my work will prevent further research on the police; it might prevent any further probing of the police world by me, but with the increased interest in police research I would not be surprised if Chief Officers denied my own findings and permitted further work by others to disprove my case. Any such research would have to consider the powerful masking of much police practice by lower ranks and find ways of penetrating those masks.

Final analysis

This account of my research leads to the time when I was awarded a sabbatical fellowship, enabling a final and complete analysis and write-up of my data. All the technical and ethical features of the work remained, but the immediate task became the ordering of a vast amount of data into a manageable form.

Obviously, lengthy sections of narrative taken from my field diary had to be subject to selection. I have already explained that I had an index concerned with individual officers, indicating every documented incident a particular officer was involved in. This index was cross-referenced with the cards of other officers also involved in each incident. Another, more used index was broken into conceptual categories of analysis, some taken from the researched literature on policing, other derived from my own interests and the accumulation of my data. This 'concept index' was cross-referenced with the 'officer index'.

Each card entry was referenced with a page and incident number corresponding to the relevant entry in my field diary. This meant it was a fairly easy, if time-consuming, task to collate data on one or more topics. For example, if I wished to collate all recorded incidents related to 'time', I located the relevant loose sheets from my diary. Once all the data on a particular theme - time, for example - were collated, it was necessary to read each item and make a preliminary note of the analytical points it suggested. This led to the sub-categorisation of concepts - speeding time up, slowing time down, the economy of arrests, and so on - and began to break down large amounts of data.

Although this method of analysis was successful for a time, I found that, when dealing with very large amounts of data, I was confused and overwhelmed by their sheer volume and complexity. The solution - found by trial and error - lay in the transcription of each relevant item from the field diary onto a separate sheet of paper. Each entry was then cut out and placed on one of a number of piles of data, each concerned with a sub-category. By organising the data in this

individualised form, I found it possible to read and analyse it into conceptual and sub-conceptual categories. I could sub-categorise and number an incident in terms of the order in which I would place it in a written chapter of the thesis. Once each incident, typed on a separate sheet of paper, had been analysed, it was placed in order in an envelope. A sheet of paper was attached to the front of this envelope, detailing the points to be developed in the relevant chapter and how each point was to be illustrated by one of the numbered items.

Of course, this method is open to criticism by ethnomethodologists who would want me to account for the criteria I used when categorising and sub-categorising each datum¹⁸. In fact, this argument leads to an infinite regression of analysis and it is answered here by stating that I chose to cut off my analysis at a point where I judged my illustrative data were adequate to secure a more theoretical point in the text. For this reason large amounts of data are contained in the text, permitting readers to assess for themselves the link between data and theoretical inference¹⁹.

The risks of ethical decision-making

If there is one major feature of the ethics of covert research I wish to convey, it is simply that we should avoid the impression that research ethics are a clear-cut matter, based on a residual, all-embracing type of social scientists' natural law. However we rate our moral credibility, covert research of a legal institution will result in highly contextual decision-making and if that decision-making is engaged with a sense of responsibility much stress will have to be endured.

Researchers in this area will benefit from the uncomfortable business of laying bare the dilemmas they face in the field, for without accounts of such matters the credibility of their work is weakened. Indeed, such accounts might also result in creation of a greater sensitivity amongst sociologists who engage in denouncing the unreliability and 'Uncle Tom' character of research on the police.

These sombre tones should also not shield the fulfilment of covert research, with its benefits for academic and policy-oriented knowledge.

In this appendix I have attempted to argue that my research on the police was based in good ethical decisions but that these decisions do not offer a carte blanche authority to the researching of any group. The most significant question to ask when deciding on any research strategy is this: 'If I were to place myself in the situation of those I wish to research, would I object to the covert method?' If we begin with this very human question and pit all our evidence against it, preferably in debate with a number of others concerned with the research, then a good decision might well be made. (I fear that a sociologically-based objection that we cannot stand in others' shoes would be an incredibly facile reply.) In the end, it is the individual researcher who will have to make the decision, accepting the risks it involves. There is much truth in Whyte's remark that they will have to live with that decision - and continue to do so.

Notes and references

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