ESRC Seminar Series
Mapping the public policy landscape

What is policing for?
Examining the impact and implications of contemporary policing interventions

the **policefoundation**
improving policing for the benefit of the public

The Scottish Institute for **Policing Research**

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Foreword

This booklet on policing is the latest in a series in which the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) presents new research and theories to potential users within Government, politics, the police, the media, and the private and voluntary sectors. Policing is changing, and constantly needs to change. Communities need to feel safe so people within them can flourish physically, economically and mentally.

There are many 'positives' to record; the Police Service – because it is a service – has never been stronger. It is delivering historically low levels of recorded crime. Officers are better equipped and trained than in any previous generation. In the wake of the 7/7 attacks in London – a reminder that even one of the most powerful countries in the world cannot protect itself from suicidally-minded terrorists – police have been at the forefront of delivering a complex security package that fights the menace of international terrorism, and the organised crime which funds it, as well as trying to meet the myriad demands of neighbourhood policing.

There are serious challenges ahead, one of the most potent of which is the global financial downturn. Rising unemployment creates new threats to law and order – from huge and complicated financial fraud to shoplifting and civil unrest. The financial crisis also poses a fundamental problem when it comes to funding the police, and ensuring the service is properly staffed and resourced.

At the same time there are broader concerns that bureaucracy and centralisation are having an adverse effect on the police, preventing them from doing their job properly. Innovation and flexibility within the service is strangled by red tape. Politics plays its part, as politicians wrestle with the structure of the force and their differing concepts of its most useful and effective function.

Meanwhile, for the public, the fundamental question is often simply: Why can't the police solve more crime?

The ESRC hosted seminars in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh entitled 'How responsive should policing be to community priorities and concerns?' 'Can and should the police solve more crime?' and 'What role can policing play in securing economic and social well-being?' The aim was to establish a dialogue between key academics and members of the police force, whose knowledge and insight will influence policy and practice.

Policing is just one of the areas in which the ESRC funds top-quality social science research. We hope you find this publication informative, serving as a bridge between reader and contributor.

Professor Ian Diamond FBA AcSS
Chief Executive, Economic and Social Research Council

Introduction

In his 2005 Richard Dimbleby Lecture, the-then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Sir Ian Blair, identified the need for a national debate that would articulate and demarcate what role and functions policing can play in contemporary society. With the police subject to a broad range of pressures – from protecting national security by combating violent extremism and organised transnational crime, to enhancing neighbourhood security and improving community safety – he voiced a concern shared by many police leaders that 'the thin blue line' was being stretched a little too thinly.

Recently, far-reaching changes to the conduct of policing were proposed in the Government's Green Paper, the Cabinet Office review of the Criminal Justice System led by Louise Casey, and the Conservative Party's manifesto. Against this background, the ESRC organised a seminar series to establish a vehicle for sustained and deep dialogue between the Police Service and those involved in researching the conduct of policing. As it did so, the police were much in the news with questions raised over the policing of the G20 London summit and the subsequent death of a 47-year-old man, and the dramatic resignation of Bob Quick, Britain's most senior counter-terrorism officer, after a security leak resulted in a major anti-terror operation, designed to foil an alleged al-Qaeda plot to bomb Britain, being rushed forward.

With this background narrative, the ESRC seminars built a picture that enhances our understanding of the issues and tries to answer the fundamental question 'what is policing for?' The seminars also stressed the importance of research which, as Professor Martin Innes of Cardiff University neatly put it, acts as either 'mirror' or 'motor.'
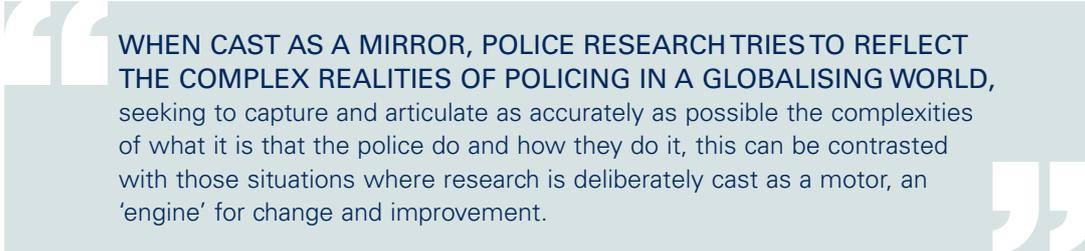
> **WHEN CAST AS A MIRROR, POLICE RESEARCH TRIES TO REFLECT THE COMPLEX REALITIES OF POLICING IN A GLOBALISING WORLD,** seeking to capture and articulate as accurately as possible the complexities of what it is that the police do and how they do it, this can be contrasted with those situations where research is deliberately cast as a motor, an 'engine' for change and improvement.

The ESRC in collaboration with the Scottish Institute for Policing Research, The Police Foundation, and the Universities' Police Science Institute organised its seminars to address the following:

- How responsive should policing be to community priorities and concerns?

- Can and should the police solve more crime?

- What role for policing in securing economic and social well-being?

This publication takes each seminar in turn, providing an overview of each presentation.

Contributors

DR TIMOTHY BRAIN is Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and one of the most senior chief constables in the country. Timothy joined the Avon and Somerset Constabulary in 1978, rising from constable to chief inspector prior to joining the Hampshire Constabulary on promotion to superintendent. In 1994, he became Assistant Chief Constable in the West Midlands Police. He has been awarded the Queen's Police Medal and the Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his services to the police and the community in Gloucestershire.

PROFESSOR NIGEL FIELDING is Professor of Sociology at the University of Surrey. An author of numerous books on the police, Nigel's teaching interests include criminology, having conducted studies of police training, police occupational culture, community and neighbourhood policing, equal opportunities in the Police Service, police corruption, and comparative research on international police systems. He has also served as a consultant to, among others, the Metropolitan Police, Surrey Police, Police Training Council, and the Home Office.

DR JANET FOSTER is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the London School of Economics and is currently seconded to The Police Foundation. Janet has conducted extensive research on crime, community and policing and has worked with a range of Government Departments and police forces across Britain and in Europe. She directed a pioneering Applied Criminology programme for senior police officers and conducted a major Home Office-funded evaluation of the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on policing (with Tim Newburn and Anna Souhami). Currently, she is working with the Norfolk constabulary on an action based research programme around community engagement and citizen focus, she is also an Adviser to the Chief Constable.

SALLY BURKE is Chief Superintendent of South Wales Police and currently Head of Call and Incident Management. Sally previously spent much of her service in the detective arena. Initially, she joined Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in 1988, transferring back home to South Wales in 1991. She was responsible for establishing the Force's Major Crime Review Unit and also set up the Regional Asset Recovery Team in Wales. Recently, Janet has been responsible for managing the Force's Scientific Support Unit and Strategic Lead for Volume Crime, and she is also currently working on rolling 101 out across Wales as a Single Non-Emergency Number.

PROFESSOR MIKE MAGUIRE is Professor in Criminology at the Universities of Cardiff and Glamorgan. Mike has researched and published on a wide range of subjects, including policing, criminal statistics, crime victims, and the resettlement of prisoners. His work on policing has mainly been in the area of crime control, including criminal investigation, intelligence-led policing and the National Intelligence Model. He has also conducted studies of PACE and the police complaints system. He is co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (fourth edition 2007).

PROFESSOR ROBIN WILLIAMS is Professor Emeritus in the School of Applied Sciences, University of Durham. Robin has carried out several research studies of the police uses of forensic science in the UK and in Continental Europe. His book (co-authored with Paul Johnson) on the growth of forensic DNA databases was published in 2007, and he has also written widely on operational and policy issues relating to the development and uses of forensic genetics in criminal investigations and prosecutions. He was a member of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Working Party on the Forensic Uses of Bio-information and is (together with Carole McCartney and Tim Wilson) currently funded by the Nuffield Foundation for a study into the future of forensic bio-information. He is the co-editor (with Jim Fraser) of the forthcoming 'Handbook of Forensic Science'.

DAVID STRANG is Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders Police. David joined the Metropolitan Police in 1980 and in 1998 was appointed as Assistant Chief Constable in Lothian and Borders Police. In 2001 he was appointed Chief Constable of Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary where he demonstrated his strong commitment to community policing. He is a past President of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), having served in that capacity for the year 2004-05, and is now the Executive Vice President of ACPOS. He also chairs the ACPOS Criminal Justice Business Area and is a member of the National Criminal Justice Board. He was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee Birthday Honours in 2002.

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PROFESSOR ADAM CRAWFORD is Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and Director of the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds. He has researched extensively into various aspects of policing, community safety and youth justice. He is currently managing an ESRC-funded research seminar series into 'the governance of anti-social behaviour' and a Nuffield Foundation study of 'the impact of anti-social behaviour interventions on young people'. His publications include *Plural Policing, The Local Governance of Crime and Crime Prevention Policies in Comparative Perspective*.

DR GESA HELMS is Kelvin/Smith Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow. Gesa's research focuses on the political economies of urban restructuring, social regulation, policing and surveillance in the UK and Germany.

DENIS O'CONNOR QPM, CBE is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary. He was Chief Constable of Surrey between 2000-2004 before joining the Inspectorate. He began his career with the Metropolitan Police eventually becoming Assistant Chief Constable in Surrey in 1991. He was Deputy Chief of Kent and was appointed Assistant Commissioner in London in 1997, he led the MPS development strategy following the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry. He was awarded the Queens Police Medal in 1996 and the CBE in 2002. He chaired the ACPO Performance Management Business Area before becoming Vice President of ACPO in 2003, and led the piloting of the National Reassurance Policing Programme – the pre cursor to Neighbourhood policing. He reviewed the fitness of the current police force structure in 2005 producing a report '*Closing the Gap*' which generated a great deal of debate. His team have provided support to the Olympic Programme, providing a report to initiate action in June 2007. He has undertaken reviews of police capability for Counter Terrorism in relation to Pursue and Prevent. Significant reviews include *Serious and Organised Crime Capability 'Getting Organised' October 2008, the Prevent component of Counter Terrorism, and Neighbourhood Policing*.

Seminar One – How responsive should policing be to community priorities and concerns?

Dr Timothy Brain, Professor Nigel Fielding and Dr Janet Foster outline the policing background, consider the current issues within the community and offer ways forward.

One of the most important engines for change has been the call to make the police more 'citizen focused' and responsive to the needs of local communities. Stimulated by concerns about the decline in public trust and confidence in the police, a number of attempts have been made to reconfigure policing in ways that make it better able to respond to local concerns.

Between 2003/2009 millions of pounds have been directed towards neighbourhood policing throughout England and Wales. However, there remains a tension between the desire to be responsive to local concerns and the fact that the police force, as an agency of the state, is the principal repository for the state's coercive power.

The speakers looked at ambiguities emerging from current reforms to establish whether it is possible to reconcile the police's function as the locus of state coercion with a more explicit focus on the needs and priorities of local communities.

Key questions:

- Whose concerns and which local communities are currently being engaged with?
- What are the practical and ethical inhibitors to an increasingly responsive Police Service?
- Are legitimacy and trust and confidence really dependent upon being responsive to community concerns?

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4   What is policing for? Examining the impact and implications of contemporary policing interventions

From the racial, political and social tensions of the 1980s and 1990s, policing has emerged as one among many contributing factors to historically low levels of recorded crime.

In the words of **Dr Tim Brain, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire**, it has adapted to the world of post 9/11 international terrorism and is making inroads into serious and organised crime. It is meeting the demands of neighbourhood policing and response. It has never been so well resourced, and possesses the highest numbers of staff in its 180-year history. To cap it all, officers and staff are better trained and better equipped than in any previous generation.

Dr Brain points out, this now hangs in the balance because of four threats:

- **The deepening recession** – Rising levels of unemployment in the 1980s saw rising levels of crime of all types. Unemployment peaked in the mid-1980s but crime continued rising until the mid-1990s. Should crime rise again as a result of recession, there is likely to be a similar 'lag' effect before the downward march of recorded crime is resumed. However, there is evidence that the recession is already having an adverse effect on police resources, which means the service may be less able to meet the challenges it generates.

- **Over-centralisation** – Some central strategic direction is desirable, but too much and there will be local inflexibility as forces spend too much time complying with central directives and not enough time innovating to meet rapidly changing local scenarios.

- **Bureaucracy** – As Sir Ronnie Flanagan (the Home Office Chief Inspector of Constabulary) observed, some bureaucracy is necessary and beneficial, but too much leads to stultification.

- **Politics of police accountability** – The tripartite system, brought in by the Police Act 1964 and consisting of the Home Secretary, police authorities and chief constables, is intended to balance the interests of the state with those of local communities and professional autonomy with democratic governance. In recent years, the tripartite structure has come under increasing strain as power has tilted increasingly towards the centre, leaving a democratic deficit at the local level.

> " FROM THE RACIAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TENSIONS OF THE 1980s AND 1990s, POLICING HAS EMERGED TO DELIVER HISTORICALLY LOW LEVELS OF RECORDED CRIME.
> Dr Tim Brain, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire "

Dr Brain said: "Times change; the Police Service must change. How the service should change is now the crucial question."

As the police force faces up to the challenges posed by these four 'threats', the question for many practitioners remains one of the priorities – specifically, how responsive should policing be to community priorities.

IN ESSENCE, WHAT ARE THE POLICE PRIMARILY FOR?

The other side of the coin to that question is getting communities to take more responsibility for their crime and social problems.

Nigel Fielding, Professor of Sociology at the University of Surrey believes people are increasingly disengaged from established institutions but want the State to do more to address their sense of risk. Against this, police efforts could never fully meet the public's feelings of insecurity, which have varied considerably. There was also a tension between the desire to be responsive to local concerns and the fact that the police were the principal repository for the state's coercive power.

THE COERCIVE POWER IDEA UNDERPINS THE POLICE ROLE, AND PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO PUTS A LIMIT ON RESPONSIVENESS.

From the beginning of modern policing, there has been a debate about whether the police should be for crime control or for maintaining public order. Sir Charles Rowan and Sir Richard Mayne, the first Met Commissioners, believed that the prime duty of the police was to maintain 'public tranquility'. If a given act of law enforcement might lead to undue resistance or disturbance to the public, then it should not be done. Responsiveness to the public is fundamental to this doctrine.

However, many situations were more complicated than a single act of law enforcement. Crime may be only one part of the situation. A community may also have low level anti-social behaviour, bad relations between police and public, and mistrust between the people living and working there. One complicating issue is highlighted by the distinction between 'community' and 'association' (Tonnies, 1955). Social networks have long been shifting from the inclusive community to the exclusive association.

There is a need to address questions like *'Which communities and whose concerns are we engaging with?'* We have a worrying track record of residents' associations being captured by racists and operating against minorities. There are some kinds of community groups that may be all too willing to engage actively in local social control but whose input we would really rather not have.

Promoting more active citizen involvement was a minefield in other ways. In 1994 the Home Secretary urged Neighbourhood Watch schemes to mount civilian street patrols. Senior officers declared this as 'legal vigilantism'. The 'walking with a purpose' idea soon died.

We have customarily solved the responsiveness conundrum by the act of faith called 'police discretion', and kept tyranny at bay with 'constabulary independence'.

However it is argued that if even if we have lost faith, or our faith is conditional, police discretion is the inescapable starting point in debating alternatives. Even with a police force equal in size to the population policed, it would be impossible to prosecute every law. The police have to decide priorities, and that is, ultimately, a question of discretion.

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In recent years the police have been concerned that their scope for discretion has been compromised by stronger managerial controls. In addition, recent legislation has considerably extended the scope of police powers.

Since 1997, over 3,000 new offences have been created and a range of new summary measures introduced. Their powers enable the police to arrest suspects without warrant and to apply stop and search powers to designated areas without reasonable suspicion. The range of actions warranting Anti Social Behaviour Orders was extended in 2003. Summary powers have been expanded via Fixed Penalty Notices and Penalty Notices for Disorder, and the Conditional Cautions that were introduced in 2003 have carried a power of arrest for breach since 2006.

Then came the global economic downturn. The recession will squeeze the country's tax base at the same time that financial fraud has become the fastest-growing kind of crime. So responsiveness is ultimately a question of who should guide the use of police resources and how it should be done.

There are three main approaches to 'responsiveness':

- **Police-based** – discretion, professional expertise and applied management principles

- **Politics-based** – formal accountability via the Home Secretary, Home Office, Police Authorities and directly-elected mayors

- **Public-based** – local priority setting via consultation meetings, community intelligence-gathering and partnership work.

History suggests that none of the three is adequate on its own. The politics-based option is best-established, but even in the tripartite system the balance of power has varied uncomfortably between police authorities, Home Secretary, and chief officers. A healthy democracy needs all three elements to be equally balanced. The public-based approach is the least-developed, has the shallowest roots, and is the most likely to lead to biased and ineffective policing.

The public is less interested in 'efficiency and effectiveness' than in having social institutions it can respect. Legitimacy comes from fair procedures and outcomes. Fairness and justice are more important than effectiveness. We know from public attitude surveys that it is these things that inspire public confidence. To the public, responsiveness is less about answering the station telephone within five rings than about sharing the public's concerns and priorities.

> "
> THE POLICE ARE NOTHING ELSE THAN A MECHANISM FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF SITUATIONALLY JUSTIFIED FORCE IN SOCIETY.
> Egon Bittner (1980) The functions of the police in modern society,
> Cambridge MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn and Hain.
> "

It is useful here to look back at research by the Government's Crime 'tsar' Louise Casey. Her 120-page Cabinet Office report, commissioned by Downing Street, was based on the views of 13,000 people in England and Wales who were consulted over an eight-month period. Ms Casey said Britain was becoming a 'walk on by' society where law-abiding citizens were unwilling to help victims of violent crime. She said people were terrified they would either be attacked themselves or face arrest, and asserted that the change in attitudes – blamed on a loss of trust in the police – could allow crime to 'strangle whole neighbourhoods'. Echoing the findings of earlier work carried out by Fielding and Innes (2006), the Casey report stated that: the public wanted to see a service that:

- takes action

- is responsive

- is approachable

- attends quickly when called to incidents

- follows up and feeds back on progress to members of the public when they report crime and anti-social behaviour.

To achieve this, the public demanded a more user-friendly service in the form of a visible, uniformed police presence. That way, police were freed up from unnecessary red tape and health and safety restrictions, and fewer constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) taken off patrols to perform administrative tasks. People wanted PCSOs to be distinguishable as part of the Police Service, with uniforms, equipment and powers that matched their role. They wanted named contacts and clear information about who was responsible for what locally, and how to contact them in both emergency and non-emergency situations, and face-to-face access at a police station, a surgery or a street meeting.

Continuity was important in the local policing team, with the report suggesting officers and PCSOs served a minimum of two years in the neighbourhood so that they got to know areas and communities well and gain communities' respect and trust. The report also called for a better service for victims of crime, especially repeat victims.

> **CRUCIALLY, IT DEMANDED CLEAR LEADERSHIP FROM THE POLICE ON CRIME – WITH THE BACKING OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS LIKE THE LOCAL COUNCIL, THE COURTS AND PROBATION SERVICES.**
> (Casey, 2008)

British Crime Survey data reveals a substantial decline in public perceptions of how well the police perform their role. In 1982, 90 per cent of respondents felt the police did a 'very or fairly good job' (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007). By 2006-07 only 51 per cent rated the police 'as doing a good or excellent job' (Nicholas and Flatley 2008).

Is policing communities about doing what 'the public' wants? If so, what *does* the public want from its police? The crux is to raise public confidence in policing first to then establish what the public want. That way it would be possible to deliver policing which both the Police Service and the Government believes is most efficacious – a huge challenge, given the amount of work the police already have to deal with.

Dr Janet Foster, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the London School of Economics said it is vital to think of many 'publics', not just one single public, because people's needs are diverse. Here we can draw principally on **two studies** with Norfolk Constabulary, the first, working in the neediest areas; and the second on citizen focus and community engagement (see Lloyd and Foster 2009, Jones and Foster forthcoming).

It is a small and unrepresentative minority who attend formal consultation meetings and therefore a very small number who are involved in setting local policing priorities. We need to ask questions about public expectations. Are these realistic and should the police always respond to public priorities? A key role for neighbourhood policing should be an educative one. In some rural areas where fear of crime is high but crime is very low, the police should seek simultaneously to reduce fear and provide reassurance through better information and other forms of communication rather than providing more rural policing presence which is what those communities might want.

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Working alongside Norfolk officers in four areas to enhance community engagement and citizen focus, Dr Foster has provided detailed feedback from the research (based on observations, focus groups and interviews with communities and neighbourhood policing staff). She concluded that there are many issues that need to be tackled, suggesting quick 'wins' and then supporting the teams in introducing longer term changes, using the best evidence to guide those decisions and taking local context into account.

An independent face-to-face survey, focusing on a very small number of critical areas in five neighbourhoods, was commissioned by Norfolk constabulary (n=506) in 2008 to explore residents' perceptions of their areas, local policing, and their thoughts on consultation and participation (Insight Track 2008).

THE IMPETUS FOR MAKING THE POLICE AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE AGENCIES MORE RESPONSIVE TO PUBLIC NEEDS AND DESIRES IS, THEN, DRIVEN BY A DECLINE IN CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCIES.

Almost one in two respondents (48 per cent) did not want to attend consultation meetings, 12 per cent did not know if they wanted to attend and 40 per cent expressed an interest in attending. However when asked if they wanted to be involved in setting local policing priorities 76 per cent said they did not. Here there were area variations (ranging from nine to 23 per cent expressing an interest in being involved).

THE STUDIES SHOW THERE ARE HUGELY VARYING DEGREES TO WHICH THE PUBLIC WANT TO ENGAGE IN CRIME AND SAFETY ISSUES.

Dr Foster said that although people wanted their views taken into account, the majority did not want to attend meetings or be directly involved in setting local priorities. Some 65 per cent of respondents in the Norfolk survey (Insight Track 2008) agreed or strongly agreed that the police understood the issues that affected their community. However, this confidence was not reflected in responses to broader questions. Only 35 per cent believed the police had been fairly or very effective in building relationships between police and community; while 40 per cent felt their Safer Neighbourhood Team had been fairly or very effective in making residents feel safer and more secure (Insight Track 2008). Nevertheless, the data suggested that the overall impact of neighbourhood policing was significant – 79 per cent of respondents believed that the police in their area were doing a fair, good or excellent job compared with 63 per cent a year ago, and 43 per cent three years ago. Those rating the police as excellent or good increased from 16 per cent three years ago, to 44 per cent now (and one area scored 54 per cent).

POLICING FOR AND WITH THE PEOPLE DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN THAT THE POLICE SHOULD DO WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS AND A VITAL ELEMENT OF THE POLICE ROLE WAS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE SOMETIMES DIFFERENT AND CONFLICTING NEEDS.

At the same time, a review of research by Dr Foster and Kate Lloyd for the Police Foundation into public perceptions of the police produced important findings. One major theme emerging from their work, commissioned by Norfolk Constabulary, was the issue of police 'attitude'.

# How public perceptions of the police are formed

According to the review one of the most striking recent findings is the extent to which the police themselves create a risk factor for crime simply by using bad manners. Modest but consistent scientific evidence supports the hypothesis that the less respectful police are towards suspects and citizens generally, the less people will comply with the law.

> **CHANGING POLICE 'STYLE' MAY THUS BE AS IMPORTANT AS FOCUSING POLICE 'SUBSTANCE.'**
> (Sherman, 1988)

Key findings

1 Unlike other public sector services where satisfaction tends to increase with contact, those who have had contact with their local police are generally less satisfied than those who have had no contact at all (Blaug et al. 2006). The reasons for dissatisfaction with the police are frequently related to how people are treated, not the role the police perform.

2 Public perceptions of the police fall into three broad categories: those who are pro-police, those who are passive sceptics, and those who are highly disengaged.

3 People who have little or no contact with the police, including the elderly, white, and affluent, tend to have positive attitudes, and appear to value the police's law enforcement, order maintenance and social service roles (Wake et al. 2007). Newly-arrived migrant groups also have positive attitudes of the police at the outset, although these are often based upon preconceptions about the police in the UK rather than linked with direct contact (Wake et al. 2007). Approximately 44 per cent of the public have contact with the police each year and the type and quality of these individual encounters shapes judgements about policing in general (IPCC 2005).

4 British Crime Survey data suggests satisfaction is lowest amongst those who have been stopped by officers on foot, and that those who initiated contact with the police – including victims of crime – are less likely to rate the police positively than those who had no contact (see Figure1).

Figure 1: Rating of local police by type of contact

Source: Allen *et al.* 2006:16

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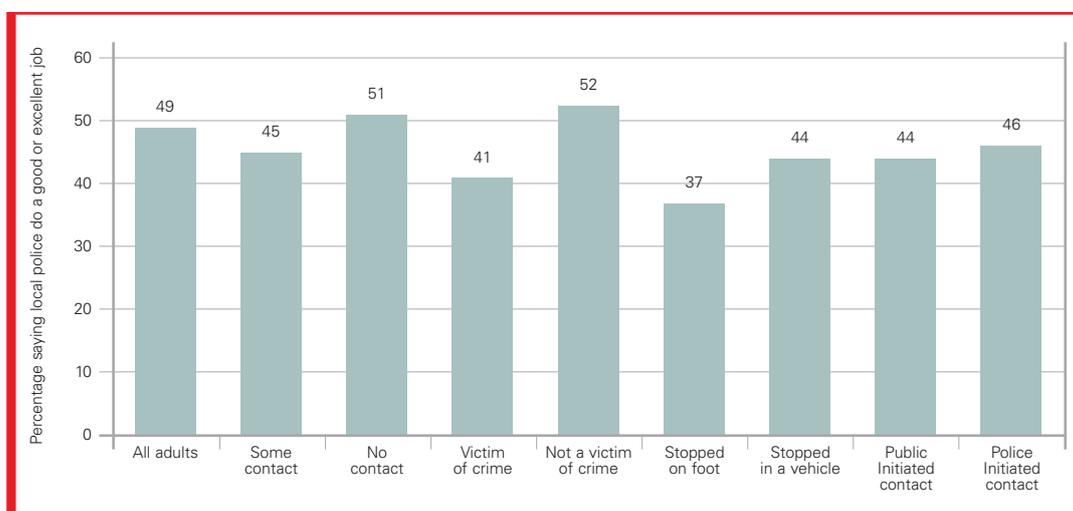
5 In fast-paced situations officers may not actively think about how people will perceive their actions, decisions, or even the tone of their voice. However, all of these encounters generate the potential for miscommunication, anger and resentment (Berger, 2000) and can deeply influence people's views of police performance and even legitimacy (Skogan, 2006).

6 British Crime Survey data also suggests that the percentage of public-initiated contacts with the police has declined significantly over the last 25 years. For example in 1981, 43 per cent of the public initiated contact with the police (most frequently to ask directions). By 2005-06 this type of contact had declined to 27 per cent. The Casey Review (2008) suggests that less contact, and less informal contact, may be a factor in lower public confidence in the police.

7 Although ratings of local police differ by type of contact, research suggests that it is not contact *per se* which leads to lower confidence in the police. It is subjective assessments of the quality of the encounters which impact on levels of confidence (Bradford et al., forthcoming) where police behaviour or attitude is the most frequently cited reason for annoyance with the police (Figure 2 – reasons for annoyance with police behaviour, Source: Allen et al. 2005). Almost half of all complaint allegations relate to incivility, being impolite, intolerance, other neglect, or failure of duty (Gleeson and Grace, 2007). As Sherman notes: 'One of the most striking recent findings is the extent to which the police themselves create a risk factor for crime simply by using bad manners.' Changing police 'style' may thus be as important as focusing police 'substance.'

Figure 2: Reasons for annoyance with police behaviour
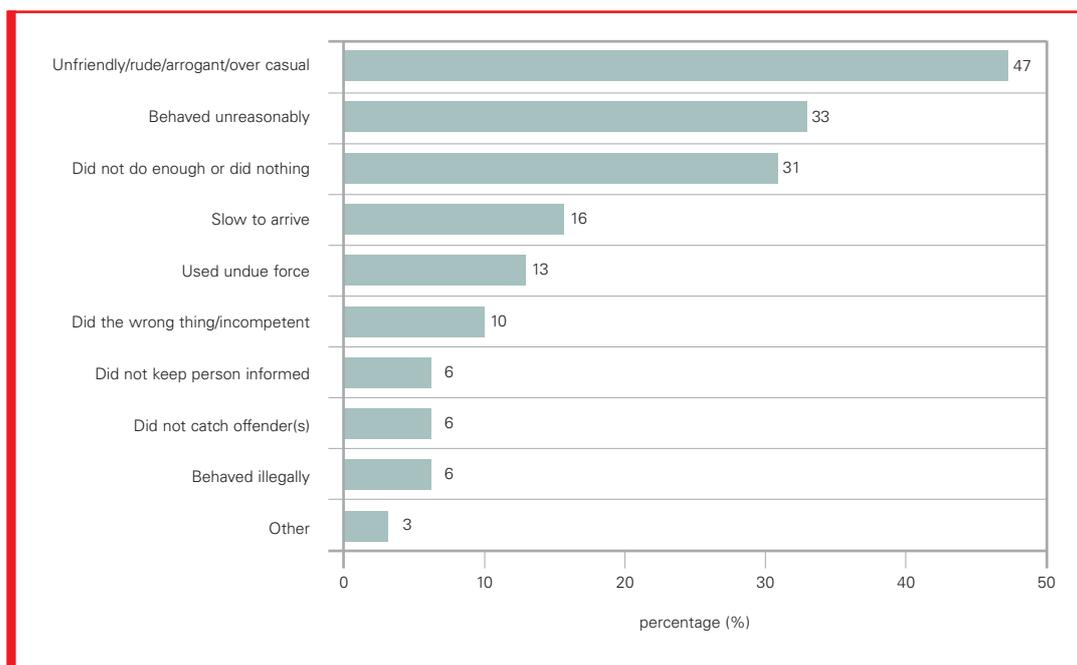
Source: Allen *et al.* 2005: Table 2.19

Seminar Two – Can and should the police solve more crime?

Looking at the police perspective are Denis O'Connor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, and Sally Burke, Chief Superintendent, South Wales Police.

While the debate continues over the role of the police, public priorities and who ultimately sets them, there have been a number of significant innovations in the conduct of crime investigation work that afford the potential to improve the conduct and efficacy of police crime investigations. Studies suggest however that the single most important determinant of success in police investigations is the quantity and quality of information provided by the public.

Key questions in this seminar included:

- How much crime and of what types do the police actually 'solve'?

- Why can't the police solve more crimes?

- What impact (if any) has the development of new forensic technologies had upon aggregate crime detection rates, and what factors explain these patterns?

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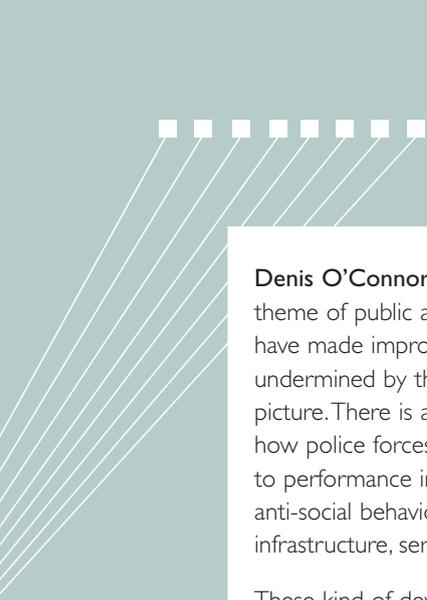
Denis O'Connor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary opened the seminar speaking on the theme of public accountability in managing crime. A central concern for him was that whilst the police may have made improvements in how they respond to crime, the potential benefits of doing so have been undermined by the fact that the public do not believe that police recorded crime figures provide an accurate picture. There is a need, therefore, to regulate and restrict the amount of 'gaming' that goes on in terms of how police forces orient themselves to performance targets. In addition, it is time to pay particular attention to performance in the area of serious and organised crime. With the political imperatives to manage anti-social behaviour, occurring alongside the need to improve the national counter-terrorist capability and infrastructure, serious and organised crime has not received the level of attention it requires.

These kind of developments will now have to be undertaken against a different backdrop to that which we perhaps anticipated. In an age of austerity, it will be important that the Police Service 'gets on top of its costs' and understands the financial implications of different options. Overall, then in terms of seeking to manage crime, prevention is always better then detection.

Policing, as the Home Office says in its national policing plan, is about priorities, expectations, targets and developments as well as progress. The national Government agenda has a significant impact on a local level.

Sally Burke, Chief Superintendent, South Wales Police, cited the 2008 Policing Green Paper – *From the neighbourhood to the national* – outlining challenges for the Police Service in the 21st century.

These included engagement with local people, their expectations and the Police Services' ability to be accountable for delivering local priorities as well as to respond to serious crime and terrorism. Alongside the Green Paper came the independent review of policing, conducted by Sir Ronnie Flanagan, which identified the amount of bureaucracy surrounding the Police Service. Chief Superintendent Burke said there was also a 'perception gap' to consider; crime has been reduced significantly over the last decade, yet the fear of crime has not.

We must also consider globalisation and technology – the challenges are immense. It is not just 'neighbourhood to national', but increasingly 'international'. This raises issues around jurisdiction and places strain on police capability; do we have the technology and resources at local level to combat crime on a global scale? Chief Superintendent Burke believes the service is about to enter a new era in terms of financial pressure which will require hard choices about the musts, coulds and shoulds within policing, especially when the complexities of the demands placed on them are increasing, which is stretching service delivery.

The key therefore was to find a way of improving delivery, and central to this was the ability and manner in which decisions were made and prioritised. Solving crime was ultimately about capability and capacity. In South Wales there are 3,132 police officers and 2,061 police staff, and they receive 1.5million non-emergency calls a year and 250,000 '999' emergency calls. They deal with approximately 120,000 crimes a year and 350,000 non crime occurrences.

Crime is only a third of their 'business' and only a third of the workforce are front line uniform/CID crime fighters. Another one third is dedicated to protective services. Therefore, it raises the question does crime type affect the likelihood it will be cleared up? In South Wales, there have been seven murders/manslaughters in this financial year so far and all have been detected in that the perpetrator has been identified – a 100 per cent detection rate. South Wales' Police detection rate for volume crime – auto crime, burglary, assaults stands at an average of 25 per cent, so there is a difference.

Why can't the police solve more crime?

For the South Wales Police Force, it appears that business choices dictate solving crime. Their call handlers are trained to conduct initial investigations, whilst gathering information at the same time. However, the Force recognises it has insufficient resources to attend to every crime. This makes the 'call handling phase' key to success in identifying what crimes are solvable, ensuring they are subject to some investigation if only by telephone. To improve efficiency, a 'case screening' process takes place at the initial phase, which is intended to identify crimes that are solvable or not. The Force screen out approximately one third of crime. In other forces it may be as high as two thirds.

> HIGH VOLUME CRIME INVESTIGATIONS FOLLOW A FAR MORE AD HOC, LESS ROBUST INVESTIGATIVE MODEL THAT RELIES ON INDIVIDUAL OFFICER DECISION-MAKING.

Chief Superintendent Burke stated that eighty per cent of the South Wales Police budget is allocated on pay and that the investigative process is where some of the really difficult business decisions have to be made. She compares the role of a Forensic Submissions Officer to that of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence – you do not always get the cancer drugs you need because it's not cost effective or it is not going to cure you in the latter stages of cancer.

Many officers have a lack of understanding as to what forensics can do, what they are trying to prove. In support of this, 16 per cent of all exhibits submitted are refused. South Wales' Police Force forensic budget is just under £2million.

> 120,000 CRIMES, AND ONE MURDER ALONE COST £160,000

In one year alone an average murder costs between £40,000 and £60,000. An average wounding costs £10,000 and a scientist call-out costs £86,000 (this is call-out alone and does not involve any examination or casework).

Dependent on the numbers of murders – a significant proportion of budget can be spent anything up to half on major crime. Some figures here may be surprising. The Force detect 22 per cent of all burglary, however, only 19 per cent of these are detected by forensic. They also detect 17 per cent of theft of motor vehicles, with only 8.3 per cent by forensics. Of some 48 per cent of all violent crime detected, only three per cent is via forensic detections.

What are the critical success factors for success in solving crime?

Chief Superintendent Burke states three:

- **Community and the public** – in terms of both intelligence, information and cooperation is critical
- **Initial action** – timely witness statements and arrests, early evidence capture
- **Good investigative skills** – train to investigate and not gather evidence, use effective decision-making based on risk, harm and threat, and deploy effective prioritisation.

Detecting crime is part of tackling the fear of crime and building public confidence – it is about making people feel safe. There is one key area that we can improve upon without significant investment. Prioritisation and decision-making skills of the front line.

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YES WE CAN SOLVE MORE CRIME AND YES WE SHOULD

The question of whether the police 'should' solve more crime is then a political and philosophical one, touching on important issues such as targets and performance indicators, police priorities, and national-local tensions, as well as confidence in policing and engagement with the public but the question of whether the police 'could' solve more crime is easier to answer.

Mike Maguire, Professor in Criminology at Cardiff University and the University of Glamorgan says they have been doing so every year since 2002, as the following tables indicate:

Sanction detection rates

Year	Rate
2001/2	19%
2003/4	19%
2004/5	21%
2005/6	24%
2006/7	26%
2007/8	28%

Offences brought to justice:

Year	Offences
2001/2	1,002,000
2002/3	1,038,000
2003/4	1,077,000
2004/5	1,138,000
2005/6	1,327,000
2006/7	1,423,000
2007/8	1,446,000
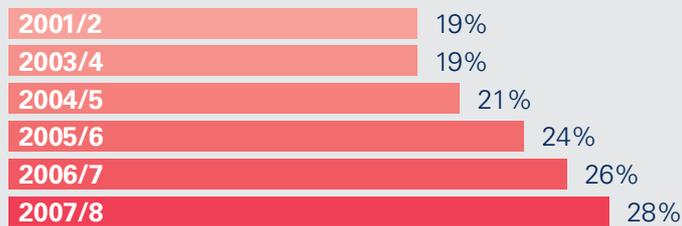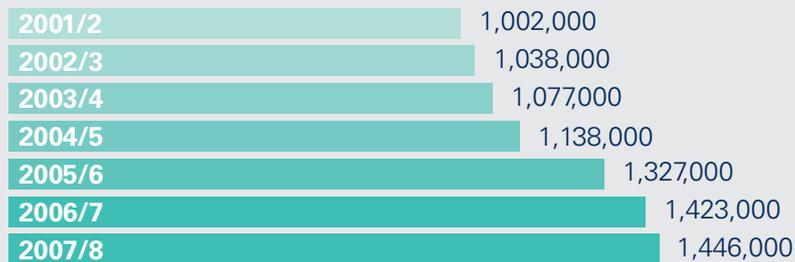
But the big increase in offences 'brought to justice' doesn't mean a massive increase in cases convicted in court.

Convicted

Year	Convicted
2001/2	683,000
2002/3	712,000
2003/4	729,000
2004/5	688,000
2005/6	708,000
2006/7	694,000
2007/8	724,000
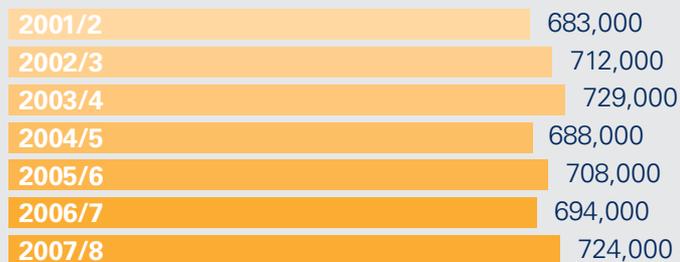
Professor Maguire points out that the figures have been sustained in the context of falling recorded crime rates. The number of total recorded offences fell by over a million between 2004 and 2008, but the numbers convicted remained roughly the same. The 'conviction rate' rose from 12.3 per cent in 2004 to 14.8 per cent in 2008. However the main increases in terms of numbers brought to justice have been achieved through (a) cautions and (b) two new forms of disposal: penalty notices for disorder, and formal warnings for cannabis possession:

Year	Cannabis Possession Warnings	Disorder
2001/2		
2002/3		2,000
2003/4		4,000
2004/5	26,000	49,000
2005/6	63,000	110,000
2006/7	81,000	147,000
2007/8	103,000	137,000

Penalty Notices for:

- Cannabis Possession Warnings
- Disorder
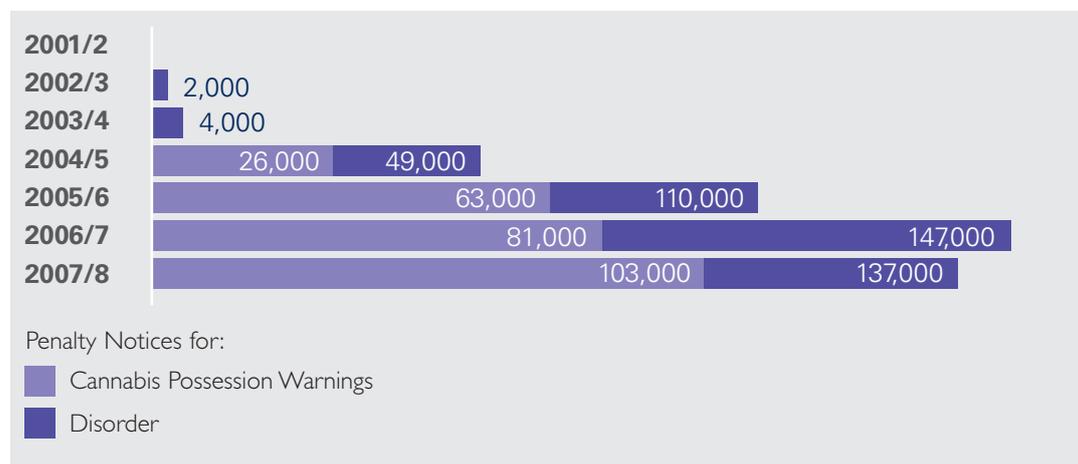
Numbers in these categories have grown fast, when crime has been falling significantly, suggesting that there has been something of a deliberate strategy by crime managers to 'squeeze' as many detections as possible out of minor offences in order to ensure that performance targets are met. This over-enthusiastic harvesting of 'low-hanging fruit' has generated some criticism and concern among academics and other commentators.

Could the police go further and solve more crime, and if so, how?

Professor Maguire says more crimes could be detected through bringing up more forces to the level of the most successful. Over the country as a whole, there is quite a lot of slack still to take up, mainly in the 'high detectability' category – cases where a clear suspect is apparent at the outset – rather than the 'low detectability' category, such as most burglaries or car crimes, where achieving extra detections requires a great deal more time and effort.

However, even if virtually all cases with a named suspect could be turned into detections (an unlikely prospect, as Professor Maguire demonstrated in the early 1990s when he examined samples of such cases, only two-thirds actually were cleared up), the large volume of 'low detectability' crimes makes it likely that a majority of offences would still remain undetected. Therefore, this suggests a 'natural limit' to detection rates well below 50 per cent even with a massive injection of resources, or re-organisation to prioritise detecting crime above all else.

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So should the police solve more crime?

The National Crime Recording Standard (introduced in all police forces in April 2002 to make crime recording more consistent) has reduced inconsistencies and anomalies in recording practice, while detections and 'brought to justice' figures have risen.

However there have been costs to these achievements including the relative neglect of other areas of crime (such as white collar crime, fraud, internet crime), too much mechanical 'target chasing' at the expense of identifying and addressing local community concerns, and in some cases the damaging and premature criminalisation of young people.

> IF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS A USEFUL TOOL TO DRIVE LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT, IT NEEDS TO BE DIAGNOSTIC AND ANALYTICAL – AN AID TO UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS GOING ON AND WHY.

Professor Maguire argues that it should be less based on crude quantitative targets and league tables (detect x number of crimes and do not think about anything else), than on identifying aspects of performance that may be good or poor. What looks like poor performance on one measure may be quite justifiable. It may reflect a conscious senior management decision to shift resources from volume crime to problem-solving at neighbourhood level in relation to low level anti-social behaviour and disorder, or to a spate of professional or organised criminal activities which take a lot of time to deal with and produce relatively few clear ups. Success in this respect may be reflected not in 'solving more crimes' at all, but in increased confidence or satisfaction in public surveys. All of this can be subject to external scrutiny.

In many ways this kind of performance assessment is more demanding on managers than simply chasing centrally-set numerical targets and it is not performance management *per se* that is the problem – it is inflexible, top-down performance management, using universal measures that do not change year on year and do not take enough account either of difference in priorities between geographical areas or of changing priorities in the same area over time. At worst, they create perverse incentives to put resources and effort into activities that are the wrong focus for that area at that time. Professor Maguire says that the police should solve more crime, but that may not mean more crime in total – it may mean more crime of types that matter to people in particular areas at particular times.

While the police are solving more crimes, their use of forensic science has fallen under increasing scrutiny.

Professor Robin Williams of the University of Durham is co-author of Genetic Policing: The Use of DNA in Criminal Investigations, an examination of the increasing significance of DNA profiling for crime investigation in modern society.

> THE USE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE, PARTICULARLY DNA PROFILING, PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN INVESTIGATING CRIMES AND PROSECUTING OFFENDERS. It is now increasingly central to contemporary policing because it contributes to efforts to arrive at the truth amidst conflicting stories from victims, witnesses and suspects.

However, some recent studies point to the dangers of misplaced confidence in many claims to scientific 'certainty' in the application of forensic technologies and their effective uses for crime control. Key Government agencies and Parliamentary bodies have carried out a series of major reviews of forensic science. These reviews generally have commended the willingness of police forces to 'harness the power of science to beat crime' (Home Office, 1999), but they have often been critical of aspects of the delivery, organisation and monitoring of such forensic science support.

For example, David Blakey's HMIC Report '*Under the Microscope*' was especially forthright in his censure of:

- weaknesses in the professional and strategic exploitation of the use of forensic science for crime investigation in general
- the variable – and sometimes inadequate – quality of forensic leadership, advocacy and awareness at a number of levels within police forces; the poorly organised deployment and use of crime scene examiners
- and the 'paucity, questionable quality and accuracy of performance data' within the area of scientific support – for example, crime scene examinations.

All police forces in England and Wales employ a largely civilian group of staff trained to undertake the bulk of forensic science work at crime scene.

Typically these crime scene examiners construct a variety of evidential 'artifacts' to support subsequent investigations. These include: photographs of places in which crimes occurred, more detailed visual records of crime-relevant objects and appearances at such scenes and of physical injuries to victims; plaster casts of footwear impressions left in soil or other soft surfaces; 'lifts' made from finger marks left on surfaces; footwear 'lifts' made by powdering hard surfaces on which the impressions of footwear marks are already faintly visible to the naked eye; and samples of biological material taken either by swabbing visible stains at relevant areas of the scene, or by seizing objects like clothing.

Decisions to construct these artefacts at a crime scene, or to seize objects from which other artefacts may be made, are subject to a complex set of considerations such as the time available to the examiner to undertake the work, their level of technical skills, and the availability of particular technology. Almost all scene examination is less than fully comprehensive, since exhaustively combing every scene for any contact materials is clearly impractical.

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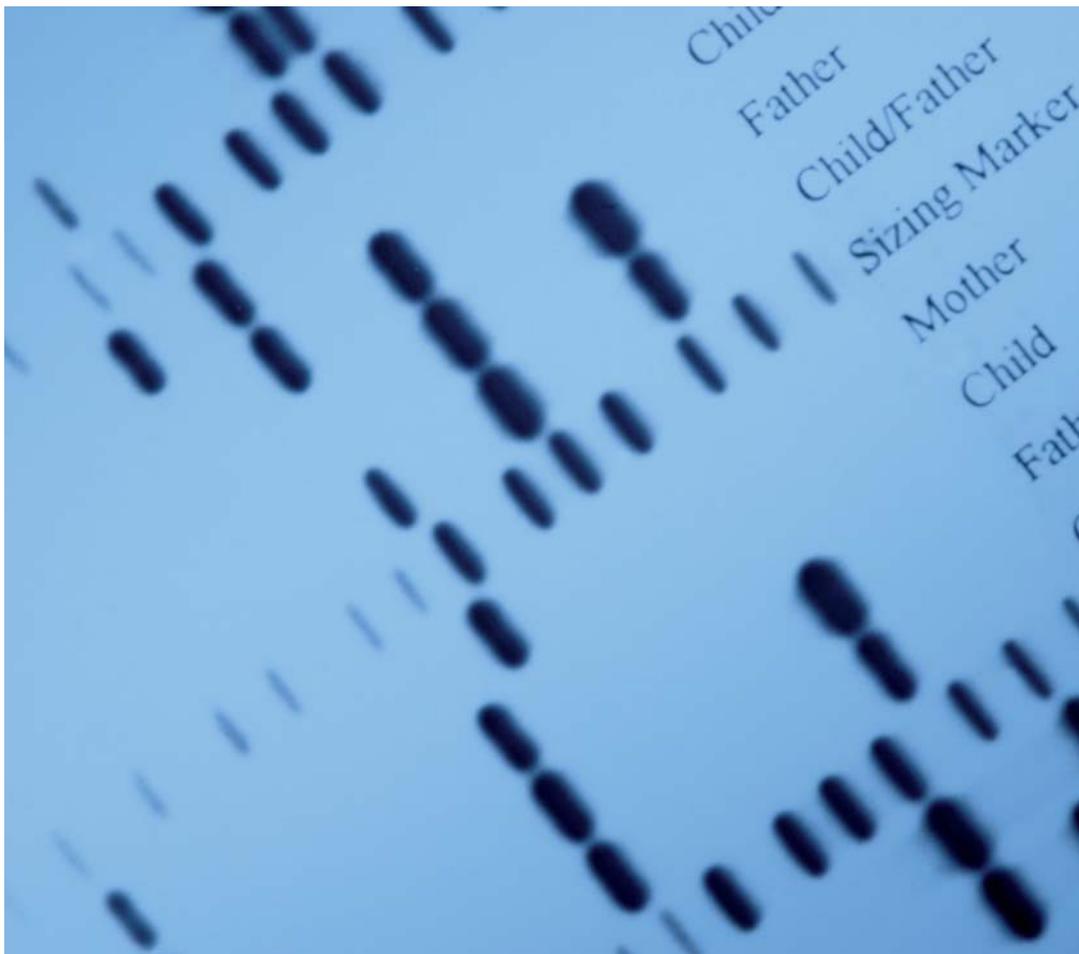
Furthermore, the work of these crime scene examiners is not always adequately integrated with the work of police officers within recognised investigative teams. In the absence of such integration, the application of individual or group performance monitoring will not necessarily be effective in enhancing the quality of the work carried out by such crime scene examiners, nor in improving the effective uses made of this work by other criminal investigators. Closer monitoring is not a substitute for rigorous research on the process of crime scene examination in particular or on the application of forensic science and its associated technologies in general.

Key UK agencies have shown little enthusiasm for funding or commissioning such research, yet in its absence it is difficult to see how it will be possible to 'move forensic science to centre-stage so that it is part of [police] service delivery at a strategic level (Green 2007: 354). There is no sign that this situation will be improved in the newly privatised world of forensic science provision, and in fact, the opposite might be true.

At the same time, the increased UK interest in evidence-based policing may find attractive the kinds of studies that are now beginning to emerge elsewhere in the world, in which carefully designed and executed 'field trials' offer new insights into what the benefits – and cost effectiveness – of specific forensic interventions may be. It will be interesting to see whether ACPO, the Forensic Regulator and other key actors are willing to support the development of this new kind of forensic science research.

Seminar Three – What role for policing in securing economic and social well-being?

In the third and final seminar of this series, we now turn our attention to the effectiveness of various interventions in securing economic and social well-being in city centre and residential environments. David Strang, Chief Constable, Lothian and Borders Police offers the police perspective, whilst Adam Crawford, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Leeds and Gesa Helms, Kelvin/Smith Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow, put the debate into the academic context.

With the police under increasing financial and political pressure, the need to develop strategies that address both the social and economic concerns of urban life have become more pronounced.

Research by Nick Fyfe, Professor of Human Geography in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Dundee and Director of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research has highlighted how, for example, the introduction of zero tolerance policing (ZTP) and closed circuit television surveillance are as much about attempts to revive the economic fortunes of city centres as they are about trying to reduce the fear of crime. Similarly in residential areas, the expansion in gated communities and the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders can be read partly as attempts to protect property values as well as deal with local anxieties about crime and disorder.

However, complex questions frequently demand complex answers, and while supporters claim significant reductions in crime and improvements in feelings of safety in public space as a direct result of ZTP, critics not only question the logic on which such claims are based but point to the wider, negative implications of ZTP for social life and social justice in the city.

> " SOME DEPICT ZTP FOR EXAMPLE AS A 'ROBOCOP VERSION OF BEAT POLICING [WHICH] COULD QUITE EASILY DESTROY THE 'BALLET OF THE STREET' AND THE 'BENIGN DISORDER' THAT ARE SO CRUCIAL TO A VITAL STREET LIFE' (MCLAUGHLIN AND MUNICE, 2000), CRUSHING ANY "STREET SPONTANEITY AND VIBRANCY".
> (Merrifield, 2000)

Key questions included:

- To what extent is policing crucial to the 're-moralisation' of city centre and residential spaces?

- What evidence is there for the effectiveness of policing interventions in securing economic and social well-being?

- Is there any evidence that current policing interventions are contributing to processes of social exclusion and the 'purification' of urban space?

What is the role of policing in community well-being?

Is modern-day policing about catching criminals? Or has police responsibility shifted to something far much broader – and indeed more impossible – than that?

There are challenges in the new world of where the police is going and if it is to move away from its more traditional role, questions are raised, says **David Strang, Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders Police**.

For David Strang Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders Police, the role of policing in the 21st century needs to be re-examined. He argues that we need to look beyond a traditional concern with the police as a law enforcement agency and emergency service and consider the ways in which policing is fundamental to social peace-keeping and community building. In other words, policing must engage in addressing the long-term causes of problems in partnership with other agencies, particularly those involved in health and education. Typically, the police get called to events because they are about broken individual or community relationships so how those relationships are repaired and how you prevent the break up of relationships in the first place are crucial. Effective policing therefore depends on the quality of the partnerships between the police and other agencies and with the public.

> **SUCCESSFUL POLICING HAS AT ITS CORE AN UNDERSTANDING OF RELATIONSHIPS.**

In Scotland, the introduction of Single Outcome Agreements under the Local Government in Scotland Act, means that the police share a statutory responsibility with partner agencies to advance community well-being in areas like health, the environment, community safety and education. As Chief Constable Strang argues, this is a 'new world' in which the police are acting well beyond their traditional role in relation to the prevention and detection of crime. Such a new world brings with it important challenges, not least with respect to how the public view the role of the police in these new partnership arrangements and how resources are distributed to allow the police to continue to play a reactive as well as a preventative role.

> **JOINT WORKING IS SO HUGELY IMPORTANT AND MY POLICE AUTHORITY HAS APPROVED AND SIGNED FIVE SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS FOR FIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS.**

> **I, AS CHIEF CONSTABLE AM ANSWERABLE TO MY POLICE AUTHORITY AND MANY OTHER PEOPLE.** But to what extent are the public informed and consenting to this new role? There will undoubtedly be challenges in terms of resources.

For **Professor Adam Crawford, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and Director of the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds**, there are a number of critical issues concerning three contemporary policy trends and their implications for the role of policing in securing economic and social well-being:

- The first is the new-found mission of the public police in responding to and seeking to manage public perceptions and subjective insecurities – the so-called 'reassurance agenda'.

- A second issue concerns the evolving mixed economy of 'plural policing' as evidenced by the growth of private security, the expansion of quasi-police agents – such as wardens and community support officers – and the proliferation of multi-sectoral partnerships.

- Thirdly, recent years have seen a growing 'marketisation' and commercialisation of the public police evident through the selling of policing services and various income-generation arrangements.

Against the background of an increasingly complex division of labour, the public police mandate is being stretched into realms of subjective anxieties and private fears as performance measurement has become linked to public perceptions of insecurity and indicators of confidence. In thinking about the contribution to economic and social well-being of policing, there is a pressing need to:

- be aware of the limitations of the role of the public police and the dangers of raising false expectations

- consolidate and clarify the boundaries between the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of diverse policing agents

- harness better the efforts of plural policing providers in the furtherance of public safety

- attend to questions about the (in)equitable distribution of security and the legitimacy of policing by different security providers and personnel

- and secure suitably robust forms of governance to ensure policing (broadly defined) is delivered in accordance with democratic values of justice, equity, accountability and effectiveness.

The shift to consumer-oriented policing – with an emphasis on public reassurance through visible patrols focused on tackling anti-social behaviour – has brought significant benefits for community engagement. It had reoriented policing towards greater responsiveness to local concerns with implications for improved trust and confidence in the police. Where local policing teams are well integrated with partner agencies and engage with diverse sections of the communities they serve, they can make significant strides in improving confidence, building trust and facilitating community well-being.

However, there are vexed questions about how public perceptions and levels of confidence are measured and their impact on policing. In a managerial age in which what gets measured counts, performance indicators significantly influence organisational behaviour, often with unintended consequences. These often crude indicators fasten performance to dynamics that lie beyond police control and fail to attend to the more fundamental levers of confidence, namely questions of legitimacy and trust. There are dangers that the emphasis on public perceptions not only stretches an already 'vast and unmanageable social domain' of police-work into newer, more impossible realms of subjective anxieties and private fears, but also raises unrealistic public expectations.

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There were allied concerns about whose demands and whose confidence police responsiveness was to be coupled with, given the differential capacity for certain communities and businesses to articulate demands and voice policing needs.

Much public policy debate constructs over-simplified distinctions between 'the needs of the victim or the ordinary law-abiding citizen, on the one hand, and offender populations, on the other hand. This not only belies the research that suggests significant levels of everyday crime amongst the so-called 'law abiding majority' and the close interconnections between victims and offenders, but also shifts the focus away from winning consent and compliance from more marginalised populations and the 'usual suspects' of police attention.

Hence, the focus on public perceptions presents dangers in skewing the distribution of policing away from areas of high crime need and into areas in which demands with regard to low-level incivilities and fear or crime are relatively high. This uneven distribution was likely to be exacerbated by the commercialisation of policing and security as commodity, where access to additional security depends upon the capacity to purchase.

> WHILE THE FOCUS ON CONFIDENCE IS TO BE WELCOMED, IT LARGELY EVADES MORE PROFOUND QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LEGITIMATE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY POSED BY THE PLURALISATION OF POLICING AND THE COMMERCIALISATION OF THE POLICE.

There remain unresolved questions over the legitimacy and role of new policing agents – notably PCSOs, wardens and private security – with regard to their capacity for authoritative action and uncertain public expectations over (limits to) their responsibilities and powers. It is no longer realistic to think of policing in terms of the public police alone. There is an urgent need to open up debate to embrace a more holistic understanding of policing and to attend to the complex challenges with regard to legitimacy, accountability and governance to which the current mixed economy gives rise.

As has been touched on, the search for safety has led to techniques like ZTP and the rise of CCTV systems as well as the creation of the ASBO. Aside from these new policing techniques to facilitate the fight against crime, there has been the rise of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) – areas of a town, city, or commercial district, where businesses have voted to invest in additional local improvements to benefit the local economy. Improvements may include extra safety or security, or cleansing and environmental measures.

Dr Gesa Helms of the University of Glasgow looked into the role and implications of BIDs and whether they actually and definitively contribute to economic and social well-being. Originating in Canada thirty years ago, BIDs have become a common vehicle for delivering the regeneration and management of commercially valuable downtown locations in North American and Europe. BIDs present one of the most advanced examples of privatised governance of urban spaces due to the fact that once approved, participation becomes compulsory and funding for services is achieved by mandatory fees payable by all businesses within the district. The introduction of BIDs in the UK builds on an extensive network of town centre management (TCM) schemes across the country since the early 1990s, with the first BID established in 2001. Since then, there has been a steady expansion with votes taken almost weekly and over 70 schemes established.

Key tasks for BIDs vary but include:

- marketing and lobbying the maintenance and improvement of street furniture
- cleansing
- the monitoring of litter
- graffiti
- parking and rubbish disposal as well
- the provision of uniformed policing presences.

The final task is often organised through wardens or other uniformed agencies employed by the BID. The BID thus effectively takes on, through contractual arrangements with the local authority, the delivery of previously statutory tasks.

But what are the implications?

Evidence is ample and widespread that homeless people, young people, and others who use public spaces in regenerated city centres have become subjected to intensified policing and management activities. Research on the policing of downtown Los Angeles (Eick et al. 2004; Füller and Marquardt 2008) in turn shows the selectively repressive role taken by non-profit organisations in cleaning up and moving on homeless populations.

The establishment of BIDs presents the most advanced case of private urban governance by creating spaces to which the adjacent businesses, by way of paying fees, can stake claims more powerful than before. The implications of these changed ownership rights over central spaces are beginning to emerge in places such as Los Angeles, Johannesburg and Portland. They point to the attempts to define legitimately a city centre community as one of businesses only. Tensions for policing are visible in the demands placed on policing in terms of the night-time economy. Large demands are placed on numerous agencies from licensing officers and taxi stewards to public police.

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However, the findings question the logic – promoted by local economic development, TCM and other place-managers and image campaigners – that more policing and the exclusion of those who do not fit with commercial uses of urban public space increases economic well-being.

A privatised urban governance model such as BIDs has resulted in making resistance to particular pressures and demands, e.g., for extra police time or the prioritising of some demands over others, a lot harder than in governance arrangements that are more transparent and democratically accountable.

This happens at a time when urban policy leaves public space to fulfill a whole set of roles and functions for people who do not have safe private spaces for sleeping, socialising or living available to them – such as the homeless, young people and other vulnerable groups. It is for reasons like these that the politics of public space must not be left out and that questions like those over definitions of economic and social well-being and who is to benefit from these require our attention.

> ECONOMIC WELL-BEING DOES NOT EQUAL ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS; NEITHER IS IT CLEAR THAT ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS RESULTS *PER SE* IN THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF A CITY'S POPULATION.

Summary

The Police Service has seen an explosion in responsibilities, its role constantly morphing. As Chief Superintendent Burke said, it is also entering a new era in terms of financial pressures which requires hard choices about the musts, coulds and shoulds within policing when the complexities of demands are increasing.

Competing demands stretch service delivery to its limits, and create considerable challenges, not least in the meeting of crude targets. That is a point that should make every man, woman and child pause for thought. For while the Police Service needs to investigate crime and respond to emergencies, as it has always done, it also needs to shift from the model of crime fighting to one of community building. Chief Constable Strang says that it is not a simplistic answer (of) 'let's stop doing all of that and start doing all of this', but it is a subtle change. The metaphor of fighting wars, whether it's on drugs or crime or terrorism is not particularly helpful, because seeing the problems as the enemy is not a helpful one. Fundamentally, law enforcement and prosecution represents failure somewhere and we ought as a society to be more intelligent at tackling prevention rather than dealing with the failure which follows.

Chief Constable Strang believes that changing how we do business and tackling these problems are not just a task for the police. Policing is wider than just professional police, it is a role for the whole community and by commitment and taking action then we can deliver economic and social and community well-being for our citizens.

Pertinently, the ESRC seminar series came as ministers were warned that Britain faces a 'credit crunch crime wave', after figures showed increases in burglary, theft and knife robberies.

Conservatives and Liberal Democrats said there was 'clear evidence' the recession was leading to increases in offences, while Jacqui Smith, the then Home Secretary, insisted the Government was working to prevent the downturn leading to rises in criminality but there was cause for optimism.

As the BBC's home editor Mark Easton pointed out: "It is a funny sort of crime wave that sees total recorded crime in England and Wales down five per cent in a year and people's experience of crime stable. Not so much a 'wave' as a slowly-draining mill-pond. The figures, we are told, contain powerful evidence of a rise in property crime – particularly burglary.

He continues "Well, recorded burglary from people's houses in England and Wales did go up. There were 3,700 more incidents year on year – ten more burglaries every day. A one per cent rise. But recorded burglary from other buildings (offices, factories, shops etc) went down by 6,050 incidents – 16 fewer burglaries every day. A two per cent fall."

So the 'crime wave' is not all it seems and while the police role is perilously all-encompassing, many officers embrace the chance to take on more – to build communities as well as fight the cancer of crime that exists within them.

Against all this, demonstrators' video footage, and their complaints that police were violent during London's G20 protests have reignited the debate about the police's role and methods. The public embraces firm policing – some claim that becoming more accountable means the police are less effective – but quickly recoils from controversial no-nonsense police tactics.

More generally, whilst there is much trepidation about the impact of the recession upon policing and communities, the pressures and stresses induced, can also occasion a more creative and innovative period of reform. This could be so for policing, if it harnesses the evidence-base being generated by the research communities.

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As Professor Fielding pointed out, there remains a tension between the desire to be responsive to local concerns and the fact that the police are the principal repository for the state's coercive power. However, it is important to note that no one ever calls for fewer police officers or for those we do have to do less. Numerous polls on the question of the most important issues facing Britain, place the economy first while, marginally ahead of policing in third, is the thorny issue of immigration. The truth is that the success of our police links these issues, and above all, that is what this ESRC seminar series has shown.

The Police Service is integral to all the major issues facing the UK, and its successful future is vital to everyone.

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