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A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF FOUR POLICE CONSULTATIVE

COMMITTEES IN BIRMINGHAM

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Doctor of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

September 1993

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Thesis Summary

Consultation between the police and the community was a recommendation of Lord Scarman in his report into the Brixton riots in 1981. By 1982 the West Midlands Police Authority had established local consultative committees on each police sub-division.

This thesis is a study of four Police Consultative Committees in Birmingham, using qualitative methods of attendance at committee meetings and interviews with committee members. The research was carried out between 1990 and 1992 - ten years after formal consultation was established, and aimed to examine the relationship between the micro social processes of the committees and key sociological theoretical concepts.

The analysis of the four committees contextualises them within the social and political parameters of urban policing in the late 1980s. Each committee is taken as a case study to highlight the following aspects of consultation:- relations between the police and black communities; membership, representation and accountability; responding to community conflict; crime prevention agencies and networks of social control. The findings are then generalised to the sociological theoretical concepts of hegemony, legitimation, community conflict and social control.

The central proposition of this thesis is that, whilst these committees are not fulfilling the role Lord Scarman envisaged for them (of involving local community representatives in policing strategies and policies), they do have important policing and political roles. It is argued that they offer a platform from which senior police officers can engage local people into supporting policing objectives without actually involving them in determining those objectives. Furthermore, such committees have political symbolism in that they enable the government to be seen to be responding to the issues of accountability and relations between the police and black communities following the urban disorders, without actually devolving any statutory powers to the community.

Key words: police consultation, institutional racism, social control, legitimation, accountability.

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NB. The names of people interviewed for this research have been changed in order to protect confidentiality.

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IN BIRMINGHAM

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ACRONYMS USED IN THIS THESIS:

ACPO	-	Association of Chief Police Officers
CDO*	-	Community Development Officer
CPP*	-	Crime Prevention Panel
CRE	-	Commission for Racial Equality
ECSP*	-	Erdington Community Safety Panel
ICPP*	-	Inner City Partnership Programme
NW*	-	Neighbourhood Watch
PACE	-	Police And Criminal Evidence Act
PCC	-	Police Consultative Committee

* Used specifically in Chapter 18 (Scarman, 1981)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION - SITUATING THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The subject of this thesis is Police Consultative Committees - established throughout England and Wales following the formal recommendation of Lord Scarman in his Report into the Brixton Riots of 1981. They are analysed within the context of the political economy of policing in the 1980s and 1990s, and in particular in the specific setting of Thatcherism. As both ideology and political practice this forms not just a backdrop to the research, but is part of the explanatory framework, as the links between PCCs, government policy and policing are explored. Lord Scarman's view was that bringing together local police officers and representatives of the community to discuss "policy and operations of policing" (Scarman, 1981: 202) would restore confidence and reduce mistrust. However, no specific remit was defined in relation to consultation, nor were statutory powers conferred when consultation was incorporated into the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) - the constitutional mechanism which established Police Consultative Committees.

Thus the fundamental argument of this thesis is that PCCs were as much symbolic structures for both the police and the government to demonstrate that 'something was being done', as they were a genuine attempt to engage in dialogue and action with local communities on policing issues. At the time of the

committees' inception in 1984 the right wing Conservative government was committed to a 'law and order' approach to crime and policing (Hall, 1983: 37-39; Kettle, 1983:231-232), and the 'riots' of the early 1980s had shaken this agenda. The government was clutching at straws and consultation offered one public response to deep-seated social problems. As the 1980s progressed PCCs came to fit in with other developments of government ideology and policy - in particular the concepts of active citizenship and consumerism.

The research for this thesis explores these issues through a qualitative study of four Police Consultative Committees in Birmingham. Each committee is then taken as a case study to analyse one of the four following aspects of consultation - the political and sociological significance of black members; membership, representation and accountability; community issues and conflict; and crime prevention through networks of social control agencies. The thesis argues that PCCs have a legitimating value for the police who can use the committee meetings to defend their actions and strategies, as well as functional roles for both the police and lay members who maintain the mechanisms of consultation.

Therefore the central proposition of this thesis is that Lord Scarman's original recommendation for these committees has never been fully achieved, but they persist because they have a symbolic function for both the Conservative government and

the police and act as a forum within which police legitimacy and consent can be produced and reproduced. Furthermore, the main beneficiaries of consultation have been the police, who are able to use them to rebuild consensus policing, rather than involving local communities in operational policing and/or policy-making (which was the role Lord Scarman intended).

This introductory chapter is of necessity a very cursory one - all the issues raised will be written about in greater depth as the thesis proceeds. The aim of this chapter is therefore to locate the research within my personal area of interest and to indicate the approach and structure of the thesis.

1.2 Personal interest

My own interest in Police Consultative Committees began in 1985, when I watched, from my own home, the flames of burning buildings on Lozells Road. What became known as 'the Handsworth riots' crystallised for me many years of concern about policing in Handsworth - the area where I live and had worked for ten years. One of the Police Authority's responses to that riot was to ask all Consultative Committees in the City to have an open meeting to discuss the issuing of plastic bullets to the West Midlands Police. The C1 committee, which covers the area of the riot, held their meeting in January 1986, and around 100 local people, including myself, attended. Following that meeting I was approached by a member of the Consultative Committee, who was also a County Councillor and member of the Police Authority, to join the committee. At that

stage I was critical of the whole notion of consultation - seeing it as no more than a public relations exercise by the police, and a talk shop for those willing to give credence to the police.

With these misgivings, I joined the C1 committee, representing the local Methodist church. I also felt ambivalent about representing a multi-racial congregation, some of whose black members had had their sons imprisoned following the 1985 riots. This raised several questions: whether the Police Consultative Committee was the appropriate forum through which the views and grievances of black parents could be brought to the attention of the local police; whether simply talking to the police was a form of collusion; whether membership of the committee by a white, middle-class woman was meaningful in mediating black experiences.

Whilst a member, I undertook a participant observation study of the committee for an undergraduate project. This helped clarify some of these questions and also raised further ones. There was also the sociological imperative to compare C1 to other committees in order to determine the 'typicality' of the C1 committee - leading ultimately to this study. My sociological imagination was intrigued that local people, from a variety of organisations, and with differing perspectives on policing, were prepared to attend meetings. Whilst there was a danger of Consultative Committees becoming formalised meetings where 'the great and the good' of a neighbourhood met to affirm

the police, there was also dissent, debate and argument over particular activities. The significant questions which emerged from this undergraduate study were:

- (i) who attended meetings (and which groups/organisations did not send representatives)
- (ii) why did they keep on going (i.e. their motivation and objectives)
- (iii) how did the police respond to various issues raised, and was their response in any way conditional on the 'notoriety' of the local community (in this case, Handsworth).

These questions have remained fundamental to this research, and others have been added in the light of reading, carrying out a pilot project, and in discussions with academic colleagues in the field.

1.3 Outline of thesis

The effect of the Scarman Report was to formalise and standardize forms of community liaison which in some police forces were already in existence. PACE 1984 gave them a statutory base, but not constitutional powers. Their legitimating role, ideological and symbolic roles and their functions in relation to social control for the central focus of this thesis. Its structure is now outlined.

Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical framework for the thesis, by drawing on sociological, 'race' and 'race relations' and policing theories, and by defining the key concepts of hegemony, legitimation, conflict, social control and 'race relations'. The policing concepts of consent, accountability and consultation are also defined and discussed. Given the sociological basis of the research, the key debate on agency

and structure is also introduced in the light of its relevance to the analysis of the data.

Chapter 3 describes the origins of police consultation - both in terms of the specific recommendation made by Lord Scarman, and in the wider context of earlier and current debates on community policing. Other research on PCCs is reviewed together with academic and police critiques of consultation.

The methodological base of the research - a qualitative study of four committees using a case study approach - is outlined in chapter 4. The operationalising of the research design is briefly discussed, and issues of validation and generalisation from the data are raised.

The following four chapters (5 - 8) form the main analytical section of the thesis. One police consultative committee is taken in turn and used as a case study to highlight a specific aspect of the research findings. The focus of each analytical chapter arose from an interplay between the original research questions generated at the outset and the themes and issues which began to emerge from interviews and observations during the course of the fieldwork.

Chapter 5 analyses the way in which an inner city, multi-racial PCC has a role in managing what can be termed the 'policing and race relations' problematic. At a structural level this occurs through the incorporation of local black 'community leaders',

and the political significance of this forms part of the analysis. The chapter also examines the production and reproduction of institutionalised racism and how this is perceived by both police and black members of the committee.

Chapter 6 demonstrates how policing by consent and police accountability are actively constructed through the specificity of selective membership of a suburban committee. A form of pseudo-accountability is generated which gives an illusion of policing by consent but which in reality serves to maintain the policing status quo.

Chapter 7 examines the role of a second inner city PCC in responding to conflict through the social construction of a community 'problem' which conceals underlying and fundamental social inequalities (the feminisation of poverty and the control of human sexual behaviour). The PCC members' 'common sense' view of the issue feeds back into the ideological problematising of prostitution and conflict in the community around this social 'problem' remains unresolved through the consultative committee despite the amount of time spent discussed the matter at PCC meetings.

Chapter 8 analyses the way in which the second suburban PCC forms part of an overlapping network of social control agencies on a police sub-division, with a particular emphasis on crime prevention and crime reduction. The incorporation of professionals and other state actors into hitherto policing

functions is related to wider government policies within the context of an apparent rise in crime. This chapter also considers the relationship of structures on the sub-division to the centralised power structures of the W.Midlands Police Authority and Birmingham City Council.

The conclusion (Chapter 9) relates the empirical findings to the theoretical framework, indicates the contribution of this thesis to knowledge in the area of the sociology of community policing, and identifies further areas of research for the future. However, it is to the theoretical and methodological considerations that this thesis now turns.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND TO POLICING IN

ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

The past 20 years have seen a plethora of writings on the police and policing. In part this has been generated by the police themselves as they have increasingly sought to professionalize their occupation and their role has become increasingly politicised - thereby producing a corpus of academics and researchers specialising in Police Studies, together with the attendant commissioning of research. In particular, there has also been a strong external interest amongst sociologists and criminologists in response to several social issues and controversies surrounding the police and their activities. Most notable of these have been the 'riots' of the 1980s and 90s; the continuing confrontations between the police and organised groups (for example, miners, print workers and poll tax demonstrators); and the inexorable rise in reported crime during the 1980s.

The subject of this thesis, Police Consultative Committees, have their origins in the 'riots' of the early 1980s and the Scarman Report which the Government commissioned. However, even the term 'riot' is sociologically and politically contentious. As Kettle and Hodges (1982: 10) point out, whilst there is a legal definition of 'riot', politically and

socially there are a variety of terms - "hooliganism, public disorder, protest, rebellion, uprising" - which have been used by different groups to both describe and reflect their particular view of the events which occurred in British inner cities in the 1980s. For the purposes of this thesis the word 'riot' is generally used, although its shortcomings are recognised.

One of the areas of research generated in the field of police studies has been that of police consultation - the focus of this thesis. However, to see PCCs simply as an outcome of a judicial inquiry into a riot is to misjudge the political and policing purposes they serve. To understand the development of PCCs account has to be taken of the social context of, and background to, public confrontations between the police and inner city communities in the early 1980s, and the economic and social preconditions which precipitated them. In particular those conditions of long-term economic recession, leading to an economic crisis in the early 1980s; the racialised division of labour and its effect on the reserve army of labour located in the inner cities; the role of the police in containing that crisis; and the marginalisation of black communities. All of this occurred within the political context of a radical right-wing government committed to 'rolling back the state' by cutting welfare and other public services; and reducing dependency on the state by raising expectations of consumer choice and allowing the free market to prevail. The ideological apparatus which facilitated this included the

mobilization of popular sentiments towards law and order which were connected to racialised attributes. These themes and histories will be more fully dealt with in Chapter 3 below.

In relation to the theoretical approach of this thesis, Fallding (1971: 501) draws a helpful distinction between explanatory theory and analytical theory. The former is a "coherent explanation for the things it studies", whilst the latter encompasses the range of concepts which are not explanatory in themselves, but contribute towards theoretical explanation. This distinction enables the researcher to distinguish between those sociological theories which constitute the framework and other theories which have been utilised at various points in this thesis to analyse, describe and explain the social, organisational and political role of PCCs.

In this chapter reference is made to mainstream sociological theories which are not directly related to policing, yet are central to the argument in this thesis concerning the role of Police Consultative Committees. In particular the works of Habermas, Gramsci and Hall have been influential and inspirational in situating the empirical research within a Marxist theoretical framework. This chapter therefore outlines key sociological and policing analytical concepts and critically evaluates these theoretical tools in relation to the analysis of PCCs.

2.2 Theoretical concepts and framework

One of the problems of theorizing policing is that there is no single, identifiable sociological policing theory on which to draw. As Johnston points out:

... the sociology of policing has been shaped by a variety of disciplinary approaches, including criminology, socio-legal studies, psychology, and the sociology of work and organisations. (1992: 183-184)

A further problem for this thesis is that the empirical research is not of policing per se, but an activity (consultation) which is on the boundary of police work. This therefore widens the potential theoretical fields to include strands as variable as 'race' and race relations theories, political theory, and community studies.

To resolve this problem, I have utilised those theories which encompass the fields of Marxist/critical sociological theory, 'race' relations theory and policing theory. Given the central proposition of this thesis - that PCCs serve a symbolic function for both the police and the Conservative government, and act as forums within which police legitimacy and institutional social control are enacted, then the relevant theoretical concepts are those which facilitate an explanation and analysis of these roles. These concepts are now briefly defined.

First, hegemony which denotes the active construction of the domination of one class over another by ideological and political means. This is used in this thesis to indicate the way in which policing by consent is actively constructed in

civil society. Second, legitimation or the basis of the validity of political representation and consent. Again this is linked to policing by consent, and also to the way in which the government, in times of crisis, resorts to using institutions like PCCs to regain legitimacy for their policies (including law and order policies). Third, conflict and the way in which different interest groups respond to issues in the community. This thesis discusses the extent to which PCCs are forums within which such conflict may be resolved. Fourth, and finally, social control and the extent to which overt or covert force is exerted to induce conformity. The question this raises is whether PCCs are covert agents of social control.

Whilst recognising that a theoretical synthesis of these concepts is not part of the remit of this thesis, nevertheless they are utilised to provide a theoretical framework which serves to facilitate explanation and analysis of the empirical findings of this research. This section now considers the major sociological theoretical concepts which have informed this thesis and are used in the analysis to throw light on the political and social aspects of PCCs, which were established against a backdrop of social and economic crisis tendencies in Britain in the 1980s.

2.2.1 Hegemony

First, in relation to ideology and politics, Gramsci's concept of hegemony is an attempt to explain the dominance of the ideology of social elites whilst avoiding the reductionism of

earlier Marxist economic explanations. Gramsci (Bocock, 1986: 11) argued that hegemony as "moral and philosophical leadership" was actively engendered in civil society, and in particular through the concept of nation. The role of intellectuals was also crucial in constructing hegemonic dominance. According to Gramsci, hegemony offered a world view with populist appeal, which becomes 'taken for granted' in its common sense articulation. As Bennett et al (1986: xiv-xvii) elaborate, there is a dynamic relationship in Gramsci's conception of the construction of hegemony, so that it becomes not a matter of domination but rather of negotiation. As Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987: 14) further argue, Gramsci's concept of hegemony also facilitates an explanation of the active search for policing by consent, and this was apparent at the PCC meetings attended for this research.

In this thesis Gramsci's theory of hegemony underpins the analysis of the way in which PCC agendas are constructed, the discussion which occurs at meetings and how the common sense world view of police and lay members is formed. The argument of this thesis is that there is a broad agreement on social norms of policing and society which are embedded in the PCC meeting and form a hegemonic construction which is seldom challenged. The PCC plays a role in maintaining and reproducing a particular hegemony of law and order.

An early and influential example of the application of Gramsci to policing was Hall et al's 'Policing the Crisis' (1978)

which drew on Gramsci's concept of hegemony, related it to the crisis in the state in the 1970s which resulted in a subsequent increase in authoritarian forms of social control. Gramsci was then applied to an analysis of crime, race and policing. Hall et al also extended Habermas's legitimation theory (see section 2.2.2 below) by locating the social construction of the crime which became known as 'mugging' within the political economy of a crisis in capitalism. Utilising the Gramscian concept of hegemony, the writers argued that as the state increased its intervention to maintain economic equilibrium for capital, so it had to increasingly manufacture consent and legitimacy, particularly by appeals to populism. As the inherent tensions and inequalities in capital manifest themselves in conditions of economic decline and the transformation from industrial to finance capital, so the state was drawn into its own crisis - what they termed a "hegemonic crisis" (ibid: 214).

As the economic crisis developed from the late 1960s into the 1970s, one of the most potent ideologies which could be mobilized by the state was that of popular racism. As the post-war economic expansion gave way to long-term decline in Britain's manufacturing industries, the impact was felt differentially. Young black people were becoming young, black unemployed people - the operations of a racially divided labour market giving rise to increasing unemployment amongst young blacks in those very industrial sectors to which their parents had been recruited. It was in the inner cities, with their concentrations of black residents, that resistance to racism

also developed. Unwilling to accept police harassment and brutality, young blacks reacted on the streets and became the visible face of the crisis - bringing them, in some areas on a daily basis, in conflict with the police. This was most notable in Brixton where the police used the 'Sus' law to stop and search black youth (Roberts, 1982: 100-128). Hall et al wrote:

Policing *the blacks* threatened to mesh with the problem of policing *the poor* and policing *the unemployed*: all three were concentrated in precisely the same urban areas.... The on-going problem of policing the blacks had become, for all practical purposes, synonymous with the wider problem of *policing the crisis*. (1978: 332)

'Mugging' provided the perfect moral panic around which both intra-state agencies (such as the police) and extra-state agencies (such as the media) could act to arouse racist ideologies and fantasies. It linked fear of crime, with fear of 'the enemy within' (ie. black people), at a period when immigration control was a major political issue, and the National Front and allied political groups of the extreme right were active.

This theoretical approach gives significance to both the specificity of particular locations and incidents as well as the long historical moments through which the interaction between economic, political and social changes can be understood. For this thesis, linking as it does both structural factors and ideological ones, it provides a background to policing and race relations which contextualises the research within a political and economic framework.

However, the historical period of 'Policing the Crisis' was the 1970s, whereas the research reported here was conducted in 1991/92, against the background of 12 years of Conservative government. The political context of this research has therefore been the policies and rhetoric of this radical, right wing government with their particular emphasis on law and order. Brake and Hale (1992: Chapters 2,5, and 8) develop an analysis of Conservative ideology and policies, arguing that law and order was crucial to their wider economic and social reforms, and has implications for specific responses to the levels of reported crime which have increased inexorably during the 1980s. They outline a model of "conservative criminology" central to which is a shift in responsibility for crime prevention from the police to the general public - a reconstruction of hegemony around ideologies of citizenship and individual responsibility.

Their model is used in Chapter 8 below of this thesis to analyse and partially account for the growing trend to establish community forums with a crime prevention remit, as exemplified on one of the police sub-divisions studied for this research. This will be linked to Cohen's theory of social control (see section 2.2.4 below) to argue that current trends in crime prevention actually allow the police to penetrate ever further into the community and thereby extend their control network.

2.2.2 Legitimation

Writing in the vein of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, Habermas (1973: Part II) linked the successive economic crises in post-war late capitalism to legitimation crises for governments. His theory argued that in capitalism, fiscal crises move from the economic sphere into the bureaucratic system, and are dealt with by the state, rather than capital.

If the state fails to manage the crisis through its own economic policies, then its legitimacy is brought into question. As the state's actions increase in order to manage the crisis, then its need for legitimacy also increases. A government with responsibility for managing the crisis will use the state apparatus in an instrumental way, but will also employ "expressive symbols" (ibid: 70) to legitimate its actions. These symbols can involve personalizing issues (Arthur Scargill as folk devil during the Miners' Strike); invoking the law by using hearings, judges and so on (Lord Scarman's inquiry into the Brixton riots); employing "advertising techniques" (such as crime prevention television advertisements discussed in Chapter 8 below); and utilising "discursive validity claims" (ibid.:8) (which senior police officers do in their pronouncements on policing matters at PCC meetings).

At the practical level, Habermas argued that governments, in order to maintain legitimacy, have to create specific institutions which engage popular support with a semblance of democracy. He wrote:

The arrangement of formal democratic institutions and procedures permits administrative decisions to be made

largely independent of specific motives of the citizens. This takes place through a legitimation process that elicits generalised motives - that is, diffuse mass loyalty - but avoids participation. (ibid., 36)

Habermas goes on to argue that ideologically such institutions focus

... attention to topical areas ... pushing other themes, problems and arguments below the threshold of attention, and thereby, of withholding them from opinion formation. (ibid., 70)

One of the arguments in this thesis is that PCCs have a legitimating role to play for both the police and the government, at both the symbolic and practical level. The way in which PCCs marginalise community issues in the way Habermas argues above, is analysed in Chapter 7 below.

As a general social and economic theory, Habermas's analysis of the way in which economic crises can lead to legitimation crises facilitates an explanation of the link between political policy changes and their unintended and intended consequences. For this thesis, the policy changes are the public spending cuts introduced from 1979 onward by the Thatcher Government and the latter refers to the the social and political responses - both planned (consultation) and unplanned (the economic recession of the early 1980s and the outbreaks of urban disorder and unrest). Habermas's concept of legitimation therefore forms an important part of the background to consultation, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 below.

Habermas's theory will be used in the empirical analysis of this thesis in three ways. First, to analyse the questions of membership of committees, representation and public participation (Chapter 6, below). Second, to the analysis of the way in which local issues are presented as social problems which displace a more rational understanding (Chapter 7 below). Third, along with Gramsci, to the analysis of the way in which the police and the local state have established an interlocking network of committees which perpetuates a particular crime prevention strategy. PCCs are part of this network and provide a platform from which the police can put forward their "discursive claims to truth" and thereby establish their norms and values, as well as legitimise their actions to government and the wider public (see Chapter 8 below).

2.2.3 Conflict

Picking up the theme of conflict in the community, and in contrast to theoretical concepts already discussed, Coser (1972: 38-49) writing from a functionalist perspective, argued that conflict had a central and positive role to play in complex societies, in that it

... serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups...
(Coser, *ibid.*, 48)

Furthermore he argued that "safety valve institutions" can develop which "drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments", thus minimising the likelihood of conflict erupting into direct hostilities.(1) Coser maintained that such institutions could offer a substitute object for feelings of hostility, but that

this was problematic, since the underlying tensions remain unresolved.

Coser further differentiated between "conflict behaviour and hostile feelings". Whilst the former alters the relationship between conflicting parties, the latter does not have this effect. Without this distinction, the concept of 'safety-value institutions' is "ambiguous". Coser goes on to note:

... though hostility may be expressed, the relationship as such remains unchanged. Whereas conflict changes the terms of the interaction, mere expression of hostile feelings does not. Thus expression, as distinct from conflict, may be welcomed by the powers that be. (ibid., 44)

In the case of PCCs as potential 'safety-value institutions', it is the expression of hostility by residents representatives about prostitutes and their clients which is permitted, rather than conflict. As Coser argues, this does nothing to change the relationship between these different interest groups, and thus the hostility persists.

There is however a problem in using the concept of a 'safety-value institution' in relation to a process like consultation, in that there are implicit contradictions. There was evidence from the fieldwork for this research that the police saw consultative committees as potential arenas for releasing conflict, but lay members saw this a problematic. Consultation implies working together over a period of time and was contrary to notions of 'safety-valves' which implies one-off situations where conflict comes to a head. This aspect of conflict will be elaborated more fully in Chapter 7 below.

As Coser rightly pointed out a problem with this concept is that the assumption of functionality of 'safety-valve institutions' in maintaining social stability leaves questions of underlying causes unanswered. In this sense the concept is more analytical than explanatory - there being no attempt to understand the social inequalities of class, 'race' or gender which may underpin conflict between groups, or the problems for marginal and/or exploited groups in reproducing inequalities through the institutionalising of conflict. This thesis will argue that the response of the PCC to the potential for community conflict around prostitution leaves these underlying inequalities unresolved, and may actually serve to reproduce and maintain inequality.

Thus it will be argued (see chapter 7 below) that the problematising of complex inequalities which result in certain forms of prostitution (feminisation of poverty, controls of aspects of human sexuality and the criminalisation of women) are not resolvable by coercive policing with the tacit support of PCC members. Nor is the substituting of police officers at PCCs meetings as objects of localised hostility to prostitution an effective way of mediating community conflicts of interest. The concept of 'safety-valve institutions' will therefore be assessed in the light of the analysis of the way in which PCCs deal with contentious issues in the community (in this instance, prostitution) and whether the PCC serves as a 'safety-valve institution' or as a legitimating institution which merely displaces conflict without actually resolving it.

2.2.4 Social Control

Finally, turning to theories of social control, the conception of the police as agents of social control is obvious given police powers and their law-enforcing role in society. However, the debate about the changing aspects of institutionalised social control has been focused more sharply by the post-war developments in policing to less direct forms of control, as embodied in the broad area of community policing policies. At one level social control is the other side of the coin to policing by consent (discussed in section 2.3.1 below). It also relates to wider issues of control and consent in capitalist, democratic societies such as Britain. If society is to remain peaceful and ordered (ie. the conditions required for capitalism to flourish), then some degree of consensus is necessary, with an element of control for those who deviate from the shared norms and values. This was the ontological question which early sociologists like Durkheim, Weber and Marx addressed as they sought to make sense of the massive changes in nineteenth century Europe. And one which sociologists like Berger (1963:83-95) pursued into the twentieth century. Yet as Berger argued, social control takes many forms - motivated from within the individual seeking conformity and imposed by social institutions and mores. It may no longer be such a central concern of current sociology, but it is an issue for this thesis insofar as the police are visible and powerful agents of social control whether through direct coercion or more indirect means.

Cohen (1985:2) finds a dichotomy in defining social control. He questions whether it is "a neutral term to cover all social processes to induce conformity", or

a negative term to cover not just the obviously coercive apparatus of the state, but also the putative hidden element in all state-sponsored social policy?
(ibid.,2)

Cohen argues that in Britain up to the late eighteenth century (and before the modern police were established) forms of social control were private - coming under the power of the local aristocracy and squirarchy, who appointed both magistrates and parish constables. The nineteenth century saw the bureaucratization and institutionalisation of control as the state came to increasingly take over roles previously held by the upper classes and/or the Church.

Cohen (ibid: 66 - 67) outlines four major changes which have contributed to increased institutionalised aspects of social control in the twentieth century. First, a return to privatisation of some aspects of police work, although not the same areas which came within the private sphere two hundred years ago. As an example he cites the growth of security firms, bodyguards and so on. Second, an increase in pro-active policing such as undercover work and entrapment. Third, the policy of community policing which aims to strengthen relationships between the police and the public, and improve the police image, whilst engaging in preventative work. Fourth, an increase in 'citizen policing' - the involvement of members of the public in policing functions, such as

Neighbourhood Watch, crime prevention panels and so forth. PCCs fit into the last two changes Cohen identifies.

Cohen (ibid: 107 - 112), in drawing together the concepts of legitimation and hegemony, links these changes to shifts in the mode of production in the past 15 years, in particular the specific changes in social relations resulting from rising unemployment and the declining industrial/manufacturing economic base. Echoing Habermas, he argues that the rise of conservatism in both Britain and the US at times of economic crisis, has led to a crisis of authority in which the role of the state in liberal democracies is questioned. The ending of the post-war consensus on welfarism as a solution to deeply embedded social problems has been replaced by an increasingly authoritarian state, and Cohen writes:

Traditional economic issues are, thus, shifted on to the common sense ideological space of law and order, justice, authority, discipline, control and welfare. It is on this terrain that the post-Keynsian assumptions of welfare liberalism begin to be dismantled in favour of an austere, technocratic conservatism.
(ibid., 108)

According to Cohen the indicators of this movement include a rise in rates of imprisonment, criminalisation, moral crusades around law and order, the marginalisation and scapegoating of minorities, and calls for harsher sentencing of offenders. State spending is redirected away from 'soft' welfare policies, to 'hard' law and order responses, and also encourages the growth of the private sector taking over state functions.

It has been argued by Scruton et al (1987) that since the election of the Conservative government in 1979 there has been an increasing move to authoritarianism, of which para-military policing is just one outward manifestation. Politicians on the right argue that with society becoming increasingly lawless and crime increasing it is inevitable that the powers of the police will be strengthened to meet the current challenge. The worst excesses of militarism are countered by forms of community policing - the benign face of authoritarianism. Ultimately this raises fundamental questions about the overall aim of policing in Britain - whether it is to maintain the peace under the kind of social and political crisis conditions discussed earlier, or to defend and protect the political interests of governments (as the Conservatives used the police during the Miners' Strike of 1984, for example)? The role of PCCs as institutions of social control at the local, community level will be further analysed in Chapter 8 below.

Inextricably linked to social control is the issue of policing by consent, insofar as it is not always possible for the police to gain consent, and at times some degree of overt force or control will be necessary to impose order. Reiner sees contemporary policing as a balancing act between the two:

Either the police are restricted absolutely to consensual methods, or they are given some sort of graduated powers to deal with people coercively in the event that they do not respond to firm but mere exhortation. Giving the police powers may reduce the incentive to develop tactics for a consensual resolution. (1985: 172)

One of the arguments of this thesis is first, that the consultation process constitutes a form of social control by the incorporation of selected representatives onto the committees (Chapters 5 and 6 below). And second, that the PCCs are part of a network of agencies on police sub-divisions through which previously informal, community-based forms of control are brought under the direct, formal auspices of the police (Chapter 8 below).

This section has discussed theories in the broad Marxist tradition - drawing from Gramsci, Habermas, Hall and Cohen, together with the functionalist Coser, and indicated briefly the way in which their specific theoretical concepts of hegemony, legitimation, conflict and control will be applied as analytic and explanatory tools in the thesis to explicate the links between police consultation as a social process, and the wider social and political context from which they originate and within which they operate. These form the macro theoretical framework, and the theories of 'race' and policing which will now be discussed are located within this framework.

2.2.5 Race relations

Before exploring theories of 'race' and policing a brief discussion of concepts and terminology is required. There is a view that the very conceptualisation of racial categories is itself in danger of maintaining and reproducing racist ideologies. As Back and Solomos argue:

The problem which has preoccupied many writers has been how to establish the epistemological validity and causal power of racialisation and race information without endorsing everyday ideological discourse. (1991:2)

It is not within the remit of this thesis to engage further in this debate, but it is perhaps useful at this point to establish that in terms of the relationship between the police and black communities in Britain the concepts of 'race', racialisation and institutional racism are central to an understanding and analysis of such social processes as consultation. (For example, the way in which relations between the police and black communities has been racialised over time will be elaborated in Chapter 5 below.)

Throughout this thesis the word 'black' is used in a generic and political sense to denote people of African-Caribbean and Asian descent (the two ethnic minority groups represented on PCCs), whilst specific ethnic origin is indicated where relevant.

The term 'race relations' also needs elaboration. In one sense it refers to the sociological theories of the 1960s and 1970s, dominated by writers like Rex and Banton, in which the focus was on relationships between black immigrant groups and the white indigenous population in Britain. These relationships were seen to be problematical as the immigrant groups competed for scarce resources and came into conflict with each other and sections of the white population. This problematising of what were perceived to be 'race relations' has been subsequently criticised by sociologists such as Miles and Solomos for

failing to recognise the significance of racism both in its insitutional and ideological forms. The importance of this sociological distinction for this thesis is that the police perspective and approach remains locked into a 'race relations' paradigm.(2)

Furthermore, the literature on 'race relations' in Britain is inextricably linked to that of policing, insofar as much of the canon of writings on 'race' contain a section on policing, and vice-versa. This will be explored more fully in Chapter 3 below, where the background to consultation is outlined. In particular attention is given to the history of the breakdown in relations between the police and black communities, leading to a search by the police for a community/race relations approach, since, as will be indicated, in policing terms race relations is subsumed under community relations. Or to put it the other way around, from the police perspective 'community relations' is 'race relations'. It is argued by some writers therefore, that community policing is an approach largely developed in response to the perceived (although not real) problem of black people in Britain, rather than institutional racism.

Specific 'race relations' approaches date from the late 1960s, when the Home Office circulated 'Police and Coloured Communities' to Chief Constables (Gordon, 1987:123). Again, this can be related to the broader 'race relations' movement in Britain with the establishment of the Race Relations Board, and

the 1965 and 1968 Race Relations Acts - the 'soft' response to increasingly repressive immigration control.

The literature which covers the development of community policing and the links with black communities will be explored in this section. Firstly through the theoretical framework of a domestic neo-colonial model, and then through an examination of the failure of the British 'Race Relations Industry' to address issues of institutionalised racism and policing, thus opening the way for race equality policies in local state agencies. This leads to an analysis in the thesis of the political significance of black members of PCCs.

First, however, the theoretical model of domestic neo-colonialism. Hechter (1975:30-34) defines colonialism as a system in which the metropolitan core accrues power and resources which are unevenly distributed between itself and the peripheral colonies, causing uneven and under-development in the periphery. The latter remains vulnerable and unstable over time, with power and wealth continuing to accumulate in the core at the expense of the periphery. Neo-colonialism refers to the position where a former colony remains in a dependency relationship to the metropolis despite gaining political independence. Domestic neo-colonialism is where the colony is located within the metropolis itself. In the British context it can be argued that black communities represent a domestic neo-colonial formation.

Fanon (1967:29-35) identified several characteristics of colonial countries, the central one of which was the segregation of the population by 'race'. This segregation and subordination was maintained by the use of force, with the police and army marking the boundary between black and white. This was reinforced by an ideology which constructed a stereotype of black as evil. The point at which the 'race' line was crossed was when the black elite engaged in dialogue with the colonial administrators, particularly during the period of decolonisation. This could be extrapolated to an analysis of PCCs, which are institutions on the boundary between the police and the community. One of the features of PCCs has been the importance attached to the co-option of black and/or ethnic minority representatives onto committees, and this will be explored in detail in Chapter 5 below.

The incorporation of black elites into the dominant society is a theme pursued by Sivanandan (1982:112-122, 1990:Chapter 4). He argues that the role of the state in post-war Britain vis-à-vis black settlers was to pursue policies of assimilation and integration through state agencies, whilst at the same time controlling the entry of blacks into Britain with successively racist immigration laws. Central to the integrationist policies was the role of organisations such as Community Relations Councils and the Race Relations Board (later to become the C.R.E.), which acted as mediators by engaging a black bourgeoisie in containing and moderating the dissent of the more militant black working class. Layton-Henry (1984:5)

also makes the point that colonial rule was enforced "with the co-operation of local chiefs and leaders", and that this has become a legacy of colonialism, both informing social policy in Britain and the expectations of black migrants to the U.K.

Hall et al take a different perspective on the domestic colony, by arguing that colonies of black settlement intensified as a response to racism by immigrant workers in the 1950s and 60s:

At one level the formation of the ghetto 'colony' was a defensive and corporate response. It involved the black community turning in upon itself. 'Colony life' was... simply a defensive reaction.. against official racism. (1978: 351)

Within the colony cultures of resistance to racism were formed, and equally important, forms of social and economic support established.

Domestic neo-colonialism is therefore a term which in the British context sees black people from the former colonies constituting, effectively, a colony within Britain. This is characterised by economic dependency on mainstream society, yet separated from it by racist law and ideology, with the police at the interface of dominant white society and the black colony. A further feature is the role of black leaders or elites in mediating between the two - a theme of relevance to this thesis. This duality may be a two-way process. Partly as Hall et al suggest, a retreat by black communities from racism, but also, as Sivanandan argues, a product of social policy reinforced by media and other portrayals of racist stereotypes and ideologies.

In the literature on 'race' and policing, the development of community policing is seen as just one public arena in which black elites or community leaders have been incorporated. For example, of Consultative Committees Gordon wrote:

By involving members of the public in policing discussions, the police could implicate them in their own decisions, divert criticism and achieve legitimation and support for their operations. (1983: 64)

This is a replication of the colonial strategy of engaging moderate blacks into agencies of the state administration, in this case PCCs.

There is empirical evidence (from Northam's research, 1988: Chapter 1) to demonstrate the colonial element of recent developments in para-military policing (3). Marxist writers such as Hall, Gordon and Sivanandan would see the role black people play in aspects of community policing as an equally neo-colonial role in the way Fanon described. There is empirical evidence from the research for this thesis that police managers on the sub-division went beyond mere incorporation to use the PCCs as a source of "community interveners" (Northam, *ibid*: 10 - black people identified by the police to be used in times of public unrest), and some people interviewed for this research have played this role.

The usefulness of a theory of domestic neo-colonialism lies partly in its broad historic thrust, incorporating as it does Britain's imperial and colonial history, the legacy of which did not end with decolonisation, but persists today in British society. Furthermore, PCCs can be situated within the wider

framework of present and past policing trends. All of this can then be located within the context of British 'race relations', an understanding of which is necessary to analyse the political significance of the membership of black people on PCCs.

However, there are weaknesses in this model. In the first place it implies a conspiracy theory to co-opt black people, for which there is little evidence. Keith wrote:

The construction of co-optation is haphazardous. It is difficult to locate the elusive 'they', the personification of the power-bloc, the anonymous managerial 'controllers' of fictional dystopia. (1990: 163)

Second, it ignores the motivation and perceptions of black people themselves who engage in police consultation. To see them as dupes of the system is patronising, and overlooks the possibility of genuine concern to engage in public service, represent their organisation or attempt to effect change.

An alternative to the domestic neo-colonial model is the socio-political analysis of developments in anti-racism by state agencies in the 1980s. Partly this arose as a response to the failure of the 'race relations industry' (ie the Commission for Racial Equality, Community Relations Councils and the Race Relations legislation) to address issues of institutional racism and discrimination in Britain. Solomos gives three reasons for this:

First, the machinery set up to implement the [1976] Act has not functioned effectively. Second, the policies have not produced the intended results. Third, policies have failed to meet the expectations of the black communities. (1989: 79)

The other thrust to what can be termed "municipal anti-racism" came from the riots of the early 1980s (Solomos, *ibid*: 93; Keith and Murji, 1990: 115), as local authorities sought to respond to the urban unrest through policy initiatives.

Moves to implement racial equality policies by local government departments produced two impetuses for the involvement of black representatives. On the one hand black groups themselves were asking to be consulted (Prashar and Nicholas, 1986: 5). The election of black councillors onto metropolitan councils in the early 1980s was significant in mobilizing and articulating pressure from the grass roots. On the other hand, one of the orthodoxies of anti-racism was the inclusion of black representatives in participative processes. Without the inclusion of such black representatives the state agency would lack credibility. This view was succinctly expressed in the 1981 Home Affairs Committee on Racial Disadvantage:

There is a strong obligation on councils to set up means of communication and consultation with ethnic minority groups and to ensure that existing structures do not directly or indirectly discriminate against ethnic minorities. (Cited by Prashar & Nicholas, *ibid.*, 5)

PCCs were no exception to this trend, and this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 below. There was strong pressure from the Home Office (see for example, Home Office Circular 62/1989) to have ethnic minority representatives on PCCs (4).

This theoretical approach takes more account of the political significance of black people on consultative committees, and

locates this within the framework of a generalised move to racial equality policies and politics amongst state agencies, including the police. This moves away from the more structural determinism of the neo-colonial model, whilst retaining the notion of incorporation. As stated above, one of the weaknesses of domestic neo-colonial is the unexamined motivation of black people and ethnic minority groups to engage in consultation. To see black people as somehow unwittingly incorporated into the system is to overlook their motivation to engage in public service - a criticism of the neo-colonial model made by Mason (1982: 40). In other words, it is not just a matter of the incorporation of black members, but the impulse for involvement which originates in black communities. This is one aspect of membership of PCCs which will be analysed in Chapter 5 below.

2.2.6 The question of agency and structure

Turning to a rather different theoretical issue, one of the current debates in sociology is that concerning agency and structure. Giddens (1987:2-4) argues that what distinguishes human beings from other species is that they are "concept bearing agents" - that is, that humans generally act rationally and consistently and understand their actions. Within sociological theory there has often been a focus on social forces - capitalism, industrialism - as social constraints on human action, which then raises the question of self-determination, conscious action and choice. Or there has been

an emphasis on social structures - religion, the family, the state - which does not take into account the role of human action within those structures. The theoretical problem is in giving centrality to one over the other - whether structures determine and constrain human action, or whether human action is primary in shaping and controlling structures.

This problem is reflected epistemologically and methodologically in the division between positivistic, quantitative studies (such as those by Durkheim and the later functionalists) and ethnographic, qualitative studies which place more emphasis on action and meaning (as exemplified by the work of Weber). The issue is further complicated by levels of sociological analysis -between macro studies of major structures in society and micro studies of small groups, individuals and social processes. In the research for this thesis the unit of analysis is the micro level of police consultative committees, their role within local communities and their relationship to community policing. Yet these are situated within macro structures of national government policy and local state politics.

In theoretical terms the super-structural models of hegemony, legitimation, conflict and social control have their limitations with regard to incorporating a notion of agency. As Gilroy (1987:16) notes, in theorizing policing and 'race relations', the question becomes more complex. Does racism have its own autonomy? Is racism part of the structures of

society (as implied by the term 'institutional racism'), or does it operate at an ideological level to give meaning to the world views of individuals and groups? Gilroy wrote: level of

... it may be useful to be more explicit about the different ways in which racism is both a property of structures and a source of meanings. (op.cit.,16)

In Chapter 5 below, this thesis will examine those structural variables through which the concept of institutional racism comes to be defined in relation to PCCs. The way in which black members of a committee perceive institutional racism in policing will also be analysed.

One way to resolve the debate is to identify and analyse the relationship between agency and structure with the specific context of the particular piece of research. As Cook (1990:113) argues, there is a "general problem of relating microprocesses to macrostructure". In relation to policing, Johnston (1992:203) points out that much of the focus of research has been on the micro level of individual 'frontline' police officers, with a disregard for both police organisational structures and the effects of other organisations. Whilst this research has a wider focus of study than individual police officers - incorporating as it does representatives of the local community within the structure of a committee - it also attempts to bridge the agency/structure divide by relating the social processes of PCCs which are influenced by individual actions, to wider structural factors.

Cook (op.cit.:115-117) proposes the utilisation of exchange network theory as a way of resolving the problem of agency and structure, but this is really more applicable at the level of analytical rather than explanatory theory. Bhaskar (1979: 42-44) on the other hand, puts forward a transformational model of the relationship between structure and agency. He argues that social structures provide a precondition for human agency and action, in that, in his terminology, the individual has to have something upon which to act. Structures are not created by action, but action can transform and reproduce structures.

Giddens (op.cit., 67-69) points to the unintended consequences of human action and the effect that can have on structures. This is particularly relevant to a study of PCCs, as it can be argued that people do not join the committees in order to legitimise policing policies and strategies, yet this is often an outcome, simply through lay members reluctance to challenge the policing status quo. (Of course, legitimation may have been an intentional goal of Scarman and the government.) This can also encompass the way in which consultation has developed and in particular the weaknesses inherent in the formal procedures which were not envisaged by Lord Scarman when he made his original recommendations, but which have resulted in PCCs being largely ineffective in relation to issues such as police accountability, as Chapter 6 below argues.

The specific relationship between individual members as agents of the PCC and their place in the social and institutional

structure which they represent (be it the police force, the local authority, or community group) will be analysed in Chapter 8 below. In particular, the role of key social actors is identified and analysed in relation to the network of crime prevention agencies on a police sub-division. In that chapter the usefulness of Bhaskar's transformational model and Giddens' concept of unintended consequences can be explored and tested for the empirical verification of the way in which key social actors relate to social structures and agencies involved in police consultation.

Overall, I would argue that agency and structure are not clearly delineated areas for social inquiry, but are inter-related and interactive. In order to explore that relationship some of the questions asked of informants for this study relate to their individual perceptions, histories and motivations, whilst other delve into structural factors. What ethnographic fieldwork can provide is empirical data to both identify those properties of structures which require explanation and analysis, and the meanings individuals give to their actions. The methodological argument for this approach is made in Chapter 4 below. In this research the micro level empirical data is analysed in relation to the theoretical concepts outlined in the framework given earlier in this chapter.

2.3 Policing concepts

In the literature on policing there are three key concepts of relevance to this thesis - consent, accountability and consultation. Scarman (1981: 102-105) cited consent and accountability as the principles which underpin British policing. Not only are they linked, insofar as Reiner (1985:172) argues there is a balance to be sought between the two, but they are also implicit in Scarman's view of consultation in providing the mechanism by which both consent and accountability in policing may be achieved. Each will now be defined and discussed and their application to the thesis established.

2.3.1 Policing by Consent

If one aspect of policing is, as discussed earlier, their social control function (whether latent or overt) the counterbalance to this is the concept of consent. Scarman (1981:102-103) identified the need for the police to find a balance between their three functions - maintaining the peace, enforcing the law with impartiality and defending civil liberties. Whilst the exercise of discretion by individual police officers in fulfilling these functions has been one of the hallmarks of British policing, it has to be exercised with the general consent of society as a whole.

Brogden (1982:248-250) argued that consent was an illusion, and had to be actively engendered in civil society rather than being passively given. In terms of policing history this view is supported by Reiner (1985: Chapter 1) who outlines two

versions of police history and the interpretation of consent. In the traditional, orthodox account, the origins of the modern police lie in the social unrest which resulted from urbanisation and industrialisation, and the related rise in urban crime. Although pressure for the establishment of a police force increased from the mid-eighteenth century, it took until the 1830s for what we know as the modern police to replace the pre-existing parish constable system. This happened first in the growing metropolitan cities, but quickly spread to the town and county boroughs. Opposition to the new police came from both upper class interest and working class representatives, but this is dismissed by the orthodox historians as an aberration which was rapidly overcome, as the public came to accept the benefits of the new police - namely increased public orderliness and an apparent controlling of crime. The main beneficiaries were seen to be the working classes, who came under the protection of the police.

Reiner goes on to argue that the underlying theory of this historical view is

... an assumed 'fit' between the 'new police model' and the order maintenance requirements of an industrialised, liberal-democratic society. (ibid., 18)

In other words, a supply and demand model, with the police being the inevitable outcome of social circumstances. From this inevitability flows the rapid acceptance of the police, consensus as to their social good, and a recognition that the police serve the interests of society and control those elements which hinder peace and order.

This orthodox view came under attack in the 1970s, according to Reiner (ibid:Chapter 1), by a 'revisionist' history which challenged many of the traditionalist claims. This perspective locates the social problems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within the framework of capitalism, and the conflict between social classes. It was the interests of the emerging industrial/entrepreneurial bourgeoisie who struggled politically for their rights and property to come under the protection of the police, which led to opposition from both the upper classes (who feared loss of power and autonomy), and the working class (who were the objects of policing). Far from there being rapid acceptance of the new police, resistance to overt forms of policing is a continuous thread in working class history, linking the 1830s unrest to the 1980s riots.

The point of outlining these differing accounts of police history, is to show that the theoretical concepts of consent and control outlined earlier are problematic in their empirical understanding and interpretation. Are the police a benign force, impartially enforcing the law and maintaining the peace with the implicit consent of the people? Or are they merely the agents of control for an increasingly authoritarian state with consent being imposed through force if necessary? Or is policing by consent something which has to be continually tested and negotiated?

In relation to PCCs, Morgan (1989: 217-234) argues that their central role is the reconstruction of consent in the face of

declining confidence in the police from wide sections of the population in the past decade (and over a range of issues including the political debates about accountability; less willingness to assist the police; and concern over public order policing). This thesis tests out part of Morgan's argument - his marginalisation hypothesis - in relation to the representativeness of committee members and the additional question of police accountability (see Chapter 6 below).

2.3.2 Police Accountability

In 1791, Thomas Paine wrote:

"A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody, ought not to be trusted by anybody." (Cited in The Observer, 17.3.91)

The question of the accountability of those who hold public office is not a new one, therefore, but has been particularly contentious in relation to the police given the special powers which they hold.

Morgan and Maggs (1985b: 7-9) in their analysis of PCCs, give three models of police accountability - stewardship, partnership and directive - which will be briefly discussed. Stewardship implies an 'after the event' account of actions, utilisation of resources and so on. As Simey wrote, when Chair of Merseyside Police Authority :

...those to whom power is delegated shall be accountable for their stewardship. (1988:74)

Partnership implies a joint approach in which policing objectives are agreed between the police and the local

community. The directive model involves the political control of policing objectives by democratically elected representatives - either local councillors or MPs. Scruton defined this as:

... making the police responsible to the government for their policies and practices. (1985:42)

Most discussions in the literature reflect the stewardship and directive (political) models; whilst Scarman's recommendation was weighted towards the partnership one. He saw consultation as being the mechanism for achieving partnership accountability.

In current policing terms, accountability takes two forms. As 'citizens in uniform' individual police officers are answerable to the law for the discretion they exercise as part of their daily policing functions - and this they have in common with all citizens. Additionally, and like all public servants, they are also accountable to the elected political representatives of the people through the local Police Authority (with the exception of the Metropolitan Police who are accountable to the Home Secretary). It is this latter form of accountability which has been most contentious and around which debates have occurred given that the model implies an element of direction, but in reality is one of stewardship for financial resources not policing policy or strategies.

The present structure of police accountability was set up by

the 1964 Police Act (1964)

This established a tripartite arrangement between the police, their local Police Authority and the Home Office. The Metropolitan Police are the only exception, and are directly answerable to the Home Secretary. Whilst the 1964 Act was an attempt to bring the police under closer control following a series of corruption scandals, at the same time it enabled Chief Constables to remain politically impartial and operationally autonomous.

However, according to Spencer (ibid:28) it contained one crucial flaw - the Police Authorities (constituting one third magistrates and two thirds councillors) were given "responsibility for the efficiency of each separate force,...but few powers to ensure this efficiency". In practice, Police Authorities are responsible for the budgets of their Police Forces, and measures of efficiency are therefore financial ones. By contrast the Home Secretary was given power to influence the police, but no statutory responsibility to direct their operations. Potentially this could involve strategies, tactics as well as short term and long term objectives. The effect of this was to leave a grey area around operational policies over which neither the Police Authorities nor the Home Secretary could exercise control or call the police to account, and it is this area that the autonomy of Chief Constables has increased since the 1964 Act.

Ultimately this links back to the stewardship model of accountability, because it is at the point where the individual officer has most autonomy to deploy his/her own discretion - and is most likely to fall foul of the law - that the political powers have least authority to call officers to account. This applies equally to senior officers, of course. As Savage (1984: 54-55) argues, the chain of command within the police hierarchy is less influential in practice than seems apparent from outside the organisation. When this extends to the discretion of sub-divisional commanders to undertake particular kinds of operations, such as Swamp '81 in Brixton, it is easy to see why this whole question has become such an important issue.

At the level of each police force, this makes the police substantially different to any other service paid for out of public funds. Under normal local government arrangements a committee of elected representatives directs senior officers of departments as to policy and practice. The police fall into a unique position in that they are neither local authority employees nor civil servants. In the case of Police Authorities, although they can call the police to account for that 50% of the budget which they supply, they cannot determine policy. Again, although Chief Constables are required to make annual reports to their Police Authority, they can refuse to make such a report if they consider it "not in the public interest" (Spencer, op.cit: 45). Spencer goes on to cite, as an example, the time when James Anderton in Manchester refused

to make a report on the policing of an industrial dispute in 1982. After some compromise he submitted a report, and when it was received critically, maintained that "...the level of policing required was his decision and not that of the Authority" (ibid:46).

The net effect of this attempt to balance political independence with accountability has been to allow the police to develop great internal power. It has meant that changes can take place without public debate. The introduction of para-military style policing, for example, has happened with little local or national discussion as to the desirability of such developments, or how they are to be controlled. Northam (1988:Chapter 2) makes the point that there has been little Parliamentary debate on the changing role of the police. In place of political independence, it can be argued that in the 1980s increasing internal autonomy developed, particularly within metropolitan police forces. This in turn has in part contributed to the crisis within British policing with some Chief Constables often seeming remote, if not directly antagonistic, to the local Police Authorities.

In relation to this thesis, the question addressed is whether consultation does offer a mechanism for accountability, and if so, of what kind and at what level? This issue will be explored in Chapter 6 below.

2.3.3 Consultation

Consultation was one of the key reforms of policing introduced by Lord Scarman (1981:202). He saw consultation as essential for maintaining good relations between the police and the local community and attributed the breakdown of consultation arrangements in Lambeth (ibid: 87-98) as contributing to the subsequent riots in Brixton. Of course, the definition of 'community' is itself problematic, and in Chapter 6 below the analysis indicates that the police construct a community of members of the PCC which is not representative of the actual 'community' in the area.

At no point does Scarman define consultation, except to write of "... community involvement in the policy and operations of policing". (ibid., 202)

In his citing of the break-down of formal liaison arrangements in Lambeth which preceded the 1981 Brixton riots as a contributing factor to the disorder, he notes: "... the police did not see liaison as a two-way process." (ibid., 88)

As these quotations show, at times Scarman conflates consultation with liaison and makes an assumption that neither term need clarifying: Morgan and Maggs (1984:27) however, draw a distinction between the two. Consultation they define as "a positive, active word" meaning:

To deliberate or confer together, to seek advice from:
it suggests the act of consultation is between
interested parties who will subsequently act on or take
into account the results of their joint deliberations.
(ibid., 27)

Liaison, on the other hand, is a more passive term, implying a relationship with no necessary outcome.

As Gibson (1987: 78-79) argues in relation to local authority consultation exercises in the 1980s, consultation implies equality, mutuality of exchanges, even "the transfer of power". He points to the very real danger of tokenistic exchanges as the power state agencies fail to shift the balance of power towards community groups and representatives.

In relation to policing, Stratta (1990: 524) pointed out, consultation has become the mechanism by which police accountability is achieved and there is a assumption by legislators, police and lay members, that having put the mechanism in place, the process of consultation is occurring.

The issue for this thesis is the extent to which consultation was taking place between local police officers and community representatives.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the first part of the literature review covering sociological, 'race' and policing theories to give the main frameworks for the subsequent analysis of the empirical data. Other references from the literature are made as necessary during the analysis. In this chapter the main theoretical influences, including the wider debate on agency and structure in sociological theory, have been outlined and

discussed in relation to the research. A more critical appraisal will be given in the concluding chapter. Furthermore, three key concepts relating to policing - consent, accountability and consultation - have been defined, since they are of central relevance to the analysis of the empirical data gathered for this research.

PCCs could be studied as social phenomena in themselves. However, in order to contextualise them within the contemporary political economy of Britain in the 1980s and 1990s a wider framework is required. Hence the use of theoretical concepts such as hegemony, legitimation, conflict and social control which enable this research into the micro-level of committees and their members to be related to their origins in Government policy and responses to specific events of social protest and dissent. Their symbolic and institutional functions and role can only be adequately explained within this broader theoretical framework.

Whilst this is an essentially Marxist framework, it is not an overly structural one, but rather draws on the more humanistic strands within contemporary Marxist theory in order to explore the relationship between agency and structure.

The second part of the literature review now follows, and gives the more detailed background to the emergence of PCCs in the historical and social context of policing in the community in Britain in the 1980s.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIOLOGY OF POLICE CONSULTATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CURRENT ISSUES

3.1 Introduction

As the previous chapter indicated, major sociological theory does not specifically cover policing, and so a macro-theoretical framework was established utilising a range of explanatory theories. Following Fallding's distinction, outlined earlier, the aim of this chapter is to review the relevant literature from the analytical level of theory. Thus this chapter extracts from the literature the social, political and policing background to the establishment of police consultative committees. The relationship of this material to the empirical findings of the research discussed in chapters 5 - 8 below in this thesis is also indicated.

Of particular relevance is the writing on policing and 'race relations' in Britain, including the socio-historical and socio-political significance of 'riots' and the most recent developments in community policing. The 1981 Scarman Report into the Brixton riots is evaluated in the light of contemporary sociological criticisms. The process of establishing PCCs is analysed in relation to other empirical research in the field. Finally, current issues pertaining to police consultation are discussed.

3.2 Policing background to consultation

Within the general history of policing in Britain, there is a specific body of literature on the racialisation of relations between the police and local black communities, an examination of which is crucial to an understanding of police consultation and forms a backdrop to the Scarman Report. Also included in this section is the origins of community policing as a policy initiative, and a brief description of pre-Scarman forms of consultation.

3.2.1 Policing and 'race relations'

Pearson et al (1989: 120-121) identify four contexts within which policing and 'race' can be analysed and discussed, and these provide a framework for this section. First, there is the 'over-policing' of black people. There is evidence for this in relation to immigration control which stretches back into the last century, when lascar seamen from the Indian sub-continent were the subject of controls which were, in turn, the precursors of present immigration control (Gordon, 1985:5-8). In the Cardiff and Liverpool 'race riots' of 1919 the police failed to protect black people under attack from unemployed soldiers and sailors returning after World War I (Fryer, 1984:298-316). The Chief Constables of those two cities asked the Home Secretary to repatriate black residents as a solution to the disturbances. Attempts to encourage repatriation failed, and by 1925 an Order "... required alien seamen to register with the police. Once registered they became liable for deportation." (Gordon, op.cit.,7) This Order not only

affected foreign seamen, but also black seamen who held British passports. Gordon contends that in Cardiff the latter group had their passports destroyed by the police, thereby reducing their status to that of an alien.

During the 1950s the police were used to control migration from the Indian sub-continent by being asked to report on the employment and housing prospects for would-be migrants. It was on the basis of such police reports that passports were issued by the Indian government (Carter, Harris, and Joshi, 1987:6). In this case the police acted as agents of the state, having a covert role in the control of black immigration. As early as 1952, for example, the Sheffield police had black people under surveillance :

A card index was compiled, listing the names, addresses, nationalities and places of employment of the city's 530 Black inhabitants. (ibid: 10)

Black people were being associated with,

...drug trafficking and living on immoral earnings, and there was concern over the ways in which these endangered the social and moral fabric of British society. (ibid., 16)

These allegations had no empirical evidence to substantiate them, but were used to construct a racialised view of black immigration, argue Carter et al (ibid: 18) and as a justification by the government for immigration control. It also served to set part of the political agenda for the policing of black communities - namely surveillance and control.

In more recent times the over-policing of black people has included the criminalisation of black youth (particularly those of African-Caribbean origin) with operational tactics such as raids on black premises, drugs raids and the planting of drugs on suspects, and in some metropolitan areas the use of 'Sus' laws to detain black youth. Roberts (1982: 100-107) gives evidence from London of the over-representation of African-Caribbean youth arrested under 'Sus'. There is no doubt this has contributed directly to a breakdown in relations between the police and the African-Caribbean community as black youth became alienated from the police and their parents felt powerless to resolve the situation (Greaves, 1984:66-67).

Further evidence of widespread racial harassment and abuse of black communities by the police is overwhelming. Evidence submitted by the Institute of Race Relations to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1979:12-19) catalogues the systematic way in which black people in Britain, on the streets, in black premises and homes, and in police stations, were denied their civil liberties and legal rights and subjected to physical and verbal abuse by the police. In the 1981 debate on the Scarman Report, MPs representing Lambeth, Toxteth and Moss Side -all areas of high ethnic minority settlement and where rioting had occurred in that year - spoke of police brutality, wrongful arrests and racist perceptions by the police of black constituents (Hansard, 10.12.81).

The police complaints system has failed to give satisfaction or justice to black people who pursue that channel - causing them to conclude that the system is unjust. In the 'Holloway incident' in London in the mid-1980s (1), for example, it was a media campaign which re-opened the inquiry into allegations against the police, when the complaints system had failed to uncover the perpetrators of an attack on a group of youths (Holdaway, 1986:101-102).

Second, and in contrast, there is the 'under-policing' of black people, whereby there is a loss of confidence by black communities as the police failed to protect black people, particularly Asians, from racial harassment and attacks. Such attacks have been increasing in the past four decades, and in a report by the Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council in 1978 the authors stated:

While the East End is traditionally a 'high' crime area, there is clear evidence that the local Bengali community has suffered physical attacks and harassment over recent years on a totally different scale to that inflicted on the rest of the community.
(cited by Holden, 1978: 10)

Yet it is only since the mid-1980s that the police have begun to take such attacks seriously, and offer such assistance as telephone Helplines and liaison with other local authority departments (2).

Third, there is the issue of institutional racism in the police, and how the police as an organisation perceive and respond to this. There is the level of individual officers'

personally prejudiced attitudes, which has been well documented (Graef, 1989:121-130; Smith & Gray, 1985:390-402). Although the Smith and Gray survey identified widespread racist attitudes amongst junior and senior ranks (who denied it affected their treatment of black people they came into contact with during their policework) Smith and Gray (ibid., 402) nevertheless found such attitudes carried over into relations with black people in a variety of ways, ranging from an increase in the number of stops of blacks compared to white, to a failure to respond to black victims of racist attacks.

There is also, and more seriously, the outcome of policies and operational strategies which may or may not be intentionally racist, but have the effect of discriminating against black people (Benyon, 1986: 60-61; Lea, 1986, 148-164). The issue for this thesis is how institutional racism has become embedded in policing policy and practice so as to reproduce and perpetuate racist discrimination and this is therefore analysed in relation to the police response to a multi-racial PCC (see Chapter 5 below).

Fourth, and particularly germane to this thesis is "racism within local systems of representation" (Pearson et al, 1989: 121). This brings together the previous three points, since the question here is how the police respond to both the over-policing and under-policing of black people through the process of consultation, and how that relates to the way in which black

members of PCCs perceive institutional racism within the police as an organisation.

The deteriorating relations between the police and black communities which are illustrated later in this thesis (see Chapter 5 below), were also highlighted in Lord Scarman's inquiry into riots in a number of British cities in 1981. Before that is discussed, however, and in parallel to the points outlined in this section, it is necessary to review the history and theories of riots in Britain as they affect and involve the police and black communities.

3.2.2 The policing of riots and rebellions - history and explanations

It was in 1980 and 1981 that conflict erupted on the streets of Britain with ferocity and unexpectedness in the form of riots and uprisings. For those in authority, policing the crisis of crime had become policing the crisis of disorder, and of relevance to this thesis, marked a paradigmatic shift in police/black relationships.

But first, the historical background. In 1919 in Cardiff, Liverpool and other seaports (Fryer, 1984: 298-313), there were 'race riots' (3) in which white men, returning from the War and finding themselves out of work, attacked black seamen and dock workers whom they saw as taking their jobs. Black homes and meeting places were attacked, and black people were pursued through the streets - some to the point of death. Fryer argues

that the police stood back and protected white interests, rather than the black victims. Furthermore, that the Chief Constables involved campaigned for repatriation of blacks as a solution to the violence.

The first direct confrontation in a riot situation between the police and black people occurred in South Shields in 1930 (Joshua, Wallace and Booth, 1983: 28), when there were clashes "between black pickets and the police" during an industrial dispute. Thus by World War II the major forms of public disorder in which black people were involved were already framed within either white attacks on black communities or conflict between the police and black communities.

These forms were to be followed in the post-war period, when Britain's black population expanded with immigration from the colonies to meet the country's labour shortage. White violence against black people occurred not just in the more widely publicized Nottingham and Notting Hill 'race riots' of 1958, but on a lesser scale in places like Dudley in 1962 (Joshua et al, 1983: 46-47). Whilst there appears to be a decline in this form of collective violence, it could equally be argued that there has been a growth of racist attacks on individuals, and the incorporation of racial violence into other sites such as football terraces.

Concern over relations between the police and black people was raised as early as 1962, when the West Indian Standing

Conference arranged meetings with senior police officers (Chase, 1974: 206), and local liaison groups were set up in London. This concern became more public in 1968 when this liaison broke down and the media began to take an interest in relations between the police and West Indians. Chase writes:

Liaison has been characterised by paternalistic attitudes and by tokenism: this is a posture which makes it easier for the police to establish a ritualistic relationship with fake leaders. (ibid., 209)

Tensions between the police and black people escalated, both in quantity and quality throughout the 1970s - culminating in the riots of the early 1980s. These tensions were manifest in clashes at public events - the notorious Notting Hill Carnival of 1976, for example, and the Southall demonstration in 1979. There was conflict associated with organised trade union activity such as the Grunwick Strike in 1977. There were clashes at political gatherings like the Ladywood By-election of 1977. Finally, at this time there was retaliation by black communities to police raids on black premises, including the long-running battle around the Mangrove restaurant in London, and the Black and White Cafe in St. Paul's, Bristol.

The extent to which any of these forms of violence are directly, or indirectly, racialised is a matter of debate in the literature. Joshua et al argue that:

Racism - though differently - is involved in [all forms]. In black revolt there is an aspect of the violence that is inter-racial; and in violent inter-racial communal conflict there is more than simple black

resistance, there are elements of an emergent black revolt. (1983: 35)

In this thesis it is argued that an understanding of racism is necessary, and in particular those forms of institutional racism around which police actions and black responses revolve (as indicated in section 3.2.1 above).

The culmination of decades of the effects of institutional racism is that outbreaks of disorder can be seen as surface manifestations of deeply embedded grievances and responses to these institutional racisms which have both historical roots and assume different social articulations in various times and places. This aspect will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5 below. The extent to which PCCs are forums in which conflict is institutionalised in response to such legitimisation crises will be analysed in Chapter 7 below.

Returning to the urban uprisings of the early 1980s, they were qualitatively and quantitatively different to previous outbursts of collective violence. First, in the scale and degree of force involved, resulting in widespread damage to property and injuries to both members of the public and police personnel. Second, the involvement of both black and white youths. Although sections of the media portrayed the events as clashes between police and black youth this is not the whole picture. Solomos (1989:103-107) argues that press coverage was contradictory, with some newspapers portraying a riot of black youths, whilst others acknowledged that black and white participated. In inner cities both black and white youth were

experiencing higher than average levels of unemployment, cutbacks in public spending, and police oppression, although that fell more heavily on black communities (as Scarman recognised in his report, 1981:35-36). Nevertheless, young people found some common ground in the revolt against the police.

The third point to note is that the disorder was directed against the police. In previous encounters the police had some notionally legitimating role in maintaining public order. In St Paul's in 1980, Brixton and Liverpool in 1981 they came under direct attack from the local community. To borrow the CCCS phrase (4) - it appeared that the empire was striking back. Furthermore, the racialisation of these disorders, argues Solomos

... led to a flurry of responses at both central and local government levels, and real and symbolic interventions which sought to prevent the further spread of disorder and violence. It is not surprising, for example, that after years of inaction many local authorities actively sought to develop equal opportunities strategies, that promises were made to reform police training to take account of multi-racialism, that initiatives to tackle the roots of racial disadvantage and discrimination were promised.
(1989: 103)

The police response to the riots in 1980 and 1981 was initially one of unpreparedness. The sight of police using dust-bin lids to protect themselves from bricks and missiles alarmed not only sections of the public, but the police themselves. Nor was the social significance of the apparent crisis lost on senior

officers. Cashmore and McLaughlin argue that the police turned this social crisis to their advantage. They write:

We do not have to know the precise motives of the police to appreciate that black youth have been of enormous help to them in their attempt to secure political influence and professional autonomy.... The police used them symbolically to demand, determine, justify, legitimate and, at key moments, rationalise their drive for power. (1991:11)

Cashmore and McLaughlin are not suggesting the riots were deliberately engineered by the police, but point to the way in which the police were able to turn the disorders to their subsequent advantage. In their response, the British police were reacting in a similar way to their American colleagues twenty years earlier. Balbus (1973: 85-87) identifies the way in which police departments in American cities adjusted their strategies in the light of the riots in the mid-1960s.

Thus the period between 1981 and 1985 saw the police develop neo-colonial strategies, purchase riot control equipment, train officers in public order and produce a Public Order Manual. There is a body of literature on these para-military developments - see, for example, BSSRS, 1985; Northam, 1988; Jefferson, 1990. It is not the remit of this thesis to examine these developments, although it is important to note that they run parallel to community policing strategies. The police were backed by the Conservative Government who not only continued to provide them with increased financial resources, but also strengthened their powers (particularly of discretionary

arrest) under PACE 1984 and the 1986 Public Order Act (Jefferson, 1990: 51-59).

3.2.3 Community policing

The final historical and developmental strand which contributes to the background of police consultation, is the policy of community policing. The origins of this lie in the policy and practice of police liaison/community contact which pre-dates Scarman's (1981:202) recommendations for consultation. In the post-war period it has been particularly associated with policing and 'race relations', in that the objective of community liaison is often to incorporate black groups and organisations. It will be argued in this thesis that the rationale underpinning all forms of liaison is both the building of consensus policing (discussed in Chapter 2 above) - the concept that in a democratic society the police can only operate with the consent of the people (Uglow, 1988: 29-36; Lea and Young, 1982: 10-13), and the extension of the police role as agents of social control (Cohen, 1985: 68-69)

Historically, changes in post-war policing have arguably contributed to the breakdown of consensus. From the 1960s onwards, these include the increased application of technology -from the use of Panda cars and two-way radios (Reiner, 1985: 63-64), to monitoring and surveillance (BSSRS, 1985: 19-25) and an increased use of firearms (Uglow, 1988: 54-57). Following the 1964 Police Act, reorganisation of the police nationally resulted in fewer, but larger forces, This in turn created the

need for higher levels of organisation and in particular, specialisation and professionalisation (Brogden, Jefferson & Walklate, 1988: 74-84). Rapid response became the hallmark of police work, particularly in inner city areas, and this distanced the police from the very communities whose consent they required to carry out their duties.

In addition there was both a qualitative and a quantitative rise in crime. As a qualitative measure crime statistics are notoriously problematic to interpret, and only a general pattern can be indicated. However, an upward trend in reported crime began in the late 1950s (Reiner, 1985: 79-80) and crime rates become one of the criteria for measuring police effectiveness (Brogden, 1982: 104). Thus the rise focused public, media and political attention on crime and criminality.

Reiner argues:

... that the recorded trends do ...correspond to basic changes... and they are certainly associated with a growing public fear of crime and sense that police effectiveness is declining. The police themselves have until recently used these figures to bolster their law and order campaigns lobbying for more resources and power. Paradoxically the very policies of increasing technology, centralisation, specialisation and professionalisation as a means of crime-fighting may have aggravated the police ineffectiveness which motivated them.
(op.cit., 79-80)

In qualitative terms the police saw crime as becoming 'harder' and more organised (Brogden et al, op.cit: 86-87), whilst sentencing seemed to be 'softer' as more liberal reforms were introduced. During the 1970s a moral panic was orchestrated by the police, judiciary and press about 'muggings' (described and

analysed by Hall et al, 1978: 3-9). Relationships between the police and organised groups became more confrontational - Saltley Gate, Red Lion Square, Grunwick are all examples of the growing use of force by the police during the 1970s (Jefferson, 1990: 2-10).

Retrospectively, it seemed that the policeman on the beat of earlier times represented 'traditional' policing with local, informal contacts and social control structures. The advent of technological and organisational changes necessitated alternative structures of control, including, as this thesis argues, purportedly democratic Police Consultative Committees.

If technology, specialisation and professionalism were working to increase the gulf between the police and the public, and eroding consent, then community policing was the policy which developed parallel to the changes outlined above. This was intended to reduce the alienation experienced by some social groups, particularly black youth, in their relations with the police, whilst reassuring other sections of society that the police were still in control.

The origins of community policing in Britain lie in concern expressed by the Strathclyde Police in relation to juvenile crime in the late 1950s (Gordon, 1987: 124-125). England and Wales developed policies in a piecemeal way throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Brogden, op.cit: 214-219), and they had strong links with developments in 'race relations' in other areas of

public life. By the 1970s the race relations industry in Britain was well established - part of the official response to the presence of black people in the UK following immigration from the former colonies in the 1950s and 1960s, and the counterbalance to racist immigration control (Cashmore and McLaughlin, 1991: 20-22). Banton (1973:103-105) argued that police/community relations were an attempt to overcome problems caused by the separation of police and public with the introduction of the unit beat system.

As the specific breakdown in relations between the police and black communities became increasingly apparent, with the police perception that black people posed a 'special' policing problem, the extension of community policing to police/race relations began to develop. One impetus for this was the report of the 1971/72 Commons Select Committee on Race Relations, in which the deteriorating relations between the police and black communities was highlighted (Fielding, Kemp and Norris, 1989: 49), although as section 3.2.2 (above) indicated there had been warnings from the West Indian Standing Conference earlier in the 1960s.

From this brief outline of the development of community policing, it is clear that as a policy it is vague in its conceptualisation and takes many forms in practice. Fielding et al (ibid: 49) identify four possible explanations for its establishment. First, as an alternative to the rapid response of the 'fire brigade' policing which arose out of the use of

panda cars and two-way radios. As the service role of the police declined with specialisation and the introduction of the unit beat system, the police were seen to be increasingly reactive. Community policing thus became a "surrogate" for what had been the traditional role of the constable (Reiner, 1986:268). Second, as a way of engaging the public in crime reduction and increasing their support for the police. Gordon defined this as:

... attempts by the police to deal with people whose support appears to the police to be weak or non-existent, and which therefore requires to be bolstered or harnessed or even created. (1987: 122)

The role of consultation in relation to crime prevention and reduction will be analysed more fully in Chapter 8 below.

Third, community policing was a way of improving communication between the police and the public through "... more direct involvement by the police in the day-to-day affairs of the community and the police more personally visible" (Scruton, 1985: 123). Through this increasing penetration of community organisations and networks the police are able to find ways of legitimating their role and regaining consensus, and this aspect of community policing will be analysed further in Chapter 8 below.

Fourth, and also of relevance to this thesis, community policing is a form of "special treatment of particular minorities" (Banton, 1974:164). It offers to the police an alternative strategy to the confrontational and controversial

use of such tactics as 'Sus' in dealing with what they perceived as the specific problems of black youth and crime. As Solomos and Rackett write:

The ideological construction of the involvement of young blacks in mugging and other forms of street crime provided the basis for the development of control aimed at keeping young blacks off the streets and keeping the police in control of particular localities which had become identified ... as 'crime-prone' or potential 'trouble spots'. (1991:45)

The way in which community policing developed in the multi-racial suburb of Handsworth in Birmingham will be described in detail in chapter 5 below.

Within the police organisation itself, however, community policing has not had a high priority. Police work generally is a bifurcation of crime fighting and service calls. The hedonistic culture of many police officers gives a predilection to reactive crime work, and the service aspect (within which community policing is located) is often ridiculed by police officers and has very little support internally (Reiner 1985: 76).

Weatheritt (1987: 7) argued that community policing operates at three levels. First, as a nostalgic appeal to a lost era of policing; second, as a form of police-speak for an approach its proponents want policing to follow - that is a service oriented approach; third, a particular range of police practices, predominantly involving beat bobbies. As a practice it can include any of the following activities:

- (i) multi-agency or inter-agency work;

- (ii) permanent/community police officers;
- (iii) police input into community groups/organisations;
- (iv) police-led initiatives such as youth clubs, crime prevention panels, victim support schemes;
- (v) formal and informal liaison (including PCCs)

Weatheritt concluded: "Overall, the emphasis is on pragmatic, small-scale and locally based interventions." (ibid: 8)

Yet as Weatheritt's paper argued, there is no clear job description for the community police officer, there are no measures of efficiency or effectiveness, nor do they resolve underlying problems. Furthermore, there is only marginal support for the practice from within the police - few senior officers would publicly dismiss community policing, but amongst the rank-and-file there is little regard for it, as Graef's ethnographic study of police officers found (1989: Chapter 3).

In an attempt to develop a more theoretical definition of community policing, John Alderson, then Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, wrote 'Policing Freedom' (1979). He was a proponent of the use of minimum force in containing dissent, and of preventative police work, and his book attempts to give a coherent framework to the policy of community policing. He advocated a pro-active approach which:

...embraces activities to penetrate the community in a multitude of ways in order to influence its behaviour away from illegality and towards legality. (ibid.,39)

His model of society was of a declining social order, characterised by economic decline, industrial conflict, and

crime. His fear was of "a breakdown in social discipline" (ibid.,176), and his vision was of recreated villages within urban areas. Seeing the police as central to this recreation, his model of community policing is perhaps understandably vague:

In community policing there can be no set pattern, no blueprint. Communities are organic and will develop in different ways. Flexibility and the need to experiment will be paramount. This exercise is based not on resources but on ideas. The community must be involved. To encourage self-help and increase the feeling of security through growth of care and the lowering of neighbourhood tensions, and to capitalize on existing social organisations to achieve these aims, is the concept. Police have to lead and thus they have to become socially-orientated and in sympathy with their embryonic villages. (ibid.,194)

Alderson also recommended the setting up of Community Police Consultative Groups, which aimed to change authoritarian, reactive policing, into a problem-solving strategy in which police and local people were involved. The role of such groups would be:

...persuasive only, and to encourage co-operative effort in community affairs. (ibid.,194)

His vision was of a village within a city - the consultative groups being the means by which local people became aware of crime and policing in their neighbourhood. A village where 'gemeinschaft' relations were paramount - social order and stability being maintained through shared values and moral consensus. His idea of consultation is based on the police identifying communities, or potential communities, which had the characteristics of the village and would become the basis

for public consultation, with local people determining the terms of reference.

Alderson recommended his model of consultation to Lord Scarman, in a detailed submission to the Inquiry (Judge, 1982: 365). As Alderson and Scarman both write from a liberal democratic perspective with reformist tendencies, it is not surprising that Lord Scarman readily accepted his model of consultation.

What underpins much of Alderson's writing is the notion of moral consensus. This, it could be argued, provides an examples of Habermas's "discursive claims to truth" - by moving into the realm of cultural norms, one would have to question whether Alderson had forsaken the realm of applying the law impartially. His appeal is to common sense and rationality - the public good. Certainly his book provoked a debate both in the public domain and amongst fellow police officers. Whilst publication stimulated debate, it was the riots of the early 1980s in Britain which focused the issue of community policing in the public consciousness. As the police themselves turned increasingly to para-military solutions (Jefferson, 1990: 7-12), Alderson gradually became marginalised within the police, and took early retirement in 1982 (Alderson, 1982: 14) (5).

Critics of community policing argue that it is little more than a thinly disguised form of social control. Gordon writes:

... community policing is an attempt at the surveillance and control of communities by the police, an attempt which operates under the guise of police offering advice and assistance, and which is all the more dangerous

because it not only merges the activities of different agencies of the state, but does so under the control and direction of the police. (1987: 141)

It acts as a balance to more repressive forms of policing, and by giving it a surface intention of crime prevention, engenders popular support. This can be seen as an outcome of what Habermas predicted in his legitimation theory would happen in times of economic crisis (although it was not signalled specifically in his writing). And it is in response to the riots, rebellions, uprisings and other forms of public disorder in the 1980s that community policing has become embedded in current policy and practice. The manifestations this takes within Birmingham will be highlighted in Chapters 5 and 8 below.

3.2.4 Pre-Scarman forms of consultation

One of the earliest initiatives under the broad community policing remit was the establishment of police/community liaison forums. These developed in common with other forms of community policing on an ad hoc basis during the 1970s (Brogden, 1982: 214-219). Alderson (1979: 194) incorporated them into his model of community policing. In London, for example, the Lambeth Police Liaison Committee was set up in 1978 (Scarman, 1981: 85-93) specifically to tackle the issue of relations between young police officers and black youth in the Brixton area. Scarman identified the collapse of this committee as contributing to the deteriorating relations in the area in the period preceding the 1981 Brixton riots. In other

parts of the country similar liaison groups were also formed. The development of a community/police liaison committee in Handsworth, Birmingham, which date back to 1976, will be discussed further in Chapter 5 below. It is worth noting that it was not just the police who initiated liaison. An informant for this research was a member of a group of black people who met in Birmingham City Council House from 1978-81 to discuss issues relating to policing and black people in the City.

From this historical literature, it can be seen that Lord Scarman's recommendation for consultation was not a new idea, but stemmed from the specific breakdown in law and order evidenced by the Brixton riots and similar uprisings in other parts of the country. It is argued in this thesis that these riots were symptomatic of an underlying conflict between the police and black communities which had a long history in terms of race relations in Britain. Furthermore, that consultation can be located within the broader, although inadequately defined, policy of community policing. It is against this background that the Scarman Report will now be critically examined.

3.3 The Scarman Report - social responses and reactions

The Conservative Government, having been elected in 1979 partially on a law and order ticket, responded to the riots in Brixton in April 1981 by distancing themselves from any social causes which might have been related to their own policies. To reinforce the individualistic 'criminality' explanation (Kettle

and Hodges, 1982: 118) the Home Secretary established a judicial inquiry under Lord Scarman. His report was published in November 1981, and debated in Parliament in December 1981 (Hansard, 10.12.81) and is now examined.

3.3.1 The Scarman Report

Scarman's description of the events leading up to the Brixton riots identified as significant the almost complete breakdown in relations between the Metropolitan Police and the local black community - what he termed "the failure to consult" (Scarman, 1981: 109). As far as causes of the riots were concerned, the broad "set of social conditions which create a predisposition towards violent protest" (ibid.: 36) were the economic deprivation and political alienation of black youth. In particular he highlighted high levels of unemployment. Of the April riots themselves, Scarman saw them as "essentially an outburst of anger and resentment by young black people" (ibid: 78), directed at the police. He rejected, however, claims of institutional racism in the police, stating, "The direction and policies of the Metropolitan Police are not racist" (ibid: 105). Instead, he acknowledged acts of racial prejudice and bias by individual junior police officers, whilst blaming senior officers only for lack of "judgement... imagination and flexibility" (ibid: 105).

Having exonerated the local police of institutionally racist practices, Lord Scarman however did see the restoration of relations between the police and black community leaders as

central to the maintenance of peace in the area. To achieve this he recommended the model of consultation proposed by Alderson, who gave evidence to the inquiry. Scarman's emphasis was on a two-way process whereby the police listened to local needs, involved people in policy-making and decision-making, which would in turn enable local people to become more knowledgeable about policing matters.

Scarman engaged in the then contemporary debates about policing by discussing what he identified as the two principles of policing: consent and accountability (ibid.: 102-105). He argued that consent was achieved by balancing preservation of the peace against crime prevention and protecting life. In his report he acknowledged the dilemma the police may face in both maintaining order and enforcing the law, and gave precedence to order maintenance. As Hall comments:

This is not only a novel innovation... it also runs contrary to the accredited wisdom which now prevails everywhere in official policing circles... For Scarman the maintenance of consensual social order is the highest priority. (1982: 70)

The way in which this was to be achieved was through the exercise of discretion, and Hall writes: "Discretion is the mediator between crime control and public consent." (ibid.: 70). In his analysis, Scarman was offering a thinly veiled criticism of the operation 'Swamp '81' in which the Brixton police had used their discretion to enforce the law through saturation policing, but thereby precipitated public disorder.

The second principle - accountability - is balanced by Scarman with independence. In this equation the contradictions of ensuring the accountability of a public service such as the police whilst maintaining political independence is the contradiction highlighted by both the left and right of the political spectrum. Whilst the left sought increased political control and accountability, the right (including some articulate senior police officers) argued strongly for independence. Scarman's solution to this contradiction was consultation. This, Hall argues, was offering "a 'sense of accountability' without the exercise of strategic control." (ibid.:70)

Whilst Scarman also made recommendations about police training, recruitment and disciplinary codes, of central interest to this research was his recommendation that consultation arrangements be set up. This recommendation states :

Community involvement in the policy and operation of policing is perfectly feasible without undermining the independence of the police or destroying the secrecy of those operations against crime which have to be kept secret.... I recommend that a statutory duty should be imposed on police Authorities and on Chief Officers of Police to co-operate in the establishment of such consultative arrangements. (op.cit: 202)

Scarman also linked consultation to accountability when he wrote:

Consultation and accountability are the mechanisms - in part administrative, and in part legal - upon which we rely to ensure that the police in their policies and operations keep in touch with, and are responsible to, the community they police... English law does make the police accountable: but the law is imperfect in one

respect ... There is no satisfactory or sufficient link between accountability and consultation. (ibid., 147)

One of the central findings of the empirical research for this thesis is that the aim of accountability through consultation in the area of operational policing matters has not been achieved. Observations at meetings gave no evidence of consultation, and lay members interviewed complained that they were not really being consulted by the police. However, there was some evidence that members felt they were to some degree making the police accountable simply by attending meetings, and this will be analysed further in Chapter 6 below.

3.3.2 The political response

In political terms, the Conservative Government elected in 1979 was the most ideologically right wing this century (Hall, 1988: Chapter 2). Their economic and social policies marked a shift away from the already failing post-war consensus on state welfarism. The economic recession, which began in the late 1960s with the decline in sectors of British industry, accelerated into major economic recession by 1980. It was predicted that with rapidly rising unemployment - the monetarist price the government were apparently willing to pay to reduce inflation - there would be massive social unrest. Such forecasts even came from within Conservative ranks. Solomos (1988: 209) cites a warning by Middlemas in 1980 that social divisions would increase with high unemployment, leading to potential for social unrest. When this came in the form of urban riots in 1980 and 1981, the government desperately needed

not only some response to the problems of economic deprivation in the inner cities highlighted by Scarman (witness the sending of Heseltine, the then Minister of State for the Department of the Environment to Liverpool), but they also required some ideological, symbolic gesture to demonstrate they were dealing with the political crisis which threatened social stability (Solomos, *Ibid.*: 195). The depth of this threat to the Government was verified in a television review of the Brixton riots (BBC TV 1991). William Whitelaw, Home Secretary in 1981, commented:

I really did worry then as to what on earth was going to happen. It seemed to me I was at the centre of something that was very worrying indeed for our whole national position.
(Black and Blue Remembered, BBC2 8.4.91)

It is argued in this thesis that consultation as a concept, although never officially defined, offered the Government the symbol required to reassure the public. After the Brixton riot the Government was under extreme political and social pressure to set up some form of locally-based, democratic accountability for the Metropolitan Police. As Keith argues, the London situation was particularly complex given the "contemporary debates on police accountability that were focused on the unique situation of the city and the nature of GLC politics" (1993, *forthcoming*: 172). Consultation offered the Government an alternative form of accountability without devolving political power to the community and local government, and in particular in making policing appear to be more accountable to the citizens concerned.

In responding to Scarman, the Government were really only interested in the policing of London - where riots threatened the very heart of the British (and by inference Conservative Government) interests, namely the City of London as a finance capital, Parliament and the monarchy (Gurnah, 1987: 24). The then Home Secretary, Whitelaw, was not even willing initially, as the Parliamentary debate (Hansard 10.12.81) shows, to give a statutory basis to proposed community consultation, but would have been happy to leave it to the discretion of individual Police Authorities and Chief Constables. In Habermassian terms, consultation was, for the government, a perfect "expressive symbol" with its connotation of participation and its potential (in Scarman's view) for healing the breach between police and black people.

3.3.3 The police response

At one level the police response to the riots was fairly predictable, in that they called for increased powers, training in riot control and better equipment with which to protect themselves. At the ACPO annual conference in 1981 they turned to one of the remaining colonies - Hong Kong - for strategies to contain public disorder (Northam, 1988: 38-41). From this conference a working party of Chief Constables was set up which eventually produced a Public Order Manual which had circulation restricted to senior officers only. As Northam points out, it also received Home Office approval, but there was no Parliamentary debate on this significant development in British policing (ibid.: 60).

In public the initial police response to the Scarman Report was favourable (Venner, 1982: 360-361), although as Greenhill (1985: 132) notes this owed more to the police being "politically expedient" than to their agreeing wholeheartedly with Scarman's findings. Scarman's rejection of widespread institutional racism undoubtedly came as a relief to many officers. The most contentious part of the report in police eyes, apart from direct criticisms of police actions during the Brixton riots, were the recommendations to make acts of racial discrimination a disciplinary offense.

The proposals for consultation were met with a mixed reaction. Judge (1982: 365) points out that some senior officers in multi-racial areas had negative experiences of community relations, particularly in liaising with local Community Relations Councils (6). In London there was the related and contentious issue of police accountability, and senior officers in the Metropolitan Police were no doubt fearful that consultation might form the basis of local accountability.

By way of justification for their actions in Brixton in carrying out the 'Swamp '81' operation, the Metropolitan Police waited until six months after the publication of the Scarman Report. In March 1982 they issued their crime statistics and highlighted, by racial categories, those arrested for street crimes, drawing attention to the relatively high levels of arrests among black youth (Solomos and Rackett, 1991: 43-44). In this way the police were attempting to show that 'Swamp '81'

was necessary to combat crime, and also were rejecting the precedence Scarman gave to maintaining public order in order to retain consent.

3.3.4 Academic criticisms of Scarman

In both the literature on policing and on 'race relations', the Scarman Report marks a significant landmark in analytical and descriptive accounts. In policing terms, as indicated earlier, Scarman's discussion of accountability, police tactics and police/community relations raised points which were extensively debated. For example, Jefferson and Grimshaw argue that he did not resolve the contradictions in maintaining public order and controlling crime, and that his proposal for consultation represents "a weak version of democratic accountability" (1982: 112).

Hall (1982:66-67) argues that whilst Scarman was writing from a liberal perspective, his analysis of the contradictions in policing (see earlier discussion) was radical in that it failed to appease the law and order lobby within Conservative politics or the police, and should not be lightly dismissed by critics from the left. He writes that Scarman shows:

... much greater sensitivity to local grievances, rooted more deeply in newer versions of 'consensual policing', based on a genuinely different mix of 'hard' and 'soft' policing. Policing with a human face; social-democratic policing. 'Community', 'consultation'; and 'consensus' would be its organising concepts as they are Scarman's leading ideas. (ibid., 68)

In this sense, Lord Scarman's Report did not give support to the growing authoritarian stance of state agencies such as the

police, and offers an alternative to the politics of confrontation.

Turning to the 'race' aspect of the Scarman Report, Sivanandan (1990: 90-97) argues that Scarman's analysis is based on the concept of ethnicity, leading to ethnic disadvantage, rather than a concept of racism. Indeed, Scarman (as previously noted) rejected the notion of institutional racism in the police or in society. Sivanandan calls this a "sociopsychological view of racism" (ibid., 95), meaning that racism is the subjective and individualised experience of black people affected by attitudes and beliefs, not a structural aspect of society. By focusing on the individual, the logic of Scarman's argument would

... shift the object of anti-racist struggle from the state to the individual, from changing society to changing people, from improving the lot of whole black communities, mired in racism and poverty, to improving the lot of 'black' individuals. (ibid., 96)

Thus consultation, in Sivanandan's understanding of it, would be the means by which black people as individuals come to understand the police and vice versa, whilst institutional racism remains.

Gurnah (1087:11) takes another view of Scarman, arguing that he reflects the interests of the state rather than those of black people. As a way of responding to grievances, the recommendations in Lord Scarman's report both limit further political demands from black people, and placate the public interest. He argues that people like Scarman act as

"gatekeepers" in a wider social policy of containment. The implication for consultation is that it is part of a social control strategy which maintains the status quo, not a real response to black interests.

3.4 Implementing Scarman's recommendations on police consultation

3.4.1 The realisation of consultation

The question raised for the Government by Scarman's report was whether to give his recommendations a statutory basis. This emerged during the Parliamentary debate, when William Whitelaw (then Home Secretary) in his speech opening the debate stated:

I do not rule out either a statutory framework in London or a duty to co-operate in establishing consultative arrangements outside London if the work that I now put in hand, and the views of those whom I consult, point firmly in that direction.
(Hansard, Column 1004, 10.12.1981)

Following this debate, the Home Office set in motion a process to determine what informal arrangements existed, and then to consult various interested parties, Police Authorities and senior police officers as to the guidelines that should be drawn up (Morgan & Maggs, 1984: 3). Correspondence between the Home Office and the National Association of Community Relations Councils (7) reveals how hard the voluntary sector had to push to make consultation a statutory requirement. And how reluctant the Home Office was to give specific terms of reference, especially around operational policing, partly because of the traditional role of local government Police

Authorities in the provinces, but also because of the debate about police accountability in London.

The first draft of the new Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, into which consultation was incorporated, was deferred by the 1983 General Election. A revised Bill (PACE) was put on the statute book in 1984 (Morgan & Maggs, *ibid.*:4), and it was at this stage that crime prevention was introduced as a further role within consultative arrangements. By the time the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 was introduced, the framework for consultation was as follows:

Arrangements shall be made in each police area for obtaining the views of people in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area and for obtaining their co-operation with the police preventing crime in the area.
(Section 106, PACE 1984)

This vague, yet statutory, requirement gave consultation no legal powers, nor did it specify the format which consultation was to take, although the Home office did circulate a set of guidelines (H.O. Circular No 2/1985) indicating which groups should be invited to attend (for example youth organisations, church and other places of worship, community groups etc.). Not surprisingly, therefore, the development of consultation was piecemeal throughout the country (Morgan and Maggs, 1984: 8-9), although it generally took the form of committees consisting of local representatives. Rural Police Authorities were most resistant to developing forms of liaison - their existing arrangements being seen as satisfactory. Other Authorities, by comparison, did not wait for the Act to be passed, but standardized and increased the forms of

consultation which already existed - the West Midlands Police Authority being one of these.

Morgan & Maggs' early work on Police Consultative Committees (1985b:74) indicates that they very quickly came to be dominated by the police. The latter often serviced the committees (despite Home Office recommendations that this should be done by lay members); they generally constructed the agenda, and, of course, had at their finger tips knowledge and understanding of operational policing matters in the locality which far outweighed that of non-police members. The format for meetings, which has become the norm in many committees, was for the central input to be a report by the police, around which questions were framed. This, it is argued in this thesis (see Chapter 8 below), is a far cry from Scarman's notion of police and public coming together to determine operational policing matters and share their knowledge and understanding of the locality in which they met. Rather, it is an example of the police setting the agenda for consultation. A more detailed description of the process of establishing consultation in the West Midlands will be given in Chapter 6 below, where one of the committees studied for this research is examined in greater depth.

3.4.2 Socio-legal research on consultative committees

Morgan (Professor of Law at Bristol University) has undertaken the most widespread research on PCCs, both in terms of geography and over time since their establishment. In 1984

(with Maggs) he carried out a survey of the 41 provincial police forces in England and Wales (following the 1982 Home Office guidelines, but before PACE, 1984 came into effect). The objective was to determine what arrangements for consultation had been made. In those early days he identified four functions of consultation from the Home Office and government perspective:

- (i) finding out what the public want
- (ii) educating the public about policing
- (iii) engendering consent
- (iv) developing co-operation between police and public on crime prevention

These provide useful indicators for this research, and Chapter 8 below in particular will discuss the extent to which these functions are part of the current role of the four PCCs studied.

From their survey Morgan & Maggs (1984: 6-9) identified a range of responses to the 1982 Home Office Guidelines. No Police Authority had refused to set up consultation in one form or other, although some had embraced the opportunity with greater speed and enthusiasm than others. The format typically adopted was some kind of committee arrangement.

Morgan & Maggs (1985a) also examined the potential link between consultation and accountability, although neither of these concepts is defined. They began with the Scarman view that consultation was preferable to increasing the powers of Police

Authorities vis-a-vis accountability, and that consultation would make the police more accountable to local communities (which is where 'the problem' was located), without compromising their political independence (Scarman, 1981:146-152). They concluded that although by 1985 PCCs fulfilled some local accountability functions, overall

... consultation may widen rather than diminish the gap existing already between different parts of the country over what is meant by police accountability.
(op.cit.: 95)

In 1985 they also carried out a review of PCCs post-PACE (Morgan & Maggs, 1985b), which covered much of the earlier ground. They drew two conclusions (ibid., 74) - first, that even where PCCs were not seen as necessary and only survive through police input, they remain for "political- symbolic and substantive - reasons". Second, that PCCs will not resolve the issue of police accountability, and in some areas may increase demand for local accountability to the community.

Continuing the theme of accountability, Morgan (1987:138-139) pursued the Conservative government's political rationale for consultation. Whilst the government stated a strong preference for consultation, Morgan argues that the committees themselves lack power. There is often a feeling that they are pointless exercises - 'talking shops' - in those very urban areas which most need police/community consultation.

Of relevance to this research, Morgan (ibid., 139) also cites the problems of setting policing policies, which are often

determined far above the level at which PCCs meet. This is the flaw in Scarman's reasoning that maintenance of public peace was more important than controlling crime, with the emphasis on the exercise of discretion. In reality, during times of crisis, operational policing strategies are determined at a far higher level within the organisational structure than could be influenced by a consultative committee. Thus the use of discretion by even sub-divisional commanders could be overridden by higher authorities. This question was also addressed by Stratta in her research into the relationship between consultation and its impact on local policing policies. She concluded that consultation was "... merely a reinforcement, rather than an exploration and a questioning, of the police point of view." (1990: 454). This aspect of consultation will be further discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 below.

Pursuing the theme of accountability, Morgan (1990:13) argued that the Conservative government favoured the "stewardship model" of accountability (see Chapter 2 above, section 2.3.2). Consultation was just one of the ways in which this could be achieved as the police were called to give explanations of their actions to the public through the consultation process. The problems and weaknesses of this version of accountability will be explored in relation to the research data in chapter 6 below.

Finally, in an unpublished, but extensive piece of research carried out in the late 80s, Morgan looked at the question of policing and consent. He gave a descriptive review of the mechanics of consultation (titles of committees, venues, police attendance and so on), which will be useful in generalising the findings of this research. There is an interesting insight into the way in which five different Police Authorities (one of them the West Midlands) responded to the Home Office guidelines; and the role of central government and the "hidden agenda" on consultation. And he also does a comparative analysis of three localities - a village, a market town and an urban council estate.

Overall, Morgan's fieldwork methodology is similar to that used in this research - interviews with members of PCCs, study of the minutes of meetings and visits to committees - although his range of localities was far wider. In comparison, the contribution of the empirical research for this thesis is a more detailed and protracted study of four PCCs within one Police Authority in an exclusively large urban locality. The relationship between those PCCs is analysed in the light of specific local social issues and problems, and the wider social formation within which they are situated. Although Morgan refers to questions of policing and 'race relations', his work is restricted to noting only the low numbers of ethnic minority members of committees, and this does not form a substantive part of his research. In this thesis, however, one of the central arguments is that consultation can only be

understood in the light of the history of relations between the police and black communities in Britain, and the specific breakdown which was evidenced by the riots of the 1980s discussed above.

3.4.3 Police consultation in a multi-racial society

In addition to Morgan's extensive research on PCCs, the other major academic study has been by Keith, whose academic background is in urban geography, and his work will now be outlined. Keith carried out a participant observation study of PCCs in several London boroughs from 1985 - 86. His starting point was the riots of the 1980s, and his research question was:

How relevant are the statutory consultative groups in London to the conflict between police and black people that underlay the major 'riots' of 1981 and 1985?
(1988:63)

He argues that consultation is both "a political issue and a set of processes" (ibid., 64), and that it is necessary to map out the interaction between politics and process in order to understand the significance of Scarman's recommendation, particularly in the London context.

His central argument is that consultation represents a "flawed reform" which will not improve relations between the police and black communities. He gives four reasons for this:

- (i) That the image of 'community' embedded in consultation is ill-defined. Implicit in PACE and the H.O. guidelines is the view that there are community leaders in geographical areas (relevant to policing) who will want to consult with the police.

- (ii) That Scarman saw consultation as a forum for expressing the anger which erupted in riots. Keith describes one meeting of a PCC immediately after the shooting of Cherry Groce in Brixton at which much anger from within the community, and even hatred of the police was vented to senior officers. However, this was at great personal cost to members of the committee, and there was little evidence of any long-term resolution of conflict. Thus in the case of PCCs, Keith implicitly counters the view that consultative committees can act as 'safety-valve' institutions for dealing with social conflict.
- (iii) That PCCs have little formal power, and their actual powers are not clarified. There are two problems here. One is that senior officers do not have as much control over the exercise of discretion by junior officers as proponents of consultation think. The other is that police divisional boundaries (in London and elsewhere) often do not coincide with local government boundaries making the relationship between senior officers at police divisional level and their local government counterparts, problematic to manage.
- (iv) That the procedures at meetings often over-ride actual issues, leading to a bureaucratization of consultation.

According to Keith, the police hold a common sense view of conflict, and see increased understanding as the key to its reduction or resolution. This is reminiscent of the 'immigrant-host' assimilation approach to race relations of the 1950s and 1960s (see Glass, 1960 and Patterson, 1965 as examples) in which it was officially believed that all that was needed to overcome the disequilibrium of immigration and post-war expressions of racism in Britain was increased contact between black and white people. Through this contact the migrants would come to adapt to British society and the host community come to accept the new migrant. What this common sense view omits is any real understanding of, and informing by, Britain's colonial and imperial history, institutional

racism and its social and political determinants within the structures of British society.

Keith's research is confined to London - in contrast to this thesis which examines the operation of consultation in a provincial urban area, somewhat removed geographically and in time from the political battles of the metropolis in the early 1980s, but with its own specific and particular political, social and especially policing issues and questions. However, in common with Keith there is a concern in this thesis to relate consultation to its original conception and intention, however implicit - that of improving relations between police and black communities. The wider question of conflict in local communities is dealt with in Chapter 7 below.

Keith looked in some detail at the politicisation of consultation in the London context, and his findings support the argument put forward earlier in this chapter - that the beleaguered Conservative government found consultation a symbolic answer to the crisis in policing and public order. Resisting calls for a Police Authority in London, the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw cited consultation as the correct balance to the increase in police powers under the Police Bill - what Keith calls "a political token exemplifying acceptance of the spirit of Scarman" (ibid., 75). As Habermas argued, in times of crisis governments resort to "expressive symbols" (1976: 70). In the case of police consultative committees, unfortunately their symbolic value far outweighs their actual

value vis-a-vis involving the community in setting policing objectives. The evidence from this research indicated that senior officers seldom used the PCC to assist in objective setting, but rather, the PCC offered a forum for maintaining the policing status quo.

3.4.4 Further critiques of consultative procedures

In addition to the substantive researches of Morgan and Keith, there are references to consultation in a range of writings on aspects of policing. These are now reviewed in discussions of four aspects of consultation relevant to this thesis: membership, relations with Police Authorities, content of meetings and local accountability.

First, questions about membership of consultative committees. Pearson et al (1989: 121) posit that black groups will be under-represented on committees, thereby privileging white interest - what they call "racism within local systems of representation". Their study is about the policing of manifestations of racism - for example, incidents of racial harassment. Black people who experience this arguably have a direct interest in making representations to local PCCs to obtain police resources to deal with local incidents of racial attacks. Yet if they are not members of the committee who is going to raise such issues? From the fieldwork for this research an analysis is made of the way in which the absence of black members on committees is discursively explained; the lack of awareness by those police interviewed of the subtlety of

Pearson's point; and how the agenda item "racial incidents" is dealt with by an all-white committee (see Chapter 5, below).

Boateng (1982:6) forecast that PCC members would have a problem of credibility. Those who go on committees and claim to be community leaders may have no widespread credibility in the local community. If the police continue racial harassment and intimidation, as they have in parts of London, then liaison arrangements would collapse for want of ethnic minority members from the community (8).

Furthermore, Bridges (1983: 45-46) argued that it would be in police interests to exclude those who were not pro-police, in particular "those groups who are most active in defending the community against police abuse and harassment". Of course, it could equally be argued that such groups would eschew consultative committees out of principle - in other words, the question of membership is not just about committees being selective but also about community groups opting in or out. Cox (1985: 54) was in favour of wide community representation, rather than workers from the public sector dominating committees. This whole question of membership and representation, including a discussion of how people became members, will be analysed in Chapter 6 below. The significance of statutory sector employees as actively constituting the network of crime prevention agencies on the police sub-division will be explored in Chapter 8 below.

In discussing the relationship between Police Authorities and PCCs, Smith and Morgan (1989: 245) argue that because PCCs "legitimate police decision making" they have the effect of marginalising the Police Authority, which has a wider public accountability function, and has elected representatives forming the majority membership. The problem is that PCCs could become free-floating decision-making bodies in the police sub-division, and have no direct link with the Police Authority, and even diminish the Authority's role. This point was also made by Cox (op.cit.,54) who argued it was essential for PCCs to be linked in to the Police Authority structure. The way in which this has operated in the West Midlands will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 8 below.

Furthermore, Smith and Morgan (ibid., 245) make the point that with policing becoming more centralised, both in regional and national terms, the relationship between local PCCs and the Authority is likely to become even more problematic. If the influence of PCCs is limited to the sub-division on which they meet, how are wider issues of policing to be discussed or negotiated? In other words, how is force-wide policy going to be affected by sub-divisional operational policy? During the course of this fieldwork, the Birmingham Six were released. Clearly this was a major issue, both for the West Midlands Police and the people of Birmingham. Whilst there was a great deal of public debate, there was no direct forum - not even PCCs - in which the police could be faced with questions raised by this miscarriage of justice.

So far as content of meetings is concerned Bridges (op.cit., 45) argued there was a potential for manipulation of agendas in PCC meetings. If the police are in a position to determine what information is presented, this can be selected information through which they can make claims for more crime prevention resources and increased police action. This is just one of the legitimating functions of PCCs, and is discussed again in Chapter 8 below.

Savage (1984: 57-58) saw the proposals for PCCs as being radical and progressive on the following grounds:

- (i) that they locally based;
- (ii) that they bring officers who make decisions about local policing into contact with local people - especially the officers who actually patrol an area;
- (iii) that local people can air their concerns about matters rather than making formal complaints - making this consultation rather than control from above;
- (iv) that they link into other forms of community policing.

Whilst these points are demonstrably true, and were found in this research, they do not necessarily lead to the model of consultation Scarman envisaged, or afford a sociological understanding of the significance of PCCs for community or race relations.

Savage further argues that councillors on the Police Authority have a much wider brief than just policing, whereas people who attend PCCs would do so because of their specific interest in the policing of their community. He writes :

Although the notions of consultation and 'co-operation' may have all of the hallmarks of compromise, there are grounds for a more positive approach to police-community liaison schemes as a route to actual involvement by the community in policing decisions. (ibid., 48)

Linking consultation back to public accountability, has proved more problematic than either Lord Scarman or writers like Savage envisaged. The reality in this study is that although lay members of committees *felt* they were making the local police accountable, there was only marginal evidence that this was how the senior officers on the police sub-division perceived the role of PCCs. This will be analysed in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7 below.

Many of these critical problems were posed before PCCs became formalised by PACE. What is of interest is how many of the problems and issues have been realised now the committees are functioning. What the fieldwork for this research revealed was the specific ways in which these manifest themselves in the different committees - there was no universal pattern. However, each committee displayed some aspects of these critical areas, and from this evidence more sociological insights and critiques have been developed as a central thrust of this thesis.

3.5 Current issues concerning consultation

3.5.1 The post-Scarman policing crisis

At a Conference on Crime and Policing, held in Islington in November 1990, John Newing, Chief Constable of Derbyshire(9),

spoke both of low morale within the police service generally, and of the general lack of confidence which the public had in the police at that point in time, leading to a lack of co-operation and reduced effectiveness (Newing, 1990:1-2)

There are several elements to this crisis. During the 1980s, despite massive increases in public spending on the police (particularly so in the light of public sector cuts in other local authority services), reported crime has apparently risen inexorably, whilst detection rates have remained relatively static or even declined. Between 1980 and 1990 recorded crime increased from 2.5 million to 4.3 million, whilst the clear up rate fluctuated between 1.0 and 1.4 million (Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1990, 1992:15). This raises questions of 'value for money', police efficiency and customer satisfaction (Crisp, 1990: 15)

Miscarriages of justice such as the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, and the Tottenham Three, have shaken public confidence in the criminal justice system, and in particular, the role of the police. In addition the disbanding of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad in August 1989 has highlighted the problems of police evidence, resulting in greater difficulty in securing convictions in the courts.

In 1988 the Director of Public Prosecution's decision to recommend prosecution of police officers involved in the News International dispute at Wapping raised again questions of

public order policing strategies (Cashmore & McLaughlin, 1991: 37). On the other hand, it was an over-emphasis on public order, rather than public safety, which contributed to the Hillsborough disaster, for which the police were also criticised in the Taylor Report.

Questions have been raised about the practice and consequence of an increased use of firearms by the police, particularly when as a result of their use by police officers innocent people have died or been seriously injured. For example, the shooting of Cherry Groce in the back in September 1985 was followed by further rioting in Brixton (Jefferson, 1990: 87).

For the Metropolitan Police there have been a series of successful civil actions brought against them by black people, who alleged racial abuse and harassment, wrongful arrest and mistaken identity. Some of these involved well known black sportsmen (for example, Linford Christie, Maurice Hope and Garth Crooks). Between 1987 and 1989 the police have paid out nearly one million pounds in compensation (Guardian, 26.7.90). It is clear from this that black people in particular are finding the courts a better source of satisfaction for dealing with complaints than the official Police Complaints Authority procedures.

Internally there has been a failure to increase significantly the recruitment of ethnic minorities into the police (10). Problems for black officers were highlighted the case of PC

Singh, who successfully won an Industrial Tribunal hearing in October 1990 against his employers, the Nottinghamshire Police, on the basis of racial discrimination. Subsequently he was awarded £20,000 in damages and ten officers were disciplined. This again focused attention on aspects of institutional racism.

These are some of the elements of what has been termed a crisis of public confidence in the police. Cashmore and McLaughlin (op.cit: 10 - 15) further point to the significance of the police response. Far from denying the existence of crisis conditions (as Newing's paper demonstrates), the police have used the concept to increase their own powers as Cashmore and McLaughlin argue :

The police are enthusiastic parties to this orthodoxy and... have utilised the idea of a crisis to address a series of problems they needed to solve en route to autonomy. (ibid., 13)

One of the questions centrally addressed in this thesis is the extent to which the police look to Consultative Committees to mediate the effects of the crisis - for example, by reassuring members that they are doing everything they can in the fight against crime - and building consensus and support for their actions (see Chapter 8 below).

3.5.2 The contemporary police view of consultation

If there was some resistance to the establishment of consultative arrangements by the police in the early 1980s, by the time this research was carried out the situation had

changed, at least at senior officer level. As Morgan & Maggs (1985b: 74) argue, Chief Constables may have co-operated with their Police Authorities initially out of political expediency in the early stages of their operation, but by the late 1980s they were incorporating consultation as an important element of policing policy.

With the Government-inspired drive for efficiency and effectiveness, it became apparent to senior officers that PCCs offered one reference point for checking that police services were responding to the actual needs of the local populace. Sir Peter Imbert (Metropolitan Police Commissioner) signalled this in an article in the Police Journal, when he wrote:

Consultation and contact with the community must be pursued with vigour. It is essential that police find out from the public, who pay for us and are our customers, what they require from us, how sensitive we are being to their needs and how satisfied they are with the service.... There must be dialogue.
(1990: 7)

He linked consultation to a wider policy of community policing, and saw PCC members as having a role to play in the prevention of public disorder.

Also in 1990, ACPO issued a policy document 'Setting the Standards for Policing: Meeting Community Expectation'. This marked a shift away from their earlier obsession with public order, to a quality of service focus. Within the framework of this document, consultative committees are just one way in which local policing priorities are determined. It would appear that the lessons of Scarman and public disquiet over

paramilitary policing developments, together with the financial restraints imposed by the government had the cumulative effect of forcing the most senior police officers to address questions of public confidence and public support.

This nation-wide policy fed through to the West Midlands Police Authority, and quality of service was set out as one of the six corporate aims for the period 1991 - 1994 (1990:6). Specifically, in relationships with the public, the document states as an objective :

To raise the profile of local consultative committees to encourage more public participation and to obtain the views of the public. (ibid., 8)

The way in which this has been interpreted by Superintendents at the sub-divisional level will be discussed further in Chapter 6 below.

Finally, it can be argued that the police, at senior levels at least, have moved somewhat away from the more confrontational, paramilitary developments of the mid-1980s, to a more realistic, service-oriented approach for the 1990s. McConville and Shepherd argue that there has always been:

... a tension between the police as a service-orientated body and the police as an agency for order-maintenance. (1992:233)

This tension is apparent in Reiner's analysis (1992:63-69) of the origins of the British police. He argues that the service role was less important than crime prevention in securing consent to the establishment of the modern police in the last century.

Shearing and Stenning (1987: 10) suggest that whilst the role of the police has widened from a law and order approach, this is simply part of their broad remit to maintain social order. Therefore, whether this apparent move from paramilitary to service role is a genuine attempt to respond more sensitively to the policing requirements of local communities, or part of a public relations exercise to regain consent and legitimacy, or simply a pragmatic reaction to fiscal imperatives is yet to be determined.

Ten years after Lord Scarman's report was published, and seven years after PACE 1984, Consultative Committees in Birmingham are established on every sub-division. The main research aim of this thesis is to analyse the socio-political role and significance of these committees. They are now well-established forums in which the police and local people meet on a regular basis. One of the phrases many interviewees used was 'talk shop', and there is an obvious concern among committee members that the meetings should be more than this. Quite what role they play, and how committees fit into the wider structures of policing, both on the sub-division and in a more theoretical sense will be critically examined and discussed in Chapters 5 - 8 below in the thesis.

3.5.3 The political economy of policing in Britain

The background to the policing crisis, as already stated, was the right wing, free market policies of the Thatcher government. Although the government were slow to impose

financial constraints on the police following the 1979 election, by 1984, in common with other public services, financial constraints on public expenditure were eventually imposed through the Government's Financial Management Initiative (Morgan, forthcoming: Chapter 1).

If public sector cut-backs was one orthodoxy of the Thatcher government, the other one was to elevate the role of the individual away from dependency on the state and towards self sufficiency and freedom of choice. Ironically, as Brake and Hale (1992: 8) point out, the government's economic policies which resulted in high levels of unemployment, cuts in welfare provision and limitations on trade unions removed those very structural factors which contribute to stability in society, and enhanced those factors likely to contribute to a rise in crime and hence the need for social control by increased policing. In response to this the government constructed their own 'Conservative criminology' which posed the issue of responsibility for crime in individualistic terms - criminals as 'bad' people, and simultaneously put the solution to crime also in the hands of the individual - namely the victims. The relationship between this ideological perspective on crime and the role of PCCs in crime prevention will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8 below.

The final aspect of government policy which is relevant to this thesis is that of public participation. The 1980s saw an increase in the ways in which members of the public could

participate in public services, under the ideological banner of consumerism. These ranged from school governing bodies to public hearings for proposed planning applications, and included, of course, Police Consultative Committees. People were encouraged to be 'active citizens', and as consumers of services were given the opportunity to be involved in the running of those services, ostensibly with a view to increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the name of 'value for money'. Thus the buzz words of business management and private sector economics were appropriated by the government and applied to the public sector. The way in which this operates with PCCs will be analysed in Chapters 6 and 8 below.

3.5.4 Policing marginal groups

As the social cohesion of British society began to collapse under the pressure of the economic recessions of the early 1980s and the current one of the early 1990s, an increasing number of groups became marginalised and targeted for policing. As this chapter has already argued, black communities have a long history of experiencing repressive policing. In the 1980s trade unions were the objective of government legislation, and in their determination to reduce the power of the coal miners the government engaged in the long-running and bitter Miners' Strike which lasted over one year. During this strike the range of paramilitary strategies and equipment introduced as a response to the riots of the early 1980s, were brought into operational use, particularly at the notorious confrontation at

Orgreave (Cashmore & McLaughlin, 1991:32-33; Jefferson, 1990: 94 - 99).

However, black people have long been the butt of repressive policing, and trade unionists are the traditional enemies of Conservative governments. What was different about the 1980s was the range of other groups marginalised and targeted for paramilitary and other repressive forms of authoritarian policing. These included New Age travellers, students, peace campaigners and poll tax protestors (Cashmore & McLaughlin, op.cit., 12-15).

Also of relevance to this thesis is the issue of prostitution, and the way in which this marginal group of female offenders is policed, especially in urban areas. As Brogden et al (1988:101) argue, social divisions in society are important in understanding police work on a day to day basis. In the section on female offenders they point to the well established problem of exercising discretion that the police face in responding to prostitution. They write:

As permanent suspects, prostitutes are always subject to all the width of police discretion - to harass or not, to arrest or not. The legal context in which the police operate with respect to specific pieces of legislation, in this case a legal context which grants the police officer much discretion, makes a real difference to the treatment of female offenders. (ibid., 119-120)

The argument in this thesis is that prostitution in the 1990s can be understood in the context of the feminisation of poverty - a further direct consequence of Thatcherite policies. In feminist analyses of prostitution (see, for example, O'Neill,

1992:17 - 21) emphasis is given to the uneven effect of public sector and welfare benefit cuts combined with a declining labour market, which has given rise to an increasing number of women experiencing poverty through low incomes and lack of available employment. Although levels of poverty have risen generally during the 1980s, women (especially working class women) form a significant group within those in poverty. Evidence points to the economic viability of prostitution as an alternative form of work for women squeezed out of a declining labour market.

In this thesis (see Chapter 7 below) the issue of prostitution is analysed in relation to the way in which it is dealt with by an inner city PCC - how the issue is raised and how the police have typically responded in both operational police work and through the PCC. The debate in the locality is about forms of street working and the way in which residents groups use the PCC to lobby for police action on prostitutes and their clients. This is then related to the broader question of whether or not PCCs can resolve conflict in local communities.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has briefly outlined several strands of literature from a variety of academic perspectives which needed to be examined in order to give the historical, social and political background to consultation. A strong case has been made for an understanding of institutional racism within the police, in order to account for the riots of the early 1980s and the

political response from which consultation developed. The research for this thesis indicates that some of the potential social issues and problems of formalising previously ad hoc and/or informal arrangements for police/community liaison which were predicted by early critics have been realised - the specificity of that realisation will be the subject of the main empirical analysis in the later chapters of this thesis. This analysis indicates that although consultation has come to be accepted by the police and the public as an established forum for meeting with the police, it is by no means unproblematic, and the particular issues and questions which arose during the course of the fieldwork will be elucidated in the remainder of the thesis.

PCCs occupy a space between the police as an organisation and other spheres of civil society. Drawing a boundary around what literature was helpful and that which was less relevant has been difficult. Whilst this chapter and the previous one (above) have discussed the most relevant literature, the wider literature will also be utilised in the analytical chapters. The role of theory building and the generation of research propositions and questions will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 4 below, which outlines the methodology for this research.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PCC

4.1 Introduction

Having established the theoretical framework for this thesis and outlined the background to police consultation, this chapter turns to methodological issues and practices. The sociological researcher has a wide variety of approaches and methods from which to choose. To some extent that choice will be informed by the nature of the research task, but it will also be informed by certain philosophical underpinnings. The notion of the researcher as an objective, detached inquirer into social life has been superseded by the recognition that the role of the researcher inevitably involves some degree of subjectivity, personal beliefs and values.

Whilst the questions of agency and structure discussed in Chapter 2 above are analytically separable they are not clearly delineated areas for social inquiry, nor methodologically prescribed, but are inter-related and interactive - as Bhaskar's transformative model implies. In order to explore and test that relationship, the research instruments for the fieldwork of this thesis were designed in such a way that they drew upon "properties of structures" in order to elicit answers which clarified meaning and action on the part of individual members of PCCs. For example, some of the questions in the interview schedule (see Appendix 2) were drawn from the terms

of reference for consultative committees issued by the West Midlands Police Authority with the committees' constitution. To examine further that relationship, some of the questions asked of informants as the human agents of the PCCs related to their individual perceptions, histories and motivations, whilst others delved into structural factors pertaining to PCCs and the respondents' communities and localities. Applying a case study approach to four PCCs in the Birmingham area yielded comparative data from identifiable structures which had some properties in common, but others which were unique to each individual committee. This produced a rich set of micro-level data for analysis which could then be related back to the macro level of those theoretical and conceptual questions raised in Chapters 2 and 3 above. As Hammersley concludes:

... the process of scientific inquiry, in so far as it is concerned with theory-building, is the same for both survey and case study research. (1992:180)

The link between theory and data is further elaborated in the discussion on generalising the empirical findings of this research in section 4.6.2 below.

4.2 Using a case study approach

There have been a limited number of quantitative studies of PCCs - see for example, Morgan and Maggs early work (1984, 1985b); and Horner (1988). However, the main researchers in this field have used qualitative methods - see Morgan (forthcoming), Keith (1988, 1990) and Stratta (1990). The research for this thesis is also qualitative and adopts a case study approach. This does not necessarily exclude quantitative

data (1) but does allow for greater flexibility in exploring the object of research - namely the meetings of PCCs and the members of the committees. As Platt argues:

... case studies, especially those which start with the case in its own right rather than as an instance, are more likely to uncover unanticipated findings as the details are explored. This openness to surprise and availability for multiple purposes is the real strength. (1988:20)

The rationale for selecting this approach was at one level self-evident - a single PCC is a case in itself, with relatively clear boundaries in terms of its membership and the police sub-division in which it is based. In methodological terms, case study as an approach can enable the social researcher to illuminate the assumptions implicit in theoretical explanations in a way that quantitative methods cannot. In this research, for example, actual examples of the legitimisation process are given in order to illustrate Habermas's theory; the active construction of hegemony is identified; examples of social control agencies are tested against Cohen's theorisation of control. The case study approach therefore offers the opportunity through both the subjective accounts of those interviewed and the objective observations made at meetings to substantiate the theoretical concepts and the question of structure and agency discussed in Chapter 2 above.

4.3 The research design

Designing research involves more than producing a plan of fieldwork and denoting the intended research instruments. Yin

(1984:27) argues that it is at the design stage that "the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of a study" is also determined. Thus there is a deeper purpose to research design which affects the eventual integrity and validity of the final research findings.

In designing the research Yin outlined three essential elements (ibid., 29-35). First, the development of a set of preliminary research questions which will to some extent determine the direction of the research and indicate the appropriate research methods. The ones generated here were based partly on the undergraduate work mentioned earlier, but mainly on the more extensive critical examination of subsequent empirical studies on PCCs referred to in Chapters 2 and 3 above. These were the following set of 'how' and 'why' questions:

how do people come to be members of PCCs?

why do people join PCCs?

why do people remain in membership?

how do the police perceive their role at meetings?

how do PCCs compare to other forms of police liaison?

how do the police 'use' PCCs?

how are member's perceptions affected by the organisation/group they represent?

why has the government preferred consultation to other forms of accountability?

how are PCCs symbolic?

These questions expressed the underlying issues raised for this researcher by PCCs - namely, what role they played in relation to policing, community and political considerations nine years after Lord Scarman's original recommendations?

An exploratory case study does not necessarily require a hypothesis to test out, but it will have some underlying propositions which can be tested out during the course of the research. The initial propositions derived from the initial research questions were:

- (i) that PCCs are a public relations exercise by the police and the government which have symbolic value;
- (ii) that the police use PCCs to legitimate activities which might otherwise be publicly unpalatable (for example, controlling public order problems in riot gear, carrying out drug and vice raids, banning marches);
- (iii) that locality is an important variable, and that there will be significant differences between inner city and outer suburban committees;
- (iv) that black groups are not generally represented or are under-represented;
- (v) that motivation for being on the PCC will vary between police and lay members.

The importance of generating these propositions lies not in their being 'proved' by the research, or to pre-empt the final analysis and conclusions, but in enabling the researcher to clarify and substantiate the areas of central sociological interest. In the course of the study, some of the propositions were found to be valid, whilst unanticipated findings were also revealed - one of the strengths of this approach.

These questions and propositions were generated at the planning stage of the research. However, it was during the fieldwork stage when issues and problems became clearer through the interaction of observation, interviewing and critical reflection, that the central proposition of this thesis was determined. This has already been expressed in Chapter 1 above, and is restated here - namely that PCCs do not fulfil the role of consultation and accountability outlined by Lord Scarman in his recommendations, but that they persist because they have a symbolic and practical function for the Conservative government and the police in maintaining and reproducing legitimacy, consent and control. Linking this proposition to the theoretical concepts outlined in Chapter 2 above, during the analytical stage of the research four critical aspects of PCCs were identified:

- (i) in relation to institutional racism - that the police continue to manage the policing and 'race relations problematic through the incorporation of local black 'community leaders' - an incorporation which has a political and symbolic significance;
- (ii) the legitimation of policing by consent and police accountability through selective membership;
- (iii) the mediation of potential conflict through the social construction of community 'problems' which conceal underlying fundamental social inequalities;
- (iv) the formation of a network of local social control agencies based on the police sub-division which reproduce particular ideologies of crime prevention.

These four elements constitute both the research design and the theoretical framework for the four analytical fieldwork

chapters (5 - 8 below) which form the substantive basis of this thesis.

Returning to the research design, Yin's third component involves defining the "unit of analysis" (1984: 31-33). In this instance, it was planned at an early stage to study several PCCs in order to gather comparative data. It was also part of the initial plan to use locality as the basis of the case - the police sub-division perhaps - in order to compare groups and organisations not in membership of the PCC, with the committee itself. However, it became clear after the pilot study that this was over ambitious given the time available, and the case was therefore refined down to the PCC itself. The boundary of the unit in each case was the immediate membership of the committee based on the police sub-division (although in chapter 8 below there is an exploration of members acting across other social arenas linked to the PCC).

In designing the research it was clear that some of the questions and propositions referred to above related to the micro sociology of committees themselves, whilst others referred to wider social processes. The focus of the research was PCCs, but interest also lay in macro political questions around policing in the late twentieth century. Using Yin's typology of case studies (ibid.,46), this research was a multiple case study of four PCCs, embedded within the wider case of the City of Birmingham. This enabled consideration to be given to the wider social and political context within which

the research was carried out, including the local policing environment and the political significance of PCCs in the context that particular historical phase of British life which became known as 'Thatcherism'.

4.4 Operationalising the research

4.4.1 Field roles

In Chapter 1 above, it was indicated that previous undergraduate research had been carried out on one PCC. My role in that study was one of "complete participant" by Hammersley & Atkinson's definition (1983:93-97). Whilst there were sound reasons for adopting that role in order to complete that particular study, it was not necessary in this study to either participate in the life of the committees or to obtain data covertly. PCCs are neither secret nor closed institutions - their life is public, and the infrequency of meetings means that membership fluctuates. By their very nature, there was no need to attempt to infiltrate the committees - accordingly an open role, as "complete observer", was entirely appropriate.

In this case Hammersley and Atkinson assert:

.... the aim throughout is to maintain a more or less marginal position. As Lofland (1971:97) points out, the researcher generates 'creative insight' out of this marginal position of simultaneous insider-outsider. The ethnographer must be intellectually poised between 'familiarity' and 'strangeness', while socially he or she is poised between 'stranger' and 'friend'.
(ibid., 100)

How this marginal position facilitated the gathering of data will be discussed later.

4.4.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is crucial to qualitative research, and in particular to the development of theory from data. Formal data, together with informal ideas and hunches are linked in producing "grounded theorizing", argue Hammersley & Atkinson (ibid., 174-177). This cannot develop without reflexivity, which occurs as the researcher examines a particular aspect of the study. Although there can be a problem of over-focusing, leading to abstract theory, Hammersley & Atkinson argue that this is countered by the fact that concentration on one part can

... give us more knowledge about how a particular aspect of the social process is organised and perhaps even why events occur in the patterned way they do.
(ibid., 174)

In other words, as the research develops, the focus moves from the macro to the micro as the researcher uncovers new or unanticipated elements worthy of study. Thus flexibility of outlook is a pre-requisite of reflexivity.

Reflexivity is also the means by which the researcher is made aware that she or he is not separate from the social world they wish to study. However unintended, the researcher cannot avoid having an effect on the object of study and, in turn, be affected. The question of bias in social research is, argues Becker, a false one. He states:

... the question is not whether we should take sides, since we inevitably will, but rather whose side we are on. (1970:123)

This recognition must, it seems to me, commit the researcher to declaring those aspect of their projects which are liable to subjectivity. Becker goes on to argue that problems can arise when researching a social situation in which there are dominant and subordinate groups. The tendency is to give greater credibility to the accounts from members of the dominant group:

As sociologists, we provoke the charge of bias, in ourselves and others, by refusing to give credence and deference to an established status order, in which knowledge of truth and the right to be heard are not equally distributed. 'Everyone knows' that responsible professionals know more about things than laymen.... By refusing to accept the hierarchy of credibility we express disrespect for the entire established order. (Becker, 1970:127)

The potential for this aspect of bias in this particular research is obvious - the police attending PCCs are the professionals in terms of policing, whilst the community representatives are lay people. On the other hand, having been a lay member of a PCC myself, could lead to the opposite form of bias - a greater sympathy with community representatives. Becker's solution to this problem is to:

... take sides as our personal and political commitments dictate, use our theretical and technical resources to avoid the distortions that might introduce into our work [and] limit our conclusions carefully. (ibid., 134)

In practice this has meant seeking to be explicitly honest about my critical attitudes to the study of police consultation. By asking the same questions of police officers (supplemented with ones of particular relevance to their role on PCCs) as were asked of lay members the perspectives of both police and community representatives could be given equal

weight. This was particularly important when analysing the data from interviews, when I attempted not just to assume there was a single 'police perspective' on consultation, but that in some cases police and community representatives had mutual interests and common values.

Much of this reflexive process has been facilitated through the keeping of a research diary (see section 4.5.3 below), whilst the opportunity to discuss issues with colleagues and others working in a similar field, has also been invaluable in preserving the necessary balance between subjectivity and objectivity as a complete observer of the four PCCs investigated. Ultimately the sociological researcher aims to maintain 'consistent subjectivity' during the fieldwork and analysis.

4.4.3 Gaining access

Having determined the field role to be adopted, access to the field then had to be negotiated at several levels. In the first instance permission was needed from the Police Authority to approach individual PCCs, and from the Chief Constable to interview senior officers. In both instances permission was readily given. A meeting with one of the clerks to the Police Authority during the negotiation stage proved invaluable at several stages in the research - in deciding which committees to study, and giving 'insider' information that would have been unobtainable elsewhere.

permission from the Chief Constable was readily given, and the general attitude of police officers approached was helpful and interested. There are several possible reasons for this. The West Midlands Police have experienced some major issues and criticisms during the period of this research (2), and they presumably felt that a piece of research which did not appear threatening should be given every assistance in order to improve their public image. A new Chief Constable was appointed in 1989, and as part of his 'Three Year Plan' (1990), gave a high profile to community policing and consultation (3). It was thus in the police interest to have research carried out in this field.

Having gained access at the police management level, the lay chair persons of those committees to be studied had to be approached to gain access to the actual field of research. This was done by an initial telephone call briefly explaining the nature of the research, followed by an explanatory letter. Again, there was no difficulty or resistance, although some scepticism as to the value of research was expressed by two of the chair persons.

The final level of access was at the first meeting of each committee attended. Permission was obtained beforehand from the chair person to have an item on the agenda, under which the research aims and methods were explained, the permission of the committee members requested, both to attend their meetings and make observations, and for their co-operation in giving

interviews. Members were invited to ask questions, and in some instances did so. The value of this approach was that everyone was clear as to my role and expectations as researcher, as well as their role as participants in a research project. It also served to allay any suspicions, so that during the course of the main fieldwork my presence at meeting became familiar as I moved from 'stranger' to 'friend'. The marginal position of complete observer, rather than participant, meant I did not have to become embroiled in committee 'politics', and when it came to interviewing individual members, they were confident I had no particular 'axe to grind'.

4.4.4 Pilot project

From May - July 1990 a pilot project was carried out in a Borough adjoining Birmingham, but still within the West Midlands Police area. There were two aims to the pilot project: to test out the research instruments and to eventually provide a comparative set of data to the more substantive fieldwork to be done in Birmingham.

Two police sub-divisions were selected, one PCC meeting on each sub-division visited, questionnaires handed out to those present, and a series of semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 2) held with a cross section of committee members. The rationale for the questionnaire was that a certain amount of quantitative data could be usefully gained - organisations represented, length of membership, distribution of gender and ethnic origin of members, as well as aspects of the committee

which members felt were effective and areas which could be improved. Questions were based on the terms of reference for PCCs issued by the West Midlands Police Authority. A schedule of open questions was drawn up to elicit evidence for the evaluation of PCCs and to identify any specific incidents in which the committee might be involved. The inclusion of a critical incident question (Brookfield, 1987:92-100) was useful in helping respondents to explore the issues surrounding specific events in which they have been involved, and enabled comparisons of perceptions of such events to be made between different respondents.

In both sub-divisions, access was given without any resistance, and there was a high level of co-operation in giving interviews. Even a single visit to the meetings revealed how different committees could be, in terms of degree of formality, organisations represented and atmosphere generated. In the main fieldwork, committee meetings were attended over an extended period of eight months, and a structured observation sheet drawn up to ensure consistency of data gathered between committees (see Appendix 1).

Out of 27 questionnaires distributed, 15 were returned. Not all of them were completed, and the follow-up interviews revealed a high level of ambiguity in interpreting the meanings of some of the questions. It was also apparent that much of the data could be gathered in a more complete form from minutes of the committees (numbers attending over time, organisations

represented). It was therefore decided to drop the questionnaire from the main fieldwork, and substitute additional questions to the semi-structured interviews, together with a review of PCC minutes for the previous five years.

The interviews, on the other hand, were very productive. The critical incident question, in particular, yielded interesting data, which was subsequently written up as a conference paper (Gwinnett,1991). Each interview was recorded (with the permission of the interviewee) and then transcribed. Recording was more useful than taking notes as tapes could be re-run several times to check for accuracy of the researcher's transcription.

Overall, the pilot project was essential in highlighting some of the practical difficulties likely to be encountered during the main fieldwork - in particular that of making contact with interviewees, which can require great persistence. It also gave a realistic idea of time management and what could be achieved in the time available for the main fieldwork. By testing out the actual research instruments alterations could be made, and were made, where necessary, and even dropped, as in the case of the questionnaire.

4.5 The main fieldworld

4.5.1 Selecting the Cases

The case studies for this research were all within the boundary of the City of Birmingham, one of the largest metropolitan conurbations outside London. Historically its present growth and size is due to the rapid expansion of the medieval market town during the industrial revolution. In this century Birmingham changed from a 'city of a thousand trades' to being economically dependent on the car industry and allied trades, with a high demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour. As the city expanded so more and more previously outlying villages were incorporated into the city boundary, yet there remains amongst some of the population a strong sense of village-based locality in the different areas of Birmingham - something which became apparent during the course of the fieldwork. With a population of just under one million, nearly a quarter of whom are from ethnic minorities, it has one of the largest black populations in Britain. At a general level, Birmingham represents an almost Weberian 'Ideal Type' large urban area which has experienced major outbreaks of public disorder in the 1980s, and for which the issues Lord Scarman sought to address in his recommendations for police consultation are as pertinent as anywhere.

Four PCCs were chosen for study from within the Birmingham boundary of the West Midlands Police. Three criteria were used for selection. First, locality (for comparative purposes) -

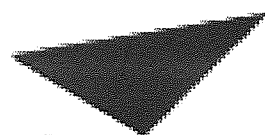
that the PCCs should cover different parts of the city's police sub-divisions. Of particular significance was the comparison between inner city and suburban areas. Second, social factors including social class and the distribution of ethnic minorities in different parts of the city. Third, those policing issues known to the researcher and residents in specific localities in the city.

One of the original research propositions was that locality would be sociologically significant, in the sense that PCC members would have a strong sense of identity with the area covered by the committee, Furthermore, that differences in social and ethnic factors would be reflected in the PCCs, either in the business discussed and/or in membership. The final selection of PCCs was made using the above criteria and after discussions with the Clerk to the Police Authority and a police officer from the West Midlands Police Research Department. They were able to offer guidance on internal factors within the police which were relevant, such as the attitude of the sub-divisional Superintendent to PCCs, and the perceived 'strength' or 'weakness' of each committee.

The final choice of PCCs resulted in two which included inner city areas with histories of public disorder (C1 and B1) and prostitution (B1), and two committees which covered outer suburbs with mixed owner-occupier and council estate residential areas (C3 and D3). Overall, adherence to strict


criteria was impossible as police sub-divisions are so large that they tend to encompass a variety of neighbourhoods. The map below shows the sub-divisions used for the pilot project, and for the main fieldwork.


Fig.4.1 West Midlands Police Divisional Boundaries



Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

 Pilot Project sub-divisions

 Main fieldwork sub-divisions

Source: West Midlands Police Force Structure

Although the selection of cases did allow for the possibility of comparisons to be drawn, in the final analysis this was not done extensively, except to generalise the findings in a broad sense. However, as Platt argues,

.... a strategic choice of types is likely to be of more use than either a single case or a representative sample. (1988: 18)

4.5.2 Sources of data

Three data sources were defined:

- (i) attendance at, and observation of, PCCs meetings of the four committees selected from the period November 1990 to July 1991;
- (ii) interviews with up to 10 members of each PCC - total of 40 interviews;
- (iii) review of minutes of the PCCs lodged with the Police Authority from 1985 to 1991.

Ancillary data were also gleaned from interviews with people not directly involved in the project, but having relevant information and perspectives. Other documentary sources included West Midlands Police Annual Reports, material in various libraries (including press cuttings) and documents relating to community and/or statutory organisations. In addition attendance at two conferences for members of PCCs in the West Midlands organised by the Police Authority (October 1991 and 1992) gave an insight into the perceptions of lay members across the Police Authority area, and the views of senior management within the West Midlands Police.

By using these three main data sources it was intended to give the fieldwork a triangulated basis, and thereby increase the internal validity of the data. However, Hammersley and Atkinson argue that:

One should not adopt a naively 'optimistic' view that the aggregation of data from different sources will unproblematically add up to produce a more complete picture.....differences between sets or types of data may be just as important and illuminating. (1983: 199)

Indeed, this happened in the course of the fieldwork for this research when the past minutes of meetings proved to be less

useful than envisaged. In contrast, attendance at meetings over a sustained period was more fruitful as it enabled pertinent questions and topics from meetings to be fed into interviews with individual members, and contact to be made with interviewees.

4.5.3 Fieldwork notes

An observation schedule (see Appendix 1) was constructed to give fieldwork notes an element of consistency both between committees studied, and from one committee meeting to the next. As well as factors such as venue, breakdown of those attending by ethnicity, gender, police, and non-police, agenda items were also recorded together with any relevant and significant responses/questions and issues raised. Evidence of consultation was also sought, based on the police asking such questions as 'What do the committee think?'; 'How do you think we should deal with this?'; 'Would anyone like to make any suggestions?' If the committees were truly consultative, then these were the kind of questions one would expect the police to be asking. The attitude of the police was also important - if they were defensive, this could indicate lack of commitment to consultation and could be probed in interviews with individual officers to identify the reasons for this.

The schedule was effective as a means of gathering quantitative data concerning attendance. Initially, it was difficult to know what notes to make during discussions - the temptation was to keep making verbatim notes, which turned it into a recording

session rather than systematic observation. Witt Werners and Schoepfle note:

The greatest danger is that observing everything is impossible and that the ethnographer's field notes may bog down in irrelevant minutiae. (1987: 263)

To overcome this they recommend a more structured approach, such as adopted in this research, in order to focus observations through the use of selective questions. During the course of the fieldwork, the observation schedule was revised as it became apparent what aspects of the meetings were most relevant to the research propositions.

Werner and Schoepfle also argue that all observational data should be "submitted to native comment" (ibid., 266) in order to modify the bias of the researcher. In this study, fieldwork notes were fed back in the interviews where relevant. For example, when an interview was carried out after a particular meeting, the interviewee might be asked what they thought of the last meeting (or some aspect of it). In this way, their perception could be compared to the researcher's observations, and any differences and similarities noted. In addition, the network map developed in Chapter 8 below was discussed with people interviewed earlier in order to check that the relationships inferred by the researcher from observations were accurate.

A further source of fieldwork notes was kept in the form of a research diary. Whilst this was primarily a record of the whole process of doctoral research, an account of subjective

feelings and impressions immediately after attendance at meetings or carrying out interviews was also kept. Hammersley and Atkinson support the keeping of such a journal as a means of checking one's own subjectivity:

One often relies implicitly on such feelings, and their existence and possible influence must be acknowledged and, if possible, explicated in written form.
(op.cit., 165)

It was my experience that recording feelings and impressions in a diary enabled a more objective role to be maintained in the field. It has also proved useful as a reminder to recall specific events during the analysis and writing up stage.

4.5.4 Interviews

The decision to interview up to 10 members of each committee was a fairly arbitrary one. Attendance at committees varied, but was generally between 20 and 30. The objective was not to 'sample' the membership in any positivistic sense, but rather to encompass the anticipated variety of views members would have who came from different representational groups and occupied different positions on the committee. From the pilot project it appeared that at least five to six interviews were necessary to obtain a 'feel' for the particular PCC being investigated.

Working with this notional ten, reference was made to the Home Office Guidelines (Circular No 2/1985) issued when PCCs were being established. The organisations they recommended should be contacted by the police in setting up committees were noted - these included churches/temples, residents/tenants

organisations, youth groups and so on. Matching these to known organisations actually represented on PCCs in Birmingham, the following five categories were drawn up:

- (a) police
- (b) public/statutory sector
- (c) voluntary sector
- (d) police-related (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Prevention)
- (e) other - including non-affiliated members of the public

Further variables for selection of interviewees included gender, race, formal role on committee (e.g. Chair, Secretary), and length of time on committee. Each senior police officer (the Superintendent of each sub-division) was interviewed. By intersecting the categories and variables, a cross section of PCC members was obtained, using a mixture of "demographic criteria" and "observer identified categories" (Hammersley & Atkinson, op.cit.,50).

Interviews lasted for about one hour, and followed a semi-structured schedule (see Appendix 2). This was to give consistency of questions between interviewees, particularly around the area of evaluation, and also to allow people to 'tell their story'. The schedule covered the following broad areas:

- (a) how members first became involved with the PCC;
- (b) what they saw as the strengths and weaknesses of the PCC;

- (c) any specific policing issues or incidents that had occurred within the last 12 months;
- (d) how their attendance related to the organisation/group they represented;
- (e) their contribution to the committee.

Key people (for example, chair persons, secretaries and police Superintendents) were asked directly for interviews. In a few instances members themselves made direct approaches to be interviewed. A 'snowball' strategy was also used when necessary, whereby at the end of the interview, the person was asked if there was anyone on the committee they thought ought to be interviewed for the research. Finally, attending meetings over a prolonged period, enabled further identification of potential informants from the categories delineated above, and they were then approached to be interviewed. No one refused to participate in the research, and two people were re-interviewed at a later stage (see section 4.6.1 below).

4.6 Validating the methodology

4.6.1 The data

One of the problems of the qualitative case study approach to research can be a lack of validity and reliability regarding the source of data. This is particularly so where only one source is relied up, according to Yin (1984: 89-97). One way in which this can be overcome, he recommends, is to have multiple sources of data:

The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and observational issues. However, the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation... Thus, any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information. (ibid., 91)

The three data sources used in this study were documents, recorded interviews and observations. This prevented an over-reliance on a single source, and increased the internal consistency of the findings during the analysis phase of the research, as information from the sources was compared. For example, information about specific incidents given by several interviewees was checked for accuracy not only against each interview, but also against recorded minutes, and in some cases, newspaper coverage. Only by laying multiple sources alongside each other could a full picture of the incident be obtained.

A fairly standard strategy for validating data is to use triangulated methodology, in which not only several data sources are obtained, but a variety of methods are also used. As Webb describes it:

.... the utility of different data-gathering techniques applied concurrently to the same problem [is facilitated by] ... the laying of techniques against multiple samples which are natural outcroppings of a phenomenon. (1970:455)

In this research each data source is obtained by a different method (examining documentary sources, interviewing members of committees, completing observation schedules and making field

notes). Furthermore, the primary data thus obtained has been checked in this case against data in the wider literature on PCCs, and from the ancillary sources noted above.

A further strategy is to follow what Yin terms "case study protocol", which he defines as:

....more than an instrument. The protocol contains the instrument but also contains the procedures and general rules that should be followed in using the instrument.
(op.cit., 64)

Elements of the protocol include an overview of the project (aims and objectives); set of procedures; and clearly delineated questions. To this I would add, a systematic way of recording and storing data. During the course of this research all those involved, at every stage, were given clear indications as to the nature of the research. Following interviews, letters of thanks were sent to acknowledge their assistance - from comments at meetings I know this was appreciated by many interviewees, and gave credibility to the research. Using interview and observation schedules was another way in which both consistency and reliability was maintained in terms of questions committee members were asked and data collected from attendance at meetings.

In addition, certain data was checked out with key informants. For example, the network analysis map developed in Chapter 8 (below) was shown to three different people involved - the Community Development Officer, a senior police officer on the sub-division, and a member of the Community Safety Team. Their comments were used to ensure the map was a fair and accurate

representation of the relationships between various organisational levels and between different committees.

During the analysis stage a presentation of some of the research findings was given to senior police officers at a management seminar in February 1992 (4). The discussion after the presentation highlighted those key aspects of consultation which particularly concerned senior police officers. In October 1992 a presentation of the findings concerning membership and representation was given at the Local Consultative Committees' Annual Conference organised by the West Midlands Police Authority (5). Both police officers and lay members of PCCs (some of whom had been interviewed for this research) gave critical feedback and their responses noted and checked against the analysis.

When access to each of the four PCCs studied was negotiated I had agreed to let the committees have a report of my findings relating to the strengths and weaknesses of the committee as identified by members during interviews. During the summer of 1992 reports were sent out (6), and in the case of the B1 PCC I was invited to attend a further meeting to discuss this report. The B1 committee were pleased with the results, and used them to address some of the issues raised by members (in particular about widening the membership of the PCC).

The final feedback mechanism used to validate the data was a report prepared for the Chief Constable and the chair of the

Police Authority (7). We met to discuss this in August 1992, and the points made by lay members about the lack of consultation were emphasised. The Police Authority also used this report to back up their own proposal for providing secretarial support to all PCCs the West Midlands.

Although this was not an action research project, nevertheless by presenting different aspects of the findings to a variety of people involved in police consultation it was possible to check the validity of the data from their perspectives. This in turn gave increased validity to the researcher's own analysis, which in the case of this research could then be refined in the light of feedback from key informants and the wider arena of social actors.

Finally, data needs to be validated in relation to the theoretical framework. Hammersley and Atkinson write:

As the categories of analysis are being clarified and developed in relation to one another, so also must the links between concepts and indicators be specified and refined.
(1983:184)

During the course of the fieldwork phase it was easy to lose sight of more abstract, theoretical considerations. This was why attention was paid at the stage of designing the case study to generating questions and propositions related to the theoretical issues discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 above. By means of 'analytic memos' written during the course of the fieldwork, observations and interview data were regularly reviewed as insights were gained into particular aspects of the

research questions, leading eventually to the final identification of roles of the PCCs. This maintained a flexible link between theory and data, which was critically appraised and refined during the writing-up phase.

4.6.2 Generalising from case studies

In methodological terms one of the key questions of social research is that of the generalisability of the data. In the social sciences the aim of research has often been to generalise the findings to the relevant population at large. This is particularly so with survey and other quantitative methods, where statistical inference can be used to justify the representativeness of the findings over a larger population. However, in qualitative, case study approaches this becomes more problematic, as it can be argued that a small number of cases may be unrepresentative of the totality and therefore any research findings are not generalisable (Bryman, 1988 :88). This has been put forward as a criticism of using a case study approach, although as Yin argues:

... such critics are implicitly contrasting the situation to survey research, where a 'sample' readily generalises to a larger universe. This analogy to samples and universes is incorrect when dealing with case studies. This is because survey research relies on statistical generalisation, whereas case studies rely on analytical generalisation. (op.cit., 39)

Hammersley (1992: 189) takes up this point and argues that case study research has been used to generalise to wider populations, although its claims as such are weaker than survey methods. To counteract this weakness Hammersley argues that whilst case studies may be less effective if the researcher

attempts to generalise to a "larger population of cases", they do produce a higher degree of detail and accuracy. This point was also made by Platt, who argues that a case study approach:

... can provide material, inaccessible or less easily obtained by other means, which fills in the 'micromediation' of social processes. This includes the process of development over a long time-span, the subjective perspectives of participants on events, the ways in which complex sets of factors interact to produce real-life outcomes, and the nature of the mechanisms or processes by which outcomes are generated. (op.cit., 11)

Strategies which Hammersley gives for overcoming the possible weakness of case studies include comparing the findings against quantitative research in the same field, and studying more than one case, selecting them on the basis of the research variables rather than because they are statistical samples. Both of these strategies were adopted in the research for this thesis, thus increasing the reliability of the data and the possibility of drawing generalisations from the findings in the conclusion.

Above all, however, the aim of this research has been to generalise the findings to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2 above. In addition, reference has been made to other research on PCCs (referred to in Chapter 3 above), which can substantiate or question the generalisability of the findings from this research. As Yin argues:

... the method of generalisation is 'analytic generalisation', in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. (op.cit., 38)

Thus the analysis of the empirical findings of this research have been used to illustrate, elaborate or substantiate various aspects of the original research propositions and the sociological theories which form the framework of the thesis.

4.7 Summary

The overall objective of this research is not to produce an analysis which purports to hold true for every PCC in the country, but rather to shed light on the processes and roles of four PCCs in a large conurbation with a history of riots and specific policing issues. Partly to answer the 'why' and 'how' questions and research propositions set out earlier in this chapter, but more substantially to illuminate theoretical questions about the nature and role of one aspect of policing - namely consultation - in the light of relevant political action and policy making at the macro level.

In epistemological terms, the construction of knowledge in qualitative sociological research is made incrementally. It is not the purpose of this study to lay claim to the absolute truth about PCCs - this would be a false objective, but rather to describe, identify and analyse those aspects of the workings of PCCs which extend our knowledge of the role of that particular social structure and the human agents in its membership. The choice of adopting a case study approach, and the use of observation, interview and a study of documentation was the most rational methodology selected from the range available to enable the research objectives to be met. The

attainment of these objectives and the full range of the richly textured empirical data obtained from employing the research methodology described in this chapter and applied in the fieldwork will be apparent in the following four chapters as the data is analysed.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLICE CONSULTATION IN A MULTI-RACIAL CONTEXT

5.1. Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 above outlined several theoretical and conceptual strands concerning policing and race relations. It was argued that PCCs were one of various forms of social control through which the state managed what was perceived to be the 'race relations problem'. Central to this was an historical account of the breakdown in relations between police and black communities, either through over-policing or under-policing. The significance of the urban riots, out of which came Lord Scarman's recommendations for consultation, was also explained. The question of the incorporation of black community leaders into consultation was discussed in the light of pressure from black communities and the need for state agencies to demonstrate their credibility to Britain's growing black population.

In Chapter 4 above the research questions were posed which arose out of the theoretical and historical material on which this thesis is based and which the fieldwork sought to answer. This chapter focuses on those questions and propositions which relate to issues of institutional racism within the policing system, and in particular the way in which PCCs can be used by the police to manage what they have traditionally perceived as a 'race' problem through the incorporation of black community

leaders. At a national and local level this relates to the political significance of black representation on PCC. This is done through the analysis of the empirical findings from research on the C1 PCC.

Here these issues will be analysed in the context of a multi-racial police sub-division which has a particularly notorious history in terms of police/black relations, and in which the police deployed forms of community policing which gained national recognition. The specific history of policing and race relations in Handsworth will be given in the first part of the chapter. It then moves on to an analysis and discussion of manifestations of institutional racism within the local consultation process. Questions of the political significance of black membership, co-option and motivation are then examined. Finally the creation of a particular stereotype of black people and their non-participation in consultation within the West Midlands Police Authority is examined.

5.2 The background to policing in Handsworth

5.2.1 The development of Handsworth as a multi-racial area.

The C1 police sub-division encompasses the Parliamentary wards of Ladywood, Perry Barr and Small Heath, but it is the Handsworth area which is the focus of this Chapter. Until the eighteenth century Handsworth was a sparsely populated heath - it was the building of Matthew Boulton's Soho Works in 1761 which marked the beginning of industrial and residential

development. By the 1860s it had become a fashionable suburb with a mixture of middle class housing (much of which remains) and farmland (Ratcliffe, 1981:9-13). Most of the present housing dates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, being a mixture of larger properties suitable for sub-letting, and small terraced houses which could be rented or purchased relatively cheaply. The former were the homes of the skilled artisans, foremen and small factory owners from the adjoining jewellery and gun quarters of Birmingham, whilst the latter housed their semi-skilled and unskilled work-forces.

In the 1930s the adjacent residential suburb of Handsworth Wood was developed and many of the middle classes and upper working classes left Handsworth in their pursuit of upward social mobility, leaving the already declining properties to be bought up by landlords for subletting and multi-occupation. When black migration to the UK from the former colonies began in the late 1940s and 1950s, Handsworth and nearby Lozells were areas to which migrants came. There were two reasons for this - the availability of affordable accommodation (given that discrimination in housing was widespread, and only profiteering landlords would let rooms to those newly arrived). Secondly, the close proximity to the industrial areas of Birmingham, with their post-war demands for unskilled and semi-skilled labour - the very work to which black migrants were recruited.

Black workers from the Caribbean were the first to migrate in the 1950s, followed by Asians from the Indian sub-continent in

the late 1960s and early 1970s. The introduction of the 1962 Immigration Act had the unintentional effect of forcing Caribbean migrants to become settlers, and so many who had initially planned to return to the Caribbean sent for their children and established their families here in Britain. Whilst work remained for adult immigrants, their children were less successful. By the mid-1960s the post-war economic boom was declining in the manufacturing sector, and the children of African-Caribbean migrants left British schools under-educated and were then excluded from both a contracting and racially segregated and discriminatory labour market (see, for example, Hudson and Williams, 1989:128-139). It can be argued that black youth were the first group of school leavers to experience widespread post-war unemployment as early as the late 1960s. Ratcliffe (1981:203-205) cites a 1977 Department of Employment survey as showing higher levels of black youth unemployment generally, with West Indian males and females having even higher levels than Asian males and females.

High levels of unemployment made black youth more visible on the streets of inner cities. Given overcrowded housing conditions, and a lack of amenities for youth in areas like Handsworth such as John (1970 :11) identified, this is hardly surprising. Having exploited the colonies for cheap labour, Britain was at last having to face the social costs for the reproduction of that labour, which by then was no longer needed. At the same time successive governments were enacting immigration laws reflecting institutional racism in their

objective of restricting migration of black people from the former colonies (1). This controlling and reducing of the flow of black labour into Britain gave to black youth a very clear message of exclusion.

5.2.2 The recent history of policing in Handsworth

Turning to the specific history of policing, in his study of inner city Birmingham, Lambert (1970: Chapter 6) found that although there were higher levels of crime in the inner city, most of it was non-indictable (for example, petty theft, family disputes, pub brawls), and amongst African-Caribbeans there was a low crime rate. Given the background of the debates on immigration control in the 1960s and the racist ideologies which were being reproduced, Lambert found a negative perception of immigrants evident amongst police officers, which was not based on empirical evidence but a stereotypical expectation of criminal behaviour. This was a reproduction of older racialised articulations of criminality associated with migrant labour, which was widespread in Britain and which itself has a long history (2).

Lambert refuted the view that immigrants brought crime with them, and argued that because they were forced to live in high crime areas they became associated with crime. He found evidence of prejudice amongst police officers, who stereotyped West Indians as excitable and arrogant, and Asians as deceitful and cunning (ibid.,190). The dangers from a policing

perspective, which Lambert highlighted, were that in exercising discretion officers may be informed by their stereotyped views in their dealings with individuals. At a managerial level the police were not inclined to change their practices to meet the needs of multi-racial areas. The police were, for example, at that time "not yet ready to recruit coloured policemen" (ibid., 177). Their standpoint was integrationist - expecting immigrant communities to assimilate to what the police perceived as an essentially law-abiding British way of life.

Police in the inner city, argued Lambert, used a law and order approach which militated against dialogue and contact with migrant communities. One effect of this was to distance the police from the growing multi-racial communities in Birmingham's inner cities, thus exacerbating the deteriorating relations between the police and black communities. By the 1960s in the Handsworth section of C1 sub-division, there were increasing allegations of police harassment and beatings in custody, and a failure to protect black people from racist attacks.

During this period John identified two key phases in police/race relations in Handsworth. In the early 1960s the local police:

believed ... that gangs of black men engaged in organised crime in Handsworth and made this their only mode of subsistence. They were therefore very vigilant and scrutinized the activities of every black man whom they knew to be out of work or whom they saw hanging

around clubs, coffee bars, betting offices, etc.
(1970:22)

such vigilance led the police to stop and question many innocent black people which in turn created a climate of suspicion and hostility amongst African-Caribbean people towards the police. (A black informant for this study cited just such an incident which had happened to him some years ago. This account was given without being prompted (3).) The second phase occurred after the accidental stabbing of a black youth in Handsworth Park, which led to a localised panic about young blacks carrying knives. This increased police stop and search activities and contributed to a generalised public climate of unease about black youth. John found there was fear of crime amongst many residents he interviewed. Not only did this have racial overtones, but was not related to the actual level of crime or the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.

When the Commons Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration took evidence on policing, Councillor Sheila Wright (later to be Labour MP for Ladywood) stated that "three quarters of the complaints I get come from the area of one police station" (Select Committee Report, 1972:472). That station was Thornhill Road, the sub-divisional headquarters for C1. During the 1960s and 1970s it became the scene of demonstrations by local black people, protesting about police harassment, and by the time John did his study of Handsworth in 1969 the station was known to local black youth as

'Babylon'. Like Lambert before him, John found that the police policy of law and order was inappropriate to the scale of reported crime, and recommended that a constructive dialogue be started between the police and community groups, leading to an action programme to ameliorate the social conditions in which young blacks in particular were living (op.cit.,46-50). John's report supports the argument that the policing strategy of law and order was becoming synonymous with 'policing the blacks' (Hall et al, 1978:332).

In common with Lambert's study in another Birmingham inner city area, John found in Handsworth that police attitudes to black people were extremely negative. One officer he quoted as saying of West Indians:

When these people have their heads full of pot and alcohol, spurred on by the thumping beat of these reggae records, they are not humans any more, and only those who don't like themselves would set out to treat them as humans [sic].
(John,1970:23)

This pathological view of black people was a recurring theme in the literature on policing (4), and one which brings into question police claims that they adopted a colour blind approach.

John's particular focus was African-Caribbean people - turning to Asian perceptions of the police, in evidence to the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration (op.cit.,68), Dr Prem (Chair of the Standing Conference of Asian Organisation in UK) cited attacks on Asians in Birmingham and the West Midlands by the Ku Klux Klan in the late 1960s, and how the police

refused to take action. It was only when a government minister intervened that the KKK leader was arrested.

Thus in the different police responses to Asian and African-Caribbean people are embedded forms of institutionalised racism which refer back to the two strands in the breakdown in relations outlined in Chapter 2A above. On the one hand, the over-policing and criminalisation of mainly African-Caribbean youth (and to a lesser extent Asian youth). On the other hand the under-policing of black communities (particularly Asian), as the police are slow to protect black families and businesses from racist attacks. These police responses were as prevalent in Handsworth as in other parts of the country. So that John was able to write over 20 years ago:

In my view trends in Handsworth are a portent for the future. A decaying area, full of stress and tension, which also happens to be racially mixed, is going to find it increasingly difficult to cope with the root problems because racial animosities and resentments have taken on an independent life of their own. The problem is not, and can never be, simply one of law and order. (1970:25)

In the 1970s the focus of public attention nationally was directed on policing in Handsworth when a moral panic about 'mugging' was constructed in the media. Although a national phenomenon (and one with a lengthy history), the crime of street robbery brought Handsworth into the national limelight when three youths were sentenced to between 10 years and 20 years for robbing a man and injuring him. The media, the courts and the police constructed a panic (well documented by

Hall et al, 1978) which gave legitimation to white fears by taking crime statistics out of context and using them to justify action against young black people. The articulations of 'race' and crime were redolent of the earlier more localised incident cited by John.

This was also the decade of National Front activity, and in Handsworth it came to a head with the Ladywood by-election of August 1977 when a National Front meeting ended in public disorder (Reilly, 1989:215). This put black people into double jeopardy - they had good reason to fear the police, and continued to be the object of fascist right-wing groups. Yet the fears and legitimate complaints of blacks were not acknowledged by national or local government, the media or the police, and their struggles against the material and social effects of racism were given no public prominence. Indeed, the 'notoriety' of Handsworth, policing and race relations was heightened by a series of articles in the Birmingham Evening Mail entitled 'The Angry Suburb' which ran in May 1976 (5).

So far had relations between the police and black residents deteriorated during the 1970s that an attempt at community policing was introduced on the C1 sub-division. In 1976 a Police Liaison Committee was established, and the police became involved in running youth clubs. In 1977 John Brown was commissioned to undertake a study of policing in the area and make recommendations. His report, 'Shades of Grey', served to

reinforce stereotypes already held by the police. He wrote of African-Caribbean residents of Handsworth: (City (Dear, 1985(5)).

Here the inheritance of the Caribbean plantation culture comes home: a lack of strong family and community structures and values; tensions and divisions of colour and class reinforcing each other; traditions of anarchic individualism fragmenting purposes, organisations and leadership. (1977:42)

This can only be construed as a pathological view which located 'the problem' within the deficient structure of the black community, and in particular the black family, rather than examining police actions and attitudes. Nevertheless, Brown did recommend increased contact between beat officers and people in the community, and a focus on crime prevention.

Brown's report caused consternation in Handsworth, with its one-sided and benign view of the police. To counter this a local organisation AFFOR (All Faiths for One Race) published 'Talking Blues' (1978) which put forward the perspective and experiences of black people in their contacts with the police. Local youth, clergy, parents, youth workers and others wrote not only of police harassment, abuse, assault, rudeness and wrongful arrest, but also of unemployment, poor educational provision and "...a feeling that this society is incapable of accepting young black people as full citizens" (ibid.,4) (6).

The targetting of black youth continued to be the unofficial policy of the police in Handsworth (7) (particularly with stop and search on the streets), whilst community policing became the official one. Following Brown's recommendations in 'Shades of Grey' in January 1978, under Superintendent David Webb, 20

additional older, experienced officers were put back on the beat to increase contact with the community (Dear, 1985:5). Links were formed with other statutory agencies, particularly schools, with the development of the locally based Lozells Project, which was also set up as a response to Brown's recommendations in 'Shades of Grey'. Using Inner City Partnership funding it was a multi-agency, although police-led, scheme with a dual remit of youth work and the distribution of small grants to local community groups. The significance of the project, argues Gordon (1984:130-131) was that it diverted funding away from other inner city schemes and increased the power of the police, who gained further access into the community through their new role as allocators of resources and through their work with other agencies. The latter had to choose between retaining their independent, welfare roles, or join the police in exercising forms of social control. As Gilroy (1982:168) argues, this policy was not a national one, but rather one which was reserved for certain parts of certain cities - what he termed "...the discrete laboratories in which experiments in control have been tested". However, the project continued under Webb's community policing strategy - a strategy which gained national prominence in the early 1980s.

In 1981 whilst the streets of the inner cities were still the scenes of action, it was no longer 'mugging' which preoccupied police, public, government and media, but the disorders which broke out all over the country. In Handsworth there was a consensus amongst the local police and political establishment

that the 1981 disturbances were little more than copy-cat outbreaks of far more serious events elsewhere. For example, the Chief Constable, Philip Knights in his 1981 Annual Report to the Police Authority wrote of "limited disturbances". Even so, there were undercurrents of local significance. Whilst most of the conflict centred around Soho Road, a drinking club a mile away which was known to operate a colour bar was petrol bombed on the night of Saturday 11th July. In addition, Superintendent Webb himself was attacked with stones as he tried to mediate in the troubles (Bishton and Reardon, 1984: 100). This was just one week after the first Handsworth Carnival, in which the police were heavily involved as part of their community policing initiative, and after which they had been congratulating themselves on its success. In December 1981 Webb retired from the police, disappointed at the lack of police interest nationally in community policing (Police, 1981: 6).

Four years later, the riots of September 1985 in Handsworth were far more serious both in terms of loss of life and property, and in the scale and ferocity of the attack on the police. Furthermore they prompted a substantially different response at local and national level. Both the police, the Government and sections of the Labour opposition (8) saw the 1985 riots as 'pure criminality' - with the police in particular blaming local drug barons for initiating the disturbances (Dear, op.cit., 53). From the political point of view, the criminality explanation allowed the Government to

distance itself from any culpability as far as deteriorating social conditions were concerned. The effects of successive years of cuts in public services and the deep economic recession of the early 1980s had, in the Government's eyes, little to do with riots. This was a police matter, would be reported on by the police, and any steps necessary would be taken by the police - no government-sponsored inquiry by the judiciary was necessary for Handsworth. Media coverage of the events gave centrality to the police position, and largely ignored the consequences for the communities in Handsworth and Lozells. The result was that public order came to occupy the main agenda for policing the area. The evidence for this lies in the acquisition of riot equipment, ranging from plastic bullets, specialised clothing and a helicopter fitted with loud-hailer and spot lights. Beat officers, in addition to their community liaison role, had to take increasing amounts of time off their beat for public order training.

The agenda for policing on C1 following the 1985 riots produced operational priorities which determined subsequent black experiences of policing both on the streets and in the home. Black parents whose youngsters had any alleged involvement in the 1985 riot endured having their front doors broken down in the early hours by the police searching for suspects. Children were taken into custody, beaten and denied access to legal representation, and threatened with charges of murder in order to obtain information. Apart from the distress caused to families this has further alienated people from the police, as

silverman (1986:82-83) found in his inquiry into the riots (9):

The local communities responded to the riots by setting up a Defence Campaign, which was a wide alliance of groups and individuals. Local churches, whilst working with the Defence Campaign, also set up a Forum for mutual support of their members, and organised a 'Crisis Procedure' which aimed to put church leaders on the streets and in police stations in the event of another disturbance. The memory of the 1985 riot still remained among those living and working in the area - half of the C1 PCC members interviewed for this research quite spontaneously gave different perspectives on what they knew of the events of 1985.

This section has given an historical account of relations between the police and black communities in Handsworth. To summarise, it has been argued that these relations are based on perceptions and practices by the police which were institutionally racist. As Gilroy argued:

... police present racist attitudes and preconceptions in proportion to those found in the rest of society... but this... is only a small part of any overall explanation of police racism, of greater interest is the more systematic and 'theoretical' racism imparted in police training and discussed by official pronouncements and analyses.
(1982:145)

Gilroy cites as examples of the latter a range of literature, including an article by Geoffrey Dear (who became Chief Constable of the West Midlands Police in 1984) which appeared

in the Police Journal in 1972. It is from this body of police literature and allied sources such as John Brown's report that policies and practices developed for the policing of inner city localities like Handsworth (including community policing and consultation).

This historical background to policing in Handsworth has particularly emphasised racialised relations between the police and local black communities in order to contextualise the development of the PCC. It demonstrates that Handsworth is at one level a reflection of national issues in policing and inner city localities - Handsworth is as typical as Toxteth, Brixton or Moss Side. However, it also highlights the specificity of local events and the particular formations of institutional racism within policing which affected relations between the police and the black communities in Handsworth.

5.2.3 The history of the C1 Police Consultative Committee

The C1 Police Consultative Committee grew out of the earlier Police Liaison Group, and in the aftermath of the Scarman Report was formally established in 1982 under the Chairmanship of James Hunte (a black Councillor and member of the Police Authority). In his report to the first AGM of the committee, Hunte stated:

The committee has not been as successful as he had hoped, because many minority groups failed to send representatives.
(Birmingham Evening Mail 22.4.83)

The question of representation from local ethnic minority communities was clearly an issue at the outset of formal consultation, and will be addressed later in this chapter.

In January 1986, the C1 PCC held a public meeting at the request of the Police Authority to discuss the question of plastic bullets being issued to the police. The then chairman of the Police Authority had resisted requests from the Chief Constable for these to be added to the armoury of police riot equipment and initiated a city-wide debate. The C1 meeting, held in January 1986, was attended by over 100 people - representing a wide range of interested parties in Handsworth - who gave a unanimous vote against plastic bullets.

By the late 1980s the C1 PCC had become dominated by local business interests through representatives of the various traders' associations. These representatives were mainly Asian men, who had become particularly active after the 1985 riot partly because of the problem of hugely increased insurance costs put an additional burden on traders already struggling for survival in a declining local economy. The other main group on the committee was residents' representatives, either from residents' associations or Neighbourhood Watch schemes. These were generally white or African-Caribbean people. Representatives from cultural and welfare organisations formed the third group on the committee, although by the time of the research for this thesis the more radical ones who were members in the late 1980s had ceased to attend (10).

5.2.4 C1 - a multi-racial PCC

Of the four PCCs studied for this thesis, C1 had the highest participation of black people, who formed three fifths of the lay membership (see Table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1 Attendance at C1 PCC meetings

Date	Total	Male	Female	Police	Lay	Black	White
10.01.91	23	20	3	6	17	16	8
14.02.91	19	17	2	5	14	10	9
11.04.91	19	17	2	7	12	8	11
19.05.91	28	23	5	8	20	17	11
11.07.91* *AGM	40	34	6	5	35	29	11

Furthermore, two Asian members occupied the key positions of Chair and Vice-Chair on the committee, and the three PCCs' Lay Visitors (11) were black. Of the general lay membership, the largest single ethnic groups was Asian, with representatives from traders associations, temples, gurdwaras and mosques as well as individual members. In this study C1 was the only PCC out of the four which had Asian members. African-Caribbean members represented residents associations and the lead councillor from the Police Authority was also African-Caribbean.

The interview sample consisted of nine individual members, with two being re-interviewed about the social problem of Asian girls missing from home. Four of the interviewees were white, one African-Caribbean and four were Asian (with two Asian women being interview twice). Seven men were interviewed and two women. Whilst this does not directly represent an ethnic matching of the total sample, it proved quite difficult to interview more Asian men than the Chair and one traders' representative even though this was the largest gender/ethnic groups on the committee. This may have been due to cultural reasons, given that I am a white woman, but there were also practical problems when a negotiated introduction failed to materialise at a late stage in the fieldwork. On the other hand, more meetings of this committee were attended than any other (five in all). I also knew several members of the committee from my membership in 1986-1988, so that there was a sense of familiarity with the C1 committee which did not apply to the other three studied. In particular, I was familiar with the issues of policing in Handsworth which were outlined earlier in this chapter.

5.2.5 Roles of black members

Since C1 was the only PCC studied with significant numbers of black people holding official positions, it was relevant to consider how they came to occupy those roles, what their perception was of their position on the committee, and what was involved in fulfilling their responsibilities. The interview

data from each black member interviewed who held such a position will now be analysed.

Historically the chair has always been held by a black member - initially James Hunte (African-Caribbean), followed by Councillor Marwa (Asian), and since 1986 Jaswant Thakar. He joined the PCC as a co-opted member, initially invited by a friend. He served as secretary before becoming chair. He saw his membership as a "voluntary, community job", with no particular status in the Asian community. His immediate task was to monitor attendance at meetings in the light of a proposed change of venue for meetings to another part of the sub-division. The main problem he experienced in this role was the unwillingness of the police to engage with him in discussing priorities. He would also have welcomed involvement in the assessment of senior officers:

I would like to see the PCC involved in the promotion of senior officers. They should be involved in the assessment of officers, and their entry to the sub-division. It could be done discretely - that's where the true credibility of the PCC lies.

The vice chair, Surinder Wahid, was a social worker on the local Social Services Children's Team who also served as secretary to the PCC before becoming vice-chair. She represented the UK Asian Women's Association, and was first invited to attend the PCC by Jaswant Thakar. When she chaired meetings in Jaswant's absence, she saw it as her role to defend the right of lay members to speak, and cited an incident when the police tried to stop a group of jewellers from raising

questions about a series of robberies. She gave as her aim of membership:

...to look at the way the police are dealing with the whole of the community. All the people are being dealt with sensitively. Because the police are so stubborn, so defensive, that's why I feel we don't win.

During her time on the committee she had been verbally attacked, and been accused of being Jaswant's "puppet", but remained resolute in her determination to continue challenging the police.

The two Lay Visitors on C1 were African-Caribbean men - Harry Yearwood and Mr Smith. During the fieldwork stage of observation of the committee, Mr Smith was ill in hospital and no lay visits were made, and therefore no reports given to the PCC meetings. This low rate of visits must cause concern, given the history of allegations of mistreatment in police cells at Thornhill Road, and certainly in comparison to the other four PCC of this study, Lay Visiting was markedly low on C1. Like Surinder Wahid, Harry Yearwood was invited on to the committee as an observer, and later joined as representative of the association he had been instrumental in setting up. His role as Lay Visitor he saw as important, not for him individually, but as a way of checking on the police. He had other contact with the police, through the Rann Project, where he was on the management committee (12), and as a retired person was actively involved with several community groups.

In addition to those people interviewed three black councillors also intermittently attended C1 meetings. One of them, Albert Charles, was the Police Authority lead councillor (13) for C1. He came to one meeting (14th February 1991) during the course of this fieldwork. At that meeting he tended to dominate time available for questions, and did not really appear to be in touch with local matters. For example, he asked questions the answers to which were already known by most people present. In other words he was unfamiliar with the matters being discussed, and needed background information in order to engage in the debate. As he represented a Ward not covered by C1 it was perhaps not surprising he was not familiar with matters specific to C1. However, as the Police Authority lead councillor he would have had access to minutes of previous meetings and could have familiarised himself before attending. An Asian councillor whose name was not recorded, attended the AGM in July 1991, but took no active part in the meeting.

On the C1 PCC therefore there was no evidence of marginalisation of black members. Indeed there was a tradition of office-holding by black representatives dating back to the initial establishment of the committee. Nor was this an issue for the committee - white members seemed happy to accept the chairmanship of Jaswant Thakar. At the same time, there was less evidence of a 'cosy' relationship between the office holders of C1 and senior police officers - something which was particularly noticeable on the other PCCs observed. This is

explored further in the next section which examines institutional racism in consultation.

5.3 Institutional racism and the empirical findings of this research

5.3.1 Institutional racism and the C1 PCC

So far this chapter has established that the PCC is a site of social relations between the police and black people, within which certain elements of institutional racism outlined earlier may be expected to be manifest and articulated. Furthermore, the specific historical continuities and discontinuities in these relations in Handsworth have been traced chronologically. The active roles and high levels of participation of black members has been analysed. The chapter now turns to an examination of the empirical data gathered for this research in order to analyse this within the theoretical and historical framework of this thesis.

The thesis has demonstrated that as a collective membership group of PCCs, the police operate from a perspective in which racialised meanings have become institutionalised in their world view - as the historical material earlier in this chapter (and Chapters 2 and 3 above) has shown. The police at every level - national, city-wide and in the C1 sub-division - have developed over decades certain stereotypes of black people and black communities. These range from the cruder notions of the young African-Caribbean 'mugger', to the 'devious' Asian

trader; through the pathological concepts of West Indian family life and the '200 Dreads' described by Brown (op.cit.:42;6), to the way in which in discourse with the police, the very term 'community' is taken to mean the 'black' or 'Asian' community.

Furthermore, that there is embedded within certain policing policies and practices forms of institutional racism which have had a direct bearing on the poor relationships between the police and black communities in the inner cities. The question which this chapter now addresses is whether there is evidence to support the arguments that racism is institutionalised in policing, and in police consultative committees in particular.

5.3.2 The police perspective

Taking the case of the police first, that the racialised stereotypes and attitudes cited earlier are part of the wider racialised social relation of the micro sociological level of the PCC is evident from the observations made at meetings during this research. For example, at the meeting on 11th April 1991, police officers were seen to exchange smiles and make disparaging remarks about the translation of a police information leaflet into Asian languages. Some police officers were also aggressive with Surinder Wahid (the PCC vice-chair) when she challenged officers about racism in the police. At the meeting on 14th February 1991 Surinder restated an earlier request for ethnic monitoring of persons reported missing from

home, and a senior police officer present asked why this was required. Given the long history of Asian girls missing from home and this being discussed repeatedly by the PCC, the police officers questioning was a challenge to Surinder. The chair had to intervene and make the point quite firmly that if the committee wanted particular information, they were entitled to request it.

On other occasions senior officers were dismissive of matters raised by Asian members and referred them back to 'the Asian community'. Police officers at meetings would refer to 'your community' when speaking to Asian members, as if a homogeneous Asian community existed in Handsworth to which PCC members had access. In the case of a more serious crime of armed robberies raised at the meeting on 10th January 1991, the implication was that the Asian community had information which for some reason they were withholding, and which would enable the police to solve that particular crime. This appeal to community was only apparent on C1, and was significantly not directed at African-Caribbean members. These observations were confirmed in my interview with the Chairman of the PCC, who commented:

On the PCC the police sit together and whisper amongst themselves. The Consultative Committee members have a once a month chance to express their concerns, which the police often laugh away.
(Jaswant Thakar)

Was there evidence of institutional racism from the interviews with police officers? The Superintendent on C1, Basil Edwards, came into post in May 1991, with no previous experience of

inner city policing. Although rather unforthcoming in interview, the only comment he made relating to the lay membership was to refer to the narrow geographical base from which the PCC is drawn, in that it was

.... representative of Handsworth, but the sub-division covers Perry Barr, Great Barr, Lozells, and there didn't seem to be much representation from those areas.
(Basil Edwards)

This could have been an oblique reference to the ethnic composition of the committee (Perry Barr and Great Barr being mainly white suburbs), but it was clear he was not going to be drawn into commenting directly to this effect.

Bradley Carter, the Sergeant in charge of the sub-divisional community affairs section, was interviewed in relation to girls missing from home - a social problem felt particularly acutely by sections of the Asian community. In interview, Bradley articulated his views and experiences of this issue with racialised cultural references. Thus he spoke of "culture and identity", "changing family structures" when comparing the Asian families and their situation with girls leaving home, to the "very disciplined Afro-Caribbean family structure of the 1970s, when the boys left home to live in squats". He also spoke of cross cultural conflict between Sikhs and Moslems in the area.

The last police officer to be interviewed was Tom Taylor, a retired police officer who now works for the Police Authority in the community relations section. He had worked as a community police officer in C1 since 1965, was instrumental in

setting up the Lozells Project and the Ladworth Project which succeeded it, and is a well known and respected figure in the sub-division. He was aware of the diversity of Asian perspectives on the PCC and said:

I think it is myth that if you are sitting in an organisation in a multi-racial area and it has got a very heavy representation from the Asian community that you're going to get total Asian views. I don't think that this happens, I think that people are getting more involved in what is good for that area for everyone.
(Tom Taylor)

What he discerned after several years attendance at the PCC was that younger Asian members were developing a more sophisticated analysis of local issues. He commended several of the black members, who were now putting forward clear and well constructed cases (whether this influences the police is another matter).

Of the three police interviewed there was no evidence of directly racist attitudes or practices. One had only been on the sub-division three weeks, and the other two are involved in community policing by choice and could therefore be expected to be more sympathetic to local people, with whom they have a high level of contact. However, this was not typical of all the officers on the sub-division, as will be shown later in this chapter when the specific issue of Asian girls missing from home is analysed.

5.3.3 The black lay members' perspective

Four Asian members of the PCC were interviewed, and at first it was difficult to discern direct references to 'race', and in

particular manifestations of institutional racism which black members were aware of through their membership of the PCC. It was Surinder Wahid who in her interview gave the key to analysing the other interviews with Asian members, when she talked of the reluctance of Asian representatives to complain openly to, or about, the police. She said:

They [Asians] are so polite. They might not agree, because when I have my discussions afterwards they say 'Well, its a waste of time. They [the police] won't listen, they're so racist.' But they won't say it to their face. And those that will say it, say it very quietly, sort of in a roundabout way.

Using this key (ie. to look for oblique rather than direct references), it was possible to identify the following five themes and issues in the interviews with Asian members.

First, there was a concern about police attitudes. Police officers were variously described as being "rude on the phone - there's no politeness" (Jaswant Thakar); "appalling, from the majority of police officers, from top to bottom and from bottom to top" (Surinder Wahid). In addition the police were viewed as sexist by Surinder, which came out more in her contact with the police as a social worker, although their aggressive reactions to her at committee meetings also gave cause for complaint. Senior police officers were criticised for a 'no problem here' attitude in denying racism in the police, with an implicit manifestation of cultural superiority. Surinder said:

They won't accept the different cultures. And the fact that at the end of the day they accept that their culture is better than ours. I mean Asian culture.

second, racism was implied in relation to training for police officers in race and cultural awareness. Jaswant argued:

In Handsworth, because of the composition of the area, I think officers should go on race/cultural awareness courses. They need to know what offends, and how to treat people.

This was echoed by Surinder Wahid and Kamal Kaur (her social work colleague and fairly new member of the PCC). Surinder had submitted a joint paper with the Community Affairs Officer outlining a suitable inter-agency training course with Social Services, but this was rejected on the grounds of cost. Significantly all three Asian members who spoke of the need for training, work in the public sector where anti-racist and race awareness training has been most commonplace in the 1980s. This links back to the point made in Chapter 2 above concerning the role of racial equality policies in local government in the 1980s, with their emphasis on training (Solomos and Ball, 1990: 217-220). This may explain why it was not an issue for other black members who did not work in the public sector.

Third, concern was expressed about the deployment of Asian police officers. Two such officers had been attached to the community affairs team and were felt to be very effective in dealing with missing girls and their families. This was not only through communication in minority languages, but also in the sensitivity they displayed towards the families. Without any reference to the PCC or individual office holders, these two officers were redeployed in another sub-division. Jaswant described the situation:

The two Asian officers were not related to the community in Handsworth, but resolved a lot of cases. They had a high success rate across the West Midlands. They had a different approach.... We wanted the Asian officers reinstated... Its very hard for the family to communicate with the police - they often use small children who can speak English.

Thus on C1 the debate about black police officers had progressed from questions of recruitment from ethnic minority communities, to a more substantive discussion of their role and deployment in a multi-racial community.

Fourth, Asian members spoke of the poor response by the police to their policing needs, and this refers back to the earlier point made about the under-policing of black communities (see Chapter 3 above). This came out in two ways. Kamal Kaur and Surinder Wahid talked of the police failing to take community issues seriously, and this will be elaborated later in this section when the question of girls missing from home is analysed. In contrast, Ranjit Singh, a small shopkeeper whose business was forced to close following the loss of trade after the 1985 riots, gave two explicit examples. He spoke of beat officers who were known and trusted by small traders being taken off foot patrols and blamed a former Superintendent. Ranjit described what happened at the PCC meeting when he brought this up:

I protested at the Consultative Committee, but the police said,
'We know what we're doing'.
I said, 'What's the point of us coming to the committee meeting - you should consult us'.

More seriously, he was concerned that the police had not joined with shopkeepers in opposing the granting of a betting license to bookmakers William Hill Ltd. The betting shop this firm opened was subsequently used by drug dealers as "a safe haven". Ranjit stated:

The police and the council could have stopped it. I sent a solicitor's letter - people were afraid of reprisals if they stated the real grounds of their objection. You can't accuse people of being drug sellers. There were thefts from shops by the people using the bookies. I don't phone the police because I may lose my business, and anyway I can't identify them.

Ranjit Singh at no point spoke directly of police racism. However, in my interview with him, in listening to his contributions at PCC meetings, and in particular the point that he made at a conference for PCC members (14), it became clear that he was concerned about discrimination perpetuated by the police. His argument was that in three 'riots' in Handsworth (1981, 1985 and 1991) Asian shopkeepers like himself had been the victims of looting and arson. Yet from his perspective as a small shopkeeper the police had done little to protect Asian traders. This he interpreted as racial discrimination against the Asian community.

Fifth and finally, race issues were referred to in discussions about relationships between different members of the committee. Surinder Wahid in particular spoke in several parts of the interview of how other white lay members tried to minimise her challenges to the police. On one occasion, she stated:

...somebody made a comment he was fed up sitting here for so long - other people face discrimination. I said, 'Sorry, but they don't face racism'.

On other occasions she felt that the white secretary deliberately avoided recording in the minutes some of the points she raised about racism in the police, whilst carefully noting every amendment the police requested.

In comparison there were clear differences between those Asian members interviewed and the one African-Caribbean member interviewed. Harry Yearwood spoke of the treatment of black youth by the police, and cited an experience in which he had been stopped several years ago. He was now convinced relationships had improved. His major concern, however, was the gap which he perceived between African-Caribbeans and Asians on the committee:

Now I am not saying that I try to discredit anybody, but that society lives on its own and its very hard to get into it and get integrated.

His concern was expressed in terms of Asian members making demands on the police (for example, over girls missing from home), lack of integration with other ethnic groups, and the drug-dealing situation. Harry felt he had to take care both over what matters he raised on the committee and the way that he raised them:

Suppose I was to start it, there could be people from that [Asian] community who think, well, I am biased against them, but if they start it I could intervene and help.

He saw the police resisting the demands made at committee meetings by Asian members as evidence that the police were treating all members of the committee fairly. Interestingly,

his view was directly contrary to the way in which Asian members' perceived the police response - what to Harry Yearwood was fairness on the part of the police, to those Asian members interviewed was seen as the police being dismissive and rude.

However, it would not be true to argue that Harry Yearwood shared the police culturally deterministic view of Asians, rather it was that he interpreted what he experienced on a daily basis through living in Handsworth in a different way to the police officers who came in from outside the area. In addition, Harry was involved with the local police through the Rann project and as a Lay Visitor. In his interview it seemed that he was trying to understand the police perspective as well as his own experiences.

5.3.4 Asian girls missing from home

If there was one social problem which recurred on the agenda of the C1 PCC, around which issues of race and racism coalesced, it was that of young Asian girls running away from home. The origins of this go back to the early 1980s when there were allegations, both in the community and in the press, of rival Moslem and Sikh gangs of young men abducting Asian girls in Handsworth (15). At times this spilled over into violence in the streets in which the police became directly involved. Although the abduction aspect had subsided girls were still going off, apparently voluntarily, with young Asian men.

It came to the attention of the C1 PCC when Surinder Wahid joined in 1987. As a social worker in the area and a representative of a local Asian women's organisation she came to meetings to ask the police what they were doing to stop these gangs operating. In the research for this thesis two Asian social workers - Sunrinder Wahid and Kamal Kaur - were specifically questioned about this matter. The Chair, Jaswant Thakar, also mentioned it as he had in the past assisted the police with a few cases in reuniting families with their daughters. The Community Affairs officer, Bradley Carter was also interviewed as he was specifically responsible for missing youngsters.

The social workers and the Chair viewed the issue of one in which the dynamics of the Asian family and the wider Asian community were crucial. From their perspective when a girl ran away from home this caused the family social shame within the community, affecting the family's prospects of marriage for their daughter. A CRC study (1976:Chapter 5) of inter-generational relationships in Asian families in Britain found that it was over the use of leisure time and freedom that there was most family conflict. Asian parents placed more restrictions on their daughters, fearing loss of respect for the family and a breaking down of tradition. A more recent study of Sikh girls by Drury (1991:396) found that the girls themselves were resentful of the freedom allowed Sikh boys, whilst still wanting to maintain family honour. Only 4% of

those girls interviewed actually said they would go against their parents' wishes by having a boyfriend.

According to Jaswant Thakar family shame was so intense that parents whose daughters did go missing did not wish the matter to be made public, although fear for the safety of their daughters made them turn to the police for assistance. Kamal Kaur said in interview:

The police stereotype this business of family honour. What is missed is the importance of children to Asian families. They marry to have children, they're not just a by-product of marriage. So the long-term interests of the family and the children are important as well as family honour.

Kamal insisted it was not just a matter of inter-cultural misunderstandings, but rather that the place of children in the Asian family was given this very high standing - it was the whole rationale for marriage - and families were understandably concerned for the welfare of their daughters as much as their family honour. Within the norms of Asian family life it was clear these different elements were inter-woven. Interestingly, Kamal also explained that many older Asians had not been back to the Indian sub-continent for many years and did not realise how much attitudes there had become liberalised. They were thus clinging to ideas and traditions which were already being transformed in their country of origin.

The police, on the other hand, viewed it as a matter of culture clash - girls caught between wanting to adopt Western patterns of adolescent life and conforming to traditional norms of behaviour. What Bhachu called:

...the crude indices of 'saris, samosas and arranged marriages' model which still has great currency and offers a simplistic conceptualisation of [Asian] lifestyle and cultural locations. (1991:401)

This was implicit in the analysis police sergeant Bradley Carter gave of the situation, blaming the older generation of Asians for failing to adapt. He said:

The older generation are the problem, particularly the older Sikhs. Family structures are changing, and there is concern in the community.

He saw his role as talking through with the family what had happened, acting as a broker between the girl (when she was found) and the family, reviewing cases regularly and referring them to other agencies where appropriate, and effecting reconciliation where possible. He gave examples of young women who had left home and had kept in touch with their families through his team for several years.

There was a link with B1 police sub-division(see chapter 7 below) as it was alleged girls were being abducted from Handsworth, and ending up as prostitutes in Balsall Heath. This concern was expressed by Surinder Wahid and Kamal Kaur, although Bradley Carter played down the question of girls being in moral danger. When I interviewed Helen Jones (16) about prostitution in Balsall Heath I asked specifically about this,

and she had no knowledge of young Asian girls working as prostitutes. She said:

There are no young Asian girls working the streets. They may be in houses - that's where any under-age prostitution takes place. There are two or three Asian women working the streets, but the girls themselves don't like under-age prostitutes and tend to give teenagers hassle. There are rumours of Asian 'houses' run by Asians with Asian girls.

Since there was no direct evidence of under-age sex working by Asian girls it is possible that Surinder and Kamal had heard the same rumour, but this would be difficult to substantiate without further investigation. From Kamal Kaur and Bradley Carter's interviews it seemed more likely that girls were going off with boys and young men in the area, initially for fun but without thinking about the long-term effects on their families or on themselves.

The C1 PCC had attempted to deal directly with this community issue of missing girls. In November 1990 a sub-committee of the PCC was formed to draw up terms of reference for a joint approach between police, social services and schools on missing persons. A set of objectives were agreed and the sub-committee was to report back to the PCC. A direct effect of the sub-committee has been for missing persons to be included in the police report at PCC meetings, with the ethnic origin and gender of those reported missing, together with an update on previous cases.

At first sight this appeared a progressive move by the PCC to become actively involved in a local community issue. However,

from the interviews, and depending on who's point of view was recorded, the sub-committee had actually engendered a degree of conflict. Bradley Carter's view was:

... it offers a closer sharing of ideas and problems. There is an interchange of police officers working with other agencies. This reduces the formality and bureaucracy.

He did however cite the practical problems of joint working. First, that police operate 24 hours per day whereas Social Services are a nine to five service. Second that boundaries of police sub-divisions and social services areas do not coincide. Third, that there can be a confusion of roles - are the police there as social workers or police, are the social workers there as social workers or community workers?

The two social workers on the other hand were highly critical of the whole process. Not only did they find police attitudes offensive, but accused the police of deliberately giving wrong information, failing to do what they said they would, and claiming credit for ideas which had come from the two social workers. One example they cited was a meeting which the police arranged in addition to the sub-committee meetings. The police invited a whole range of senior officers from other sub-divisions in the West Midlands, Asian religious leaders, community workers and teachers. Surinder Wahid said:

Its just appalling, their attitude. First of all I found it insulting to go to a meeting where they've invited men from outside telling me what our needs are, when we've identified them. I said, 'I think its insulting for the C1 members to have people from outside telling them what they already know and what they have been saying for a number of years now'.

surinder's complaint that the police claimed credit for initiatives which came from the lay members of the PCC was echoed by the Chair, Jaswant Thakar, who said : "Thornhill Road took the idea and got the credit. Their attitude isn't right".

Surinder Wahid and Kamal Kaur complained that the police used the law to get them out of tight corners. From their point of view the police were upholding Western liberal values that girls aged between 16 and 18 had a right to leave home, at the expense of understanding the needs of Asian families. This was at the heart of their criticism of the way the police handled the issue of missing girls, as they felt the police should work with them to effect reconciliations where ever possible.

The police view on this was neatly summarised in an interview with a senior officer from Smethwick, carried out as part of the pilot project for this study. He said:

After the meeting last week there was a discussion between the one Asian Councillor and myself about Asian girls running away and leaving the family because they don't want to get married, and I was able to enlighten him as to the arrangements we have got already for that sort of problem, and acting as intermediaries. Because the family are not always that understanding of the needs of the girls - as far as they are concerned its a matter of honour that she comes back and gets married, and if she's 18 then I'm sorry but we're not going to force her to, and its difficult to get that across to the family on occasions.
(Superintendent Mark Harley)

This police officer clearly saw himself as arbiter of British legal norms - that girls over 18 have a right to leave home - and of explaining that law to families. Whether he could set

himself up as more understanding of the needs of Asian girls than their families is debatable. Also questionable was the assumption that girls ran away to avoid arranged marriages. From interviews with C1 members (both police and lay) girls in Handsworth ran away for a variety of reasons, one of which might have been to avoid marriage. This police officer at least was reproducing the kind of cultural stereotypes which were heavily criticised by Asian members of the C1 PCC.

Rather than being a way of moving forward on this issue which affected sections of the Asian community, the sub-committee had become a site of contention and dissent. At one level it was an example of struggle between two groups of professionals - police and social workers - over their respective rights and powers. At another level it was a clash between white male PCC members (including the police) and the Asian female members. Surinder Wahid put it:

I've actually been labelled now, especially by the white males in there, and people from outside as well - the community, white males as well.... One [PCC] meeting when Jim [the police Superintendent] and I was going hammer and tongue at each other about this working party... and this guy then decided to leave and he said, 'Well I'm not sitting around while you're on an ego trip.'

Now its not an ego trip, cause you've got it [racism] in your work, you've got it in the community, and the police are not dealing with it properly - white people, social workers not dealing with it properly - and you have to keep battling with that.

For Surinder the variables of race, gender and professional standing coalesced around the issue of Asian girls missing from home, putting her in an exposed position on the PCC.

At an even wider level, this kind of struggle within local communities was a form of 'war of position' in a Gramscian sense (Gramsci, 1971, 229-230). The police represented part of the state hegemony, which had to be continually challenged and contested. They resorted to strategies to maintain that hegemony - in this case not the coercive use of force, but rather more subtle means of marginalising potentially contentious issues or taking them over and appearing to offer solutions, rather than working with or listening to people from the community who had insights, expertise and contacts to offer the police. Just one example of this was the label "missing persons" given to the sub-committee. The actual issue is young Asian people (mainly girls) missing from home. By adopting a general title the police were reconstructing the issue in a way which masked the specific community affected. Members of the community were therefore forced into confronting the police in order to challenge their monopoly of dominant interest.

As Chapter 7 below will argue, there is no 'typical' way in which police consultation responds to community issues. Each committee adopts different responses. B1 had a relatively undeveloped response, and invited 'an expert' on to the committee. That was very different to C1 where the attempt to work on the issue through a sub-committee resulted in internal conflict between those lay members involved and the police - conflict which had racialised overtones.

5.4 The political significance of black members

5.4.1 The link between national and local trends

In Chapter 2 above the political significance of black representatives on PCCs was located within the wider framework of the move to racial equality policies in state institutions in the 1980s. The argument in this thesis was that PCCs needed to have black members as much to demonstrate their political credibility following the urban riots of the early 1980s, as to genuinely consult with representatives of black communities.

Evidence from Home Office documents (for example, the 1985 guidelines) indicated that the recruitment of representatives of ethnic minority communities and organisations was seen as a priority for newly established police consultation forums. This remained a priority for PCCs as was shown by a 1989 report of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies on the B Division of the West Midlands Police, which recommended that the B1 PCC should increase the numbers of black members (17).

In relation to the question of consultation in general, during the 1980s it became part of the orthodoxy of state agencies, particularly at the level of local government, to engage in consultation with black groups and individuals in determining policy. In his study of education, Gibson (1987: 78) for example, argued that consultation could be another form of social control, unless there was a significant shift of power from the state to black groups. Gibson (ibid, : 87-90)

identified several factors preventing this transfer of power, three of which are relevant to this research:

- (i) state officials being responsible for calling meetings, drawing up the agenda, chairing meetings, and recording the minutes;
- (ii) lack of publicity which restricted the participation of black representatives since there was no mechanism by which wide participation could be achieved;
- (iii) constraints on individual black people (such as pressure of time and lack of resources) which prevented them consulting in turn the group they represented.

Points (ii) and (iii) could equally apply to PCCs generally, as will be discussed further in Chapter 6 below. However, it was point (i) which highlighted most clearly the main contradiction in police consultation. Even though it was the lay members who held office on the PCC, and therefore had notional responsibility for agenda-setting, chairing meetings and so on, with police officers deliberately holding back from that particular role, the police still dominated the meetings. The point has already been made that PCCs have no statutory powers to act in any way, therefore any transfer of power in relation to operational policing matters or policing policy would only ever be with the goodwill of individual police officers at the level of sub-divisional Superintendents. Merely refraining from holding office on PCCs did nothing to transfer power from the police to the lay members, although it gave an illusion that the PCC 'belonged' to the community.

As far as the agenda was concerned, in theory lay members could have items included, but in practice this did not happen. As this research has found (in line with earlier academic studies), police reports formed the main agenda items. Lay members therefore raised their concerns either as questions or comments on the police reports, or under any other business. Both of these were unsatisfactory in terms of consultation, because the former still left the main input to the agenda in the hands of the police, whilst the latter meant important and contentious issues were usually raised when the meeting was nearly over and people wanted to get off home. On C1 Surinder Wahid in particular often made her points under Any Other Business, and her interventions could arguably have been more effective if she had requested an agenda item on, for example, race awareness training for the police. As vice-chair she was in a position to have items on the agenda, and irrespective of her reason for not doing this, the result was that the police input continued to dominate meetings of the C1 PCC.

In their study of local authority consultation arrangements Prashar and Nicholas (1986) found a variety of practices which different local government departments and other agencies adopted to engage with ethnic minority groups and organisations. This highlights the point that police consultation was part of a wider process adopted in a variety of contexts during the 1980s. Prashar and Nicholas also found that recruiting black people onto consultative bodies could be problematic. With PCCs the Home Office guidelines emphasised

that black members were important to the process of consultation. In that regard, the C1 committee could be seen as a success, with three fifths of the lay members being black.

However, as Prashar and Nicholas (ibid., 46) argued, in local government terms there was a lack of clarity as to the reasons and objectives for consulting with ethnic minorities leading to the "form of consultation rather than the content" becoming paramount (ibid.,46). They stated:

... setting up formal structures cannot necessarily secure effective consultation. It simply cannot be assumed that specific committees or co-options will secure the desired effect. (ibid.,6)

This is precisely what has happened with PCCs generally, and the C1 committee in particular. There was no evidence, either from the meetings or from interviews that the police on C1 were prepared to consult, in the sense of sharing decision making or involving the committee in operational policing (which was Scarman's intention (18)). The chairman summed this up, when he stated:

Two Superintendents have cooked something up at Thornhill Road - there's been no consultation, the committee's just been told. Members have been very concerned.... I'd like to see the PCC have more authority, play a more active role in policing the area. I'd like to see the police listen to the views and ideas of CC members. (Jaswant Thakar)

The evidence from this research is therefore that although there was recognition nationally and locally that black membership of PCCs was both desirable and politically necessary, when actually confronted by a significantly large

black membership (in the case of C1 three fifths of the lay members), the local police officers on the committee were unable to respond positively to the satisfy the policing needs of those black members.

5.4.2 Creating myths - the West Midlands picture

Within the West Midlands Police Authority, whilst there was a recognition that participation by black people was desirable, this research identified a 'story' which circulated in order to explain the absence of black and/or ethnic minority representation. This differed significantly from Home Office findings, whose review of consultative committees noted:

In practice most groups have experienced difficulties in attracting an active membership which is genuinely representative of the area they serve. In particular it has generally been found difficult to attract members from ethnic minority organisations.
(H.O. Circular 62/1989)

The review went on to suggest explanations for this which included lack of co-operation from Community Relations Councils, lack of willingness to attend a 'talk shop' and ethnic minorities having alternative channels of communication with the police.

In this study none of these possible explanations was offered, but there was another one which emerged. This was that ethnic minorities only came to PCC meetings when they had a particular problem to solve, and once that was resolved they stopped attending. This rationale was given at a meeting of the B1 PCC when the question of increasing black membership was discussed; at a Conference for Consultative Committee members organised by

the West Midlands Police Authority in October 1991, and in the discussion following a lecture given to senior police officers and PCC lay members in February 1992 on the findings of this research.

As this explanation seemed to have assumed widespread credibility within the West Midlands Police Authority, and given the high level of membership from ethnic minorities on C1, it was pertinent to see if there was any evidence to support it. Examining the fieldwork notes from attending meetings and the minutes of past meetings, there was no direct evidence of any black person attending a PCC for one or two meetings only, nor was there evidence that black members generally had narrow, 'ethnic' interests. On C1 questions were asked about Asian girls missing from home, but this was the only specific issue relating to the Asian community. Other matters, such as the theft of gold necklaces snatched from the necks of Asian women in Soho Road (the main shopping area), was a reflection of the multi-racial composition of the area. Traders who tackled the police on this were as worried about the detrimental effect on business as of Asian women being the victims of crime.

Furthermore, general questions were just as likely to preoccupy the lay members, such as traffic bottlenecks, and a long-standing problems of a piece of land used as a tyre dump with the attendant risk of fire and the environmental pollution that would cause. In other words, with the one exception of Asian

girls, the C1 committee discussed the same kind of issues that the other three committees did - ones which reflected local matters. Although there is marginal evidence of problems specifically related to black representatives, there was no evidence that black people on C1 were any more likely than either their white counterparts or members of any of the other committees studied to only come with one specific complaint and once that was dealt with, cease attending. Indeed, on the two suburban PCCs there were several white people - members of the public - who regularly attended meetings to raise single issues and were very vociferous in this!

Thus it can be argued that the rationale put forward by white people for the absence of black members did not hold up to scrutiny, and had at its heart elements of 'blaming the victim' - that the perceived problem (lack of black members) was located within black communities themselves. The problem with this perception was that it hindered PCC members identifying first, the reasons why black people did not attend their committee, and second, successful strategies for increasing the participation of representatives of black groups or organisations.

One of the research questions for this study (see Chapter 4 above) was that black groups generally would not be represented. In all but one of the committees studied this was in fact proved to be the case. As Keith (1990:156) argued, PCCs constructed a "fallacious notion of community" in which

imagined 'community leaders' were ready and waiting to participate in consultation. The reality was that there were a limited number of people with either the time or the interest to become involved. If those people were black, then the added experience of dealing with manifestations of institutional racism common to bureaucratic structures, and the historical specificity of police/race relations outlined in this thesis, was often a deterrent. Whilst there could be no compulsion to participate whatever the ethnicity of members, there should, however, have been an obligation and understanding that structures like PCCs should at least reflect the multi-racial composition of the geographical area which they cover. The onus was therefore on individual committees to regularly review their membership lists, reflect on how welcome they made new members feel, and how effectively they enabled local people to consult with the police.

The evidence from C1 was that black people could become fully involved in the running of a PCC over a long time period, and that their membership stemmed from a desire to represent the views of the community to the police. It may be significant that the chairmanship had always been held by a black person, thereby reinforcing at least an appearance that black participation was not tokenistic. However, this did not mean that C1 was without problems, because as the earlier sections in this chapter have indicated, there was a strong feeling that the lay members were not being fully consulted or involved as they might have been in local policing policies and strategies.

In terms of proportions of black members and roles occupied on the committee, then C1 could certainly act as a model for other committees to use in increasing the number of black representatives. Making that representation meaningful was the problematic issue for both the police and the black members themselves.

5.5 The incorporation of black representatives

The incorporation of black people (usually the elites of black communities) into the dominant society was a theme pursued by writers on colonialism. Sivanandan (1982: 112-121) argued that the role of the state in post-war Britain vis-a-vis black settlers was to pursue policies of assimilation and integration through state agencies, whilst at the same time controlling the entry of blacks into Britain with successively racist immigration laws. Central to the integrationist policies was the role of organisations such as Community Relations Councils and the Commission for Racial Equality (established under the 1976 Race Relations Act) which acted as mediators by engaging the black bourgeoisie in containing and moderating the dissent of the more militant black working class. Layton-Henry (1984: 5) also makes the point that colonial rule was enforced overseas "with the co-operation of local chiefs and leaders" and that this has become a legacy of colonialism which informs social policy in Britain.

It has already been argued (see chapter 2 above) that much of the community policing and multi-agency work begun in the 1970s

can be located within a domestic neo-colonial model, as the law and order arm of the state sought to engage more moderate black people into managing the crisis of race relations on behalf of, and/or in conjunction with, the police. However, a weakness of this model is its failure to explain the motivation of black people who join such forums as PCCs, Crime Prevention Panels and so on. To see black British people as colonial subjects is to overlook their motivation to engage in public service, represent community organisations and groups or to attempt to effect change. It was to overcome this weakness that a question on motivation for being a member of the PCC was included in the interview schedule. Lay members interviewed were therefore asked why they had joined the committee in the first place, why they continued in membership and what they felt able to contribute to the consultative committee.

Answers to this question across the four PCCs revealed a range of reasons for joining the PCC. For C1 there were two main reasons given by black members:

(i) wanting to represent an organisation so as "to foster links between the police and the community"
(Harry Yearwood)

(ii) raising views from the community (which the police might not otherwise acknowledge or understand)
(Surinder Wahid and Ranjit Singh)

The difference between these two reasons is that Harry Yearwood saw himself in the role of 'honest broker', mediating between the community and the police, whereas Surinder Wahid and other Asian members saw themselves as wanting to increase police awareness of local issues and problems from an Asian

perspective. This may seem a semantic difference, but it affected the way in which black members behaved at meetings, with Harry Yearwood being more conciliatory, whilst Surinder Wahid in particular was far more likely to challenge and argue with senior police officers. The evidence from the C1 PCC was further supported by an interview with Lloyd Caines, and African-Caribbean members of the B1 PCC. He stated:

There is lots of talk and disagreement with the police... How the police see black people is in a very stereotyped manner. Therefore I had to get on the PCC to put the other view of black people... I want them to realise that there are some of us who care.

The noticeable difference from the period of my own membership of C1 (1986-1988), was that the more radical black people who used to attend had ceased coming, and with the exception of Surinder Wahid, a more moderate black voice was generally prevailing - typified by Harry Yearwood (see 5.2.5 above).

All black members, however, were clear that they were independent of the police - indeed their membership was entirely voluntary, unlike the police who had to attend. The evidence of this research was that the black people interviewed were members of the committee because they felt that in some way, and however problematic that might be, they were able to contribute something in terms of police/community contact.

Nor did the means by which black people became members show a direct form of incorporation, at least in terms of the police themselves recruiting people. All four out of the five black members of the C1 PCC interviewed had joined at the request of

existing black members, and the fifth gave no information. Indeed, the continual contests over which groups should be allowed on the committee indicated that at least from Asian groups in the local community there was a strong desire to have representation on the PCC. However, the reason for this being continually contested at meetings did not become apparent during the course of the fieldwork.

It can be argued, therefore, that whilst there was no direct evidence to support the concept of incorporation in a determinist sense, neither was it demonstrated that black members were being directly consulted. This would support Keith's view (1990: 156) that PCCs were a "flawed reform" in that they appeared to address the issue of conflict between police and black communities, whilst in reality achieving little in relation to their original aims and objectives. The flaw which Keith specifically identified was the failure of PCCs to address this issue:

... because their role of 'talking away conflict' is contradictory, because their structure incorporates a fallacious notion of 'community', because the power of committees is often largely illusory, and because of the nature of bureaucratic procedure itself. (ibid.,156)

The evidence from the research from this thesis would support Keith's propositions and also his empirical findings that far from 'talking away conflict', the way in which the social problem of missing girls was dealt with, for instance, actually engendered conflict and antagonism, and thus reinforced Asianf

members' perceptions of institutional racism in the policing system.

5.6 Summary

This chapter set out to analyse the empirical findings from a study of a mutli-racial PCC meeting within the context of a racialised history of relations between the local police and the local black communities. The wider evidence from the study as a whole, indicates that, with the exception of C1, there was a low level of participation in the consultation process by black people (19). Given the origins of Scarman's recommendation in the breakdown of relationships between the police and black communities in London, this understandably gave cause for concern to many people interviewed. This was particularly so for senior police officers who were fully aware of the political credibility attached to liaison and consultation with black representatives.

Evidence from the research for this thesis indicates that the cruder, pathological discourses which dominated policing in the 1960s and 1970s had given way to more indirect forms of institutional racism. In common with other public sector managers, senior police officers have absorbed some of the anti-racist orthodoxies, particularly in their use of language. However, as informants made clear, there was much ground to be made up in addressing the still pervasive institutional racism embedded in policing practices and attitudes. Senior police

managers and experienced community police officers may in public avoid the excesses of their predecessors, but the behaviour and strategies of policing in general continue to operate from a racialised construct in both material and explanatory frameworks. In the analysis of C1, for example, it was clear that confronted with a committee on which the majority of members were from ethnic minorities, the police officers present were unable to respond positively. Instead the PCC became the site of racialised struggles over community issues, and black people interviewed were aware of the embedded racism in the consultation process. It seemed that the police constructed a racialised cultural identity for Asian and African-Caribbean members, and that this obscured and hindered the police from responding in a meaningful way to matters raised by black members. The fact that the newly appointed Superintendent identified as a weakness of the PCC the lack of representation from all geographical areas (notably the white, middle class suburbs) on the sub-division was possibly an indication that he was ill-prepared to deal with a truly multi-racial PCC.

However, in the end one had to wonder why PCCs were concerned to recruit more black members. Was it to give the PCC itself credibility or the police legitimacy? There was no evidence from C1, which was arguably the most successful PCC in terms of black membership, that the police had a genuine desire to address the needs of black people in relation to the quality or quantity of policing they experience.

Overall, I would argue that there was evidence of institutional racism surfacing in the PCC is so far as the police constructed racialised meanings and identities which then partially determined their response to the matters raised at PCC meetings, as well as to individual members. But black members also identified forms of institutional racism, although these were not explicitly expressed as such. Nevertheless, in interviews racialised meanings and signifiers were present, demonstrating that institutional racism was still part of everyday reality, but not necessarily the sole determinant of social relations. The situation had moved on from narrowly deterministic ethnic, cultural or racial positions as far as lay members are concerned, although the police still, from this research, appeared to operate within a narrower paradigm of racialised discourse. It seemed there was a cultural time lag operating, whereby some of the old-fashioned stereotypes persisted, but were over-laid by the wider and more macro-sociological influences of such political changes as municipal anti-racism and the implementation of race equality policies.

CHAPTER 6

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF POLICING BY CONSENT AND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY - THE CASE OF THE C3 PCC

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The issues of membership, consent and accountability

The previous chapter analysed a committee where the most significant factor in relation to its membership was the large number of black people on the committee. This chapter examines a PCC with a very different membership constituency, and one which poses different sociological and policing questions in analysing the relationship between membership, consent and accountability. This links back to the central proposition of this thesis (discussed in chapters 1 and 4 above) - that PCCs have a symbolic and practical function for the police and the Conservative government in producing and reproducing legitimacy, consent and control. The analysis in this chapter demonstrates the practical way in which policing by consent is constructed through one PCC, and identifies in detail the processes involved.

The primary focus of this chapter, policing by consent, is one concept which relates back to the earlier discussion of the theories of Habermas and Gramsci (chapter 2 above), who in different ways argued that consent and legitimacy are actively constituted within the institutions of civil and political

society. For Gramsci the construction of hegemony involved the kind of "moral and philosophical leadership" (Bocock, 1986:11) found in the institutions of civil society (that is, outside the State), whereas the State exercised more coercive forms of domination. Consultative Committees become examples of a State institution (the police) utilising civil society institutions in non-coercive ways in order to construct an hegemony around law and order. This occurs within the wider social and political context of the the kind of economic crises described by Habermas which led governments to re-establish legitimacy through purportedly democratic institutions. This thesis argues that PCCs are one type of organisation through which the present Conservative government seeks this legitimacy for their approach to crime and policing. In this chapter the way in which membership is constructed (mainly by the police) is analysed to demonstrate how consent, legitimacy and hegemony can be achieved. Different ways in which consent is engendered are identified and an examination of the processes involved forms the substantive part of this chapter.

The second focus of this chapter, police accountability, raises first the wider question about whether consultation offers a mechanism for accountability; second, which model of accountability is relevant to consultation; and third, to whom the police should be accountable - community representatives or democratically elected representatives?

This chapter links together these two policing issues of consent and accountability by exploring the membership of the C3 PCC and in particular the notion of representativeness. Having highlighted the way in which membership is socially constructed in order to ensure consent, this then leads to an analysis of accountability as perceived by the members themselves, which is related to the models of accountability discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.3.2) above.

Finally, the analysis in this chapter also explores the following preliminary research questions outlined in chapter 4 above (section 4.3):

- how people became members of the PCC;

- how PCCs compare to other forms of police liaison;

- how members' perceptions were affected by the organisation/group they represented;

- why the government preferred consultation to other forms of accountability.

The discussion of the findings then relates to the critical aspect of consultation set out in chapter 4 above, namely:

- that PCCs legitimate policing by consent and police accountability through selective membership.

The question of membership of Police Consultative Committees has been crucial with both the practical establishment of committees and at the political level. As previously noted (chapter 3, section 3.4.1 above), neither Lord Scarman in his report (1981) nor PACE 1984 specified the form consultation should take. In practice, in most areas of England and Wales

the form they took was that of local committees (Morgan and Maggs, 1985b:24-25). During the process of establishing these committees the correspondence the Home Office had with various organisations indicates that there was considerable debate about who should be members, what roles they should play, how members should be recruited, and whether the general public should be allowed access. The previous chapter discussed the political significance attached to the recruitment of ethnic minorities representatives on to committees. For this chapter, the issue was one of how people became members and what links they had to the organisations and/or groups they purportedly represented.

Morgan and Maggs (ibid.,19) identified the question of membership as being one of the significant differences between the 1982 Home Office Circular and the 1985 one. In the earlier Circular, concern was expressed about having a large membership which might lead to 'talk shops', whilst keeping consultation as open as possible. By 1985 the Home Office had come to the view that a wide membership was desirable with an emphasis on access for all "bona fide formally constituted groups which represent a significant number of local people" (HO Circular 2/1985, cited by Morgan and Maggs, ibid.,19). Furthermore, with the additional shift of emphasis to crime prevention, stress was laid on the inclusion of representatives from Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Prevention Panels and residents/tenants associations.

At the political level, the participation of 'active citizens' in police consultation was part of a wider ideologically driven strategy by the Conservative government to give the consumer a voice in public services. Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 3) argues that part of the market approach of the Government was that the consumer voice would inform policing objectives and lead to increased efficiency and responsiveness. In this respect, policing was no different to education, health and planning - all areas which also had increased formal and regulated public participation under the Conservative government. However, with PCCs this builds on a much longer tradition of lay participation in the criminal justice system as a whole. As Gill and Mawby (1990:1-5) indicate, this involvement ranges from lay magistrates and jurors in the British courts, to volunteer prison visitors and probation service volunteers. Recent years have seen an extension of this with lay visiting, victim support and, of course, police consultation.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to explore the concepts of policing by consent and police accountability through an analysis of the membership of the C3 PCC. This includes an examination of the way in which those people interviewed became members; the strength of the relationship between individual members and the organisation they represented; what benefits membership conferred on them; how other contacts with the police build consensus between members; and public participation and the marginalisation of critics. Police

accountability through consultation is related to the three models discussed in chapter 2 above. First, however, relevant background information on the C3 PCC is presented.

6.1.2 The C3 Police Consultative Committee

The C3 PCC was within the same police division as C1 (Handsworth) and within the same police 'family' (1) as D3. The sub-division covers the Harborne and Quinton area of Birmingham, which consists of the mainly white, middle class suburb of Harborne and large council estates and owner-occupier suburbs in Quinton and Bartley Green. The committee was chosen partly because it was perceived by the Clerk to the Police Authority as 'the best' in Birmingham in terms of its organisation, efficiency and support from the police. Within the sub-division there was a structure of police liaison groups established some time before the PCC. These were allowed to send five representatives to the PCC, and whilst this was not the only sub-division studied with this particular structure (B1 also had liaison groups), it was the only one studied which formally linked liaison groups into the PCC membership.

A breakdown of the attendance at C3 PCC meetings is given below. What is noticeable from the attendance figures is the relatively high number of police officers as a proportion of those present at particular meetings, and the high number of members of the public attending the December 1990 meeting at Kitwell - this will be discussed in more detail in section 6.2.5 later in this chapter. The final point about attendance

is that no black people were members of C3, nor attended from the public. Although the committee comprised of white members, it was the only one studied for this thesis to have a specific report on 'racial incidents'. There had also been localised public order incidents on the sub-division - at Harborne High Street and Woodgate Vally - and in the year before the fieldwork these had been discussed at PCC meetings.

Table 6.1 Attendance at C3 PCC meetings

Date	Venue	Total	Male	Female	Police	Public	Lay
3.12.90	Kit	34	22	12	10	12	12
21.1.91	Quin	18	11	7	6	2	10
20.5.91	Quin	22	13	9	6	3	13
22.7.91	Kit*	24	15	9	9	3	12
	*(AGM)						

Key: Kit = Kitwell community centre
 Quin = Quinbourne community centre

In summary, then, the C3 PCC can be described as situated in a predominantly middle class area of Birmingham. The attendance at meetings was comparable in terms of numbers with the other three PCCs studied, and the membership comprised white, middle aged and older local people or representatives of local groups. The main issues raised at meetings were crime levels, in particular vandalism and nuisance from young people on estates. The relationship between the officers holders and the police is best described as 'cosy' (2) with the police very seldom being

challenged, except by the public. All of this will be analysed in more detail in the remainder of the chapter.

6.2 The social construction of policing by consent - an analysis of the C3 PCC membership

This section, in analysing the membership of the C3 PCC, argues that through the process of socially constructing membership, the C3 PCC was one which was mainly (although not exclusively) pro-police, and thereby actively engendered policing by consent. Furthermore, that public participation at PCC meetings, whilst appearing to give the community access to the police, was in itself part of this social construction.

6.2.1 The debate in the literature

One of the criticisms levelled at the C3 PCC by those members interviewed for this research, was that the 'wrong people' were on the committees. This was often expressed as members being unrepresentative either of the locality in terms of geography; or different groups within the sub-division (for example youth groups, ethnic minorities); or of social class (insofar as most members were middle class or professional people); or of age (most people attending being middle-aged or older). Overall the four PCCs studied in Birmingham were typically dominated by white men (and from observations in the field, generally older, middle class men).

As Pearson et al (1989:121) argued, there was a real danger that the under-representation of certain groups could lead to the privileging of the interests of those groups who were represented. Thus the interests of white people can take precedence of those of black people simply by the sheer attendance of white people at PCC meetings. And by the same token, a high level of attendance at meetings by police officers can serve to privilege the interests of the police.

Nor was it simply a question of having the 'right' groups represented on the committee - equal numbers of black and white, older and younger people needed to be accompanied by their representatives having credibility. Boateng (1982: 6) argued that representatives who lacked credibility (either in the eyes of their own organisation - ie. they were self-appointed representatives, or in the eyes of other PCC members) would be more easily marginalised, particularly if they were in any way critical of the police.

The real questions of representation, Keith (1988:65) argued, were more complex than simply the organisation or group that members nominally represent. The two more problematic issues were first, who did individual members speak for, and second, the basis of their mandate to speak on behalf of others? There was a danger of the police constructing a community out of pro-police and committee-type members. On C3, this was clearly a danger Superintendent Norton identified:

As far as I'm concerned they're [the members] very anxious about this - very status conscious - the people.

So they can be a bit 'jobs worth' some of these people. A bit, I call them local opinion formers. They don't necessarily reflect what's going on, but they reflect their definition of what's going on in the locality. And some tactics are to appease them.

Here, therefore, was a Superintendent admitting that he did respond to the demands of the more active law and order lobby in Harborne and Quinton, thus prioritising their interests.

This issue is discussed by Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 3) who puts forward the following three models of representation:-

(i) Reflective. This is the model implicit in the Home office guidelines - that PCC members should reflect the wider community. The critical question here is what aspect of the community is reflected? Is it physical characteristics such as age, gender or ethnic origin, or is it the values, beliefs and interests? Morgan (Ibid.) states, "In the final analysis, some would argue individuals can only represent themselves"

(ii) Symbolic. This is where an individual stands for something, in the way that a Lord Mayor is symbolic of the town or city s/he represents. Morgan found no evidence of this type of representative on PCC, although a local charismatic leader may fall into this category.

(iii) Contractual. This is where a representative has a mandate from a group or organisation to represent it on the PCC. The critical question here is the degree of attachment

versus independence which the individual representative is able to exercise.

As PCCs have no statutory powers of decision-making or action delegated to them the question of representation is not as crucial as it might be in other settings. As Morgan argues, if the police do not perceive people on the committee to be representative of the locality they can use other avenues of liaison, and indeed this research shows that they do (3). However, the other side of this argument is that the very lack of power of PCCs is one reason why groups do not participate, as they see consultation as a pointless exercise. What Morgan argues for is the need to clarify what the PCC represents from the police perspective - what status do they give the PCC? And from the lay members point of view - are they able to challenge police decisions or be involved in police decision-making?

Evidence from this research indicated that the degree of status afforded the PCC was entirely dependent on the individual Superintendent who attended meetings. Noticeably the present Chief Constable, Ron Hadfield, gave them sufficient priority to have included consultation in his three year plan and to have visited each committee in the West Midlands. For lay people there seemed to be sufficient opportunity to challenge the police, for people who have a more critical approach to remain on the committee, and for the more pro-police members their concern about rising crime ensured their attendance in order to find out what the police were doing in response.

In relation to the way in which critics of the police become excluded from consultation, Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 3) outlines a 'marginalisation hypothesis' in which he argues that the following process can take place. Members of PCCs are generally "socially and economically advantaged" to begin with, having little or no experience of police harassment or negative behaviour. They depend on the police for information on policing problems in the area, since they cannot draw on their own experience. Members come to take on the police perspective, and become even less willing to listen to critics, who become increasingly marginalised. Members' views permeate the wider communities from which they are drawn, further marginalising critics who come to be seen as 'anti-police'.

This view of marginalisation has a direct appeal to law-abiding people, who can meet with the police at the PCC meetings to affirm society's disapproval of forms of deviancy. It also mobilizes 'active citizens' into feeling they are working positively to create a sense of community. Indeed, Mabel Castle, one of the C3 members, gave this as one reason for being on the PCC:

I'm not there because I'm interested in ordinary crime - I'm interested in making contact with people. I'm committed to the fact that if you've got a strong community, with people talking to each other and organisations, the community itself is stronger.

C3 members were generally moderate in their views, assisted by the tendency the Chairman had to smooth over any awkward or

controversial matters, and be very supportive of the local police.

The alternative argument over marginalisation is that there is over policing of working class (Jefferson, 1991:168) and black communities (Pearson et al, 1989:120). PCCs represent 'respectable' middle class and working class interests, and give legitimacy to the existing inequalities in policing. In this way, it is argued, members are able to mobilize the police to deal with local matters, and give themselves an advantage in utilising police resources compared to groups who are not represented on the PCC, even though the latter may experience police harassment, brutality and wrong doings.

Finally, the Home Office and West Midlands Police Authority have also been, albeit less directly, influential in the social construction of PCCs. According to Morgan & Maggs (1985b: 16-18) both the 1982 and 1985 Home Office Circulars indicated the kind of organisations which should be approached to join in consultation, namely:

- statutory services
- churches
- youth organisations
- chambers of commerce
- voluntary groups
- residents associations

The 1985 Circular emphasised the importance of public access to consultation. Similar organisations were recommended to be targeted for membership by the West Midlands Police Authority Constitution for Consultative Committees - with an additional emphasis on ethnic minority organisations and individual

"holders of special posts in the community" (Constitution para.8). It also recommended that all meeting should be open to the public, with at least one general public meeting each year.

However, in the West Midlands membership was constructed in such a way that people already involved in forms of liaison with the police were brought onto the newly formed PCCs. In 1982 the West Midlands Police Authority devolved the establishment of consultative committees to the Superintendents in charge of each sub-division. According to David Fryer (former West Midlands County Councillor on the Police Authority who chaired the sub-committee responsible for setting up PCCs), their remit was to build on existing formal and informal liaison groups. They were thus able to exercise discretion as to who was invited into membership. During the course of this research PCC members were interviewed who had been engaged in liaison with the police prior to 1982, although the majority were post-1982 members. In effect, therefore, the PCCs which were initially established drew on a pre-existing 'community', and one which had already been constructed by the police through informal and formal channels of liaison.

Four ways in which the membership of C3 is social constructed have been determined from the data analysis:

- (i) through the routes into membership, including social networks in the community;
- (ii) through the building on existing structures and the subsequent creation of community;

- (iii) by questioning the representativeness of members including their relationship to the organisation or group they represent;
- (iv) through the marginalisation of police critics, including the public.

There was some overlap between points (i) and (ii) and they are therefore analysed together.

6.2.2 How people on C3 became members

Turning now to the specific ways in which the membership of C3 was socially constructed in order to build consent, the first two processes - routes into membership and building on existing structures - overlap. Routes into membership involved the utilisation of social networks in the community, including personal invitations to become members. In addition, the C3 PCC built on existing structures in two ways. First as a newly created committee in 1989 and second, through the system of Liaison Groups which existed prior to 1982, when PCCs were set up in the West Midlands.

C3 was constituted as a new sub-division in 1989 following boundary changes within the West Midlands Police. Of the ten members interviewed, eight had been members of other PCCs:

From B1	-	1 member of C3	(Superintendent Roy Norton)
" C2	-	5 members	" (Barry Thomas, P.C. Don Ingram, Trevor Yeomans, Pam Naylor, Maggie Bacon)
" B2	-	3 members	" (Barbara Osborne, Bernard Trotter, Mable Castle)

One member was a Police Authority appointee (Barbara Osborne), and the final interviewee had joined after C3 was established (Monica Cox). Two members (Barbara Osborne and Bernard Trotter) retained dual membership of C3 and B2. In a very obvious way, therefore, the C3 PCC was constructed out of existing structures. There was no evidence that the police or the lay members had used the restructuring of the sub-division to widen the membership categories.

On the C3 sub-division there was also a well-established structure of four Police Liaison Groups, based in different geographical areas of the police sub-division. The origins of these were not determined during the course of the research, but members interviewed were certain they pre-dated the Scarman Report. Of these four groups, each nominated up to five representatives to the PCC, and this was the route onto the PCC for five of the ten people interviewed. However, since individuals already represented an organisation or group on the Liaison Group, it became difficult for them to determine which community group they actually represented on the PCC.

Four people were directed to attend the PCC - one being the police Superintendent (Roy Norton), one the lead Councillor from the Police Authority (Barbara Osborne), one an area manager for a local authority department (Bernard Trotter), and the final one from a voluntary organisation (Monica Cox). The local Police Public Liaison Officer (Don Ingram) was invited to

attend after being involved in establishing the PCC through the Liaison Groups.

In his study of five Police Forces, Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 5) found that personal approaches to individuals and/or organisations was one of the ways Police Authorities set up PCCs. This was a significant factor in membership of C3, with four people out of the ten interviewed citing personal invitation as important in their becoming members. Barry Thomas's experience was typical:

We started a residents association here for the block of flats in 1984, and I got involved with that. And the Chairman used to go over to these meetings over in the Church Hall just over the road here. And he said, 'Why don't you come across and see what goes on?' And it just built up from there.

Personal invitation was indicative of underlying social networks on the sub-division. For example, Trevor Yeomans (Chairman), Maggie Bacon (Vice-Chairwoman) and Pam Naylor were all friends and also met on different local committees. Mabel Castle and Monica Cox were both involved with the West Midlands Autistic Society.

Two of those interviewed were on two PCCs - the local authority manager Bernard Trotter, whose 'patch' overlapped two police sub-divisions and Barbara Osborne, the Police Authority lead Councillor. In Barbara Osborne's case, her more substantive involvement with PCCs was through B2, where she had followed a similar route to other C3 members - invited onto the local Liaison Group, and from that to the PCC. She found

regular attendance at C3 meetings difficult due to demands on her time as a councillor, exacerbated by the ward she represented not being within the C3 sub-division.

Mabel Castle had the longest route into membership - she represented the West Midlands Autistic Society on a group called the Weoley Castle Community Forum (of which she was Secretary), from which she was nominated to attend the Weoley Castle Liaison Group, and from which in turn she was nominated to attend the C3 PCC. In contrast, Monica Cox had the shortest route, having joined the PCC in 1990 when the organisation she works for - the West Midlands Autistic Society - was circulated and invited to send a representative. These two members were also friends. It was Mabel who encouraged Monica to become a member of the PCC. Thus although Mabel and Monica 'officially' represent different organisations, they have common interests and membership of the same group.

C3 with its Liaison Groups had a ready-made, although not exclusive, route for lay people into membership - yet there was not an overwhelming demand for places. The four Liaison Groups could have potentially filled 20 of the allocated 50 places on the PCC, but as Maggie Bacon, Vice Chair, put it:

We haven't got enough. This is one thing Trevor, the chairman and I want to do at the moment, is to make sure we've got our 20 from the Liaison Groups, and the 30 others are offered to representative groups that aren't on the others.

The police membership was most ambiguous in the sense that they had no option but to attend, yet whether they regarded themselves as members was questionable. The Superintendent saw the PCC as "another bit of machinery" of the sub-division, although he was very positive about consultation and had a clear model of how the committee fitted in to other elements of policing. The Public Liaison Officer, Don Ingram, clearly felt an expectation that he should attend as part of his work, and he played a very active role (see section 6.3 below). He said:

I found that as a Public Liaison Officer I was expected to go to these meetings as well, in a similar vein to the Liaison Groups, and I found that I was taking on, or accepting, roles connected with the Consultative Group to make sure that the paper work flowed freely.

The ambiguity of police membership lay in the dichotomy of their role on the committee. On the one hand they were directed to attend by their Chief Constable to fulfil the requirements of PACE 1984, yet were not permitted to hold office on the committee. They therefore occupied an anomalous position vis-a-vis lay members who were generally there in a voluntary capacity. Furthermore, the police dominated committee meetings either in strength of numbers (as on C3 where police attendance was relatively high) and/or in their input to the agenda. In this respect C3 was very similar to C1 (see chapter 5 above). As Cohen argued, "... the community institutions have been absorbed by the formal control system" (1985:78), yet the 'control system' appears to be outside the committee insofar as the police were not allowed to play an

active role as officer holders but their presence was essential.

Returning to the way in which the construction of the C3 PCC built on existing structures, another dimension analysed was other contacts members had with the police. Lay members of C3 were asked about such contacts, and the two police officers were asked what forms of community liaison they were involved in.

Not surprisingly, the other main form of contact apart from the PCC for lay members was the Liaison Groups, with which seven out of eight people were involved. Three people were Lay Visitors (Trevor Yeomans, Pam Naylor and Barbara Osborne), and although this was not a form of liaison, it did bring them into fairly frequent contact with the police during their visits to police stations. Three people were on crime prevention panels. West Midlands Police Authority, Neighbourhood Watch, charity fund raising, a community forum, a crime reduction panel and a community safety panel were each cited by lay members as other contacts with the police.

Of the police officers, Superintendent Roy Norton only had contact with the public through the PCC, whilst Don Ingram attended Liaison Groups, community forums and a wide range of local groups and organisations on a regular basis as part of his work.

The highest level of contact with the police was experienced by Bernard Trotter, the local authority manager and Barbara Osborne, the city councillor, who each gave up to seven forms of contact. Bernard Trotter described it as follows:

To be absolutely honest there seem to be so many police liaison, crime prevention, fear of crime, community safety stuff going on in the area that I could become a full time community safety officer if I'm not careful. But then we've got the Liaison Groups that I like to trot along to from time to time, we've got the Consultative Committee, then you've got the crime prevention panel that the police set up. Then I have to draw together the constituency crime reduction panel - it used to be called the Inter-Agency Crime Reduction Group.

The way in which local authority workers in Recreation and Community Services Department have become involved in aspects of crime prevention and policing will be discussed in Chapter 8 below, and Bernard Trotter provided ample evidence of the time commitment this requires in addition to all the other aspects of his work.

When asked how the PCC compared to these other forums, in terms of effective liaison with the police, Councillor Osborne said:

Well, the crime prevention - its only the second one I've been to, so I'm not sure where its going to slot in yet. Then the CC its going through the motions, frankly. I don't know, I sometimes think its a waste of my time, and other times I think, 'No, I'm going to keep plugging away at this, I'm not letting them get away with it'.

Barbara Osborne and Bernard Trotter were the two most critical members of the PCC interviewed, and it could be that their wide range of contacts led them to see the parochial nature of much of the items discussed, and the kind of people who become members were generally pro-police and anxious to maintain the status quo.

other lay members found that the significant difference between the PCC and Liaison Groups was in the level of officers attending. Whereas the Superintendent or his deputy always reported to the PCC, a lower rank of officers attended Liaison Groups. Although in theory this should lead to a higher level of policing matters being on the agenda, in practice members complained that the wrong issues were raised. Pam Naylor argued that too many of the PCC items were really business for Liaison Groups (4) - a point echoed by Maggie Bacon:

This is the trouble. I don't think the difference is great enough. 'Cause I think the things that are personal to Harborne and Quinton should come up at the Liaison Group... And I see the CC more as giving an overall picture. And if the person reporting from the Liaison Group, if he's got anything there that needs Superintendent Norton or somebody higher up to deal with or report back on, then that's where he should get that information and take it back to the Liaison Group. Otherwise I don't see any point of having the Liaison Groups and the PCC. There should be a difference, in what's discussed at the one and at the other.

Overall, the level of both formal and informal contact PCC members had with the police was relatively high. Even Monica Cox, who was the one person of the eight lay members interviewed who gave the PCC as her only form of contact, subsequently turned out to have informal contact with the police through charity fund-raising the police had done for her organisation. At the other end of the spectrum, two people had relatively high levels of contact and were the most dissatisfied with police liaison.

It can be concluded from this section that although there was evidence of the police penetrating community organisations in the way Cohen described, this was not necessarily of benefit to the police, who found high levels of contact with particular individuals counterproductive as those individuals became increasingly frustrated with the lack of action or change any of the forms of contact produced (as expressed by Bernard Trotter). However, it also supports the marginalisation hypothesis (discussed further in section 6.4.2 below), as the police were having contact with relatively narrow groups of people across a range of community liaison forums.

6.2.3 Analysis of the relationship between C3 members and the group/organisation they represent

The third means by which the membership constructed consent was through the links individual members had to the organisations or groups they represented on the PCC. This is analysed through an examination of the models of representativeness outlined by Morgan - reflective, symbolic, contractual - and discussed in section 6.2.1 above. This section examines them in relation to those C3 members interviewed for this research. It also raises the question: on whose behalf were members actually speaking at committee meetings.

There was no evidence on C3 of symbolic representatives, and in order to determine which of the other two models of representation might be found, questions were asked about the relationship between the individual and the organisation they

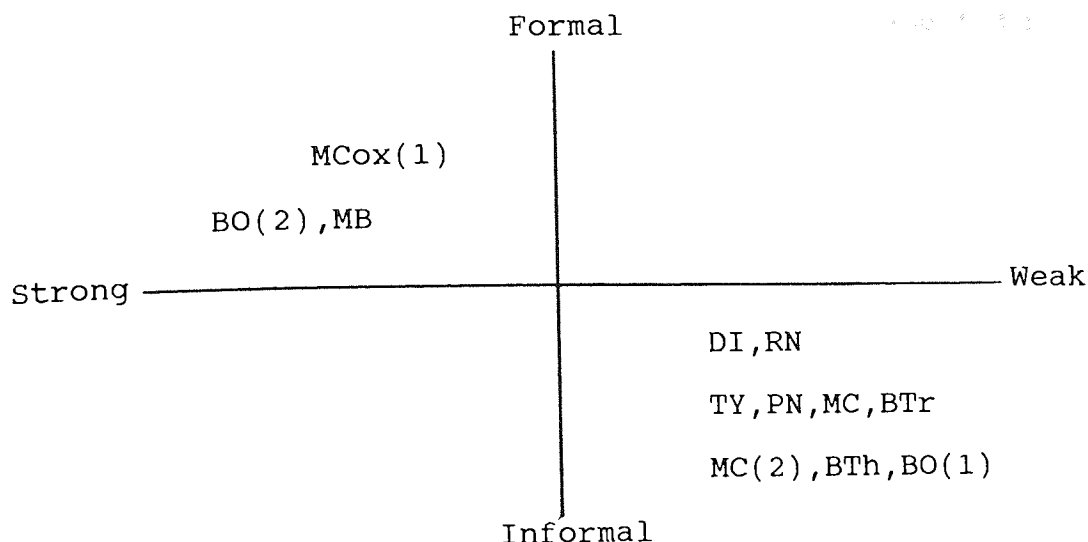
represented. Were they, for example, expected to report back in any way? Did they feel accountable to the group which had nominated them? Did they bring matters from their group to the PCC meetings, and how were these dealt with?

From the interviews two dimensions were identified in terms of reporting back to organisations or groups (see Fig 6.1 below). One dimension was 'strong/weak' - at the 'strong' end members had to report back regularly with an expectation that this was part of their membership of the PCC. At the 'weak' end of the continuum, reporting back was discretionary and might not be directly to the organisation or group. In the case of Bernard Trotter, for example, he would give information gained from the PCC to community groups he had contact with as and where it was relevant:

The relevance it has now is to keep community groups informed of what's going on and to make them feel part of the policing. And certainly its to try and get over the message that the police can't do the job on their own. They need help. That community groups should liaise with their local officers as much as possible.

The other dimension was 'formal/informal'. 'Formal' reporting included written or verbal reports, whereas 'informal' reports would be given casually or in the form of, for example, articles in a group's newsletter.

Fig. 6.1 Reporting Back



(1)(2) - indicates number of reports made.

Key: MB	Maggie Bacon	PN	Pam Naylor
MCox	Monica Cox	BO	Barbara Osborne
MC	Mabel Castle	BTh	Barry Thomas
DI	Don Ingram	BTr	Bernard Trotter
RN	Roy Norton	TY	Trevor Yeomans

This analysis indicates clearly that very few members had strong links with their organisation, since the majority of members fell in the weak/informal quadrant. Only Monica Cox was expected to report regularly and formally to her Management Committee:

BG Do you have to report back?
 MCox Oh yes, I do. I go to the office and we have newsletters, and I'm on the committee so I report to the management committee.
 BG On a regular basis?
 MCox Yes, yes.

Both Maggie Bacon and Barbara Osborne were expected to report to the Liaison Groups, but only if there was pertinent

business. Barbara Osborne also made occasional reports to the Police Authority, and Maggie Bacon also had to report to the Harborne Society:

- MB And I've got to report back to the monthly meetings, and if I don't they say, 'Has anything been done about so and so?'
- BG So you have a strong link with your organisation?
- MB Yes, definitely.

Neither of the police officers had to make formal reports, although they made frequent, informal reports to a variety of other officers as and where they saw the information as relevant. Roy Norton relied on the minutes of the PCC meetings being forwarded to Police Headquarters as the only link between himself and the West Midlands Police senior management. He described the whole process thus:

I would feed that through to our meetings with my boss - not necessarily formal meetings, informal meetings, and he should go to the Chief Superintendent Conference. But every year anyway, as part of the Chief Constable's Police Statement, we feed up information to them about what local concerns are, and very much part of that is the Consultative Committee.

From this it is clear that for the police the PCC was part of a wider information gathering exercise on the sub-division, rather than there being a formal/strong link between those police on the PCC and the police organisation.

Monica Cox and Barry Thomas both put occasional articles in newsletters and for Barry this was the only link between him and the residents group he represented. Bernard Trotter, Trevor Yeomans, Pam Naylor and Mabel Castle only reported if asked to and this was infrequent. Barry Thomas had the weakest

link to his group - when asked if he had to report back, his reply was:

No, I haven't done so, no. Occasionally we do a newsletter - if there's something of any particular interest to this area I may mention it.

Other links between members and their organisations were typified by Mabel Castle, who raised matters pertinent to the interests of the group she was involved in (West Midlands Autistic Society), although didn't actually represent directly on the committee. In interview she said:

One of the useful things at the meetings is that you can - you can represent an organisation and you can actually use the meeting to say, face-to-face with the police.... if you do it tactfully so they don't resent it... you can actually say what's wrong with the policing.

Not only does this illustrate the way in which people used their representativeness to raise issues of particular interest to their groups, but also that people were ambivalent about which group they actually did represent on the PCC. Like Mabel Castle, Maggie Bacon also spoke of both representing the Liaison Group and the Harborne Society.

Bernard Trotter, on the other hand, had a different kind of link between the local authority and the PCC. His representation was different from most of the other lay members in that he had to go as part of his work, whereas most of the lay members went in a voluntary capacity. Bernard worked for Recreation and Community Services - the department nominated to deal specifically with crime prevention on behalf of the city

(5). He was responsible on the one hand for allocating resources, but also felt he was dealing with the aftermath of an historical issue in Birmingham. He explained it as follows:

Certainly in the early days it was to do with two main things. One was perhaps the shovelling around of resources into areas where there was obvious problems with young people. And the other key thing was the mistrust between people who ran youth groups and the police..... And I think this is why the city went through a period of trying to reconcile youth workers with police beat officers.

The almost total absence of representatives of youth organisations on PCCs can in part be explained by reference to the situation in Birmingham in the early 1980s, when youth workers refused to co-operate with the police. This was linked directly to the issues of police harassment of black young people referred to in Chapters 2 and 5 above.

Overall, the evidence from C3 was that the majority of members interviewed (including the police) had weak and informal links to their group or organisation. From this analysis it can be seen that there were no symbolic representatives, and only one contractual representative - Monica Cox. Of the lay members the majority could be categorised as reflective representatives - but of the shared values, beliefs and interests of the 'law-abiding' active citizens of the area. Whilst members themselves acknowledged this as a weakness of their committee, there was little evidence they were working to widen the basis of representation.

Furthermore, the multiple layering of nominations from one committee to another meant that some people were ambivalent about which group they were actually mandated to speak for and report back to. To pick up Keith's point (1988:65) discussed in section 6.2.1 above, the weak links back into the community indicated that C3 members had little mandate to speak on behalf of the groups they purportedly represented. It is difficult to escape the conclusion, therefore, that at the end of the day individual members tended to bring their own views to PCC meetings, unless specifically asked by their group to raise a point (which happened infrequently).

6.2.4. The marginalisation of police critics - the issue of public participation

The fourth and final way in which policing by consent was socially constructed was through the marginalisation of dissenting voices. In this section, Morgan's marginalisation hypothesis outlined earlier is analysed in relation to public attendance and participation at C3 meetings.

First, however, a brief background to public involvement in public services. Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 3) notes that since the 1970s one of the features of the public sector has been the increased participation of the public, although this has been in limited and controlled ways. From the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act which allowed for public inquiries, through to the establishment of Community Health Councils, School Governing Bodies and Police Consultative Committee there

have been a variety of ways in which 'active citizens' can participate in public sector service provision. Under the Conservative Government in the 1980s this was linked firmly to their market economy approach, in which the public, as consumers of public services, were given a voice in service delivery. The underlying political rationale has been to improve efficiency and effectiveness in public services without increasing public spending, and at the same time giving the illusion of consumer sovereignty.

However, public participation in social institutions was constructed with restricted access, resulting in only those who chose to become involved or were nominated actually having any involvement in whatever area they select. PCCs have been slightly different in that they are neither totally open access (like public inquiries, for example), nor was the membership constituted solely through nominated or co-opted members (as in school governing bodies). There was a debate within the Home Office about the attendance of the general public over and above those admitted into membership. In the immediate post-Scarman days the Home Office guidelines recommended having PCC meetings open to the public. However Morgan & Maggs (1985b:37-40) found patterns of public participation varied around the country.

Key questions about public attendance are:

- (i) on what terms the public are admitted to meetings (as observers or participants/ with or without voting rights/ whole of the meetings or a restricted part of the agenda)

- (ii) whether the public should be able to attend every PCC meetings or only special public forums.

Cansdale (1984:35) found that in Lambeth the public were important when they brought particular concerns to the meetings, because this showed that the PCC offered alternative access to the police. He argued that it gave local credibility to the PCC and gave a wide base to participation in the consultation process. On the other hand, as Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 5) found, many committees had difficulties in giving access to the public, particularly in the area of defining the role of members of the public who turned up to PCC meetings.

6.2.5 Public attendance on C3

Of the four committees studied for this research, two had regular public attendance, one of which was C3. This was generally regarded by those members interviewed as a strength of the committee, although it was not without problems, which will be discussed. Initial observation also suggested the public were the police's most vociferous critics. However, as this section will show, in reality their dissent was contained by the police response, and marginalised by the regular members of the committee.

From observations at meetings, the pattern of public attendance appeared to be that at one venue in particular (Kitwell Community Centre) local residents would attend the PCC and bring crime and policing problems to the attention of the

police, often in a very forceful way. One specific issue was raised on more than one occasion - vandalism and nuisance by young people. Twice members of the public asked for information - on one occasion about the specific locality of burglaries because the council was felt to be putting 'problem families' into the area, and on another about the number of elderly people who were victims of crime - which led to a discussion on fear of crime.

A careful scrutiny of the list of people attending meetings circulated with the minutes indicated that in fact, with the exception of the December 1990 meeting where 12 members of the public attended, there was a small group of people from the general public who were going to all the PCC meetings. Their attendance was so regular they could well be described as ad hoc members.

How did the formal members of C3 regard the public? The police were generally in favour of having the public at meetings because they were able to deal with problems and complaints directly. Superintendent Norton also argued that the public presence widened the rather narrow base of the lay membership, and helped the police obtain a grassroots view of local problems. He cited the following example of how he had been able to respond to local police needs:

I put a policeman out at Kitwell directly as a result of the CC meeting where I was met with a great crescendo of complaints about literally lack of visibility of the police. Very valuable in that direction.

Moving the venue of the meetings was given as one reason for high levels of public attendance, although as the above analysis of the attendance list shows, it was really only at one particular venue - the Kitwell estate - that the public attended in larger numbers.

Problems associated with public attendance centred on the narrowness of the points they raised, which were seen more appropriate to Liaison Group meetings:

It does mean, though that you tend to get what you shouldn't at the CC - you get a little group of local residents, who should really go the Liaison Groups, and should be bringing up their point at the Liaison Groups - sometimes turn up at the CC. And you get sort of a couple of streets being talked about and the problems on those streets, and that isn't really the place for doing that. (Maggie Bacon)

Those members of the public who did attend were also seen as fairly vociferous in the way they brought complaints to the PCC, and one member was worried that too open an access for the public could cause problems:

If they advertise too much they might get too many trouble makers. You know, you've got to balance it out - if someone takes the floor - it might take up quite a lot of police time - the whole of one evening. (Monica Cox)

C3 members identified the need for more publicity of Liaison Groups to encourage local residents to attend those, and to find a role for the public who did go to PCC meetings so that they moved from merely voicing complaints to actual involvement. Bernard Trotter argued for:

... a genuine role where people can get involved. People don't want to be involved in things that they can't see things happening. And I would be reluctant to

go on some sort of campaign to raise people's awareness for these groups unless those groups had got some teeth to make something happen.

This view was shared by the police, who also claimed to want contributions not just complaints from the public - although this could be because their experience of public attendance was largely police-complaint oriented.

From an analysis of both observations at meetings, the documentary evidence and interviews with members, on C3 there was a high level of tolerance of the open access policy - that all PCC meetings were open to the public. The problems associated with public attendance appeared to be based on the experience of meetings at the Kitwell Community Centre where a particular group of local residents attended and made their complaints. Locality was important here - geographically Kitwell was a fairly isolated council estate on the border of Birmingham. It came under C3 with the 1989 boundary changes which established the C3 sub-division, and the local police had little knowledge of the area. The PCC meetings offered the residents the only opportunity they had to bring local crime matters to the attention of the police, given that they were three miles from the sub-divisional police station and had no local station or police officer on the beat with whom to register complaints or concerns. No Liaison Group met in the locality, and the PCC was the only available channel for local people.

Members, on the other hand, recollected the Kitwell meetings as being dominated by the public, and a careful analysis of their concerns over public attendance can be related back to meetings at this particular venue. What the C3 committee did not succeed in doing was either mobilize those members of the public into local action on policing matters or recruit them into regular membership. Nor were they able to attract members of the wider public to meetings in other venues. As Morgan (forthcoming, Chapter 3,) found, people may not participate in PCCs for two different reasons - either because they are happy with policing or because they feel alienated from the police. C3 provided a different kind of public attendance where people who were unhappy with the policing service they experienced attend meetings in order to make demands on police resources - which to a limited extent they had been successful in achieving. As a result of their lobby through the PCC they had obtained a beat officer for the areas - which the Superintendent explained:

I moved a local man down there to get things going - get involved with the youth, start giving people confidence in seeing a police man. 'Cause they were a little bit isolated out on that area.

By the granting of concessions and responding to local crime problems, the police were able to contain dissent and criticism from the public. Noticeably, at PCC meetings at Kitwell, those who did complain about policing were not supported by regular members of the committee - in fact the Chairman appeared to be trying to shield the police officers present from criticism. In addition, members' clear feelings that points raised by the

public were not relevant to PCC meetings served to ensure lack of support for local residents. Thus the police contained criticism by responding to complaints, whereas the formal members of the committee contributed to the marginalisation of critics by their unwillingness to accept or act on points raised by the public. And so the general public who did attend PCC meetings were not so much marginalised by the police, but by the lay members of the committee.

On the C3 PCC from the empirical evidence it could therefore be argued that marginalisation was complete, as there were few direct criticisms of the police. From observations at meetings, although questions were asked, the whole tone was rather cosy, with an underlying consensus that whatever the unpleasantness of crime, everyone must work together with the police to overcome these problems. This is what Keith (1993, forthcoming: 152) terms a "social problem ideology" in which Neighbourhood Watch, tenants and residents association representatives come to meetings with concerns about specific crimes (usually burglary and vandalism/nuisance) and criticise poor performance by the police, but only to demand more resources from the police - ie. increased foot patrols, crime prevention and detection work. Essentially, though, their attitudes remains pro-police. Thus it can be argued that PCCs tend to have members who are supportive, yet questioning of the police, with any critics having been successfully excluded or contained.

6.3. The successful construction of consent - building a supportive PCC

Overlaying the four ways in which the C3 committee built consensus policing was the actual interactions within the committee itself. Having identified and analysed routes into membership, types of representation and processes of marginalisation, it is also important to establish what being a member of the PCC meant to individual social actors. This is to demonstrate the way in which this socially constructed committee worked internally to marginalise critics, support the police and actively build consent. This was determined by asking those interviewed what they felt able to contribute to the PCC either at a personal level or on behalf of the organisation they represented. Linked to this was the roles people had on the committee, either in terms of maintaining the committee or in responsibilities such as Lay Visiting. Finally, members were asked what benefits they felt they received from membership, again either at the personal or organisational level.

Contributions members make to the PCC, either through direct interventions at meetings or through their specific roles on the committee, can be analysed under the following five broad headings.

(i) Maintenance. The two most active members in terms of maintaining the PCC were Barry Thomas (Secretary) and PC Don Ingram. Between them they took the minutes of meetings, had

them printed and circulated, and Don also took responsibility for publicizing the meetings. The Chair, Trevor Yeomans and Vice Chair, Maggie Bacon also saw their roles as important in maintaining the committee meetings and in supporting the local police. The C3 PCC was the most active of those studied in publicizing its activities at local carnivals and open days. The office holders were all involved in this and Barry Thomas described what happened:

Last year we had one public meeting that coincided with the Carnival at Weoley Castle, and we had representation, and we had two or three stalls there - crime prevention. And I went out there distributing - we had various leaflets.... Just to give them some awareness of what the C3 is for.

(ii) Information This formed the main input from the two police officers interviewed. Roy Norton, the Superintendent, claimed to have an open style of management, which was reflected in his approach to the PCC:

I like the idea of being very open, very honest with people - making them aware. Some people say, 'Well, you shouldn't really be telling them how many policemen we've got'. But I think people here ought to know.

His contribution to the committee was to stimulate debate and discussion:

So what I try to do and where I feel I'm at my best is when I am challenged. So I try in my report not to give a bland report about detection and whatever but to try and recognise issues with potential for a good argument or discussion. To try and open it up.

He saw the PCC as a forum in which he could both discuss sub-divisional strategies, particularly on crime reduction and prevention, and receive feedback from members. The local

authority manager, Bernard Trotter, by comparison, found himself giving very different information to PCC members, who view him as "the man from the council", capable of dealing with anything from broken paving slabs to street lighting. This is a one of the weaknesses of PCCs cited by members -that many of the matters raised at meetings were not strictly police-related.

(iii) Feedback One of the main inputs that PC Ingram (and in this he is typical of much of the police reporting) made was in giving reports on matters raised at earlier meetings:

I enjoy getting the questions answered, any that might be addressed to me. I enjoy getting them answered.

Trevor Yeomans, the chair, also thought it important to give the police what he termed it "constructive criticism" (although there was little evidence of him doing this at any of the meetings attended for this reasearch). In part this feedback was what formed the momentum of the committee from one meeting to another, although it depended often on individual members picking up issues. Mabel Castle described how she perceived the police response and the process of reporting back:

You can guess at the meeting there are two types of response - you can get the smooth, easy one, or you can get slapped down and yet they have listened and gone off and done something about it.... It would be up to me to pick it up at the next meeting, if I was sufficiently motivated. I mean, at any meeting if you're sufficiently motivated to pursue something, you'd attend and make sure.

Clearly the process of reporting back was not as unproblematic as the police seemed to think and was another way in which

critics were marginalised publicly, whilst in operational terms the police may have taken remedial action.

(iv) Knowledge This was the area where lay members really came into their own. One of their main contributions to the committee was local knowledge, of the geographical area, organisations, individuals, and policing matters. Maggie Bacon was typical in this respect, when asked what she was able to contribute:

A lot of knowledge of Harborne, through the Harborne Society really. I get a lot of our members at our general meetings. And I ask members to bring up any points they want to make. And sometimes its things that need to go to the PCC.

The police too were able to contribute their knowledge of policy initiatives, and Roy Norton saw it as important for the two -lay and police - to come together:

I think there are two ways in which I see us. I would say there's the professional definition of what the problem is - the way we perceive it and the way we regard suitable matters for action, and then there's the public definition of the problem. Now at some stage there needs to be a kind of correlation between those two views. Some common ground about which we can agree, about what it is important for us to be doing, and how best we can serve.

(v) Influence The final contribution members felt able to make was in the rather vaguer area of 'influence'. Although this was linked to accountability, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, there were two ways in which individuals sought to influence the police. One was articulating the interests of the group they represent. This was exemplified by Monica Cox who works for the Autistic

society, and joined in order to raise with the police the specific problems of young people with autism:

... 'cause autism is a social problem. I mean, the behaviour is rather bizarre, we were having difficulty with the adults and teenagers being picked up by the police.

The influence she sought to exercise was over police training and raising police awareness of how to respond to autistic people.

The other way of influencing the police was harder to define. Barbara Osborne, for example, expressed a much higher degree of concern with policing because of her much wider range of contacts with the police, which ranged from work as a councillor at ward level to sitting on the Police Authority. She said:

I don't know what you can do, but its [the PCC] the only way you can have any influence at all. If you can.... I just like to keep a presence there, for them to know that I'm keeping an eye on them!

Influence was a two-way process, as police officers too had an interest in influencing those members of the public they came into contact with through the PCC:

I strongly feel we've got a lot of work to do... well, not win back public confidence, I don't think we've totally lost it, but certainly it needs some re-generation of public confidence.
(Roy Norton)

The ways in which the Superintendent used the PCC to build this public confidence included openness about local initiatives, dealing quickly with specific complaints, using issues raised by members to change priorities on the sub-division, and to

initiate discussion about policing matters. Here was an example of a police Superintendent utilising his local PCC to re-build consent in the face of the public crisis in confidence discussed in Chapter 3 above.

Not surprisingly, benefits members felt they received from being on the PCC were often a consequence of contributions made. Thus, for example, information was also cited as a benefit of membership, both for the police, who gained insights into local issues, and for lay members who felt more informed about policing on the sub-division. This information was gained formally, through police reports and crime statistics, and benefitted individual members and the organisations they represented.

Linked to this is what could be called a 'learning' output, as members came to see issues from other people's perspectives. This worked for both police and lay members - as Barry Thomas (Secretary) put it:

I find I'm not only taking the minutes, but you get to know people, also what's going on from the police angle, 'cause its always very interesting to know.

Compared to Superintendent Norton:

I think definitely right from the beginning I used it as a learning exercise.... I went to the Liaison meetings to begin with to try and get a flavour of what were areas of public concern. I was able to meet local people, get an idea of matters of public concern.

These are examples of a PCC fulfilling Scarman's idea of

consultation leading to mutual understanding. Although whether it had a strong influence on police/public is debatable given that most members are were there because they were supportive of the police anyway.

The police also benefitted from being able to resolve potential problems and complaints at an early stage. The strategy Norton used was to direct several officers to attend meetings so that any specific policing matters raised could be picked up by the relevant officer and dealt with by the next meeting. This was also what Don Ingram saw as a beneficial outcome:

I enjoy getting the questions answered - any that might be addressed to me.... I find taking personal responsibility for what I'm doing, I'll phone people back at home or find something out. I feel that if they've asked me then its up to me to do the job for them. That's my commitment. I'm a public servant so I feel I've got to do what they ask, so to a large extent that's why I enjoy doing it.

Clearly he derived satisfaction from being able to accomplish part of his job of public liaison through PCC meetings.

The other main outcome of membership was contact made with other members of the committee. For lay members, increased contact with the police led them to be more confident in approaching individual officers about local policing matters outside of the PCC meetings. Members also made useful contact with others on the committee, which had a variety of benefits.

I've got to know a lot more people. (Maggie Bacon)

Its a more direct link with the police. (Maggie Bacon)

Its useful to know who to talk to. (Mabel Castle)

...complaints might come in which bypass the committee, because I'm known to people now. (Don Ingram)

Not surprisingly, PCCs, like any other committee, formed a social network for local members which had benefits away from the regular meetings. The way in which these networks interlock and overlap on a police sub-division will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 8 below. On the C3 PCC it was apparent from observations made at meetings and from interviews with members that the committee were consistently supportive of the police, reluctant to engage in any real debates about policing issues, and did play a strong role in building consensus policing.

6.4 Membership and accountability

6.4.1 Debates on the relationship between consultation and accountability

Chapters 2 and 3 above discussed the wider question of police accountability, and the way in which Lord Scarman envisaged consultation linking to accountability by achieving a balance between political independence for the police whilst maintaining an active responsiveness to the local community. In Chapter 2 above Morgan and Maggs' (1985b:7-9) three models of accountability - stewardship, partnership and directive - were discussed. The current model of police accountability is the stewardship one where the police have delegated powers and are accountable in retrospect for their efficient use of their budget to the Police Authority. It is also the model favoured

by the government. The directive model of political control, in which elected representatives direct police policy and strategy, was the one favoured in the 1980s by Labour controlled Police Authorities and Labour controlled London Boroughs where the Metropolitan Police are accountable only to the Home Secretary. The model implied by Scarman is the partnership one - where the police and community representatives work actively together through the consultation structure.

Morgan (Forthcoming, chapter 3) argues that the government tried to maximize the stewardship model by introducing a range of procedures to retain the tripartite arrangements between Police Authorities, Police Forces and the Home Office, whilst retaining police independence over operational matters. Included in this range are consultation, Lay Visitors, devolving operational management to sub-divisional commanders, crime prevention, multi-agency work and policing by objectives. Consultation is meant to link to accountability by making the police open and responsive to local demands, which will in turn enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. Consultation offers evidence of accountability and policing by consent by making the police seem open to public scrutiny.

However, as critics have pointed out, there is no duty on the police to inform PCCs of any policing operations or policies. Spencer (1985:104), for example, argues that consultation is an appeasement in the accountability debate, because there is no

shift of power to the community. A further problem which Keith (1993, forthcoming:167) identified is that PCC members may have an unrealistic expectation of the degree of control senior officers are able to exercise over junior officers. Thus if complaints are brought to the PCC meeting about unacceptable behaviour on the part of police patrols, senior officers may not be able to do much about this. Thus critics argue that consultation is symbolic, and accountability through this particular process is illusory.

On the other hand, Keith (ibid.,167) counters, PCCs do offer a public forum in which senior officers are publicly answerable to members of the community for local policing generally. Furthermore, Savage (1984:56-58) identifies three ways in which consultation can offer limited forms of accountability - by bringing into contact community representatives and those who deliver the local police service; those representatives then influencing sub-divisional policy through the feedback they give senior officers on how policing is perceived; and finally by reflecting specific, local issues of which councillors on the Police Authority may not be aware. It was these aspects of accountability, at the level of the sub-division, which was explored in this research. The key questions were whether members of C3 could identify any ways in which they were making the police accountable, over what policing matters, and which model of accountability was most applicable?

6.4.2 C3 - models of accountability.

What became clear during the interviews was that lay members felt they were making the police accountable at PCC meetings and that the police felt they were accountable to the PCC members. For lay members, the mere fact that complaints and problems were brought to the meetings was evidence of some form of accountability. Typical comments were:

I think people have been using it [the PCC] to say they don't like being burgled.... The police can be told the public isn't very happy.
(Mabel Castle)

How am I accountable? People come to me with problems and its my job to sort them out. The police, their attitude seems to be, 'Oh, another whinger' when its a minor crime... I just keep plugging away... I just like to keep a presence there, for them to know that I'm keeping an eye on them. (Barbara Osborne)

From the police perspective, their willingness to deal with complaints and problems from one meeting to the next, was evidence that they were "delivering the goods":

Its reassurance so far as we promise them the goods and deliver - that's reassuring. Providing we do that for these people. If we don't deliver then they get scathing at the next meeting, and they've got every right to be scathing.
(Don Ingram)

Superintendent Norton articulated a more managerial view of accountability:

We are very accountable, you know, compared to other organisations. Every complaint that comes in is paid quite serious and careful attention to.... we are quite accountable in small things.

It was evident from interviews with the police and observations at meetings that they used the PCC as a 'front line' complaints

forum, and by responding positively to individual complaints and dealing with individuals, they were able to head off the more formal complaints procedure being used. In this sense the police were only being accountable to individual complainants, not the PCC as a whole, since there was no evidence that matters raised by one person at a particular meeting would be picked up by anyone else at subsequent meetings. Accountability at PCC meetings was therefore very much on a one to one basis. This point was made by Mabel Castle who stated that it was left to individuals to follow matters up:

It would be up to me to pick it up at the next meeting, if I was sufficiently motivated. I mean, at any meeting, if you're sufficiently motivated to pursue something you'd attend and make sure.

The problem was one of definition - the term accountability was used loosely and the model was implicitly that of stewardship. Lay members felt that by expressing their concerns about local crime, detection rates and so on they were challenging the police over how they utilised their resources and deployed their officers. However, as noted earlier, PCCs have no statutory power and it is entirely at the discretion of senior officers how they use and respond to the demands made by PCC members. The general impression seemed to be that membership of the PCC gave lay people the opportunity to challenge the police and call them to account. For the police it was a way of being seen to respond publicly to local concerns and dealing effectively with specific complaints. At the sub-divisional level, therefore, PCCs can offer a form of accountability to the community of a stewardship kind. However the dangers are

clearly that if that 'community' has been so constructed to be wholly supportive of the police, the matters over which the police are called to account are likely to be narrow in focus and based on individual self-interest.

As regards the partnership model of accountability, this was clearly the one which Lord Scarman intended in his recommendations, when he stated:

Community involvement in the policy and operations of policing is perfectly feasible without undermining the independence of the police.
(1981:202)

The means of achieving this, according to Scarman, was consultation:

Consultation and accountability are the mechanisms... upon which we rely to ensure that the police in their policies and operations keep in touch with, and are responsible to, the community they police.
(ibid.,147)

The West Midlands Police Authority incorporated this in their terms of reference for Consultative Committees, which states:

The Police Authority Local Consultative Committee may discuss any aspect of policing policy, with the exception of operational dispositions, cases which are sub-judice and formal complaints against police officers.
(Terms of reference, point 2)

This was further elaborated in their guidance notes as the following aim:

To encourage co-operation between Police and community in the determination of priorities and objectives and the development of agreed strategies to deal with agreed local problems.
(Guidance note 2(d))

This links to Morgan and Maggs' definition of the partnership model of accountability, which

... grants the police delegated powers to decide policy but stresses the importance of their being formally provided with information about the views of citizens.
(1985b:8)

The evidence from this research indicates that there was very little 'partnership' in fulfilling the Police Authority's terms of reference. The problem was not lack of interest or willingness on the part of lay members, but of resistance by senior police officers. The Superintendent in charge of C3 was clear about the relationship between the police and the community, and stated:

I would say there is the professional definition of what the problem is - the way we [the police] perceive it, and the way we regard suitable matters for action. And then there's the public definition of the problem. Now at some stage there needs to be a kind of correlation between those two views - some common ground about which we can agree, about what it is important for us to be doing and how best we can serve.
(Roy Norton)

This seemed very promising as the basis for a partnership between police and lay members. And when this point was pursued later in the interview, Roy Norton identified policing initiatives which had been discussed at PCC meetings. For example:

I do consult, genuinely consult them. I say, 'Look, I'll throw this idea at you. What do you think about it? Can you pick any holes in it?'

When we go to this public survey thing, at the next meeting I'll be telling them about that. Its a policy thing, so I don't want to keep it up my sleeve. I want to tell them about it and get their views before I go ahead with it next February.

A closer analysis shows, however, that Superintendent Norton was presenting pre-determined policies for comment, rather than

allowing issues to arise from the community and develop into policing policies and objectives.

Of the four PCCs studied for this thesis, C3 had the most open senior police officer. The other three Superintendents interviewed were far more resistant to involving the PCC in setting local policing objectives and developing policies. Superintendent Chambers on D3 was typical in his definition of the role of PCCs:

I hope I don't sound as though I am not supportive of CCs, but, to be honest, I think that they should certainly only be seen, in my eyes, as a confirmation of what we're doing, rather than a replacement for anything we're doing.

Lay members on C3 criticised the PCC for not facilitating a more dynamic relationship with the police. Some wanted active involvement in initiating policy rather than simply responding to police initiatives. As Bernard Trotter expressed it:

The PCC needs a higher public profile - a genuine role where we can be involved. People don't want to be involved when they can't see anything happening. And I would be reluctant to go on some sort of campaign to raise people's awareness of these groups [PCCs] unless those groups had got some teeth to make something happen.

The critical views of lay members was supported by observations at meetings of the C3 PCC, where there was not real evidence of consultation. Morgan summed this up when he concluded:

PCCs have become the proving ground on which police middle managers are learning to listen to public views as to what local problems comprise and what police priorities should be.
(1991:14-15)

This was certainly true of the C3 PCC, but, I would argue, still falls short of Lord Scarman's model of partnership accountability, and even the local Police Authority's guidelines.

6.5 Summary

Morgan's study of five police forces (forthcoming, Chapter 5) found two forms of consultation predominating - a committee model which appoints a certain number of members, specifies the top limit to membership and has an annual review of membership; and a forum model with membership open to any group if they have a written constitution. Although in his research the distinction between these two models was sometimes unclear, in this study C3 represents a committee model of consultation. Analysis of how people became members indicated a typical pattern of progress from Liaison Groups to PCC, with personal invitation often initiating membership. Liaison Groups were an important source of lay members for the C3 PCC and contributed to the social construction of consent within civil society.

Over time the membership of C3 had solidified into a core group of regular members, and although people spoke of increasing the membership and widening its base there was no evidence of anything actually being done to achieve this. Both police and lay members generally felt able to contribute to the committee, but there was little evidence they were actively involved in shaping police policy or strategies on the sub-division. It appeared that the police used the PCC to 'rubber stamp'

decisions, therefore the benefits of membership for lay people and their organisations were limited to gaining knowledge, information and insights, rather than any deeper involvement in local policing.

In terms of the representativeness of the membership, there were doubts expressed by those interviewed that the membership did not accurately reflect the socio-economic profile of the sub-division. Nor did the members have strong links to the organisations or groups they represented. Analysing representation showed that several members had multiple-layers of representation leading to lack of clarity as to which particular group they were actually mandated to speak for. Given that the PCC has no specific powers of decision making this may not be too important. However, it does lead to the conclusion that most members actually represented their own perspective, and had little accountability themselves for those matters they raised at meetings.

Although public participation appeared to be a regular feature of C3 meetings, further analysis demonstrated that far from being widely used by the general public as a channel of access to the local police, C3 attracted a regular group of members of the public. The only apparent distinction between formal members and these 'ad hoc' members of the public was in terms of social class - the former tended to be middle class, whereas the latter came from the upper working class areas of the sub-division. C3 had no clear role for the public who did attend

and in interview regular members, whilst supporting public attendance in principle, had doubts as to its usefulness. The function the public seemed to perform was to destabilise the equilibrium of meetings when they came in sufficient numbers or were vociferous enough to challenge the police. I would argue that although the public appeared to be tolerated by the lay members in reality they were marginalised. Despite bringing grassroots complaints, they were not essentially anti-police, simply wanting more police resources directed to their specific needs. Ultimately, this was the same objective as most of the members. Thus the essentially law-abiding, pro-police values of the regular members came to permeate the wider community.

The link between accountability and consultation is problematic, as the debate in the literature demonstrates and this analysis has shown. Scarman perhaps had an idealised view of what consultation could achieve and, although C3 members indicated there was some measure of accountability achieved through meetings, this was of a very limited kind. As the police had no obligation to make any particular information known to the PCC (especially in areas of policy), their report was entirely discretionary. PCC members therefore depended on the police for the picture of crime and policing matters on the sub-division, since their own knowledge was likely to be patchy and anecdotal. The only form of accountability they could exercise was to ask the police what they were doing about crime, and given the status quo orientation of the committee as a whole, the police were able to give responses which satisfied

the members without ever being challenged fundamentally about policy and operational tactics.

In this chapter the detailed analysis of the empirical findings of this research relating to membership processes, formations and issues, has shown how consent to policing is actively constructed through a membership mainly supportive of the police. The possibility of a partnership model of accountability is not achieved, and even stewardship accountability is not particularly challenging of the police. Thus part of the central proposition of this thesis, relating to the practice of producing consent in civil society, is confirmed by the empirical evidence.

Finally, C3's membership represented "the committed public spirited activists" which Morgan found typified members in his study. The open responsive style adopted by the police Superintendent ensured that whilst lively debate was not ruled out at meetings, there were seldom any deeper conflicts drawn out. The police used their membership to deal quickly with complaints and grassroots issues, whilst the lay members used their attendance mainly to affirm local policing. A committee where more contentious local issues provided the possibility of conflict at PCC meetings forms the basis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

COMMUNITY ISSUES - PROSTITUTION AND THE B1 PCC

7.1. Introduction

The previous two chapters of this thesis analysed aspects of membership of Police Consultative Committees. The emphasis of the analysis now turns to the relationship between the PCC and the local community. As previously stated, PCCs are on the boundary of the police as an institution and the community in which they are located. It is part of the remit of PCCs to offer a forum within which problems and issues can be brought by members of the community to the attention of local police officers. This chapter examines at the role of the B1 PCC in institutionalising conflict around prostitution in Balsall Heath, Birmingham through the social construction of a community 'problem' which concealed underlying and fundamental social inequalities (the feminisation of poverty and the control of human sexual behaviour). The chapter further highlights the way in which PCC members demonstrated a Gramscian 'common sense' view of the issue which fed back into the ideological problematising of prostitution - an unintended consequence of consultation, rather than Lord Scarman's intention of improving community relations.

The overall argument is that PCCs are an example of the type of 'democratic institution' which Habermas argued would be constituted by governments in times of economic crisis. The

purpose of such institutions is to engender public support for state agencies, whilst "pushing other themes, problems and arguments below the threshold of attention" (Habermas, 1973:70). What the B1 PCC did in relation to prostitution was to bring into the public arena certain aspects of the activity in the neighbourhood which were deemed unacceptable by vocal residents. At the same time the deeper social inequalities embedded in prostitution itself were left unresolved and unexamined. Yet these inequalities were in certain respects indicative of the underlying economic crisis of which Habermas wrote.

Keith (1990:156-159) argued that the rationale behind Scarman's consultation proposal was the idea that consultation would offer a forum for local people to meet face-to-face with the police to express their grievances. Essentially, that potential conflict could be taken off the streets and resolved through the consultation process. However, Keith found this problematic in his case study of the Brixton PCC. When that committee held a public meeting in the wake of the rioting which followed the police shooting of Mrs Cherry Groce in October 1985, although it did offer a release of tension, insofar as strong feelings were vented, this was at a high personal cost for the senior police officer present (who broke down in tears) and the black chair of the committee (who lost community credibility). In this instance consultation was employed following conflict on the streets, but as Keith concludes:

The roots and nature of this conflict were simply not susceptible to being talked away. (ibid.,159)

Coser (1972:140) in his analysis of the institutionalisation of social conflict argued that "associations and coalitions between previously unrelated parties" could be created as interested parties sought to maintain social stability. Coser (ibid.,155) identified "safety-valve institutions" where "hostile feelings" may be expressed without resulting in actual conflict. As chapter 2 (section 2.2.3) above noted, in one respect PCCs could be described as "safety-valve institutions" insofar as they allow residents' representatives in particular to express their hostility to such community issues as prostitutions. However, as Coser argued, such institutions do not allow for social change, and he wrote:

Safety-valve institutions lead to a displacement of goal in the actor: he need no longer aim at reaching a solution of the unsatisfactory situation, but merely at releasing the tension which arise from it. (ibid.,156)

This was the case with the B1 PCC, as this chapter will demonstrate.

Further evidence of the failure of PCCs to fulfill this part of Lord Scarman's intention came from the pilot project for this research. An issue relating to the presence of a police riot van on a council estate had been examined to determine how the sub-divisional PCC dealt with this community issue (Gwinnett, 1991). It was found that although at one level the matter was apparently resolved because the police stopped using the riot

van, within the committee itself the issue engendered conflict between various members and displaced what had been a community-police conflict into an intra-community conflict. The question in relation to the B1 PCC was whether there would be similar findings on the B1 PCC over the issue of prostitution.

It is not suggested that the conflicts expressed around prostitution are necessarily directly comparable to the urban disorders of the 1980s, which Lord Scarman was addressing. Nevertheless, as this chapter will show, prostitution has a long history in Balsall heath, and part of that history included residents organising 'vigilante-type' patrols, which had brought them into conflict with the police, as well as conflict between residents and prostitutes, their pimps and clients.

This chapter of the thesis therefore analyses the way in which the B1 PCC dealt with the issue of prostitution in Balsall Heath, and addresses the question raised by Keith of whether PCCs can 'take conflict off the streets' or whether they simply serve to institutionalise elements of conflict around community issues. Furthermore, PCCs as 'safety-value' institutions is examined. Finally, the ways in which consent and legitimacy for particular police action on prostitution is actively constituted within the PCC meetings to form a hegemonic consensus is analysed. In undertaking this analysis the chapter

relates to the first part of the central proposition of this thesis - that PCCs have not fulfilled Lord Scarman's recommendations so far as mediating between the police and the community is concerned.

7.1.1 The B1 PCC

The B1 committee was initially selected as one of the case studies for this research partly because of the known prevalence of prostitution in the locality. During the 1980s the press in Birmingham had given coverage of various attempts by residents' groups in Balsall Heath and Moseley to tackle the perceived problem of prostitutes working on the streets in the area, in the light of the apparent failure of policing strategies. There was therefore a strong rationale for choosing the B1 PCC, which covers Balsall Heath, in order to test out the research proposition that PCC meetings offer a legitimising forum for police activities such as vice raids (see Chapter 4, section 4.3 above). The related research question of how the police 'use' PCCs was the other reason for selecting B1 -to see whether the local police did indeed utilise the PCC in order to gain support for their particular strategy of policing prostitution. As Chapter 4 above further stated, during the fieldwork the role of the B1 PCC was more precisely defined as mediating potential conflict through the social construction of a community 'problem' which was amenable to certain policing strategies which the committee endorsed, whilst underlying and more fundamental social inequalities were not addressed. Thus the understanding of the committee members

remained largely at the Gramscian level of 'common sense' rather than developing into a more critical understanding of the origins and day-to-day practices of prostitution in their community. This 'common sense' view made it such an enduring and seemingly intractable 'social problem'.

The B1 police sub-division stretches from the inner city area of Balsall Heath itself to the middle class suburbs of Edgbaston, Moseley, Selly Oak and Selly Park. Largely a residential area, it also includes the Birmingham University campus and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital within its boundary. Apart from the rationale for selection discussed above, the B1 PCC was similar in characteristics of diversity of population (socio-economically and multi-racially) to the C1 PCC, and was therefore the other inner city committee which counter-balanced the two suburban PCCs studied (D3 and C3).

The committee itself had the most occupationally and socially diverse and interesting membership of the four studied for this thesis. The individual members on the committee were generally professional, middle class people who were articulate and willing to question the local police (more so than those on the C3 committee analysed in the previous chapter). Many of them had a high level of committee expertise either from their work or public service (1). Thus there were often lively discussions at meetings attended for this research. Although residents groups were well represented, they did not dominate meetings except over the question of prostitution (as will be

analysed in section 7.4.3 below). Before developing the analysis, background information about prostitution at a general level and in the specific locality of Balsall Heath is given.

7.2 A brief overview of prostitution

In order to understand the specificity of prostitution as an issue for the B1 PCC it is necessary first to situate prostitution within a wider socio-cultural framework. There has been sociological research carried out in the past ten years (particularly by feminist researchers) which has focused more on the reality of prostitution as an economic and social activity rather than a form of deviancy. The findings of this genre of research is helpful in analysing the contradictions in understanding the issue which became apparent during observations of meetings and in interviews with members of the B1 PCC.

7.2.1 Prostitution as practice

It can be argued that prostitution as a social relationship between men and women is primarily an economic relationship. However it also reflects gendered relationships in society insofar as women are generally subordinated to men, and prostitution is an extreme form of exploitation and subordination. Given the social stigmatisation and control of female sex workers it further divides women into 'good' women who receive social approval and whores. Recent research has shown that prostitution is essentially an ordinary, everyday

activity with little of the sordid, salacious overtones the populist press purvey. An image of prostitution which survives from Victorian times is of the 'fallen woman' touting for trade on the streets, with all its overtones of moral degradation and clients vulnerable to infection from sexually transmitted diseases.

However, this is far from the reality of prostitution in contemporary Britain. For example, McLeod's (1982:13-16) research in Balsall Heath, Birmingham, indicated that clients came from a range of ages and social backgrounds and a large proportion were married. McLeod estimated that nearly 14,000 clients visited prostitutes in Birmingham in any given week, giving a ratio of 17 clients to 1 prostitute. From this it is clear that prostitution is an activity in which far higher numbers of men engage than women, yet much of the focus of media attention and particularly policing is directed at female sex workers rather than their clients. Furthermore, it is a very regular activity for many clients - on average McLeod found that clients visited prostitutes twice per month, and that some had regularly paid for sex for periods of up to ten years. Paying for sexual services can therefore be seen as a normal activity for a proportion of the adult male population, rather than a furtive, random or one-off encounter.

For male clients there is a double-edge to the social acceptability of prostitution. Whilst a proportion of men at some time in their lives engage the services of a sex worker

there is still social stigmatizing of this exchange. Chadwick and Little (1987:264-267) argue that the whole issue of prostitution highlights society's different and contradictory responses to male and female sexuality. On the one hand men's use of prostitutes is to some extent tolerated if not actually condoned. Male sexuality is constructed around a norm of 'natural' sexual urges, as McLeod argues:

One of the main ideas... is that of the primacy of men's sexual urges ie. that they are stronger and require more immediate satisfaction than women's urges. The corollary of this is that it is appropriate, or not so surprising that men should find outlets purely and simply for the sake of relieving those urges. (op.cit.,65)

Thus men's participation in prostitution is justified and rationalised on the basis of a biological view of the male sex drive. Furthermore, the social stigma for men is in being 'found out' rather than in the activity of purchasing sex per se, since so many men engage in this activity.

In contrast, Chadwick and Little argue that female sexuality is constructed in two different. Women who conform to social norms as wives and mothers receive social approval as 'good' women, whilst women who sell their sexual services are regarded as 'fallen' women who have

... deviated from the dominant images and stereotypes of women as passive, submissive and feminine. (op.cit., 264)

Thus the sexuality of prostitutes is seen as abnormal and deviant, and by and large it is the women sex workers, whose bodies are exploited by clients and pimps, who are regulated,

controlled and criminalised by the legal system and police operations.

The relationship between male client and female prostitute is primarily an economic exchange of cash for services. But, argues O'Neill (1992:3), it is one which serves to privilege male interests and reinforce male-dominated ideologies of male and female sexuality and commercial exploitation. As a form of economic activity prostitution has several attractions for women. McLeod (op.cit.,17-19) found that it offers highly paid work in comparison to female wage rates generally, requires minimal capital outlay for street workers (although the situation is different for other forms of sex working), and is convenient for women who have childcare responsibilities because it offers a flexible form of part-time work.

One reason for the continuance (and in some areas the increase) of street working in the 1980s is the feminisation of poverty. According to Lewis and Piachaud (1992: 42-44) the post-war period has seen a shift in the causes of poverty amongst women. Before the war women's poverty was attributed to their dependence on husbands, low wages and large families. In the last twenty years there has been a shift to women's increasing reliance on state benefits. This has been exacerbated during the 1980s as levels of poverty have increased. Unprecedented post-war rates of unemployment, cuts in welfare benefits and an increase in the number of single parent families have impacted more acutely on women, who increasingly bear the brunt of

poverty. In the labour market they are subject to low pay, part-time and often insecure jobs in the service sector, whilst in the home they have to manage on a daily basis the problems of maintaining the family whether their partner is a man who is unemployed or low paid, or they are the head of a single parent family. Add to this increasing homelessness amongst young women and cuts in students grants, there are many groups of women who are particularly vulnerable to poverty. O'Neill argues:

For all of these groups economic need is the bottom line, prostitution can be an answer to poverty, and debt, or a fall in lifestyle and lifestyle expectations. (op.cit.,19)

McLeod (op.cit.,17 - 19) also found that while it was economic necessity which first drove women into prostitution, the trade itself is subject to wider economic forces so that in a time of recession clients will either visit less often or renegotiate lower charges. Not only were earnings from prostitution higher than average female earnings they were also far higher than social security benefits. As women became increasingly dependent on state benefits during the economic recessions of the 1980s, prostitution offered a far higher paid alternative form of income. Thus in times of economic recession, such as the booms and slumps of the 1980s and early 1990s, it is likely that street working will increase as women seek to maximize their incomes and clients to minimise their expenditure. As section 7.4 below shows, it was street working which most exercised the minds of the PCC members, yet the relationship

between wider economic forces and forms of prostitution was never considered.

The negative aspect of prostitution is the undoubted violence which many of the women experience. Whilst violence against women generally in society is widespread, that experienced by prostitutes comes from several directions. McLeod (ibid., 50) found that violence from clients was regarded as one of the hazards of the job. Women were routinely assaulted and robbed by clients, and the only location in which it was less prevalent was saunas or massage parlours.

Women also experience violence from ponces. McLeod (ibid., 44-45) found that 75% of the women had ponces, who varied from 'heavy' ponces who used extreme violence and intimidation, taking most of the earnings of street workers. Women working indoors or in saunas were less threatened by ponces, as were those whose husbands and boyfriends lived off their earnings. McLeod argues that it is the illegality surrounding prostitution which makes the women vulnerable to the attentions of 'heavy' ponces. The very fact of their occupation as sex workers can make it harder for the women to have relationships with 'straight' men, yet the violence from clients reinforces the vulnerability of the women who may initially turn to ponces for protection.

The women experience further harassment from the police, who until recent years have applied the law almost exclusively to

prostitutes rather than their clients. Despite attempts to target male clients as they kerb-crawl, introduced in the 1980s, the women remain the main target of police action. Rather than protecting women working as prostitutes, the police are often another problem with which the women have to contend. The policing of prostitution will be discussed in the next section, and the response from residents in Balsall Heath and North Moseley will be considered in section 7.3 below.

Finally, and of relevance to this research, the target of much police activity is women working on the streets and to a lesser extent from houses in residential areas. Yet as McLeod's (ibid., 5) study found there are four locations in which prostitution is carried out: street work, indoor work (with telephone numbers publicized through contact magazines), saunas and/or massage parlours and hotel work (often through escort agencies). Class stratification is apparent within these localities, with working class women tending to work on the streets because they have fewer capital resources to enable them to move into other localities. A higher proportion of middle class women work in saunas, massage parlours and hotels.

While it is difficult to determine the exact number of women involved as they move around both geographical areas and to a lesser extent between the different localities, McLeod estimated from her research in Birmingham that approximately 200 women were involved in street work, 300 were working indoors, 130 worked in saunas and massage parlours, and 170 in

hotels. This gave an approximate total of 800 women, of which 500 were engaged in the forms of prostitution (street work and indoor work from houses) which attracts most police and media attention.

A more recent piece of research on prostitution in Birmingham (Kinnell, 1989:3) estimated a total of 2000 female prostitutes working in the city as a whole. The problem with identifying numbers is that police statistics are unreliable given that it is at their discretion how many sex workers are arrested, thus making this source of data an unreliable indicator. Kinnell's estimated total is based on combining current police statistics of arrests with McLeod's finding in 1982. Kinnell found that police policy varied across the city and in Balsall Heath there was a particularly vigorous policy of arresting women, especially those involved in street work. This inevitably adds to the potential distortion of the overall numbers of women actively working in prostitution. What Kinnell's figures do seem to indicate is an overall rise in the number of women sex workers during the decade of the 1980s, which may partially explain residents' concerns. The specific issues pertaining to prostitution raised by residents represented on the B1 PCC will be analysed further in section 7.4 below.

7.2.2 Prostitution - legal controls and policing strategies

The current control and regulation of prostitution in Britain has its origins in the mid-nineteenth century when a series of Contagious Diseases Acts were introduced, ostensibly to reduce

the spread of venereal disease amongst members of the armed services. According to McHugh these Acts empowered a specialist police division to

...identify prostitutes and submit them to examination by designated official doctors; if they were found to be diseased they were detained in hospitals for specified periods. (1980:16)

This obvious discrimination against the female half of the sexual partnership underpins much of the succeeding legislation. As McHugh points out, the Victorian policy was to accommodate prostitution whilst minimising the problematic side effects (such as venereal disease). There are other similarities to the Victorian era in the contemporary debate. Although women in the last century were also forced into prostitution for economic reasons, much of the concern of the effects of prostitution was focused on the health of men. Yet the campaign for the abolition of the Contagious Diseases Acts mobilized middle class women in support of working class prostitutes in much the same way as the women's movement of the 1970s and 1980s has taken up issues raised by campaigning prostitutes.

Matthews (1986:188-191) locates post-war legislation on prostitution within the context of earlier 19th century attempts at control. He argues that the legislation put on the statute book as a result of the 1957 Wolfenden Report (2) was intended to manage prostitution rather than eradicate it. The 1959 Street Offences Act which followed recommendations of the Wolfenden Report legislated against the related offences of soliciting and living off immoral earnings, removed the

necessity for corroborative evidence (the word of the police was sufficient), introduced a system of cautions and allowed women to be brought to court under the title of "common prostitute". The aim was to protect private morality and allow the police to deal with the public nuisance of street working.

This legislation was initially effective in reducing street work, although other forms of prostitution flourished in its place. Again, this obvious discrimination against women sex workers rather than their clients led to attempts to modify the law in order to control kerb crawling. There were also moves to remove the labelling of women as "common prostitute". As Chadwick and Little remark:

The category is used in court to establish that a woman is a prostitute before she has been tried. In effect she is guilty before she even enters the court room. Consequently the principle of 'innocent until proven guilty' which guides procedure in all criminal cases is undermined. (1987:266)

In 1983, in an attempt to decriminalise aspects of prostitution imprisonment for soliciting ceased and fines were substituted. However, as Matthews (op.cit.,191) argues, far from decreasing the number of women in prison for prostitution-related offences, the numbers of women imprisoned for non-payment of fines actually increased (3). Not only did the substitution of fines lead to increasing pressure on women to go back to prostitution to earn money to pay the fines, it inadvertently created a longer route to prison for female sex workers.

In a wider analysis of the contemporary debates surrounding laws on prostitution, Matthews (ibid., 193-201) identifies two broad approaches. The first is the movement to legalise prostitution. This aims to control and regulate sex working, whilst protecting the women from both physical exploitation and from criminalisation. It also seeks to remove the moral double standards which currently apply. In criticism, Matthews argues that the main beneficiaries of legalisation will be male clients, whilst the women are reduced to participating in an even more exploitative objectification of female sexuality. He cites evidence from Germany that legalising brothels does not eliminate street working, and may increase the penalties for this form of prostitution thereby increasing the criminality of women who engage in this work.

For some clients it is the very illicitness of soliciting which is part of the sexual stimulus (Mihill, 1991). Thus there is a demand from clients themselves for street working. From the women's point of view street working is the easiest form of prostitution to engage in especially because of its compatibility with childcare and family responsibilities. For women who want flexible working hours and conditions it offers the most viable option. Thus legalisation of sex working through the establishment of brothels will only serve to regulate and control one form of prostitution, and not necessarily eliminate the more public forms of street working.

According to Matthews (op.cit.,196-201) the other approach advocated by reformers is that of decriminalisation of prostitution and related activities. The argument is that this will remove the stigma and open up the whole taboo subject. Offences related to prostitution are non-victim crimes and it is therefore inappropriate for the law to intervene. Whilst this approach acknowledges prostitution as a form of economic activity and highlights the legal anomaly of focusing on the woman rather than the male client, it ignores the need to protect women from exploitation by assuming that decriminalisation would automatically eradicate the negative aspects of prostitution (4). Legal brothels, argues Matthews, will serve the interests of clients and the businessmen who operate them. Such a laissez-faire approach might fit in with current free market ideologies, but will do little to remove from working class neighbourhoods the nuisance of kerb crawling and related crimes of violence. It is these aspects of prostitution which were raised at the B1 PCC meetings, both by representatives of working class areas (who currently experience prostitution on the streets of their neighbourhood) and middle class representatives who fear the movement of prostitution to their areas.

In summarising some of the current research and contemporary debates on prostitution, those points pertinent to this thesis have been highlighted. Of central interest is the focus on street working, since in Balsall Heath this formed the substantive part of residents claims of nuisance and was the

form of sex working they wanted the police to act upon. However, the contradictions in terms of gendered relations have also been highlighted, since this indicates an underlying lack of understanding on the part of residents of the reality of prostitution as both an economic activity and a particular social relationship which is more firmly embedded in male behaviour and activities compared to female involvement in sex working, yet much of the attention of police and residents is focused on prostitutes rather than their clients. The specificity of prostitution in Balsall Heath is now examined in more detail in the following section.

7.3 Prostitution in Balsall Heath

7.3.1 Empirical research evidence

Lambert's study of policing in Balsall Heath (1970:74-80) indicated that prostitution had been located in that area for several decades - indeed, the area had national as well as local notoriety as Birmingham's 'red light' district. In particular he identified Varna Road and the immediate vicinity as the main centre of mixed street and indoor trade. He wrote:

In the Varna Road area, prostitutes and clients use rooms in the houses and solicit from windows, doors or in the street. The road is busy with customers day and night who arrive by car, lorry, bus, or on foot: some arrive drunk, and assault or accost any woman in sight or knock on doors of houses unoccupied by the girls. Many of the houses in the streets in the area are occupied by immigrant families and their children, who have to live amid the throng and bustle of the prostitutes and their clients. (ibid.,76)

This description is significant in that several of the themes were ones which recurred frequently in both local press coverage since the 1960s and in the information given by members from the B1 PCC interviewed for this research.

As Lambert went on to point out, from the police point of view they faced the task of balancing their duty to police prostitution without causing undue harassment, whilst also meeting the demands of residents for security and freedom from nuisance. A dilemma they were still facing in 1991, as interviews with senior officers revealed (see section 7.4.2 below).

The other area Lambert identified with prostitution activity was Anderton Park, in north-east Moseley. Here the trade was more discreet, with prostitutes soliciting clients in cars and then driving elsewhere for business. Again this was significant, as the movement of prostitution between the two areas of Balsall Heath and north Moseley and the differing demands and responses of residents had been a focus of media attention, police action and the subject of considerable and continuing discussion at the B1 PCC meetings.

One further issue highlighted by Lambert (*ibid.*, 77) was the question of the city council licensing brothels. In 1967 there were demands made by local residents, notably Indian and Pakistani people, for increased police action to reduce prostitution in Varna Road. This in turn sparked off a debate

in the local press, in which licensing of brothels was one possible solution. The residents of the Anderton Park area expressed anxiety that soliciting on the streets would increase in their area. In the event the city council demolished Varna Road as part of their urban redevelopment programme. No doubt they hoped that prostitution would also be eliminated, although as subsequent research showed, it simply moved to adjoining streets. Again, this subject of legalisation was one which recurred over the years, and was favoured by some of the members of the B1 PCC interviewed for this research as a solution to the perceived problem of street nuisance. This will be discussed in more detail in section 7.4.2 below.

McLeod's (1982) research in Birmingham, much of which was carried out in Balsall Heath, has been cited earlier. Her findings indicated that by the late 1970s prostitution had developed into more diversified locations than Lambert identified, insofar as the relatively high numbers of women working from residential premises mixed with street soliciting had become more prevalent in Balsall Heath by the early 1980s, compared to Lambert's research in the 1960s.

One of points McLeod (op.cit.,100) identified was the role of residents in making demands on the police in relation to nuisance surrounding prostitution. She cited a local community newspaper highlighted the following as areas of concern:

- (i) the general poor image of the neighbourhood;
- (ii) children witnessing soliciting;
- (iii) disturbances at night from clients;
- (iv) local women being afraid to go out alone.

Although McLeod took issue with the actual degree of nuisance caused to residents, she did acknowledge the role residents' and community groups played in bringing these issues into the public domain, and this is discussed further in section 7.4.3 below.

From her research, McLeod argued that prostitution in Balsall Heath was a relatively low-key activity. Research from the late 1980s indicated that many women working on the streets and in houses had regular clients, and that clients themselves used prostitutes regularly over long periods of time. What had changed in the past 2-3 years, according to the interview with Helen Jones (5), was the increased incidence of violence associated with drug dealing and prostitution. Workers from the SAFE Project (6) had witnessed and experienced attacks on prostitutes and their clients from drug dealers. Thus there was some justification for public concern over the increased level of related violence, although there was no evidence this posed a threat to residents - the targets and victims remained those involved in some capacity in the inter-related activities of prostitution and drug dealing.

When Lambert (1970, 74-77) conducted his research in the 1960s, the policing of prostitution was carried out by a specialist vice squad. The main activities were observation and surveillance of street working and illegal brothels, and the arresting of women following the requisite number of cautions. By the 1980s policing of the more public aspects of

prostitution had been devolved to uniformed officers on the sub-division. By the late 1980s levels of police activity in Balsall Heath had increased, and the focus shifted to operations directed at clients as well as prostitutes. In 1984 the West Midlands Police used the Justice of the Peace Act of 1361 to prosecute kerb-crawlers (Birmingham Evening Mail, 10.10.84). This initially entailed the use of plain clothed women police officers to trap male clients. Cautions were also sent to the addresses of owners of vehicles observed cruising the 'red light' area of Balsall Heath. Given that far more men (a ratio of 17:1 according to Mcleod's data) engaged prostitution services it was more equitable that police action should shift from simply criminalising women to using the laws available to caution and arrest their male clients.

One of the reasons given by the police for the increase in arrests of street workers in the late 1980s was the risk of spreading disease (echoes of the Victorian concern with Venereal Disease replaced by concern over AIDs). Yet as Kinnell found, it was street workers who were more likely to insist on safe sex, whilst women who "only worked off-street were significantly more likely to report high risk activities with their clients" (1990:5). The reasons for this appeared to be that women working off-street charged more for their services and found it more difficult to insist on clients using condoms. Managers of saunas and massage parlours also discouraged women keeping supplied of condoms on the premises as these could be used as evidence by the police of operating

a brothel. Finally women working off-street were attracted by the higher potential earnings because their financial outgoings were higher "due to their own or their partner's drug use" (Kinnell, *ibid.*, 7-8)

In her study of clients, Kinnell found that the majority came from the Birmingham/West Midlands area, ranged in age from 16 to 79 years, and that they visited a prostitute every fortnight on average, with an average total of ten visits per annum. She concluded that between one in twelve and one in five adult male Birmingham residents visit prostitutes in the city on a regular basis (8-22% of males).

Furthermore, the women themselves had on average been involved in sex working for seven years. They tended to begin work around the age of 18 and cease in their late 30s and early 40s. Clients on the other hand used prostitutes for an average of 10.4 years (Kinnell, *ibid.*, 11). This adds further support to the view that prostitution was a persistent form of behaviour for both parties involved and decreases the likelihood of effectively eliminating prostitution. Far from being a 'social evil' (as Lambert described it) research pointed to it being a normalised activity for a substantial portion of the adult male population and a far smaller proportion of women sex workers.

7.3.2 Documentary sources on prostitution in Balsall Heath and Moseley

As part of this research the press cuttings files on prostitution covering the past 20 years, located in Birmingham Local Studies Library were scrutinized. In addition a file of relevant press cuttings was also maintained from the outset of this research in 1989. Other documentary sources included the Annual Reports of West Midlands Police and 'The Heathan' - a community newspaper circulated in Balsall Heath.

In the 1970s the public of Birmingham were more interested in sex shops, the opening of Brook Advisory Clinics in the city and the activities of a sex therapist, than in prostitution. The issues Lambert identified in the 1960s had fallen from public interest. The only references to prostitution were city-wide, although these included Balsall Heath. There were calls for licensing of massage parlours, but this was in the middle class Edgbaston area.

It was not until the 1980s that prostitution in Balsall Heath became a specific focus of the local press. McLeod (op.cit.,108-109) argued that in the early 1980s, in the immediate aftermaths of the inner city disturbances, the police were reluctant to maintain a high profile street presence in potentially 'sensitive' areas, and this in part accounts for the relatively low number of arrests in that period. However, by the mid-1980s focus on Balsall Heath emerged in the local press with a change in police tactics (mentioned in the

previous section). Police began to target male clients kerb crawling following campaigns by local groups, particularly the North Moseley Residents Association.

Other themes which recurred during the 1980s were the arguments about legalisation - either of brothels or the Council licensing massage parlours. Concern was reported over the potential threat of HIV/AIDS although there was no particular moral panic over this. Also significant was action taken by residents, which included vigilante patrols by people living in north Moseley and a group of Moslems in Balsall Heath. In 1989 the council used the Town and Country Planning Act to enforce closure of brothels in Cheddar Road and Court Road (the streets to which prostitution moved after the demolition of Varna Road). This gives credibility to the view that the police alone cannot deal with prostitution, but need a multi-agency approach since it is not simply a law and order issue.

It was from 1989 that the police began their real offensive against prostitution in Balsall Heath. Operation after operation is described in the local press in which the police arrested both prostitutes and clients. This can be linked to the appointment of Inspector Nigel Gray to Belgrave Road police station, under whose supervision the raids were carried out. He was supported in this by local residents groups, the B1 PCC and St Paul's Project (7). This high level of police activity continued through 1990 and 1991. In the first eight months of

1991 two thousand women were arrested and 434 clients (Evening Mail, 23.9.91 - police statistics).

The Council continued to be involved when they gained parliamentary powers to license massage parlours following complaints from Selly Oak residents. As part of this latter initiative, the local College of Food and Tourism offered training for a Diploma in Massage as part of the attempt to 'clean up' the trade. The Council also put forward plans to use road changes - blocking off some roads making them cul-de-sacs in order to deter kerb crawlers, although some residents were by then calling for an official red light area (Evening Mail, 20.7.91).

West Midlands Police Annual Reports for 1989 and 1990 also highlight prostitution in their reports from the B Division. In 1989 prostitution came under the heading of 'Crime Vice and Drugs'. Newspaper headlines of the 'War on the Vice Spots' 'Drugs den swoops' variety were presented in a collage to highlight a relationship between prostitution and drugs. Mention was made of the arrest of an organised group of pones, who according to the police were "behind a large percentage of the street prostitution of central Birmingham" (West Midlands Police, 1989:8). In the 1990 Report (West Midlands Police, 1990:6) prostitution appeared under the heading 'Public Tranquility' - thus implicitly drawing on the notion of public nuisance and disturbance from prostitution, whilst linking it explicitly in the text to drug-related crimes.

A further source of information on prostitution in Balsall Heath came from 'The Heathan' a community newspaper published and distributed by the St Paul's Project. Their coverage reflected that of the local press, and given the importance of the project in campaigning against prostitution what was perhaps surprising was that more coverage was not given. Reading through issues from 1990 and 1991 (when police activity was intense) there were relatively few references to prostitution. What underpinned The Heathan's reporting was an assumption that the police activities were the right ones and should be encouraged until prostitution was removed from the area.

What emerges from an analysis of empirical research and populist press reporting of prostitution in the area of Balsall Heath is that there was a very large gap between popular understanding and the reality of sex trade in the locality. Press coverage was mainly of street working and the related nuisance from kerb crawling clients, whereas McLeod and Kinnell both found that this accounted for only one quarter of the trade. Arguably from the residents point of view, it was the most visible one, the one which caused the most nuisance and public offense for local people, and was therefore quite rightly the one the police should have concentrated on. Yet there was research evidence that other strategies could be used by the police to contain related nuisance rather than prosecuting women who were engaged in sex working. This gap

between public understanding and empirical evidence will now be discussed further in the analysis of PCC members' views. 1989

7.4 Prostitution and the B1 Police Consultative Committee

This section first analyses the fieldwork data obtained from attending meetings of the B1 PCC and examining the minutes of meetings dating back to 1987. Both sources of data are related to local press reports cited in the previous section. Then interviews with members of the PCC are analysed.

7.4.1 Analysis of the minutes and observations from meetings

From attending four meetings of the B1 PCC it became apparent that although prostitution was not an agenda item in its own right, it was discussed in one form or another at every meeting. This was confirmation of the rationale for selecting the B1 PCC. Clearly prostitution was a recurring matter for discussion at committee meetings. Minutes going back to 1987 show that from 1987 to 1989 it was a specific agenda item, but in 1990, when Derek Turner was elected Chairman at the AGM, he used his power as chair to remove prostitution from the agenda. Any references subsequent to that date were made under other business items - for example, in response to the police reports or under AOB. The point is that prostitution remained a live topic for discussion by the committee.

From the minutes, the discussions on prostitution concerned kerb crawling, AIDS, massage parlours, police operations, wounding of prostitutes and clients, and prostitution moving to

the Selly Park area. Some of the matters relate back to police operations and press coverage. For example, in November 1989 the local press reported police arresting several prostitutes from Balsall Heath. The Inspector in charge of the operation, Nigel Gray, stated:

At least three of the prostitutes who work in Balsall Heath have admitted to police officers that they have got full blown AIDS. Even with condoms and other safe sex practices it could be passed on. Some of these girls have 20 - 30 customers a day, and it takes just one to be infected for it to spread. In years to come we could have thousands of people affected as a result because the area attracts men from all round the country. (Evening Mail 4.11.89)

Following this press item, at the PCC meeting in March 1990, under a discuss of the risks of HIV/AIDS transmission through prostitution, a prostitute alleged to have AIDS was named in the minutes (8).

Helen Jones (director of the SAFE Project), in her interview, stated that she challenged Inspector Gray about this at a meeting organised with local police officers and representatives of the SAFE project. He admitted making it up to deter clients. Helen Jones was unaware this had also been discussed by the PCC. Here is evidence of the police actively passing misinformation to the public through the local press, and not rectifying this at a PCC meeting. Thus it can be argued that the police themselves, in their public pronouncements, contribute to misunderstandings about prostitution and amplify the potential threat to the general public.

At the January 1990 PCC meeting it was announced that prostitution was to be a policing priority for that year, with the police bringing prosecutions rather than issuing warnings, and thereby escalating the tariff of possible police responses. Prostitution was also linked to the drugs trade in that area. Again, this reflects the data from press cuttings - that Inspector Nigel Gray was making police operations against prostitution highly public. This is a further example of the police using the PCC as a vehicle for legitimating their operations - although there were some on the committee who would applaud such action.

Linking the minutes to the press coverage, what becomes significant is the influence one police officer can have. For example, when Nigel Gray was appointed to the sub-division he began a highly publicized series of operations against street sex workers in Balsall Heath. This high profile policing continued after he left the sub-division (9). In relation to the theoretical question of agency and structure, evidence from this analysis of the policing of prostitution would show that the actions of individual social actors on the committee were instrumental in determining policing strategies and influencing public opinion. Thus in this instance human agency was significant in utilising structures to maintain and legitimise particular forms of policing strategies irrespective of their effectiveness.

Notes on the observation schedules reflect the above discussions recorded in the minutes. Analysing these it was found that the main focus of attention was street prostitution, and in particular the success of police operations in Balsall Heath having the unintended (but inevitable) consequence of moving the trade on to other parts of the sub-division, and this brought complaints from residents association representatives. There was a more limited discussion of massage parlours in the Selly Oak area, which apparently are policed by the vice squad. The July meeting reported an increase in prostitution-related drug and criminal offences in Balsall Heath. This was substantiated in the interview with Helen Jones who spoke of increasingly disorganised and random criminal acts which she attributed to the growing use of 'crack' in the area.

There was one discussion of legalising prostitution - proposed by Lloyd Caines (vice-chairman of the B1 PCC and a Lay Visitor), who had experience of the legal system in Germany. The observation schedule records that this caused some disarray at the meeting, and I recorded the impression that the police were reluctant to discuss this proposition (10).

7.4.2 Analysis of interviews with B1 PCC members

A total of eleven members of the PCC were interviewed at the time of the main fieldwork (from December 1990 to July 1991), with Helen Jones from the SAFE Project being interviewed in May 1992 following her invitation to join the PCC.

Analysing the interview transcripts, the first question addressed was who raised the issue of prostitution? In eight out of the eleven interviews this was discussed (by two police officers, the Chair, two Lay Visitors, a Councillor, the Director of the St Paul's project and a community group representative). Of those, six raised the issue spontaneously whilst I raised it with the other two. The three who did not talk about prostitution were lay members who did not live or work in the Balsall Heath area or a locality where prostitution was an issue. From this it can be concluded that prostitution was raised by people with direct experience through their work (either paid or voluntary) or where they lived. And the fact that three quarters of the interviewees discussed the issue without prompting indicates that it is a 'real' issue in the sub-division both in policing and in community terms.

The police view was the prostitution could not be eradicated only controlled. The two officers interviewed made points about street nuisance, related crimes of violence, the effect on the environment and on house values. To control the sex trade and minimise some of these aspects of prostitution they mounted operations against individuals - women and clients. Both officers interviewed felt under some pressure from residents, particularly so when police operations in Balsall Heath succeeded in moving the trade into north Moseley. Superintendent Dave Kelly said:

There was concern expressed within the last two to three weeks by the residents of a number of roads in Moseley that as a result of our positive policies on

prostitution in Balsall Heath that the problem had been very much moved to them.

Later in the interview he went on to elaborate how residents started to form vigilante groups and patrol the neighbourhood to deter women from soliciting. The police responded to this pressure by setting up a meeting with local people, from which a Neighbourhood Watch scheme was established.

The main problem for the police was the demand placed on resources to deal with prostitution. There were no additional personnel given to the B1 sub-division, so any police operation diverted resources from elsewhere - a fact appreciated by the newly appointed (May 1991) Superintendent, Peter Townsend, who said:

Its not just prostitution its the allied things surrounding it - drugs, violence. It is a problem. Probably from a policing perspective - because you've got to see things from both sides - from our point of view its one of our biggest headaches. Because of the propensity to sporadic violent disorder there. So a lot of our resources and time is actually pushed into that particular area probably at the expense of policing other parts of the sub-division.

It could be argued that the policy of highly publicized operations against street prostitution ha created its own problems in terms of resources. Publicizing the operations had raised expectations amongst local residents that the police would act, yet it was not actually seen by the police to be effective. Thus the police were drawn into ever more expensive operations and might be unable to fulfil their obligations elsewhere on the sub-division (and this will be discussed again later in this chapter).

The two lay members with the strongest views on prostitution were, not surprisingly the two most directly affected by the street trade in Balsall Heath. Clarence King, although representing the Barbados Association on the PCC, lived in a road adjoining the 'red light' area, and Ann Inman was Director of the St Paul's project which had long campaigned against street working (11). They were both adamant that they wanted that form of prostitution removed from their locality. Ann outlined the kind of nuisance experienced by residents and people using the project:

At school - that a number of prostitutes are hanging about their gates, and the kids then walk past. And the rubbish in the playground. People have fights outside houses a few yards down the road, you know. And cars constantly up and down accosting all sorts of women who obviously didn't want that at all.... So I've always been interested in it, but the question is, what on earth one can do about a situation which everybody is so badly affected by?

McLeod (1982:100) addressed these points and argued that nuisance was "magnified out of all proportion". Whilst she acknowledged the concerns of local people, she contended that some elements were over-emphasised. Her argument was that amongst residents the subject of prostitution became a way of articulating racism, insofar as people talked about the decline of the area which they privately attributed to black families moving into the neighbourhood, whilst publicly blaming prostitution. This may have had some element of truth in the early 1980s, but by the time of the research for this thesis - ten years later - there were several ground of which McLeod's argument can be rebutted.

First, whilst The Heathan (which had been a source of McLeod's) had certainly been a public mouthpiece for some of the campaigning in the mid-1980s, it was published by the St. Pauls project - a multi-racial, multi-cultural educational project. There was no evidence it was manipulated in any way by white residents. Second, Clarence King, a resident totally opposed to prostitution, was black and represented a black organisation on the PCC - the Barbados Association. Third, Asian residents had opposed prostitution, and there was a Birmingham Evening Mail report (4.12.89) of a Moslem vigilante groups organised by the Central Mosque in Belgrave Road, Balsall Heath.

Thus, although McLeod was right to argue that prostitution is not itself a cause of neighbourhood decline, the evidence from this research was that the concerns expressed by residents was not racist in overtone, as black residents themselves were actively involved in different ways in opposing prostitution in Balsall Heath (12).

The other point McLeod (ibid., 101-102) made was that aspects of the nuisance could be dealt with under different legalisation than the Street Offences Act, which criminalised prostitutes. She pointed to a danger of "totalitarian street control" if the police responded to every charge of loitering. In an inner city environment of streets of terraced housing, often fronting straight onto the pavement, noise and activity of neighbours was inevitably heightened whatever their lifestyle. She argued for contextualising the nuisance within this urban environment,

rather than the police targeting people "for what they are, as opposed to what they do".

Clarence King shared Ann's feelings about nuisance and made the further point that residents who complained to the police experienced harassment:

Now we have some very bitter residents in the area. They feel that they are being threatened because the moment that they go and report what is happening with prostitutes, somehow they gets a backlash. Either telephone calls very late at night, harassment and all this sort of things.... From the prostitutes, pimps and so on. Because you know, they seem to be an organised group of people, and they have some hangers on that carry out these sort of things.

Both PCC members recognised the difficulty of eliminating prostitution altogether, but were adamant that Balsall Heath residents had had their share:

The people of Balsall Heath would certainly wish to see the back of them...we just don't care where they go providing the people of Balsall Heath don't have them here.

(Clarence King)

Ordinary residents of whatever culture or background say 'Well, we just don't want it'.

(Ann Inman)

This seemingly intransigent problem of recognising on the one hand the inevitability of prostitution, whilst not wanting the actual trade in 'your own back yard' had been partially resolved in other urban areas, according to the interview with Helen Jones. She cited a scheme in Utrecht where a 'Toleration Zone' had been established on a light industrial estate. The sex trade was restricted to evenings only and policed to keep out pimps, drug deals and other criminals. Parking bays were

built for privacy and a health clinic provided. Local residents were please with the scheme because it removed street working from residential areas. When a similar initiative was proposed in Walsall, residents, prostitutes and police got together to work out a way of operating such a zone, but the idea collapsed when the police refused to co-operate and stop arresting prostitutes. This shows that there are alternative strategies, but that the police hold the key to their success. One could take a cynical view and argue that with the wider pressures on the police to be seen to be doing something about the inexorable rise in crime, street sex workers and their clients offer easy targets to boost arrest figures.

The PCC member in favour of legalising prostitution was Lloyd Caines. He said:

I lived in Germany for four years, and I can see it happen. Each prostitute have [sic] to have a book, so a doctor can go in. And they pay taxes.... And the thing they say about the pimps - you control the pimps. It would also stop a lot of the murder.... I feel adamant that it should be legalised.

This suggestion was not well received by the PCC (although Brenda Quinn supported limited legalisation in her interview), and he had been criticised by other members. His idea was that one cul-de-sac should be turned into a street where prostitution is permitted, in a similar way to the toleration zone outlined above. Helen Jones supported this idea, arguing:

It would free the girls of harassment from the police and residents. The girls would prefer that. But it would only solve some problems, and it needs a strong commitment from the police to protect the women.

The other three lay members of the PCC to mention prostitution did not live or work in the immediate area and their comments therefore reflect a more detached view of the issue. Derek Turner the Chairman felt the committee spent far too much time discussing it and had used his powers of chair to have it taken off as an agenda item. He argued:

We're sick to the back teeth of speaking almost 90% of every meeting on that subject.... It was on the agenda for years. And it was something I personally worked on. Not to sweep the problem under the carpet in any way whatsoever, but to get it off the agenda as an item in its own right, because it swamped everything else.

Certainly there was a danger that a PCC like B1 could become a single-issue committee. On the other hand, if this was what most exercised people's minds as the priority policing matter, they could and did raise such questions persistently. As the previous section showed from analysing the minutes of meetings, simply removing the issues as a specific agenda item did not stop it being raised and discussed at every meeting attended for this research.

Brenda Quinn had met prostitutes in the police cells as part of her Lay Visiting work. She also felt the committee spent too much time talking about the issue at the expense of other policing matters in different parts of the sub-division. She was the only member to raise the question of why the police do not arrest more pimps or ponces:

Why aren't they picking up the pimps? I've seen the pimps - I've seen the one down Speedwell Road driving his brand new BMW with three girls in the car - putting three out on the street and picking three up. So why don't they pick him up?

This too was raised by Helen Jones, who argued that arresting pimps would "decrease prostitution on the streets". As discussed earlier (section 7.2.1 above) the relationships between prostitutes and pimps are complex and multi-layered. At one end of the continuum are those typified by McLeod as 'heavy' and these are the ones which concerned Helen Jones. It is those pimps who force the women to work long hours on the streets, often to pay for their own drug use. She explained:

When SAFE workers see girls looking tired, drawn, pale and poorly dressed, working very long hours, its usually because they are being terrorized by the ponces. This is not an unusual situation. A high level of violence is used by ponces against prostitutes. Ponces drive around in BMWs and the police take no notice. Arresting the women is easy for the police because they don't need evidence. A pimping charge needs evidence and therefore means more work for the police. They take the easy option.

The question of whether the issue created conflict between PCC representatives of different areas in the sub-division was raised with Councillor Alan Green. He replied:

Well, I think you can overdo the conflict. Because Selly Oak has the prostitution problem in a different form. .. I mean Balsall Heath has its own problems but other areas have them as well.

He was referring to limited discussions at PCC meetings of the proliferation of massage parlours on the Selly Oak section of the Bristol Road. Unlike the street sex working in Balsall Heath there was no mention of public nuisance associated with massage parlours. The police explained that massage parlours came under the remit of the vice squad. At one meeting members expressed concern that these premises advertised their services

in the City Council's publication 'What's On' and asked if there was not something the Council could do to prevent this.

Unlike the issue from the pilot project when resulted in conflict between members of the committee, there was no evidence of internal dissidence within the B1 PCC. Rather, there were different perspectives aired at meetings which were based on members' actual experiences of prostitution (in particular whether street working was visible in their geographical area). The only contentious point was the unintended consequences of high-profile police raids in Balsall Heath, which would temporarily displace prostitution to adjacent areas of Moseley and Selly Park. Residents representatives from these areas would then voice their concerns and make demands for police action. Overall, these views recurred from one meeting to the next with very little development of understanding, and with the police therefore able to maintain the strategies of high profile action against prostitutes and their clients.

7.4.3 Critical questions on the relationship between police and residents' representatives on the B1 PCC

In Chapter 6 above of this thesis Pearson et al's (1989,121) argument that there was a danger of the membership privileging certain interests groups within the community was outlined. In the case of the B1 PCC, analysis of the meetings and interviews

indicates a privileging of the interests of residents representatives. One of the lay members interviewed, Bob Quick, criticised the membership of the committee as follows:

Its wrong in the sense that it lacks a proper mixture, a proper composition - its out of balance. There are lots of worthy people, but they are representing groups of streets. I know this sounds awfully snobby, doesn't it? and I don't mean it to sound like that, but you've got to face the fact that communities are socially very complicated and its no good omitting the people who supply the intellectual and social brawn, as it were. If you omit those you're not getting a proper feel of the thing... You've also got to think of people like youth leaders, head masters, ministers of religions, trade unionists, industrialists.

From the research evidence cited earlier, the press coverage and fieldwork analysis there is no doubt that residents in Balsall Heath and Selly Park had been instrumental in supporting recent policies on the policing of prostitution. The relationship between the police and these residents representatives was a dynamic one - the residents made demands on the police for effective action against the visible form of prostitution in their neighbourhoods, street working, whilst the police both responded to this and used residents' demands to legitimise their operations.

However there were two problems with this relationship. First, there was a danger of the police and residents constructing a social problem out of prostitution which did not reflect the reality of sex working in all its manifestations - that it was a regular, normalised activity for a proportion of the male population. Edelman (1988:36) argued that the social construction of social problems was historically specific,

reflected contemporary ideologies and the way they were reproduced in order to maintain consensus. Many inequalities existed over extended periods of time, but only periodically became problematised in the public domain. This was true of prostitution - throughout the Victorian era it was tolerated in naval ports and army barrack towns as restrictions were placed on the marriage of members of the armed services (McHugh, 1980: 18). In this century it has been regarded as a necessary concomitant to war as a form of relief for armed combatants during periods of leave. It is a feature of all large cities in the industrialised world.

The press coverage from the 1970s showed that it was not a major public issue in Balsall Heath. Why then should it become one during the 1980s? Edelman argued that there was a link to politics and the political climate, and that focusing on one problem diverted attention from other, possibly more deeply embedded problems, since the construction of social problems typically denied historical and structural elements by highlighting events which can be described and represent the values of interest groups. For instance, on the question of public nuisance caused by women and their clients on the streets of Balsall Heath, Helen Jones stated in interview:

I wonder how much real nuisance prostitution causes. Do clients really make a habit of harassing 'innocent' women - they seem quite a cautious lot to me. Violence and drug-related crimes are real, but more often it is the prostitutes (and their clients) who are the victims, not the residents. Otherwise it seems largely a question of litter, traffic and noise.

What Helen Jones was addressing here was the oft-quoted criticism (see McLeod, 1982: 96-100) of nuisance to residents. It would seem that residents groups had been successful in orchestrating public and media interest around what in reality may not be a major problem - the real social issue was more deeply rooted in poverty and changes in government policy. They had also been assisted in this orchestration both intentionally and unintentionally, by the local police.

As has been argued earlier in this chapter the changing social and economic climate and in particular the recession of the early 1980s resulted in the feminisation of poverty, so that prostitution "becomes an increasingly attractive option - or rather an decreasingly unattractive option" (Matthews, 1986: 191). The focus at B1 PCC meetings on street activities diverted attention from these underlying problem of rising poverty and vulnerability experienced by some women. Furthermore, O'Neill's (1992: 19-20) more recent research found that an increasing number of young women entering prostitution had been in local authority care as children and adolescents "often with a history of abuse, homelessness, poverty and loneliness". She described the spiral by which young women became involved in sex working to provide an income:

What we have here for many women is a catch 22 situation, sex work provides an answer to economic need. However, once a woman has been cautioned twice she is labelled a 'common prostitute' her 'crime' ceases to be a temporal act and becomes a label, what she does becomes what she is. Stigmatisation, marginalisation, and the reality of street life facilitates the need for a pimp, and for many women destructive dis-empowering relationships ensue.
(ibid.,20)

The role of residents in Balsall Heath in highlighting and campaigning around street prostitution minimised these underlying inequalities and reproduced ideologies of deviancy, social control and stigmatisation. This may also prove to be counterproductive. Research (McLeod, 1982; Kinnell, 1989; O'Neill, 1992) showed that fining the women for street offences drove them back onto the streets to pay off the fines. In 1988 the then Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear (Evening Mail report, 18.7.88) acknowledged this and proposed that women should be imprisoned. However, it can be argued that adopting such a punitive stance would serve no purpose except to put an even greater burden on the state in the costs of imprisonment and care for children of the women, whilst not removing the underlying economic causes of women working as prostitutes. Since the actual sex act is not illegal, only the related offences of soliciting, loitering and living off immoral earning, imprisoning women for what are relatively minor offences of soliciting and loitering would be a tariff far higher than other criminal offences attract. Nor would this deal with the other areas of prostitution, off-street work with its potentially higher risks of sexually transmitted diseases, or the violence meted out by ponces. Prostitution, it would seem, is a community problem which is neither amenable to policing solutions nor to improving police/community relations.

As Schneider (1985:216-223) argued, what needed to be examined in this was the role of the state in creating and responding to

social problems, and the role of the media in shaping problems. In the case of prostitution in Balsall Heath the police as an arm of the state appeared to have willingly engaged in the construction of a social problem with the compliance of local residents through the PCC and a willing local media.

Further evidence of the police using the PCC came from Roy Norton (Superintendent of the C3 sub-division), who was an Inspector on B1 until 1989. In interview for this research he stated:

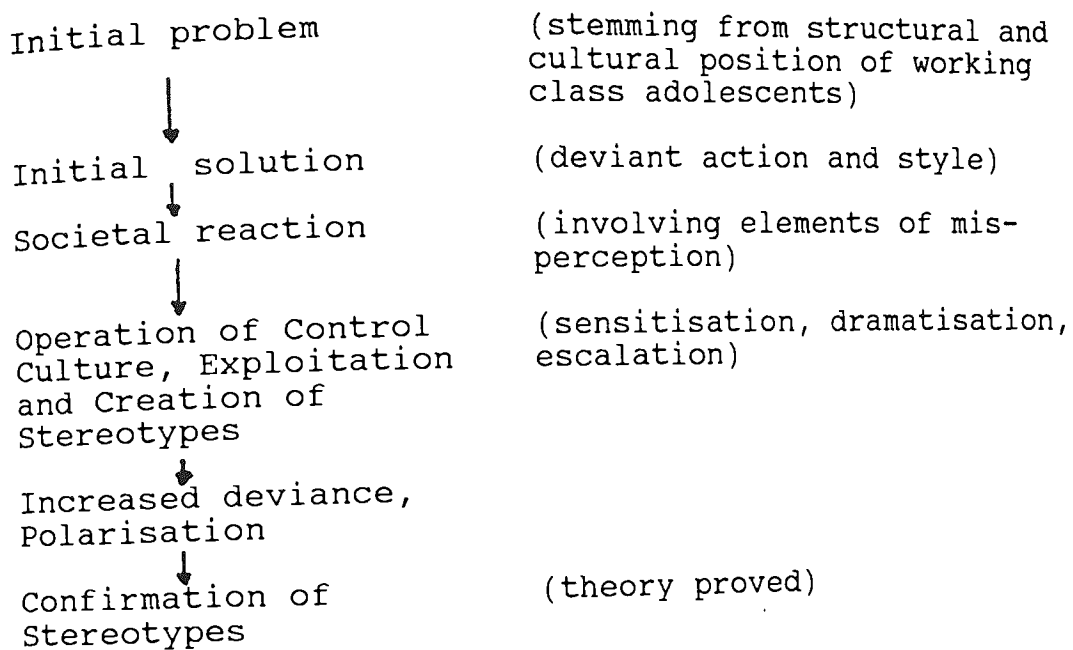
They [PCC members] were manipulated a bit at Belgrave Road [B1] by the Chief Superintendent. Because of prostitution and because he was going to loose men to this move, they were used a little bit as political pawns -
'Let's get the Consultative Committee complaining about this'.

This was one possible explanation for the police maintaining a high profile around prostitution - to retain personnel resources. And the senior officer was apparently willing to 'use' the PCC to resist cuts.

The second problem with the relationship between the police and residents representatives was that there was a danger of creating a moral panic, both about the level of nuisance experienced by residents and about the potential threat of HIV/AIDS. Section 7.3.2 (above) described the factors which led to the publicity given to prostitution in the 1980s, involving residents groups, changes in police policy and publicity in the local press. Cohen (1972:199) drew the following model of

"deviancy amplification" to show how a moral panic was constructed:

Figure 7.1 Creating a moral panic



(Source: Cohen, 1972:199)

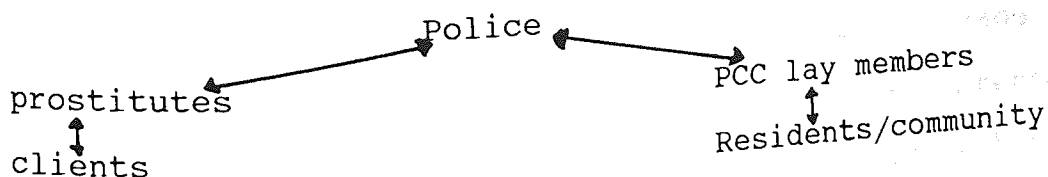
If this was adapted to the issue of prostitution in Balsall Heath, and bearing in mind Cohen's caution that there was not necessarily a straightforward causal relationship between the various stages, one can see in the press reports and the discussions at the PCC (although these are considerably more muted than the media) the development of the amplification of a problem, implementation of control strategies from the police, and the reinforcement of stereotypes which polarised the 'normal' residents from the 'deviant' women sex workers and, to a lesser extent, their clients. The moral panic, argued Cohen served to reinforce interests, ideologies and

values but in its very creation in Balsall Heath it has locked those involved into an almost inescapable cycle of social problem ideology, with the police expected to react and residents reproducing fears and anxieties which cannot be easily resolved. Although the threat of AIDs has recently appeared in the media (largely it would appear at the instigation of the police), interestingly a moral panic did not develop.

7.4.4 How the B1 PCC dealt with the perceived problems of prostitution

The way in which the PCC responded to the issues raised by members was two-fold. First there were regular discussions of matters relating to prostitution in the areas, but (as indicated earlier) these were repetitive. During the fieldwork for this research there was no attempt by the police officers attending meetings, or the Chairman, to enable the lay members to develop any real understanding of prostitution in the area, rather it was what could be termed a case of parallel activities:

Fig.7.2 Parallel relations



On the one side were the prostitutes and their clients and on the other the PCC lay members who represented residents groups and community organisations. The link between the two was the police who acted as mediators between the two, and at times actually reproduced deviancy models of prostitution. In this way they were able to seek support and justification for controlling street working through repeated raids and warnings to clients.

To use a Gramscian term, the committee had a 'common sense' view of prostitution in the locality. For Gramsci 'common sense' was an uncritical world view which did not question commonly held assumptions (1971:321-330), but contained elements of 'good sense'. Through critical reflection good sense can be developed into a "more unitary and coherent" (ibid.,328) world view which relates to empirical conditions.

Thus Gramsci wrote:

One's conception of the world is a response to certain specific problems posed by reality, which are quite specific and 'original' in their immediate relevance.
(ibid.,324)

For the B1 PCC lay members they were attempting to respond to what they perceived as the "specific problem" of prostitution, but the way in which their understanding of sex work in the locality remained at a 'common sense' level meant that discussions at meetings simply reiterated points made at previous meetings. The police were part of this 'common sense' - seeing law and order strategies as the way to control the nuisance, whilst conceding that this was unlikely to remove prostitution as an activity.

After the fieldwork stage, the newly-appointed Superintendent on the sub-division invited Helen Jones to join the committee. In her interview, she expressed some surprise at the rather low-key reaction of the PCC members to prostitution, saying:

I went to the PCC expecting 'outraged, Balsall Heath' and was surprised at the members. My impression was that it was a show put on by the police, who were very much in control, whilst the lay members were passive. The police gave the latest moves to clear the streets of prostitutes.... The police were keen to show what they were doing, and the residents listened politely.

Helen Jones's membership of the PCC could be seen as a progressive move on the part of the police in that she was likely through her knowledge of prostitution in Birmingham to be able to raise the understanding and awareness of the issues involved and help the committee examine alternative strategies to the rather counter-productive police operations. She would provide what Bob Quick (see section 7.4.3 above) termed "intellectual and social brawn", and transform the inconsistencies of 'common sense' into the application of 'good sense'. However, in reality, her invitation to join the committee was more a reflection of the newly-appointed Superintendent's search for solutions to an apparently intractable problem.

The second way in which the B1 PCC dealt with prostitution was by default - that is by not dealing with it at all. There was no attempt by the police to involve the PCC members in a problem solving exercise, which was one role Alderson (1979:194) advocated for such committees. It could be argued that if members were given more information about prostitution,

the likely and known outcomes of various strategies, and the options open to the police and other agencies, then they could have worked with the police to develop ways of responding to the issue which moved them forward from a social problem/moral panic cycle of repetitious discussion of the same points. What the PCC members perhaps needed to do was move away from the deviancy/problem understanding to situating prostitution in the wider framework of human sexual behaviour and work with residents groups and the prostitutes themselves to find acceptable alternatives to all parties involved.

Lord Scarman (1981: 202) clearly recommended a role for the community in "the policy and operations of policing". If a very real community issue such as the effects of particular forms of prostitution cannot be, in Keith's terms, "talked off the streets", then a more active role for PCCs was required. If the role of PCCs was to be "safety-valve institutions" then Coser's point was correct - that such institutions simply allow the expression of hostility without changing the situation.

7.5 Summary

Finally, we return to the original questions posed at the beginning of this chapter - does the PCC take conflict over prostitution off the streets or does it institutionalise it within the committee forum? How does a PCC respond to community issues? Evidence from the B1 committee indicated that the police were brought into direct contact with local people who had strong grievances, and there was a coincidence

of interests between the police and residents representatives on the committee. Both agreed on the necessity to control and regulate prostitution in order to minimise, if not eliminate, what residents perceived as nuisance and offense in their neighbourhoods.

The police responded to residents' demands for active policing by adopting a highly publicized policy of operations against street sex workers and, to a lesser extent, their clients. However, research on prostitution indicates that this was a counterproductive strategy, since the continual arresting of prostitutes and the resultant fines simply forced them back onto the streets to earn money. The more problematic aspects of prostitution - in particular the terrorizing and intimidation of women by their pones was not tackled, and the even more deeply embedded social problems of poverty, inequality and exploitation were not addressed at all. The latter, of course, were not policing problems, but political and social ones. However, the police could have done more to protect sex workers from pimps and pones.

Targeting street workers and their clients offered an easy option for the police. This ostensibly built up public confidence in terms of arrest rates and appeared to respond to residents' demands. Yet the nature of sex working was such that it was highly unlikely it could be eliminated. The way in which the PCC meetings at best reiterated partial understandings of prostitution served only to polarise

representatives of residents groups from the female sex workers
- the one voice which was missing from the committee was that
of the prostitutes themselves.

On the evidence of this research the B1 PCC did not take
conflict off the streets, but supported conflict between the
local police and prostitutes. It institutionalised conflict
only insofar as the undeveloped understanding of lay members of
the PCC supported and legitimated policing control strategies
rather than considering alternatives. Furthermore, there was
evidence that the police manipulated the PCC and the issue of
prostitution for their own benefit.

What is of significance in the wider scope of this research,
was that it was the two inner city committees which had local
issues that were ultimately not reducible to policing
solutions, despite Lord Scarman's intentions. Neither of the
two suburban PCCs studied had community concerns of the depth
and complexity of prostitution or that of young Asian people
missing from home which the C1 PCC tackled (see Chapter 5
above). PCCs could only take conflict off the streets in any
meaningful way (not least through policing operations) if they
had powers to institute social change, which is clearly beyond
their remit.

This chapter has analysed a long-running community issues in
the Balsall Heath area of Birmingham. In doing this it has
demonstrated that Lord Scarman's original intentions for

consultation have not been full achieved, as far as resolving community conflict is concerned. It has also shown that PCCs have a practical purpose for the police in maintaining and reproducing legitimacy for particular operations. They have a practical purpose for government too, in concealing deeper social inequalities which are located in underlying economic changes. By focusing on prostitution, the community is led away from a critical analysis of these underlying questions.

Having examined different dimensions of membership, discussed police accountability, and now analysed community conflict, the thesis turns in the next chapter to an analysis of a PCC in relation to other crime prevention/police liaison structures on a police sub-division.

CHAPTER 8

THE POLICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AS PART OF A NETWORK OF SOCIAL CONTROL AGENCIES: THE D3 SUB-DIVISION

8.1 Introduction

The previous three analytical chapters of this thesis have incorporated both macro theory and the micro sociological analysis of Police Consultative Committees drawing in particular on data from interviews with members. This chapter takes a rather different approach insofar as it considers the structural relationship of the PCC on the D3 Police sub-division to other organisations, agencies and projects operating in the broad field of inter-agency crime prevention, community safety and community policing. It examines these at three levels - city-wide, area/police sub-division (1) and neighbourhood. A network analysis is undertaken in order to elaborate the relationships between and within the three levels and the different committees.

The argument expounded in this chapter is that the PCC was just one of an overlapping network of social control agencies operating on the police sub-division, which had a particular focus on crime prevention. This elaborates the earlier debates on social control (Chapter 2 above) and in particular Cohen's model which was based on analysing organisational control of deviant behaviour. This chapter describes and analyses the specific processes by which agencies of control were inter-

related and enabled the police to penetrate further into community networks in order to perpetuate particular crime prevention strategies and ideologies. Furthermore these processes and structures also gave empirical evidence for Habermas's claim that in times of economic crisis governments and their agents (in this instance, the police) would seek public platforms from which to legitimate their policies and practices. Habermas wrote:

If governmental crisis management fails, it lags behind programmatic demands that it has placed on itself. The penalty for this failure is withdrawal of legitimation. (1973:69)

Given the Conservative government's claims to be the party of law and order, the apparently escalating rise in reported crime during the 1980s and early 1990s had called this claim into question, at least in the public domain. Through their agents of crime control (the police and the Home Office) the government therefore required public forums through which they could regain legitimacy. The argument of this chapter is that PCCs, together with other committees and structures, formed just such a network and offered just such a platform. This chapter therefore throws light on the way in which the Conservative government's market approach to crime prevention was realised in local communities through the combined action of the police and Local Authority.

In relation to the theoretical debate on agency and structure (see Chapter 2 above), the analysis in this chapter also illustrates the way in which key individuals were significant in the network of control agencies. Of interest here was the

role of one local authority worker who had a specific remit for community safety as part of her wider work of community development.

The initial selection of the D3 PCC was based on its similarity to the C3 PCC (see Chapter 6 above)- ie they were both suburban committees with a social and economic mixture of middle class and blue collar working class residential areas. As a consultative committee D3 most closely resembled C3 in respect of its membership, including levels of public attendance at meetings.

However, on the D3 sub-division there was a project based on a local council estate which was sponsored by the City Council and the project worker was interviewed during the fieldwork. The Lyndhurst Project was initially of interest as crime on the estate was highlighted at the April 1991 PCC meeting, but no reference was made to the existence of a crime prevention initiative in the area. It was therefore surprising to find out about this project when interviewing the Community Development Worker. I then decided to investigate further to see if there were any links between the Lyndhurst Project and the PCC.

By establishing the relationships between various committees and those Local Authority and police officers who had membership of more than one committee it was possible to identify overlapping networks of inter-agency contact and

analyse them in relation to the earlier theories of social control and legitimation. Whilst the D3 PCC was central to the analysis, its position in the network described and mapped in this chapter was in certain respects marginal, and the reasons for this are examined in some detail.

In relation to the original research propositions of this thesis (see Chapter 4 above), the D3 PCC highlighted the role of consultative committees as public relations forums for the police. The relevant research question was, 'How do the police 'use' PCCs?'. Finally, the relevant role of the committee identified in Chapter 4 above was the one which they play within the network of local agencies based on the police sub-division.

This chapter therefore describes and analyses the structure of a network of crime prevention agencies found on the D3 police sub-committee during the course of the fieldwork for this research. This analysis is then related back to the original research propositions and to the macro sociological theories of social control and legitimation outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 above.

8.2 The committees and projects studied

Two committees and one project were examined for this chapter - the D3 PCC, the Erdington Community Safety Panel (ECSP) and the Lyndhurst Project. A brief description of each is given in this section. First, however, they are located within the

framework of Birmingham City Council's Community Safety strategy which is germane to this analysis.

8.2.1 Birmingham City Council's Community Safety Strategy

In 1984 the Home Office Circular 8/84 recommended an inter-agency approach to crime prevention involving the Police, Probation Service, Local Authorities, the voluntary sector and the private sector (Morgan and Maggs, 1985b: 22). In 1987, as a response to this, Birmingham City Council issued a Joint Policy Statement with the Probation Service and West Midlands Police outlining an multi-agency approach to crime reduction. A Community Safety Team was set up within the City Council and in 1990 they produced the 'Community Safety Strategy' paper. This strategy laid a strong emphasis on community development approaches which included involving and consulting local communities and groups. It took account of situational and social (2) crime prevention and reduction methods, as well as ways of reducing the fear of crime. The remit of the strategy was wider-ranging than the typical policing and media view of crime and included, for example, domestic violence, child abuse, racial harassment and personal safety. It thus sought to address much wider issues than the traditional police-led crime prevention with its focus on burglaries from domestic premises and auto-related crime.

A Council Officer's Strategy Group was appointed to oversee the implementation of the strategy and this devolved grassroots initiatives to the 12 Area Community Safety Panels established

in 1987 across Birmingham. The lead Council department for these panels was Recreation and Community Services. I attended a meeting of the Erdington Community Safety Panel as part of this research and previous minutes of their meetings were examined. However, there was also a general remit for all Council departments to consider crime reduction and prevention as part of their service delivery.

Feeding into the Community Safety Strategy was the work of the Social Crime Prevention Team. This operated at a city-wide level, although it has its origins in Social Services based in the West District of Birmingham. According to their 1988 Report, the aim of this team was to develop a multi-agency social crime prevention approach as opposed to a situational crime prevention one. The Team developed a sociological model of crime prevention which took into account some of the social causes of crime and advocated a collective, policy-oriented strategy. They had carried out research on council estates in the city and in an inner city school. The Community Safety Strategy therefore incorporated both local and national government initiatives.

8.2.2 Erdington Community Safety Panel

This inter-agency committee was established in 1987 as a result of the operationalising of the Joint Policy Statement outlined above, and therefore formed part of the Community Safety Strategy. It met monthly and was chaired by Recreation and Community Service's Area Manager. Representatives of

mainly statutory and a few voluntary agencies attended - including police, probation, Local Authority workers (including the Erdington Area CDO, Lauren Irwin) - with the emphasis on agency representation rather than the more open membership from the community which characterised the four PCCs studied. The police members had a relatively low profile (in terms of both numbers attending and input to the meetings) in comparison to Local Authority representatives. In contrast to the PCC, the membership consisted of council and police officers and people working in the locality, and did not have direct input from residents, local politicians or the public, except where representatives happen to live in the area. The only local resident on the Panel was Mr Smythe, a Neighbourhood Watch (3) (NW) co-ordinator who also chaired the all-zones NW meetings (see section 8.2.4 below) in Erdington.

The aims of the Panel were to implement community safety initiatives and monitor local issues. In relation to the former, it directly managed the Lyndhurst Project (see below), and in relation to the latter had input into various initiatives including solvent abuse amongst young people, the environmental crime prevention aspects of a council housing estate redevelopment, and problems of vagrancy in the main shopping area. Its roles were decision-making, action implementation and management.

8.2.3 The Lyndhurst Project.

Using ICPP funding, the Erdington Community Safety Panel set up this project on the Lyndhurst Estate in Erdington with a worker appointed in 1990. It also had its origins in the Home Office circular 8/84, and was therefore part of the overall way in which the City Council had responded to the Home Office recommendation that Local Authorities should become involved in crime prevention. There were three other projects in Birmingham funded under the Crime Reduction Initiative budget of ICPP.

Lyndhurst was a 1960s council estate which won design awards when it was built, but which had suffered some of the problems of neglect in the 1980s:

...many of the older residents who have lived on the estate since it had been built felt it was being run down and neglected.... The sense of belonging and sharing seemed to have been lost and there was clearly an opportunity to tackle many of the issues raised on an inter-agency 'front'.
(Birmingham City Council, 1991b: 27)

The aims of the project were to develop initiatives based on the estate, reduce crime, reduce the fear of crime and improve the conditions of life on the estate (Birmingham City Council 1991a: 3). The community safety worker, Charles Black, was accountable to the Community Safety Panel, and his line manager was Lauren Irwin, the Community Development Officer. Although it was notionally a multi-agency project, there was little input from the police, according to Black. In interview, he stated that although there was work for him to do on the estate it was not a particularly crime-ridden area - many of the

problems being to do with housing and the environment. He commented that the Community Safety Panel did not give sufficient direction to the project which was not surprising in view of the low level of need for crime reduction. This seemed to be at odds with the specific mention of crime on the Lyndhurst Estate reported by the police at the D3 PCC meeting mentioned earlier. It does, however, support Charles Black's view that he had little contact with local police officers. Perhaps multi-agency policing, from the police perspective, was not as fully integrated as Local Authority crime prevention on the D3 sub-division.

8.2.4 The Police Consultative Committee

There was a clear relationship between the previous two initiatives, located as they were within the Local Authority structure. Yet they shared similar origins to the PCC, stemming as they did from national government policy initiatives. The D3 committee, however, had two key characteristics which differentiated it from the Community Safety Panel and the Lyndhurst Project.

First, the PCC was relatively autonomous in that it was not incorporated directly into either the Local Authority or the police hierarchy. Its membership (see Fig.8.1 below) was drawn from a wide range of community groups and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators with a few statutory sector workers and city councillors attending. Meetings were also open to the public, who attend regularly on a similar basis to those described in

Chapter 6 above (ie members of the public whose attendance was so regular as to amount to ad hoc membership of the committee).

Table 8.1 Attendance at D3 PCC Meetings

Date	Venue	Total	Male	Female	Police	Lay	Public
18.2.90	K'stand	33	20	13	5	19	9
22.4.91	E'ton	35	20	15	3	26	6
08.7.91	E'ton*	43	22	21	9	28	6
*AGM							

Key: Venue - K'stand = Kingstanding Leisure Centre
 - E'ton = Staff room at Erdington Police Station

The D3 PCC had the highest overall attendance of the four PCCs studied, the highest attendance by members of the public, and the lowest numbers of police officers attending (although they still formed the largest group on the committee).

However, the committee had no obvious functional role other than to hear reports from the police and Lay Visitors, and discuss items raised by those present. Although the Police Authority guidelines gave wide-ranging terms of reference, few of them were on the agenda of the PCC. Furthermore, it had no decision-making or active role in initiating strategies for crime prevention. Nor was there any evidence from attending

meetings or interviewing the sub-divisional Superintendent that the police involved the committee in any way in determining the policing objectives or priorities for the sub-division (a point to which I return in Section 8.5 below).

significantly the Community Safety Strategy document made only passing reference to PCCs - in relation to "ensuring better representation of specific groups upon local Police Consultative bodies " (1990: no page reference). On the D3 PCC there was no evidence of this taking place - for example, one member interviewed directly referred to the absence of ethnic minority groups from the PCC, despite there being Asian and African-Caribbean communities within the police sub-division.

The second characteristic of the D3 PCC was the related structure of Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Over 200 (4) local schemes were organised into zones on the sub-division, representatives from each zone met three or four times per year, and there was an all-zones committee which met twice yearly. This three tier structure (see organisational map, Figure 8.1 below) was well represented on the PCC, with approximately ten Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators on the D3 committee. Although in structure this was similar to the Liaison Groups on the C3 PCC, whereas those drew in representatives of community groups, local organisations and people working in the neighbourhood, as well as residents, the basis of the D3 structure was entirely residential through the NW schemes. As section 8.3.2 (below) demonstrates, there was

also overlapping the membership of Mr Smythe (Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and chair of the all-zones committee) between NW, the PCC and other committees on the sub-division.

8.2.5 Crime Prevention Panel

This panel was not visited during the course of the research, and information about it was therefore drawn from interviews given by two members - Police Inspector York and the Community Development Officer, Lauren Irwin (who chaired the CPP). The primary function of the Panel was to co-ordinate local crime prevention initiatives, such as producing leaflets and school projects. It was mainly attended by local business people in addition to the police. Its role was fairly low key insofar as it focused on small-scale, low budget projects in comparison to the other committees studied which had a wider remit.

8.3 Network Analysis of inter-organisational relationships on the D3 sub-division

8.3.1 Network Analysis in general

The use of network analysis has a long tradition in the social sciences - from anthropological studies of kinship to organisational networks. Stinchcombe (1989: 119-130) argues that such analysis offers a powerful tool for identifying aspects of social relations which are not apparent through quantitative methods. Furthermore, Magenau and Hunt (1989: 547-548) locate the police with community networks as they seek

both to respond to and manage the differing demands made upon them in relation to law enforcement.

Perrucci and Potter (1989:5-8) outline four themes in the literature on inter-organisational network analysis which are of relevance to this chapter. First, they cite the increasing importance of organisations in society, marking the shift from informal to formal relationships. Chapter 6 above drew attention to the increase in the number of quasi-consumerist organisations established under the aegis of the Conservative government in the 1980s as they moved to a consumer/market-orientated approach. This included governing bodies for schools and colleges, Community Health Councils, Crime Prevention Panels and also PCCs. The D3 sub-division was no exception to this development, but had the added involvement of the Local Authority, which through Recreation and Community Services' involvement in crime prevention and community safety operationalised and managed the multi-agency approaches already described in this chapter.

Second, and linked to the above, Perrucci and Potter cite the increasing power of the state which no longer acts as a neutral mediator of diverse interests in society, but is actively involved in channelling economic resources and determining policy from a highly centralised position, often through the kind of community organisations studied in this thesis. Indeed, the community agencies examined in this chapter, were all brought into existence as a direct result of national

Governmental policy which had been interpreted and activated at neighbourhood level through the local state.

Third, Perrucci and Potter argue that it is networks of organisations which form power systems rather than single organisations, as each organisation seeks to control the environment beyond their own boundary. As this chapter will proceed to demonstrate, the committees and projects on the D3 sub-division formed an inter-organisational network in which the police and the local authority diversified their power in the community, in order to mobilize and activate community support for crime prevention and crime reduction initiatives.

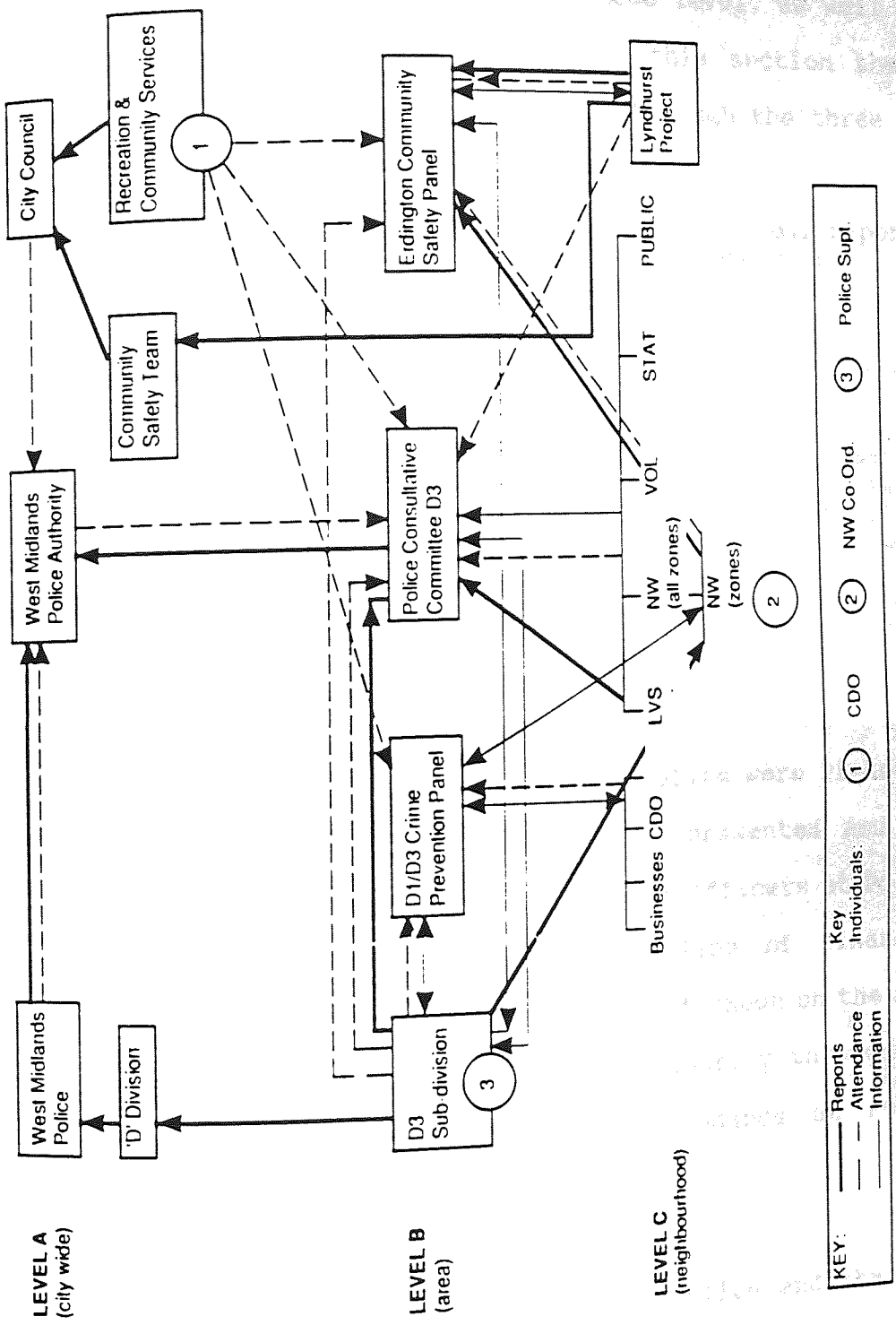
Fourth, Perrucci and Potter argue that there are unequal relationships between individuals and organisations, with large organisations far more able to gain power than smaller community organisations. This chapter will demonstrate that networking served the interests of the police (as the most powerful agency represented on the various local committees) by allowing them to penetrate further into community organisations, exercise their social control functions and use the committees as public relations platforms. Whilst the significance of individual actors will also be considered, it is recognised that they can only act within the framework and authority conferred by the different organisations represented in the network.

Thus a network analysis has been used to highlight the specific relationships between the various committees, projects, panels and even individuals on the D3 police sub-division which had a broad crime prevention role. More specifically, this network analysis has allowed the researcher to pin-point precisely what flows between points of the network in terms of formal reports, membership and information.

8.3.2 Network analysis of committees on the D3 Police sub-division

Figure 8.1 (below) is a map of the network analysed in this section. The network operated at three levels - level A was at the top of the local state hierarchy and included the West Midlands Police, the Police Authority and Birmingham City Council. Level B was the Erdington area and D3 police sub-division, and included those committees and organisations which formed the network analysed here - the D3 CPP, the D3 PCC and the ECSP. Between Levels A and B were intermediate levels within the total structures - the police D Division, the Community Safety Team (see Section 8.2.1 above) and Recreation and Community Services (the last two being part of the Local Authority). These intermediate levels did not feature significantly in the network analysis. Level C was the neighbourhood level, which included the Lyndhurst Project and the Neighbourhood Watch structure peculiar to the Erdington area. This level was also the source of members of the CPP and the PCC.

Figure 8.1
The D3 (Erdington) Network Map



The analysis which follows shows that there were inter-organisational relationships at Levels A, B and C - the city-wide, area/sub-divisional and neighbourhood level, as well as relationships between these levels. In this section these relationships are analysed by levels and through the three following linkages (5):

- (i) reporting - where formal written or verbal reports were made from one section of the network to another;
- (ii) membership/attendance - where an individual was a member of more than one committee or was located at different levels;
- (iii) information flows - where identifiable information passed between individuals or committees. This could be verbal or written, for example at PCC meetings details of training for Lay Visitors was circulated. In interviews with PCC members information was cited as an important aspect of membership, whether it was the opportunity to give or receive information.

At Level A (city-wide) the West Midlands Police were linked to the Police Authority through the reports presented and the attendance of the Chief Constable and senior officers at Police Authority meetings. There was also a line of financial accountability between these two which is not shown on the map. The city council related to the Police Authority through the membership of councillors and their attendance at Police Authority meetings.

Individual officers of the West Midlands Police and the city council were also linked through the multi-agency crime prevention Joint Statement which developed out of the Home Office Circular 8/84 (see Section 8.2.1 above). A joint

committee had been established which involved various council departments (including the Community Safety Team), West Midlands Police, and the West Midlands Probation Service.

At Level B (area/sub-division) overlapping membership was one of the main links between the police, the Crime Prevention Panel (CPP), the PCC and the Erdington Community Safety Panel (ECSP) (see Fig.8.1). The police were represented on all three committees at senior officer rank (Superintendent and Inspectors), by the crime prevention officer at the CPP and ECSP, and by other officers as required at the PCC. The CPP membership was formed from local business representatives, the police and the Community Development Officer (CDO) Lauren Irwin who chaired the meetings. The PCC had a more mixed membership of residents, councillors, some statutory agency representatives, NW co-ordinators and the public. The ECSP membership consisted mainly of statutory agency representatives. Local Government employees and the police. (Two of the members of this committee are also on other committees studied for this research - a Probation Officer attended the C3 Crime Prevention Panel, and Tom Taylor a civilian worker for the Police Authority and an ex-police officer, was on the C1 PCC. Thus the network of membership was not confined to the D3 area/sub-division but linked even further into city-wide committees and forums.) The overlapping membership covering the three committees in this network analysis was from the CDO, Lauren Irwin (also a Lay Visitor), the NW Zone representative, Mr Amythe and the police

Superintendent, Keith Chambers (see circles 1,2,3 respectively on Figure 8.1).

These three individuals - the CDO, the NW representative, and the police Superintendent, - were highly significant in the network. The CDO in particular had a very active role on the CPP (which she chaired), the ECSP through which she managed the Lyndhurst Project worker and the PCC which she attended regularly. She also formally facilitated the flow of information between these various committees, projects and individual members by producing reports and a neighbourhood newsletter. Her vast network of contacts facilitated informal exchanges between different social actors and levels of the structures identified in the network map, and her role will be elaborated further later in this chapter. However, there was no evidence that any of these actors were influential, either as "Top Influential" or "Key Influential" as distinguished by Miller (1959,300) (6), outside the D3 subdivision/Erdington area, or even within the network. Their roles were ones of maintenance, the facilitation of exchanges and the implementation of policy, rather than promoting change.

Still at Level B, information flows between the three committees and the police were a further important link (see Figure 8.1). Information was exchanged both formally (through reports, updates, feedback and discussion) and informally during the 'meeting and greeting' before and after meetings. What was notable from the network analysis was that formal

information flowed from and to the police rather than between the committees (see Fig 8.1). This analysis is supported by observations made during attendance at the PCC meetings, at which neither the work of the CPP nor ECSP was mentioned; similarly at the ECSP meetings no reference was made to the PCC or CPP. The significance of this will be analysed in Section 8.5 below. Of course, key actors took information informally from one meeting to another, but there was no evidence of formal information exchanges between the committees.

Formal reports also linked the police to the PCC at Level B, but were less important than the previous two links (see Figure 8.1). The police report however, as previously stated, formed the main agenda item at the PCC meeting and its significance in terms of public relations and legitimation will be discussed later in this chapter. The police were also asked to give updates on matters raised at previous meetings. In contrast, no formal reports were made by the police to the CPP or the ECSP.

At Level C (the neighbourhood or community level) the links were understandably more informal (apart, that is, from the Neighbourhood Watch structure which was highly formalised). The very diversity of groups, organisations and individuals at this level precluded a detailed study during the fieldwork for this thesis. However, from members of the PCC interviewed, such as NW co-ordinators and church representatives there was

little evidence of overlapping membership, information exchanges (except informally) or reports between groups at Level C.

8.3.3 Network analysis between levels.

Between Levels A and B (city-wide and area/sub-division) two main links existed. Both the police side of the network map and the local authority side were related through the hierarchical structure of their organisations. Thus there were regular meetings, reports and contacts between officers at the different levels which fed into the top level of the structure, and there were directives which emanated from the top of the hierarchy and worked down to all levels.

The relationship between the PCC and the Police Authority was maintained through the system of lead councillors - a system initiated by the Police Authority as a way of checking on matters raised at PCC meetings which might be of relevance to the Authority. On the D3 PCC the lead councillor happened to be the Chair of the Police Authority, Laurie Kent. He described his role as follows:

The one that I'm tending to do at the moment is sitting back and listening. Listening to what views those members have got, and the way that the police are trying to deal with it, because that comes in when you're discussing budgets etc. with senior officers within the Authority. But I also have now and again put the point of view of the Police Authority when it comes to the situation where the police says, 'Its not down to us, we haven't got enough money,' and all the rest of it. And I make my contribution there.

In his view the relationship between the Police Authority and PCCs needed to be strengthened and made a two-way one, with the Police Authority sending short reports to PCC meetings about matters which were relevant to the committees. He also argued for a West Midlands Consultative Committee, drawn from local PCCs, which could "talk regularly with the Authority and the senior police officers" (Laurie Kent).

On the evidence of this research it was apparent that the lead councillor system was only working effectively on D3. On the other three PCCs Councillors generally attended meetings intermittently, and those appointed as lead councillors were criticised by committee officers for their lack of attendance. D3 was the exception with not only regular attendance by Laurie Kent, but high attendance by three other councillors, one of whom was the Chair, Jenny Kirby. Given that the Police Authority was responsible for the overall maintenance of PCCs, the system whereby the two were related clearly needed reviewing.

The other link between the PCC and the Police Authority was through the minutes of the PCC, copies of which were forwarded to the clerk to the Police Authority. From these he prepared a report to the General Purposes sub-committee of the Police Authority. However, it was unusual for there to be any feedback from the Police Authority to PCCs.

Between Levels B and C (the area/sub-division and the neighbourhood/community) there were strong links, again in respect to membership and information flows, with some formal reporting. The CPP drew in information from the local business community and fed information out through its work in producing crime prevention leaflets, posters and other initiatives. The PCC received formal reports from Lay Visitors, and there was a two-way information exchange through matters raised from the floor and through updates and reports from the police. The PCC was also used by members to publicize local schemes such as the Crime Prevention Week, community events and so on. The ECSP received a monthly report from Charles Black about the Lyndhurst Project, and he attended their meetings as well as occasionally attending the PCC. Mr Smythe (see Circle 2, Figure 8.1) was involved in the NW structure and represented one of the zones at both the PCC and the ECSP. Lauren Irwin (see Circle 1, Figure 8.1) also linked both levels through her involvement with the Lyndhurst Project, her work with the NW zone committees, and the implementation of many of the CPP initiatives. Her voluntary work as a Lay Visitor further located her in Level C.

There was no direct link through reporting, membership or information exchanges between Levels A or C (city-wide or neighbourhood). There was however a financial link through the funding of the Lyndhurst Project by the city council out of the ICPP budget.

8.3.4 Summary of network analysis

This analysis shows that the main relationships were inter-organisational at Level B (area/sub-divisional), and intra-organisational between Levels B and C (the neighbourhood or community). The relationships between Level A and the other two were necessarily formal, whereas between Levels B and C there were both formal and informal links. The main linkages either between or within levels were overlapping memberships and information flows, with reporting of less significance.

From the mapping of this network the police appeared to be marginal, but the rationale for the CPP, PCC and ECSP were related to policing through the increase in reported crime, the falling detection rates and the Home Office directive that a multi-agency approach to crime prevention and reduction should be adopted. As Section 8.4 below will argue, the police were far from marginal, but through the committees which formed the network they were able to penetrate the community to reinforce their social control role.

The network analysis also appeared to show a higher rate of activity on the Local Authority side at Level B, and this demonstrates the extent to which the Home Office directives had been implemented in this sub-division. This was particularly obvious from the active role played by the local authority CDO in linking the various elements together. Nor was this unique in the city - on the C3 sub-division the CDO also attended meetings of the local CPP (which he chaired), PCC and the

Community Safety Panel (7). This demonstrated the extent to which the police and the Home office had successfully shifted the focus of crime prevention from a policing function to a joint Local Authority/community operation. (This will be discussed further in Section 8.4 below.)

The D3 PCC, in common with the other PCCs studied for this research, appeared to be relatively autonomous within the network insofar as it was not linked directly into the same hierarchical structure as the police or the local authority system. Yet its constitutional weakness - having no budget or specific powers - meant it lacked an explicit overall goal or purpose. This was particularly noticeable in comparison to the ECSP - the latter initiated, monitored and managed crime prevention and crime reduction programmes and projects. However the PCC was also, along with the ECSP, the focus of the network, drawing in and disseminating information and having overlapping membership. Yet in some ways it was the least accountable in terms of reporting to the Police Authority. Whereas police officers and local authority officers were incorporated into line management systems within their organisational structures which in turn linked Levels A and B, the relationship between the D3 PCC and the Police Authority was more ad hoc. Minutes of PCC meetings were forwarded to the clerk of the Police Authority, but no attention was drawn to specific matters of concern and there was no evidence of action being initiated as the result of this system. This lack of an active role for the PCC could account for it being described by

some members as a 'talk shop'. Clearly it was not fulfilling its crime prevention role as outlined under Section 106 of P.A.C.E., 1984 - in this respect the ECSP was far more successful with its strong focus on projects and ability to attract resources.

The final notable feature of the network was the significance of key actors. The Community Development Officer, the Neighbourhood Watch activist and the D3 police superintendent (see Circles 1,2,3 respectively, Figure 8.1) all had membership of committees at Level B. The CDO and the NW representative also operated at Level C. The CDO and the police superintendent had links through the organisational structure to Level A. Whilst this shows that individuals were active in constructing the network both in terms of their overlapping membership of various committees and their positions within the various hierarchies, and in terms of the information and exchanges they were able to transmit from one committee and level to another, their actions were nevertheless constrained. In other words, as far as the agency and structure debate is concerned, this research gave evidence to support the view that human action is significant within social structures, nevertheless the structures were imposed upon the actors through national and local policies which for two of them - the police superintendent and the CDO - were part of their working roles. Only the NW representative had what could be considered an entirely voluntaristic role within the network. Furthermore, there was no evidence that any of these actors were in a

position to shape the network, rather their actions were ones which maintained the network as it existed, rather than introduced elements of change. The importance of these actors, and particularly the CDO, in relation to the legitimising function of the network is analysed in more detail in Section 8.5 below.

What was observed in this research was similar to Miller's findings in his study of community structures:

A continuum of community power structures is suggested... ranging from the highly stratified pyramid dominated by a small but powerful business groups to a ring of institutional representatives functioning in relatively independent roles.
(1959:307)

The key actors identified in this analysis were of the latter type - they acted independently, were not part of any social network outside of the community/policing one analysed here, and were not part of a "top influential" clique.

This network analysis of D3 is an example of top-down mobilization of a city-wide crime prevention and crime reduction strategy which incorporated local people, both residents and public sector employees into state activities. It is also an example of a specifically constructed network since two of the committees - the CPP and ECSP - had a central focus of crime prevention and crime reduction, whilst the PCC was intended to incorporate this into its remit. These committees had overlapping membership and information flows which fed directly into the local community, and drew from the community both resources in terms of personnel (either

voluntary or as employees) and information - the significance of this will be analysed further in the next two sections.

8.4 The Inter-organisational network as agencies of social control

One of the arguments of this chapter is that the related committees on the D3 sub-division (Levels B and C in Fig. 8.2 above) act as an interlocking network of social control agencies. Although the term 'social control' is used so widely now that it can lose its meaning, in this thesis it is based on Cohen's definition:

... the organised ways in which society responds to behaviour and people it regards as deviant, problematic, worrying, threatening, troublesome or undesirable in some way or another.
(1985:1)

The emphasis in this thesis is on 'organised ways' in the policing of society and social 'behaviour'. To elaborate this analysis some preliminary background detail is required.

First, the particular social behaviour relevant here is criminal deviancy as expressed in the inexorable rise in reported crime in Britain since the 1950s (Social Trends, 1991: 195). Wiatrowski (1988:100), in his study of community policing as informal social control, argues that the traditional police response to this has been to increase the use of technology. Thus since the 1960s there have been various innovations - two-way radios, patrol cars, and more latterly computers and helicopters - all aimed at improving the detection rates. However, this application of technology has

not stemmed crime, and in Britain in the 1980s in particular there has been an accelerated rise in reported crime. For example, in 1980 there were 2.5 million reported crimes, and in 1990 this rose to 4.3 million (Criminal Statistics England and Wales, 1990: 19).

Crime rates of themselves are problematic, either as indicators of actual crime, since they are based on reported crime, or because of the way in which the figures are constructed. However, in the 1980s both the reported crime statistics and the results of the 1988 and 1992 British Crime Surveys (which identify levels of victimization and unreported crimes) indicate that the post-war increase in crime has accelerated during the 1980s (Mayhew et al, 1989: 8-23; Mayhew et al, 1993: 19-23).

Given the present Conservative government's commitment to law and order, and their continued support for the police, both in terms of high pay awards comparative to other workers in the public sector and in the ideological rhetoric of support for the police, the rising crime rate has caused them some public embarrassment. Brake and Hale (1992: 8-12) argue that the Conservatives constructed a criminology which determined the causes of crime to lie within deviant individuals on the one hand, whilst locating the solution to crime also in the hands of the individual - through crime prevention schemes. The underlying assumption of this view was that successful community-based initiatives which incorporated situational and

environmental methods would reduce crime by making criminal behaviour more difficult. This was to be achieved through mobilizing 'active citizens' into co-operating with the police and other crime prevention agencies, and by increasing individual responsibility for the prevention of crime through using property protection measures such as locks and bolts, burglar alarms and so on. (A critique of this approach will be given in Section 8.5 below.)

Morgan and Maggs (1985b: 21-22) trace the link between this view of crime prevention and PCCs back to a Home Office circular (114/1983) on policing efficiency. Financial constraints were being imposed across the public sector and the efficiency and effectiveness of policing was called into question as crime rates rose. The Home Office wanted to widen the range of crime prevention from a purely policing function to one which involved the wider community. PCCs then assumed an added importance as potential forums through which the police could mobilize community support for crime prevention methods. This initiative was subsequently incorporated into the 1984 Home office circular (cited in Section 8.2.1 above) from which the projects and panels analysed in this chapter originated (8).

Thus the network on the D3 sub-division was the localised realisation of Home Office directives to increase crime prevention measures by incorporating voluntary and statutory agencies, as well as individuals and community groups in order

to stabilise if not actually reduce the rising crime rate. The growing rationale during the 1980s was that the police alone could not effectively respond to crime. Evidence for this is found at the structural level with the remit in Section 106 of PACE to include crime prevention, in addition to Lord Scarman's recommendations about consultation and accountability, to the terms of reference on consultation. At PCC meetings evidence was also found in the centrality given to crime statistics in the police report. From observations at PCCs meetings for this research it was noted that presentation of crime statistics would then be followed by appeals from police officers for help from the community to solve crime, be vigilant in respect of crime and take appropriate precautions against crime. Although no comparisons between police sub-divisions were drawn at PCC meetings, the West Midlands Police Community Services Dept does draw up statistical tables of crime figures across the city of Birmingham. These are made available to Crime Prevention Panels, but not, interestingly, to PCCs.

The second element of Cohen's definition of social control was the 'organised way' in which this is done. One of the features of the D3 sub-division was the involvement of the Local Authority as a response to the Home Office circular 8/84 to develop a multi-agency approach. As the organisational map indicated (Figure 8.1), there was an interlocking network of agencies all of which had a crime prevention element, and which worked from the grassroots of Neighbourhood Watch schemes (Level C) through the sub-division (Level B) of the various

committees and up to the city-wide network (Level A) of both the West Midlands Police and the City Council. An interview with a member of the Council's Social Crime Prevention Team indicated that the council too had shifted to a consumerist approach, in which consideration was given to service delivery (the citizens of Birmingham as consumers of council services rather than recipients of welfarism) with an emphasis on individual self-help.

Gordon (1984:47) criticised the emerging multi-agency police work for moving welfare agencies from a care to a control approach to their work. He further argued that multi-agency work was developed in a piecemeal way, and generally confined to either geographical areas (usually the inner cities) or to specific groups (i.e. youth). In D3 the establishment of the Community Safety Panel marked an extension of this piecemeal development to more wholesale coverage of a substantial suburban geographical area with a wide remit across social groups and situations.

Cohen's argument was that there has been a move by social control agencies from the private/hidden sphere (in particular he refers to penal institutions) into public space, and in particular into social institutions such as schools, the family and the neighbourhood. In ideological discourse one of the most powerful, yet meaningless terms evoked in this instance is that of 'community'. This conjures in the mind evocations of small scale, safe, cohesive localities with a degree of

retrospective nostalgia for the golden days when we all lived in 'communities'. As Cohen wrote:

The form it takes in crime-control ideology is a look back to a real or imagined past community as providing the ideal and desirable form of social control. This impulse is reactionary and conservative... in always locating the desired state of affairs in a past which has now been eclipsed by something undesirable. As in all forms of nostalgia the past might not really have existed. But its mythical qualities are profound.
(1985:118)

This essentially conservative ideology of community appears not just in government rhetoric but also in policing discourse. Alderson's vision of creating urban villages (1979: 194) through community policing, the encouragement of neighbourhood watch, police liaison groups, PCCs and so on all imply a model of a traditional community in the urban environment. As Shapland and Vagg (1988: 2-3) argue, the assumption is that small scale, rural communities have informal social control mechanisms such as "politeness and status" which induce conformity and regulate minor acts of deviancy. They go on to argue that this assumption is unresearched empirically both in the rural and the urban environment, yet it forms a powerful part of the crime reduction ideological discourse.

Cohen (op.cit., 124-126) argued that moving social control agencies into the wider social space of 'the community' was a form of colonisation which simply relocated the control agencies whilst retaining their control elements and incorporating informal neighbourhood social control into the process. The D3 sub-division analysis shows that as well as penetrating existing institutions, the state through the police

and the local authority had created new institutions and forms of control from the neighbourhood level of crime prevention (through Neighbourhood Watch and projects such as the one described in this chapter on the Lyndhurst estate) to the committees established with their differing stated objectives of community safety and consultation. On the sub-division, through overlapping membership, exchanges of information and reporting, these formed a coherent control structure which incorporated local residents (such as Mr Smythe from NW) and local state officials (like Lauren Irwin and Superintendent Chambers). The rationale was crime prevention and crime reduction - the controlling of deviant 'behaviour' in 'organised ways'.

8.5 The inter-organisational network as a legitimation process

8.5.1 Legitimation theory

In Chapter 2 above Habermas's theory of legitimation crisis was outlined, and it is apposite to utilise that theory further to analyse the ways in which the D3 network serves both practical and ideological political purposes. Habermas's argument was that in times of fiscal crisis when the government's legitimacy is undermined, it finds both instrumental and symbolic ways in which to regain legitimacy. This is precisely the situation in which the Conservative government found itself during the 1980s with respect to the rise in reported crime which was occurring in spite of increased spending on policing. By individualising

the causes of crime to deviant members of society, they sought to distance any causal links between their policies of public spending cuts and monetarist economic management (which led to unprecedented high levels of unemployment and widespread social unrest) and the emerging crime wave.

Evidence suggests that it is the police who have felt the brunt of the crisis in confidence around rising crime, and it is through the police and the Home Office (publicly accountable for policing in Britain) that the government has sought to manage the ensuing crisis in legitimacy. This process began in the early 1980s, following the urban riots, and gathered momentum during the decade. As Brake and Hale argue (1992: 86-88) by 1988 this reached a peak in outpourings of government rhetoric which promoted ideas of active citizenship, moral failings and the need to return to 'family values' in order to stem the tide of crime. They cite a speech of Mrs Thatcher's in which she stated:

...a clear ethic of personal responsibility - we need to establish that the main person to blame for each crime is the criminal... But if anyone else is to blame, it is the professional progressives amongst broadcasters, social workers and politicians who have created a fog of excuses in which the mugger and the burglar operate.
(ibid., 87-88)

Of significance in this quotation is the reference to mugging and burglary - two crimes which most affect individuals and which have echoes of the moral panic of the previous decade.

The instrumental way in which the government managed this crisis through the Home office and the crime prevention

strategies discussed in the previous section will now be analysed as they were exemplified at community level through the evidence gained from this research on the D3 police sub-division.

8.5.2 The D3 police sub-division and the PCC as a legitimisation forum

There are two ways in which the network on the D3 police sub-division operated as a legitimisation forum in crisis situations. First, in practical terms by the information which flowed between the committees and agencies both informally and formally through overlapping membership, reports and exchanges. However, I would argue that the key linking agents were the police officers, who controlled information flowing from their organisation in the form of reports to the three committees. Furthermore, the police gained most in terms of information they received from their attendance at meetings. This ranged from specific incidents, to on-going issues (particularly involving young people), to criticisms and commendations of the way police officers had handled incidents. Such information came from formal reports (for example, from NW co-ordinators) and from feedback on the effectiveness of police actions in the locality such as police monitoring an open space known locally as 'The Pimple', on which young people regularly congregated with a perceived potential for disorder. This flow of information was acknowledged at divisional level by the senior officer interviewed, Chief Superintendent Trigg, who referred to the PCC members in particular as "our eyes and ears", and

spoke of the way in which the PCC fitted into a wider network of community help for the police.

The police also gained practical help and support for their crime prevention initiatives, particularly through the neighbourhood watch structure. The sub-divisional Superintendent, Keith Chambers, said in interview:

The Neighbourhood Watch groups are extremely strong here...and they're not at all fearful of criticising us if we don't respond to what their communities think ought to happen. And we've got some very outspoken members on that, and some of them do come to the Consultative Committee. Neighbourhood Watch was set up really as a support for the police, and a sort of community safety aspect.

Here we see what appears to be a potential contradiction between criticism and support. Yet constructive criticism of the kind fed to the police at PCC meetings through NW members was helpful in that it enabled the police to claim to have achieved the West Midlands Police objective of 'quality of service' (9), whilst maintaining underlying support from members. There was little likelihood of NW representatives seriously challenging the police, and in fact they actively assisted the police by increasing home security (some NW schemes operate discount buying of security systems) and reporting suspicious people and events.

Furthermore, as Saward argued in relation to the co-option of different groups and actors by governments:

... cooption [sic] can foster perceptions of government legitimacy by being an open expression of support by key social, economic, religious and/or cultural actors.
(1990:591)

Given that NW co-ordinators have already, by their very involvement in that form of crime prevention, tacitly accepted the government's ideology - the PCC then offers a further public platform in which their support may be articulated and be rendered visible, thus increasing the legitimacy of both the police and government policy.

Also facilitating and maintaining the information flow was the key individual Laurne Irmin, Community Development Officer for Recreation and Community Services. Her membership of the three committees - CPP, PCC and ECSP - ensured that she had an overview of Level B. Through her management role in the Lyndhurst project and involvement in the Neighbourhood Watch zone committees she linked Levels B and C. Finally, chairing and active involvement in the CPP ensured an operationalising of crime prevention strategies. Lauren Irwin was the key link in the community for the police and indirectly played a role in maintaining the network and its relationships, securely anchoring policing policies to the Local Authority structure, and acting as gatekeeper for the police into community organisations.

Second, and ideologically, the network was even more important in constructing a normative or legitimating set of values and beliefs around the concept of community crime prevention and the need to support the police. This was totally detached from an examination or understanding of the causes of crime. A study of the D3 PCC minutes of meetings showed repetitious

comments supportive of the police (and the police acknowledging this support), of which the following are a few examples:

Superintendent Chambers thanked the meeting for the support he had received in this respect. (18.2.91)

The Consultative Committee has every faith in the local police and would want to discourage these groups from setting up vigilante groups within Birmingham and in particular in this area. (22.4.91)

Madam Chairman on behalf of the Consultative Committee, wished the officers a safe journey to Rumania and commended their public spirited gesture. (22.4.91)

A lady shop-owner from Tyburn Road thanked the police for their help in deterring youths who congregate in the general area of the shops. (16.9.91)

This ideology of crime prevention was supported nationally by the use of "advertising techniques". Of this particular medium Habermas wrote that they were:

... advertising techniques that at once confirm and exploit existing structures of prejudice and that garnish certain contents positively, others negatively, through appeals to feeling, stimulation of unconscious motives, etc.
(1973:70)

Two in particular which have been used in recent years purveyed powerful images of criminals as animals. In one, magpies were used to represent burglars and in the other, jackals were used to represent car thieves. The latter advertisement in particular created an atmosphere of fear and threat in which jackals prowled around an unattended car. This anthropomorphism of perpetrators of crime not only arouses strong feelings of apprehension, but also further distances criminals from victims with its overtones of 'predator' and 'intruder'. Again they reinforce ideas of both individual

deviancy as the problem and the responsibility of individuals to prevent crime, whilst utilising popular cultural form of television advertising. They are also particularly relevant to PCCs, as house burglary and car theft are two of the crimes most likely to affect lay members of PCCs (10).

The Home Office intention, according to Johnston was that PCCs should be one means by which the police set their objectives and priorities. He wrote:

The idea was that after internal consultation between management and rank-and-file officers, and external consultation between the police and the community, clear force objectives would be established.
(1992:52)

The research for this thesis indicated that far from using the local consultative committee to help determine policing objectives, the police actually used the committees to legitimise their own position (through such statements as "we are doing all we can in the fight against crime"), to reassure the public and to secure information and assistance. In interview Superintendent Chambers stated:

... to be honest, I think that they [PCCs] should certainly only be seen, in my eyes, as a confirmation of what we're doing, rather than a replacement of anything we're doing.

When pressed, he further stated he had no plans to enlist the help of the PCC in setting his policing objectives for the sub-division.

On the D3 sub-division, therefore, it can be argued that the pragmatic approach of the Home office in pursuing multi-agency crime prevention and reduction strategies, and the government

ideology of individualising cause and responsibility were realised and brought into conjunction through the network of committees and projects. One of the functions of this network was to give legitimacy to the police through engaging 'active citizens' and staff from many agencies (but particularly the local authority) into crime prevention both through practical schemes and through the construction of an ideology of crime prevention.

8.6 Summary

In this chapter the network of interlocking committees and agencies which operated on the D3 police sub-division has been described and analysed. I have argued that this network has both a social control and legitimating function, and that it was the construction of this network which facilitated these roles in the face of a national governmental policing crisis concerning the escalation of crime levels in Britain in the 1980s. Furthermore, the organisational network operating in the suburb of Erdington and the surrounding area linked the city-wide structures of the police and the local authority to the grassroots community through the medium of various committees and projects.

Despite the crime prevention remit of PCCs nationally, incorporated in Section 106 of P.A.C.E. 1984, of the three committees operating at Level B of the network analysis, the D3 PCC was the least active in crime prevention/reduction terms. One of its roles in the network was to act as a focus for the

NW structure on the sub-division, and as the primary forum through which the police gave information to the community and from which they received information and gained support.

In the context of the wider study of this thesis, D3 was unique in having this network of committees and projects. Although each of the other PCCs studied had relations with other agencies, and the C3 PCC had a structure of Liaison Groups which linked into it, there was no other PCC which so strongly connected various schemes and forums into an interlocking network at the local state level. D3 stands as an example of the successful incorporation of individuals and community groups into the individualised and community crime prevention approaches promoted nationally by the Conservative Government in the 1980s.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Generalising to theory

The central proposition of this thesis has been that Lord Scarman's original recommendations for consultation have not been fully realised. However police consultation persists because it has a symbolic and practical function for the Conservative government (which initiated PCCs) and the police in maintaining and reproducing legitimacy, consent and control. To explore this a range of sociological theoretical concepts have been utilised and modified as the framework within which the fieldwork data could be located, analysed and interpreted. In this conclusion the findings from the four case studies of consultative committees have been generalised to the theoretical framework and critical issues raised.

The Gramscian concept of hegemony - the idea that consent to particular forms of domination has to be actively constituted through intellectual and moral leadership in civil society - can be applied to policing by consent, and was manifest in a variety of ways in this research. First by the construction of the membership of committees from people in the community who were largely supportive of the police. On the C3 PCC this happened by drawing the membership from existing police liaison groups, so that the majority of the members of the PCC were

already involved in contact with the police. This also effectively marginalised any dissenting voices.

Second, the way in which the police gave the lead response to prostitution on the B1 PCC- by presenting it as a purely law and order matter -produced a consensus around particular policing strategies and approaches. Part of the hegemonic construct was the 'common sense' understanding of prostitution which committee members had, thus leading to their reliance on the direction and information given by the police rather than developing their own understanding of the complexities of prostitution and ways in which it might effectively be controlled and regulated in their community.

Third, there was the active construction of ideas about crime prevention and crime reduction. It was shown how the Conservative ideology of criminality and the individualisation of crime prevention had been translated into active crime prevention programmes in the D3 police sub-division. Underlying this action, however, was an uncritical subscription on the part of police and lay members of the PCC to the prevailing conceptualisation of crime as a problem for its victims to deal with and the police to detect.

Linked to hegemony was the concept of legitimation - the notion that consent has to be publicly validated - and in relation to PCCs this applied to both symbolic legitimation as well as practical ways of gaining legitimacy for both policing and

political purposes. The thesis argued that an historical account of certain aspects of policing was necessary to understand the particular moments and issues around which loss of legitimacy occurred. This was particularly true of relations between the police and black communities which was evidenced by the riots of the early 1980s, which in turn gave rise to police consultation as it now exists. Thus legitimacy was a central theme of this thesis, and evidence for the way in which consultation served political and policing purposes came from several sections of the analysis.

Observations at meetings of all four committees and interviews with senior police officers demonstrated that the mere fact of having consultation established was seen by the police as evidence of their credibility in building links with the community. This was also true, although to a lesser extent, of lay members, many of whom cited the existence of the committee as proof that the police were genuinely seeking the views of the public. However, there was no evidence (and this was frequently given as a weakness of committees) that the police involved committee members in setting local policing objectives (which was an important part of their terms of reference). One can conclude from this that the process and form of consultation was perceived by both parties as more important than any tangible outcomes.

The committees also had a practical role for the police in constructing consent and gaining legitimacy. As the police

report dominated meetings officers could reassure lay members they were responding to local policing matters - usually in the form of platitudes. When they were directly challenged (and this happened infrequently) senior officers tended to be defensive or appeal to the committee for assistance. Thus it can be concluded that committee meetings offered the police a platform from which they could proclaim their "discursive claims to truth".

A rather different concept was that of conflict, and the extent to which PCCs could be used as 'safety valve' institutions to reduce tensions. The evidence from this research was that in terms of the racialised relations between the police and Asian representatives over the issue of Asian girls missing from home, the attempt to establish joint working through the C1 consultative committee had actually produced conflict between police officers and local Asian social workers. As a Coserian analysis predicted, the continual discussion around this issue at committee meetings appeared to intensify hostilities between those members involved, rather than release conflict and facilitate social change.

Over the issue of prostitution in Balsall Heath the B1 committee demonstrated potential conflict at two levels - between residents where street working was most commonplace and the prostitutes and pimps involved; and between residents and residents as they struggled to resist prostitution moving from Balsall Heath to North Moseley and Selly Park. Yet as was

argued in the analysis, the consultative committee was not a forum in which such conflicts could be resolved. Rather it was hostilities which surfaced, were aired and then surfaced again at the next meeting. One of the main reasons for this was that prostitutes themselves were not represented, so the potential conflict was displaced from direct confrontation to indirect confrontation between different residents' representatives. Thus it is concluded that consultative committees were not appropriate forums through which such local community conflicts could be resolved.

In relation to social control, the thesis analysed the way in which a network of agencies with a crime prevention role were constructed on the D3 police sub-division. Within the network, three key actors were identified who maintained and linked the various committees. Although Cohen (1985) defined this as social control whereby the police increased their penetration of the community, the evidence from this research was that Cohen's '1984' scenario of surveillance and penetration was not fully realised. Instead, I would argue, control was more closely linked to hegemony, and what the networks facilitated was the active construction of crime control ideologies and practices in which the role of the police had actually been marginalised and the role of local government strengthened. Furthermore, the remit expressed in Section 106 of PACE that consultation should be expressly linked to crime prevention was not manifest at all at the D3 PCC. It is therefore concluded from this research that institutionalised consultation of this

kind does not offer a social space within which crime prevention initiatives can operate.

A central theme of this thesis has been that of institutional racism - given the origins of PCCs in Lord Scarman's report. This thesis explored two possible models to account for the presence and position of black representatives on PCCs (see Chapter 2, 2.2.5 above). The domestic neo-colonial model has been favoured by Marxist writers in the 1970s and early 1980s to explain the incorporation of middle class blacks into institutions on the boundary between sections of the state and the community. However, I would argue that although this offers a useful understanding of the general position of black communities in British society, it is less relevant given the political changes in the 1980s arising from both the urban disorders and the implementation of racial equality policies through municipal anti-racism (although the two are, of course, connected).

Black lay members of two committees - C1 and B1 - stated clearly that their membership was voluntary. As section 5.5 above demonstrates, whilst black representatives were clear about manifestations of institutional racism within the police, they were nevertheless committed to representing their communities and challenging local police where appropriate. Chapter 5 above also argued that black representation was a key issue for the Home Office and the West Midlands Police Authority. The empirical findings from this research points to

black people joining PCCs in order to try to influence and change policing through consultation. Their awareness of institutional racism within policing was clearly expressed, but they persisted in attending meetings to seek to have some input into building better relations between the police and black communities. Of course, this raises a dilemma about effecting change (which links to the sociological debate about agency and structure) - whether to change institutions from within or without.

Therefore the empirical evidence analysed here suggests that the model of municipal anti-racism of the 1980s with its racial equality policies has superseded the neo-colonial model, and incorporates the impetus from the grassroots which has been evident in a range of institutions. First, the point that black people should be represented, not only to demonstrate that institution's credibility, but also to recognise the multi-racial nature of British society, is supported by the Home Office and police authority's concern to recruit ethnic minority representatives. Second, the point that black people themselves want to be represented in order to ensure social justice through representation, was evident from interviews with black people on the committees. However, the goal of changing policing to overcome the forms of institutional racism defined and discussed in Chapters 2,3 and 5 above has yet to be achieved through consultation.

In terms of institutional racism, this thesis has argued that there is a shift from direct forms of racism which can be termed the 'race relations problem' to indirect forms of institutional racism. Black members interviewed for this research gave examples of what they perceived to be examples of racism in the context of their contact with the police through the C1 consultative committee. Police racism was most evident in the conflict which emerged over the issue of Asian girls missing from home. The failure to consult black members of PCCs was confirmation of the proposition of this thesis that Lord Scarman's intention of improving relations between the police and black communities had only partially been addressed at the local PCC level.

Turning to policing concepts, the first to be discussed is policing by consent. It has been argued that this concept forms a central tenet of policing theory - that the police can only act with the consent of those they police. The empirical evidence analysed in this thesis has shown how consent is actively constructed through the membership of the committees. In general, lay members were pro-police and were selectively representative of the locality. Members themselves identified the lack of representation of young people and ethnic minority groups as particularly problematic. Even where committees were open to the public (C3 and D3) the same people tended to go to meetings, thus constituting an informal membership group. Any critics of the police were marginalised. Therefore the police were in a position to dominate consultative committee meetings

and engender consent to policing objectives which they had already determined.

The second policing concept, and a key one for this thesis, is police accountability. The research indicated that consultation within PCCs was not an effective mechanism for achieving any real form of accountability. Rather, it has been argued that through the social construction of a particular kind of membership, consultative committees give an appearance of local accountability insofar as the police have to answer to local critics, receivers of police services and so on, but in reality it is only a superficial form of accountability. The underlying problem of a lack of police accountability which Lord Scarman was trying to resolve through consultation was simply not reducible to community representatives on PCCs challenging local police officers.

The third, and final, policing concept is consultation. Significantly, this was one raised most critically by lay members interviewed for this research, who consistently cited lack of consultation as a major weakness of all four committees. This was supported by my attendance at meetings where evidence of consultation was sought (see Appendix 1), but generally not found. The exception was one meeting of the B1 PCC when the police superintendent did initiate a discussion on the future role of the committee. The conclusion has to be drawn that in these formally constituted committees there was little actual consultation taking place. The problem appeared

to lie with senior police officers who were reluctant to involve the committee in determining local policies or policing objectives. As Chapter 8 above indicates, the superintendent of the D3 sub-division was the most clearly opposed to lay members' involvement in decision making, but his attitude was not untypical of the other superintendents interviewed.

The final section of the theoretical framework which needs to be responded to is the wider sociological issue of agency and structure. PCCs are on the boundary of the police and 'the community'. They occupy a particular social space between on the one hand the hierarchical, disciplined highly structured police force and on the other hand the looser, amorphous, voluntaristic 'community'. Evidence from this research shows that human agency from the community was less effective than that exerted by the police. PCCs have become bureaucratized institutions in which form was more important than process, achieving goals or having tangible outcomes of meetings. There was no evidence of lay members being actively involved in the "operations of policing" (Scarman, 1981:202). There was a lack of consultation, and instead there were symbolic meetings which achieved little in terms of changing, influencing or even determining policing objectives or policies. Human action from community representatives had little effect here - in Giddens' (1987:2-4) terms the unintended consequence of Scarman's recommendation has been to turn consultation into a 'talk shop' in which the local committee activists (rather than

political or social activists) meet with the police for their mutual reassurance.

9.2 The contribution of this thesis to sociological theory and methods of research

This sociological research offers a detailed analysis of social processes which can be utilised to illuminate the aspects of theory outlined at the beginning of this thesis. One of the problems of macro theory can be a lack of empirical evidence to substantiate the theoretical assumptions. The contribution of the empirical data from this research aimed to show the specific ways in which consultative committees, as part of the reconstruction of policing by consent and legitimation, actively constituted community representation, used the meetings to legitimate policing actions, gained active consent and supported and reinforced particular ideologies around crime prevention. All of which constitute forms of hegemonic control.

In relation to the particular problem of policing and 'race relations' the empirical data offers a unique contribution to the sociology of 'race' in that the black people observed and interviewed for this research were not black groups traditionally alienated from the police. On the other hand, neither were they the kind of willing accomplices of state management of 'race relations' implied in the domestic neo-colonial model discussed in Chapter 2 above.

Furthermore, the particular focus on Asian members of the PCC also makes an original contribution, in that people of Asian origin have generally been studied in relation to their experiences of racist violence and harassment and the subsequent police response. This thesis has studied Asian people interacting with local police officers in the process of consultation, and has demonstrated that whilst Asian (and, indeed, African-Caribbean) are actively involved in consultation, they find that process difficult and are aware of elements of racist attitudes and practices on the part of the police.

A further contribution which this thesis makes is in the methodology of using a case study approach. There is a danger in purely ethnographic studies of paying such close attention to micro social processes that the broad structural context is ignored or underplayed. As Layder argues:

Understanding the way in which social structure interweaves with activity is an absolutely essential aspect of fieldwork and demands that the researcher inquires beyond overt aspects of interaction to investigate its structural components.
(1993:57)

Although the focus of much of the research for this thesis has been at the micro level (particularly in relation to the issues of membership explored in chapters 5 and 6 above), the case studies of each PCC have been contextualised within the more macro structural variables of central and local government policies, policing initiatives and broader economic and social forces. Thus the actions and meanings of individual social actors within the four PCC case studies have been analysed in

the light of structural concepts and variables. This in turn contributes to the agency and structure debate in sociology, by arguing that human action cannot be isolated from structural considerations on the one hand, whilst on the other hand demonstrating that structures have to be mediated by human agency. Thus policy developments such as crime prevention initiatives have to be realised in terms of human action and this can vary depending on the social actors involved in the process of putting policy into practice. Thus, for example, chapter 8 above demonstrated how key individual actors were significant in constructing a particular network of crime prevention committees, although their actions originated in national and then local government policy initiatives.

The final point to make about the contribution of this thesis to sociological knowledge of police consultation is to situate it in relation to previous research. The two major researchers in the field - Morgan and Keith - have taken different empirical approaches to their studies of consultation. Morgan's research covers England and Wales from the inception of Scarman's recommendation for police/community consultation. The focus of his analysis has been mainly on the policing issues of consent and accountability. Keith, on the other hand, has examined in greater detail the connections between police consultation and the relations between the Metropolitan Police and black communities in London. The research for this thesis falls between these two research approaches. It has some of the breadth of Morgan's work in terms of the issues

covered -institutional racism, membership, representation, accountability, conflict and social control. However it also focuses very sharply upon a specific urban locality - Birmingham in this case - as Keith's work does. In particular this thesis argues that police consultation cannot be fully understood without an initial analysis of police/race relations in the years preceding the 1981 urban disorders.

Thus this research has something in common with Morgan in its empirical approach, although more attention is paid here specifically to the 'race relations' aspect of consultation than Morgan's research. However, its analytical and theoretical approach has more in common with Keith's broadly Marxist analysis.

9.3 Areas of further research

There are several ways in which this research could be developed into further areas of study. First, the drawing of comparative analyses. The rationale for selecting the four PCCs for this study rested on an assumption that a comparative analysis would be both desirable and feasible. In the process of data analysis it was decided to focus on particular aspects of consultation highlighted by each committee. A comparative analysis therefore remains to be made utilising the empirical material from the fieldwork. However, this could also be extended beyond Birmingham to contrast with other urban and/or rural committees. For example, Chapter 6 above analysed the way in which the membership of the PCC was constructed by the

police from people already involved in local police liaison groups. This was due to the way in which the consultative committee was initiated by the West Midlands Police Authority. In other parts of the country - Manchester for example (see Cox, 1985:54-55) - the process of establishing consultative committees was not only much slower but also took a radically different, community based approach in contrast to the West Midlands. It would therefore be of sociological interest to compare the range of issues discussed in this thesis with research from Manchester, to determine whether the process of establishing committees affected the way in which they operate and focus on particular community policing issues in the 1990s.

A second area of research concerns the data collected from interviews with police Superintendents. Johnston (1992:185) notes that much policing research has focused on rank and file officers (with the exception of Reiner's recent study of Chief Constables). Since consultation in the West Midlands Police involves senior officers (Superintendents and/or Inspectors) there is a source of data embedded in this research which merits further development. Given the current proposals in the Government's White Paper (Cmnd Paper CM2281, 1993) to devolve greater autonomy to Superintendents in charge of police subdivisions, this rank of police officer is an important one for further research in this context.

Third, and also linked to the White Paper proposals, are the proposed changes to Police Authority structures. The Home

Secretary's proposal to reduce the number of elected representatives on Police Authorities and replace them with Home Office appointed members has implications in the West Midlands for the relationship between consultative committees and the Police Authority. This is an area of development to be monitored and researched in the light of the issues raised in this thesis about the role of local councillors on PCCs.

9.4 Concluding remarks

In analysing the fieldwork data and relating this empirical material to the theoretical concepts what has become apparent is that PCCs in Birmingham represent a 'failure' of consultation. Lord Scarman's original recommendations gave a clear remit for community representatives to become involved in policing operations and strategies in their own localities. The evidence of this research leads to the conclusion that in Birmingham this has not happened. Black representatives - seen as vital to effective consultation by the Home Office - were involved in the form of consultation, but not actually consulted (most notably on the C1 PCC). More radical critics of the police had been excluded from consultation altogether. As far as consultation being a mechanism for achieving local accountability was concerned, the evidence from this research points to this being of a very limited kind, and being controlled by the role of the police in determining what information lay members were given.

Furthermore, in terms of resolving community conflict - the origins of Scarman - there was no evidence that consultation through PCCs was an effective way of responding to issues and problems in inner city communities. Again, the police played an active role in controlling and managing lay members' perceptions of community problems whether relating to Asian girls missing from home or prostitution. Finally, in relation to their crime prevention remit, consultative committees were not fulfilling the role laid down for them in section 106 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984. Thus it is concluded that the central proposition of this thesis - that Scarman's original recommendations have not been achieved - is validated by the empirical evidence.

The second part of the proposition - that consultation persists because PCCs have a symbolic and practical function for the Conservative Government and the police in maintaining and reproducing legitimacy, consent and control - has been argued earlier in this chapter in relation to generalising the findings to theory.

In a recent television programme on policing, Barry Irving (Director of the Police Foundation) stated that PCCs were

... social engineering. Senior officers decide who to meet in consultation. They go for the 'law abiding' and 'law and order' lobby.
('Who Killed Dixon?' BBC2, 23.5.93)

His view is supported by the evidence from this research. The overall conclusion is that PCCs offer a forum for committee-

minded community representatives with an interest in crime prevention and policing to meet with local police officers to discuss matters of local concern. However, this is not the role Lord Scarman envisaged as there is no attempt to involve lay members in determining community and/or local policing objectives and strategies. Instead, the police retain control in a variety of ways, as this research has demonstrated. Therefore 'consultation' in Birmingham is ultimately a failure to consult in any sociologically meaningful sense of the word.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 2

(1) At the time of writing, it could be argued that the much publicised second trial of four Los Angeles police officers for their attack on Rodney King acted as a safety valve to dissipate the tensions which erupted so violently following their acquittal in 1992. However, I would maintain that although such trials have an element of 'safety valve', the beating of King represented only one aspect of institutional racism within the Los Angeles Police Department, and only a thorough overhauling of internal policies and practices will tackle that more substantive issue.

(2) This assertion is based on interviews with senior officers in which they frequently spoke of relations between the police and black people in terms of 'conflict', 'hostility', 'misunderstandings' and so on; and on a survey of literature written by police officers, from police sources such as policing journals, in which similar terms and perspectives are apparent.

(3) Northam (1988) describes how the ACPD Conference of 1981 (following the riots) had a presentation on colonial policing strategies from a senior officer with the Hong Kong Police. This laid the foundation for the Public Order Manual which was produced by a working party of Chief Constables. It incorporated features of para-military policing specifically developed in colonial countries.

(4) Home Office Circular 62/1989 (p.20) states:
"Consultative groups obviously cannot be said to be truly representative of the existing local population unless their membership includes representatives from the local ethnic minority communities."

CHAPTER 3

(1) The Holloway Incident involved a group of young men (black and white) who were the victims of an unprovoked attack by a group of police officers. Despite good descriptions and an investigation, the officers were not identified and disciplined until a campaign was mounted in the press.

(2) West Midlands Police first opened a telephone helpline in 1987 but there was little response. Relunched in 1990 with confidential telephone lines in six community languages and English. (Source: Daily News, 31.7.90)

(3) In this context 'race riot' is defined as unrest and disorder involving black and white people. The events of the 1980s are generally not regarded as race riots since they involved attacks on the police.

(4) This refers to the book 'The Empire Strikes Back', Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), 1982 London: Hutchinson.

(5) For example a series of articles appeared in the Police magazine during 1982 which criticised Alderson's model of community policing. Chiefly:

Police, Vol XIV No 8, April 1982, pp.14-18 'Why its time to say 'Goodbye' to police authorities (report of speech by James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, criticising community policing and consultation).

Police, Vol XIV No 9, May 1982, p.6 (Dogberry column notes that candidates for Alderson's post in Devon & Cornwall were all committed to training in CS gas and plastic bullets).

Police, Vol XV No 2, Oct 1982, p.10 'Now the Liberals vote for Labour's line on the police (article criticising Alderson's speech to the Liberal Assembly).

(6) Note the earlier point from the Scarman Report about the Lambeth Police Liaison Committee and how the breakdown of that consultative arrangement contributed to the Brixton riot.

(7) Drawn from copies of assorted correspondence between the Home Office and community groups in London, from 1979 - 1982. Documents found in the Runnymede Trust Library on visit in April 1990.

(8) Again, this relates to events in Lambeth in 1979, when the black members of the CCRL withdrew from the Police Liaison Committee.

(9) Since giving this paper, the Derbyshire Constabulary was given a highly critical report by the HMI.

(10) 1990 statistics (source: Guardian 13.3.90) indicate Bedfordshire Constabulary has the highest percentage of ethnic minority officers at 2.69%, followed by Leicestershire (2.46%), the West Midlands Police (2.36%). Given that ethnic minorities constitute 4.5% of total British population, police recruitment does not reflect the general distribution of black people in the wider population. Furthermore, in the West Midlands, where one in six of the population are from ethnic minorities, there are only 176 such police officers out of a total force of 7000 officers (source: Birmingham Post, 2.4.91).

CHAPTER 4

(1) For example, the number of people attending meetings was recorded on the observation schedule. This was further broken down into the following categories: police, lay members, public; male and female; black and white. (See Appendix 1) Where appropriate this data is tabulated in the analytical chapters of this thesis.

(2) The two major issues at the time of commencing this research in September 1989 were the disbanding of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad (which caused public concern and lowered police morale), and the campaign to release the Birmingham Six. During the fieldwork stage - in March 1991 - the Birmingham Six were freed on appeal. Both these critical issues formed a continuous backdrop to the research, and from time to time were referred to directly during interviews. However, they were never raised as questions at any of the PCC meetings attended for the research.

(3) In his first two years in office, Ron Hadfield attended at least one meeting of every PCC in the West Midlands Police Authority.

(4) Paper entitled 'How Effective are Consultative Committees?'

(5) Paper entitled 'Research into Local Consultation'

(6) Reports entitled 'An Evaluation of Police Consultative Committees in Birmingham' June 1992. Copies sent to chairs, secretaries and sub-divisional police superintendents, and to the Chair of the Police Authority for information.

(7) Report entitled 'Research into Police Authority Local Consultative Committees' August 1992. The report related directly to the Police Authority terms of reference, and highlighted as problematic consultation, membership, staff turnover of senior police officers and the lead councillor system.

CHAPTER 5

(1) Institutional racism in immigration controls in the 1960s and 1970s has been well documented and argued by such writers as Gordon (1985), Solomos (1989) and Sivanandan (1982). The point is that post-war legislation was intended to restrict the entry of black people from the former British colonies, rather than control immigration as such. Furthermore, the political debates which preceded each piece of legislation were informed by racialised and racist perceptions of immigration and black people.

(2) See for example, Miles (1982) on Jewish and Irish immigrants, and Fryer (1984) on Chinese immigrants. Certain themes recur in relations between these groups and the police - notably an expectation of forms of criminal behaviour involving drugs, prostitution and gambling - usually without empirical evidence to support police action.

(3) Harry Yearwood described an incident which happened many years before. He was on his way to work at 5 o'clock in the morning when he was stopped by a policeman. He asked where Harry was going, who he worked for, where he lived, and then asked to see the bottom of his shoes. Harry felt the policeman was trying to provoke him, but as he had done nothing wrong the policeman had to let him go. Harry cited this as typical of incidents experienced by West Indian men at that time.

(4) See Brown's Report 'Shades of Grey' cited in this chapter, in which he refers to the 'plantation culture' of African-Caribbeans in Handsworth. This pathologising of black communities has been criticised by black writers - see, for example, Lawrence (1982, Chapter 3)

(5) This series of feature articles covered such issues as the number of black youth involved in crime and homelessness among black youths. Source: press cuttings on file at CRER Resource Centre, Warwick University.

(6) In his report, Brown (1982:6) had identified "...some 200 youths of West Indian origin [who formed] the criminalised Dreadlock sub-culture in Handsworth" and who were responsible for most of the street crime. He states as 'fact' that 90% of known attackers in street robberies were West Indian youths (the 200 Dreadlocks), yet produces no empirical evidence to support this. As the AFFOR publication argued, these 200 only represented 2 per cent of the African-Caribbean population of Lozells/Handsworth and gave no justification for police harassment of black youth generally. As Gordon (1987:130) argues, far from addressing allegations of institutional racism in the police, Brown blames the 200 'Dreadlocks' for poor relations between the police and local blacks.

In my research for this Chapter the '200 Dreads' seem to have a life of their own. John (1970) had identified that the police believed there was a criminal hard core of around 50 Black men in Handsworth responsible for organised crime in the area. An officer from Thornhill Road who gave evidence to the Commons Select Committee in 1972 (op.cit.:454) spoke of 250 - 300 young, homeless West Indians, living in squats and being involved in petty crime. Had these become the 200 Dreadlocks by 1977 when Brown did his research? What may be of interest is that when Geoffrey Dear (1985:9), then Chief Constable, wrote his report on the 1985 Lozells/Handsworth disturbances he referred to a group of around 200 Rastafarians who he termed "the unclubbables".

(7) Evidence for this was given to the Silverman Inquiry (1986) into the Lozells/Handsworth disturbances. I attended sessions of this Inquiry and have drawn on my contemporaneous notes from a variety of people who were questioned at the time - e.g. local councillors, community leaders and community workers. Silverman tended to minimise this evidence in his final report, although G. Dear in his report on the riots did attempt to refute allegations of police harassment - evidence in itself that this was an issue. Transcripts from the Silverman Inquiry are no longer available, although every attempt was made to locate them.

(8) For example, Jeff Rooker, Labour MP for Perry Barr, appeared on TV decrying the criminality of the rioters.

(9) Evidence given to Silverman Inquiry by, for example, a local councillor (Norman Hargreaves) of police searching homes of Rastafarians without search warrants and stopping young blacks on the streets. See also endnote (7) above.

(10) This assertion is based on observations/analysis made during the time of my own membership of the C1 PCC (1986-89). In this period there were several local Asian and African-Caribbean organisations represented on the committee, and their representatives were often critical of the police and policing. When I attended meetings again for this research (1990-91) it was noticeable that these members were no longer attending.

(11) Lay Visiting - "the carrying out of random checks by independent persons on the detention of suspects at police stations" (Kemp and Morgan, 1990:1) - was a further recommendation of the Scarman Report. The West Midlands Police Authority devolved authorisation for the appointment of Lay Visitors to local PCCs. Lay Visitors are trained by the Police Authority, but have to make their reports to the PCC which appointed them. In this thesis Lay Visitors are part of the lay membership (ie non-police members) of each PCC.

(12) The Lozells Project was eventually incorporated into the Ladworth Project - set up in 1985. Recently this has also been expanded to cover other inner city areas of Birmingham, with a wider crime prevention remit. It is now called the Rann Project.

(13) The system of lead councillors is discussed further in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

(14) Annual Conference of Local Consultative Committees, held on 19th October 1991. Organised by the West Midlands Police Authority. Both Surinder Wahid and Ranjit Singh (C1) and Lloyd Caines (B1) questioned by police about racism and black representation on PCCs.

(15) When I interviewed Wally Thomas from the Social Crime Prevention Team, he referred to working as a community worker in Handsworth in the early 1980s. The fights between gangs of Asian young men were evident then. According to Walter rumours and counter-rumours circulated the area.

(16) Helen Jones was a member of the B1 PCC who was involved in research on prostitution in Balsall Heath. See Chapter 7.

(17) A copy of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies' Report on 'B' Division (1989) was attached to the minutes of the B1 PCC and examined at West Midlands Police Authority offices.

(18) The involvement of other parties in setting policing objectives is not even the prerogative of Police Authorities and their democratically elected councillor members. This perhaps indicates a surprising naivety on the part of Lord Scarman in imagining that the police would either welcome or allow outside influence in an area where they have traditionally had complete autonomy.

(19) Of the 4 PCCs studies, only C1 had a substantial black membership. B1 (the other inner city PCC) had four regular ethnic minority representatives (3 African-Caribbean, 1 Jewish); C3 was an all-white committee; and on D3 two black people attended one meeting.

CHAPTER 6

(1) Police 'families' - the West Midlands Police group subdivisions into what they term 'families' based on socio-economic factors determined from census data. C3 and D3 are in the same family, and B1 and C1 are in the same inner city family.

(2) A description which came from both the C3 Superintendent and some lay members on the committee.

(3) All senior police officers interviewed identified both formal and informal means of liaison with community groups and organisations. Community police officers, like Don Ingram, are often the key link here.

(4) This was an aside to me during a PCC meeting.

(5) The role and activities of Recreation and Community Services as a Local Authority department with responsibility for crime prevention is examined more fully in Chapter 8 of this thesis

CHAPTER 7

(1) For example, one of the PCC members, Albert Kelly, had been a life-long active trade unionist during his working life. In retirement he was Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, on the committee of his local golf club, playcentre and residents' association, as well as the PCC. He was fairly typical of lay members of the committee.

(2) 1957 Wolfenden Report: 'Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution'.

(3) Statistics cited by Matthews give 8 women imprisoned for non-payment of fines in 1982, compared to 173 women in 1983.

(4) Although, ironically, legal brothels have from time to time been recommended by some Birmingham Councillors as a solution to prostitution in Balsall Heath. Its pertinent to note also that since undertaking this research, the city council has looked at prostitution as part of its Community Safety Strategy and produced a number of suggestions which are currently being debated.

(5) Helen Jones was director of the SAFE Project. She was co-opted onto the B1 PCC in 1991 and was interviewed for this research in May 1992.

(6) The SAFE Project was sponsored by the Regional Health Authority to carry out research on the risks of HIV/AIDs transmission by prostitutes and their clients, and to give health advice and free contraceptives to prostitutes. It works mainly in the Balsall Heath area.

(7) The St Paul's Project was a social education community project. In the late 1980s they mounted a "Better Balsall Heath" campaign in an attempt to improve the general environment.

(8) The validity of this police account can be challenged on several points. First there was the dubious practice of the police being willing to publicize allegations of AIDs without any medical evidence, thus contributing to the possible escalation of a moral health panic. Second, there was the implication that prostitutes spread AIDs. Kinnell's research (1989:13) found that it was the prostitutes themselves who were an important part of the health education programme on HIV/AIDs, since they tended to be better informed than their clients. 85-95% of sexual contacts involved the use of condoms. Third, there was the focus on street workers as the threat to spreading HIV/AIDs which was misleading. Kinnell's research found that street workers were more likely to practice and insist on safe sex than women working in other situations. Kinnell (ibid.,14) wrote:

The cost of commercial sex was higher in off-street locales. It is possible that both clients and prostitutes wrongly perceive expensive sex as being safer sex. Such misconceptions clearly need to be challenged.

If the police were really concerned about HIV/AIDS, then arguably they should have targetted off-street locations where higher-risk sexual activities take place. Fourth, there was the obvious concern for male clients rather than the women themselves. This reflected the double standards which exist around prostitution discussed in this chapter. The extrapolation that three women in Balsall Heath were putting at risks the health of thousands of men contributed little to increase public understanding of the transmission of HIV, but rather served to contribute to something of a moral panic about AIDS. .

(9) After Gray left the sub-division John Croft was appointed divisional Chief Superintendent. At a meeting of the B1 PCC he promised to maintain the police pressure on prostitution. This officer was particularly significant as he was moved to the division as a demotion following his highly criticised role in the disbanding of the Serious Crime Squad. One B1 lay member who had been involved in management training for the police, believed that Croft was having to redeem himself, and it could be argued that backing public operations against an easy target like street sex working would bring results that would improve his personal standing within the Police Force.

(10) In July 1992 a report on the findings of this research was sent to each PCC studied. I was invited to attend a meeting of the B1 PCC in October 1992 to speak to this report. At that meeting Birmingham City Council's suggestion of a 'zone of toleration' was raised. The senior police officer present was totally opposed to such a scheme. In the end one is led to conclude that the police prefer the current situation - perhaps because it leaves them in control?

(11) Their community newspaper, The Heathan, was used in this research and also cited by McLeod in her study.

(12) Of course, black people - Asian and African-Caribbean - were also involved in prostitution - as sex workers, clients, pimps, pones and brothel keepers.

CHAPTER 8

(1) 'Area' refers to the constituency boundary within which local authority departments work in Birmingham. 'Sub-division' refers to the policing boundary. These two do not coincide, and this poses its own problems for inter-agency work.

(2) Situational crime prevention focuses on physical security measures such as locks, bolts, burglar alarms. It can also encompass environmental improvements such as street lighting, improved security in car parks and so on. Social crime prevention emphasises the social causes of crime and acknowledges that crime prevention requires long-term educational, social initiatives. In Birmingham it is concerned with the delivery of local authority services and personal safety.

(3) Neighbourhood Watch is a community-based crime prevention initiative in which local residents are encouraged to "watch out for and report suspicious incidents to the police" (Bennett, 1989: 139). It can also involve situational crime prevention measures with discounts for locks and bolts. On the D3 sub-division there was a highly structured network of NW schemes, and NW co-ordinators formed a significant proportion of the D3 PCC lay membership. For example, at the February 1991 meeting nine out of 22 lay representatives were from NW schemes.

(4) Source of data: Erdington Community Development Strategy 1991/92. Report to Birmingham City Council, department of Recreation and Community Services, 1991.

(5) These three linkages were developed from an analysis of interviews with D3 PCC members - where they were the most frequently cited relationships between individuals and organisations. This was confirmed by observations at meetings and a scrutiny of the minutes of past meetings. This preliminary analysis was then checked back with two key informants - Lauren Irwin and Inspector Black who verified my identification of the three links.

(6) 'Top influential' was defined as a pool from which people were drawn during periods of community struggle or change. 'Key influential' was someone who maintained social relationships in the community power structure.

(7) In the case of Bernard Trotter, the CDO on C3, he was less active in initiating projects. His attendance at PCC meetings was on a similar basis to that of Lauren Irwin, and he also chaired the C3 CPP, but his role was generally more administrative compared to Lorna Hart's level of activity.

(8) This also explains the incorporation of crime prevention as one of the aims of consultation in Section 106, P.A.C.E., 1984.

(9) West Midlands Police have a three year strategy, of which the main objective is to provide 'quality of service'. Several senior officers interviewed stressed the usefulness of PCCs in giving them feedback as to whether or not they were achieving this objective.

(10) This was true of all four PCCs studied for this thesis. When police officers presented sub-divisional crime statistics

at meetings, lay members generally focussed on house burglary and car theft for further discussion. Of course, these are crimes which particularly affect individuals and their families, and for which they have recently had to pay heavily through increased insurance costs.

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 Appendix A - 'Constitution'
 Appendix B - 'Guidance Notes to Constitution'
 Birmingham

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APPENDIX 1

POLICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS - OBSERVATION SHEET

PCC.....
DATE.....

PLACE.....

VENUE Access:
 Lighting:
 Signs re meeting:
 Room:

PRE-MEETING formal/informal:
 refreshments:

LAYOUT OF ROOM FOR MEETING

ATTENDANCE Total present:

police		M		F		public
uniform/non-unif.	B	W	B	W	B	W

Councillors

ATMOSPHERE
V. formal _____ informal

CHAIRING

Strong _____ weak

Who is in control? police chair members

Main items of business:

Issues raised:

By whom?

Attitude of police (body language + verbal/non-verbal signals):
defensive/responsive/listening/fatalistic/blaming/other
comments:

Are the police challenged? By whom?
What issues?

Evidence of consultation (e.g. What do you think? Has the
committee any suggestions? What should we do?)
On what issues?

POLICE REPORT

Handouts?

Data? (explained?)

OTHER COMMENTS

APPENDIX 2

POLICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name.....
Organisation represented.....
Place of interview.....Date.....
PCC..... Confirm letter.....
Position on PCC.....

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. The interview will last about one hour, so we should finish by..... is this alright?

I'd like to tape it - do you mind?
Everything you say will be treated with confidence.

What I want to do is work through some open-ended questions to focus the discussion.

Q1. Tell me how you first came to be involved with the PCC?
What do you think you are able to contribute to the PCC?
(ie why do you go?)

Q2. What do you think are the strengths of the PCC?
(prompt - what's been the most interesting/lively/best meeting you've attended? Why was that?)

That's the strengths - what about any weaknesses?
What is the worst meeting you've ever attended?

Q3. Is there anything that could be done to improve the committee?
(prompt - its membership? format of meetings? venue?)

Q4. Why do you stay on the committee?
What do you see as the most beneficial aspect of being on the PCC?

Q5. Thinking about the area in B'ham that this committee covers, have there been any particular policing incidents/issues in the past 12 months that have cause you concern or been brought to your attention?
Has the PCC played any part in resolving this?
What happened?
How do you feel about the outcome?

- Q6. Do you think the PCC has any effect on police/public relations?
Why is this?
Any specific examples?
- Q7. Do you have any other contact with the police/public - either formal or informal?
How does that compare with the PCC?
- Q8. You represent on the PCC - do you have to report back to them in any way?
How does that work?

CHECK TIME

We have minutes left - are there any more comments/points you would like to make?

Is there any aspect of the PCC that I haven't asked about that you would like to comment on?

Finally, is there anyone else you think it would be useful for me to talk to?

Thanks again for your time.

Thank you letter sent.....