

Police Studies: Traditional Perspectives

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This chapter provides an overview of the main theoretical perspectives that constitute the backbone of Anglo-American police scholarship. As was noted in the previous chapter, the first book-length sociological study of the police by Michael Banton was not published until 1964. Hence, sociological analysis had a marginal presence in initial discussions about shifts and changes in initial post-war policing. However, the socio-economic, cultural and political transformations that convulsed Western democratic societies from the 1960s onwards created a fertile terrain for the development of a sociologically informed police scholarship (see, Sherman, 1974). The 1960s were marked by social and political unrest, urban riots, new social problems, the emergence of radical protest movements, political violence and the process of de-subordination. The police was the state institution that stood at the frontline of these transformations. Official reports from that time concluded that policing this 'restless society', characterized as it was by escalating crime, disorder and fear of crime, would require new methods of recruitment and training, organizational reform and the rethinking of operational philosophies and practice. Hence, the gateway was opened for a generation of researchers to interrogate the role of the police in contemporary Western society. In so doing they generated: sociological; Marxist administrative and left realist perspectives on the police and policework. These are the approaches that this chapter will examine in detail.

Sociological perspectives: policing society

Symbolic interactionist perspectives were crucial for the development of police studies. They foregrounded the question of how deviance is produced by the

defining agencies such as the police and how conformity to social rules and norms is secured by these agencies. They also helped to deconstruct dominant conceptualizations of the problem of crime by arguing that crime can never be an absolutely known 'fact' because its existence depends on a series of transactions between rule makers, rule enforcers and rule violators.

They also threw light on the core concept of 'deviance'. For instance, for one key interactionist, Howard Becker (1963, p. 14) deviance is not 'a quality that lies in behaviour itself, but in the *interactions* between the person who commits an act and those who respond to it'. The police are primary 'rule enforcers' in this moral enterprise who must justify their work and win the respect of those they deal with. In validating their work, the police are required to demonstrate that the rules they enforce have some meaning and that they can enforce them. They also have a vested interest in amplifying the significance of these problems. If necessary, police officers must coerce respect from the public. This means that an individual 'may be labelled as deviant not because he has actually broken a rule, but because he has shown disrespect to the enforcer of the rule' (Becker, 1963, p. 158). Officers must also decide what rules to enforce and who to label and frequently focus on those with the least power to respond.

The first wave of ethnographic Anglo-American police research, carried out by Bittner, Manning, Niederhoffer, van Maanen, Reiss, Muir, Wilson, Brown, and Rubenstein in the US and Cain, Punch, Chatterton and Holdaway in the UK, represented part of the shift of the analytical focus from the offender to the agents of social control. This utilized observational methods to access the process of becoming a police officer, the 'inner realities of organizational life', the characteristics of the police work group and the determinants of officer interactions and relationships with citizens. The focus was on frontline urban patrol work because this was where all officers, irrespective of rank, served their apprenticeship and the majority would spend their working lives. Accessing the behind closed doors world of the patrol officer was deemed to be of vital importance because it would provide an understanding of the wider aspects of the police organization and its relationship with the criminal justice system. Westley and Banton had already established that police power is predicated on their role as 'gatekeepers' to the rest of the system.

Although there were differences in emphasis and actual methodological approach, this body of research established that only 'thick description' could 'tap that initial encounter on the streets, or in a private dwelling, with all its implications for the individual citizen concerned and for his potential passage through the criminal justice system' (Punch, 1979, p. 4; see also Van Maanen, 1973; Manning and Van Maanen, 1978, p. 1-10; Punch, 1993, Holdaway, 1983, pp. 15-16). The importance of recording, in an empathetic manner, the contradictory realities of 'round-the-clock' policework is accounted for by Punch vividly:

Policemen work at the nerve-edge of society where control is exercised, where sanctions are applied, and where crises are resolved. They inhabit profane

areas of society, where good citizens fear to tread, and face situations where the buck can no longer be passed on. Encounters become instant morality plays with the abstract values of our civilization ... being daily redefined in unedifying and irresolute conflicts accompanied by blood, blasphemy and violence. The magic and the mundane, the sacred and the profane mingle in policework into a blend irresistible to the hackneyed plots of television serials and, less conspicuously, into rich and fruitful material for the study of social interaction. (1979, p. 17)

Researchers confirmed that, as in most public bureaucracies, police agencies are 'multiple reality' organizations. The formal organizational map characterizes the police department as a quasi-military hierarchical institution with standardized operational procedures and practices which is territorially structured and imposes discipline through strict regulations and ordinances. However, research indicated that the organizational form enclosing policework was in certain important respects a 'symbolic' or 'mock' bureaucracy. Manning (1978, p. 65) argued that the paramilitary command structure and 'the elaborate militarism of insignia and public rhetoric tend to mystify the basic fact that the control of policework lies in the hands of the lowest functionaries'. Organizational rules and regulations were in fact ambiguous and negotiable and there was little effective managerial control over the actual work practices of rank and file officers. Although police officers are formally required to do things 'by the book', researchers established that once they left the station there was considerable room for improvisation.

The production of street policing

Ethnographic research established that, from the officer's perspective, policework was a complicated activity because discretion had to be exercised as to whether in any given situation a criminal or disorderly act has taken, or is taking, place. In essence, the police must transform the precepts of criminal law into criminal law 'in action'. The low visibility of police work, with little direct supervision or monitoring by senior officers, means that patrol officers have considerable operational discretion regarding the 'when, how, where and who' to monitor, stop, search, arrest, charge or seize goods from and whether to use force. And of course the initial gate-keeping decision determines, to a significant degree, whether and how a member of the public will subsequently be processed by the criminal justice system. Equally importantly, formal action draws officers into a bureau-legal process that includes case construction and presentation, and organizational and judicial review.

Researchers noted how officers routinely ignored a substantial number of offences or potential offences or responded to situations informally. Petty legal infringements, crimes where the victim declines to make a formal complaint, and certain violations of the law where the officer suspects that there is insufficient evidence to guarantee a conviction may generate an action other than

arrest. Although the widest exercise of discretion is more likely in routine street encounters involving relatively minor crimes and misdemeanours, serious criminal behaviour may also result in discretionary decisions not to make an arrest. Hence, as Wilson (1968, p. 203) noted, the police officer is the *source* of the criminal law and is required to decide 'which laws to enforce formally (by an arrest), which to enforce informally (by imposing a settlement on the spot or by punishing an offender without arresting him), and which not to enforce at all. This discretion is essential to the maintenance of a minimum of public respect for the police'.

For Wilson (1968) police discretion was an inescapable aspect of policing for four reasons.

- First, it is not possible for police officers to notice every infraction.
- Second, although the law lays down universal principles, *particular* situations and *specific* circumstances must be interpreted and defined by the police officer 'on the spot' before a principle can be enforced.
- Third, police officers can very often obtain information on serious crimes by overlooking minor infractions of the law.
- Finally, public opinion would not sanction the full enforcement of all laws all of the time.

Judicial rather than administrative in nature, the discovery of 'police discretion' gave rise to other concerns about officers abusing or exceeding their authority, using, for example, their stop, search and arrest powers on the basis of personal prejudice, moral indignation, loss of temper or to make the work more interesting. The discretionary nature of policework also provided an explanatory starting point for understanding the prevalence of police misconduct and corruption.

The multifaceted nature of policework

Thinking about the role of the police in crime control can conjure up images of officers on the beat, deterring criminals and reassuring the public; police vehicles rushing through city streets to stop crimes in progress, and of detectives investigating serious crimes, arresting offenders, and activating the criminal justice system. Despite the central position of this 'cops and robbers' model in both police culture and the public imagination, ethnographic researchers confirmed that the exact nature and scope of police activity is in fact difficult to define and, for the most part, unrelated to law enforcement and criminal detection. As Manning (1977, pp. 158–9) argues normal policework 'is boring, tiresome, sometimes dirty, sometimes technically demanding but it is rarely dangerous'. However, it is the infrequent hot pursuit, gun battle, drug bust, or dramatic arrest of a wanted criminal that has been 'seized upon by the police and played up by the public. The public's response has been to demand even

more dramatic crook catching and crime prevention, and this demand for arrests has been converted into an index for measuring how well the police accomplish their tasks' (Manning, 1977, pp. 158-9).

Confirming Banton's findings, far more time is spent 'keeping the peace', maintaining order and regulating public conduct on the beat. Police officers are expected to handle a vast, complex range of problems and predicaments because no other means has been found to resolve them. Thus, the two defining characteristics of policework are that it is (a) not crime/law enforcement but social service related and (b) reactive, dealing with the crime after the fact, rather than proactive. It was this that originally led Punch to define the police as a secret round-the-clock social service expected to arrive 'when a crisis is happening' and the public requires a visible, authoritative intervention (Punch, 1979, p. 107). Bittner (1970, pp. 40-1) argued that members of the public 'call the cops', rather than other agencies because they are mandated by society to use force. Whatever tasks the police are called upon by citizens to undertake 'police intervention means above all making use of the capacity and authority to overpower resistance to an attempted solution in the natural habitat of the problem'. The involvement of police officers projects the message:

... that force may be, and may have to be, used to achieve a desired objective. Police procedure is defined by the feature that it may not be opposed in its course, and that force can be used if it is opposed. This is what the existence of the police makes available to society. Accordingly the question 'What are policemen supposed to do?' is almost completely identical with the question 'What kinds of situation require remedies that are non-negotiably coercive ...' (Bittner, 1970, pp. 40-1)

Goldstein (1977) provided a succinct list of the policing tasks that require the potential application of 'non-negotiable force': regulating conduct that is threatening to life and property; aiding individuals who are in danger of physical harm; protecting the constitutional right to free speech and assembly and freedom of movement; assisting those in need of care and protection: conflict resolution and peacekeeping; and creating and maintaining public security. Researchers also noted that the ambivalence surrounding the police task in a liberal democracy needed to be formally acknowledged because it had implications for how policing should be organized, delivered and evaluated. One important way to realize this was through impression management strategies to 'dramatize the appearance of [police] control' (Manning, 1977).

Police culture

These early sociological police studies established that the rituals associated with putting on a blue uniform requires the recruit to cross the threshold and become part of a collective 'police culture'. For Manning, (1995, p. 472), this culture is defined as the 'accepted practices, rules and principles of conduct

that are situationally applied and generalized rationales and beliefs'. Under the guidance of experienced officers, 'rookies' are moved from 'knowing how' to 'learning by doing' via the craft of policework, the territorial structures, working rules, pace of work and folklore of a particular force, division, and immediate peer group. Researchers noted how it was in the canteen and in the patrol car, in the locker room, in the quiet moments of the shift and during off-duty socializing that 'rookies' learn about the realities of 'the job', the street wise tricks of the trade, the 'easing' behaviour and the common-sense 'recipes' for dealing with and 'solving' highly problematic organizational and highly emotionally charged public situations. The 'togetherness' forged through this particularly strong version of occupational socialization produces a distinctive oppositional mentality with negative and defensive views common to majority of rank and file police officers. Gradually, officers become part of an institutionally sanctioned community of craft, tradition and memory. (Manning, 1995)

Because of the ever-present possibility of being abused, threatened, provoked and physically attacked, police officers become hyper-sensitive to and suspicious of the routine aspects of daily life. The experienced, streetwise beat officer is alert to 'signals' that something might not be right. Police officers, made distrustful by experience, treat incidents and encounters with heightened vigilance. Skolnick also established that officers' highly developed sense of caution and suspicion worked to produce the notion of the 'symbolic assailant'. Officers, because their work requires them to be alert to the possibility of violence develop 'a perceptual shorthand to identify certain kinds of people as symbolic assailants, that is as persons whose gestures, language and attire that the policeman has come to recognise as a prelude to violence' (Skolnick, 1966, p. 266).

And as Westley (1951, 1953, 1964, 1970) had confirmed, many urban police officers, given the everyday realities of their 'dirty work' environment, develop a cynical perspective, losing faith in people, society, their senior officers and eventually the purpose of the job. According to Neiderhoffer (1967, p. 9), in their Hobbesian view, the world becomes 'a jungle' in which crime, corruption, complexities and brutality are normal features of the terrain. Added to this, the work of the police, as was mentioned above, frequently appears to be an illusory method of controlling crime. Officers have to cope with criminals who flaunt their protection from the criminal law and confront gangs of youths on housing estates and city centre streets who have no respect for the police. They also complain about being humiliated as a result of aggressive and unfair cross-examination by 'bent' or 'slick' lawyers and let down by incompetent prosecutors, gullible juries and out-of-touch judges (Graef, 1989; Young, 1991, 1993). Handcuffed from doing policework by liberal politicians and anti-police pressure groups, the idea that they are enforcing criminal justice and upholding the rule of law becomes a joke. It is this that underpins the development of an authoritarian political perspective on criminal justice and law and order.

Another important source of police officers' cynicism is the awareness that others may wish to manipulate or control their decision-making powers and authority. Officer views of 'the public' are influenced by contact not with the average law-abiding citizen but experience of 'heavy users' of police services (willingly or unwillingly). Wilson (1968) noted that when the police arrive 'to look for a prowler, examine a loss, or stop a fight, the victim and suspect are agitated, fearful, even impassioned'. However, experienced police officers 'have seen it all before and they have to distrust victim accounts (to say nothing of suspect explanations) of what happened. Instead of offering sympathy and immediately taking the victim's side, the police may seem cool, suspicious, or disinterested because they have learned that 'victims' often turn out not to have been victimized at all - the 'stolen' TV set never existed or was lost, loaned to a friend, or hidden because payments were overdue; the 'assault' was in fact a fight which the 'victim' started but was unable to finish' (Wilson, 1968, pp. 24-5).

Researchers also noted the hostile reaction of officers to those they believe to be defiant, disrespectful or questioning their authority. The individual who does not move away when ordered to do so, who asserts that she or he knows their rights, or who challenges a police officer physically is asking for trouble (Reiss, 1972, p. 58). When police officers speak of their authority, Wilson (1968) argues, they mean the right to ask questions, obtain a reply and have orders obeyed. When officers cannot exercise authority by their very presence or psychological advantage, they may be called on to demonstrate who exactly is in control. For some, says Wilson, physical size and/or a confident attitude may suffice. However, other officers with an 'eye for an eye' mentality will resort to more persuasive tactics. This explains why the discourse of violence is central to the institutional culture, even though it was rare for officers to experience actual violence. As Smith and Gray (1985, p. 369) noted, the defining meaning of policework for the majority of officers 'is the exercise of authority, and force (rather than knowledge or understanding) is for them the main *symbol* of authority and power, even if they actually impose their authority in other ways'.

Police officers also experience a process of social isolation and *depersonalization*. They expect to be viewed by many members of the public as uniforms rather than as individuals and to be routinely called 'pigs' and 'the filth' by some sections of society. In order to do their job, officers must in turn depersonalize the public, categorizing them into those deemed to be deserving of police help and the 'others', the 'toe-rags', 'slags', 'scrotes', 'scum' and 'animals'. Researchers argue that in certain important respects, these highly moralistic 'we and they' stereotypes drive the day-to-day nature and pattern of policework (see Smith and Gray, 1985; Young, 1991, 1993) and even structured views of supervisors and senior management. This stereotyping is directly related to the social/sturtification Racial/ethnic/religious of a given society.

These cultural traits were found to have a critical role to play in understanding the 'invitational edges' of police deviance and malpractice. 'Blue coated crime' was not just an individual exceptional matter but intimately related to both the police mandate and the police culture. Manning (1977) found resistance to the internal rules to 'supervise, guide, sanction and alter behaviour'. Skolnick (1966) argued that the only way that police officers could 'resolve' the inevitable conflict between demands for high productivity and due process was by resorting to extra-legal practices. Because procedural violations can lead to criminal charges, civil actions, complaints investigations, reprimands, lost cases, demotion or dismissal, officers learn to watch their backs, say nothing and control the flow of information to supervisors. As a result, the strength of the culture is a consequence of the unique characteristics and conflicting pressures of policework.

The recusant culture also shields officers from questioning or investigating their decisions and actions. Trust and allegiance are 'not given to an abstracted set of legal norms, posited organizational structure or quasi-political and cynically defined 'professionalism', but to one's peers, those with whom the joy, drudgery, satisfactions and chaos of the streets are shared' (Manning, 1978, p. 65). When necessary, the rank and file had the power to erect a 'blue wall' of silence and resistance against both supervisory officers and outsiders - particularly those with the power to challenge their version of reality, voice criticism or advocate change. Secrecy shields the shared definition of situations, group solidarity and an ever-alert 'grapevine' provides officers with the means to 'close ranks' against those officers who are deviant or different and therefore not to be trusted. Officers contemplating 'whistle blowing' on malpractice are aware that, if they are found out, they will face an isolated and vulnerable working life.

Ethnographic studies noted how the assertive features of police culture generates many pernicious problems for the organization. The negative attitudes of officers towards the public in general and particular social and ethnic groups are the source of many unnecessarily conflictual and counter-productive street encounters. The police culture also provides officers with the capacity to resist or 're-script' any 'top-down' modernization or 'rule-tightening' initiative that does not correspond to the 'lived realities' of policing, or will not 'action' policies that blur the distinction between 'real' policework ('feeling collars' and 'getting figures') and 'rubbish' or 'dead-end' community work (the rest) and/or expands organizational control over officers' operational autonomy. In its strongest version it might be more accurate to discuss a 'police ideology' rather than a 'police culture'.

Subsequent insider accounts that resulted from 'riding the cruisers' and 'walking the beat' deployed and developed the conceptual insights of the first generation of police researchers. As a result, we have been provided with increasingly sophisticated, nuanced, dynamic understandings of the ambiguous nature of the police mandate; how and why police officers and citizens

encounter and interact with each other; when, why and with what effect do officers choose not to enforce the law; the degree to which policework is constrained by the organizational and territorial working environment; and the connection between officer attitudes and situational behaviour. In the process, the urban police officer was further humanized as someone with an extremely complex job working in very difficult set of circumstances.

More recent research has deepened our understanding of the dynamics of occupational socialization and functioning of police culture. It established that there are cultural differences within the organization, which are most evident in the difference between 'street cops' and 'management cops'; college graduates and old school cops; detective and uniformed officers; officers attached to specialist operational units and neighbourhood-based officers, etc. Researchers found that there is also space for officers to develop their own – progressive and reactionary – professional identity and policing style. Moreover, an understanding of virtually any aspect of police culture is limited to the extent that it does not work through how gender, race and sexuality define and structure police subjectivities and how each generation of officers both re-enacts police culture and renews it at the same time. A new concern is the new antagonistic 'copper versus copper' dynamics that are now playing out within police forces (for an overview see Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999; Praoline, 2003; Crank, 2004). This is something we will return to in Chapter 6.

According to Chan (1997) further theoretical innovation is necessary to address the complexities that have engulfed the term 'police culture'. Using Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'habitus', she argues that police practice should be understood 'in terms of the interaction between specific structural conditions of policework (the field) and the cultural knowledge accumulated by police officers which integrates past experiences (habitus)'. Her model 'emphasizes the active role played by police actors in developing, reinforcing, resisting or transforming cultural knowledge and institutionalized practice' (Chan, 1997, p. 225).

However, ethnographic studies have been subject to trenchant critique. For instance, Brogden et al. (1988, p. 45) noted that there are built-in methodological limitations. For them, the 'naturalistic' value of accessing the inside world of the police officer is offset by the fact that:

Everything depends on how comprehensive that social world can be revealed by participation and observation alone. Two sorts of errors become possible: that resulting from participants successfully concealing aspects of their world from the researcher; and that resulting from the inability to take into account unobserved processes, beyond the immediate world under observation, that nevertheless affect the social world being studied.

The construction of the uniformed beat officer as the basis for sociological research and theoretical understanding of 'the police' obscures 'how the law,

formal organizational policy or senior officers impinge on this world' (Brogden et al., 1988, p. 45). In an early critique, Galliher (1971) argued that 'cop-sided' insider studies were unable to make the conceptual connections between policing and the structural features of advanced capitalist societies. The 'surrender' of the researchers to the police culture meant that they ignored or downplayed the variable of 'class' in their analysis of police culture and policework. If class was included, they would have to address the fact that the core function of the police is to control the poor and minority ethnic groups:

... in any way necessary while other citizens can continue to believe this is a free, democratic society and yet have their property protected at the same time. In fact, the dirty work of policing American slums is so well-hidden from the middle classes that even middle class sociologists fail to understand its meaning and function, the function being the maintenance of a highly economically stratified and racist society. (Galliher, 1971, p. 316)

He went on to question the research findings concerning police autonomy, arguing that 'it is incredible to think that social scientists would believe that a highly stratified society would allow lower class or marginally middle class people such as the police to control major social policy' (Galliher, 1971, p. 317). Allied to this was an inexplicable absence of research on police officer's position in the class structure and the role of the collective organizations that represent the interests of police officers.

For reasons that will become apparent in the next chapter, Johnston (1992) provides us with another set of problems inherent in the ethnographic approach to policework. He argued that, despite the possibilities, the focus of interactionist police research was 'disappointingly narrow' due to the dominant influences that had 'distorted' the discipline's development. There was an inexplicable fetishization of 'the blue uniform' to the exclusion of a multitude of private security companies and voluntary agencies involved in 'policing' activities. And within this there was a tendency to concentrate on the activities and attitudes of front-line personnel. This 'eyes down' or 'street level' approach to police research 'addresses a field with a limited spatial range and, in consequence, generates more and more data with less and less scope' (Johnston, 1992, p. 186). The end result was to 'construct a sociology which, although producing an encyclopedic knowledge of the ins and outs of the patrol function, excludes other key areas of policing activity from serious consideration. In short, we come to know more and more about less and less' (Johnston, 1992, p. 186).

The first wave of ethnographic studies, with phenomenological tendencies, were unwelcome to police administrators because they de-mystified a number of problematic issues concerning policework, including the reality that police capacity to control crime is limited to symbolic gestures, police officers 'make' crime and deviance rather than control or suppress it; arrest is a selective process dependent on situational factors and suspect characteristics rather

than the 'facts' of crime; crime statistics are an organizational construction; policing styles can amplify deviance deviation from due process is integral to getting the job done; and the 'dial-a-cop' police bureaucracy has limited control over the self-governing rank and file culture. In addition, because they empathized with the dilemmas of rank and file officers, researches offered little in the way of practical help to: control street level policing practices; structure officer discretion; improve the effectiveness of police patrol activities; and/or develop positive relations between the police and the public. Consequently, the 'beyond bureaucracy' ethnographic research by the lone sociologist has been increasingly replaced by controlled observations by policy-oriented research teams: recording the working practices of large samples of police officers and testing and surveying the psychological attitudes of police officers. These applied studies are harnessed to a 'what works' administrative police studies framework. As a result, some of the most 'realistic' contemporary insider accounts of policing from a rank and file perspective are now provided not by ethnographers but by investigative journalists, documentary makers, ex-police officer's and of course police procedural novelists and television and film companies.

Marxist perspectives: policing capitalist society

Paul Chevigny's 1969 book, *Police Power: Police Abuses in New York City*, focused attention on 'the routine denials of due process of law' by false arrest, framing suspects, unlawful search and seizure, systematic harassment, violence and 'summary punishment' that were a routine feature of street encounters between police officers and citizens. Chevigny argued that police abuse was not just patterned and normal but political. For the powerful, the police are vital because they need an agency to keep society running smoothly and as a result are willing to turn a blind eye to police criminality. The police have been given the mandate to construct a criminal class and criminal threat that justifies the use of existing legislation and new legislation. However, police practices are also counterproductive and create contempt for authority. The criminal justice system within which the police work 'is evil, for the simplest of reasons: because it injures people and destroys their respect for the legal process. It is not for nothing that ghetto people have chosen police abuses as symbols of oppression; it is because they actually are acts of oppression' (Chevigny, 1969, p. 283). Following Chevigny, during the 1970s Marxist and critical Anglo-American criminologists sought to analyse the role of the police in advanced capitalist societies (Platt, 1971; Platt and Cooper, 1974, Takagi 1974, Bunyan, 1977; Cain, 1977, 1979. Ackroyd et al., 1977; Quinney, 1977; Bowden, 1978; Hall et al., 1978: Thompson, 1980). These studies were explicitly concerned with analysing police-state-class relationships rather than 'the police' as such. This marked a radical departure from and challenge to ethnographic police perspectives.

In 1975 the Center for Research on Criminal Justice at Berkeley, University of California published *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove*. It expanded upon the Marxist theorizing laid out by Takagi and by Platt and Cooper et al. to combine historical studies of the origins and functions of the nineteenth-century police and the increasingly political role of the police in America in the 1960s and 1970s. A particular concern was the police role in the criminalization of political protest, for example, against anti-Vietnam demonstrators, the civil rights movement, the Black Panthers and the Weathermen. This indicated that in the 1970s the police would become 'a formidable and increasingly dangerous institution of oppression' and criminalization (1975, p. 184). As the USA moved rapidly from a liberal democratic state to what was defined as a 'garrison state', coercive policing would increasingly span both counter-insurgency work abroad and the pacification of the domestic ghettos. The demand for sophisticated public order weaponry and technologies and crowd control techniques would also generate a lucrative police-industrial marketplace.

This emerging Marxist perspective argued that critical criminologists would have to, as a matter of political urgency, theorize the precise nature of the relationship between the police and this new state formation. The starting point was the belief that underneath the illusion of consent the core function of the police was to enforce class, racial, cultural and sexual inequalities. Platt (1975, p. 12) pointed to the historical evidence that suggested that the police 'were not created to serve 'society' or the 'people', but to serve *some* parts of society and *some* people at the expense of others'. The 'social service' and 'peace keeping' functions ideologically mystified the true function of the police: this 'velvet glove' had been deliberately constructed to mask the construction of an 'iron fist'. As the economic and social crisis in the USA and other western societies deepened, we would witness the unmasking of a repressive, militarized policing apparatus and punitive control culture which would be used to regulate surplus populations, suppress cultural dissent and subdue political resistance.

The political police

In the UK, Marxist writers such as Bunyan, Bowden and Cain and State Research began to document the changing nature of British policing in a similar manner. The underlying premise was that the police are grounded in and structured by the state-class relations that encase them at particular historical moments. As British capitalism entered a period of crisis, the post-war democratic Keynesian consensus, and accompanying legitimating social welfare programmes, was breaking apart. This would have profound implications for the police as the core state agency mandated to maintain socio-economic and political order. The most apparent signs were the surfacing of the political police and security agencies and the politicization of the public policing. In so

doing these writers created an understanding of the police and policing that was connected to the changing governmental capacities of the British state.

In 1977 Maureen Cain argued that ethnographic perspectives, with their focus on uniformed police work, were increasingly irrelevant to the task of understanding the changing nature of British policing. There was, most notably for Cain, no reference to those 'deep state' political police agencies that were mandated to protect national security interests:

They have ignored them *theoretically* because they were constrained to ignore them empirically. Thus 'the police' have been presented as a more or less homogenous structure, divided internally only by dominant preoccupation with traffic, juveniles, criminal investigation or just plain patrolling. That would not matter if one could simply add on other functions – internal intelligence gathering, control of overseas spy operations, counter revolutionary preparations and so on – but one cannot. For to add on these extra tasks transforms the equation. (Cain, 1977, p. 162)

Others, such as Bunyon (1977) and E.P. Thompson (1980), detailed how political policing and security agencies such as MI5 and MI6 'normally deeply concealed within the strategic centres of the state' along with chief police officers were increasingly intervening in the nation's political affairs. As with the US Marxists, there was the embryonic idea that, in an attempt to manage social conflict and dissent, authoritarian or law and order ideologies were taking hold *within* the core control agencies of the liberal democratic state.

Thompson (1980) noted the willingness of chief police officers to align themselves publicly with authoritarian political discourse. He argued that it is in the nature of the police to be attracted towards 'authoritarian and statist ideologies' and to press for more resources and powers. These tendencies and demands are normally checked by the constitutional requirements of the liberal democratic society. However, Thompson felt that the police and security services were increasingly pushing at an open door. For instance, in November 1973 Sir Robert Mark, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, had used the high-profile BBC Dimpleby Lecture to make a sweeping attack on the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system and the damaging effect that corrupt criminal lawyers were having on the criminal justice process and police credibility (see Mark, 1977, p. 118). He also declared that 'we who are the anvil on which society beats out its problems and abrasions of social inequality, racial prejudice, weak laws and ineffective legislation should not be inhibited from expressing our views, whether critical or not'. His forthright views on crooked criminal lawyers generated a news-media storm (see Mark, 1979; Chibnall, 1977). This lecture represented the first of a series of high profile interventions on 'law and order' issues by a generation of political police chiefs (see Reiner, 1991; McLaughlin, 1994; Wall, 1998; Savage and Chapman, and Cope, 2000; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). For (Thompson, pp. 200–1) what was alarming about these developments was:

... the very powerful [police] public relations operation which disseminates these notions as an authorized, consensual view – an operation carried on out of our own taxes, which presses its spokesmen forward on every occasion upon the media, which lobbies inquiries and Royal Commissions constantly pressing for larger powers, which bullies weak Home Secretaries ... which reproves magistrates for lenient sentencing; which announces unashamedly that the police are in the regular practice of breaking judges rules when interrogating suspects; which slanders unnamed lawyers and lampoons libertarian organizations; which tells judges how they are to interpret the law and which justifies the invasion of the citizens' privacy and the accumulation of prejudicial and inaccurate records ... the notion that we should be instructed as to what value we are to put on freedom and democracy, and be instructed by the police. And that the police are to be seen as, somehow, for themselves, rather than as servants to us, so that we are to be instructed by the police as to what is to be our place.

Policing the crisis of social democracy

The most comprehensive and influential elaboration of the 'authoritarian police' thesis can be found in Hall et al.'s (1978) *Policing the Crisis*. This complicated, wide-ranging book was the first cultural analysis of the relationship between crime, policing and the state in the context of the shift towards an authoritarian consensus. As many commentators have noted, *Policing the Crisis* is analytically constructed from concepts and ideas gleaned from new deviancy theory, news-making studies of 'moral panics' and 'crime waves' and a Marxist analysis of 'the state' derived from the work of Althusser, Poulantzas and Gramsci. (see Sumner, 1981)

The empirical reference point for the book is how the 'moral panic' about 'mugging' came to define political debates about law and order in the 1970s. The intention of Hall et al., (1978, p. vii) was to go 'beyond the label to the contradictory social context which is mystifyingly reflected in it'. What was of particular interest was how from the very beginning news-media reportage of this particular crime was 'shadowed by the theme of race' and why this particular 'crime' rapidly acquired such powerful racial connotations in the official and public imagination. Everyone soon 'knew' that muggers were young black men and their victims were weak, vulnerable and white.

For Hall et al., the social and political reaction to 'mugging' was out of all proportion to the actual seriousness of the offence and the threat posed. They could find no reliable evidence to substantiate the 'mugging' crime wave claims made by police, judges, politicians, journalists and commentators. In order to understand the significance and importance of this particularly moral panic it was, they argued, necessary to locate it within the convulsions engulfing British society in the 1970s. This crisis was not just economic but a deeper crisis of governance – what they termed a 'crisis of hegemony' – as the

authority and legitimacy of the post-war social democratic welfare consensus collapsed. Manifestations of this crisis were to be found in the wave after wave of 'moral panics' that had engulfed Britain from the 1960s onwards. British society experienced major social dislocations through moral panics and in the 1970s the different concerns and panics began to weave a general image of Britain as an increasingly ungovernable society.

It is in this unsettled context that street crime and 'the mugger' achieved prominence. The moral panic about 'mugging' was not a rational well-founded reaction to an increase in violent crime but one of the most visible manifestations of the hegemonic crisis of the British state. As part of the reconstruction of the state, the ideological terrain was being re-shaped to manage the 'enemies within':

The state itself had become mobilized – sensitized to the emergence of the enemy in any of his manifold disguises; the repressive response is at the ready, quick to move in, moving formally, through the law, the police, administrative regulation, public censure, and at a developing speed. This is what we mean by the slow 'shift to control', the move towards a kind of closure in the apparatuses of state control and repression. The decisive mechanisms in the management of hegemonic control are regularly and routinely based in the apparatuses of constraint. (Hall et al., 1978, p. 278).

Through the potency of 'moral panics', and the accompanying demands for 'something to be done', public consent was being gathered together behind an authoritarian set of policy responses. The image of the 'mugger' – young, lawless and black – in combination with increasing images of the British inner city as 'urban black colonies' came to serve as 'the articulator of the crisis, as its ideological conductor'. Black, male youth came to epitomize all the social problems of the inner city: racial conflict, generational conflict, poverty, degeneration, crime, and violence. This segment of British society was the ideal scapegoat or folk devil because of how they responded to the structural situation they found themselves in. With no chance of employment, their life chances limited by their class position and racial discrimination, this group of young people was deeply alienated from white society. Their response was to opt for a means of survival which included street criminality and petty hustling and subcultural resistance.

A 'law and order' crackdown on black youth overlapped with a crackdown on the poor, the unemployed, the disadvantaged and those living in areas ravished by the crisis. Hence, the task of policing black youth was 'for all practical purposes, synonymous with the wider problem of policing the crisis' (Hall et al., 1978, p. 332). The key themes of 'race-crime-youth' operated as 'a mechanism for the construction of an authoritarian consensus, a conservative backlash: what we call the build up towards a 'soft' law and order society' (Hall et al., 1978, p. viii).

One agency – the police – had a crucial role to play in the state's move from a social democratic to an authoritarian mode of social control because crises 'have to be remedied, their worst effects contained or mitigated. They also have to be controlled. To put it crudely, they have to be *policed*' (Hall et al., 1978, p. 339). Hall et al., argued that the role played by the police in the mugging panic went largely unquestioned because the dominant news-media image was of a beleaguered 'thin blue line' mandated to uphold law and order. The police because they are relatively autonomous from the state can play a pro-active and innovatory role in the construction of moral panics. The crime statistics are police property and this ownership, in conjunction with their professional expertise as 'crime fighters', ensures that their 'primary definitions' and pronouncements are newsworthy and presented as definitive by a news-media who are largely dependent on them for information and access. In certain instances, the 'police view' can stand in for 'public opinion' as the authorised, legitimate, consensual viewpoint on any given issue. Consequently, the police have a central role to play in the media's construction of moral panics because they are in a position to identify the nature and seriousness of the crime problem, who the criminals are, who the victims are, and equally importantly *what should be done*. In essence, they are in possession of the 'raw material' required for the engineering of fully-fledged crime waves and moral panics and over-criminalization. The police are increasingly proactive in: (1) *defining* situations; (2) *selecting* targets; (3) *initiating* campaigns; (4) *signifying* their actions; and (5) *legitimizing* their actions (Hall et al., 1978, p. 52).

It is of course open to the police to distance themselves from 'crime waves' and 'moral panics' about crime by issuing disclaimers to the news-media and calming public fears. However, the organizational temptation is to amplify public anxieties and manipulate 'moral panics' because the police can benefit from them in terms of resources, empowerment, legitimacy and status. Hence, in the case of mugging, key police officers actively pronounced not only on the extent and nature of the problem but also on the solutions. The question is why?

Hall et al., argue that the police-society relationship was changing as a result of the policing task becoming more difficult. A combination of conflicting demands, the emergence of alternative cultural value systems, low morale, a sense of not being valued, de-subordination in the form of increased questioning of their authority resulted in the growth of 'a particular "mood" within the police, a mood characterized by a growing impatience, frustration and anger' (1978, p. 50). Police officers and their representative organizations were increasingly allying themselves with right-wing political forces in British society by pronouncing Britain to be on the edge of anarchy and demanding the resources and mandate to launch a decisive 'war against crime'.

At a mundane routine level, it was day-to-day relationships with black communities. which was a source of increasing frustration and discontent. The police had responsibility for 'controlling and containing the widespread disaffection among the black population, attempting to confine it to black areas, and

had 'heightened sensitivity to, and expectation of, black involvement in trouble, and by extension, "crime"' (Hall et al., 1978, p. 45). This locked rank and file officers into a conflictual set of relationships with black people because there had developed a 'deep and complex culture of resistance' in black communities. The resistance ranged from community campaigns against racist crime and controversial policing actions to threats of 'war in the ghetto' by more radical black groupings such as the Black Panthers. By the early 1970s the nature of the response to casual police harassment was changing: 'sharper, quicker, tougher - above all more organized' (1978, p. 331). The result was that without recourse to tough public order tactics, the police were in danger of losing control of certain neighbourhoods in the major conurbations.

For Hall et al. (1978) the mugging panic cannot be understood outside of the police belief that black youth were a potent threat not just to law and order but to *social* order. The police needed more autonomy and powers to deal with this problem population and the fact that they were actively engaged in a 'frightening' new strain of violent street crime provided the necessary pretext. The state let the police 'slip the leash' of constitutional control by mandating this agency to define the social and political problems of the inner cities as essentially criminal matters requiring a forceful response.

The outcome of this significant shift in police practices and philosophy was not just the over-racialization of street crime (and criminal victimization) but the over criminalization of a whole section of society. In addition, this community was defined as being undeserving of police protection with regard to criminal victimization. And, crucially, given that anyone who questioned the policing of black neighbourhoods was automatically condemned and labelled as anti-police, it was left to the police and black communities to fight out this intensifying war of attrition.

Published in 1978, *Policing the Crisis* warned of a very specific set of conflictual police-community outcomes if the state's authoritarian lurch continued. The moment of the 'authoritarian state' moved decidedly closer with the election of a 'free market, strong state' New Right government in 1979 with a mandate to restore law and order and dismantle the institutional framework of post-war social democratic Britain. The Thatcher government committed itself to enhancing the role of the police in order to do both. When the most serious anti-police riots for a century broke out in 1981 it looked as if the warnings of Hall et al., had been fulfilled. The after-shocks of the riots reverberated through police scholarship in the UK. Howard Becker's question of 'who's side are we on' took on a new relevance and the different answers resulted in a fundamental and irrevocable split between Marxist criminologists and other police scholars in relation to how to conceptualize the disturbances and the police and formulate a response. Marxist criminologists rejected the dominant idea that these were mindless, criminal riots - they were political 'uprisings', 'rebellions', 'insurrections' - black people had risen up in order to defend their communities against a racist and oppressive army

of occupation. The mask of consensual 'social service' policing had finally dropped and the police had willingly taken on the role of being the Praetorian guard of the New Right. Hall argued (1980, p. 6) that the police were 'willing and able, indeed anxious to impose the neglect of the state on the people ... and to provide the disciplinary means by which the poor and working people are made to bear the brunt of Mrs Thatcher's tough medicine.

The 'iron fist in the velvet glove'

Marxist police scholars viewed post-riot 'community policing' proposals by Lord Scarman (1981) as the authoritarian state's latest attempt to mask the shift to normalised paramilitary policing. 'Community policing' was defined as a complementary part of a 'totalising policing' initiative geared towards: persuading people to allow a seemingly benign police presence back into their communities; gathering community information on extremists and trouble-makers; co-opting other social agencies into the policing function because the police had lost their legitimacy. The attempted synchronization of social services, education, housing and the probation service in a corporatist policing exercise was necessary because whole communities, groups and neighbourhoods rather than just individuals and individual offences now needed to be policed. Multi-agency initiatives would result in welfare agencies being reorganized to carry out territorially/community-based crime control functions under the direction of the police. Hence, a concerted effort was being made to construct an authoritarian and disciplinary local state, one in which social welfare and civil functions and their respective knowledge bases would be integrated in an overarching attempt to re-establish control over crisis-ridden neighbourhoods (Bridges, 1983).

As far as Marxist scholars (Christian, 1983; Hall, 1985; Scraton, 1985, Gilsoy and Sim, 1985) were concerned, the only possible response to these developments was to recognize that for certain communities the police themselves were the problem and therefore to support:

- campaigns to bring the police under democratic control in order that their autonomy could be curbed and discretionary powers restricted;
- community-based monitoring initiatives which could provide an authentic picture of local policing practices and defence groups which could provide legal support for those victimised by the police;
- unmask the realities of community policing initiatives and the futility of trying to reform a fatally flawed policing system and instead to 'affirm and extend the belief that people are able to regulate their own community space and protect their lives and property without lapsing into vigilantism';
- the right of communities to resist the authoritarian state and its coercive agencies and to defend themselves.

The Marxist thesis about the real role of authoritarian policing was further confirmed by the unveiling of new paramilitary tactics and strategies to suppress industrial conflict and further inner city riots and counter-terrorism policing in Northern Ireland. During the 1980s, Marxist police scholarship on the 'authoritarian state' generated innovative research on police powers and accountability; police-community conflict; police corruption and criminality; police complaints system; police-news-media relationships; police interventions in the political process; police racism and sexism and the paramilitarization of police practices and culture; the deployment of criminalization strategies; the development of new urban policing intelligence and surveillance methodologies; and the use of deadly force (see Scraton, 2002). There were also attempts to analyse the developing relationship between political or 'high' and conventional or 'low' policework, the 'Fortress Europe' securitization of policing, and more recently the post 9/11 'national security state' (see Brodeur, 1983). Marxist researchers also developed a range of 'police watching' methodologies to research state-police relationships including community rather than police based ethnographic methods; sustained analysis of police policy documentation and investigative case studies (see StateWatch website) and crisis moments.

However, the 'authoritarian state' thesis that underpinned this research suffered a heavy critique from those who argued that it had been constructed out of highly selective evidence (Sumner, 1981; Downes and Rock 1983; Waddington, 1986). In addition they were accused of being overly political in their analysis and unable to provide any practical response to the increasing levels of criminality and disorder engulfing dramatically changing working class inner city neighbourhoods. However, more significantly, Left Realist perspectives emerged to counter what they viewed as Marxism's political dead end reading of policing developments in the UK. For them, the self-fulfilling logic of the 'authoritarian state' thesis did not allow for and therefore could not conceptualize the possibility of contradictory developments outside of a base line 'crime as moral panic' framework.

Administrative perspectives: the police and the community

At the same time that ethnographic and Marxist perspectives were establishing themselves, a significant number of applied research studies were conducted with the intention of improving the effectiveness of police administration and management of resources, professional practice and generating expert knowledge. Patrol work, as we have seen in the previous section, has always been presented as the backbone of the Anglo-American police and in most forces, the majority of officers were formally assigned to this work. However, applied research studies verified a number of key policing facts, including: increasing the numbers of police officers would not necessarily

reduce crime rates, nor would it raise the proportion of crimes solved; random preventative patrol would not have a marked effect upon crime levels or raise the proportion of solved crimes; intensifying patrol coverage and/or improving the speed with which patrol cars respond to calls from the public would not necessarily impact on the crime rate; and follow-up investigations were of little use without witness or victim.

In addition, conventional police, these strategies were insufficiently preventative in focus and were incapable of addressing the circumstances that generated crime and disorder. And of course, this was in a context where the police come to learn about only a small percentage of all committed crime and most of the crimes they do come to learn about are reported to them by the public rather than uncovered through their own efforts. As numerous reports testified, a primary police role was managing the crime statistics in a politically acceptable manner.

However, in the course of 1980s, US policing underwent a remarkable renaissance as a result of a pragmatic 'what works' shift in thinking by administrative – police scholars working in a variety of forums (see Sherman et al., 1997; Skogan and Frydal, 2004). Some even went so far as to talk about a 'blue revolution' in the policing of crime. There seems to have been a determination to ensure that the US police would not be gripped by the 'nothing works' policy paralysis that had seized the rest of the criminal justice system. (see Skolnick and Bayley, 1986)

A detailed analysis of 'what works in policing' movement would identify its connections with various innovative post-war policing initiatives. For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on Herman Goldstein's 'problem-oriented policing' and James Q. Wilson and George Kelling's work on 'broken windows' and 'order-maintenance' policing. These authors provided the police with both new operational strategies (Goldstein) and a core operational philosophy (Wilson). Ideologically, Goldstein and Wilson were important because their writings drew a distinction between policework as *is* with policework as it *could be*. In the process, they re-motivated the police to face up to their professional responsibilities with regard to controlling crime and social disorder, reducing fear of crime and neighbourhood protection.

Problem-oriented policing

Herman Goldstein articulated the concept of 'problem-oriented policing' in a seminal 1979 article and developed it in his 1990 book. He critiqued the key assumptions of the technocratic policing model, namely that continuous administrative and personnel improvements would produce more effective policework. The drive for professional status, organizational effectiveness and procedural propriety had produced a conservative mindset that was amplifying rather than resolving the practical dilemmas facing the police. First, a corporate police mentality had foregrounded managerial processes to the exclusion of concern about the outcomes of responding to persistent problems.

Second, the police continued to devote most of their resources to responding to ever increasing numbers of calls from citizens. The dominant 'dial-a-cop' model meant that there was very little time available to the organization to act on its own initiative to prevent or reduce crime. Third, the community was a major resource with an enormous potential largely untapped, for reducing the number and magnitude of problems that were becoming the responsibility of the police. Fourth, within the organization, police managers had readily available to them another huge resource: rank and file officers whose time and talent was not being used productively. Finally, reforms to improve policing were failing because they were not adequately connected to the complexity of the police mandate (Goldstein, 1990, pp. 14–15).

For Goldstein (1979, p. 236), the reform focus had to shift from an obsession with bureaucracy towards specifying the end results of policework. This would require separating out the 'unrelated, ill-defined and often inseparable jobs the police are expected to handle'. Police departments exist to deal with a wide range of behavioural and social problems, that is 'the incredibly broad range of troublesome situations that prompt citizens to turn to the police, such as street robberies, residential burglaries, battered wives, vandalism, speeding cars, runaway children, accidents, acts of terrorism, even fear. These and other similar problems are the essence of policework. *They are the reason for having a police agency ...* [italics added] (Goldstein, 1990, p. 243). 'Incidents' that come to the attention of the police are rarely random: officers return to the same places to deal with the same individuals or groups. And yet the dominant model of policing requires officers to respond to an 'incident', whether citizen or police initiated, as a de-contextualised event with neither a history or future.

Goldstein argued that the 'the problem' in all its complexity should be the basic unit of policework. And he noted that categorizations such as 'crime', 'case', 'call', 'incident', 'disorder' and 'violence' were problematic because they were not accurate enough descriptors. Understanding 'problems' meant analysing precisely and accurately the core of the problem. There must also be the capacity to review why existing police responses to particular problems have failed as well as exploring possible alternatives to traditional law-enforcement practices. A large part of the predicament of professional policing is that the police have become unduly reliant on arrest, prosecution and imprisonment as 'solutions' to complex 'problems'. Hence, police chiefs would have to countenance the 'de-policing' of complex problems.

He cautioned against alternatives that sought to remove 'chronic' problems from the police. This has obvious attractions for police chiefs but Goldstein warned that in all likelihood – irrespective of governmental re-designation of responsibility – they would remain problems that the police would be eventually called on to deal with. Many problems become the responsibility of the police 'because no other agency has been found to solve them. They are the residual problems of society'. Consequently, 'expecting the police to solve or eliminate them is expecting too much. It is more realistic to aim at *reducing* the

volume, *preventing* repetition, *alleviating* suffering, and *minimising* the other adverse effects they produce [italics added] (Goldstein, 1979, p. 242).

Goldstein argued that the police needed to shift to a decentralized, flexible teamwork system that would allow officers to develop the local knowledge and interpersonal skills to deal creatively with non-criminal matters. Dealing with neglected problems, necessitated the mobilization of different government agencies with the police, if required, acting as 'community ombudsman' making the connections happen and creating new community justice forums. Increased regulation and tightening up on what is expected from shop owners, residents, local authorities to prevent crime. Increased use of city ordinances could resolve non-criminal matters and zoning could be deployed to deal with neighbourhood problems and disputes. 'Problem-oriented policing' requires police officers to take greater initiative in attempting to deal with problems rather than resign themselves to living with them. Focusing on concrete problems would be attractive to both rank and file officers and citizens. The benefits for the police would be developing new expertise and proactive relationships.

He also noted that police departments had already been forced to think more creatively about how to respond to specific crime victims where the traditional response had manifestly failed. The development of new specialisms around child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence had required new working methodologies and approaches. These initiatives 'subordinate the customary priorities of police reform, such as staffing, management and equipment, to a common concern about a specific problem and the police response to it'. The overall outcome of shifting to problem-oriented policing would be to *amplify* the operational capacity of the police and enhance organizational effectiveness. Thus, Goldstein argued that:

- policing consists of dealing with a wide range of criminal and non-criminal problems;
- police should work to *prevent* problems rather than simply responding to an endless number of incidents;
- developing an effective response to a problem requires prior analysis rather than simply a customary response;
- each problem requires a tailormade response;
- the criminal law is only one means of responding to a problem;
- the police should be willing to act as facilitators, enabling and encouraging the community to maintain its norms governing behaviour.

A practical problem solving tool is SARA: *scanning* for recurring problems and prioritizing in terms of seriousness, frequency and impact and connections; *analysis* to develop a sharper understanding of the causes and extent of 'the problem'; *response* via widening the range of appropriate tactics that police might adopt as well as stakeholders who need to be involved; and *assessment*

to measure the effectiveness of the analysis and whether the problem solving plans (see Eck and Spelman, 1987). SARA was intended to enable officers to formulate not just more precise answers but sharper initial questions. The crucial point about SARA was that it was supposed to be iterative in nature with analysis going back and forth between the different stages. The critical analytical task being to identify those issues that can be practically transformed or influenced.

Goldstein's 'problem-oriented policing' was also strengthened through connecting it with rational choice/actuarial criminologies. Marcus Felson's (1998) routine-activities approach provided the police with a method for thinking about how to tackle mundane crime and disorder problems. The routine activity approach is premised on the belief that when a crime occurs, three things happen at the same time and in the same space: a likely and motivated offender is present, a suitable target (person, object or place) is available and there is the absence of capable guardian whose presence would prevent crime. A target's suitability for victimization is determined by *value*, *inertia*, *visibility* and *accessibility*. It is the offender's rational assessment of the situation which determines whether a crime will take place. The convergence is made possible by the routine structures of everyday life. Although the routine activity approach began with predatory street crime, it was subsequently expanded to include fights, illegal sales, and illegal consumption.

Offenders can be controlled by 'handlers', targets and victims can be protected by 'guardians' and places can be controlled by 'managers'. Thus, effective problem solving requires understanding of how offenders and their targets/victims come together in specific places and times, and understanding how those offenders, targets/victims/places are or are not effectively controlled. 'Problems' that the police are called upon to handle routinely cluster around behaviour, that is, place, persons and time. Crime and disorder are not evenly distributed across time, place or people and police need to recognise clusters of: repeat offenders attacking different targets at different places; repeat victims repeatedly attacked by different offenders at different places; and repeat places or 'hot spots' involving different offenders and different targets interacting at the same place.

While routine activity theory helped police officers to analyse and map problems, Ron Clarke's situational crime prevention approaches provided a framework for practical intervention (see Clarke, 1980). Situational crime prevention takes offenders' propensities or motives as given and works from what might be defined as a 'good enough' account of criminal behaviour. Argued that Crime is best understood as 'rational action performed by fairly ordinary people acting under particular pressures and exposed to specific opportunities and situational inducements'. Hough et al. (1980, p. 5) Hence, much 'common-place' crime can be prevented, reduced or displaced by police manipulation of opportunities and inducements. Proceeding from an analysis of the immediate circumstances giving rise to particular 'criminal events', it

introduces specific changes to influence the offender's initial decisions or ability to commit these crimes at particular places and times. Thus, it seeks to make criminal actions more difficult, more risky and less rewarding for offenders rather than relying on detection, punishments or attempting to reducing criminality through social policies. According to its proponents, situational crime prevention can be applied to any environment, product or service. Changing the immediate crime situation in these different ways involves: increasing the efforts associated with crime; increasing the risk of crime; reducing the anticipated rewards of crime; and/or removing the excuses for crime.

Effective situational crime prevention requires the police to undertake comprehensive problem-solving and risk analysis. The intention behind problem-oriented policing was to encourage a new generation of reform-minded chief police officers to: re-conceptualize the police mandate to include, crime prevention, fear reduction, community tranquillity and to be imaginative about the operational methods and identify evidence-based decision-making techniques that might be used to realize departmental goals. However, evaluations of problem-oriented policing home found that: the police were concentrating on easy problems; there was a lack of long-term organizational commitment to mainstream problem-oriented policing; ongoing cultural resistance to a move from traditional law-enforcement methods; a lack of skills to analyse problems and evaluate strategies; police workloads ruling out anything other than superficial analysis of poor quality data; and an unwillingness to involve the community or partner agencies (see Eck, 2004).

In the United States, the problem-oriented policing philosophy has also been compromised by being absorbed into broader Community Oriented Policing (COP) initiatives. Bayley (1988, p. 225) provided one of the most sustained critiques of COP, noting that COP was being used as an umbrella term to cover a variety of 'feel-good' initiatives: 'public relations campaigns, shop-fronts and mini-stations, rescaled patrol beats, liaison with ethnic groups, permission for rank-and-file to speak to the press, Neighbourhood Watch, foot patrols, patrol-detective teams, and door-to-door visits by police officers. Community policing on the ground often seems less a programme than a set of aspirations wrapped in slogans'. He warned that an undue focus on general community issues was diverting police attention away from the task they are uniquely authorized and trained to do, i.e., maintaining order and enforcing the law. (see also Klockars, 1988)

'Broken windows' policing

In the same period as Goldstein was formulating his concept of problem-oriented policing, James Q. Wilson was producing a body of work that stressed that policing philosophy and strategies needed to relate directly to the crime problems afflicting increasingly disorderly Western societies. Wilson had been writing about policing and crime for several decades before the publication of

'Broken windows' in 1982, arguably the most influential article published in contemporary police studies. In the early 1960s he had questioned whether the technocratic model of policing was beneficial or indeed effective especially with regard to the needs of lower class urban neighbourhoods. The old 'order-maintenance' or 'watchman' model of policing had historically served some useful social functions in such neighbourhood settings, especially in terms of officers' knowledge of the populace and their ability to use their powers to suit what he viewed as 'the conditions of the jungle' (Wilson, 1963, p. 216).

In a series of publications Wilson (1968, 1969, 1975) reiterated that although the police could do very little about serious crime, in an era of rapid social change and changing crime patterns they needed to act and talk 'as if they were able to control crime' (Wilson, 1978, p. x). To do so meant a return to neighbourhood policing and a focus on the overriding responsibility to protect communities from predatory street crime. This form of crime was increasingly impacting on the quality of metropolitan neighbourhood life, impeding 'the formation and maintenance of community ... disrupting the delicate nexus of ties, formal and informal, by which we are linked with our neighbourhoods ... [it] atomizes society and makes of its members mere individual calculators estimating, their own advantage, especially their own chances for survival amidst their fellows (Wilson, 1975, p. 23).

For Wilson, policing needed to 're-localize' in focus because it was the breakdown of informal neighbourhood controls and 'standards of right and seemly conduct' that gives rise to a 'sense of urban unease' and anxiety about being in public places. It is in the neighbourhood where people's 'sense of security, self-esteem, and propriety is either reassured or jeopardized by the people and events we encounter (1975, pp. 26-7). Wilson noted that fear of crime derives from many sources other than direct or indirect experience of victimization and generates serious problems. He warned that if the police did not pay attention to visible signs of deterioration of quality of everyday life and public civility, respectable residents would move out, leaving neighbourhoods to a predatory underclass who would undermine anti-poverty and regeneration programmes. He also cautioned liberal America that 'broken promises' on combatting street crime was capable of being transformed by conservative politicians into a potent electoral issue that would generate demands for punitive law and order measures.

Fixing broken windows

In conjunction with George L. Kelling, Wilson elaborated upon the original 'order-maintenance' thesis in 'broken windows' (1982), presenting a thought-provoking thesis regarding both the role policing played in neighbourhood de-civilization and the role police could play in protecting neighbourhoods from such de-civilization.

'Broken windows' emerged, in part, from the findings of the Newark experiment of the late 1970s, which evaluated the effect of foot patrol on crime and

public perception. The activities of foot patrol were obtained from a daily log maintained by officers. Officers reported that they made very few arrests and filed very few reports but did issue summonses, primarily for traffic violations. One of their main activities was not reported on their daily activity sheet: the amount of time spent talking to residents and visiting local businesses. The study found that while foot patrol did not actually reduce crime, it *did* increase public order. Foot patrol officers kept an eye on strangers, and also helped to keep 'disreputable' elements under control. As a result, people's fear of being bothered by 'disorderly people' decreased, and their perceptions of public safety increased, despite the fact that crime levels had not actually gone down. Wilson and Kelling noted that the positive response of citizens to officers on foot patrol suggested the need to rethink what concerns and what reassures people in public places. This was reinforced by the fact that officers involved in the experiment 'had higher morale, greater job satisfaction, and a more favourable attitude toward citizens in their neighbourhoods than did officers assigned to patrol cars' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, p. 29 see also Bahn, 1974).

Quite understandably, the police priority had been on combatting the 'real' source of public fear generated by potential violent assault by the nameless, faceless stranger. However, the police needed to also pay attention to the much more multi-faceted public fear being generated by a combination of environmental dilapidation and 'worrisome' encounters with: 'disorderly' people. Not violent people nor necessarily criminals but disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers; and the mentally disturbed' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, p. 30). Environmental and behavioural disorder and crime were inextricably linked in a developmental sequence:

If a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighbourhoods as in run-down ones. Window breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window breakers whereas others are populated by window lovers; rather, one unrepaired broken window *is a signal* [italics added] that no one cares and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It has always been fun). (Wilson and Kelling, 1982 p. 31)

Neighbourhoods can be de-stabilized by 'actions that seem to signal that no-one cares' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, p. 31). Residents no longer take care of their homes, look out for and, if necessary, correct one another's children, and deal with unwanted intruders. When property is abandoned, windows broken, buildings graffitied, lighting smashed, litter uncollected, weeds allowed to grow, etc., control over the public realm is lost. When teenagers are allowed to congregate on streets in a disruptive fashion, low level, sub-criminal misconduct will trigger more serious criminal behaviour which, in turn, increases the potential for 'criminal invasion' (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, pp. 32-4). The only people not concerned by the amalgam of disorder, deterioration and

criminality are the people who are oblivious to or benefit from such an anarchic environment, e.g., drug dealers, street criminals, prostitutes and the homeless.

Wilson and Kelling note that in the 'old days' if there were signs that matters were getting out of hand, respectable residents had a vested interest in re-affirming control over the disorderly elements. And police officers had a vital role to play in the re-establishment of neighbourhood authority: 'Young toughs were roughed up, people were arrested "on suspicion" or for vagrancy, and prostitutes and petty thieves were routed. "Rights" were something enjoyed by decent folk, and perhaps also by the professional criminal, who avoided violence and could afford a lawyer' (p. 34).

In the contemporary city respectable residents leave the neighbourhood at the first signs of social disorder and environmental dilapidation. In addition, police officers had been trained out of understanding the very obvious connections between order-maintenance and crime control. Wilson and Kelling noted that much serious crime is opportunistic rather than the result of 'inexorable social forces or personal failings'. It exists because of a criminogenic local context:

The link is similar to the process whereby one broken window becomes many. The citizen who fears the ill-smelling drunk, the rowdy teenager, or the importuning beggar is not merely expressing his distaste for unseemly behaviour; he is also giving voice to a bit of folk wisdom that happens to be a correct generalisation – namely, that serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behaviour goes unchecked.

The unchecked panhandler is, in effect, the first broken window. Muggers and robbers, whether opportunistic or professional, believe they reduce their chances of being caught or even identified if they operate on streets where potential victims are already intimidated by prevailing conditions. If the neighbourhood cannot keep a bothersome panhandler from annoying passersby, the thief may reason, it is even less likely to call the police to identify a potential mugger or to interfere if the mugging actually takes place. (Wilson and Kelling 1982, p. 34)

Patrol officers have been dissuaded from intervening as a result of an individual rights culture, the bureaucratization of policing, the de-criminalization of petty crime and anti-social behaviour, the assumption that certain crimes were 'victimless', the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill and the erosion of legal authority for controlling disorder. As police indifference to their order-maintenance role grew, disorder had engulfed vulnerable neighbourhoods.

For Wilson and Kelling, the primary police role must be neighbourhood protection. Crime statistics and victimization surveys measure individual but not communal losses. The priority must be maintaining, 'communities without broken windows' and arresting window breakers. This necessitated a highly visible uniformed police presence and beat officers working with respectable residents to take back their communities to make them less inviting for criminals.

In addition, policing had to be morally re-dramatized. Wilson and Kelling provided the example of the old style Irish cop, 'Officer Kelly' who kept an eye on strangers and required disreputable elements to observe informal baseline community norms:

Drunks and addicts could sit on the stoops but could not lie down. People could drink on side streets, but not at the main intersection. Bottles had to be in paper bags. Talking to, bothering, or begging from people waiting at the bus stop was strictly forbidden. If a dispute erupted between a businessman and a customer, the businessman was assumed to be right, especially if the customer was a stranger. If a stranger loitered, Kelly would ask him if he had any means of support and what his business was; if he gave an unsatisfactory answer, he was sent on his way. Persons who broke the informal rules, especially those who bothered people at bus stops were arrested for vagrancy. Noisy teenagers were told to keep quiet. (Wilson and Kelling 1982, p. 30)

For Wilson and Kelling, effective order-maintenance policing reconnects police and community, strengthens the dynamics of informal social regulation and amplifies feelings of safety and social order. Ideally, municipal authorities would allocate the resources to put more police officers back on the beat.

The police officer's uniform singles him out as a person who must accept responsibility if asked ... A private security guard may deter crime or misconduct by his presence, but he may well not intervene – that is, control or drive away – someone who is challenging community standards. Being a sworn officer – a 'real' cop – seems to give one the confidence, the sense of duty, and the aura of authority necessary to perform this difficult task. (Wilson and Kelling, 1982, p. 38)

If not, the police would need to think more systematically about the nature of neighbourhood and community dynamics. To allocate patrol effectively and to cultivate a proactive 'guardianship' role, police departments would be required to decide where the deployment of additional officers would make the greatest difference. There was little point in expending scarce resources on either 'demoralized and crime ridden' or 'stable and serene' localities. The police should concentrate resources on 'thickening' the informal community control mechanisms in 'tipping point' neighbourhoods: 'Where the public order is deteriorating but not unreclaimable, where the streets are used frequently but by apprehensive people, where a window is likely to be broken at any time, and must quickly be fixed if all are not be shattered'.

Wilson and Kelling conceded that order-maintenance policing was not easily reconciled with adherence to due process, equal treatment and a 'rights culture'. It could not be subjected to the same legal and organizational strictures as serious crime work. Police activity should be shaped by clearly articulated and accepted community (particularistic) rather than state (universal) standards. To ensure that officers do not become 'agents of neighbourhood

bigotry' it needs to be emphasized that the police exist to 'help regulate behaviour, not to maintain the racial and ethnic purity of a neighbourhood'. Redefining the police mission would require radical organizational change. Authority over patrol officers would have to be decentralized, so that they had the freedom to manage their time. This implies giving them a broad range of responsibilities: to identify and understand the problems that create disorder and crime, and to deal with other public and private agencies that can help cope with these problems. It would mean committing officers to a neighbourhood for an extended period of time and providing departmental support and resources.

In addition to addressing 'quality of life' problems, order-maintenance policing can have a significant impact on serious crime. Responding proactively to disorder and low level offenders both informs the police about and puts them in regular contact with those who commit serious crime and persistent offenders. High visibility police actions and the concentration of police in disorderly neighbourhoods protects the decent and law abiding and sends a message to potential offenders that their actions will not be tolerated. Citizens regain the confidence to assert control over their lives and property and help the police to identify and prosecute offenders. As the problem of crime and disorder become a community responsibility more 'weed and seed' resources can be mobilized against specific forms of crime and disorder.

The ideological impact of the 'broken windows' thesis, unlike problem-oriented policing and situational crime prevention approaches, on not just police thinking but governments cannot be overstated. The thesis became a central reference point in an unfolding public debate about the role Robust policing could play in the Re-establishment of municipal political authority. The most obvious point of - 'the smallest details speak the loudest' - influence, as we shall see in Chapter 5 was the 'zero tolerance' or 'quality of life' policing experiment that was implemented when Mayor Rudolph Giuliani appointed William Bratton as Commissioner of the New York Police Department in 1994 (see Kelling and Coles, 1996; Bratton, 1995; 1996; 1998; Maple, 1999; Giuliani, 2002).

However, despite or perhaps of its popularity and influence, the 'broken windows' thesis has also been subject to serious critique. Some criminologists have questioned the overly simplistic connection Wilson and Kelling make about: the 'grime to crime' relationship; the career trajectory of petty criminals; and the relationship between *feeling* and actually being safe. In policy making terms, the thesis was extremely light on empirical data. There has also been concern that 'broken windows' would divert scarce resources from the policing of serious violent and organised crime. Others have argued that there was an empirical need to separate out 'broken windows' as a signalling theory as distinct from 'broken windows' as a theoretical formulation of the relationship between minor disorder and predatory criminality.

Walker (2000, p. 336) has argued that the thesis is based on a 'false and heavily romanticised view of the past'. Wilson and Kelling had exaggerated the flaws

of the professional model and the historic capacity of the police to control crime. He also questioned the implicit assumption that old style policing enjoyed political legitimacy and expressed concern about the scope for both summary justice and corruption. Walker warned: 'such a revitalised form of policing would represent something entirely new in the history of the American police. There is no older tradition worthy of restoration' (p. 336).

Critics also contextualized the seemingly benign 'broken windows' thesis within the broader ideological framework of right-realist criminology. Wilson and Kelling have been vocal critics of a liberal rights culture and Wilson has been at the forefront of campaigns to return to a rational choice based criminal justice system consisting of swift and certain justice; proactive street policing; and incarceration. Wilson's advocacy of a 'punitive turn' also required the abandonment of the search for the 'root causes' of crime. He himself commented that:

Though intellectually rewarding, from a practical point of view it is a mistake to think about crime in terms of its causes and then to search for ways of alleviating those causes. We must think instead of what it is feasible for a government or a community to do ... Wicked people exist. Nothing avails except to set them apart from innocent people. And many people, neither wicked nor innocent, but watchful, dissembling and calculating of their opportunities, ponder our reaction to wickedness as a cue to what they might profitably do. We have trifled with the wicked, made sport of the innocent, and encouraged the calculators. Justice suffers and so do we all. (Wilson, 1977, pp. 235-6; see also Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985)

Kelling's strong affinity with Etzioni's communitarianism reinforces his insistence that the police should realize that they are in the business of defining and enforcing public morality. Hence, policework should be oriented towards strengthening the crime resistant capacities of primary social control institutions, namely the family and the community. Although beyond the reach of the present discussion, it should be noted that Wilson and Kelling's concern with policing 'street barbarism' and 'predators' and communal de-civilization connects across to Charles Murray's (1995: 2000) highly influential 'underclass' thesis. Murray insisted that the underclass, or the 'New Rabble', was the result not of poverty or material inequalities but of behaviour, characterized by drug abuse, casual violence, criminality, anti-social behaviour, illegitimacy, child neglect, work avoidance and welfare dependency. (see also Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985)

For Murray, the anti-social value system of a rationally calculating underclass threatens all notions of liberal civilization. Consequently, he has repeatedly argued that restoring public civility, respect for social institutions and lawful behaviour will require radical welfare reform, public condemnation and stigmatisation and re-imposing the punitive capacities of the criminal justice system. Seen in this context, a combination of 'broken windows' and

problem oriented policing combined with situational crime prevention techniques constitute the perfect right realist crime control model for sweeping the disadvantaged, dispossessed and dysfunctional from the streets of the neo-liberal global city into the 'underclass' neighbourhoods that they are quite content to abandon to criminal depredation.

Left-realist perspectives: the police and the community

In 1975 Paul Hirst berated Marxist and critical criminologists for their politically irresponsible posturing on policing, crime control and social order:

All societies outlaw certain categories of acts and punish them. The operation of law or custom, however much it may be associated in some societies with injustice and oppression, is a necessary condition of existence of any social formation. Whether the social formation has a State or not, whether it is communist or not, it will control and coerce in certain ways the acts of its members. The police force in our own country is not *merely* an instrument of oppression, or of the maintenance of the capitalist economic system, but also a condition of a civilised existence under the present political-economic relations ... One cannot imagine the absence of the control of traffic or the absence of the suppression of theft and murder, nor can one consider these controls as purely oppressive. (Hirst, 1975, p. 240)

This was supported by, among others, Maureen Cain (1977) who argued that Marxists 'must go further than identifying the police as agents of state coercion. Socialists do not face a lumpen, monolithic, and therefore invincible state structure; they face a political situation'. (see also Marenin, 1983; Kettle, 1984).

Taking policing seriously

During the 1980s Jock Young and colleagues went on to develop a grounded 'left realism' as an alternative to Marxism's 'idealistic' position on crime and policing and the superficial solutions of right realist criminologists. The fundamental principle of left realism is that crime is an endemic product of the class and patriarchal structure of advanced capitalist societies. This is why it must be taken seriously by radical criminologists:

This involves a rejection of the tendencies to romanticise crime or to pathologise it, to analyse solely from the point of view of the administration of crime or the criminal actor, or to exaggerate it. And our understanding of methodology, our interpretation of the statistics, our notions of aetiology follow from this. Most importantly, it is realism which informs our notion of practice: in answering what can be done about the problems of crime and social control. (Young, 1986, p. 21)

Criminal victimization is a real and increasing problem for the most vulnerable sections of society because it is driven not just by relative economic deprivation but by individualistic attitudes. The concentration of new forms of predatory criminality and anti-social behaviour in urban working-class communities was destroying the quality of life for residents:

Crime is the endpoint of a continuum of disorder. It is not separate from other forms of aggravation and breakdown. It is the rundown council estate where music blares out of the windows early in the morning; it is the graffiti on the walls; it is aggression in the shops; it is bins that are never emptied; oil stains across the street; it is kids that show no respect; it is large trucks racing through your streets; it is streets you do not dare walk down at night; it is always being careful; it is a symbol of a world falling apart. It is lack of respect for humanity and fundamental human decency ... It is items like this that rebuff those commentators who maintain that because most crime is minor it is unimportant. (Lea and Young, 1983, pp. 55–8)

Escalating fear of crime and disorder had disorganizing and de-civilizing social effects: undermining social relationships, valorizing individualistic and acquisitive values; destroying the quality of life associated with public spaces; and generating 'populist punitive' demands for law and order policies. As part of taking the lived realities of crime and disorder seriously, democratic socialists needed to affirm that the police have a vital role to play in protecting the quality of life of the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population from criminality and anti-social behaviour.

For left realists the class interests represented by the police in a liberal democratic polity are neither obvious nor ideologically pre-determined. Hence, the major deficiency of Marxist analysis was 'the over-emphasis on the coherence of the police as an institution and their interconnection with all other agencies of the state'. This neglected both the degree of conflict within the police and the nature of the autonomy the police had carved out from the state. As a result, Marxist analysis ruled out the existence of political space for progressive police reform (Baldwin and Kinsey, 1982; Cowell et al., 1982; Kinsey et al., 1986).

The relative autonomy of the police

Left realists argued that there was a need to get to come to terms with the fact that the police were a relatively autonomous institution. Chief police officers are 'operationally independent' from the formal political process and police constables are law officers not employees of the state. Consequently, all sections of the police enjoy guaranteed autonomy from the realm of formal politics. This provides them with the critical organizational leverage to mediate state interests. Organizational autonomy is amplified as a result of the discretionary

powers of the rank and file. In addition, public demands and expectations regarding policing mean that the police cannot just represent the interests of the state or the bourgeoisie in a straightforward manner.

Furthermore, the police are not solely dependent on the state for their ideological legitimacy. The ever-present symbolism of the unarmed PC George Dixon-style 'bobby on the beat' – the citizen in uniform who is drawn from the people and acting on behalf of the common good – constitutes a distinctive and powerful ideology that bestows public legitimacy on the police. This also acts as a powerful counter against moves to a state-controlled police force. Fourth, rank and file police officers spend their working lives, for the most part, among the working class. As a consequence, they may be disliked by the poorest, youngest and lowest criminogenic sections of the working class but they are 'viewed with a contradictory mixture of respect and suspicion by the majority – and in particular by those sections of the working class from which they themselves are recruited, and in whose interests they see themselves, in the vast majority of interests to be acting'. The police in short are 'the organized super ego of the respectable working class' (Kinsey et al., 1986, p. 172).

The conditions for consensus policing

In a liberal democratic society the obviously paramilitary role of the police in suppressing urban riots and industrial conflict remains exceptional rather than the norm for the following reasons. First, routine crime control constitutes real policework for the majority of police officers. Second, consensual policing has been the aspirational norm for post-war liberal democracies. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War socialists recognized that the police had an important role to play in securing a just and equitable social democratic society. In this period, according to Taylor, the police had a paternalistic relationship with the working class. The 'bobby on the beat' was 'a court of appeal in cases of domestic and neighbourhood dispute, a firm hand in cases of trouble between local youths, and a helping hand for the elderly or the indisposed. He was also a useful resource in dealing with drunks' (Taylor, 1981, p. 69).

Beat officers apprehended juvenile delinquents 'who were in need of care and protection and would hand them over to the professionals of the welfare state. They also attempted to combat fraud, fiddles and black market offences which were exploitative of the working class. Hence, the beat officer according to Taylor was 'the hard working defender of the new social democratic community, burrowing away in pursuit of the predatory crimes of the powerful' (1981, p. 70). This 'public service' policing, because it corresponded to community needs and priorities, constituted the basis for a consensual relationship between the police and the working class. The 'Dixonian' police force was successful at catching criminals and controlling crime in this time period because of the strong communal social controls and active community support and information.

Third, the shift to paramilitary policing styles has not been a dominant feature in all forces or for that matter in all areas covered by a particular force. Indeed, it has no presence in the policing of respectable working-class and middle-class neighbourhoods or rural areas. Finally, paramilitary policing strategies cannot be sustained and the urgent political task is to determine the alternative policing styles that are capable of enlisting the active support of local communities in crime control. For the left realists, consensus policing collapsed in Britain's inner cities as a result of the dramatic changes of the 1960s and the 1970s. Established urban working-class communities were physically and morally destabilized by constant development. At the same moment, new Commonwealth immigrant communities were established with different value systems and this contributed to the sense of fragmentation and cultural dislocation. Finally, structural unemployment and increasing deprivation produced soaring crime rates. Thus, it was major social changes, new social divisions, rising crime rates and the emergence of a distinctive criminal youth subculture that produced rising crime rates and undermined the conditions for consensual policing. The respectable working class demanded a much tougher police response to the young black men they held to be responsible for this crime wave.

The police in responding to these concerns 'were not responding simply to figments of their imagination' (Lea and Young, 1984, p. 166). Because of their position in British society, black communities enjoyed an uneasy relationship with all agencies of the British state, including the police. However, once the police began to respond to the rising crime rate, the alienation of the black community increased dramatically. Because information was not forthcoming about specific incidents and criminals there was no alternative but to police whole communities and neighbourhoods. Information was prised from the community through the cultivation of informers and intensive stop and search operations which were also intended to act as a general deterrence. Such an aggressive policing style inevitably led to allegations of harassment and discrimination and the crucial distinction between the innocent/non-offender and the law-breaker/non-offender quickly blurred. The attitude of the wider community also changed towards offenders and as confidence in the police collapsed they were more willing to intervene to halt arrests. Alienation also undermined the other social institutions in the community that have a direct role to play in controlling crime, especially the family and schools. The harassment of children led to the harassment of the parents because of the raids on homes. Police raids in youth clubs also alienated youth and community workers whose work was crucial to keeping children out of trouble.

The police came to expect collective resistance in certain neighbourhoods and responded by mounting paramilitary operations that did not need community support or acceptance. This generated 'a vicious circle in which moves in the direction of military policing undermine whatever elements of consensus policing may remain, and lay the conditions for further moves in the

direction of further military policing'. The police came to view the population in these areas as criminogenic (Lea and Young, 1984, p. 175). It is this conflictual street policing dynamic that fuelled rank and file racism rather than any notion of institutionalized racism.

Even though they rejected the Marxist 'iron fist in the velvet glove' thesis, left realists were also highly critical of police controlled community policing initiatives. Community or multi-agency policing must be seen as the official response to the crisis in urban crime control rather than as a conspiratorial attempt by the police to penetrate and control civil society. These approaches reflect a shift away from a concern with crime detection and deterrence to 'situational crime prevention' and 'problem-oriented policing' and the sharing-out of responsibility for the fight against crime. These community policing approaches are also inherently undemocratic because the police define 'the parameters of debate for the other agencies' (Lea and Young) and the community is conceptualised as just another resource to be used in the officially defined fight against crime. Such strategies would create new difficulties if the police attempted to harness them to paramilitary crime control strategies. Social welfare agencies cannot work with the police in such circumstances because it would damage their credibility and effectiveness.

Minimal policing philosophy

In terms of effective policing, left realists argued that it was necessary for policy makers to commit themselves to social crime prevention strategies. Young noted:

It is not the 'Thin Blue Line', but the social bricks and mortar of civil society which are the major bulwarks against crime. Good jobs with a discernible future, housing estates that tenants can be proud of, community facilities which enhance a sense of cohesion and belonging, a reduction in unfair inequalities, all create a society which is more cohesive and less criminogenic. (Young, 1992, p. 45)

Resources must be concentrated in the deprived crime and disorder torn neighbourhoods that right realists such as Wilson and Kelling would write off as beyond redemption. A new set of relationships must be constructed between the police, the public and local government departments in order to ensure that policing policies are constructed out of and manifestly address community concerns and anxieties. Elected representatives should have the lead role in developing localized policing strategies. In order to do so, they would have to research local crime problems to identify real community needs and priorities and formulate appropriate policies and practices. In order to ensure maximum public access to the police decision making, communities would be directly involved in neighbourhood panels. Elected representatives,

police officers and the community would be required to work on neighbourhood priorities. Such arrangements would open up the dialogue deemed crucial to re-establishing consensual forms of local policing. They would also break down the barriers between police officers and the community and encourage different groups to join the police. This in turn would make the police more representative of the communities they served.

Left realists argued that in order to re-establish 'consensual policing' and to encourage active community participation there would also have to be shift towards what was defined as a 'minimal policing' philosophy. Maximum public initiation of police action would ensure that information and evidence was freely brought forward to the police by witnesses and victims of crime. The realists accepted that the police have an inevitable and legitimate coercive role to play in society and they are entitled to use reasonable force in conflictual situations. However, these coercive powers should be tightly defined and monitored:

Minimal policing, with the emphasis on public initiation, thus presents a radical form of policing by consent. The public are not being asked to place blind faith in 'police expertise', nor are they 'obliged to cooperate' for fear of the consequences. Minimal policing entails a strict limit on police powers, working from the premise that it is for the police to cooperate with and respond to the demands of the public, rather than vice versa. (Kinsey et al., 1986, p. 192)

In order to ensure that the 'minimal policing' crime control model is established as the core function of policework there needs to be internal change. First, all other non-core roles presently carried out by police officers should be jettisoned. Second, all police officers, not just specialist units, would be responsible for active criminal investigation. This would ensure that all members of the police force were brought into constructive relationships with members of the public when their help is requested. This would also cut down on the number of hours spent on unproductive random patrol. It would also mean that specialist or elitist 'troubleshooting' units could be abolished. Such an overall framework would undermine the negative value system underpinning the occupational culture. Finally, there should be co-ordinated multi-agency interventions to deal with

- 1 the structural causes of crime;
- 2 the moral breakdown of communities;
- 3 the situational aspects of criminality and disorder;
- 4 effective crime detection;
- 5 offender rehabilitation; and
- 6 victim support.

Left realism represented a significant policy intervention in policing debates, not least because it placed policy emphasis on prioritizing the safety and security needs of deprived communities and vulnerable groups. Through it local

crime victimization surveys played a major role in orienting Labour controlled local authorities towards a more proactive stance on crime prevention and community safety. And it also attempted to construct a democratic dialogue between police and community that could halt the drift into paramilitary policing of Britain's inner cities. Left realism also laid the foundation for the emergence of New Labour's 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' and anti-social behaviour policy shift. However, its critics argued that it underestimated the role that race was playing in constituting urban policework; idealized the police-working-class community relationship; under-theorized the changing nature of the state-police relationship; tacitly accepted the tough policing and criminalization of the disreputable and disorderly; did not research the drift to paramilitary and highly political policing forms; and had effectively anchored themselves to US right realist 'broken windows' conceptualizations of the supposed links between disorder, anti-social behaviour and serious criminality.

Conclusion

In 1993 Maureen Cain in a review of the latest batch of police books, noted that police scholarship had 'come of age' in the 1980s as 'a mature, steady sub-discipline, not easily shocked, much slower to anger, and with a solid base of ethnographic, historical, comparative, and theoretical work to draw upon' (Cain, 1993, p. 67). She noted that the 'first generation' sense of excitement at going behind the 'blue curtain' to access the realities of policework had gone. However, also gone was:

that touch of voyeurism which made the Policeman as the Other so much larger than life. The officers emerge at least in some of the texts, as thoughtful, differentiated, concerned about politics, careers, religion, families and organizational change rather than puppets of a locker room culture. The authors are allowed to appear too, although reflexive history has not yet touched this branch of the subject. Women officers remain sadly off stage. (Cain, 1993: 63.)

For Maureen Cain, the parameters of police scholarship on police officer-society; police-state; and police-community relationships had been set. However, there were signs that all was not well within the emergent sub-discipline of police studies. It became increasingly clear that as a result of funding decisions, that policy-oriented methodologies were being used to colonize the soul of police studies. This was driven in the United States by the Police Foundation, the Police Executive Research Forum and National Institute of Justice and in the UK by the Police Research Group at the Home Office. The consequences for academic police scholarship was two-fold. First, there was a notable drying up of ethnographically based in-depth research monographs and research papers. Research funders seem to have concluded that there was

nothing 'relevant' or 'useful' to be gained by supporting sociological research that continued to foreground disgruntled rank and file perspectives on their job and reached the conclusion that policework had little effect on crime rates and it was almost impossible to measure police effectiveness. What was advocated instead was systematic observation and recording of police officers 'on the job' using quantification procedures that would allow for replication and comparison. The purpose of this research would be to produce the 'what works' knowledge base necessary for the managerialization of police practice and crime control. Second, Marxist scholars left the field, some because they were disillusioned with the institutionalization of police studies and others because they realized that the theoretical registers they had been working with were inadequate to the task of explaining the new forms of policing, crime control and security surveillance that were emerging. This in turn left the field to realist police scholars who were more than willing to deploy evaluative methodologies to address management and government concerns about the effectiveness of new initiatives.