

POLICE AND MINORITIES IN ENGLAND

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Police anywhere are problematic as a public institution for a variety of reasons, such as their authoritarian and adversarial role, the fact that they can legally use force, the opportunities for corruption they are offered, lack of agreement over the morality they enforce, and the fact that they must act quickly in situations where only limited information is available.

The English police are of interest in this regard because they occupy a rather unique position in appearing to be more loved than hated, something that can hardly be said for police in most other countries. The degree of consensus and voluntary compliance with law, though easily exaggerated by the anglophilic American, seem more pronounced than in most other countries.

As with all stereotypes, the image of the English police is no doubt overdone. Americans operating with contrast conceptions often exaggerate the virtues of other societies (particularly English and Scandinavian) and the problems and failings of their own. With only a little poking beneath the surface, tarnish can be discovered on the badges of at least some Bobbies. While we were in England, the head of the Scotland Yard narcotics unit was arrested for dealing in drugs. Custom's inspectors traced a suitcase filled with heroin to him. In another case which was the subject of a parliamentary inquiry, the special criminal police (C.I.D.) were hanging suspects from a wall and whipping them to gain information. The Challenor case, also the subject of a government inquiry, saw a policeman who in his zeal to fight crime went so far as to plant evidence on people. Some claim that English police carry guns under the seats of patrol cars.

The image of comfortable powerlessness conveyed by police can be deceptive. The English police appear to have extensive powers

which do not make the subtrafuge and defensive sub-culture of American police as necessary. There is no written Bill of Rights or Supreme Court Reviews and doctrines such as that in Miranda. In the area of stop and search they face far fewer formal legal restraints. A New York detective reported, perhaps with a tone of envy in his voice, « it's as if Hitler wrote the laws under which the English police operate ». The South African head of state has expressed envy of the British Special Powers Act.

Foreign students and radicals sometimes claim there is an extensive political intelligence police who know everything that is going on. The visible police are seen as a subtrafuge. The somewhat bumbling image they represent is seen as a front. Other more secretive branches such as the C.I.D. or special branch are said to do the really dirty work.

Any discussion of the merits of the English police must also be tempered by their historically oppressive role in Ireland. The image of the helpful, smiling Bobby is not held by many of Irish and lower class background in England, not to mention those subject to the British colonial experience.

One should also not go too far in trying to « explain » the good English police-community relations without more carefully ascertaining just how good they are and what the dimensions of « goodness » are. If we wish to say the English police are somehow « better », how are they « better » and what is to be explained ? Is it positive attitudes toward police that citizens hold as revealed by public opinion polls ? Is it a higher level of citizen cooperation with police ? Is it in more compliant behavior on the part of those involved in adversarial relations with police ?

Is it greater police efficiency in deterring or apprehending those engaged in crime ? Is it better service during emergencies or conflicts ? Is it lower *per capita* costs ? Is it lesser police dishonesty ? Is it resort to lesser degrees of physical force ? Is it more respect for the liberty of the individual ? Is it more rigorous sanctioning of police abuses and taking citizen complaints more seriously ? Is it greater tolerance for ethnic diversity and alternative life styles ?

Were precise comparisons available on all of the above dimensions, it is doubtful that the English police would uniformly appear better. Yet holding apart such nuances, it is still our impression that English police-community relations are relatively unique, even if they are far from the idealized image held by some. How is this to be explained ?

Beyond historical factors and things such as police organization, ethos recruitment and training, the relatively good quality of police-community relations has rested in the social characteristics of the

English people. Changes in this area now make it necessary to question just how good police-community relations are in England.

Important to understanding any social control relationship is degree of consensus on the rules being enforced and the homogeneity of the population. One English policeman remarked « we have a good police because we have a good public ». Relatively speaking, English society has been homogeneous, consensual, and integrated, and hence high on self-policing.

Social and cultural homogeneity are important factors in the quality of service citizens receive from public service bureaucracies — whether police, medicine, schools or welfare is considered. What then happens when the English police encounter the youth culture and alien non-white ethnic groups such as West Indians and Pakistanis ?

The system tends to break down. There is more conflict, and police-community relations in England, at least to the extent that they involve immigrants and those with deviant life styles, start looking much more like police-community relations with such groups in the U.S.

In this paper we explore some aspects of police-minority relations in England. This draws on 1) our observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews with police and minority group members ; 2) a survey we developed in conjunction with Conrad Jameson associates. The survey was carried out in London in 1972-3 and involved 334 West Indians and 438 whites. We first consider some of the survey data and then some qualitative data.

Respect for the police among West Indians and whites

For the purpose of assessing the general standing of the police in the eyes of citizens in a given social context, the extent to which members of the public say that they respect the police has often been used as an indicator (*e.g.* Reiss, 1967). In the present study, a composite measure of general attitudes toward the police has been devised, and as well, specific components of this measure have been examined in the anticipation that they may shed light upon the image of the police in London.

Our respondents were asked specifically how much *respect* they had for the police, and as Table IA reveals, the West Indians in the sample were much less likely than the whites to say that they had great respect. Young persons of both races were less likely than were older persons of both races to say that they respected the police. Interestingly, while there appeared to be a linear relationship

between age and respect for the police for both racial groups, it was those West Indian persons who were between age 25 and age 44 who were most ambivalent on this question, while the youngest and the oldest blacks were more likely to express definite views — strongly positive for the oldest.

Citizens in the United States have been asked in several studies (e.g. Bouma, 1970 ; Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1968) how well they *liked* the police in their neighbourhoods, and the results have suggested strong racial differences in this measure of general regard for the police. Data from the present study reveal a similar pattern in attitudes toward the police in London, England. Whereas 60 % of white males and 57 % of white females say that the police are liked in their neighbourhoods, less than a quarter of the blacks interviewed held this view and almost half (42 % of males and 48 % of females) say that the police are *not* liked, in contrast to only 15 % of whites holding this view. When race was controlled, there were significant tendencies among both whites and West Indian for young people to be more critical of the police than their elders, as Table I B indicates. Indeed, it is impressive to note that over 90 % of the youngest blacks held negative or ambivalent views as to **whether** the police were liked in their neighbourhoods, while just over **half** of the white youths between 16 and 24 years of age felt this way. Age along with race is a significant determinant of **whether** the respondents claim that the police are liked.

The homily that the British police are the *finest* in the world is a reflection of the general belief that the police in Britain are highly regarded. Consequently, our respondents were asked to judge the truth of this statement as a measure of their general views of the police. The racial differences which showed up on this item were striking, as Table IC shows. While almost four-fifths of white males agreed with this statement, only a quarter of the black males said that the statement was true ; the patterns were very similar for females except that less clear-cut opinions were expressed, more females than males of both racial groups being inclined to say that they did not know. The data also indicate that within racial groups age differences were also evident, with young persons of both races being less likely to agree that the British police are the world's finest, although this trend was more striking for whites than for blacks.

An indirect measure of esteem for the police which has been employed in some American studies (Reiss, 1967 ; Bouma, 1970) is the question of whether one would approve of his *son's becoming a*

police officer (1). Interestingly, in our survey differences between West Indians and white respondents do not appear to be as great regarding the judgment that for one's son to be a policeman might be a *good* idea as are the racial differences in the expression of the view that this would be a *bad* idea. Whereas 21 % of the whites would not approve of their son's becoming a policeman, over half of the blacks sampled decried the idea. One possible interpretation of these findings is that for West Indians the idea of one's son becoming a law enforcement agent has a political significance that is not salient for whites who may view the question simply in terms of the practical merits of the occupation. Consistent with this supposition is the finding that for blacks the tendency to support the idea of one's son becoming a policeman increases with age ; if a civil rights rhetoric underlies young persons' opposition to a family member's being a policeman, this politicized view of the question is not so frequently held by older West Indians for whom the practical possibility of one's children attaining jobs may be more salient.

A composite measure of general regard toward the police was comprised of the component items mentioned above and, as Table II shows, there were differences by race and by age in the tendency of respondents to score high on this measure. For West Indians, the clearest age differences were found to be between those under age 25 and those over that age, while for whites, the tendency to express generally positive views of the police increased more gradually with age, fully 81 % of whites over age 45 scoring in the highest category of general regard for the police. These findings tend to lend support to Banton's (1973) contention that the « generation gap » may be more severe among non-whites than among white Britons. Nevertheless, the effects of race are greater than those of age, as over half of even the youngest whites scored high on the index while in contrast over half (54 %) of the blacks under age 25 fell into the lowest of three categories on this variable.

Willingness to cooperate with the police

Respondents' stated willingness to provide the police with assistance in the performance of their various duties provides a behavioural measure of the more abstract concept of respect for the police. Of course, it is impossible to say from an attitude survey alone whether

(1) In contrast to the U.S., the English police have not tried as hard to recruit minority group policemen, but there are several in London whose fathers were police in the West Indies or who were police there themselves. One of the black policemen is sometimes predominantly displayed directing traffic in front of South Africa House.

the expressed degree of cooperativeness is reflective of actual behaviour, and so such measures are probably more useful as indices of the general image of the police and the extent of positive feelings toward what the police do. These dimensions of attitudes toward the police are interesting particularly because they may involve two countervailing tendencies on the part of citizens in orienting to the policeman's role. If, on the one hand, the questions tap a general appreciation for the jobs that police may perform, one might expect whites to score higher on measures of cooperativeness than do West Indians. If, on the other hand, as several American studies (Cumming, Cumming and Edell, 1965 ; Bercal, 1970) have shown, lower socioeconomic status persons are more likely to call upon the police in time of need than are the more affluent members of a society, then one might expect that West Indians would express the willingness to call the police as often or more often than white Britons.

Table III shows responses to several questions which inquired of respondents how likely it was that they would call the police under certain specific circumstances. On the question of whether to call the police if a fight broke out at the respondent's home, over 60 % of both racial groups said that they would contact the police. In fact, fully 47 % of the black respondents said that they would be *very* likely to call the police under these circumstances, whereas only 32 % of the whites were that emphatic. At the same time, however, a greater proportion of blacks said that they would definitely *not* call the police under such circumstances, although the differences between the racial groups were not great in this respect. Willingness to call the police if a fight broke out in one's home was positively associated with age for whites, but age did not make a significant difference for West Indians. On the whole, these findings lend support to the idea that *some* West Indians would be likely to call the police, as would many American poor people, in time of need, while others of their race would actively resist doing so, partly as a reflection of a general negative attitude toward the police. For whites, on the other hand, the fact that willingness to call the police is associated with age is consistent with the interpretation that this measure reflects general attitudes toward the police, as we have shown in the previous section that regard for the police also increases with age among whites.

One of the most interesting findings in Table III is the great racial differences in responses to the question of whether respondents would call the police in the event that they observed a store being broken into. Here we see that while almost all (90 %) of the whites said that they would assist the police in this manner, just over half of the blacks were so disposed. The relationship between age and willingness to call the police when a shop was being broken into

appears to be curvilinear for West Indians, with the youngest and the oldest groups sampled being somewhat more reluctant to call the police than were blacks between 25 and 44 years of age. This finding may reflect a tendency on the part of the young and the older respondents not to want to « get involved » while those in their prime might have less to fear as far as their personal safety was concerned.

When the question concerned the respondent as hypothetical *victim* of a crime, the picture changed. In the instance of having had something stolen from them, West Indians were almost as likely as were whites to say that they would contact the police, although the youngest West Indians (under 25) were less likely to say that they would call the police than were their elders. If the victimization involved a person whom the respondent knew, such as a neighbour who threatened, both white and West Indian respondents were considerably more reluctant to call in the police, and this was especially true for West Indians under age 25.

When the individual measure of willingness to call the police were combined into a composite measure of cooperativeness, the strong racial differences held up as Table IV shows. In addition, there is also evidence that while willingness to cooperate with the police increases in a linear fashion for whites, there is a sharp disjunction between blacks under age 25 and those over that age in their willingness to call the police in a variety of circumstances. The findings indicate that there are differences by race and differences by age, as well as differences attributable to the interaction of race and age, as black youths are the least likely to express a willingness to cooperate with the police.

Fear of the police

Research in the United States has shown that minority group persons are more likely than are whites to express a general fear of the police, and that such fears are negatively related to willingness to support the police (Block, 1971 ; Bouma, 1970 ; Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1968). Therefore, we devised a scale of attitude items designed to measure the concept of fear of the police using items derived from Bouma's research on adolescent attitudes toward the police in the United States.

The data demonstrate that the relationship between race and fear of the police is very strong even when age is controlled. In the youngest age group, over half of the blacks expressed a high fear of the police while almost half of the white youths gave low fear responses. Interestingly, the differences by race are even stronger in the older age groups, with 67 % of whites over 35 expressing little

fear as compared with only 6 % of blacks of this age, and fully 55 % of blacks over the age 45 expressing *high* fear as compared with only 3 % of the whites in the oldest age bracket.

The effects of age show up more clearly for whites than for blacks as Table VI indicates, with young white persons under age 25 being somewhat more inclined to express fear of the police than was the case for those over that age. Nevertheless, these age differences were far outshadowed by those of race, providing a very clear picture of the way in which West Indian residents in London orient toward the police in contrast to white Londoners; this also suggests the attitudinal foundation for potentially hostile encounters between West Indians and the police if, as Lambert (1970), Humphrey (1972) and others have indicated, West Indians may mask their fear of the police by taking the offensive with them.

These findings regarding levels of fear of the police may have significant policy implications. Some police in both United States and Great Britain hold the belief that respect for the police can be instilled in citizens, and especially in minority group persons, through the use of tactics which indicate that the police are worthy of being feared. In fact, our data showed that there were very strong *negative* correlations between fear of the police and other measures of general attitudes toward the police, such as general regard for the reputation of the police (-.51) and willingness to cooperate with the police (-.51). While police may feel that fear inspires respect, the evidence is that citizens who fear the police will withdraw legitimacy from them and will refuse to aid them even in their law enforcement functions unless they personally are the victims of crime.

In an effort to measure the amount of positive or friendly contact with the police that white and West Indian respondents had had with members of the London police force, we asked them to respond to a number of specific questions, as Table V shows. The findings reveal that West Indian respondents were significantly less likely to report having had some positive contact with the police than were whites, and moreover that this was especially true for West Indians under the age of 25, only a third of whom reported any positive contact with the police at all.

West Indians were less likely to have had a friendly talk with a policeman, and less likely to know a policeman by name, than was the case for white respondents. On the other hand, blacks over the age of 25 were about as likely as whites of those ages to say that they had at some time gone to the police for help over something important, a finding which is consistent with those American studies

which have shown that minority group persons may rely on the police in times of emergencies (Cumming, Cumming and Edell, 1965 ; Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1968).

Table VF shows that the relative amounts of negative contact with the police which West Indian and white respondents report that they have had with the police are surprisingly consistent with the observational data of Black and Reiss (1967) in the United States. That is, whites were *more* likely than were West Indians to say that they had ever been stopped and questioned by the police. In fact, over half (58 %) of the white males interviewed said that they had been stopped by the police, as compared with only 36 % of the West Indian males. There was no statistically significant difference in the rate of arrest for black and white males, although the percentages indicate that blacks were more likely to say that this had happened to them than were whites. In the case of both stops and arrests, males of both races were significantly more likely to report such negative experiences with the police than were females.

Black-white differences also appear in evaluations of the nature of the police role and the quality of police performance (Table VII), thus West Indians rated police performance much lower than whites did with respect to the giving of help, respecting the rights of citizens, and controlling political demonstration. In a related item 75 % of West Indian males and 55 % of females agreed with the statement « the police are really protecting the interests of people with power », for whites these figures were 41 % and 40 %.

It has been contended by some students of race relations in Britain that the problems which West Indians have encountered in British society, and correlatively their attitudes toward British social institutions, are partly the product of the recency of their immigration and also partly attributable to the traditions of the islands from which they came — Jamaica being seen to be more anti-British than, say, the Barbados which is thought to be staunchly British. Consequently, it was informative to discover in the course of our research that neither the island from which respondents had migrated nor the length of time which they had been residing in Britain was of any importance in predicting attitudes toward the police.

With respect to social class effects, our data tended to bare out the conclusion which has often been arrived at in the U.S. (*e.g.* Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1968) that socio-economic factors are less significant determinants of attitudes toward the police than are race and age. Four different measures of socio-economic status were employed and none of these showed a clear relationship to general attitudes toward the police for either blacks or whites in our sample.

Contrary to the « optimistic » view that as West Indians become better acquainted with British society they will come to share the native Briton's positive view of its most sacred institutions, we found that the length of time respondents from the West Indies had been in Britain had absolutely no effect upon their attitudes toward the police, and indeed there is some indication that for those who have been in the country longer, relations between the police and West Indians appear to be worse than for those who have more recently immigrated. Perhaps a decade or more of residence in the country with no tangible evidence of improvement in one's life situation has the effect of embittering people and of passing that bitterness along the children who have been raised in Britain.

RESPECT FOR POLICE

Table 1

	West Indians	Whites
A) « Considering <i>everything</i> about the way British police do their job, would you say that you had a lot of respect for the British Police, not much respect for the British police or mixed feeling about them ? » (% saying « a lot of respect »).....	26 (334)	54 (438)*
B) « What about this area, how well liked would you say the police are by the people who live in it ? » (% saying « very well liked » and « liked well enough »)	22	59
C) « People say the British police force is the finest in the world. Do you think this is true or not » ? (% saying « true »)	25	77
D) « Imagine you had a son aged 18 or 19, how do you think you would feel about the idea of him joining the Police ? » (% saying it would be a « good idea »)	46	53

(*) Numbers in our total sample, these vary slightly depending on the item in question.

GENERAL REGARD FOR THE POLICE

Table II

West Indians					
AGE	16-24	25-34	35-44	45 +	All ages
% HIGH	15	38	39	46	<u>34</u>

Whites					
AGE	16-24	25-34	35-44	45 +	All ages
% HIGH	57	63	68	81	<u>66</u>

WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE POLICE

Table III

	West Indians	Whites
A) « If, for example, you had a party and a fight broke out that looked as though it might get out of hand, how likely is it that you might call the police ? » (% « likely »).....	66	60
B) « And, if you saw someone breaking into a shop, how likely is it that you would call the police ? » (% « likely »).....	57	90
C) « And, if you were having trouble with a neighbour who threatened you, how likely is it that you would call the police ? » (% « likely »)	53	53
D) « And, if someone stole something valuable from your house, how likely is it that you would call the police ? » (% « likely »)	86	96

**COMBINED MEASURE OF WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE
WITH POLICE**

(based on items in table III)

Table IV

West Indians					
AGE	16-24	25-34	35-44	45 +	All ages
% HIGH ON WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE ..	31	47	53	52	46
Whites					
AGE	16-24	25-34	35-44	45 +	All ages
% HIGH ON WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE ..	74	71	78	87	77

CONTACT WITH POLICE

Table V

		West Indians	Whites
A) « Have you ever had a friendly talk with a policeman who works in your neighborhood ? » (% yes)		26	35
B) « Do you know any policeman by name ? » (% yes)		3	21
C) « Have you ever gone to the police for help over something important ? » (% yes)		33	39
D) « What about yourself, have you ever been treated unfairly by the police or the law in general ? » (% yes)	Males	30	20
	Females	13	10
E) « In fact, have you ever been stopped by the police and asked what you were doing ? » (% yes)	Males	36	58
	Females	7	13
F) « In fact, have you ever been arrested yourself ? » (% yes)	Males	17	12
	Females	7	7

FEAR OF THE POLICE

Table VI

West Indians					
AGE	16-24	25-34	35-44	45 +	All ages
% HIGH	57	53	54	55	55
% LOW	1	9	6	6	6

Whites					
AGE	16-24	25-34	35-44	45 +	All ages
% HIGH	15	7	6	3	9
% LOW	45	48	64	70	55

EVALUATIONS OF POLICE PERFORMANCE

Table VII

		West Indians	Whites
A) % saying police are doing a « very good » or « good » job in giving help.	Males	42	62
	Females	51	64
B) % saying police are doing a « very good » or « good » job in respecting the law and the rights of citizens	Males	22	63
	Females	34	64
C) % saying police are doing a « very good » or « good » job in controlling political demonstrations	Males	47	69
	Females	57	75
D) % agreeing « the police are really protecting the interests of people with power »	Females	75	41
	Males	55	40

Some qualitative data

Let us move from the statistical data to some specific examples that illuminate increased police-minority conflict. An important part of the greater West Indian dissatisfaction with police would appear to lie in culture conflict and the breakdown of communication. Such explanations are often put forth to account for American police-community issues. Thus police may drive young men off street corners when hanging out is part of their life style or they may arrest people whose recreational interests involve gambling, homosexuality and drugs. In the United States context such an argument is often exaggerated because almost all groups share important elements of a common culture.

Such an argument may also mask more basic causes of group struggle involving racism and class. But in the English case they clearly apply, given the newness of the immigration to England and the extensive differences between the immigrant and host cultures.

A number of examples of this culture conflict can be seen. Pakistani Moslem immigrants have special rules about how the animals they eat should be slaughtered. Thus, Moslem chicken salesman may go to immigrant areas with live chickens and kill them on the spot. This may upset English neighbors who summon a policeman, though there's probably no law against killing chickens on the streets of London. Similar problems may emerge with the sacrifice of a goat.

In another case a bearded and turbanned Seik came into a police station in a rural area late at night and said in excited and accented English « they're fourteen men with sticks who are chasing me and want to kill me ». The old sargeant looked up at him in disbelief and said « sure there are fourteen men with sticks that want to kill you ». Fortunately another person was in the station who had some understanding of Seik customs and the local situation. The frightened man had taken an unmarried female alone in a car to a wedding, and this had embarrassed and humiliated her relatives. They then set out after the man. The police then intervened and protected him.

The social structure of some Pakistani villages has been reproduced in England. Along with this may come traditional social control mechanisms, such as village councils sanctioning people. In one case the police intervened on behalf of a man who had received a sentence of 50 lashes from his village council in England. We were even told in whispered terms of one English policeman born in India, who could speak Hindi, being given the power to be a tribal judge.

In West Indian culture, an emphasis on drama and a belief in conspiracy may make initial police efforts to get information more

difficult. Varying cultural definitions of the tactile may also be relevant. Touching people has a different meaning than it does in England. A West Indian may interpret a policeman grabbing his arm as a hostile act. For a native born English person this is less likely to be true. West Indian youth often carry nine inch wooden afro combs. This sometimes results in their being convicted for possessing « offensive weapons ».

West Indians appear to place a greater emphasis on street life. West Indian youth often congregate outside their homes. Police are not accustomed to such a life-style and often try to move them indoors and off the streets. A tradition of open parties where all can join in, even people walking down the street who hear the music, can generate conflict with police. Liquor may be sold by the cup, violating licensing rules. Police receive many complaints of noise even though no laws are being broken.

Some immigrants interviewed felt that to police, they all looked alike. Problems with mistaken identity appear more likely when immigrants are involved. A person may be accused of something he didn't do by the inability of the accusers to differentiate facial types. There are also problems in locating or tracking down immigrants wanted for crimes, for help as witnesses, or simply to give information. A Pakistani involved in an incident with police will give his name as Singh and his address. When police show up at his house twenty people all named Singh will appear.

In lower income white areas it is sometimes said that a man either becomes a cop or a thief. In such areas police and those they deal with know each other. Stable accomodative relationships may form. But for immigrants such relationships have not had time to form.

Lack of knowledge of the English system may result in immigrants unknowingly breaking English law, or interpreting legal and departmental sanctioned police action (or non-action) as examples of discrimination.

There are cases of West Indian parents beating a child as they would if they were still in the West Indies. In the West Indies, they are perhaps less likely to be sanctioned but in England such behavior can result in jail for the father and the child being taken away.

It's not uncommon for Indians and Pakistanis to arrange marriages for their daughters. The daughters who have grown up in England, gone through the English school system and heard the Beatles and the Rolling Stones sometimes resist arranged marriages and run away from home. The family reports their missing daughter to the police,

who will locate the girl and tell the family that she is well, but they will not reveal her address. This infuriates the parents who believe the police are discriminating against them.

An immigrant stopped by police on suspicion, may not know that police can legally do this. A stop and search by a policeman is more likely to be seen as an example of prejudice by a West Indian. It may be felt that police do not similarly stop whites. As one West Indian said, « Hell, every black in a white society is a suspicious person ». Police reciprocate and see West Indians as being on the defensive and as more likely to attack them than whites. Many police interviewed felt that black complaints often involved routine police behavior which the complainant mistakenly saw in racial terms.

We presented to our respondents a hypothetical situation of a young man being stopped and questioned in the area where a number of robberies had recently occurred and asked them to say whether the policeman was allowed to do this by law. While over three-quarters of the whites actually knew that the police had the legal power to make such an investigation, only about half of the West Indians were aware that this was within the prerogatives of the police and over a third actually said that such a policeman would have been « going beyond the law ». These findings suggest that one reason why West Indians may feel that they are treated roughly or unfairly by the police, whereas whites are less likely to claim that this is the case, is that West Indians are not fully apprised of what the police have a legal right to do vis-a-vis any citizen in London.

In the West Indies, police seem to play a more diverse role. They will punish as well as adjudicate. A policeman called to a house where the husband is drunk may hit him a few times and then take him to jail to cool off. A policeman may punish an unruly child. The policeman may help to adjudicate a landlord-tenant dispute. In England police actions are more formal and restricted. In landlord-tenant disputes, for example, police often claim that there is nothing they can do. They may refer the complainant to a rent board, however, the immigrant may see the policeman's failure to take action as discriminatory.

When called upon to settle a dispute between two or more parties, the police sometimes find that the expectations of citizens for their intervention actually exceed formal legal powers which the police are authorized to use. In part, such a situation may arise because citizens are not adequately aware of what the legal limitations on the police are, and in part the difference between expectations and reality may reflect dissatisfaction on the part of citizens about the extent to which they perceive the police as being willing to help them resolve their

difficulties. Consequently, we asked our respondents about a situation in which a policeman says there is nothing that he can do in regard to settling a disagreement between a landlord and a tenant and found that white respondents were overwhelmingly aware that the police were not legally authorized to intervene in such matters while almost a quarter of the West Indian respondents felt that the policeman in the situation described simply did not *want* to get involved. In a similar vein, we asked the respondents whether they felt that the police *ought* to be concerned with matters involving landlord discrimination and found that while whites were sympathetic to such an idea (75 % felt that the police should be concerned), West Indians were somewhat more likely to feel that such matters should be part of the police mandate, well over half saying that the police should be *very* concerned with landlord discrimination.

The tendency for West Indians to feel that the police ought to be very concerned with protecting the interests of individual citizens showed up even more clearly in regard to a question concerning whether the police should become involved in controlling the practice of overcharging on the part of shopkeepers. While just 60 % of the whites interviewed felt that such matters should be the concern of the police and about a quarter said that this should be none of the police's business, fully 90 % of the West Indians said that this was a legitimate concern of the police. These findings may suggest that either the West Indians really are more likely to be victimized by unscrupulous businessmen that are whites or that West Indians are more sensitized to this form of exploitation ; in either case it seems clear that the West Indians sampled are overwhelmingly convinced that this is an area of life which the police ought to be regulating, even though it is not now part of their legal mandate to exercise control.

While we did not collect systematic survey data on police attitudes toward immigrants, we did carry out numerous interviews. Relative to the U.S. there was much less realization of police-minority problems. One police commissioner said that 98 % of the immigrants were satisfied with the police. Another told us that there have been « no really serious immigration problems since Knottinghill ». For him a problem was seen as a riot and not police mistreatment or lack of service. We found a greater stress on a perceived need to « make immigrants become like us » than is the case in the United States. Pluralism seemed less appreciated, even at the level of lip service. This may be related to the fact that West Indians, unlike American blacks, are seen as non-citizen alien immigrants. There was considerable racial stereotyping among police. Just as American police offered George Wallace disproportionate support, so too do English police appear to offer disproportionate support to Enoch Powell.

West Indians, and especially Pakistanis, may expect police to be corrupt, based on experiences in their homelands. Pakistanis who may be accustomed to bribing police, may see an English policeman's failure to accept a bribe as a type of prejudice against them and be resentful (2).

The opposite, the failure to involve police or cooperate with them, may also be a source of conflict. As immigrants with a tenuous status in the country, minority group members are often hesitant to get involved with police in any fashion, even when they themselves are victimized or have done nothing wrong. Police report that whites are much more cooperative, even during the investigation of crimes where immigrants are victimized.

Police drew distinctions between the Irish and West Indians. While the Irish were seen as rowdy, at least they were thought not to carry knives. The use of a knife in a fight was seen as an unmanly act. Irishmen were seen to fight ferociously with police in bar room brawls, but to be repentant the next day in court, apologetically telling the Judge, « the drink made me do it your honor ». Defiance rather than repentance was seen to be more characteristic of West Indian responses.

Some Implications

Over the course of the hundred and fifty years since modern metropolitan policing was begun in England and America, we have observed three phases of similarities and differences between policing in the two societies. At the beginning, large cities in the two nations faced similar problems and adopted similar solutions in the form of a bureaucracy of constables trained to serve and protect citizens. For more than a century, however, policing in England and America diverged from one another in important respects including the structure of the police organization, the powers of the police and their accountability to civil powers and citizens, the degree of centralization of their operations and their isolation from the public ; and these structural differences gave rise to a very different image of the police in the minds of the citizens of the two nations — the one, the benevolent and wise role-model, and the other, the crude and ruthless wielder of truncheons. Policemen, too, have shared these conceptions of the essential difference between British and American policing. When

(2) Several people related the story of a rich Pakistani landlord who was involved in a dispute with a poor tenant on his land. While the landlord was traveling abroad, the tenant took the matter to court and a judgement was rendered. The landlord's lawyer wired his client about the case « Justice

prevails ». The landlord wired back « Appeal at once ».

asked what might happen if the police forces of London and New York were exchanged, the Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police said, «The New York streets would be filled with dead bobbies and the London jails would be filled with New York cops ». However, the second half of the twentieth century has brought about a renewed convergence of the patterns and problems of policing between England and the United States, a convergence which appears to be based most fundamentally in the structural characteristics of the societies being policed.

Policing in England and the United States had similar sources in the perceived demand for order by the propertied classes of the nineteenth century who feared social changes brought about by rapid urbanization and industrialization and who associated their fears with the burgeoning urban masses which were thought of as the « dangerous classes ». However, whereas the solution adopted in Metropolitan London of creating a highly disciplined organization of « professional » constables rather quickly established a modicum of order and achieved acceptance by many citizens, in the U.S. there was not, as Allan Silver (1967:5) put it, « a comparable sense of relief or improvement ».

Throughout the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, policing developed along different lines in the United States and Great Britain. Whereas in the United States there was a centrifugal tendency for local, county and state jurisdictions each to set up their separate forces with little coordination amongst them, in England and Wales there was a spread out from the centre, London, of a standardized method of policing and a growth of the monitoring capacities of the central government. The result of this latter pattern was that the legal powers of the English police have continued to expand with little opposition from most citizens and little generalized sense that civil liberties have been endangered. In contrast, American police have found themselves in a position of having their legal powers systematically curtailed through the efforts of the Supreme Court in response to protest from segments of the population who fear the unbridled power of the police. The difficulty of developing a way of policing a country composed of disparate ethnic and racial groups in which interests are forcefully articulated has been seen as a major social problem in the United States for well over a century. David C. Perry (1975:47) takes the American case to exemplify the dilemmas of modern policing itself :

« The history of the police function in the United States has been the history of a nation's confusion over how to police itself... The questions a metropolitan nation has yet to answer are : What is it we want the police to do ? How is it that we want our lives protected yet undisturbed in the name of such protection ? ».

Dismayed and sometimes appalled at the quality of police performance in many areas of the United States, and disheartened by the apparently low level of regard for police expressed by many citizens, American students of policing have frequently turned to England for the example of how « good » police-community relations could be established. They have looked with reverence at the capacity of the British policeman to command respect from citizens even though he has no more coercive capability than do ordinary persons. Often they have interpreted the apparently great deference shown by British citizens to their police to the long-standing *cultural* traditions of respect for authority and civility which contrast with the frontier individualism and rebelliousness of Americans.

Perhaps it required a *British* sociologist to identify for Americans the part that *structural* factors play in the extent to which legitimacy is accorded to the police by citizens. In 1964 Michael Banton drew attention to the relative homogeneity of the population of Britain as compared with the United States and predicted that as Britain became more racially heterogeneous, consensus about the police would decline and patterns of policing would necessarily change.

Whereas the United States has experienced an almost constant flux in the composition and movement of its population over the course of its history, England had remained almost exclusively a « white and tight little island » until after World War II. Not until the nineteen-fifties was there any appreciable in-migration of persons from the former colonies of the Third World. Thus, the chronicle of non-white immigration to Britain is the story of how in thirty years time a nation has been awakened to the fact it is no longer homogeneous, that long-shared and often unspoken understandings might no longer be taken for granted, and that conflict over the rights of citizens and the obligations of authority would manifest themselves in connection with the role of the police.

Policing in the United States since the Second World War has been analyzed as involving a growing attention to the law enforcement aspects of the social control function. Maureen Cain (1973) has suggested that such changes are already becoming apparent in British policing as well and has predicted that a new consensus surrounding law enforcement issues would emerge as conflicts about other aspects of the police role — such as peace-keeping and service — became manifest. At the same time, however, it is argued in both the United States and Britain that as police have relegated the tasks of order-maintenance and service to secondary positions in their priorities, they have tacitly acknowledged their allegiance to dominant segments of the society and have distanced themselves from accountability to most citizens through adoption of the stance of professional crime-fighters.

But the structural bases of conflicts which surface in demands for order and service do not evaporate because police disattend to them. Indeed, research in the United States in the past decade has highlighted the fact that the most vocal protests about the quality of police service and the conduct of police functions emanate from those segments of the society which perceive themselves as being alternatively harassed and neglected by police, whom they view as ignoring their demands in favour of the interests of people with power.

It appears that the same patterns of protest about the police are currently emerging in England ; namely, that minority group persons as well as young whites are less than satisfied with the quality of policing which they receive, and moreover that their discontents are centred upon the order-maintenance and service aspects of the police function. Granted, there is a fairly high degree of consensus that the police ought to be concerned about crime control, but those persons who are unsatisfied with the way the police serve their needs and answer their demands for order are likely to feel alienated from even the objective of crime control when it involves *their* participation in the process of preventing and apprehending offenders. If there is a « new consensus » about policing in Britain, or in the United States, it is a narrow one which leaves many persons feeling deprived of the respect and protection which, as citizens, they feel they are entitled to. Therefore, as police in both England and America emphasize their role as professionals in crime-fighting, they incur, on the one hand, a qualified appreciation for their specialized expertise and, on the other hand, a loss of the respect which had been associated with the more diffuse aspects of their function. As citizens become sensitized to the limited accountability of police to the public, the demand for curtailment of police power grows and the conflicts between the policers and the policed become salient issues for debate.

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