

6 Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to explore democracy by analysing how and why policing policy has changed in recent years. In approaching this task, the study is concerned both with the actual institutions and processes involved in decision making, and with democratic ideals. Although a preliminary attempt was made in the first chapter to establish a framework of analysis for deciding whether a set of institutions and processes are democratic, such a framework will only be useful to the extent that it can be applied to a specific and concrete case such as the shaping of policing policy. On the one hand, actual institutions and processes need to be evaluated by reference to a democratic ideal, or to a more elaborated set of standards or criteria. On the other hand, the pertinence and usefulness of the standards themselves need to be evaluated in the light of the results produced by applying them to a concrete and specific case. Hence, exploring democracy involves an interaction between actual processes of change and the framework of analysis used to evaluate them.

The strategy adopted was to focus, not on 'political' institutions, but on one of the central public services – the police – within the modern state. Democratic theory evolved at a time when the functions of the state were far more limited than they are today. In eighteenth century England, government expenditure accounted for about 5 per cent of gross national product, compared with about 50 per cent in the 1980s. In order to be applicable to modern conditions, the idea of democracy needs to be extended and developed so as to apply not just to central government institutions, but more widely to the whole apparatus of the service-delivery state.

For practical reasons, any study in this field must concentrate on a limited number of chosen areas of policy. Nevertheless, the three areas of policy chosen in this case cover such a wide range that they might be expected to highlight some of the main contrasts in the policy-making process. They include one of the three central policing functions (crime prevention) as these were defined by the founders of the modern police in England; a field in which the sphere of formal regulation is expanding in response to fundamental changes in the wider society (the police response

to rape, domestic violence, and child abuse); and an aspect of the internal organisation of the police that has an important influence on service delivery and value for money (civilianisation).

As set out in Chapter 1, an apparent limitation of the focus on change is that this cannot explain why certain aspects of policing have remained the same. Yet in practice the changes in the response to rape, domestic violence, and child abuse turn out to be much more far-reaching than in the field of crime prevention, where, in spite of a kaleidoscope of new initiatives, it seems that 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose'. Hence, the findings allow us to probe the reasons for the failure to address the crime prevention task in a convincing way, as well as the causes of more positive change in other fields.

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF CHANGE

The evidence of a change in policy and practice over the 1980s was perhaps strongest in the case of the response to rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. During that period, a number of concrete initiatives had been taken in the four study forces.

- All four had introduced specialist teams of some sort. Two forces had created a team on each division, one had designated individual women officers as victim liaison officers on each sub-division, and planned to introduce a specialist child abuse team, while the fourth had established a central 'family support unit'. Most of these teams were concerned primarily with child abuse, although in three of the four forces they were also involved in cases of rape and sexual assault.
- Two of the four forces had introduced victim examination suites.
- There had been a large increase in the amount of training given both to specialist officers and to others in dealing with victims of rape and child abuse.
- Detailed written guidelines had been introduced in all four forces, although they were fuller in some forces than others.
- New inter-agency structures had been put in place, most significantly those supporting joint investigations of child abuse by the police and social services.
- All four forces had by 1990 recruited and inducted female police surgeons, and had introduced procedures that allowed female victims to choose to be examined by them.

- With varying degrees of success, all four forces had made efforts to ensure that victims of rape and sexual assault, and of child abuse, would be given sensitive consideration and continuing support.
- In all four forces, there had been an increase over the 1980s in the proportion of women police officers.

Whereas there had been substantial changes of policy in the response to rape and to child abuse, changes in the response to domestic violence were comparatively slight. Although this research did not include observation of policing on the ground, there was good evidence that policy changes had been accompanied by some substantial changes in the actual pattern and style of policing. For example, specialist officers, and others who had received special training, seemed to be sympathetic to rape victims; in many cases they volunteered that a few years earlier police officers had generally had negative attitudes towards rape victims, and had treated them badly; they strongly disapproved of those earlier attitudes, and saw their own approach as entirely different.

Although there had been substantial change in all four forces in the response to rape and to child abuse, structures and policies varied in detail between them, and implementation was patchy in some cases.

The history of policy development on the civilianisation of posts formerly held by police officers is a longer one. Although there had been a few civilians in the police forces since their establishment in the nineteenth century, a rapid expansion occurred between 1945 and 1975, and this was encouraged by official pronouncements, starting with the report of the Oaksey committee in 1949. However, central government has followed a stop-go policy in this as in other fields. Home Office circulars in 1975 and 1976 reversed the earlier policy by calling for reductions in civilian staff. This was followed by actual declines in the proportion of civilian staff in police forces throughout England and Wales, and specifically within the four study forces. It was the Home Office Circular of 1983 on *Manpower, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Police Service* that explicitly reversed the policy again, and this was followed from 1985 by increases in the proportion of civilian staff in the service, which by 1993 had climbed back to the peak earlier scaled in 1975.

There is evidence of a fairly strong drive towards civilianisation in the latter half of the 1980s in the four study forces.

- The number of civilians employed increased both in absolute terms and as a proportion of an expanding total staff in all four forces.

- Home Office circular 105 of 1988 included a check-list of functions deemed suitable for civilianisation, referred to as 'key posts'. The percentage of key posts that were held by civilians increased considerably in all four study forces between 1987 and 1990. By 1990 the highest figure reached was 75.3 per cent in force A, whereas the lowest was 67 per cent in force B.
- During the 1980s, administrative support units, staffed partly by civilians, were established in two of the four study forces to deal with preparation of case files and other paperwork. This followed recommendations by the Home Office and the Audit Commission.
- In circular 114 of 1983, the Home Office made it clear that an increase in police officer establishment would not normally be approved unless the force was making progress towards civilianisation. Within all four study forces it became clear from interviews with senior officers that this was an effective lever that had caused them to look again at their civilianisation plans.
- Home Office circular 105 of 1988 made more detailed recommendations on staffing reviews and identified key posts for civilianisation. In addition, it drew attention to the need for career structures for civilian staff.
- According to Home Office statistics, considerable numbers of police officers were 'released' from posts not requiring police powers or training by civilianisation in each of the four study forces in the period 1985-1990. Whether there was actually an increase in the number of police officers engaged in functions for which police powers or training are required is nevertheless open to question (see below).
- In broad terms, the policy of civilianisation was supported by the most senior officers in all four study forces. They did not believe that the scope for civilianisation had yet been exhausted.
- In the second half of the 1980s, all four forces had introduced procedures for designating posts for civilianisation, and for putting this into effect. In two of the forces, this was through centrally organised staff reviews, whereas at the other two it was through systems whereby local commanders bid for staff and other resources.
- All four forces had a personnel department for civilian staff headed by a civilian.

- All had a civilian in charge of administration and finance, and in certain cases this post was very senior and influential.

It may be thought that the growth in the number of civilians within police forces might influence the styles of management used when dealing with police officers, and the culture of working groups. Effects of this kind seem more likely to the extent that there are civilians in more senior or expert posts, and to the extent that civilian staff generally have opportunities for training and advancement. However, it has not been possible to establish from the present research whether civilianisation has had an influence of this kind on the police organisation as a whole.

The conclusion that there was a substantial move towards civilianisation in the study forces has to be qualified in two ways. Although the increase in the number of civilian staff was real, this change never meant that police officers were *replaced*. Civilianisation always meant growth. For senior police officers, the first priority was probably to maintain or increase the number of police officers in the organisation. The price for doing this was that they had to bring about a greater increase in the number of civilians.

Again, although the Home Office has counted the number of police officers 'released' by civilianisation for 'proper' police duties, there is no clear evidence that the number or proportion of police officers engaged in 'proper' police work has actually increased. The problem is that the police officers who are 'released' from one administrative post may be redeployed to another; and new growth in the number of police officers may expand the number of administrative as well as 'proper police' posts held by police officers. A report by the National Audit Office (1991) has suggested that although more than 3,000 posts were civilianised between 1985 and 1989, the proportion of police officers classed as 'operational patrol' remained constant at around 55 per cent.

The story of policy change in the field of crime prevention is considerably more complex than in either of the other two cases. There are a number of reasons for that greater complexity. First, crime prevention is potentially a large and varied field of activity, yet it is one that is still at an early stage of development. At the present stage, there are many different, often contrasting and uncoordinated initiatives; and there is no well-established body of knowledge, or widely-shared set of assumptions, about what does and does not work. Second, crime prevention was in the nineteenth century said to be one of the three basic functions of the police (along with maintaining public tranquillity and upholding the law). It was for long assumed that the police could exercise this function through uniform patrol. In modern conditions, however, neither uniform foot patrol

nor vehicle patrol is an effective or efficient method of crime prevention. The process of policy change therefore involves finding new methods of crime prevention that the police can implement either on their own or in collaboration with other agencies. This cannot be a linear process of development. It involves the creation of new forms of social action and organisational structures. Third, the question of what the role of the police (as opposed to other agencies) should be in crime prevention has remained unresolved. Fourth, far from clarifying these complexities, government has tended to cloud the waters further by dividing responsibility between departments of central government and by creating new agencies. For example, the Department of the Environment and the Home Office in the 1980s launched fairly similar initiatives to reduce crime on inner city housing estates (the Priority Estates Programme (PEP) was launched by the DoE, whereas the Safer Cities Programme was launched by the Home Office); at the same time, the Home Office funded crime reduction initiatives on housing estates run by the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit of the non profit-making NACRO (although the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit was later floated off as a separate organisation); and it established another semi-autonomous and semi-governmental but apparently voluntary organisation, Crime Concern, which also launched some crime reduction programmes on housing estates (among other things). One purpose of all this was to avoid giving budgets or statutory responsibility for crime prevention to local authorities. Another consequence, however, was that the nature of the police responsibility for crime prevention became increasingly obscure.

In this field, therefore, changes in policing policy are an aspect of wider changes in crime prevention policies implemented by a medley of governmental, semi-governmental, and non-governmental organisations. Although, taking account of the many relevant initiatives, policy developments, and organisations, there was a huge increase over the 1980s in the attention given to crime prevention overall, changes in *policing* policy in the field were fairly superficial. The following is a summary of the evidence for limited policy change in the four study forces.

- All of the forces had specialist crime prevention officers and central departments. In one (force B) the central crime prevention department was larger and better funded than in the others, and some growth in the size and prestige of this department had occurred over the 1980s. The chief constable had made great play in public of the emphasis he placed on crime prevention, and that was reflected in the high profile of some of the force's crime prevention activities. A restructuring of staff concerned with crime prevention had been carried through in two of the

other forces. The objectives were to devolve responsibility for crime prevention activity to officers based at divisions or sub-divisions, but create a channel of communication or line of management between them and the central crime prevention department.

- The 1980s saw the introduction and rapid proliferation of neighbourhood watch schemes throughout the country, though not evenly across types of neighbourhood. Although this was not strictly a change in policing policy, considerable policing resources were devoted to servicing these schemes.
- All of the four study forces had introduced new policies for dealing with burglar alarms following recommendations made by ACPO in 1989. The new ACPO policy shifts responsibility away from the police and towards central alarm stations in the first instance: for example, it is these alarm stations that contact keyholders to check whether an alarm call is genuine. The guidelines also state that wherever there are seven or more false calls in any 12 month period from a single alarm source, the police should withdraw response for a minimum of 12 months or until they are satisfied that the fault has been rectified. The new policies introduced by the study forces should have had the effect of reducing the amount of police time wasted by false calls.
- A wide variety of special projects with crime prevention objectives were introduced or supported by the police over the 1980s. All of the four study forces had started to offer advice to local authorities, architects, and building developers about the crime prevention implications of design features, some within the framework of the *Secured by Design* initiative. All of the four forces had become involved in social crime prevention schemes of one kind or another: ‘crime theatre’ schemes (by which children were encouraged to develop short plays with a crime prevention theme); training schemes for young people; organised activities for young people during the summer holidays. Schools visits took place in all four areas, but in one (force C) the schools liaison programme was reshaped in the latter half of the 1980s. Force B had introduced the policy of dedicating one police officer in each sub-division to analysing the local crime patterns and presenting the information to management and operational officers. There was some police support for crime prevention panels in each of the four areas, and in one there was evidence of an effort to stimulate this kind of activity. There were various other more specific initiatives such as the crime prevention ‘theme of the month’ in force D, the ‘light against crime’ campaign in the same area to encourage householders to

reduce crime by increasing the level of lighting around their properties, an autocrime prevention initiative in the same area, and the 'coalition against crime' in force B, in which a committee of business people and others were intended to launch crime prevention initiatives, although examples of specific initiatives that had been launched in this way were scarce.

- The police had been involved in a number of local initiatives launched within the framework of the Safer Cities Programme. For example, force C was involved in a target-hardening and property-marking scheme in a particular area of the city, and in a project against obscene telephone calls, both launched by the local Safer Cities Programme. Again, in force D area there was police involvement in many aspects of Safer Cities work. For example, a burglary project was coordinated by a seconded police inspector, a sub-divisional crime prevention officer carried out security surveys and provided advice for a target-hardening programme, and the police were represented on working groups set up to examine racial harassment and women's safety.
- In force B area, multi-agency crime prevention initiatives were established in each local authority area, led by a co-ordinator and steering group. There was evidence that the police had played an important role in these initiatives, although it was not clear that the schemes had taken effective action to counter crime problems as opposed to collating information and identifying what the problems were.
- Force C had taken a leading role in setting up a working party on inner-city disorder, which had come up with various actions, such as reducing the sale of half-price drinks, detailed instructions to doorstaff at pubs and clubs, and afternoon closure of pubs on days before Christmas when there had previously been trouble. The working party had recommended that closed circuit television be installed in the central city area, although at the time of the research this proposal was still the subject of controversy.

In spite of these developments, there was evidence of a wider failure by the police to make substantive changes towards introducing effective crime prevention policies.

- Except in force B, crime prevention departments remained small and had not grown. Staff with specific crime prevention responsibilities still amounted to only around 1 per cent of the total by the end of the 1980s.

Contrary to Reiner's (1992:99) statement that they had become 'the belles of the ball', their status remained low.

- There was much rhetoric during the 1980s in support of 'community policing' and 'community-based crime prevention', but there was no clear line of development in putting such ideas into practice. Any police contribution to community-based crime prevention schemes was minor.
- Although there was a huge growth of NW schemes, the police rapidly came to realise that they could not support these schemes adequately. Because of inadequate support, and for other reasons, the NW idea was not fully implemented. There is little evidence for the effectiveness of NW as it emerged in Britain in the 1980s.
- There was a continual lack of clarity in the structures within police forces for dealing with crime prevention. Changes tended to make matters worse. In several of the study forces, specialist crime prevention officers came to have a dual responsibility to the local commander and to a central crime prevention department.
- There was generally a lack of resources and expertise within the study forces to support proactive crime prevention. For example, the amount of impact that could be made by architectural liaison officers in their very small numbers must have been minimal in relation to the enormous task of re-designing the built environment. Also, their level of expertise must have been low compared to that of a professional architect who would have had seven years' full-time training.
- Social crime prevention projects initiated by the police had tenuous links with concrete crime prevention objectives. They can be regarded as good public relations for the police rather than hard-nosed schemes to reduce crime.
- Whatever the role of the police in crime prevention should finally be, it is clear that since they record crime and process criminal investigations the police are in a better position than anyone else to analyse the patterns of crime and draw conclusions about possible actions to prevent it. Yet, on the whole, the study forces had failed to develop detailed crime pattern analysis. For the most part, they had not even begun to take an analytical approach to the development of crime prevention strategy.
- For the most part, multi-agency crime prevention involving the police was not a reality. At best, there were initiatives where the police cooperated with one other agency. The other agencies involved tended

to perceive the police as wanting to direct any initiative in which they were involved, and this attitude was unpopular. There was little evidence of concrete policy initiatives embodying a major transformation away from narrow target-hardening initiatives and towards the multi-agency approach.

- Although more resources were devoted to crime prevention in force B than elsewhere, most crime prevention initiatives by that force lacked substance and were largely exercises in public relations.
- None of the crime prevention activity by the study forces was adequately evaluated. There was little or no evidence that it was effective.

INFLUENCES ON POLICING POLICY

The findings on policy change in the three areas covered by the study are therefore mixed. They show a major change in policy and practice in the response to rape and child abuse, and a smaller change in the response to domestic violence. Even allowing for patchy implementation of new policies, this probably led to substantive change in the style and pattern of policing on the ground. There has also been real change in the employment of civilians within the police force, both in terms of their numbers and proportion of total staff, and in terms of the range of tasks they undertake. However, it is not clear that this has caused any more fundamental change in the nature of the police organisation. Also, the policy has been implemented defensively by chief constables, as part of a package of growth that allowed them to maintain and increase the numbers of police officers in their organisations. It is not clear that the amount of 'proper police work' carried out has increased as a result of civilianisation. In the case of crime prevention, the police have mounted many small initiatives and have participated to some extent in the plethora of schemes originating from elsewhere, and they have provided some limited support to the huge number of neighbourhood watch groups that grew up in the 1980s. But there has been no major change in the police role in crime prevention, or in the amount of resources they devote to it. At a time when crime prevention has come to assume greatly increasing importance in public policy, the police have largely failed to establish a credible role for themselves in this field.

This section analyses the influences leading to policy change in certain areas, and the constraints that have prevented constructive change in others. That prepares the way for an evaluation in the final section of the institutions and processes leading to change or stability in the light of the democratic ideals set out in Chapter 1.

Central government

The Home Office clearly had a strong influence on the development of policy in all three areas, and in the case of crime prevention there was also an influence from the Department of the Environment and, at one period, from the Prime Minister's office. In all three policy areas, Home Office circulars were a central element of policy change. Although the researchers did not have privileged access to Home Office files, it was not difficult to trace the origins of these circulars, and a considerable body of information was collected about the process of consultation that took place before they were issued in their final form. A number of conclusions can be drawn.

First, none of the circulars, and none of the policy changes of which they were a central element, arose from the concerns or interests of ministers. The impetus for the development of crime prevention policy came from a new Permanent Under Secretary in the Home Office, and grew out of research and analysis carried out by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit. Thereafter officials awaited favourable political conditions to float their proposals. It was officials who took the initiative in drafting the Home Office circulars on rape (of 1982 and 1986), on child abuse (of 1988) and on domestic violence (of 1990). In several of these cases, officials were responding to stimuli from pressure groups (the Women's National Commission Report) or events (development of new approaches to policing crimes against women and children in the Metropolitan Police); or events gained acceptance for a circular already drafted (the Cleveland controversy). The reversal of policy on civilianisation in 1983 may seem to be the exception, in that it grew out of the government's Financial Management Initiative (FMI), which had originated with ministers. However, such an analysis would be misleading. What is most remarkable is that the Home Office had avoided applying FMI to the police for four years after the Conservative Government came to power. At a time when other public services were being squeezed, no questions were asked about the efficiency of the police, and greatly increased amounts of money were thrown at them. The reversal that occurred in 1983 was not the result of a ministerial decision, but as Sir Clive Whitmore publicly testified to the Public Accounts Committee, was a response to pressure by Treasury officials.

Second, although ministers did not initiate any of the policies, they were involved in their further development at a later stage in two cases. At the 1987 election (*after* the first circular on crime prevention) the Conservatives made a manifesto promise to put more resources into crime prevention, and the new Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, decided to pursue this as a major plank of policy. John Patten was put in charge of developing a 'total

response' to crime, and a Ministerial Group on Crime Prevention was set up to coordinate action between government departments. Similarly, *after* officials had started to take initiatives on the response to crimes against women and children (including drafting circulars) a Ministerial Group on Women was formed with John Patten as chair. However, there was little evidence that either of these groups had exerted any specific influence on the development of policy, except to give extra weight to it.

Third, the circulars tended to be the product of a wide range of influences, because each one emerged in its final form only after a considerable amount of consultation with bodies outside the Home Office. Information about the consultative process is incomplete because ACPO declined to cooperate with this research. However, it seems certain that ACPO was formally consulted in every case. The first crime prevention circular was also discussed in draft with the local authority associations, and with individual local authorities. The second was sent to about 30 organisations, including the police staff associations, the local authority associations, the Association of Chief Officers of Probation, the Fire Unions, NACRO, and Crime Concern, although the comments did not lead to major changes. The 1983 circular on *Manpower, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Police Service* was discussed in draft by the Tripartite Forum, which includes representatives of the Home Office, ACPO, and the local authority associations. The second on *Civilian Staff in the Police Service* (105/88) was discussed by the Police Advisory Board, which includes in addition representatives of the Superintendents' Association and Police Federation. In addition it was sent in draft to trade unions representing civilians in the police service (principally NALGO). The influence of bodies outside the Home Office was marked in the case of the various circulars on the response to crimes against women and children. In several cases, Home Office officials felt they should respond to events or outside pressures, but initially lacked the knowledge and expertise needed to draft guidance; they therefore looked to people and organisations with experience and ideas, notably to those leading new initiatives within the Metropolitan Police. Also, ACPO was very influential in several cases: in fact, it was virtually the joint author of the circulars on rape and on child abuse. The draft circular on child abuse was also circulated to police staff associations. The role of outside pressure groups had been to stimulate activity in these areas; they did not have an input into the detailed drafting of circulars.

Fourth, in some of these cases central government acted on its own initiative in launching these policy changes, whereas in others it responded to outside pressures or to a sea change in the wider society. The

development of crime prevention and civilianisation were proactive, whereas the reforms in the response to crimes against women and children were more responsive. Nevertheless, the original initiative to develop guidance on investigating child abuse was begun by the Home Office before there was obvious or specific outside pressure; the Cleveland controversy broke after the circular had been drafted.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

During the 1980s, the role of HMIC was extended and its resources were strengthened. The most notable developments were the decision to publish reports of inspections of individual forces from 1988; a more systematic and thorough approach to the collection and analysis of information about police forces, in line with the development of measures of performance by the Audit Commission; and the appointment of younger men to the inspectorate, which had previously consisted exclusively of men who had completed full careers as chief constables. Because of these changes, HMIC has tended to become more influential in general terms. Yet the Inspectorate played no part in initiating any of the policy changes considered in this study. Also, it played no significant part in the further development of policy in the fields of crime prevention and the response to crimes against women and children. HMIC did, however, have an important influence in keeping up the pressure for civilianisation once the 1983 circular had been issued. Individual inspections would always consider whether civilianisation was proceeding as fast as it should be. However, this role was limited to policy implementation.

Reiner (1991) has argued that the strengthened role of HMIC is an aspect of increasing central control over policing. These findings suggest that this argument is an over-simplification. The strengthened role of HMIC may have led to a more even implementation of policy (although even so, implementation often remains patchy, as argued below). It has not, however, led to any increase in central control over the process of policy making.

The Association of Chief Police Officers

ACPO is the body through which chief officers can express a collective view. (Besides chief constables, chief officers include assistant chief constables in provincial forces and those at the rank of commander and above in the Metropolitan Police.) In formal terms it is merely a staff association, except that the taxpayer foots the bill for its secretariat, conferences, and other expenses. In practice it can be argued that it is the emergent network of a national police organisation. The clearest evidence

of this is the Association's role in setting up the National Reporting Centre which coordinates the response to major public disorder across all police forces. ACPO has an extensive structure of committees and sub-committees (always made up of chief officers) on areas of policy such as crime prevention or drugs. The members of the committees, and the dates and agendas of their meetings, remain outside the public domain. ACPO does, however, hold several conferences each year, to which the press are invited.

ACPO certainly had an important influence on the development of policy in the areas covered in this study, but that influence did not always dominate, and it seems that ACPO suffered some important defeats. Most notably, ACPO was clearly opposed to further civilianisation in the 1970s. Although its view prevailed for a while, and may have helped bring about a reverse of Home Office policy between 1975 and 1983, ACPO gave in when officials decided to apply the Financial Management Initiative to the police. Further, in order to reduce the influence of local authorities over the growing number of civilian staff in the police service, ACPO argued in the early 1980s for a national civilian service. This would have avoided the present situation in which police civilians are employed by local authorities (or police authorities). However, this proposal was not adopted, and ACPO had to give ground. As pointed out earlier, however, the chief officers perhaps won the most important battle in ensuring that civilianisation would always be interpreted as growth, and would never lead to a reduction in the number of police officers employed.

In the case of the initiatives in responding to crimes against women and children, ACPO was not among the initiators of change, but it was closely involved from an early stage in the formulation of detailed policy through the drafting of circulars.

The analysis of ACPO's influence is most interesting and problematic in the case of crime prevention. The chief officers as a body were certainly not among those who initiated the move towards placing a greater emphasis on crime prevention, although a couple of individual chief constables were influential in that way. ACPO was consulted about the two crime prevention circulars, but there is no evidence that its advice led to any important changes. After the new emphasis on crime prevention was well established, ACPO's crime prevention sub-committee produced a paper outlining a model for a community crime prevention department, and this model was an important influence on one of the four forces covered by this study. The same committee also set out a national 'burglar alarm policy' which strongly influenced all of the four forces studied. In both cases, these models were based on the arrangements in one force headed by a chief constable who had become known as a crusader on behalf of crime prevention.

In spite of these limited and specific influences, it can be argued that ACPO tended to prevent the police service from finding its mission in the field of crime prevention. It had the choice of jumping in one of two ways. One choice would be to argue that the police should be the lead agency in crime prevention, and to put forward ambitious plans for developing new methods and structures for dealing with crime prevention. The other choice would be to argue that some other body should take the lead (for example, local authorities, or a new national agency) and to define a role for the police in a crime prevention effort directed by this other organisation. Although this is difficult to reconstruct, it seems likely that ACPO failed to make a choice between these alternatives, and adopted spoiling tactics. Because of its general hostility to local authorities, the government would have been reluctant to give them a new statutory responsibility for crime prevention, or the funds needed to discharge such a responsibility. However, an additional factor may well have been ACPO's hostility to the idea. It would have seen crime prevention as a source of new funding, and would have been reluctant to see those funds going elsewhere. At the same time, most senior police officers interviewed as part of this study would be extremely reluctant to take on the main responsibility for crime prevention: they lack the appetite and expertise for such a task, they see the need for the active participation of other organisations, and they understand that those organisations would generally not accept police leadership. Hence, in the words of a chief superintendent in force C, 'the partnership approach is a response to pressure from the police'. It is plausible to suggest, although it cannot be proved, that this particular fudge is largely the product of ACPO influence in blocking more imaginative proposals in which other organisations would take the lead, while failing to take the lead itself.

The local authority associations

The level of influence of the local authority associations on changes in policing policy has been mixed. The associations had a strong influence on circular 114 of 1983 on *Manpower, Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Police Service*, and one of them (the Association of County Councils) caused circular 115 of 1988 on *Civilians Staff in the Police Service* to be revised. They cautioned against new initiatives to deal with crimes against women and children, particularly the creation of specialist units, without specific additional funds to cover them. Most interesting, however, was their attempt to influence the development of crime prevention policy. The Association of Metropolitan Authorities set up a working party in 1988 to examine the local authority role in crime prevention, which recommended that the major responsibilities should be divided between three tiers (central

government, county councils, and district councils); that county and district councillors working together should draw up general strategies and more specific plans; and that crime prevention should be resourced by a specific grant from central government. So far these recommendations have been ignored, possibly in part because of representations from ACPO (see above).

Staff associations and trade unions

The Police Federation is a natural opponent of civilianisation, and has consistently argued against it or tried to slow it down. For example, in July 1981, the Federation submitted a paper to the Police Advisory Board which expressed concern at the growth of the civilian element in the police service in the climate of industrial militancy. Perhaps because of its known opposition, the Federation was not asked to comment on the draft circular of 1983, which was only submitted to the Tripartite Forum (see above). It was given the opportunity to comment (as a member of the Police Advisory Board) on the later circular of 1988 on civilianisation. However, the objections that it submitted in response (mainly to the civilianisation of specific posts) were brushed aside.

The Federation supported the development of improved training packages for investigating serious sexual offences and the setting up of specialist units. The Federation did not play a part in initiating interest in the field, but followed the lead of the report of the Women's National Commission on *Violence Against Women*. The initiatives suggested by that report were seen as being in the interests of Federation members, because they would help to attract resources to the police service, and would tend to enhance the level of skill and training required by police officers, and raise them in the esteem of the public. By contrast, the Police Federation seems not to have played a significant role in debate about crime prevention policy, perhaps because the role of the police in this field seems either unclear, or if clear, mundane.

The National and Local Government Officers' union (NALGO – now part of Unison), which at the time of the research had 25,000 members in British police forces, influenced policy through its role in collective bargaining over pay and conditions for local authority staff, including civilians in the police service. Although (in contrast to the Police Federation) it was a natural supporter of civilianisation, it was not formally asked to comment on the circular of 1983. However, as well as members of the Police Advisory Board, it was asked to comment on the later draft circular of 1988 on civilianisation. It is not possible to trace any specific influence of the views NALGO expressed on civilianisation, however. The

union did not appear to have had any influence on policy change in the fields of crime prevention or the response to crimes against women and children.

The Audit Commission and the National Audit Office

From 1986, the Audit Commission began working on improving value for money in the police service; it produced audit guides for use in forces, and a series of published papers on police management topics. Subsequently the Commission was given responsibility by the government for developing a set of performance indicators for the police service. By that time, a close relationship had developed between the Audit Commission and HMIC, so that the subjects for the Commission's police papers and, later, the performance indicators arose from a close interaction between the Commission and the Inspectorate (as well as with senior officers within the police service).

The Audit Commission's 1988 paper *Administrative Support for Operational Police Officers* appears to have been an important influence in stimulating the development of civilian administrative support units within police forces. Otherwise, the Commission appears not to have had a direct influence on the policy of civilianisation.

The National Audit Office (a body that certifies the accounts of government departments and a range of other public bodies) in 1991 published a report on value for money in the police service, which examined civilianisation in that context and criticised the effectiveness with which the policy had been pursued. This provided useful ammunition for the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (see below).

Parliament

There were not enough resources within the present study to carry out a systematic analysis of all questions and debates in Parliament touching on the three chosen areas of policing policy. Instead the problem was approached the other way about by asking participants in the policy-making process whether they had taken note of parliamentary debates or answers, and by carrying out a few interviews with MPs. Although they are not exhaustive, the findings firmly establish the conclusion that Parliament had only a very limited effect on policy change in the three chosen areas. The clearest example of a specific influence was provided by the 1991 report of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee on value for money in provincial police forces. The committee strongly criticised the inability of the Home Office to exert direct control over the progress of civilianisation, and more generally felt there was a lack of control by central government over police expenditure, more than 70 per cent of which came

from central taxation. Although this kind of criticism may prove to be influential in the 1990s, it is notable that Parliament only got round to discussing the subject about eight years after it had been highlighted within the Home Office. There is no evidence that Parliament had any influence on civilianisation in the 1980s, or on the drive towards value for money in the police service that took place then.

In order to investigate possible Parliamentary influence on the response to crimes against women and children, an interview was carried out with the late Jo Richardson MP, who had campaigned for many years on women's issues. However, she made no strong claims about her own influence, or that of other members, on policy developments in the 1980s. She had earlier been instrumental in making it possible for a woman to get a court injunction requiring a man to stay away from her, and had played a role in the establishment of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues. However, that group was not a major influence on changes in policing policy. Officials in the Home Office who had been responsible for drafting circulars mentioned parliamentary questions as something that might, in principle, draw their attention to a particular problem; but they did not in fact cite parliamentary questions as the stimulus for the development of any of the relevant circulars.

In the case of crime prevention, the field of possible parliamentary influence is so wide that it would be impossible to monitor. Many parliamentary debates touch on rising crime and what is to be done about it in a general way, but there was not the slightest indication from interviews with participants in the policy-making process that these had been influential or even noticed. During the latter part of the 1980s the Labour Party had begun to develop its 'new realist' approach to crime, which advocates a combination of firm law enforcement and practical crime prevention. There was no indication in the 1980s that the Labour Party's stance had encouraged the government to embrace crime prevention with more enthusiasm. Its main effect in the 1990s has been to drive the Conservative government back to get-tough policies of stiffer penalties and specifically higher rates of imprisonment.

Local representatives

In general the police authorities in the four study areas had little or no influence on policy change in civilianisation, the response to crimes against women and children, or crime prevention. There were, however, important differences between the police authorities in the four areas. Two of them (A and C) had no effective influence, but for contrasting reasons. In area A, the authority circumscribed its own role. It adopted an attitude of

exaggerated deference towards the chief constable, never tried to exert an influence, and complained that it was provided with too much information. In area C, by contrast, the Labour-led authority under a young and active chair tried hard to have an influence but was met with total opposition from the chief constable. The authority had a very low level of information, since the chief constable not only took action without consulting it, but also frequently refused to provide information about what had been done after the event. As well as being deaf to the majority on the authority, the chief constable also refused to bow to Conservative demands that NW schemes should be supported.

Like the one in area A, the authority in area D circumscribed its own role, was strongly supportive of the chief constable, and had little effective influence, although it did have some. The authority in area B was more active and influential than the others. It took the initiative in calling for reports, and knew how to ask for useful information, which was generally provided. It strongly supported the chief constable.

It has been suggested (Loveday, 1987) that the joint boards created on the abolition of the metropolitan counties are likely to be more impotent than single-county police authorities. However, among the four authorities studied here, by far the most active and influential was the one joint board, which was in area B.

The findings cast some light on the reasons for the lack of influence of police authorities. One important factor seems to be their circumscribed legal powers. Although an amenable chief constable will not stand on legal niceties, an unhelpful one has plenty of legal arguments on his side. Also it is significant that in several areas police authorities did insist on having their way on the grading of civilian staff and won because their statutory powers were unassailable in that field. Differences between the police authorities are not explained by which party was in power, but they may have been related to the political complexion of the ruling group within that party. Thus, a moderate Labour ruling group was the most influential one. The approach of the chief constable was important in determining how influential the authority was allowed to be, although where it had the relevant powers the authority might win in any case. The way the authority defined its own role seemed to be extremely important. Finally, having sub-committees on specific areas of policy probably helped an authority to be more effective and influential. Taken together these findings suggest that bodies with statutory powers similar to those of the present police authorities could be considerably more influential than the present ones generally are. Increasing their statutory powers would be a necessary but by no means sufficient condition of making them more influential.

Other local representative bodies, such as police consultative committees, crime prevention panels, and NW groups, made no discernible input into local policing policy. This confirms the results of previous research (Morgan, 1989). In area A, however, a police and public safety committee covering one major town had been active and influential. Among the reasons for its success were that it had the services of a full-time adviser, who analysed information regularly produced by the police; that it included members of groups that often have difficult relations with the police; and that it had achieved results, because it was a sub-committee of the borough council with access to resources and to the council decision-making process.

Pressure groups and voluntary organisations

Women's groups had an important influence in stimulating policy change in the police response to rape and (less successfully) to domestic violence. Among these the most important were the Women's Aid Federation and Women Against Rape, which in 1985 published a report *Ask Any Woman* (Hall, 1985) that suggested detailed requirements for police procedures in the investigation of rape. These organisations were building on a body of research and analysis that had been accumulating for more than a decade. They had modest contacts with the police at the local level, and their main influence was through the national publicity given to their reports. The crucial influence on the Home Office when it introduced its second circular, however, was the report published in 1986 of the working party set up by the Women's National Commission. This was a governmental advisory group rather than a pressure group completely outside government, and it may have been particularly influential for that reason.

Much the largest voluntary organisation with relevant interests is Victim Support, which was started in the early 1970s, and by the late 1980s encompassed 400 local victim support schemes. The main purpose of the organisation is to provide support to victims of all crimes, but in recent years some of its volunteers have been trained to support victims of sexual offences specifically. The emphasis has therefore always been on providing a service rather than lobbying, and contacts with the police have always been close because people have to be referred to Victim Support by the police. Victim Support may have been part of the attitude shift towards emphasising the needs of the victim rather than those of justice in the abstract, but it was not a force behind the specific policy changes in the 1980s. However, more recently (in 1992) Victim Support published a report of a national inter-agency working party on domestic violence, which made specific recommendations for all agencies, including the police.

NACRO (the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) had an important influence on the development of crime prevention policy in the 1980s. From the late 1970s, with the establishment of its Crime Prevention Unit and Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, NACRO became involved in crime prevention initiatives, particularly on 'problem estates'. A seminar it organised in 1982 had what a senior Home Office official described as a 'really quite critical' influence on the development of thinking about crime prevention within the Home Office. Later its crime prevention initiatives became a source of practical knowledge, and its former staff moved on to newer parts of the growing crime prevention industry.

Pressure groups and voluntary organisations had no influence on the development of thinking about civilianisation in the 1980s. More recently, 'New Right' think-tanks such as the Adam Smith Institute have started to turn their attention to the police, but their influence lies more behind more recent developments such as parts of the Police and Magistrates' Courts Bill, and not behind the changes in the 1980s and early 1990s that are under discussion here.

The media

The influence of the mass media on policy change tends to be pervasive and difficult to pin down but, perhaps surprisingly, some useful conclusions can be drawn from the examples analysed in this study. In the case of the response to rape, there was widespread agreement that a particular television programme transmitted in 1982 had had a decisive influence on changes in the investigation of rape. This was the famous programme in the series by Roger Graef filmed in the Thames Valley Police, which showed a woman who alleged that she had been raped being interviewed by two disbelieving CID officers. The impact of the programme was so great that it caused a massive public reaction. The Home Office felt obliged to issue a circular that year on rape investigation, although it had to be couched in vague terms because officials had not had time to develop examples or precepts of good practice. This programme was spontaneously mentioned about eight years after its transmission by many of those interviewed about policy change in rape investigation both inside and outside the police forces.

Later, in 1986, television and newspaper reporting of the controversy about alleged child abuse in Cleveland again had a strong impact. The Home Office had already drafted a circular, but the media coverage ensured that the police in the words of one senior official 'were screaming for it' and enforced acceptance of its recommendations.

It is not possible to point to any specific media coverage that had a comparable effect in the case of crime prevention, and still less, of course, in the case of civilianisation. As an aspect of the internal organisation of the police, civilianisation is obviously not a subject with mass appeal. The case of crime prevention, and its contrast with rape, is more revealing, however. What was wrong with the police investigation of rape could be devastatingly revealed by simply filming a single case. The whole pattern was encapsulated in the individual drama. The failure to find effective means of preventing crime could not possibly be dramatised in any comparable way. Worse, the only neat and dramatic response that can be found for rising crime is catching and punishing an exemplary criminal. Crime prevention schemes are merely the fodder of outstandingly boring documentaries.

Individual police forces

Although chief constables had an important influence as a collective, through ACPO, there was also evidence that each individual chief constable had a specific influence on policy change within his own force. The clearest illustration is in the field of crime prevention, in which the chief constable of force B considered himself to be a pioneer. The central crime prevention department was considerably larger in force B than elsewhere, and the model structure for such a department that was adopted by ACPO was on the pattern of force B. Similarly, ACPO's burglar alarm policy was force B's policy writ large. This was not necessarily a good model of policy development, however. There was a strong view both within force B, and in other forces, that much of its crime prevention activity was lacking in substance. Indeed, as in other forces, the results of these schemes were never properly evaluated.

Again, although all chief constables gave some support to NW, they did so at different times, and with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The extreme case of reluctance was force C, where the chief constable resisted until very late, then mounted an 'experimental' scheme, then extended support for NW more widely even though the evaluation of the experiment was unfavourable, then partially withdrew support when he became alarmed at the amount of resources consumed.

Policy change on the investigation of child abuse was fairly consistent across the four forces studied, but the same was not true of the response to rape, or to domestic violence. Although all of the forces had done something, there were wide variations in what they had done. In particular, there was no general pattern with regard to specialist units or the breadth of their responsibilities.

There were fairly important differences, too, between timing and rate of civilianisation in the four forces, and the differences became much greater at the level of particular functions, some of which had been completely civilianised in one force, half in another, and not at all in a third.

In general, these differences between individual forces could be traced to the views of the chief constables, or to internal history and politics. They had nothing to do with patterns of demand in the area, the views of local people, or the positions adopted by the police authority or local consultative committees.

Cultural shift

So far the analysis has considered the influence of various organisations, institutions, or groups on change in policing policy. However, an account in those terms clearly lacks something. This is particularly clear in the case of the response to crimes against women and children. It is possible to point to organisations such as Women Against Rape, the Women's Aid Federation, and the Women's National Commission that had an influence; but it seems unlikely that these small, ill-funded, and essentially rather marginal organisations were the major cause of change. After all, many larger and better-funded pressure groups or national commissions have failed to achieve any of their objectives over long periods.

It is plain that the change in policing policy in this field is an aspect of a much wider and deeper cultural shift. The case study of policing policy on the response to rape provides a particularly striking illustration of this. The two CID officers featured in the Thames Valley film were apparently comfortable with their own behaviour at the time that they interviewed the alleged rape victim. They knew that they were being filmed, and that the film might be transmitted to millions, yet they appeared to make no attempt to behave in a way that others would find acceptable. This strongly suggests that they saw their behaviour as normal and correct in the circumstances, and were unable to grasp that others would see it differently. When the film was transmitted, the response on the part of a large number of viewers (men as well as women) was shock and outrage. That was an immediate and spontaneous response, not the result of deliberation or analysis. Those facts demonstrate a radical disjuncture between the way the CID officers saw the interview and the way many viewers saw it. It can only be explained on the assumption that a major cultural shift was taking place, and had opened up a fissure between the CID officers, still rooted in an old tradition, and many viewers who had shifted to a new one.

It would be superficial to say that the Thames Valley film caused the change of policing policy. It was the flashgun that momentarily illuminated

the clash of perceptions, assumptions, and values between the police and many of their customers. The fundamental cause of change, however, was the underlying cultural shift. The activities of the organisations described in the last section were a part of that shift and no doubt contributed to it; but they were themselves partly a product of the underlying shift that was taking place.

This kind of analysis is based on the assumption that culture develops to some extent according to a logic of its own. Although the shift in the way that rape victims are perceived can be represented in crude Marxist terms as a consequence merely of a change in the balance of power (in this case between men and women), that would be much less true of the cultural shift that underlies the increasing emphasis on crime prevention. This is akin to the 'paradigm shift' that Kuhn (1970) argued lies at the heart of scientific revolutions. The paradigm, in this case, is the idea that the only proper response to crime is punishment, and that the threefold purpose of punishment is retribution, deterrence, and reform. Social scientists have found it increasingly difficult to reconcile their findings with such a paradigm, and accordingly a shift of paradigm is in progress. There is an increasing body of evidence to show that the individual who is punished is not deterred but becomes more likely to reoffend as a result. Imprisonment at thinkable levels does not incapacitate more than an insignificant fraction of offenders. There is little or no evidence that a high rate of conviction or severity of punishment causes a reduction in the overall crime rate. And punishment by the state does not reform people: to quote the 1988 White Paper, 'imprisonment is an expensive way of making bad people worse'.

The paradigm shift that is taking place involves separating what have been thought of as the inter-related functions of punishment, and using different means to achieve the different objectives. The ritual or symbolic function of punishment as retribution is important, and cannot be abandoned, although restitution can in some cases be added to it. Yet these symbolic acts cannot achieve the objective of reducing the aggregate level of crime. The growth of interest in crime prevention arises directly from this. Practical methods of reducing crime that are completely unconnected with punishment or even law enforcement must be found.

At a more detailed level, of course, the growth of interest in crime prevention arose from the results of research by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit on methods of reducing opportunities for crime in specific situations, but the basic idea is much broader than that. It arises from a paradigm shift that allows us to see the reduction of crime as a separate objective from the punishment of offenders.

This analysis helps to explain why crime prevention policy has changed less than in each of the other areas studied. Essentially it is because the shift in this case affects the paradigm used by specialists in the field, and has had comparatively little influence on popular culture. There is, as it were, a coterie that is trying to develop new remedies on a scientific basis while the mass of the people still rely on herbal folk medicines. Politicians of all parties find it easy and convenient to appeal to the old way of thinking. Consequently, the paradigm shift that would truly put crime prevention policy at the centre of the stage has not been accomplished.

CRITERIA OF DEMOCRACY REVISITED

It is now time to return to the seven criteria of democracy suggested in Chapter 1. If this framework of analysis can usefully be applied to the results on policy change in the police service, then it should be possible to say how far and in what ways British policing is democratic.

Equity

The concept of equity does not seem to be relevant to the process of civilianisation, but it does have immediate application to the other two cases. The whole shift of policy on the response to rape, domestic violence, and child abuse can be represented as an attempt to equalise the treatment of different sorts of victim, and to open up access to justice to certain disadvantaged groups. It can also be represented as an extension of formal control to what was hitherto a largely private domain, but equity is the motive and justification for such an extension. In principle, the growth of crime prevention can also be justified on the basis of equity. First, many types of crime, and statistically the majority of all crimes, affect the weaker and poorer sections of society disproportionately, so crime prevention, if effective, would tend to redress the balance in their favour. Second, crime prevention activity can be targeted on disadvantaged groups, and in fact much of it has been (crime prevention on 'problem' housing estates) although some of it has not (NW). Third, the paradigm shift that leads towards an increasing emphasis on crime prevention as opposed to law enforcement and retribution is broadly in line with the principle of equity. Offenders who are caught and punished tend very strongly to be poor, weak, and disadvantaged. Shifting the emphasis to crime prevention should help potential victims of crime while reducing the degree to which weak and inadequate people are stigmatised by the criminal justice system. It has been argued above, however, that the shift towards crime prevention has yet to be effectively accomplished. To the extent that that is true, the trend of policy has failed to follow the principle of equity.

Delivery of service

All three cases of policy change move towards delivering an appropriate service more effectively and efficiently to the public. In the case of civilianisation, that is the dominant theme of the change of policy. It is not possible to say unequivocally that civilianisation has, in fact, led to an improvement in service delivery. An equally plausible interpretation is that the main objective of civilianisation for chief constables is to maintain or increase the number of police officers in their organisations. There may have been an expansion of tasks carried out by civilians without any consequential increase in the number of police officers doing 'operational' work. However, as outlined in Chapter 4, demands upon the police service would have increased whether or not forces had civilianised. It thus seems reasonable to argue that civilianisation most likely prevented a sharper decline in service levels in the face of such demands upon police resources.

There is clear evidence of a major improvement in the service delivered to women and children as victims of rape and sexual abuse. Without confusing changes in policy with changes in practice, it seems clear that in general, rape and child abuse are now dealt with in a completely different manner than was the case 10 years ago. However, the police response to domestic assault has shown less evidence of change. The changes in the study forces were confined to local initiatives.

There has been a marked increase in the profile of crime prevention as measured by the rhetoric of chief officers and Home Office circulars. However, in terms of major developments in the crime prevention role of the police, there remains little evidence of a significant shift. The ambiguity of the police role in crime prevention is compounded by the lack of evaluation of activities, making it difficult to measure the extent to which service delivery has improved.

Responsiveness

In general, the developments in policing policy examined in this study cannot be represented as a response to views expressed by police authorities or by others at the local level. In all three fields considered in this study, policing policy has, however, been responsive to advice and direction from the Home Office. Some have argued – for example, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee – that since central government pays over 70 per cent of the bill for policing, this is the appropriate kind of responsiveness. However, as observed by Reiner (1991), this opens up a serious gap in the system of accountability, as the Home Secretary does not have statutory responsibility for most matters affecting provincial police forces and therefore cannot be held accountable for them in Parliament. In

practice, Parliament had little influence on the developments in policing policy considered in this study.

The findings suggest that police authorities lack influence both because their statutory powers are limited and because in many cases they circumscribe their own activities and do much less than they could. The level of knowledge and interest among police authority members is often low, and the standard of debate is frequently poor.

Two kinds of reform can be suggested. First reform which aims to increase the influence of local police authorities. For example, police authorities could be given the statutory power to determine broad policy priorities, though this would not be a sufficient condition to increasing their practical influence. In addition, and as was recognised by leading members in at least two police authorities, they simply did not have the expertise or the information to give them the 'clout' to initiate change proactively. Thus, it would also be necessary to impose a duty on chief constables to provide regular information on a range of matters. Further reforms would be required to enhance the status, seniority, and knowledge base of the clerks to the authorities. This supports the recommendations of some other authors, for example Loveday (1994:29) who suggested that 'if [a] police authority is to act independently of the police force, then it will also need a secretariat, with sufficient resources to cost police proposals, identify local priorities and liaise with local communities'.

Finally, given the degree of influence now exercised from the centre, further reform is needed to make the Home Office answerable to Parliament for the use of its very considerable powers in relation to provincial police forces. This would appear to be a prerequisite of an enhanced form of responsiveness.

Distribution of power

In all three areas considered, the Home Office played the leading role in policy making, although there was also a considerable degree of consultation with the other participants. This process of consultation usually appeared to be a genuine effort on the part of officials to gather reactions to proposed changes from interested parties. On occasion, the Home Office was prepared to withdraw proposals and revise them in response to comments received from other bodies. Furthermore, it seems that officials took account of the expected reactions of other parties in the policy-making process before drafting circular advice, so that there was (on occasion) an exercise of power even where there was no detectable conflict. In this sense, although the Home Office was clearly the central influence,

the distribution of power was not as concentrated or as absolute as is sometimes implied.

The Home Office appeared to have considerable influence in determining the broad direction of policy, but a lot less influence over the details of implementation. In the case of civilianisation, for example, it can be argued that the police actually achieved most of what they wanted (growth of police officer numbers). In the case of crime prevention, it can be argued that the police successfully forestalled a possible attempt to shift more of the responsibility to another agency, and that this has been a major block to the development of policy. The changes in the handling of crimes against women and children can most plausibly be seen as a response by all participants to a major cultural shift. Power relations were less important because all participants supported the broad trend of policy, with the exception of the local authority associations, which were cautious about the resource implications.

As was suggested in Chapter 1, it is important that the 'democratic criteria' be considered as overlapping and inter-dependent. Thus, for example, in two of the chosen policy areas at least, the criteria of distribution of power and effective service delivery cannot be properly viewed entirely independently. For example, a central criticism made by the members of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, was that the Home Office had encouraged forces to civilianise, but had little direct control of the increasing costs of provincial forces. In other words, there was an *insufficient* concentration of power in the hands of the Home Office under the present arrangements. In the field of crime prevention, Home Office officials argued that they had deliberately avoided giving clear responsibility to a single body in order to keep all the 'players on board'. However, as Chapter 2 illustrates, this dispersal of power was a barrier to the development of an effective crime prevention strategy. In this instance, the distribution of power appeared to be in conflict with the criterion of effective service delivery.

Information

There has hitherto been a serious shortage of information on funding, expenditure, activity, and outputs. The amount of information available to police authorities varied widely between one authority and another. The experience in force A – where detailed information was provided – showed that provision of information alone was insufficient to lead to an effective contribution from police authority members. However, it seems that information about what the police are doing and how they do it is a crucial precondition to effective functioning of other democratic criteria.

However, it was not generally the case that a representative body could engage in a continuing dialogue with the professional police managers so as to become better informed and to elicit relevant information. The present Government's policy is to develop standard measures of performance and to require police forces to provide regular information to police authorities and central government based on these indicators of performance. It is a policy that should lead to improvements in this area, although there will still be a considerable emphasis on the ability and the will of police authorities to use this information as a basis for starting to build a more productive relationship with their chief constables.

Redress

The findings of this study show that policing policy can be reversed in line with a deep shift in culture or public opinion, although they also show that it was not elected representatives who acted as the channel through which the new opinions were expressed.

In Chapter 1, two other notions of redress were also rehearsed. The first was the possibility of removing an incompetent or malevolent police management. The second was the opportunity for individuals who have been wronged by the police to have their complaints investigated, and to gain compensation, if upheld. There is no specific information on either of these points from the present study. No chief constable has been removed since the Second World War, although some have moved on following difficulties. Recent research on complaints investigation (Maguire and Corbett, 1991) suggests that many complainants remain dissatisfied, but that prospects for improving the system may not be good.

Participation

In general, the style of policy making in the three areas studied did not involve active participation by the wider public or their representatives, at least in any direct sense. Developments which were intended to enhance wider participation in discussions over policing policy, on the whole, failed in this objective. Both section 106 committees and crime prevention panels were almost without exception unrepresentative and marginal to the policy-making process. There was no influence by the wider public in the case of civilianisation, and very little in the case of crime prevention. The growing emphasis on crime prevention arose from paradigm shift among highly informed people only. The greatest level of participation was in changing the response to crimes against women and children. This 'participation', however, largely by-passed the formal institutions of local and national representation. Pressure groups concerned with women's

issues were an important influence on the national debate to which Home Office officials responded by developing circular advice. The voices of the pressure groups were heard because they were in tune with a wider cultural shift.

The findings of this study therefore confirm that participation, particularly in the formal democratic mechanisms, was less important than other democratic criteria in leading to change. Consequently, they also call into question the possibility that participation might form a central plank in some future system of 'democratic' control of policing.

THE BALANCE SHEET

One of the main conclusions of PSI's programme of research on *Police and People in London* carried out between 1980 and 1983 was that the style and pattern of policing on the ground is determined largely by the immediate demands that are made on police officers, by the way police officers perceive these demands, by the goals, satisfactions and frustrations that are built into the job, by the internal logic of the encounters between police officers and members of the public, and by the internal dynamics of the police organisation. It was concluded that, by contrast, organisations outside the police force, such as Parliament or police authorities, had comparatively little influence, and that attempts to control police behaviour through systems of rules tended to be ineffective.

There was an element of deliberate exaggeration in those conclusions. In an attempt to redress the balance, the purpose of the present study was to look in detail at change in the police service and to consider whether and how far it is a response to democratic influences originating from the wider society.

The study concentrated on three chosen areas of policy in which important changes were thought to have occurred. The findings confirm that substantial changes took place over the 1980s in the style and pattern of responding to crimes against women and children. Also, a long process of internal reorganisation continued as the pace of civilianisation picked up again in the second half of the 1980s. On the other hand, changes in police activity in the field of crime prevention were relatively superficial, even though this looks to most observers like the first priority for major policy change.

Where the change in the style and pattern of policing has been clearest – in the handling of crimes against women and children – this was a response to a deep cultural shift in society at large. The change has occurred because police officers, under pressure, have come to see things differently: there has been a cultural shift within the police service, too. This is entirely in

accord with the conclusion from the earlier PSI research that only internalised principles of conduct have a consistent effect on behaviour. On the other hand, the shift was partly accomplished by the development of new codes of conduct (most notably for the investigation of child abuse), by associated training programmes, and by a consistent approach by management to the application of the new standards. So in the context of a cultural shift, rules were critically important in bringing about a change in police behaviour.

The foregoing analysis suggests that British policing currently meets or partially meets a number of democratic criteria. Two of the policy changes upon which this study has concentrated can be justified with reference to the principle of equity. All three policy changes have been aimed at, with varying degrees of success, an improved delivery of service. The levels of information about the inputs and outputs of policing have been improved in recent years, even though there is much room for further progress. Finally, even though the Home Office is clearly the most influential player, power is perhaps more dispersed in the system than other studies have allowed. However, the formal democratic institutions that are supposed to frame policing – police authorities, consultative committees, Parliament – do not appear to have played an important role in the development of policy. The criteria of responsiveness and participation have featured little in the process of policy change in the three areas studied. This confirms the argument put forward in Chapter 1 that democracy is not only or primarily about governmental institutions, but more generally about the openness of a society and its capacity to respond flexibly to new demands and pressures. The change in the police response to rape came about largely without any active participation by police authorities, or by other local or national representatives. It seems that the distribution of power does not always depend on active participation in formal democratic institutions.

Much recent debate has been critical of an alleged tendency towards increased centralisation of decision making about policing. The analysis put forward in this study is rather different. It starts from the observation that nearly three-quarters of the cost of policing is met by central government. It is most unlikely that the share of the costs met by local taxation will increase: it is more likely to decline. In those circumstances, central government certainly has a duty to get a better deal for the taxpayer by improving the efficiency of service delivery. The four police authorities included in this study had made no substantial effort to put pressure on their police forces to improve the efficiency of service delivery. That reinforces the need for central government to do so.

Criticism of centralisation has particularly highlighted disputes over the supply of equipment for dealing with public disorder (CS gas and baton rounds). Police authorities have not ultimately succeeded against the wishes of central government in denying chief constables access to equipment of this kind. Yet the argument of the Appeal Court in the crucial case (*R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex p Northumbria Police Authority* [1988] 2 WLR 590) was that the Home Secretary had the power to do what was necessary to preserve the Queen's peace, and implicitly the case was concerned with public disorder that would transcend local police boundaries. There does not seem to be anything antidemocratic about central government making provision for dealing with major public disorder that is not restricted to one police force area.

These arguments suggest that central government is bound to have the major share of responsibility for improving efficiency of service delivery and value for money for expenditure on policing, and for ensuring that the police can deal with large-scale outbreaks of public disorder. Any suggestion that these responsibilities can be decentralised to police authorities is unrealistic. However, this does highlight an important weakness in the present structure of accountability. The true extent of the Home Secretary's responsibility for provincial police forces is not fully recognised by the present arrangements. For example, although the Home Office is in fact trying to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of provincial police forces, the Home Secretary is not answerable to Parliament for the service they deliver. The main problem with the fudge enshrined in the 1964 Police Act is that it fails to make the Home Secretary adequately answerable for the powers that, in practice, he exercises.

The findings on police authorities and consultative committees suggest that it is very hard to create a forum in which useful discussion of policing policy will take place. The main counter-example in this study was a police and public safety committee that covered one major town within one of the four police force areas studied. Three reasons can be suggested for the success of this committee. First, it included both natural opponents and natural supporters of the police among its members. Second, it was serviced by a full-time official who made good use of the substantial amount of information supplied by the police. Third, the committee covered a town with a strong sense of identity and was therefore at a scale intermediate between the much less successful police authority on the one hand and consultative committees on the other. This example suggests that there is scope for some aspects of policing policy to be determined by local representative bodies, but that neither police authorities nor consultative committees (in their current forms) are the appropriate model. They are at

the wrong scale, they are not adequately serviced by professional advisers, they do not adequately represent groups that come into conflict with the police, and their members have too little awareness, knowledge, or motivation.

It would be useful to compare policing with some other public service, such as health or education, in terms of democratic responsiveness and accountability. That was beyond the scope of the present study. The broad impression gained from the findings is that policing is democratic on a number of criteria. However, as outlined above the most important criteria have not included those of participation or responsiveness to elected bodies. This is not to suggest that these elements of democracy have no importance. The argument is, that if changes in policing are to be described as democratic, it is largely in spite of the lack of participation rather than because of it. The police authorities had little influence over the policy changes considered in this study; in the rare instances where they were relatively active, they tended to articulate points of view that had earlier been developed at a national level, rather than reflect the particular conditions or concerns that existed at the local level. The strategy implicit in the Police and Magistrates' Courts Bill is to try to make police authorities more effective by establishing measures of police performance, giving the authorities responsibility for improving standards on these measures, and appointing more experienced people to them (although defining what counts as relevant experience turns out to be very difficult). Measures of this kind may help, but it seems likely that police authorities for whole police forces at the present scale will at best provide retrospective accountability rather than act as a decision making forum. As suggested above, more active discussion of policing policy seems more likely at the level of a city or town (at a substantially smaller scale than the present police forces).

The conclusion that emerges most strongly from the findings of this study is that the police can only continue to behave in ways that people find unacceptable if their behaviour largely remains hidden. Just one film of a CID interview with a rape victim was enough to tip the balance against a whole tradition of dealing with this kind of case. The decision by Peter Imbert, then Chief Constable of the Thames Valley Police, to allow that series of television documentaries to be made was probably more important in making police governance democratic than the whole apparatus established by the 1964 Act. Similarly, police corruption and oppressive behaviour which have surfaced through the highlighting of miscarriages of justice in recent years can only continue in the dark. It has not been the bodies concerned with the governance of police, such as police authorities

or the Home Office, that have brought these matters to light. This does not mean that the formal democratic institutions are unimportant in the governance of the police. Their influence, however, is circumscribed in several important ways, and it is clear that their role is one that could and, arguably, should be enhanced. The results of this research suggest, though, that consideration of the potential influence of the formal institutions must take into account the very real limits of their role. Consequently, any analysis of the relationship between democracy and policing must focus more broadly on a variety of other means of influence and control. In particular, policy makers should also concentrate on openness, information, and the opportunity for people to see, as directly as possible, what the police do and how they do it.