Chapter 6[*]

Police in the Ghetto

If the policeman's lot has always been a hard one, it is especially difficult in this historical period. Police have borne the brunt of criticism from many quarters. In the wake of the several hundred riots, near-riots, and serious civil disorders, the police have been criticized on the one hand for alleged brutality, hostility, and insensitivity; and on the other hand for their inability to contain mass violence and to bring it rapidly under control. Some of our most important civil rights are in the hands of the uniformed men of our local police forces; it is scarcely surprising that, in the struggle Negroes are waging for parity in this respect, the police should come under strong criticism.

Not only is the policeman both the guardian of and possible infringer upon individual civil rights, he is also the around-the-clock representative of authority in the ghetto. It is the policeman who is on duty twenty-four hours a day and who represents the go-between to get medical treatment, who settles marital spats, and who watches to see that you do not break regulations, make too much noise or hang out on street corners. The friction between police and the ghetto has raised enough heat to make this relationship of particular importance in understanding why civil disorders have appeared.

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the police in finer detail than was possible in the earlier chapters of this report. The police were questioned using a specially designed questionnaire, aimed at getting a statistical portrait of what the policeman's job is like in the ghetto and what his views are concerning ghetto residents.

---

[*]By W. Eugene Groves.

THE SAMPLE

Interviews with 437 policemen distributed across eleven of the fifteen cities were included in the preliminary analysis. Forty respondents in each city were selected from those precincts which contain the 1960 census tracts with the highest percentage Negro in the city. In all cities, precincts that had over fifty percent Negro residents were sampled. All those interviewed worked primarily in the Negro neighborhoods within the precincts. Five of the forty policemen occupied positions higher than patrolmen (e.g., sergeants, lieutenants); and one fourth were Negroes (one supervisor and nine patrolmen) in each city.

Unfortunately, access to the policemen in some cities proved to be difficult. Even when the leadership of the department officially cooperated, seldom was it possible to draw a probability sample of policemen in the precincts sampled. Our final sample expresses the biases of police captains and other officials who often chose men to be interviewed. While we cannot determine the bias that has entered, it reasonable to assume that the selectivity operated in favor of the images police departments consciously wish to project to the public.

The entire sample of fifteen cities has not yet been completed because of official non-cooperation in several departments. This item of information, in itself, might be considered indicative of the general accessibility and openness to criticism and suggestions in police departments. Milwaukee has been particularly adament against permitting any access, while Boston, and Chicago have been quite difficult. Most other

cities gave some measure of cooperation, though often somewhat grudgingly. Few actively encouraged the study.[1]

THE POLICEMAN'S JOB

The task of a policeman, to paraphrase the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder, is to protect persons and property in a manner order, is to protect persons and property in a manner that embodies the predominant moral values of the community he is serving. This role is one of the most difficult in the society. Furthermore, the conscientious policeman in the predominantly Negro areas of our central cities faces perhaps the greatest difficulties of all. At present the total efforts of the police departments neither effectively control crime in the ghetto nor achieve legitimacy in the eyes of many residents of the community. The policemen interviewed clearly reflected this situation. Seventy-three percent said they worked in neighborhoods where the crime rate was higher than average for the city. Almost forty-five percent listed their neighborhoods among the highest in the city in its crime rate. At the same time a majority of the respondents felt that a lack of support from other officials and agencies were among the major problems in doing their job in the neighborhood to which they were assigned.

The police interviewed were asked to name the two or three major problems they faced. Forty-eight percent of the responses (Table 6.1) dealt with the lack of external support for the policeman. Answers to other questions confirm this assessment. Forty-two percent of the policemen considered non-cooperation from residents a very serious problem; and sixty-four percent thought lack of support from the laws and courts was very serious (Table 6.17). Likewise, almost fifty-nine percent of the policemen thought that most of the residents in the precinct where they worked either regarded policemen as enemies or were indifferent towards them (Table 6.5). As both Table 6.5 and 6.17 illustrate, Negro policemen are less likely to perceive the ghetto as hostile and non-supportive.

Police work in these neighborhoods was viewed by the majority both as harder (sixty-one percent) and more hazardous (sixty-two percent) than elsewhere in the same city (Table 6.2). However great the difficulties and hazards of the job, the police did not express a comparable overall dissatisfaction with the job. Seventy-three percent seemed at least somewhat satisfied with being a policeman, and only twenty-six percent preferred another assignment somewhere else in the city. There was no striking difference between Negroes and whites in these assessments.

[1] Further reports from this study will contain interviews with police in all cities, save Boston and Milwaukee. In both those cities, police officials ordered their men not to cooperate with our interviewers.

TABLE 6.1
WHAT POLICEMEN SEE AS THE MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THEM IN DOING THEIR JOB IN NEGRO NEIGHBORHOODS

[Q 1—Police]

[100 percent = 622]

	Percentage of all responses given [1]
Lack of external support—public, courts, officials, and other agencies	48
Internal departmental problems in doing the job—facilities, supervision, policies	21
Crime, violence, riots, etc.	16
Racial problems—hostility, agitation	9
Living conditions of residents—unemployment, housing, schools, government services, etc.	6

[1] Each of the 437 respondents could give several answers, the first three of which were coded and used in this analysis. Individuals gave an average of 1.4 answers.

TABLE 6.2
COMPARATIVE RATINGS OF ASSIGNMENTS IN GHETTO PRECINCTS AND OVERALL SATISFACTION

[Q 2–3 Police]

	Percent
A. Harder or easier than other assignments?	
Harder	61
About the same	30
Easier	6
Don't know and no answer	3
B. Is work safer or more hazardous than in other assignments?	
Safer	6
No difference	36
More hazardous	62
Don't know and no answer	2
C. Would you prefer working here or some other assignment?	
Prefer present assignment	47
Prefer another assignment	26
Does not matter	25
Don't know and no answer	1
D. How satisfied are you with police work?	
Very satisfied	36
Somewhat satisfied	35
Somewhat dissatisfied	21
Very dissatisfied	6
Don't know and no answer	1

The respondents were asked if they were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with eight aspects of their work. The largest number complained about poor pay and lack of respect from citizens (Table 6.3). The policemen's assessment of the eight job aspects might best be summarized as indicating that these men are the most dissatisfied with the external rewards, only moderately dissatisfied with the immediate conditions under which they usually work, and quite satisfied with their colleagues. Such a pattern is consistent with the observation of James Q. Wilson[2] that, when there is little public respect for policemen, they tend to develop subcultural identification or "codes" in order to achieve self respect independent of civilian attitudes.

[2] "Police Morale, Reform, and Citizen Respect: The Chicago Case," David J. Bordua, Ed., The Police: Six Sociological Essays (New York, Wiley, 1967), p. 138.

TABLE 6.3
THE POLICEMAN'S SATISFACTIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS WITH HIS JOB

[Q 33—Police]

	Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Don't know	100	No answer
	Very	Somewhat	Very	Somewhat			
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent		
The respect you get from citizens	22	32	10	33	1	(434)	3
Pay	28	26	9	36	0	(435)	2
Physical danger you often face	17	32	11	28	11	(431)	6
Resources and facilities for your job	22	27	19	31	0	(436)	1
Working conditions	13	34	11	42	0	(436)	1
Flexibility in doing your job	15	22	24	38	1	(435)	2
Other policemen with whom you work	2	12	52	33	1	(436)	1
Your supervisor	3	10	51	33	1	(432)	5

INTERNAL RESOURCES

As Table 6.1 shows, the second most frequent spontaneous complaint voiced by the policemen was of the lack of internal support for their work: manpower, facilities, supervision, etc. Twenty-one percent of the police citations of major problems were of this type. Within this category of problems, the most frequently mentioned single item was manpower. Ten percent of the policemen listed this as one of three major problems facing them.[3]

Even though the policemen felt disliked by so many citizens, and operated with inadequate facilities and support, very few mentioned low morale as a problem they faced. Only three respondents volunteered a comment about pay or morale as major problems they faced in doing their jobs. A few more, six percent (Table 6.2), reported that they were "very dissatisfied" with a policeman's job. Apparently, high morale has been maintained, at least among most of the respondents, in spite of many perceived difficulties and negative sanctions.

Another aspect of the policeman's resources is the training given him to cope with the problems he faces daily. While our information does not enable us to assess the effectiveness of comprehensiveness of police training for these difficult assignments, we can report that eighty-five percent of our respondents have had special training in riot control and prevention, and seventy-eight percent have had some training in human relations, psychology, counseling, etc. Very few policemen reported lack of training as a major problem they faced in doing their job (only seven respondents spontaneously referred to this).

When we consider some of the findings shown later on in this chapter, our respondents' feelings of satis-

[3] When asked in another context whether the control of crime and the enforcement of the law is hampered by shortage of men, cars, facilities, etc., eighty-nine percent considered this to be a problem; sixty-one percent thought it "very serious."

faction with their training can easily be brought into question.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Ghetto critics of the police often charge them with being essentially "occupation" forces rather than "community protectors:" agents of external, often alien, norms and interests rather than agents of social control for the community in which they are assigned. Undoubtedly much of this charge rests on exaggeration of actions and attitudes of both sides; however, it is important that we search for indications of such large scale group conflict as opposed to isolated individual defiance of legal norms. In addition, we shall examine how the police tend to explain or justify actions that are deemed by many to be provocatively and punitively directed against a large class of people—those with black skins and little money.

From their own reporting (Table 6.3), fifty-four percent of the policemen queried were dissatisfied with the respect they receive from citizens. In fact (Table 6.4), thirty percent suggested that the average citizen in their patrol precincts held the police in some degree of contempt. The police were asked several questions about whether residents considered the police as enemies, assuming this to be a good indication of the degree to which the policemen feel like aliens in the community. Nineteen percent suggested that most people in the precinct in general look on the police as enemies (Table 6.5). While thirty-seven percent reported the people they protect as regarding police on their side, the largest portion (forty percent) perceived the residents as indifferent.

TABLE 6.4
RESPECT ACCORDED TO POLICE BY AVERAGE RESIDENT OF PRECINCT

[Q 5—Police]

	Percent
"How much respect does the average resident of this precinct have for the police?"	
A great deal of respect	12
Some respect	44
Neither respect nor contempt	11
Some contempt	20
A great deal of contempt	10
Don't know and no answer	3

When asked about the attitudes of Negroes, a higher proportion of policemen (twenty percent) felt they were viewed as enemies. Indeed, the policemen's perceptions of hostility were primarily reserved for the Negroes. Only one percent of the respondents thought most whites considered them enemies, and seventy two percent thought whites considered them on their side.

The policemen apparently feel much more a part of the "white community" than of the "Negro commu-

nity" at least in regard to their official activities within their patrol precinct. What hostility is perceived by the police seems not to be a manifestation of racial antagonism against individual policemen. Negro policemen report the same pattern of perceived hostility that the whites report, although a consistently smaller percentage of the Negro police regard any one group of people (except whites) as antagonists (Table 6.5).

Perhaps more important to observe than the relatively low respect and cooperation between police and Negroes in general is the marked distance between police and the young generation. At a time in which juvenile crime is rapidly on the increase and complaints are loudly voiced about the lawlessness of ghetto youth, the police seem to be least in touch with the people. While it is beyond the scope of this report to analyze whether the generation and perhaps racial gaps between police and Negro youth are more an antecedent or consequent of a reported increase in antisocial and criminal behavior among that group, we can quite clearly see that police think themselves disliked more by the young than by any other segment of the population. Fifty-one percent of the policemen believe that most adolescents view them as enemies, and thirty-nine percent think most young adults share that hostility. In contrast, the elderly, the storekeepers, and the teachers are perceived as friends or at least friendly.

TABLE 6.5
[Q 6—Police]
THE POLICEMAN'S VIEW OF WHETHER THE RESIDENTS CONSIDER POLICE AS ENEMIES, FRIENDS OR ARE INDIFFERENT

	Regard police—					
	As on their side	As enemies	Indifferent	Don't know	100 percent	No answer
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent		
Residents in general	37	19	40	3	(432)	5
Most old persons in the neighborhood	94	1	5	0	(437)	....
Most storekeepers	83	0	14	0	(436)	1
Most teachers	83	1	13	2	(435)	2
Most whites	72	1	25	2	(437)	....
Most Negroes	34	29	35	2	(434)	3
Most young adults	16	39	44	1	(437)	....
Most adolescents	16	51	32	1	(436)	1

The policeman's view of whether or not the residents consider the police as enemies, by race of respondent

[Percentage responding that most regard police as enemies]

	White [1] (N=335)	Negro [1] (N=101)
The residents in general	21	11
Most old persons in the neighborhood	1	0
Most storekeepers	0	0
Most teachers	2	0
Most whites	1	2
Most Negroes	30	22
Most young adults	43	27
Most adolescents	52	46

[1] One respondent was neither white nor Negro, or was miscoded.

What lies behind this perception of hostility? The Commission's report [4] cited several surveys of the opinions of Negroes and whites about such things as police brutality and police respect, indicating that in the last two or three years a sizeable fraction of urban Negroes believe that there has been police brutality, while considerably fewer whites believe that police use unnecessary force. Although a survey of the opinion of residents would be the most appropriate measure of their view of police actions, we had to rely upon the police themselves as informants, asking how frequently they had heard certain complaints from the citizens. Six types of actions were listed and the respondents asked how frequently they had heard them—often, sometimes, seldom, or never—as complaints about police.

As we can see from Table 6.6, policemen think that residents frequently see them as brutal, annoying and inconsiderate. They sometimes hear complaints about corruption and general hostility, but seldom are charged with being too lenient. In fact only sixteen percent of the policemen "often" hear complaints that they are not tough enough, while thirty-one percent never hear these charges. In the view of the policemen themselves the residents complain frequently about the actions of the police but there is no widespread demand for a crackdown on "crime."

TABLE 6.6
COMPLAINTS POLICEMEN HEAR ABOUT THEIR ACTIONS
[Q 26—Police]
[In percent]

	Often or sometimes	Seldom or never	Don't know
Policemen are physically brutal to people on the streets	75	25	0
They give too many tickets and do not help the residents	64	35	1
They do not understand the problems of the residents	64	36	0
They are corrupt and take bribes from those with money	52	48	1
Policemen are generally hostile to the residents	52	48	0
Policemen do not adequately prevent crime because they are not tough enough	42	57	1

What truth is there to many of these complaints? What actions and attitudes of policemen might stimulate such complaints? A closer examination of the common practices of the police might indicate possible situations and types of police-resident contact that would be most likely to generate hostile feelings. Six types of activity were listed, and each respondent was asked to tell whether he was frequently, sometimes, seldom or never called upon to do each. (Table 6.7)

[4] Chapter 11, Section I.

TABLE 6.7
WHAT POLICEMEN ARE CALLED UPON TO DO
[Q 9—Police]

	Frequently	Never	100 percent	No answer
	Percent	Percent		
Intervene in domestic quarrels	94	0		(2)
Breakup loitering groups	63	1		(2)
Interrogate suspected drug users	35	6		(4)
Stop and frisk suspicious people	34	11		(2)
Search on suspicion but without a warrant	24	16		(4)
Search with a warrant	20	7		(4)

Although we cannot compare these types of activity with ones considered more supportive by those possibly affected by the actions, some conclusions are reasonable. It is clear that police quite frequently intervene in domestic quarrels and break up loitering groups. This often places them in delicate situations where they interfere with groups of people who may consider their own behaviour normal and legitimate, and at the least not a proper subject of forceful interference. The tension that may be created by indelicate actions in these circumstances is hardly helped by the frequent practice of placing the least skilled policemen in the higher crime areas.

The other activities that policemen report frequently engaging in seldom can be expected to endear them to the residents. About a third are frequently stopping people to question or frisk them, implying thereby that the person stopped is suspected of some crime or potential crime. Almost a fourth report frequently searching without a warrant, further indicating to a great number of residents that they do not merit the justification of due cause to a court.[5] More than a third frequently interrogate suspected drug users. Since the use of the less habituating drugs is considered less onerous by ghetto norms than by white middle class standards, such interrogation is easily interpreted as the imposition of alien and unjustified standards of conduct upon a powerless people. The police, then, are constantly interfering with many of the day-to-day activities of a significant portion of the residents of the neighborhood. It is quite understandable how this imposition—whether justified or not—could generate a considerable level of hostility.

Some degree of hostility can be expected to be generated by the regular surveillance activity of the police. Those who were innocent of any intended or actual wrong-doing are likely to dislike being stopped and frisked. Indeed, the probability of a person who is stopped and frisked by the police being innocent is much larger than the probability of being caught in some illegal activity. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice

[5] From the way in which the question was worded we are uncertain whether respondents referred to searching premises, searching persons, or both.

reported that, in some high crime areas only ten percent of those stopped and frisked were found to be carrying a gun, and another ten percent were found to be carrying knives. The policemen in our sample claim a higher success rate, as the evidence in Table 6.8 indicates. The median number of persons found to be "carrying something that might lead to a crime" when stopped and frisked is 5.1, according to our policemen. Furthermore, the police also claim that a median of 3.5 individuals were found to be wanted criminals or to have committed some illegal act.

TABLE 6.8
PROPORTION OF POSITIVE FINDS IN STOPPING AND FRISKING
[Q 10—Police]

Out of every 10 persons stopped	Carrying something that might lead to crime (e.g. gun, knife)	Actually turned out to be criminals you are looking for
None .... percent..	3	5
One .... do	13	22
Two .... do	10	13
Three .... do	10	10
Four .... do	7	10
Five .... do	12	16
Six .... do	8	3
Seven .... do	12	6
Eight .... do	11	7
Nine .... do	10	5
Ten .... do	3	3
100 percent equals	(366)	(344)
Median number [1]	5.1	3.5
Number responding otherwise		
Desk job	18	17
Illegal to frisk	24	26
Don't know, no answer	29	50

[1] Calculated assuming that responses "five," for example, are evenly distributed between 4.5 and 5.5.

We think it would be safe to assume that the policemen are claiming more positive results from the stop and frisk procedure than is actually the case. In any event, the majority of persons stopped are innocent of any wrong doing. If the rate of stopping and frisking in the Negro community is very high, then it would not take long for the police to antagonize a large number of residents.[6] Interestingly, there were no differences between Negro and white policemen in the reported median frequency with which suspicions were verified in frisks.

The general tenor with which the policemen reported their dealings with people in the neighborhood seemed to be a hardened Hobbesian pessimism in only a small fraction of the respondents. In dealing with suspects only ten percent suggested that the policemen

[6] It may also be the case that those policemen who do a great deal of stopping and frisking may have lower overall "take rates," even though they may apprehend more criminals in total. Hence a policy which would increase the amount of stopping and frisking bears the risk of antagonizing very large proportion of the non-criminal even though it would significantly increase the number of criminals or alleged criminals who are apprehended.

should "deal aggressively and authoritatively from the start so that the suspect knows who is in control," while eighty-nine percent agreed that they should "deal firmly from the start, but be polite until a hostile move is made by the suspect." Similarly, only eight percent felt that most people they deal with on the job respond primarily to power and force. A full forty percent thought that people respond in the end primarily to reason and respect, with few responding only to power and force. The rest (fifty-two percent) thought there were some of both kinds of people (Q 13 Police). In total, sixty percent felt that some sizable proportion of people responded only to power and force, providing some justification for its frequent use.

The typical interaction between policemen and suspect, when people are questioned and frisked, is not congenial. Only nine percent of the policemen report that people they stop are usually fully cooperative (Table 6.9). More than eighty percent admit that the usual reaction is at least a dislike of being frisked. Forty-one percent of the policemen report that they usually have to use threats or force to get the suspect to respond adequately. Eleven percent find that their suspects usually physically resist their efforts to question and frisk. Such responses from suspects would be expected from hardened criminals. But in a situation in which a majority of those stopped are neither carrying weapons nor are criminals, and in which thirty-four percent of the policemen frequently stop and frisk people, it is clear that considerable hostility is generated among many others than those directly engaged in criminal behavior. Table 6.9 illustrates that hostility is generated in stopping and frisking by police of both races. However, citizens are perceived as slightly more cooperative by Negro policemen.

TABLE 6.9
RESPONSE OF SUSPECTS WHEN THEY ARE STOPPED AND FRISKED
[Q 12—Police]

Response	Race of policemen White	Negro	All police
Cooperative.....................percent..	10	8	9
Cooperative, but don't like being frisked......do....	36	48	39
Respond finally under threats and pressure..do....	30	29	30
Physically resist..........do....	13	5	11
Don't know, don't frisk, no answer..........do....	11	10	11
100 percent equals..........	(335)	(101)	(437)

Some critics have suggested that it is easy for a policeman to get away with brutal treatment of Negroes. But, whether or not police actions are more aggressive in the Negro ghetto than elsewhere, the police seem to worry more about the restraints placed upon them there. When asked whether they worried about getting into trouble because of their mistakes or because of citizens' complaints, a sizable proportion (thirty-nine percent) expressed more anxiety about such constraint in their Negro precincts than in other sections of the city. Most saw no difference. Only six percent indicated that they need be less cautious in the Negro precinct to which they currently were assigned. Interestingly, this pattern holds for Negroes as well as whites (see Table 6.10). The complaints that bring the threat of discipline apparently do not arise primarily from racial antagonisms alone. As suggested earlier, the conflict stems more from the overall nature of the police relationship to the Negro community.

TABLE 6.10
HOW MUCH POLICEMEN WORRY ABOUT MISTAKES AND COMPLAINTS
[Q 15—Police]

Worry about mistakes, complaints from public	White	Negro	All
Worry more here than elsewhere in city...percent..	40	35	39
Worry more in most other precincts...........do....	5	11	6
Makes no difference..........................do....	53	52	54
Don't know, no answer........................do....	2	2	1
100 percent equals...........................	(335)	(101)	(437)

The relationship between police and the Negro residents is partially characterized as extensive "anti-crime" activity by the police and many outraged complaints, sometimes leading to collective expressions, by the residents. The desire by city and police leadership for some measure of caution is understandable. The policemen on the beat, defining the precincts as high crime areas, frequently frisk people, break up loitering groups, and intervene in domestic quarrels. The residents complain about many of these activities and resent the manner in which they are carried out. Complaints of police brutality are frequently heard by the police themselves. Seventy-five percent said they "often" or "sometimes" heard them (Table 6.6). Few policemen (four percent), however, listed complaints of police brutality as major problems in doing their jobs (Q 1—Police).

TABLE 6.11
POLICE ATTITUDES TOWARDS TREATMENT OF NEGROES BY POLICE AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS
[Q 6—CORE]

Treatment of Negroes	Race of police	As well off Percent	Less well off Percent	Better off Percent	Don't know, no answer Percent	100 percent
Treatment by police.....	White.....	78		17	1	(335)
	Negro.....	36	57	6	1	(101)
Treatment by public officials.	White.....	59	5	34	2	(335)
	Negro.....	39	54	5	2	(101)

Both Negro and white policemen often hear these complaints from citizens, but only the Negroes consider black-skinned people to be ill-treated by police, public officials, and the general public. Table 6.11 indicates that a majority of Negro police felt that Negroes are treated worse than others by police and public officials; only five percent of the white police believed this. Similarly, as shown in Table 6.12, sixty-two percent of the white policemen felt that Negroes are treated equally or better than any other part of the population, while only eight percent of the Negroes agreed. The pervasive feeling among white policemen that Negroes are treated equally, or even better, than whites may indicate that many feel that the Negro community has more power and privilege than it deserves, including the power to wield some restraint upon police.

TABLE 6.12
POLICEMAN'S VIEW OF HOW NEGROES ARE TREATED IN HIS CITY
[Q 5—CORE]
[Percentage of respondents agreeing with statement]

	White	Negro	Total
Treated better than any other part of the population..	20	2	16
Treated equally..................................	42	6	33
Treated as other people of the same income..........	26	24	26
Treated worse than other people of the same income..	8	38	14
Treated worse than any other part of the population..	2	26	7
Don't know or no answer..........................	2	5	3

Note: 100 percent equals: white—335; Negro—101; total—437.

In summary, the complaints from ghetto residents are not considered major obstacles by most police. If a policeman feels more anxiety about these complaints in some precincts than in others, he is likely to perceive more pressure in Negro areas. Furthermore, as the preceding considerations suggest, and as later discussions will indicate, it is clear that the white policeman finds less justice in these constraints than does the Negro.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY

What do the policemen think of the people in the neighborhoods where they patrol? Some earlier studies have indicated that a large fraction of white policemen working in Negro neighborhoods exhibit prejudice toward Negroes. Albert Reiss reported to the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders that three out of four of the white policemen in predominantly Negro neighborhoods in one city studied exhibited some prejudicial attitudes.[7] As noted earlier (Chapter III), not many of the police, especially white, were sympathetic to Negro causes: fifty-nine percent claimed that the Negroes were moving "much too fast" or "too fast" in gaining what they feel to be equality. Seventy-three percent of the whites and twelve percent of the Negroes felt this way. Forty-nine percent of the whites expressed some chagrin about Negroes socializing with whites, and fifty-six percent were at least "slightly disturbed" with Negroes moving into white residential areas. Very few, including the Negro policemen, expressed any active support of Negro causes. Five percent of all the respondents had been active in a civil rights group during the previous two years (four percent of the whites and seven percent of the Negroes).

The images an individual holds of traits and attitudes of a group have often been used as an index of prejudice. At least, the policeman's stereotypes of the residents with whom he is working can be expected to influence the manner in which he deals with them. In assessing six characteristics, police were quite mixed. (Table 6.13.) On each characteristic a sizable fraction thought highly of the residents, but a large fraction held low opinions. Comparing positive to negative assessments, both Negro and white policemen rated the residents best on "honesty." Negroes thought somewhat better of the residents than did whites, on the average.

[7] Chapter 11, Section 1.

TABLE 6.13
ATTITUDES TOWARD RESIDENTS OF THE PRECINCT
[Q 8—Police]
[In percent]

Attribute (stated positively)	Very positive assessment White	Very positive assessment Negro	Very negative assessment White	Very negative assessment Negro	Partially true White	Partially true Negro	Don't know, no answer White	Don't know, no answer Negro	Total
They are often friendly to outsiders	22	40	32	21	42	37	4	3	100 / 101
They look after their health very well	22	28	28	16	42	52	8	4	100 / 101
They are industrious people	16	26	28	12	53	60	2	2	99 / 100
They care very much for law and order	33	48	22	14	44	38	2	1	101 / 101
They are respectable, religious people	19	28	18	3	59	67	4	2	100 / 100
They are honest people	32	50	10	4	56	46	1	0	100 / 99
Average on six items	24	37	23	12	49	50			100

Note: N (White)=335; N(Negro)=101.

POLICE ASCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

Many factors influence the collective behavior of a community, particularly the characteristics of the people themselves, the relationship they have with organizers and representatives of many outside agencies, their relationship to various government agencies—welfare, police, educational system, etc., and the economic exchange relationships they have with those who control economic resources. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, in assessing the basic causes of rioting, stressed the centuries of neglect and discrimination on the part of the white community toward their Negro neighbors. The Commission concluded that agitators and militants were not basically responsible for the outbreaks of violence; even less responsible was the general nature of the Negro community. Rather, the lack of adequate private and governmental response to the problems of unemployment, housing, deficient education, and most basically, the pervasive discrimination against Negroes in American life were seen as the root causes of the disturbances.

The policeman, who is the most visible agent of the society in maintaining law and order, sees the causes of rioting and civil turbances quite differently. It is reasonable to expect that his viewpoint will reflect the enforcement actions and strategy which he daily uses in an attempt to minimize violence and disorder. The viewpoint he expresses appears to be one of short-run criminal control, rather than one of long-term eradication of the causes of discontent. While individual policemen differed considerably in their ascription of responsibility for the problems they face, most tended to see disorders as a result essentially of a lawless, negligent, belligerent, and criminal uprising of some elements of the Negro community.

All respondents were asked what they considered the major causes of the 1967 civil disturbances. Fifty-six percent of the reasons given (Table 6.14, categories one, forty-four percent; three, eight percent; and seven, four percent) ascribed the causes to the lawlessness, anger, disorder and agitation in the Negro community. The remaining forty-four percent of the reasons given ascribed at least some responsibility to the total society and by implication to the white community.

But, if we probe deeper, the policeman's emphasis becomes clearer. For example, the profile of responses for policemen who reported their city having a major civil disturbance in Summer, 1967, was somewhat different than that for policemen reporting no serious disturbance that Summer. Where there had been a serious disturbance, forty nine percent of the reasons given cited agitation and criminal elements—basic Negro lawlessness—while twenty-two percent of the causes given ascribed some responsibility to the failure

TABLE 6.14

REASONS GIVEN FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCES

[Q 15 and 18—CORE]

[In percent]

Reasons	Reporting riot in 1967 in city (N=269)	Reporting no serious disturbance in city in 1967 (N=141)	All police responding (N=430)
(1) Causes attributed to faults of the Negro community—disrespect for law, crime agitation, unrest, broken families, etc.	49	33	44
(2) Causes attributed to failure of system to meet problems—unemployment, housing, poverty, welfare, schools, indifference, leadership.	22	38	27
(3) Negro anger, frustration, and unfilled aspirations.	7	8	8
(4) General white and official discrimination and provocation.	7	5	6
(5) Contagion—media, rumors, etc.	5	4	5
(6) Lack of interracial communication.	3	8	5
(7) Lack of adequate enforcement and control by authorities.	3	5	4
(8) Specific person or event.	4	0	2
Total responses, 100 percent equals.	(542)	(274)	(816)

of the system and the white community. In cities where policemen reported no serious disturbance that summer the frequency of reasons listed was reversed. Thirty-five percent of the responses blamed the criminal and lawless elements, while thirty-eight percent blamed the system in part.

Whether this difference is due primarily to the impact of the riots and subsequent rationalizations for police actions or whether it existed prior to the riots and might have, in part, been responsible for whether or not there was a riot cannot be known from our limited information in those interviews. However, in our judgment such a difference in police assignment of causes is primarily a result of having recently experienced a riot. Those cities in which policemen emphasized social-economic causes seemed just as likely to have had a riot in 1968 as did the other cities.

Quite significant racial differences appear, as Table 6.15 illustrates. Twice as many whites basically blame the Negro community as blame the socioeconomic system. The reverse is true for the Negro policemen. In addition, approximately three times as many Negroes as whites place the emphasis upon lack of interracial communication.

When police were more directly questioned about the causes of riots, they strongly supported the agitation, criminal element explanations as opposed to police brutality or white neglect (Table 6.16). Seventy-eight percent and sixty-nine percent, respectively, saw militant agitation and criminal elements as either the main reason or a major reason for the recent civil disturbances. Only nine percent and thirty percent, respectively, subscribed to the police brutality and unresponsiveness explanations. Table 6.16 also shows that Negro police subscribe much less than whites to the militant

and criminal explanations, and much more than whites to the police brutality and unresponsiveness explanations.

TABLE 6.15

REASONS GIVEN FOR CIVIL DISTURBANCES

[Q 15 and 18—CORE]

	(Total for all police) [1]		
	White (N=329)	Negro (N=100)	Both (N=429)
Causes attributed to faults of Negro community—disrespect for law, agitation, crime, unrest broken families, etc.	50	24	44
Causes attributed to failure of system to meet problems—unemployment, poverty, bad housing, poor schools, poor leadership from city, etc.	21	44	27
Lack of interracial communication.	3	9	5
All other reasons.	25	23	25

[1] Seven of the 437 interviewers did not give answers to these questions; the eighth was neither white nor Negro.

Note: 100 percent equals: White 609; Negro 206; both 815.

TABLE 6.16

HOW NEGRO AND WHITE POLICEMEN DIFFER IN ATTRIBUTING CAUSES TO THE RIOTS

[Q 67-72—CORE]

[Percent agreeing that cause listed is main reason or largely true]

	White (N=335)	Negro (N=101)	All Police (N=437)
Local authorities not paying sufficient attention to complaints.	24	52	30
Result of criminal element in Negro ghetto.	74	52	69
Result of militant agitation.	84	55	78
Deliberate political actions.	28	23	27
Police brutality.	4	25	9
Negroes basically violent and disrespectful.	33	11	28

While very few of the policemen considered inadequate laws or lenient courts as direct causes of riots (two percent volunteered this explanation), they quite strongly resented the restraint placed upon them by the courts and the laws. In a question asking for their major problems as policemen, fifteen percent volunteered complaints about courts and judges being too lenient. This was second only to the forty percent who gave "lack of public support" as one of the major problems they face in doing their jobs. In another question (Table 6.17) more of the policemen considered laws and courts to hamper their jobs than any of the other three problems.

TABLE 6.17

SERIOUSNESS OF FOUR PROBLEMS IN THE POLICEMAN'S JOB

[Q 16—Police]

[Percent of policemen who consider problem "Very serious" and "Not at all serious"]

(N[White]=335; N[Negro]=101)

Problem	Very serious			Not serious		
	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total
Noncooperation of residents.	44	32	42	10	18	12
Laws and court decisions hamper investigations and convictions.	68	50	64	5	17	8
Inadequate resources: Men, cars, facilities, etc.	61	60	61	12	10	11
Other agencies lack adequate resources.	40	57	44	13	6	12

Table 6.17 illustrates again how the races differ. Laws and courts were most frequently perceived as an obstacle by whites, but only third most frequently by Negroes. In contrast, Negroes felt most hampered by inadequate resources for themselves, and by the inadequate resources of other agencies in the city. The white police were least concerned about the supportive functions of the other agencies in dealing with community problems.

The policeman is under conflicting pressures and expectations. As Reiss [8] and Bordua point out, enforcement of the laws is separated from the outcome of an arrest. The policeman is under professional and public pressure to catch criminals and to keep public order, but the final conviction and sentencing of an offender is out of his hands, as are judgments of police brutality. It is therefore expected that the average policeman should resent occasional court rejection of his decisions, and frequent court scrutiny of his actions. Likewise, we might add to this conflicting expectation another—that enforcement is separated from prevention. Prevention of many of the situations a policeman handles rests in hands other than his own—city officials, poverty workers, employers, teachers, et al. He has at his disposal only the resources of persuasion and force. With this he must handle the results of the inadequacies of all other segments of the system.

The policeman's perception of other people who work on social problems in his neighborhood is varied. We asked whether the efforts of four types of agencies, organizations or individuals made his job easier or more difficult (Table 6.18). Consistent with their assessment of the causes or riots, the policemen rated the more militant organizations as most deleterious to law enforcement. For every one policeman who considered the civil rights and poverty organizations helpful in the long run, eight thought they were deleterious. On the other hand those workers most directly associated with the same work as the police consider themselves doing—the gang workers—are considered beneficial to the policeman's work by five policemen for every one who thinks them harmful. Policemen are much more evenly split on the benefit of poverty and welfare workers, though the poverty workers are perceived slightly more helpful. A large fraction of the respondents considered poverty and welfare workers as irrelevant to the policeman's job of law enforcement.

The Negro policemen have a greater appreciation for the functions of the various organizations (Table 6.18). The percentage of Negro police who consider all of the four types of agencies to be beneficial is approximately twice that of the white police. Consistently fewer Negroes than whites consider the agencies deleterious. In all cases, however, the Negro and white policemen agree in the way most think about

[8] Environment and Organization: A Perspective on the Police", in David Bordua, op. cit.

TABLE 6.18
HOW THE WORK OF OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTS THE POLICEMAN'S JOB

[Q 14—Police]

(N[White]=335; N[Negro]=101)

[In percent]

Agency	Easier			More Difficult			No Difference			Don't Know			Total
	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	Total	
Gang workers	46	71	52	13	5	11	31	18	28	10	6	9	100 / 100 / 100
Poverty program workers (Headstart, VISTA, CAA, etc.)	36	61	42	23	4	19	34	31	33	6	4	6	99 / 100 / 100
Welfare workers	29	36	30	20	13	18	46	46	46	5	6	6	100 / 101 / 100
SNCC, CORE, NAACP, and Poverty Rights groups [1]	6	16	8	75	39	68	10	22	13	8	22	12	99 / 99 / 100

[1] Five percent of the whites and sixteen percent of the Negroes indicated that NAACP makes their job easier, while other groups make it more difficult.

---

each type of organization. A larger fraction of both races think that civil rights groups make life more difficult, while the others make it easier.

POLICE PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

The policeman's task consists primarily of the immediate enforcement of rules of law and order, and hence he is concerned with establishing a criminal-non-criminal dichotomy in his encounters with citizens. McNamara [10] observed in his study of New York police that such dichotomous stereotypes can often interfere with the policeman's ability to skillfully handle a variety of situations and different types of people in a sensitive manner. This ability partly requires an understanding of the community in which the policeman works. Such an understanding, in turn, would seem to require extensive and frequent informal and non-hostile communication with all major segments of the population with which the policeman is dealing. Not only would this communication increase the policeman's information about the neighborhood and the activities of its residents—thus minimizing mistakes and increasing surveillance of possible criminal—but such communication would tend to increase the policeman's perception and understanding of the resident's problems and concerns and activities, enabling him to avoid insensitivity in treatment of subjects. In short, in seeking the community cooperation and effectively creating a legal order, the policeman could perform best—if this argument is valid—if he is personally familiar with the adult and youth leaders, the community agency volunteers, the possible troublemakers, et al.

[10] John H. McNamara, "Uncertainties in Police Work: The Relevance of Police Recruits' Background and Training," David Bordua, *op. cit.*

112

Our respondents, however, seem strikingly isolated from the neighborhoods in which they patrol. As noted earlier fifty-one percent of the police thought adolescents, and thirty-nine percent thought young adults, regarded police as enemies. In contrast, ninety-four percent of the police perceived storekeepers as regarding police as friends. Whether isolation has caused the hostility or hostility the isolation is beyond our scope to determine. However, it is clear that police communicate very little with the youth and a lot with the merchants. Thirty-one percent of the police do not know a single important teenage or youth leader in the neighborhood well enough to speak to him when they sees him (Table 6.19). Fifty-nine percent know five or fewer this well. On the other hand over fifty-five percent of the policemen report that they know more than twenty-five shop owners, managers, and clerks well enough to speak with them whenever they see them. Where the most communication is occurring between the police and citizens in the neighborhood is reasonably clear. Such a pattern illustrates the grounds on which policemen are often perceived as a force of occupation, stationed in the ghetto to protect the property of the white merchant.

Table 6.19 shows the policeman's priorities in the community. He makes it his business to be aware of the "continual troublemakers" and the merchants. But the community adult and youth leadership, as well as people working on eradicating the social and economic conditions that contribute to crime, are apparently considered largely irrelevant to the policeman's work of law enforcement. One would not usually expect the average patrolman to know very many organizers of crime well enough to exchange greeting on occasional meetings. But he knows as many of these as he does of teenage and youth leaders. Yet the policeman regards juveniles as presenting a particularly pressing problem. We should note that comparison and

---

TABLE 6.19
EXTENT OF PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH PEOPLE IN THE PRECINCT

[Q 23—Police]

Question: ". . . In your precinct, for example, about how many people among (name group) do you know well enough to speak with whenever you see them?" (N=437)

Group	None	Five or fewer	Six or more	Don't know	100 per-cent	No answer
	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent		
Shop owners, managers, clerks	3	9	89	1	(435)	2
Residents in general	5	12	86	1	(433)	4
Continual trouble makers	6	14	84	1	(436)	1
Important adult leaders	15	49	54	2	(436)	1
People from various government and private agencies who work in the neighborhood, eg. welfare, religious, utilities	19	49	49	1	(436)	1
Organizers of unlawful activities like crime syndicates, numbers rackets, drug pushers	31	57	40	3	(434)	3
Important teenage and youth leaders	31	59	38	2	(433)	4

Note: (Answers were recorded in seven categories, which were collapsed to form the third category above. The second response category listed above is cumulative, including the first category.)

---

conclusions from the information on Table 6.19 must be made with caution, since there are quite different numbers of people in the neighborhood in each category considered. Thus, there are probably many more merchants than important youth leaders in any precinct. Secondly, we must note that thirteen percent of the respondents (about equal percentages for Negro and white), have desk jobs. While this would not necessarily mean that they would not be acquainted with anyone in the community, it would be expected to reduce the number of residents with whom they frequently communicate. However, what we are particularly emphasizing is the large percentage of policemen who know just a very small number, or even none, of the teenage and youth leaders and the people from other agencies.

Table 6.20 compares by race of respondent his contact with people in the neighborhood. With one exception (continual troublemakers) the white police are more isolated—as measured by the percent who have no acquaintance at all—than the Negro police.

TABLE 6.20
EXTENT OF NO PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH PEOPLE IN THE PATROL NEIGHBORHOOD

[Q 23—Police]

[Percentage of respondents admitting knowing none well enough to casually speak with]

	White (N=335)	Negro (N=101)
Shop owners, managers, clerks, etc.	3	1
Residents in general	5	4
Continual troublemakers	5	6
Important adult leaders	18	7
People from various government and private agencies	22	12
Organizers of crime, et al.	31	30
Important teenage and youth leaders	35	18

One of the reasons that Negro policemen have more contact with the neighborhood in which they patrol, and have a greater sympathetic understanding of its problems, is that they are much more likely to informally participate in the community than are their white colleagues. Table 6.21 lists four measures of community participation. The general level of participation is rather low. Eighty-three percent of the respondents do not live where they work; and seventy-six percent do not have relatives in the neighborhood. Only twelve percent have friends there they see "a lot" off duty. On these three measures the Negro policemen understandably rate considerably higher. But for both races, the number who have friends in the neighborhood whom they see "a lot" is smaller than the percentage of policemen who live in that neighborhood.

TABLE 6.21
NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION BY POLICEMEN

[Q 29-32—Police]

[Percentage who responded affirmatively]

	White (N=335)	Negro (N=101)	Total (N=437)
Live in same area as work	11	37	17
Any relatives live where you work	13	56	24
See friends from neighborhood socially "a lot"	6	30	12
Attend meetings in neighborhood "often" or "sometimes"	16	37	21

Even if a policeman does not live in the neighborhood, he can engender community cooperation by attending meetings of various organizations. While thirty percent reported attending meetings at least occasionally only seven percent attend "often." But policemen in general, as would be expected of lower-middle-class occupational groups, are not frequent participants in groups and organized activity outside the job. Sixteen percent do not belong to any organization, and fifty-six percent belong either to one or none (Q 6–BKGD). Their informal contact with their own residential community, aside from the neighborhood in which they work, is not very high.

Another set of questions has frequently been raised about the police department's relationship to the community. These deal with training in human relations for the individual officers, and with departmental policies that may be interpreted as discriminatory. Seventy-eight percent of the sample reported some training in human relations, psychology, counseling, law, etc. We have no way to assess the nature, extent, and effectiveness of this training.

The outward symbol of integration is a mixed patrol. Eighty-four percent of those who are on patrol report that they have patrolled with an officer of the opposite color. However, only thirty-six percent of those on a beat report travelling interracially more than "once in

113

a while." The more subtle form discrimination might take is in hiring and promotion. Recently, of course, most cities have been encouraging Negroes to join the force, particularly placing them in the Negro community. When asked how likely it would be that a man of another race would take one's place if he were to change his present job, seventy-one percent reported that it would be either "very likely," or "somewhat likely." Only six percent said it would be not at all likely. While this gives no indication of promotion and assignment practices—since most of the respondents were patrolmen (eighty-three percent)—it does signify that very little effective discrimination in hiring or in general assignment to a Negro neighborhood is perceived by those presently employed.

SUMMARY

The nature of the police relationship to the community is of critical importance in maintaining order and in protecting persons and property. We have found that in the predominantly Negro areas of several large cities, many of the police perceive the residents as basically hostile, especially the youth and adolescents. A lack of public support—from citizens, from courts, and from laws—is the policeman's major complaint. But some of the public criticism can be traced to the activities in which he engages day by day, and perhaps to the tone in which he enforces the "law" in the Negro neighborhoods. Most frequently he is "called upon" to intervene in domestic quarrels and break up loitering groups. He stops and frisks two or three times as many people as are carrying dangerous weapons or are actual criminals, and almost half of these don't wish to cooperate with the policeman's efforts. Most police, however, report that a sizeable proportion of people they deal with respond to reason and respect in the end

The broader relationship between the officers and the community with which they deal is one of low participation, and often unfavorable attitudes toward the residents, especially among the white policemen. Those segments of the population which the police perceive as most hostile, they are least in touch with

on a day-to-day basis. Thirty-one percent admit not knowing a single important youth leader well enough to casually greet him when they see each other. Few police participate in community organizations or have friends they regularly see in the neighborhood. Seventeen percent actually live in the neighborhood in which they work.

There are no obvious signs of discrimination by race in most of these police departments, at least by report of the interviews. However, many differences appear between races in the way individuals view community problems. White policemen see riots as stemming primarily from agitation and criminal elements in the ghetto, seeing their job as one of short term criminal control. Negro policemen, however, tend to see disturbances as caused by more underlying social and economic conditions. The white policemen typically feel that Negroes are treated as well or better than anyone else. Quite to the contrary, the Negro policeman sees his people as mistreated and not moving too fast to achieve equality. Few policemen of either race, however, have recently participated in any civil rights groups. Most of the overall difference between the Negro and white respondents can most likely be attributed to their race, and related community ties and associations. However, the fact that fifty percent of the Negro policemen interviewed had at least some college education, while only thirty-two percent of the whites had some college, might contribute somewhat to the broader and more sympathetic outlook and analysis of the Negro policeman.

Generally speaking, the policemen are dissatisfied with the external rewards for their job, about half-way satisfied with the immediate conditions under which they work, and very happy with their colleagues. Such in-group solidarity, while maintaining morale in the department, might well tend to remove them even further from an already unsupportive, and even threatening world in which they work. Such isolation most likely exacerbates the already marked hostility that exists in many areas between the "residents" and the "enforcers."

Chapter 7*

Major Employers and Their Manpower Policies

Unlike the other occupational groups studied, the major employers in each of our fifteen cities are not necessarily located in the ghetto. Their connection with the Negro community is through the operation of the labor market, a metropolitan-wide system. The days have long gone by when workers lived close to their jobs and firms sought to locate within walking distances of their labor forces. Blue-collar and white-collar employees commute to work in the typical metropolitan area, freeing the business firm to locate itself considering other criteria.

Major employers were included in our study because business enterprises constitute one of the central institutions of the local community. Big business provides enough of the community's personal and collective income to make it a major force in a variety of ways.

From the point of view of a ghetto resident, getting and holding down a job is another way in which he is connected with the larger community. Whether or not he can participate in community life as a full-fledged member depends in very large part on whether the doors to this central institution are open. In our society man may be more than his occupation, but if he does not have an occupation, he is not much of a man.

*By Bettye K. Eidson.

The major employers were chosen from among the largest firms in each of the fifteen metropolitan areas studied. Samples were drawn from a listing of such firms, according to the methods outlined in Appendix A. In each firm we sought to interview the management official who either administered directly the labor recruitment of the firm or who set policy in that respect. We tried to interview thirty such persons in each city, almost achieving that objective, but ending up with a total sample of 434 respondents.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYERS

If any occupational group in the survey could be expected to typify the sort of "white racism" alluded to in the Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, it would be without doubt the employers. This is so not because the employers reportedly engage in overt acts of repression against Negroes, nor even because they hold attitudes which would predict or condone such acts. They do not. It is rather the case that the men represent, as a group, institutions whose doors are open but whose thresholds are too high.

In a near literal sense, employers are the litmus papers which test the degree to which preparatory institutions function for groups which face ultimately the prospect of having the worth of that preparation eval-