

1. Description of the country

The United Kingdom is not one country, but four: England, Wales, Scotland and the province of Northern Ireland. Scotland and Northern Ireland are distinct jurisdictions with their own legal systems, policing structures and traditions, as too are the tiny jurisdictions of the Channel Isles and Isle of Man. So, for convenience, this 'country report' will concentrate upon England and Wales, but even here devolution to the Welsh Assembly has had implications for policing.

England contains the majority of the population of the UK with just under 50 million, whilst Wales adds another 3 million. The population within England and Wales is very unevenly distributed: the greatest concentration in England lies in the South-East around London (which alone has a population of 7 million). Apart from this area, population is concentrated in major conurbations around what were the industrial centres of Birmingham and the West Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool in the north-west, Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds in north-east, Newcastle in the far north-east and South Wales around Cardiff. With the decline of manufacturing, many of these conurbations have suffered serious deprivation during the second half of the 20th century, unlike the wealthy south-east.

What is common to all these areas is their multi-culturalism. It is unofficially estimated that more than a quarter of the population of London comes from an ethnic minority background and that currently its population speak over 250 different first languages. Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds Newcastle and Cardiff also have large ethnic minority populations very often based on migrant labour attracted by manufacturing industries have since declined, some to the point of extinction. This has resulted in ethnic minority settlement concentrated in areas of greatest deprivation, which has led to tensions and public disorder. Indices of deprivation associated with criminality are disproportionately suffered by ethnic minorities: single-parenthood, unemployment, low educational attainment. Unsurprisingly, crime is concentrated in these areas with the result that ethnic minority populations figure prominently amongst both offenders and victims. Correspondingly, police action in these areas tends to be more often confrontational than elsewhere. For instance, stop and search is experienced disproportionately amongst youth black men. This has fuelled tension between these ethnic groups and the police, which periodically has erupted into rioting and disorder.

2. Structure of the police forces

Policing in the UK developed as a patchwork in response to the contingencies of the time and periodical bouts of reform. There are now 43 police forces in England and Wales of enormously varying size, from the

London Metropolitan Police with over 30,000 sworn officers, to the City of London police (responsible for policing the financial district) with only a few hundred officers.

Rank structures are reasonably standardised, with the exception of the two London forces. Both the Metropolitan ('the Met.')

 and City of London forces are headed by a Commissioner. In the Met. the Commissioner has a Deputy and several Assistant Commissioners and Deputy Assistant Commissioners. The command structure in both forces then descends through Commanders, Chief Superintendents, Superintendents, Chief Inspectors, Inspectors, Sergeants, to Constables. Elsewhere, forces are headed by a Chief Constable, supported by one or more Assistant Chief Constables with either territorial or functional responsibilities. The hierarchy then descends through the same command structure as the Met. from Chief Superintendents to Constables. In all forces there has been the recent and increasingly common addition of Police Community Support Officers at the base of the pyramid who enjoy highly circumscribed powers.

Some sparsely populated rural forces have only a few hundred officers to police large tracts of territory, in conurbations police are correspondingly concentrated. This has a direct impact on organisation: where officers are concentrated organisation tends to be functional, with specialist units responsible for distinct tasks from the investigation of specific crimes (fraud, child abuse, domestic violence, hate crimes, etc) to the deployment of specialist equipment and skills (mounted and dog specialists, maritime units, specialist armed squads, etc). In rural areas officers are obliged to be multi-functional, but increasingly have called upon the specialist capabilities of larger forces for specific purposes (e.g. high-profile murder investigations).

This is just one respect in which policing in Britain has become increasingly centralised over the course of its history. The Home Office is the government department responsible for policing, but until recently its constitutional powers have been severely circumscribed. Since the mid-19th century it has used its financial influence to encourage greater standardisation and its main instrument has been Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. In the 1960s there was a period of intense amalgamation of hitherto small forces to create the current structure of 43 forces. In the last quarter of the 20th century the HMIC and various agencies of government (e.g. the Audit Commission) have influenced police practice by exposing failings and recommending policies on subjects ranging from 'diversity' within the police organisation to national standardisation of public order tactics and training. In 2005 an HMIC report on the structure of police forces proposing further amalgamations.

The Police Reform Act 2002 concluded a decade of frantic constitutional reform of policing that entrenched Home Office power. The Home Office now promulgates an annual 'Policing Plan' to which all forces are obliged to subscribe in their own annual plans. Targets are established and forces ranked in league tables published annually. Forces that are deemed to be 'failing' can be subjected to remedial intervention by the Home Office, Police Standards Unit. Chief Constables of forces that conspicuously fail (or cause public embarrassment to government) can now be dismissed—a power exercised by the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, following a damning report into intelligence failures by the Humberside Police.

Another development has been to regionalise and nationalise criminal investigation. In the 1970's Regional Crime Squads were formed from amongst the detectives of nine areas of England and Wales. They had responsibility for serious crimes that transcended the territories or exceeded the capacities of their constituent forces. In the 1990's this acquired a national dimension first with the establishment of the National Criminal Intelligence Service with limited responsibility for acquiring and disseminating criminal intelligence. NCIS then spawned an enforcement arm, the National Crime Squad. Recently, this has been elevated to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency responsible for national and transnational criminal threats and designed to incorporate the enforcement arms of Customs and Excise, and the Immigration Service. Unlike its predecessors, it will recruit directly personnel with relevant specialist skills (e.g. accountants, computer specialists) and sworn officers will not be seconded from constituent forces but employed by the Agency itself. So, for the first time in its history the police in England and Wales will include a national police force with overlapping jurisdiction with local forces.

3. Legal guidelines

The law on police use of force in England and Wales rests on three legs, common to all of which is that the police have no more legal authority to use force than any other citizen. First, the common law position is that the *any person* may use reasonable force to protect themselves or others from unlawful attack. Any citizen is also duty bound to use force, if necessary, to maintain or restore the Queen's Peace.

Secondly, the Criminal Law Act 1967 section 3 provides the statutory basis for the use of force. Again, it extends to 'any person' who is allowed to use 'such force as is reasonable in the circumstances' for a lawful purpose such as preventing crime and apprehending offenders unlawfully at large. When it comes to the use of lethal force, the Human Rights Act 1998 enshrines the right to life and this means that the use of lethal force must be necessary, which effectively raises the legal standard from that of 'reasonable in the circumstances'.

Finally, England and Wales are blessed by severe restrictions on the possession and use of weapons. Virtually every item of coercive equipment used by the police would be illegal if found in the possession of anyone else. Batons are *ipso facto* 'offensive weapons' proscribed by law; CS spray would contravene firearms legislation because it discharges a noxious substance; baton guns, pistols, carbines, sniper rifles are all banned under the provisions of firearms legislation; even police dogs would fall foul of the Dangerous Dogs Act if owned privately! The exemption granted to police to carry weaponry is the main respect in which they are distinguished legally from other citizens, for they have a capacity that others lack.

As a matter of longstanding practice, but recently enshrined in law, police forces routinely refer to civilian oversight bodies all cases in which death or very serious injury is caused as the result of police action. The Police Complaints Authority (PCA) and its successor, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), review or investigate all instances of deaths arising from police shootings, police vehicle accidents and deaths in custody. This legal obligation was tested after the tragic shooting dead of a Brazilian citizen mistaken for a terrorist 'suicide bomber'. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, in whose area the shooting occurred, suggested that a separate investigation by the IPCC should be suspended so as not to distract police efforts in the wake of the London bombings of 7 and 21 July 2005. However, he was overruled and the IPCC investigation commenced, albeit a couple of days later than would otherwise have been the case.

4. Use of Force practices

Internal police policy on the use of force varies according to the amount of force used but is characterised by caution. For instance, when rigid handcuffs were introduced officers were taught how to use them for 'pain compliance', but for reasons that remain clouded in mystery, this advice was rescinded and official policy insisted that handcuffs be used exclusively as mere restraints. In most forces, an officer who draws a baton or CS spray from their respective holsters will be required to complete a 'use of force' report form. Technological innovations are viewed officially with considerable caution, not least because oversight agencies, such as the IPCC monitor their use very closely and are prone to highlight difficulties, real and imagined.

Lethal force is treated with exceptional caution and recent developments have been 'incident driven' in two respects: first, when the armed threat of criminals and terrorists becomes egregious armaments and tactics are changed to deal with the threat; and, secondly, when armed officers unjust-

tifably inflict injury or death policy is amended in a (usually vain) attempt to prevent a recurrence.

Policing in England, Wales and Scotland, has been distinguished from its inception by the fact that officers do not routinely carry firearms. Firearms have always been available, but resort to them has always and continues to be regarded as exceptional. Even when reporting on foreign jurisdictions where police *are* routinely armed, news media reports will refer to 'armed police' as though they were exceptional! Until the mid-1960s police were officially 'in denial' about their use of firearms, which produced a culture of amateurism when recourse to the use of firearms became necessary. For instance, officers with military training or those who participated in gun sports would be pressed into service to deal with an armed offender.

With the abolition of capital punishment and the commission of a gruesome murder of three unarmed detectives in Shepherds Bush, London in 1966, the London Metropolitan Police established the first specialist armed squad, D11 (which interestingly masqueraded as a 'training' department). With the growth of Irish Republican terrorism and armed crime generally, officers performing routine duties were increasingly trained to use revolvers and received the designation of 'Authorised Firearms Officers' (AFOs). When any armed emergency arose these officers were dispatched to the nearest police armoury to collect revolvers and attend the scene of the emergency. A massacre in the quiet rural town of Hungerford in 1986 led to the abandonment of this ramshackle arrangement and the expansion of mobile specialist armed response. By the early 1990s most forces had mobile patrols carrying firearms in locked containers and staffed by officers who trained frequently with their personal-issue firearms (Armed Response Vehicles—'ARVs'). It is notable that these officers were initially only authorised to carry their guns once an incident had occurred, but gradually were allowed to carry a pistol routinely.

Similar caution has characterised the weaponry with which officers are equipped. Initially, firearms were restricted to revolvers and shotguns, and only gradually have self-loading pistols and carbines been adopted, usually following some notable incident that justified their use. It was the attack by Palestinian terrorists on El-Al check-in desks at Rome and Vienna airports in December 1986 that saw officers at London's Heathrow Airport patrolling overtly carrying Heckler and Koch MP5 carbines. Even so, there was considerable controversy and reassurances from the police that these weapons could only fire single shots. Since then the MP5 has become almost commonplace.

More recently, police have begun to use more powerful firearms. Two developments have promoted this: first, arose from an incident where police

delayed approaching the scene of a multiple domestic murder as victims lay wounded and dying because the police feared that they were 'out-gunned' by the murderer. Following the resulting inquiry by the IPCC, the Thames Valley Police have equipped their ARVs with high-powered assault rifles to counter any such future threat.

The second justification was in response to international terrorism (witnessed in Britain by the attacks on underground trains and buses in July 2005) as been accompanied by the appearance of armed officers carrying Heckler and Koch 33 automatic rifles and MP5PDWs. This has caused a mixture of admiration and fear: a much-publicised photograph of a 'SWAT' officer in 'ski-mask', body armour, carrying a pistol and MP5 adorned many a front page beneath headlines such as 'The face of the police'.

5. Terminology Relating to Force.

A. Sources to be consulted:

- a. Legislation relating to the use of force by the police (constitution; criminal code; criminal procedure code; human rights legislation; etc.)
- b. Ministerial/departmental policies on the use of force.
- c. Training manuals.
- d. Focus group transcriptions.

B. Words/phrases of interest: all that are used to refer to physical or psychological interference with civilians (e.g., force, coercion, violence, control, power). Please include any slang or special terms that are used to convey these notions.

C. Material required:

An analysis of the words/phrases, including the original language and the best translation to English. Citations are also necessary (for referencing these terms).

6. Important Critical Incidents/Complaints.

The other respect in which armed policing has been 'incident driven' has been when armed police have injured or killed people unjustifiably. In the early 1980s a succession of mistaken shootings of entirely innocent people led to the growth of specialist armed squads. Officers involved in these incidents were prosecuted but in each case acquitted. However, the accompanying publicity proved enormously embarrassing to the police service, who were pressed to 'sharpen up their act' by demonstrating their professional competence in the use of firearms. Scandals inevitably continue and the PCA conducted two reviews of all firearms incidents that they had investigated and were critical of tactics that they believed provoked confrontations. For instance, they found that occasions where the police had opened fire were the result of officers challenging the suspect

who came into view (for example, at a window) holding what appeared to be firearm. The recommendation of the review was that such potential confrontations should be avoided. However, the police find themselves between the proverbial 'rock and a hard place', for the first inquiry conducted by the IPCC was critical of the forces 'culture of caution' when armed police delayed approaching the scene of the multiple murder mentioned above. The conflicting opinions of civilian oversight bodies dramatically illustrates the dilemma for the use of force which must be both sufficient to overpower resistance, but not so as to inflict serious injury or death.

Similarly contradictory opinions are entertained by parliamentarians, news media commentators, and some academics. The mistaken shooting dead of an innocent Brazilian in the aftermath of the London terrorist bombings caused a furor, nationally and internationally, and exposed a 'change of policy,' known as 'Operation Kratos,' allowing 'head shots' without warning if a person was a suspected 'suicide bomber'. Critics have insisted that this 'change of policy' should have been, at least, presented to Parliament. However, the 'change of policy' is less radical than supposed. Hostage-takers holding a hostage at gunpoint have long been vulnerable to headshots from snipers precisely to prevent the same threat as that posed by the 'suicide bomber', namely squeezing the trigger as they die.

Another important feature of this incident was that the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police initially resisted an investigation by the IPCC on the grounds that it might impede the investigation of the terrorist attacks themselves. However, this objection was overruled and after a delay of a few days the investigation commenced. The Deputy Chairman of the IPCC hailed this as a 'victory' for the independent oversight of the police and undoubtedly was correct to do so.

7. Crime Rates and other relevant official data

England and Wales has an undeserved reputation for being a law-abiding country. On the contrary, it has consistently been at or near the top of the international league tables for crime generally, at least amongst the developed nations. Administrative practices result in homicide being undercounted by approximately ten per cent, which masks a rate of murder and manslaughter that is actually on a par with most other economically developed countries. Particularly worrying for the police has been growth in gun-related crime over the past decade. Like most crime, this is concentrated in the areas of greatest deprivation and is closely associated with illicit drug-use. Anti-drugs enforcement operations routinely used armed officers, but armed criminals may be encountered haphazardly in the course of routine policing. So-called, 'black-on-black' gun crime has become so numerous in London that for a decade now a special squad,

'Operation Trident', has been dedicated to the investigation of such incidents.

8. Methodology Used.

- Which scenario was used (append it) to stimulate the focus groups (FG)?

The scenario was amended to accommodate the fact that police in England and Wales routinely patrol unarmed. Once the pursuit of the vehicle commenced, the adventitious appearance of an ARV was introduced.

The suspects were described as young black men to conform to the stereotypical image of street criminals in Britain. The car they are sitting in is also described in stereotypical terms.

- What sort of probes (questions asked to follow up on unclear remarks) were used in the course of the group?

Standard probes are included in the scenario and impromptu probes were kept to a minimum. When participants asked for clarification, they were asked what difference would it make if circumstances took different turns. For instance, some patrol officers asked about the number of people in the immediate vicinity. When asked what difference it would make, they replied that it would influence their decision about how to proceed once the smell of cannabis was detected. The presence of a hostile crowd might persuade them not to pursue a minor drugs offence.

- How many groups were assembled?

Four groups were assembled: two of which consisted of general duties officers patrol officers and detectives of diverse lengths of service and both genders attending routine training courses. The remaining two groups consisted of specialist armed response crews undergoing routine refresher training in tactics.

- How large were each of the focus groups?

Groups varied in size according to operational contingencies. The smallest group numbered five and largest ten.

- Were the groups of officers mixed rank, or of single or similar ranks?

In all groups there was a mix of ranks. The two groups of general duties officers included a predominance of constables, but also some sergeants and inspectors. The armed specialists consisted of one group of constables and sergeants and another in which a similar group was accompanied by the Superintendent in charge of the squad. No influence was detected by his presence; indeed officers may have over-compensated in their criticism of policy.

- Where were the FGs held? Police station, private home, conference room in university, etc?

The two groups of general duties officers were both held in a private room at a divisional police station, where a buffet lunch was supplied by the police as an incentive for officers to attend. One of the armed groups was interviewed at a training facility, whilst the other was interviewed during a special training exercise at another police station in the force area.

- Who presented the vignette and introduced each new phase of the vignette? Were other researchers present?

I conducted the focus groups and recorded the discussion on tape and mini-disk. No other researchers were present because I have established rapport with officers at the divisional police station. Likewise, the special access I enjoy to armed officers allowed a measure of rapport that may have been jeopardised by the presence of an unfamiliar companion.

- How was the vignette presented? Power point? cartoon/poster/flip chart? Verbal presentation?

Verbal presentation that kept strictly to the text.

- How were the interactions/ talk recorded?- written, filmed, audio, other? Did you use some combination of recording methods? How long are the transcripts-pages or words? How long are they in average and what is the range of pages e.g. 5 to 15 pages (this bears on the detail of the written recordings).

The mini-disks proved reliable and were the retained copies. The discussion was not transcribed, because it is difficult (if not impossible) to represent para-verbal oral communication simply by recording only the written word. Results were summarised in an Excel spreadsheet

- In what form, if any, are they available to other members of the PUOF Group? Written, CD-ROM, filmed, audio recordings?

Undertakings of anonymity and confidentiality, as well as the law on Data Protection, forbid the disclosure of the recorded discussions.

- How long did each focus group take?

45 minutes to one hour

- Were there any problems in conducting the focus groups?

The groups were conducted surprisingly easily. Officers showed little inhibition in imagining the unfolding scenario and there were often unprompted remarks that testified to its credibility. For instance, when the car speeds away from the officer (Stage 2), this was greeted by remarks such as 'Surprise, surprise!' accompanied by laughter. At each stage officers were asked whether the scenario was credible and this was repeatedly and unanimously confirmed.

- Exceptions or concerns e.g. Did it appear that one person dominated and "skewed" the discussions? Were there silent people who might have dissented?

Levels of participation inevitably varied, but the only occasion when an officer's contribution was dismissed by others, was at the first group involving general duties officers. A young constable replied to Stage 1 of the scenario by citing the legal powers to intervene. Other officers present, acknowledged the accuracy of what he had said, but then went on to observe that many more considerations than the law are relevant to deciding what action to take.

- What is your overall impression of the groups? Tense, lively? Serious or very serious? Agitated about something, etc. (This may not of course be relevant).

My impression was extremely positive. The groups were far more successful than I had feared. The officers seemed genuinely to engage with the scenario and to argue, sometimes quite heatedly about the appropriate course of action. There were also many moments of wry amusement to punctuate the discussion.

- Were there any comments to you after the sessions that are relevant? Did you have a "debriefing" after the sessions- asking the participants what they thought about the exercise?

This varied according to the differing predilections and commitments of officers. Some stayed and continued to discuss issues raised in the scenario, whilst others left. There was no negative feedback regarding the focus group, indeed officers frequently compared invidiously the interest that I showed in their views and opinions with what they regarded as the institutionalised deafness of senior management.

- Were there any current or past events that seemed to pattern the responses e.g., a recent shooting in the city or of an officer?

The focus groups occurred in the aftermath of the first shooting of a suspect by officers in this force. The shooting had been investigated by the Police Complaints Authority and the report recently published in which the officers concerned were not only exonerated but praised for their professional restraint in dealing with the incident.

9. Analysis.

Stage 1 = beginning of the scenario up to the point where one of the youths starts the car. (The Encounter)

As a preliminary to this analysis, it needs to be made clear that armed officers did not envisage themselves carrying their firearms during the early stages of the scenario.

a. Perceptions of what is going on in the situation.

There was agreement between all four groups that this was a routine situation, e.g. 'business as usual'. In the variant of the scenario used here, one of the occupants of the car is portrayed as been well known to officers as someone involved in local drug-related crime. This they regarded as wholly unexceptional. So too was the odour of cannabis that wafted from the car once the passenger's window was lowered. Nor was there any surprise when the occupants of the car accused the officers of only stopping to question them because they were black: this was regarded as almost a ritualistic denunciation and certainly not one that they took seriously or as serving as a deterrent to taking action. As one participant remarked, 'It goes with the territory'.

There was, however, a clear distinction between the general duties and armed officers. General duties officers were rather more wary than their armed colleagues. They did not criticise the officers in the scenario for stopping and questioning the occupants of a vehicle partially obstructing

traffic. However, they did tend towards the view that the situation may need to be approached with some circumspection depending upon who else was around. In one group, the scenario was embellished and officers suggested that if the car was parked outside a café or other meeting place frequented by local black youth, then it might be prudent not to pursue matters very far. For instance, they would have abstained from taking any action in relation to the smell of cannabis detected once the car window was opened.

Armed officers whose main work is to act as a mobile reserve for a wide range of 'use of force' situations, tended to be more confident—even assertive or arrogant—in their capacity to deal with any conceivable situation that may have arisen. They universally insisted that local youths would know their vehicle and know they belonged to this squad and were not to be 'messed around with'. They implied that their reputation would be a sufficient deterrent. They self-consciously drew a distinction between themselves and relatively inexperienced patrol officers (like those depicted in the scenario) and suggested that the latter may be more reticent about becoming embroiled in a possible confrontation under such circumstances.

b. Actions that the officers would/would not take.

There was universal agreement that the officers depicted in the scenario had been justified in stopping their vehicle and approaching the suspect car. However, the scenario also incorporated ignorance of normal operating procedure that all four groups picked up. WPC Smith is portrayed as approaching the passenger side of the car, whereas officers insisted that normal practice would be for the officer to approach the driver's side. They also revealed other nuances of normal operating procedure, such as the expectation (mentioned prior to the car being depicted as speeding away) that PC Brown would remain in the police vehicle with its engine running lest precisely this contingency arose. They also mentioned that whilst WPC Smith was talking to the occupants of the car, PC Brown would invariably be radioing the registration number of the vehicle to the Control Room so as to check if it was stolen or wanted. They all envisaged that the two officers would be sufficiently familiar with each other for WPC Smith to be able to communicate with PC Brown by subtle gestures and other non-verbal communication.

The armed officers and some of the more experienced general duties officers also insisted that WPC Smith would not have asked for the window to be lowered or if she had she would quickly have opened the door of the vehicle once she smelled cannabis smoke. They also tended to agree that WPC Smith would ask the driver to step out of the car immediately and

might even reach into the car and remove the ignition key in order to prevent the escape of the suspects once they smelt cannabis smoke.

c. Informal rules for the use of force that were mentioned.

At this stage in the scenario there was little mention of the use of force. Armed officers claimed that if they had been involved in the scenario then the driver would have been removed from the parked car very speedily, if necessary by force, but they tended to agree that recourse to force would be unlikely in such circumstances because of their reputation as a 'no nonsense' squad.

d. Formal rules for the use of force that were mentioned.

Officers did not mention use of force at this stage, but did rehearse the formal legal requirements for a stop and search, asserting that they were fully met in this scenario.

e. Justifications for the use of force.

Since use of force was not envisaged at this stage, no justifications were necessary or relevant.

Stage 2 = vehicle chase up to and including the youths' car crashing against the lamp post. (The Chase)

a. Perceptions of what is going on in the situation.

The speedy escape of the suspect car was regarded as utterly predictable by all four groups.

b. Actions that the officers would/would not take.

What did occasion considerable debate was whether the officers should pursue the vehicle and how long it would be before the Control Room instructed them to cease the pursuit.

At one end of the spectrum were officers who voiced the opinion that it was inappropriate to pursue the vehicle at all. They did so for contrasting reasons, however. The first reason was that there was little justification for doing so. 'What have we got?' some asked rhetorically, referring to the traffic offence of parking the car in such a manner as to cause an obstruction and the minor offence of smoking cannabis. Amongst this group, the fact that Errol King is known to the officers as a local petty criminal was irrelevant. This group phlegmatically expected that the two occupants would 'come again' (that is, would come to police attention again if they were in-

volved in crime). There was little reason, therefore, to chase them for very minor offences.

A second line of reasoning was that there was no point in pursuing the car because as soon as the officers reported (as they were duty-bound to do) a pursuit in progress the Control Room would instruct them to break-off the chase. Even if the action of the occupants of the car aroused suspicion in their own minds, they regarded any pursuit as futile because policy guidelines discouraged pursuing escaping vehicles except in the most extraordinary circumstances. This policy was universally condemned on all occasions when it was mentioned. It was criticised for allowing 'low-life and scumbags immunity from the law'.

Another strand of opinion was that despite the official policy, 'natural' inclinations would triumph and WPC Smith and PC Brown would feel compelled to give chase. There was some suggestion that the officers might find it expedient not to report the pursuit in progress immediately to the Control Room for fear that they would be instructed to discontinue the pursuit.

The final strand of expectation was that voiced by armed officers, who as part of their training also qualify as 'pursuit drivers'. They felt that notwithstanding the slender legal grounds for pursuing the escaping vehicle, the Control Room would defer to their expertise and grasp of the situation and allow the pursuit to continue. This was another expression of their sense of being exceptional.

c. Informal rules for the use of force that were mentioned

Apart from the first group of officers who took the view that the offences committed by the occupants of the vehicle were too minor to justify pursuing them, there was agreement that by speeding off the occupants of the vehicle were in 'contempt of cop' (although no one used that phrase). Whether or not officers advocated pursuing the vehicle because of the expected intervention of Control Room, they felt that to allow vehicles to escape in such circumstances without being pursued was tantamount to granting immunity to 'low-life and scumbags'. Even some of those who did not advocate pursuit because of the triviality of the offences so far disclosed, agreed with this sentiment.

d. Formal rules for the use of force that were mentioned

The formal proscription against pursuing escaping vehicles *per se* was regarded almost universally as reprehensible.

e. Justifications for the use of force

The justification for pursuing escaping vehicles (either in these specific circumstances or more generally) was that it was essential to maintain the authority of the police.

f. Resource implications

The scenario envisages the availability of an ARV to intervene in the chase, this was regarded as unrealistically fortuitous given that in a force area covering three counties, it would be extremely unlikely for an ARV to be in this town of 200,000 people, still less within the vicinity of the chase. This was a view endorsed by ARV crews, who thought it highly improbable that they would be so readily available. In the course of discussion some officers raised the prospect of the force helicopter being deployed, but again this was met with some incredulity by others.

Stage 3 = youths get out of car and run, one of them with what looks like a gun, up to the end of the scenario.(Finale)

a. Perceptions of what is going on in the situation.

The final stage also witnessed a divergence of opinion between armed and general duties officers. However, at this stage roles were reversed: it was the armed officers who expressed wariness and general duties officers who anticipated an armed confrontation.

b. Actions that the officers would/would not take.

General duties officers imagined that the information that the vehicle was wanted in connection with a drugs-related shooting and the identification of Errol King as a local petty criminal would be sufficient to grant authority to the ARV crew to arm themselves. Armed officers and some of the more experienced general duties officers were rather more sceptical that this would be so. Their view was that the vehicle, rather than its occupants, was in some vague way associated with a drugs-related shooting. They felt that this was unlikely to persuade the 'duty officer' in the Control Room that the ARV crew should be authorised to arm themselves. 'What have we got?' they asked rhetorically.

c. Informal rules for the use of force that were mentioned.

d. Formal rules for the use of force that were mentioned.

Once the escaping car crashes and the occupants began to escape on foot general duties officers envisaged the pursuing ARV crew jumping from their vehicle and giving chase, possibly 'throwing in a challenge' (that is, identifying themselves as 'armed police' and instructing the fleeing suspects to halt).

The armed officers were also sceptical of this occurring for practical, tactical and legal reasons. Practically, they imagined that since only one of the suspects appeared to be in possession of a gun they doubted whether either they would receive authorisation to arm from the Control Room, or feel justified in 'self-authorising'. In either event, they anticipated that it would take time to strap on gun belts and extract pistols and carbines from the armoury box in their vehicle. 'By which time "chummy" would be long gone'.

Tactically, there were compelling reasons for not pursuing the escapees. They noted that it was the vehicle that was wanted in connection with the drugs-related shooting. Therefore, it would be necessary to preserve it for forensic examination. In addition, before giving chase they would need to check the vehicle for further weapons. One officer entertained the possibility of the two suspects returning to a unguarded vehicle and recovering weapons abandoned when they ran off. At the very least, unarmed officers would need to be instructed to guard the abandoned vehicle and preserve any forensic evidence. Even this was regarded as unduly risky by some officers, for they imagined that suspects returning to the vehicle and threatening any unarmed officers with the gun that was seen as they escaped.

Armed officers also pointed out that the scenario envisaged only the one ARV crew being present (the prospect of two ARVs being fortuitously on hand was regarded as utterly ridiculous). If they pursued the suspects on foot and the suspects escaped in different directions the officers would be faced with a dilemma: they would be very unwise to split up themselves, for standard operating procedure dictates that officers always deploy in pairs so that one guards the other. Therefore, if they elected to follow just one escaping suspect, that would leave the other suspect free and that might pose a threat. Officers envisaged that if one of the suspects was indeed in possession of a gun, his companion may also be armed and could intervene unpredictably in any chase. Alternatively, some envisaged that even an unarmed accomplice might be able to garner support from local 'street criminals' to ambush the armed officers with bricks and bottles.

Armed officers also pointed to the inherent danger of pursuing suspects in such circumstances. 'I'm not rushing round a corner into I don't know what'. For instance, they considered the likelihood that once they lost sight of the suspects the latter might wait in ambush.

For all these reasons, the armed officers felt that the most likely scenario was that the ARV crew would remain with the damaged car and depending on developments may assist in a more deliberate search of the area in conjunction with other ARV crews, officers with dogs, and the helicopter.

What they universally discounted was any immediate pursuit of the escapees, especially once they disappeared from sight.

They were equally dismissive of any suggestion that they would 'throw in a challenge' still less open fire. 'So, I yell "Armed police. Halt!" and the guy keeps running. What do I do next? Shoot him? What for?' The armed officers asked the ubiquitous question, 'What have we got?' Their answer was that two youths had committed a minor traffic infringement and were suspected of a petty drugs possession offence. They had also escaped in a vehicle that was associated in some vague way with a drugs-related shooting. How this association had been established, was in the circumstances described unknown. 'For all I know, it could have been some bollocks told to a detective by a snout' (that is, unreliable information provided by an informant). The youths were now escaping with one of them brandishing what *appeared* to be a gun, but armed officers pointed out that objects that have the appearance of a firearm are not necessarily firearms at all.

The notion that they might open fire on the escaping youth(s) was regarded as little more than ridiculous by the armed officers. They pointed out that there was no legal justification for doing so, since no one's life was immediately in jeopardy. They also drew attention to environmental hazards: 'If I fire a shot at an escaping scumbag and miss, it could hit a mother pushing a pram'. Before firing, they explained, they would need to consider the 'backdrop' and any danger that might be caused to innocent third parties. In the circumstances of the scenario, with the youths escaping on foot towards a shopping area, they felt that inevitably it would be too hazardous.

Extending the scenario I asked what if Errol King turned and either aimed or fired the gun he was carrying. Armed officers considered this highly improbable, but assuming they had had time to arm themselves then they conceded that under these circumstances they might consider returning fire, but even so any decision to do so was hedged around with qualifications: the 'backdrop' would need to be right; King would need to be well within range and presenting a clear target. In sum, they felt this was so unlikely as not to be worth serious consideration.