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Policing and the Reproduction of Local Social Order: a case study of Greater Manchester

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Abstract

In light of increasing concerns in relation to police accountability, this article reviews the history of public order policing for one large provincial force (Greater Manchester Police). Explaining our misgivings about those narratives that discern a trend towards ‘negotiation’ and ‘facilitation’ between protestors and the police, we outline a critical framework for the analysis of police practice. This account is centred upon an understanding of the development of policing as the cornerstone of the fabrication of bourgeois social order, but stresses that this is mediated through its formal subservience to the rule of law, conflicting priorities and the need to establish ‘patterns of accommodation’ with the populations that are to be policed. All of this makes for the reproduction of ‘local social orders’, influenced by particular urban political contexts, as well as wider cultural currents. This article suggests that this is clearly evident in the facts surrounding the four major riots, and numerous other public order policing engagements, that mark the history of this particular provincial force.

Key words: public order policing; social order; police community relations; riots.

Introduction

This article seeks to contribute to debates around police practice and accountability by exploring the recent and contemporary history of a large provincial force in England (Greater Manchester Police) over a relatively extended period of time (1974–2014). Firstly, the need for such an article arises from an appreciation of a dearth of other histories, beyond the more general academic treatments of authors such as Critchley,¹ and Emsley,² and Reiner,³ which, for obvious reasons, tend to prioritise both the overarching national picture and the London Metropolitan Police. Secondly, as is recognised in much of the literature, police-community relations have become increasingly fraught in recent decades, coincident with the emergence of neoliberal forms of governance. Arguably such processes are intensifying, whether this is seen through the prism of the crimi-

nalisation of nuisance embodied by Anti-Social Behaviour legislation, the War on Terror and the associated surveillance and stigmatisation of Muslim communities, or concerns in relation to police accountability, particularly in the context of the use of lethal force and public order policing.⁴

It is this final concern, around public order policing, which will be the focus of our historical account. This builds on previous work by the present authors that has raised questions about the policing of antifascist protest⁵ and the police role in triggering the Pendleton Riot of 2011.⁶ Some authors have stressed a shift from ‘escalated force’ to ‘negotiated management’⁷ as characterising the general trajectory of public order policing in the aftermath of the Miners’ Strike and Poll Tax Riots of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In our view, such a narrative of the ‘de-politicisation’ of public order policing, ignores the more

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¹ Critchley, T. A. *A History of Police in England and Wales*, London: Constable, 1967.

² Emsley, C. *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, London and New York: Longman, 1996.

³ Reiner, R. *The Politics of the Police (4th Edition)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁴ Greer, C. and McLaughlin, E. ‘We Predict A Riot?’, *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 50 (2010) no. 6. pp. 1041–1059.

⁵ Gilmore, J. and Tufail, W. ‘Police Corruption and Community Resistance,’ *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 93 (2013) no. 1 pp. 8–9.

⁶ Jeffery, B. and Tufail, W. “The riots were where the police were”: Deconstructing the Pendleton Riot’, *Contention: the Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Protest*, vol. 2 (2015) pp. 37–55.

⁷ Joyce, P. *Policing: Development and Contemporary Practice*, London and New York: Sage Publications, 2011. Gorringe, H. Stott, C. and Rosie, M. (2012) ‘Dialogue Police, Decision Making and the Management of Public Order During Crowd Protest Events’, *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, vol. 9 (2012) pp. 111–125. Waddington, D. *Policing Public Disorder: Theory and Practice*, Cullompton: Willan, 2007. Waddington, D. ‘A “kinder blue”: analysing the police management of the Sheffield anti-‘Lib Dem’ protest of March 2011’, *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, vol. 23 (2013) pp. 46–64.

recent experience of the policing of the protest movements of marginalised groups,⁸ as well as the extent to which public order police have been prepared to use violence in the interests of the established economic order.⁹

In the first section of this article we develop our theoretical framework, which is grounded in an appreciation of the ‘dual function’ of policing, that is; as the neutral arbiter of justice and the highly partial defence of the propertied. We discuss the centrality of the police to the fabrication of the bourgeois social order through the work of Neocleous and review the work of Fassin as a contemporary study of the police role in reproducing a particular kind of social order, inflected by histories of imperialism and racism.¹⁰ We then draw on the work of Marenin and Cohen to explore the ways in which the contradictory functions and practices of policing serve to mediate the social order imperative and produce contingent outcomes.¹¹ In the third section of the article, we present our extensive, but by no means exhaustive, review of academic, journalistic and other secondary accounts of the recent history of public order policing in Greater Manchester. In order to make the research manageable, we have selected our period of interest as beginning with the establishment of the Greater Manchester Police in 1974 (following the mergers of the Manchester and Salford forces with parts of Cheshire, Lancashire and West Yorkshire Constabularies), continuing up to the present day. Finally, and by way of conclusion, we explore the shifting influence of the prevailing social order on the practices of public order policing, and relate this back to our interest in contemporary debates concerning police practice and accountability.

Public Order, Parking Tickets and Class Repression

Neocleous’ history of the ‘police’ concept seeks to go beyond standard Marxist accounts that have viewed the police as a purely repressive force aimed at silencing working class dissent. Instead he argues for a view of the institution as ‘productive’, that is, as playing a central role in the fabrication of bourgeois social order. That such a notion was fundamental to the ‘police science’ which developed in Europe from the 17th century onwards, is beyond dispute, and is linked by Neocleous to the need of the state to ‘manage society to greater prosperity’ and to finance standing armies in the aftermath of the Peace of Westphalia. Dissecting the canon of Liberalism, Neocleous draws attention to the rhetorical sleight of hand in

Adam Smith, whereby in the course of his career the pioneer of political economy replaces “police” as supreme regulatory mechanism of society with the notion of a ‘self-generating and self-regulating commercial society’.¹²

That the police were created to assist in the fabrication of bourgeois social order is evident in the writings of those who established the ‘new’ professional police forces which appeared between the late 18th and early 19th centuries in England. Colquhoun, the founder of the Thames River Police, thought poverty to be absolutely essential in compelling people to sell their labour power, but that policing was necessary to prevent indigence (extreme poverty engendered through an inability or refusal to work) leading to crime.¹³ As Neocleous argues, the ‘stability’ of the market-system ultimately relies on the insecurity of economic actors and of a class of poverty “forever on the edge of falling into the state of indigence”¹⁴

Beyond the various clues as to the primary function of the police found in Enlightenment political philosophy, we can also point to tasks to which the ‘new’ police forces were set. As is evident in various histories of policing, the Police of the Metropolis (established in 1829) acted as a ‘national riot squad’, being deployed around the country and particularly to the northern towns and cities in order to quell dissent. Manchester saw its own force established in 1839, though political wrangling ensured local opposition continued through to 1842.¹⁵ Scarcely a year later that force would face a major antipolice riot beginning with a dispute involving soldiers drinking in the inner-city area of Ancoats. Storch provides a vivid account of working class resistance to the new police in such places, centred on the suspicion that the police were a “political, not a protective” force, intent on the criminalisation of working class street cultures, informal economic exchange, and in the suppression of political agitation.¹⁶

Bringing the discussion up to the present, Neocleous argues that while the organisation of the police is designed to reinforce the view that their primary role is crime prevention through law enforcement, this is essentially a myth.¹⁷ Such a claim is indeed belied by those studies that have demonstrated that ‘crime’ constitutes a minority of police work.¹⁸ Rather than viewing changes in policing in the twentieth century as illustrative of a shift in the focus of policing from a ‘force’ to a ‘service’, Neocleous notes that both derive from the wider mandate of ‘order maintenance’.

⁸ Gilmore, J. ‘Policing Protest: an authoritarian consensus’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 82 (2010) pp. 21–23.

⁹ Jackson, W. and Monk, H. ‘Police violence at anti-fracking protests: pacifying disruptive subjects’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 98 (2014) pp. 12–13.

¹⁰ Neocleous, M. *The Fabrication of Social Order: A Critical Theory of Police Power*, London: Pluto Press, 2000. Fassin, D. *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*, Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

¹¹ Marenin, O. ‘Parking Tickets and Class Repression: The Concept of Policing in Critical Theories of Criminal Justice’, *Contemporary Crises*, vol. 6 (1983) pp. 241–66. Cohen, P. ‘Policing the Working-class City’ in *Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, Labour and Cultural Studies*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan Press, 1997 [1981].

¹² Op. cit. p. 25.

¹³ Op. cit. p. 54.

¹⁴ Op. cit. p. 59.

¹⁵ Joyce, P. ‘The Transition from „Old“ to „New“ Policing in Early 19th Century Manchester’, *Police Journal*, vol. 66 (1993) pp. 197–210.

¹⁶ Storch, R. D. ‘The Plague of Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840–1857’, *International Review of Social History*, vol. 20 (1975) pp. 61–90. See also Emsley, C. *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, London and New York: Longman, 1996, p. 61.

¹⁷ Op. cit. pp. 92–93.

¹⁸ Bittner, E. *Aspects of Police Work*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990; Brodeur, J. *The Policing Web*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; Karn, J. *Policing and Crime Reduction: The evidence and its implications for practice*, London: The Police Foundation, 2013.

Fassin's account of the undercover Anti-Criminality Brigades in the deprived Parisian suburbs relates this conception of order maintenance to the practice of stop-and-search, which, serving little practical purpose (i.e. the infinitesimally small amount of crime that is detected in this way), is better thought of as an act of signification, a call to 'social order', which in the context of economically marginalised and politically disenfranchised non-white populations in Europe, is one of 'inequality and injustice'.¹⁹ Bringing his account to life through a rich anthropological approach, Fassin implores his reader not to ignore the "ethical dimension" of stop and search as call to social order, a reminder of one's place in the system, as purely quantitative analyses of such practices tend to ignore the component of ritual humiliation that inflects police interactions with their "property".²⁰ Crucially, Fassin's account directs us to an appreciation of the *specificities of social order*, and how this relates to the positions of particular classes and ethnicities within particular societal contexts (i.e. what it means to be a Frenchman of North African decent in a deprived peripheral housing estate, in the context of the history of French colonialism).

Nonetheless, a crucial aspect of the legitimisation of the police, is clearly the necessity to be seen as an impartial arbiter of the social order. This is where such mechanisms as police discretion and the semblance of formal submission to the rule of law²¹ combine to produce contradictory and contingent outcomes, not explicable in terms of class repression alone. Marenin perhaps goes further, basing his work on the notion of the "relative autonomy" of the state, he distinguishes between a *general order*, the "common interest of all groups in the maintenance of regularity and the protection of lives and property", and a *specific order*, "[...] the reproduction of ordered social relations, and the maintenance of those institutions and resources which allow for reproduction".²² This leads to the author's famous formulation of the 'dual function' of the police as one of "parking tickets and class repression", yet also points to the need to excavate the precise socio-historical contexts in which policing is embedded:

The police, a priori, are neither repressive nor deserving of support as defenders of a universal consensus on the public good. What the police defend depends on the concrete situation in which they work and the degree of control, through ideology or power, by the state over them.²³

This suggests to Marenin, that police actions must be investigated in order to adjudicate the point at which they indicate

'domination', but that this cannot be read off from the mere existence of a police agency.

The idea of contingency in policing outcomes also features strongly in the work of Phil Cohen, who, in exploring relations between police and a particular working class community (Islington, London) over decades, draws attention to the contradictory practices stemming from a combination of conflicting "expressive" and "repressive" functions, or the signification of the maintenance of a benign general order and the "dirty work" of "real policing".²⁴ For Cohen this occurs when a capitalist state develops forms of representative democracy and public accountability "which reproduce the conditions of bourgeois hegemony through a process of active consent".²⁵ The problem for the police, on their introduction, was that they had to actively work to produce this consent through the semblance of impartiality, while at the same time being able to introduce discipline to urban populations resistant to the emerging social order.

The police were thus required to develop strategies to maintain legitimacy in 'difficult neighbourhoods' that accommodated particular working class practices, while outlawing others, and this led to the *differentiation in policing between urban contexts* whereby the statutory norms were routinely enforced in the city-centre, but increasingly only used in emergencies, in the working-class inner-cities.²⁶ In his historical elaboration of these arguments Cohen explores how working class resistance to the "policing of their usage of social space and time"²⁷ gave way to patterns of tacit negotiation in the post-World War I period, and that this was also supported by the expansion of the lower middle-class, who, through a politics of Labourism, were being incorporated into the State, and into dominant conceptions of good order and 'public propriety'.²⁸

Nonetheless, Cohen makes the important point that such accommodations must be continually renegotiated, given the "continual recomposition and relocation" of the labour force in accordance with the demands of capital²⁹, and that one barrier to this is the increasing emphasis on productivity in police work, which may lead police towards more rigorous enforcement: "The more resources allocated to increasing the efficiency of repressive policing, the more manpower has to be poured into "community relations" to re-stabilise the public image of the force".³⁰

In this section, we have explored the roots of the police as a productive agency in the fabrication of bourgeois social order, the central role assumed by the 'new police' in quelling working

¹⁹ Op. cit. p. 92.

²⁰ Op. cit. p. 129. See also Lee, J. A. 'Some Structural Aspects of Police Deviance in Relations with Minority Groups', in Shearing, C. (eds) *Organisational Police Deviance*, Toronto: Butterworth, 1981.

²¹ Neocleous, M. *The Fabrication of Social Order: A Critical Theory of Police Power*, London: Pluto Press, 2000, pp. 100–118.

²² Marenin, O. 'Parking Tickets and Class Repression: The Concept of Policing in Critical Theories of Criminal Justice', *Contemporary Crises*, vol. 6 (1983) p. 258.

²³ Op. cit. p. 259.

²⁴ Op. cit. pp. 126–127.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Op. cit. p. 129.

²⁷ Op. cit. p. 114.

²⁸ Op. cit. p. 119.

²⁹ Op. cit. p. 131.

³⁰ Op. cit. p. 132.

class dissent during the Industrial Revolution, and the fact that much police work seems to be more concerned with order maintenance than crime prevention. Such a review is an important corrective to liberal accounts such as Joyce, which downplay the police's role in class repression and suggest that working class resistance to the police is a relatively new phenomena emerging from the early twentieth century onwards³¹, rather than, as we have seen in Cohen, something markedly declining from then up until the late twentieth century. Fassin meanwhile has provided us clues into how the specificities of social order inflect local forms of policing, and how this relates to societal context, which is a vital insight in terms of the present study.

Yet at the same time, for reasons of ideological legitimisation, we have also noted how the police must present a semblance of submission to impartial (legal) authority, which leads Marenin to argue that the extent to which the police be seen as repressive agency must be answered by empirical investigation, not a priori assumption. Finally, Cohen, in his own take on the contradictions at the heart of the police function, points to the contingent factors that may allow patterns of accommodation between the police and working class communities to develop, as well as highlighting the inherent instability of such accommodations.

Public Order and Greater Manchester Police

In this section we present our data; as full a picture as we have been able to reconstruct of public order policing engagements occurring over the history of Greater Manchester Police (GMP), contextualised in relation to other policing events and developments, culled from academic work, journalistic and other secondary sources, and informed by discussions with a range of activists and local historians. We make no claims that this historical narrative is exhaustive and we recognise the dangers of air-brushing a great number of incidents of public order policing that did not give rise to antagonism or violence from the historical record. Nonetheless, given the police propensity to celebrate their successes (as any other bureaucratic institution), and given our extensive archival research in the Greater Manchester area and interviews with residents, police officers and significant local state actors, we would expect to be able to identify major examples of positive police community relations, even if these do not necessarily relate to public order policing function per se. In interpreting the historical manifestations of public order policing, we begin with basic questions of what happened, where and why, with a particular focus on any possible police role in precipitating disorder, as well as their statements and actions in the aftermath of disorder. We are particularly interested in how this relates to the general societal context (debates about policing at the national level) and specificities of a local social order (i.e. within the County of Greater Manchester³²).

³¹ Op. cit. pp. 182–183.

³² This is not to treat space ‘as a container’ and we will attempt to specify some of the relationships between the political actors and contexts operating at a local level and the national context within which they are embedded.

³³ ‘History of Greater Manchester Police’, GMP Museum and Archive, last accessed 21st January, 2015, http://www.gmpmuseum.co.uk/?page_id=913.

³⁴ Jackson, L., ‘The Coffee Club Menace’: Policing Youth, Leisure and Sexuality in Post-War Manchester’, *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 5 (2008) pp. 289–308.

³⁵ Copsey, N. *Anti-Fascism in Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

³⁶ Renton, D. K. ‘Anti-fascism in the Northwest 1976–1981’, last accessed 21st January, 2015, <http://www.dkrenton.co.uk/anl/northw.htm>

³⁷ Op. cit. p.186.

The Manchester Police Museum states that the first Chief Constable of GMP, William James Richards, ‘took over the force at a time when there was unprecedented growth in crime such as robbery and assault’.³³ Clearly the 1970s was period of political instability, coupled with rapid social and economic change. In terms of the policing function, spectacular threats to public safety represented by the Irish Republican Army’s mainland bombing campaign (there were a spate of bombings in the city in 1974 and 75, including the bombing of Manchester Magistrates Court and Lewis’ department store), while an increasing concern with drug trafficking had replaced the more muted fears relating to “coffee bars”, northern soul and the corruption of youth that had characterised the previous decade.³⁴

Significantly at this time, the early decades after the Empire Windrush brought the first large groups of post-war immigrants to the UK, far-right extremism was growing to an extent not seen since the de-legitimisation of the British Union of Fascists through the association with Hitlerism in the 1930s.³⁵ In Greater Manchester, as elsewhere, the far-right had been mobilising under the banner of the National Front since 1967. The National Front attacked a meeting at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) in November 1975, and one eye witness reported police inaction when the neo-Nazis lined up for a publicity shot in front of an Ulster Volunteer Force banner.³⁶ As Manchester Trades Council issued a demand for an inquiry into the incident, the Director of Public Prosecutions refused to press charges on the advice of then Deputy Chief Constable James Anderton (who would later blame the ‘race relations industry’ for generating tensions between ethnic minorities and the wider community). Nonetheless, UMIST brought a private action against four NF members, who were eventually found guilty of assault and criminal damage.

The very next year, Anderton, an outspoken moral crusader whose political perspectives will be untangled below, was appointed Chief Constable. One of his first acts was to preside over the establishment of the Tactical Aid Group (TAG), an extra-territorial paramilitary force - not tied to specific divisions or routine policing duties - modelled along the lines of the Metropolitan Police Service’s Special Patrol Group (which was established in 1961 and had performed controversial roles, leading to the deaths of protestors, at Red Lion Square in 1974 and Southall in 1979). Joyce refers to a number of difficulties associated with such paramilitary units: that they lack local knowledge and sensitivity to local concerns; they are frequently associated with heavy-handed or aggressive policing; and in possessing their own command structure they often act independently of larger policing operations of which they are part.³⁷ Nonetheless, while the SPG was eventually replaced by Territorial Support Groups (organised at the divisional level)

in the London Met, GMP retains a centralised unit up to the present. Another important early intervention by Anderton was to establish the "Community Contact Department"³⁸, aimed at fostering good relations with the community, though McLaughlin makes clear that the nature of this engagement was very much on the new Chief Constable's terms.³⁹

Nonetheless, the new force within a force (the TAG) was to receive its first outing in October 1977 in policing a National Front mobilisation on the outskirts of Hyde. The march had already been approved by Tameside Council, whose Tory majority had won out over Labour opposition and whose leader had stated that the National Front were after all only 'marching for free speech and against red terror'.⁴⁰ Anderton played a key role in facilitating the march through secret negotiations with the NF leadership.⁴¹ While announcing a ban on the march in public, the Chief Constable had secretly agreed to police the NF demonstration along a different route to that which had originally been proposed. GMP deployed nearly 6,000 officers to police the eventual march, of whose passing Renton ironically reports:

In Hyde, Martin Webster of the National Front conducted a one-man march [...] As he walked, nervous and sweating past the distant jeers of the protesters, it must have occurred to him that rarely in the history of public order have so few people owed so much to so many. Without the police to protect him, his 'march' could not have begun. Ramila Patel of the Asian Youth Movement walked in front of him the whole way with a placard, saying 'This man is a Nazi'. Anti-fascists were able to heckle Webster and disrupt his parade, but could not prevent such a large contingent of police officers from demonstrating.⁴²

A further NF demonstration in Bolton in February 1978 led to brawls, mainly between police and antifascists, with Renton reporting mounted police charges against the main antifascist protest outside of the Town Hall and eighteen antiracists being arrested under public order statutes and 'charged without access to a solicitor'.

While later in 1978, the tide seemed to be turning against the National Front, with a huge Anti-Nazi League march and rally attended by some 35,000, and featuring a performance by the Buzzcocks, in July, the focus of concerns relating to policing had already shifted to the discriminatory practices endured by the conurbation's African-Caribbean community. In 1979 for instance journalist Darcus Howe was arrested for obstruction by Vice-Squad officers, reflecting the widespread misuse of discretionary police power in neighbourhoods such as Moss Side. In that same year, Anderton's blend of religiously-inspired con-

servativism was on display on the BBC's Question Time, when he stated that over the coming decade the primary role of the police would not be crime prevention, but tackling politically motivated attempts to overthrow the state.⁴³ Moreover, while 1981 was to mark a milestone in the post-industrial resurrection of Greater Manchester's economy (through the establishment of an 'Enterprise Zone' covering the former docklands), it was also a year in which widespread police repression was to return to levels perhaps not seen since the inter-war period.

In the first instance, Anderton intervened in an industrial dispute at the Laurence Scott engineering works in Openshaw⁴⁴, recovering materials from an occupied warehouse to allow for the continuation of production. In the second instance, tensions in relation to racist policing practices boiled over and precipitated the Moss Side Riots. These broke out on the 8th July when a crowd of 1,000 youths surrounded Moss Side police station, smashing windows and destroying 12 police vehicles. A policeman was shot through the leg with a crossbow bolt and over the following nights looting and the burning of premises occurred around Moss Side and neighbouring Rusholme. Further disturbances are also reported at Reddish, Clayton, Salford Precinct and in Eccles.⁴⁵

The riots came to an end when on the 11th July the Chief Constable responded with a mobile task force of 500 officers who made 150 arrests within 24 hours, rising to a total of 470 in the weeks following. As McLaughlin records, the Hytner Inquiry into the disturbances reported later that year and confirmed that tensions over racist policing were at the core of the summer's rioting; the Moss Side Defence Committee went even further in its 'Hytner Myths' report.⁴⁶ The response of the Greater Manchester police committee lay in attempts to establish appointed, non-accountable 'community liaison panels' to help restore fragile relationships between the police and inner-city residents. While 1982 was a year of relative quiet, with the policing of a visit by Pope John Paul II to Heaton Park passing off without major incident, 1984–85 was to mark a particular nadir in the status of the police with a range of marginal groups.

In the first instance, the 'New Left' Labour regime at Manchester Town Hall was at war with the local force over the discriminatory behaviour of officers, politicised policing, and a lack of accountability. GMP officers were extensively deployed to mining areas under mutual-aid agreements through the centralised mechanism of the National Reporting Centre, where they were often seen to be at the forefront of aggressive actions.⁴⁷ It was in part to punish the Chief Constable for his costly deployment of officers outside of the conurbation that

³⁸ Broady, D. and Sawkill, C. (1989) *The Police! 150 Years of Policing in the Manchester Area*, Manchester: Archive Publications Ltd, 1989, p. 63.

³⁹ McLaughlin, E. *Community, Policing and Accountability: The politics of policing in Manchester in the 1980s*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1994.

⁴⁰ Renton, D. K. 'Anti-fascism in the Northwest 1976–1981', last accessed 21st January, 2015, <http://www.dkrenton.co.uk/anl/northw.htm>.

⁴¹ McLaughlin, E. *Community, Policing and Accountability: The politics of policing in Manchester in the 1980s*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1994, p. 40.

⁴² Renton, D. K. 'Anti-fascism in the Northwest 1976–1981', last accessed 21st January, 2015, <http://www.dkrenton.co.uk/anl/northw.htm>. See also Broady, D. and Sawkill, C. (1989) *The Police! 150 Years of Policing in the Manchester Area*, Archive Publications Ltd: Manchester, 1989, p. 64.

⁴³ Walker, M. (1986) *With Extreme Prejudice: An Investigation into Police Vigilantism in Manchester*, London: Canary Press.

⁴⁴ McLaughlin, E. *Community, Policing and Accountability: The politics of policing in Manchester in the 1980s*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1994, p. 65–66.

⁴⁵ Op. cit. p. 45.

⁴⁶ Op. cit. p. 51.

⁴⁷ Waddington, D., Jones, K. and Critcher, C. (1989) *Flashpoints: Studies in Public Disorder*, London and New York: Routledge. While GMP officers were mostly deployed outside of the conurbation during the Miners' Strike 1984–85, there were local deployments, such as Agecroft Colliery, Salford.

the county-wide police committee took the decision to abolish the police band. Furthermore, the same year also witnessed the establishment of two grass roots organisations campaigning for police accountability, the Youth and Allied Workers Monitoring Group and the Gay Men's Police Monitoring Group⁴⁸, the latter formed in response to a police raid on the Napoleon's bar in Manchester's emerging 'Village'. 1984 also witnessed a continuation of racist action on the part of the police, most notably the alleged rape of Jackie Berkeley by GMP officers while she was held in custody.⁴⁹

In the April of 1985, police lost control of fans at a Liverpool-Manchester United game being played at the 'neutral ground' of Manchester City in Moss Side, in an event that became known as 'The Battle of Thornton Road'.⁵⁰ At the same time, student activists and others watched the trial of Jackie Berkeley (for wasting police time) unfold. Those student activists were to play a key role in the most important public order policing engagement of that year, the 'Battle of Brittan', and the ensuing campaign of police vigilantism.⁵¹ The sequence of events was as follows: Home Secretary Leon Brittan responded to an invitation to speak at the University of Manchester Student's Union on the 1st of March 1985. This was subsequent to an earlier visit by Michael Heseltine, where the minister was greeted by a hostile crowd and splattered with red paint. As Pullen and Abendstern note, such stage-managed set piece engagements (whereby Ministers refused to enter Students' Unions through side entrances, in an unobtrusive manner) with student protesters seemed designed to de-legitimate a major source of opposition to Conservative Party policies, but more than this, that the level of brutality witnessed during the Home Secretary's visit was an attempt by GMP to compensate for their earlier failure to protect Heseltine.⁵²

During initial meetings with GMP commanders, the Student's Union officers were persuaded to relinquish control of the steps leading up to the University's main entrance, allowing it to be treated by police as a 'public highway' for the duration of the Home Secretary's visit. After allowing a group of around 300 students to occupy the steps to the building on the night of the visit, the Tactical Aid Group, assisted by other uniformed and plain clothes officers proceeded to violently assault the gathered crowd to clear the steps for Brittan's entrance. A witness cited in Walker reports:

'I witnessed two girls being dragged by their hair and reduced to tears. I saw several people kicked and punched down the stone steps. Several plain clothes police were indulging in gross physical violence. In the crush when Brittan arrived I witnessed one officer removing a girl from the crowd, calling her "nigger", and saw him hit her while dragging her towards the van'.⁵³

More serious still, was the campaign of 'police vigilantism' that developed in the aftermath of the 'Battle of Brittan', as junior GMP officers waged a campaign of intimidation against Steven Shaw and Sarah Hollis, two students involved in the demonstration outside the Students Union, to ensure their silence.⁵⁴

In the years following the 'Battle of Brittan', GMP was rocked by a number of scandals. In 'The Stalker Affair' of 1986, Deputy Chief Constable of GMP, John Stalker, was removed from his position at the head of an official investigation into the existence of a "shoot-to-kill" inquiry in Northern Ireland and suspended from the force following allegations of his links to organised crime in Manchester. Stalker claimed that Anderton was involved in his dismissal and the affair caused significant local and national public outcry. Also in 1986, Anderton continued a pattern of ill-advised public statements by commenting that those with HIV/AIDS were 'swirling about in a human cesspit of their own making', following this in 1987 by stating, in his last major speech to the Association of Chief Police Officers, that rapists should be castrated. Not only had the Conservatives been extremely effective in associating 'anti-police sentiments' with the stigmatising label of the 'loony left', but the abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils in 1986 had emasculated the police committee's ability to hold the force to account. In this context McLaughlin explains that the 'battle for police accountability' within GMP was increasingly being lost.⁵⁵ Finally, in reference to Anderton's AIDS comment, it is now known that the Prime Minister herself intervened to protect his job⁵⁶, illustrating that his brand of moralistic social conservatism was not out of step with contemporaneous national political elites.

Nevertheless, the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s were not without incident, as rave culture spread through the region, and a minor moral panic loomed in relation to the new drug-related subculture. In 1990, on the 1st of April, a day after the Poll Tax Riots had rocked London, serious disorder broke out at Her Majesty's Prison Strangeways. The disturbances, triggered by resentment due to overcrowding and the ill-treatment of prisoners by staff, lasted for 25 days. Two people died and 194 prisoners and staff were injured. Damage estimated at £60 million was caused.⁵⁷ Despite this, and recalling Cohen's contention that an increase in repression necessitates an intensified public relations offensive to stabilise the image of the force, the 1990s was, broadly speaking, a period of retrenchment for Greater Manchester Police. The divisive figure of James Anderton was finally replaced by David Wilmot in

⁴⁸ McLaughlin, E. *Community, Policing and Accountability: The politics of policing in Manchester in the 1980s*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1994, p. 98.

⁴⁹ Walker, op. cit.

⁵⁰ McLaughlin, op. cit.

⁵¹ Walker, op. cit.

⁵² Pullen, B. and Abendstern, M. *A History of the University of Manchester*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 197–198.

⁵³ Op. cit. p. 39.

⁵⁴ Op. cit.

⁵⁵ Op. cit. p. 104.

⁵⁶ Qureshi, Y. 'Secret documents show how Margaret Thatcher helped save ex-Manchester police chief Sir James Anderton after row over Aids comments', *Manchester Evening News*, 4th January, 2013.

⁵⁷ Carrabine, E. *Power, discourse and resistance: An analysis of the Strangeways prison riot*, PhD thesis, Salford: University of Salford, 1998.

1991, who immediately set about attempting to establish more of a 'service' ethos for the force.⁵⁸

Over the course of the 1990s the Greater Manchester conurbation underwent a post-industrial rebirth (albeit a partial and fragmentary one), and the concerns relating to trends in crime and policing seemed to reflect this. On the one hand there was the growing significance of the secessionist suburbs, (socially) constructed as being in opposition to "those inner cities" of job loss, riot and decay⁵⁹, while on the other, was an increasing concern with the city as "growth machine", necessitating the securitisation of space in order to attract capital and the middle classes to the core of the city-region.⁶⁰ Both of these trends were associated with the proliferation of private policing.

Moreover, it is important to understand the local dimension to the ways in which post-industrial restructuring has been articulated. In the early 1980s, Manchester (as noted above) had been a bastion of the New Left; of municipal socialism constructed in an explicitly antagonistic relationship to the Conservative national government. When the 1987 election produced a third consecutive defeat for the Labour party, a pervasive sense of defeatism set the scene for an embracing of neoliberal pragmatism and the downgrading of social objectives as secondary to the drive to secure inward investment.⁶¹ Tickell and Peck have described how this led to a re-gendering of local politics, as the role of male and business dominated quangos was expanded to by-pass local democratic structures.⁶²

Yet while the 1990s appear as a moment of economic growth and relative stabilisation in police-community relations, new fractures were emerging. If 'patterns of accommodation' with the constabulary had ever persisted amongst the most deprived sections of the working class, after more than a decade of deindustrialisation, the closure of the docks and unprecedented job loss, working class forms of resistance appeared to be hardening and would be crystallised in the early days of July 1992 in a riot on the Ordsall estate. Campbell describes how the riot was rooted in resentment towards the indiscriminately heavy-handed policing meted out against men and boys in Salford, regardless of prior record.⁶³ In her wider excavation of the so-called 'Council Estate Riots' of 1991–1992, Campbell centres her explanation on deindustrialisation, the feminisation of work, and heavy handed police incursions following prolonged periods of non-intervention.

That the neighbourhood of Ordsall, alongside other inner-city neighbourhoods, was undergoing significant crime waves seems to be beyond dispute. A particular Salford crime outfit, having secured lucrative security contracts for city-centre venues that provided access to newly emergent drugs markets⁶⁴ were quite explicit in their attempts to set themselves up as an alternative authority structure in the neighbourhoods where they lived, and those seen speaking to the police were subject to public shaming as 'grasses'. The spokesperson of the 'Firm', interviewed in the early 1990s, espoused a local politics of class conflict whereby politicians were the reasons people in his area committed crime, while the incoming 'yuppies' at Salford Quays were identified as the proper targets for victimisation by local people.⁶⁵

The disorder in the neighbourhood began on the 1st of July with an attack on the offices of a tenants' cooperative. The following evening a Carpet World store was set on fire, with one local resident interviewed in the aftermath linking this to the employment of 'outsiders'.⁶⁶ A sales executive with the Manchester Evening News, who was present at the event, describes what happened next:

There were lots of people around but it was very peaceful. Suddenly, just after midnight, eight vanloads of police arrived and started wading into the crowd, telling them to get back even though they were not in danger. One man sitting on his fence was coshed in the face and fell. I have no doubt that if I had not moved I would have got a baton in my face. There was no riot when the police arrived. I am convinced they started it.⁶⁷

In the following weeks community buildings elsewhere in Salford were attacked and on the 6th July a job centre in Ordsall was torched, with shots taken at the fire appliance that was dispatched to the scene, leading to the saturation of the neighbourhood with armed officers. While the disorder disappeared as soon as it had come, the incident fed into Salford's increasingly national reputation as a 'no-go area'⁶⁸, and the links to organised crime allowed the various authorities to de-politicise the problems facing the inner city.

The late 1990s were punctuated by the largest IRA bomb detonated in England, which tore through Manchester city-centre. Mercifully a timely evacuation averted any loss of life and the damage to the retail infrastructure was greeted as an opportunity for continuing 'regeneration'. Elsewhere, GMP faced

⁵⁸ Loader, I. and Mulcahy, A. 'The Power of Legitimate Naming: Chief Constables as Social Commentators in Post-War England', *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 41 (2001) pp. 41–55.

⁵⁹ Taylor, I. 'Fear of Crime, Urban Fortunes and Suburban Social Movements: Some Reflections from Manchester', *Sociology*, vol. 30 (1996) pp. 317–337.

⁶⁰ Taylor, I. 'New York/Manchester: Zero Tolerance or Reclaim the Night', *City*, vol. 2 (1997) pp. 139–148.

⁶¹ Peck, J. and Ward, K. *City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

⁶² Tickell, A. and Peck, J. 'The return of the Manchester Men: men's words and men's deeds in the remaking of the local state', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 21 (1996) pp. 595–616.

⁶³ Campbell, B. *Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places*, London: Methuen, 1993, p. 289.

⁶⁴ Hobbs, D., Hadfield, P., Lister, S. and Winlow, S. *Bouncers: Violence and Governance in the Night-time economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 71–108.

⁶⁵ Evans, K., Fraser, P., Walklate, S. 'Whom can you trust? The politics of 'grassing' on an inner city housing estate', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 44 (1996) p. 372.

⁶⁶ Brotherton, I. and Hughes, R. *Barbary Coast Revisited: A Book by Ordsall about Ordsall- Heart of Salford Docklands*, Manchester: Bridging the Years, 1994, p. 79.

⁶⁷ Ian Kearney, cited in Campbell, op. cit. p. 289.

⁶⁸ Walklate, S. and Evans, K. *Zero Tolerance or Community Tolerance: Managing crime in high crime areas*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999. See Fraser (1996) on similar processes of the construction of a Greater Manchester inner-city neighbourhood as a 'national problem', in her case, Moss Side.

a major public order engagement in the form of environmental protests over the construction of Manchester Airport's second runway. Protestors forming encampments and digging tunnels to prevent construction taking place were removed on a number of occasions between 1997 and 1999, with GMP allowing eviction orders to take their course through the courts, before taking action. The GMP Museum's narrative of events notes that "the operation drew universal praise for the sensitive way that the work had been done".⁶⁹

Towards the end of 1990s issues of racism began to reassert themselves on the public agenda. In 1996 Amer Rafiq lost his sight in one eye, alleging brutality by GMP⁷⁰, while in 1997 it emerged that a black policeman, Martin Harding, had been passed over for promotion 56 times.⁷¹ In the context of the ongoing MacPherson Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, Chief Constable David Wilmot admitted to the existence of 'institutional racism' within his force. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that this acknowledgement constituted the high watermark of GMP's admittance of discriminatory practices, for, in the years following, the force was shown to be stoking conflict with minority ethnic communities in another part of the conurbation; actions that were to be substantial causal factors in the triggering of riots in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham. It could be argued that social disorder was all but inevitable in the context of GMP's history of racist discrimination towards minority ethnic communities. This discrimination, first against the black community and then against British Asians⁷², developed against the backdrop of a media induced moral panic concerning asylum seekers and the opportunism of the British National Party and other far-right splinter groups in inflaming antagonisms.⁷³ Yet GMP were to play a very particular role in the developing tensions by lending credence to a growing belief that the white majority of Oldham were in fact the disproportionate victims of race attacks by Asians.

The GMP statistics on which this narrative was based (showing 60 per cent of the victims of racist assault to have been white), and on which sensationalistic *Oldham Chronicle* headlines were based⁷⁴, should be seen as a result of the low levels of trust in the local constabulary by the Asian communities of the town,

⁶⁹ Op. cit.

⁷⁰ Amnesty International, 'Alleged ill-treatment of Amer Rafiq', 5th March, last accessed 15th February, 2015, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR45/005/1996/en/80abf203-eb0c-11dd-aad1-ed57e7e5470b/eur450051996en.html>.

⁷¹ Anon, 'Black policeman was passed over for promotion 56 times', *The Independent*, 2nd April, 1997.

⁷² Ahmed, N. M. Bodi, F. Kazim, R. and Shadzreh, M. *The Oldham Riots: Discrimination, Deprivation and Communal Tension in the United Kingdom*, London: Islamic Human Rights Commission, 2001.

⁷³ Copsey, N. *Contemporary British Fascism: The British National Party and the Quest for Legitimacy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Bagguley, P. and Hussain, Y. *Riotous Citizens: Ethnic Conflict in Multicultural Britain*, Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008.

⁷⁴ Waddington, D. *Policing Public Disorder: Theory and Practice*, Cullompton: Willan, 2007, p. 99.

⁷⁵ Copsey, op. cit. p. 125.

⁷⁶ Kalra, V. S. 'Police lore and community disorder: diversity in the criminal justice system', in Mason, D. (eds) *Explaining Ethnic Differences: Changing Patterns of Disadvantage in Britain*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003.

⁷⁷ Waddington, op. cit. p. 101.

⁷⁸ Bagguley and Hussain, op. cit. p. 162.

⁷⁹ Webster, C. 'Race, space and fear: imagined geographies of racism, crime, violence and disorder in Northern England', *Capital & Class*, vo. 80 (2003) pp. 95–122. Webster also draws attention to overlapping patterns of residential and work based segregation in the northern textile towns (including those in the north of Greater Manchester) that served to reinforce ethnic boundaries and social distance. For example, the practice of employing Pakistanis and Bangladeshis on night-shifts, while employing whites on day shifts.

⁸⁰ Op. cit. p. 164.

⁸¹ Greater Manchester Police, 'PCSOs', last accessed 6th March, 2015, <http://www.gmp.police.uk/live/recruitv2.nsf/WebPages/ADB986F175B3E4E3802574B0004612AF?OpenDocument>.

and not in fact as evidence of the persecution of the white community. Yet even without this interpretation, given that ethnic minorities comprise only 11 per cent of the population of Oldham, they were still more than 6 times as likely as a white person to be a victim of attack (according to the official figures).⁷⁵ Such subtleties escaped the divisional superintendent of GMP, who in a number of public statements focused on the growing resentment felt by (white) residents towards 'Asian gangs'.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the immediate precipitants of the riot in May 2001 were far right incursions into Oldham attempting to win local legitimacy through a discourse of 'rights for whites', demonstrations for which the police were seen to be providing de-facto protection.⁷⁷

Perhaps the most important outcome from the 2001 Oldham Riots (alongside Burnley and Bradford, the misleadingly titled 'Northern Race Riots') were more active attempts by state actors to de-politicize public disorder through a language of 'self-segregation' that stressed a lack of 'common values' and 'community cohesion'.⁷⁸ Webster has articulately rebuffed such claims, noting that it has been the specificities of failing housing markets in northern former textile towns (a surfeit of inner-city terraced housing abandoned by the white majority) that have combined with racist discrimination (white flight and the unwillingness of Asians to move to peripheral white working class housing estates) to produce neighbourhood decline, geographical immobility and more marked patterns of ethnic segregation.⁷⁹ All of this has occurred in the context of deindustrialisation that has disproportionately affected minority ethnic populations. In this context, it is noteworthy that the conclusions of the Cantle Report, the official exploration of the summer of disorder, and the Ritchie Report, the earlier Home Office sponsored study specifically on Oldham, contained no substantive acknowledgement of the kind of systematic discrimination that Scarman had identified 20 years earlier in his report on the Moss Side Riot, but instead reproduced a blaming-the-victim narrative of a (racialised) 'dysfunctional community'.⁸⁰

The policing of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002 passed off without incident and Police Community Support Officers were introduced to provide "a friendly face for the public, creating safer and more confident neighbourhoods".⁸¹

However, in 2003, the new Chief Constable Michael Todd faced a major scandal when GMP officers were shown to be engaging in 'racist banter' in the television documentary *The Secret Policeman*. The scandal surrounding police racism continued in 2003 following the savage beating (including the use of CS spray) of Delbo King, a 33 year old black man, which was caught on CCTV.⁸² Large scale public order engagements in the decade included a total lockdown of Manchester city-centre in 2004 for the Labour Party conference⁸³, in scenes that would become a regular feature in the years to follow. In response to shifting crime concerns GMP launched its anti-gang unit, Operation XCalibre, in the same year, and in 2005 the chief Constable allowed himself to be hit by a taser, in a bid to reassure the public in relation to the growing deployment of officers armed with these weapons. Todd was also notable in making explicit the link between policing and the 'regeneration' of the conurbation, incorporating it into his "guiding principles for transforming GMP".⁸⁴

In 2005, the rebranded Tactical Aid Unit was deployed to protect the Glazer family, the new owners of Manchester United, as they arrived at Old Trafford in the face of widespread animosity from ordinary fans for their debt financed purchase of the club.⁸⁵ In 2006, and in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the USA and UK in 2001 and 2005, there were a series of highly publicised 'terror raids' in the city, and in April 2007 the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) was established to tackle terrorism and extremism, one of four CTUs nationally dedicated to combating 'violent extremism and radicalisation'.⁸⁶ The last years of the new millennium also saw an apparent intensification of the processes of the 'securitisation' of urban space (noted above), with the establishment of dispersal orders on Salford Quays in 2007, prefiguring the BBC's move to a new northern headquarters at MediaCityUK. The following year, GMP saw a further change of Chief Constable as Peter Fahy of Cheshire Constabulary succeeded Michael Todd, who died in mysterious circumstances on Mount Snowden.

The major public order event in that year related to the policing of the Glasgow Rangers - Zenit St Petersburg UEFA Cup Final being staged at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium (to the east of the city centre). The policing of this event came in for criticism, after the handling of spectator discontent following the failure of large screens in a specially created 'fan zone' and an unwilling-

ness by officers to allow the gathered throng freedom of movement, which precipitated outbreaks of disorder.⁸⁷ Eye witness reports describe the Tactical Aid Unit responding aggressively, meting out indiscriminate violence against the crowds focused on the city centre. The TAU made the headlines again in March 2009 by arresting and breaking the fingers of Andrew Sinclair for 'driving too slowly past Manchester airport'.⁸⁸

In a sign of Conservative Party efforts to recover their traditional strength on issues of law and order, 2009 also saw Shadow Minister Chris Grayling, at his Party's annual conference, make the comparison between Manchester (where the conference was being held) and the Baltimore of US TV serial *The Wire*, in terms of the extent to which the two cities have been blighted by crime. This was despite the fact that at the time Baltimore, with a substantially smaller population than Greater Manchester, had a 'gang-related' murder rate exponentially greater than its UK counterpart.⁸⁹

More recently, concomitant with the financial 'crisis' unfolding since 2008, Greater Manchester has seen an upsurge in far right activity, with clashes taking place between Islamophobic street organisations such as the English Defence League, and antifascists loosely organised around the group Unite Against Fascism. The uncompromising approach of the police towards antifascists was highlighted by the arrests and subsequent compensation claims ensuing from the policing of the EDL UAF clashes in Bolton in 2010⁹⁰, as well as the use of controversial tactics such as 'kettling'. The policing of large-scale protests in Manchester regarding increases in tuition fees in 2010 passed off with relatively few arrests, in contrast with the significant clashes that took place in London.

Nonetheless, it is clear that economic recession, a major reduction in welfare state spending, and, a breaching of the implied moral economy upon which aspirational neoliberalism had been sold⁹¹, formed the context in which the fourth major riot in the history of GMP unfolded. The events of Tuesday 9th of August, precipitated by the killing of a black man, Mark Duggan, by the Metropolitan police service (but which became emblematic of widespread discontent felt by working class and ethnic minority populations) were initially triggered by a misguided attempt by GMP to put on a show of force in the vicinity of Salford Precinct, Pendleton.⁹² This disorder

⁸² Stevens, R. 'Britain: The beating of Delbo King highlights police racism and brutality', *World Socialist Website*, 24th March, 2004, last accessed 15th February, 2015, <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2004/03/brit-m24.html>.

⁸³ Coaffee, J. and Rogers, P. 'Rebordering the City for New Security Challenges: From Counter-terrorism to Community Resilience', *Space and Polity*, vol. 12 (2008) pp. 108–109.

⁸⁴ Todd, M. 'Transforming Greater Manchester Police', Society of Personnel Directors Scotland Annual Conference, 2007.

⁸⁵ Barnwell, M. and Burleigh, J. 'Man Utd owners flee Old Trafford under police escort', *The Telegraph*, 30th June, 2005.

⁸⁶ Coaffee and Rogers, op. cit. p. 111.

⁸⁷ Millward, P. 'Glasgow Rangers Supporters in the City of Manchester: The Degeneration of a „Fan Party” into a „Hooligan Riot”, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 44 (2009) pp. 391–392.

⁸⁸ Cooper, R. (2013) 'Father-of-three assaulted and wrongly arrested by police in front of his partner and young children „for driving too slowly past airport”, *Mail Online*, 16th July, last accessed 15th February, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2365353/Father-assaulted-wrongly-arrested-police-partner-young-children-driving-slowly-past-airport.html>.

⁸⁹ Watt, N. and Mulholland, H. 'Baltimore's mayor rebukes Tory Chris Grayling over Wire remark', *The Guardian*, 28th August, 2009.

⁹⁰ Gilmore and Tufail, op. cit.

⁹¹ Harvie, D. and Milburn, K. 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Twenty-First Century', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 112 (2013) pp. 559–567.

⁹² Jeffery, B. and Jackson, W. 'The Pendleton Riot: A Political Sociology', *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 87, (2012) pp. 18–20. Jeffery, B. and Tufail, W. "The riots were where the police were": Deconstructing the Pendleton Riot', *Contention: the Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Protest*, vol. 2 (2015) pp. 37–55.

quickly spread to Manchester city-centre and resulted in widespread looting and destruction of property. The present authors have not been alone in describing these events as “anti-police riots”⁹³ and have joined Spalek et al in linking the specific geographies of the August 2011 English Riots to patterns of gentrification, socio-economic polarisation and the securitisation of urban space.⁹⁴ In Salford, where three decades of ‘regeneration’ has failed to make any appreciable impact on the lives of those working class communities rendered without purpose by deindustrialisation, the response to the riots was, rather predictably, more regeneration.

The final public order engagement of our narrative relates to an environmental protest beginning in 2013, at Barton Moss in Salford on the western periphery of the conurbation. The protest against exploratory hydraulic fracturing (or ‘fracking’) by IGas followed earlier protests in Sussex and the Fylde Coast and centred on opposition to a process widely seen as harmful and polluting. Research by local investigative journalists, as well as by academics at Liverpool John Moores University and University of York, attests to the levels of police violence meted out to demonstrators in this secluded corner of Greater Manchester, with Tactical Aid Unit officers being at the centre of allegations of unlawful arrest and the inappropriate use of force.⁹⁵ The fact that almost every one of the some 200 arrests that took place have ended in acquittal or dismissal surely demonstrates the illegitimacy of the police approach, while evidence has subsequently come to light of the close levels of cooperation between the police and the private company over the running of the ‘operation’. Acquitting the defendants in one of the many cases that followed the policing operation at Barton Moss, the judge accused Greater Manchester Police of exceeding its powers by intervening on IGas’ behalf during a civil trespass and of “acting as civil enforcement officers” for the company.⁹⁶ None of this prevented the nominally independent Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, Tony Lloyd, from presiding over a white-wash investigation of the policing operation.

Conclusion

In this final section we want to draw out how the forgoing account relates to the construction and reproduction of local social order. Firstly, we must return to Cohen’s contention that the continual re-composition and relocation of the workforce under capitalism leads to a constant need for the re-negotiation of patterns of accommodation, and that the very presence of outsiders ‘threatens the delicate equilibrium of existing tolerances’.⁹⁷ This seems an apt description of 1970s Greater Manchester, where despite the beginning of the major ravages of deindustrialisation, the primary targets of repressive policing were seemingly New Commonwealth migrants, and this was

legitimised through the better or worse concealed racism of local institutions and authority figures (not least the force’s Chief Constable). The entirely predictable outcome of such policing was the 1981 riots, which while centred on Moss Side, saw sporadic outbreaks of disorder in white working class communities such as Clayton and Eccles.

As we move further into the 1980s, antagonism towards the police clearly became more general, with Greater Manchester developing into a key battleground between social democracy and the ‘New Right’, and this is illustrated through GMP deployments against the miners, the politicised policing of student protest evident in the ‘Battle of Brittan’ or the (lost) battles for police accountability waged by the municipal New Left. Yet by the late 1980s, we can talk of a relative stabilisation in police-community relations. Public order policing was refocused on more marginal social groups such as youth subcultures (rave), while the ‘service’ role was stressed by a far more conciliatory, less demagogic Chief Constable (David Wilmot). At the same time however, ‘patterns of accommodation’ could not be restored with those sections of the white working class who had experienced precipitous levels of downward social mobility under the emerging conditions of neoliberalism. So much is evident in the 1992 Ordsall Riot, but also in the increasing levels of crime and politicised antagonism of those residents towards attempts to ‘gentrify’ the inner-city.

While the conditions of such marginal inner-city neighbourhoods, inhabited by an increasingly multi-ethnic working class, may have continued to decline (relative to the rest of society), the relatively long economic boom of the 1990s and 2000s saw the transformation of the conurbation’s core as Manchester attempted to compete as a global city or ‘city-region’. While accusations of racist policing continued to emerge (lent credence by Wilmot’s admission to the MacPherson Inquiry), the policing of the environmental protests against the airport’s second runway produced no major disquiet. Nonetheless, racist policing, coupled with a media moral panic in relation to asylum, and failure by the police to prevent incitement by far right groups would be enough to lead to rioting in Oldham in the summer of 2001. The response to ‘Northern Riots’ reflected an increasing tendency at the national scale to de-politicise social disorder in terms of a lack of ‘cohesion’, while the roughly concomitant terrorist attacks in New York and ensuing ‘War on Terror’ served to move the Asian community up several points in the hierarchy of ‘police property’.⁹⁸

As the new millennium advanced, we saw the re-emergence of popular protest in opposition to the Iraq War, which coalesced around large demonstrations against Labour Party conferences in the city. These largely disciplined protests unfolded without major outbreaks of disorder. Nonetheless, amidst

⁹³ Reicher, S. and Scott, C. *Mad Mobs and Englishmen: Myths and Realities of the 2011 Riots*, London: Constable and Robinson, 2011.

⁹⁴ Spalek, B., Isakjee, A. and Davies, T. ‘Panic on the Streets of Birmingham: Struggles over space and belonging in the revanchist city’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, 87 (2012) pp. 14–15.

⁹⁵ Jackson, W. and Monk, H. ‘Police violence at anti-fracking protests: pacifying disruptive subjects’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 98 (2014) pp. 12–13.

⁹⁶ Netpol, ‘Police and fracking companies - in each other’s pockets?’, 5th August, 2014, last accessed 6th March, 2015, <https://netpol.org/2014/08/05/police-fracking-collusion/>.

⁹⁷ Cohen, op. cit. p. 131.

⁹⁸ Tufail, W. and Poynting, S. ‘A Common „Outlawness“: Criminalisation of Muslim Minorities in the UK and Australia’, *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, vol. 2 (2013) pp. 43–54.

a context of increasing scare-mongering in relation to the twin problems of ‘domestic extremism’ and ‘gangs’⁹⁹, and a stated policing commitment to support the regeneration (gentrification) of the urban core, the fractures in police-community relations clearly widened. Recalling Reiner’s claim that the “class repression” function is bound to predominate over the enforcement of “parking tickets” amidst periods of systemic crisis¹⁰⁰, a more confrontational style of policing is evident in the years immediately prior to the August 2011 English Riots. As we enter the second decade of the new millennium, the use of the police in defence of the established order and elite interest has become quite naked, and perhaps this is what provoked Chief Constable Fahy to warn that it is not the police role to define ‘what counts as extremism’, while airing unease that Britain may drift into ‘a police state’.¹⁰¹

The response by GMP to anti-fracking protests at Barton Moss, Salford between November 2013 and April 2014 demonstrated the enduring concern with the maintenance of order over and above a regard for the law. The policing of this protest relied heavily on the use of Tactical Aid Unit officers and was heavily criticised by campaigners, journalists, legal observers and the local MP for the way in which the right to protest was curtailed through the policing operation.¹⁰² This most recent episode in the history of GMP’s response to public ‘disorder’ demonstrates the significance of GMP at the national level in influencing the development of public order policing¹⁰³, but also reinforces GMP’s role at the local level in the (re)production of social order. The policing of protest in the manner experienced at Barton Moss was of course not new. The policing of those populations who are portrayed as a threat to order, has always involved the exercise of violence, and the history of GMP set out above demonstrates that this is as true in Greater Manchester as it is anywhere else. But it is important that the productive dimension of the exercise of police power in this sense is understood both in its relationship to the wider bourgeois order and its local specificities. The policing of the

anti-fracking protests as Barton Moss demonstrates how the demands of the local order, in this case the imposition of policies drafted at the national and local level in the face of local opposition, are attended to through the exercise of police power. The presentation of police as impartial arbitrators has been central to the representation of the institution from its inception, and remains central to the police narrative of the Barton Moss protests. This presentation serves a key legitimating function, but its veracity is not borne out in the everyday experiences of policing by those who are marked out as threats to the social order. The construction of the threat and the police response clearly draw from a wider national, and even global context, but are both really only intelligible in the local setting. The specificities of the representation of protesters, as with that of working class and minority ethnic communities, need to be understood in the local context; and equally, the police response to these populations, how the police act and how it is justified, needs to be considered in its particular historical, political, economic and social contexts, without losing sight of the relationship to the national and global levels.

In this article we have situated the need for more attention to be paid to local histories of policing within a context of increasing concerns relating to police accountability. While we follow Neocleous in suggesting a productive role for the police in the fabrication of social order, we have drawn attention to the various contingencies produced by the peculiarities of the police role and the need to attain a level of hegemonic acceptance in the communities that are policed, and hence to explore how particular kinds of social order are constructed in particular places. By taking one aspect of a local force’s responsibilities, namely public order policing, we have demonstrated how the unfolding of particular events can be seen to both be determined by, as well as actively reproducing, a local social order, embedded in an evolving national political context overwhelmingly characterised by processes of repressive neoliberalisation.

⁹⁹ Smithson, H. Ralphs, R. and Williams, P. ‘Used and Abused: The Problematic Usage of Gang Terminology in the United Kingdom and Its Implications for Ethnic Minority Youth’, *The British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 53 (2013) pp. 113–128.

¹⁰⁰ Reiner, op. cit. p. 33.

¹⁰¹ Dodd, V. ‘Chief constable warns against „drift towards police state“’, *Guardian*, 5th December, 2014.

¹⁰² Jackson, W. and Monk, H. ‘Police violence at anti-fracking protests: pacifying disruptive subjects’, *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 98 (2014) pp. 12–13.

¹⁰³ Netpol ‘Senior public order police commanders train for future anti-fracking protests’, *The Network for Police Monitoring*, 16th December 2015, last accessed 12th March 2015, <https://netpol.org/2014/12/16/gold-command-training-fracking/>.