

## *Chapter Eleven*

# **COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS IN THE SMALL TOWN ERA**

The overall influence of the general public's evaluation of policing will be primarily long-term rather than short-term because, ultimately, their taxes underwrite the costs of criminal justice and because changes in public behaviour have a gradual effect on the policing environment. More immediately, however, policing is affected by the views and perceptions of those in the community who work closely with, or exercise some degree of control over the police.

Local control has been more significant for municipal than for federal (RCMP) policing. Notwithstanding the relatively recent adoption of Community-based Policing, the RCMP has maintained a greater distance between themselves and the community. This ensures the political independence necessary for a legalistic policing style.

This independence, however, does not imply autonomy. Criminal justice institutions may not function uniformly as a "system", but there is considerable interaction and mutual influence among the agents of social control. Furthermore, community influentials such as retail store owners, media managers and other business operators comprise an important clientele serviced by the police (Galliher *et al.*, 1975). The responses of these influential citizens help to shape the characteristics and immediate environment of local policing. This influence is likely to be greater for a policing organization which is municipally supported or is oriented to community policing. The study of the social context of policing, then, should include an assessment of the attitudes of community influentials.

Unlike the majority of the general public, the "knowledgeable" group can be expected to have a greater appreciation for the degree to which policing, particularly municipal policing, has been standardized or "modernized". It is also among the influentials that Community-based Policing initiatives would be most likely to have an impact. For example, CBP may increase citizen-police contacts and decrease the social distance between the police and the community. Knowledgeables may also be in a position to perceive changes in the administration of municipal departments or RCMP detachments caused by Community-based Policing.

Municipal police departments undergoing standardization may be expected to experience an increase in the social distance between themselves and the community unless changes in policing are accompanied by community-oriented initiatives. On the other hand, for a variety of reasons, such as fiscal restraint which causes a decrease in the number and frequency of transfers as well as the implementation of a version of Community-based Policing, the social distance has been narrowing for the RCMP. The optimal social distance between the police and the community is difficult to determine. In addition to their attitudes and perceptions about such current issues as the standardization and regionalization of policing and RCMP/MPD differences, we expect

the interview responses of the influentials will reflect the variable pros and cons associated with different degrees of social distance between the police and the community.

### **The Select Sample: Users, Collaborators and Controllers**

Four separate groupings in Kings County and the towns of Hantsport and Middleton were approached among the knowledgeable<sup>1</sup>. The first group, consisting of ten respondents, was defined as "users" of police services. They included a newspaper manager, three business managers, two administrators and a worker in social services, a school principal and a health administrator. Typically, these respondents had contact with more than one police organization in the Valley, although they usually had closer contact with the one in whose jurisdiction they were located. All were in contact with the police concerning Criminal Code violations such as shoplifting, break and enters, missing persons and violence against women. Almost as many called the police to assist with assorted public order complaints such as parking, loitering and alarms. Three of the "users" reported some degree of information exchange instigated by either themselves or the police depending on the specific instance. Most had contact with the police through crime prevention programmes such as Crime Stoppers or bicycle rodeos, open-door checks made by the police at night, or through crime-prevention campaigns such as anti-shoplifting campaigns. Many were involved in special fund-raisers. As might be expected in smaller communities, several of the respondents reported significant informal contact with the police in their community, from membership in community service clubs and organized sports, to being neighbours.

The second set of respondents, eleven in number, were designated "collaborators", defined as those who worked with the police in a related function. Again, from Hants, Kings or Annapolis Counties we interviewed a Sheriff, a Customs Officer, a Fire Chief, a private security manager, a parole officer, a probation officer, two correctional administrators, a Lands and Forests officer, a Fisheries Officer, and a Military Police administrator. For the majority of the collaborators, most of their police contact was with the RCMP because they worked in their jurisdiction. More than half said they were in contact with the police at least twice per week, usually over the phone, in the court house, in the Department or Detachment or when the police are called to assist in the enforcement of provincial or federal regulations. Most of this contact was with constables who respond to calls and conduct most investigations. All the collaborators had contact through investigations, interviewing and laying charges, and most had order maintenance interactions with the police such as assisting with a violent person, transporting prisoners, security and crowd control. The majority also had some level of informal contact through sport clubs and events, community service

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents in the select sample were interviewed by one of the researchers and their answers recorded. The questions asked appear in Appendix 4. Following the interview, the respondents were given the "policing" section of the public questionnaire to fill out and return.

organizations and the firing range. There was also a degree of overlap in some of the training. Most respondents said they exchanged information with the police, including the use of CPIC, offender assessments and sentencing recommendations.

Finally, two distinct groups of "controllers" were included in the study. While all police departments are formally independent of local political authority, this is somewhat less true of the municipal police forces because they are dependent on town Councils for their annual budgets. They exercise a certain control, although not "day-to-day", over the police service. We interviewed 20 "controllers" including Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Town Administrators, Town Clerks, County Wardens, and members of Town Police Commissions. An additional group of "controllers" consisted of one judge and five prosecutors from Kings, Annapolis and Hants counties who were included in the study.

The "controllers" had been in their present position for an average of 10 years. The majority of the respondents were residents of the towns and, having their most direct influence over municipal police departments, although two County municipal councilors (RCMP rural policing) were also interviewed. Most were long-time residents in the region and, usually, of their town. The most conspicuous venue of respondent-police interaction was participation in police commission activities where they were provided with a monthly update of department activities and formulated general policy guide-lines to regulate police activities. County Wardens are much less directly "controllers" given the independent mandate of the RCMP contract. They receive annual crime policing activity up-dates from the C.O. of their local detachments.

In the towns, the police chiefs draft a tentative budget which is reviewed and streamlined by the police commission before going to Council. Most of the respondents were actively involved in the budget process. Several negotiated for the Town in the determination of police contracts. Police controllers also field public complaints passed directly to them or through the Chief. Many of these respondents were prominent in their respective communities, several being both local politicians and important businessmen. Accordingly, they interacted with the police in a number of other capacities, such as the victims of criminal code complaints and as neighbours.

These 47 respondents were not generally representative of a larger population, as could be claimed for the public sample. Below we refer to this set of knowledgeable respondents as the "select sample". Nevertheless, the majority of prosecutors were interviewed, and the 20 municipal council members consisted of the majority of members who were overseeing policing directly in the targeted towns. The population of the collaborators group and, especially, the users group were potentially very large. The sample, therefore, is considerably less representative in these cases. Overall, then, those interviewed were primarily influentials from the Valley towns.

The respondents were interviewed directly by one of the co-authors in the spring and summer of 1990. The interviews, which lasted about an hour in each case, were based on a series of open-ended questions outlined in Appendix Four. Following the interview, each respondent was given a mail-back questionnaire consisting of a selection of questions from the general public survey. The intention was to compare the select sample with the general public survey in order to determine whether there

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were substantial differences in perceptions of policing between the two. The questionnaire provided the select sample is part of the public survey, which is presented in Appendix Two. Of the 47 questionnaires distributed, 38 were returned for a return rate of 80.1%.

### Working Relationships

The majority of "users" described their working relationship with the police in a positive fashion, using phrases such as: "We get along well" with the officers; we find the department "friendly and co-operative right up to the Chief"; and, the officers are "cordial and accommodating". In municipal units, the Chief was singled out as the cornerstone of the positive association.

Similarly, about 65% of the collaborators characterized their working relationship and rapport with the police as good or better: "Because we rely on them and they rely on us it automatically creates a harmonious atmosphere." A few expressed reservations. One collaborator portrayed his relationship with the police as more confrontational: "not comfortable, not close". According to another respondent, his generally good relationship with the police is marred by what he regarded as some personality differences among individual officers. Some RCMP officers, he said, had "a real attitude problem", were unfriendly and "didn't do much work". Others attributed a degree of arrogance to some RCMP members although they did not generalize their negative perceptions of a few constables to the entire force. As with arrogance, honesty and trustworthiness were also regarded as individual traits and, while some officers were open and honest, not all were thought to be equally believable.

Two women said that the working relationship definitely needed improvement. A social service administrator wanted to see more formal contacts between her agency and police to help create policy. This doesn't happen, she suggested, because police have a, "Who are you to tell us?" attitude.

Contact between the police and the controllers group (exclusive of the prosecutors) was quite regular. Approximately 50% of the respondents said they were in contact with police departments "one way or another" on a daily basis. Most of the remainder had monthly contact although, for a few, it was more limited. For one respondent, this was still too frequent: "I try not to deal with any of the police in the town."

With only two exceptions, the majority of controllers directly contacted the Chief. As one town councilor said, "If I can't start at the top it doesn't work." As indicated above, controllers have formal contact with the police departments at Police Commission or Town Council meetings. Informal interaction would include anything from having coffee and attending community events to departmental ceremonies. Because the towns have small population bases, controllers typically know police members by sight and name.

Over 50% of the controllers claimed their relationship with the police department was good or excellent. The comments were typical: "We are kindred spirits"; "They give the town the best service they can"; "Communication is easy... just no problems".

This attitude is summed up by the Police Commission member who declared: "We're pro police." The controllers also pointed to the importance of their relationship with the Chief, who wields considerable influence in municipal departments. One Councilor said that, in his town, the Chief "is very obliging.... [He] will take comments...[and] looks after us; I have no complaints."

Only four controllers said that their relationship with the police was tense or unsatisfactory. In all cases these comments came from respondents from one town where the relationship between the Commission members and the Chief or other departmental members was clearly strained.

As expected, the survey of "knowledgeables" indicated that the select sample tended to know the police personally more than the general public: 43% of the public claimed to know some officers by name, while 61% of the select group knew most by name; 23% of the public claimed to know at least one officer socially and personally, while 30% of the select sample knew many or most officers socially or personally with an additional 49% knowing some. Among the select sample, as demonstrated by Table 11-1, knowledge of the police officers themselves varied: controllers knew officers the best, followed by collaborators. Users tended to be about as familiar with the individual officers as the general public.

**TABLE 11-1 - Knowledge of the Police, Select Sample (1989)**

Knows Police:	Controllers	Collaborators	Users
Most/Many By Sight	100%	90%	40%
Most/Many By Name	80%	50%	20%
Most/Many Socially	43%	20%	0%

Among all these groups, prosecutors have the closest working relationship with the police. Three of the six prosecutors said they had an excellent, very co-operative relationship with the police. One of these summed up what existed in his county as a "team approach.... We don't always agree but we talk it through." The relationship with the constables, he said, was open and frank: "I would never go over their head without consulting them first." A frank relationship also included the possibility that he would "blister" an officer for making mistakes, although he was reluctant to approach the higher ranks in the RCMP because they may be looking for negative information for an assessment. Two others expressed some small reservation. For one, the relationship changes from time to time: "Sometimes I'm not in some officers good books and when that happens they're usually not in mine." The other prosecutor characterized his dealings with the police as being pretty good, with "no real difficulty...just every now and then."

The prosecutors reported that they were literally in daily contact with the police. The initial contact was usually from the police, not with respect to every charge laid, but if they regard the charge as "unusual, complicated or strange". This is on a

consultative basis when the police want some advice on what charge to lay, which charge would be the most effective, or which would best suit the evidence gathered. In any event, as the case moves towards plea day, the police officers supply the prosecutor with all the information he requires, such as Crown Sheets and information statements. In simple cases, he would have no further contact until the initial court appearance. If the case were more complicated, such as one with many witnesses or involving children, the prosecutor would meet with the officer and the Crown witnesses to review the entire case. Several prosecutors added that, on a few occasions, they had accompanied the police in actual investigative work. On one large drug bust, for example, the prosecutor was involved in all stages including being present for the "take-down".

Prosecutors also contact the Chiefs or Detachment CO's to discuss policy matters if specific problems arise of a more general nature. New directives from the Attorney General or amendments to the Criminal Code might be the subject of a Detachment meeting and the prosecutor would use the opportunity to educate the officers on the changes. He handles similar situations directly with the Police Chiefs who, in turn, pass information on to the members. When a new officer comes on line, a prosecutor said, he would review his style of prosecution, explain his approach and give the officer tips on the styles of the various judges and defense lawyers.

### **Expectations about the Police**

Among users and controllers, the chief expectations about the police were to respond quickly to calls: "To come if they're needed". In their every-day interactions the police were expected "to have a reasonable manner", which meant showing "respect, co-operation, courtesy and friendliness", and to provide and exchange "relevant information". Collaborators also wanted the police to provide back-up assistance upon request. They felt that they called rarely and only when absolutely necessary -- they didn't "cry wolf" -- so the police should respond rapidly.

On the whole, the police lived up to the expectation of being friendly, courteous and respectful. About half of the collaborators also felt the police were adequately meeting their expectations. One respondent replied that he "couldn't think of any way they could be more responsive to our needs."

A problem mentioned by both users and collaborators was that the police were very slow in feeding information back to victims or collaborating parties. A town business manager said that one of the problems with the police was that they didn't keep you well enough informed. They should call the owners and explain whether they have a suspect, or even if they don't have any leads. "You don't hear from them", she said, "Unless you call them up and ask." A manager of a Valley newspaper complained that, from a media point of view, it is difficult to get information from the police. "We have to drag the information out of them. I guess the old style of policing was that what went on was only police business and not anyone else's. It's almost as if they have been conditioned to say only the essentials. They only respond minimally to questions... they are not forthcoming with many details. It can be like pulling teeth.

They answer the questions and then get irritated if the questions persist.... Sometimes the police will say that they have a PR man on the force and that we should get in touch with him. Its nice to hear but it doesn't mean anything in the final analysis." A store manager was concerned that the town police in his area did too little PR work. He added, "I think more communication with the merchants in the town would be a good thing. They tend to stay away until they are called." In his view, as the police force had grown larger, "considerable down time" had resulted which "could be spent in communication".

The relationship between the police and other agents in the criminal justice system, such as correctional workers and probation or parole officers, was described as "sometimes quite rocky". According to one corrections worker, the police tend to view probation and parole officers as "bleeding heart liberals" and "con-lovers" who protect the offender from the court system. The police generalize about corrections workers as "easy guys and themselves as the tough guys", another worker added. Some police officers see themselves as the most important: They "think they own the ... system". This leads them sometimes to overstep the boundaries. co-operation

In fact, he continued, probation and parole officers "police more than the police". The police are merely reactive while correctional case workers are involved and track the behaviour of offenders very closely. The result of the negative police attitude is poor information sharing between the police and other departments in the criminal justice system: the police "are not interested in tapping our information source, or they aren't interested." A number of respondents suggested that the police and other agents should spend time familiarizing themselves with the other parts of the system, but this is never done.

The police focus on offenders, one corrections worker suggested, is based on the 15% who continue their involvement in additional criminal matters -- "that's how they judge all offenders". This leads, then, to a weakness in policing: "They underestimate human potential for change and overestimate resistance to change".

One area which is potentially difficult concerns the sharing of information between the police and social agencies. These agencies collect information on clients, some of which may assist the police in investigations. However, all files of each agency are confidential. According to one agency worker, an informal protocol is established in which information is sought and only enough information is passed to allow the police to obtain a warrant. With a court order the sensitive information can be released with no legal repercussions accruing to the agency worker.

## **Law Enforcement and Community Involvement**

Such an accord requires a close working relationship between people in social services and individual police office. This amount of trust is personal rather than organizational, although specific organizational styles would encourage or discourage such opportunities. In particular many of the "knowledgeables" emphasized the importance of a type of policing which maximized police-community involvement. Equally importantly, however, this was balanced by a belief, held equally strongly, that

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the police were to enforce the law professionally. There is a potential contradiction here since objective enforcement might demand a social distance which precludes close ties to the community.

Collaborators expected the police to be "professional", that is, objective, honest and fair: To treat all people the same". As one collaborator put it, he expected the police to be objective in their assessment of individuals, to understand that their role in the criminal justice system is "to arrest, gather information and present it to the court, not to act as judge and jury too", and to "be fair" and avoid racism and sexism. However, another respondent said: "What I expect and what I get are two different things".

Among those closely involved in the criminal justice system, the major expectation about policing is that they complete competent investigations. Poor investigations (described by one respondent as "Marshall-style investigations") force a "needless, inconclusive trial", allow guilty people to go free and harm innocent people. One such respondent agreed: "All too frequently the officer approaches an investigation with preconceived notions, collecting only that evidence which supports his belief and disregarding all evidence which is contrary to it." In testifying, he added, the police should be "certain when they can be; and equivocal when they have to be."

Among controllers, the police were expected to maintain a high level of visibility in their jurisdiction: They are "to be there and to be seen." Seventeen specifically noted that they expect the police to maintain law and order in the town; for the others this was probably a given. The police were to be "even-handed.... The bottom line is they must enforce the law fairly with no discrimination of any kind", including preferential treatment for prominent town residents. The police should, "Be professional, act professional; and dress professional", be friendly, personable, helpful, well groomed, in full uniform and "have a good conviction of morality; they can't be good one day and bad the next."

If objective enforcement represented one important pole of their expectations of policing, close police-community relations were equally important. Among the political controllers, eighteen of twenty said they expected the police to be involved with the community, formally and informally. One respondent succinctly represented the views of several when he commented: "They have to be part of the community, not just go after the bad guys." They want police to develop effective public relations, to have "not just a watch dog role, [but] a very active public relations role."

A small number of the controllers thought the police addressed all of their expectations. Half of them thought the police were "adequate", adding comments such as "it's sometimes a bit of a battle to keep the constables up and at it" and "the constables do not always give one hundred per cent." These problems were attributed to the personalities of certain police officers or to a degree of tension between the Police Commission and the department. Only two controllers clearly expressed the view that the police did not adequately meet their expectations; there were "too many grudges" or "bad personalities" who were "too heavy handed". Again, these comments reflected primarily the situation in one town in the Valley where policing was seen as problematic.



Generally, the select sample of respondents rated the police as being good, professional and fair. The exceptions noted tended to be attributed to specific individuals in the various departments or detachments rather than being characteristic of difference in policing type (RCMP or MPD). As one respondent put it: "There are red-necks in any business" and he tries to "circumvent dealing with the bad ones". Another keeps the relationship at "a business-like, impersonal level" and has no police friends. A social service administrator said that there were co-operative, sensitive individuals within each department and detachment and, likewise, there were some non-supportive types as well. Most of the police officers, according to a prosecutor, have reasonable personalities and the right attitude: "they're not out to nail people." Attitude was not a product of a particular agency but was rather an "individual thing".

While the expectation that police treat all courteously and fairly was not always encountered in reality, a lawyer who was interviewed felt that there had been improvements in the police handling of their biases: "There's not as much blatant racism or picking on the poor" and, in addition, the police are now less likely to give those with wealth or social status undeserved breaks; "These are getting to be things of the past". Police are now generally more professional and, as one respondent said, he seldom heard any racist remarks in public any more.

### Number of Police and Quality of Service

The users judged the police response to most calls for service to be "effective", although one opinion shared by many respondents was that the RCMP coverage was thin and response time was too long in the rural parts of the county where 24 hour coverage would be desirable. Table 11-2 summarizes the responses to the question about the number of police in the respondent's area. There is a slight but interesting variation between the general public and the sample of knowledgeable about the judgment about the number of police in the area. The majority of both groups, the public and select sample, agreed that the number was just about right. For the public, however, 31% thought there were too few and only 3% said

**TABLE 11-2 Judgment About Number of Police in Respondent's Area (1989)**

No. of Police:	Public #	Public %	Select #	Select %
Too Many	32	3%	3	8%
About Right	715	66%	29	76%
Too Few	337	31%	6	16%
Total	1084	100%	38	100%

too many; for the select sample, 16% said there were too few and 8% said too many.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Among the select sample, judgment about the number of police was partly also a

Some of the public perception may be accounted for by the rural nature of much of Kings County. One user complained, "After hours it was difficult to get in touch with an officer and this is a bit disconcerting". In many of the outlying communities the police visit only rarely and one frequent community complaint is the desire to see the police more often. On the other hand, many of the select group were town Police Commissioners concerned with the annual budget of policing their municipality. For many of them the police force was too large and some were on record as recommending that their police force be made smaller by releasing a constable.

A total of 88% of the public and 95% of the select sample believed that their area was being "adequately served by the police"; 12% of the public and 5% of the select group said it was not being adequately served. This point, however, is not replicated by an additional question: Lack of contact with the police was regarded as a "big" problem by 4% of the public and 8% of the select sample; as "somewhat" of a problem by 17% of the public and 40% of the select group; and as "no problem" by 79% of the public and 53% of the select sample. This second question more generally concerns police/community interaction and many of the select sample indicated in the interviews that the police should become more involved in the community.<sup>3</sup>

### **Expectations of the Crown Attorney**

Because they work so closely with the police, the prosecutors had more specific anticipations, generally expecting the police to conduct a professional and complete investigation, "intelligently and critically", and "to uncover any and all evidence that is there". They should "know the law and what constitutes a proper charge", be able to substantiate it and prove all aspects of the charge, keep a record of their own court dates and not have to be tracked down. The police should attend court at the proper time ready to give evidence, having reviewed the file and the appropriate paperwork, such as written statements, search warrants and exhibits. They should be able to identify vulnerable witnesses, persons who are fragile emotionally or intellectually and need special attention.

From the point of view of Crown Attorneys, an incomplete and inferior investigation -- such as missing witnesses, poor paperwork, or improper statements -- makes prosecution more difficult. One prosecutor stressed that he expected the police to be honest, "straight with him and level with the court." He said the police should "never play games in court.... There's always tomorrow." When officers are not honest on the stand, he said, they destroy their credibility and should be transferred.

Another prosecutor said that a small number of police are inadequate investigators as a result of "laziness or stupidity." For some, doing a full day's work

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function of age: among older respondents (those 45 or older), 84% thought the number of police was "about right", and 5% said "too few"; 69% of younger respondents thought the number "about right", and 31% said "too few".

<sup>3</sup> In addition, among the select sample, those with higher levels of education were the most likely to regard contact with the police as less of a problem.

was not always a priority. The majority, however, do the job to the best of their ability. Only a select few "do it all", the "dogged, tenacious types who never leave a lead not followed up and are determined to get to the bottom of the matter" and can assimilate every bit of information intelligently. Another prosecutor tried to distinguish the "niceties" of the Criminal Code, which the officers were not expected to know, from knowledge of the basic sections. Another did not think some were reading the Criminal Code at all: "A lot of them find it easier to call me than read the book."

One prosecutor was concerned that the police "disclose properly". Since the Marshall Inquiry and subsequent directives, he expects the police to adhere to full disclosure, "to supply whatever they have without being asked;... whatever you get is what they have."- He should receive this "early on" so there are no surprises in court and so that he can disclose to the defense attorney correctly. He said that, in the past, you had to ask the police for all their information and they often did not send everything. The police now provide the prosecutor with "a copy of every scrap of paper in their file" because "the defense is always demanding it." This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Marshall Inquiry and permits defendants to give a full defense.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, a prosecutor said, there remained some serious deficiencies in the investigations of some police officers. For example, in one case the police were willing to lay a charge on the uncorroborated testimony of a five year old child, but they were unwilling, he said, to obtain a search warrant for potentially incriminating photographs on the word of this same child. The police argued that, if the photos were not found, it would be detrimental to the prosecution's case and to the credibility of the only child witness. "This, after the Marshall Inquiry"! he exclaimed.

While the responsibility for laying the charge is with the police -- the prosecutors say they give advice but refuse to tell an officer whether he or she should lay a charge - - once a charge is laid the prosecutor has the absolute discretion to withdraw it and not have it proceed to trial. This is usually done in consultation with the charging officer who does not always agree with the decision. One prosecutor said that some charge confrontations do happen between himself and the police adding that, at most, they amounted to some grumbling. In his view, it was in the interests of the police to have charges withdrawn for lack of evidence rather than have them thrown out in court and risk losing credibility. Another prosecutor said he "could not recall a single case" in which the police have laid a charge against the wishes of the prosecutor. "If there was such a case we would withdraw it", he added, only after reviewing the matter with the Attorney General's department, the people to whom the police could complain, to "make sure that they would back us up before we did it."

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<sup>4</sup> Nova Scotia, Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall Jr. Prosecution, Vol. 1, 1989.

**Evaluating the Police Role: Survey Comparisons**

Generally there was a close working relationship between the Crown Attorneys and the Police in the Valley at the time the interviews were conducted. Overall among the "knowledgeables", however, evaluations were somewhat less positive than those of the general public. Both the select and public samples were asked to evaluate the job done by the police in their area on such characteristics as enforcing the law, responding to calls, crime prevention and helping with local problems (see Table 11-3).

Overall, as indicated, the "knowledgeables" were somewhat less satisfied with police performance than the general public. Specifically, respondents in the select sample were slightly more likely than the public to rate the police better at enforcing the law and keeping order (84% versus 75% said they did a "good job"). In addition, none of the select group but 7% of the public thought the local police did a poor job of responding to calls for service. Although 5% of the public and none of the select group thought the police did a "poor job" investigating and solving crimes, overall the select sample was more critical than the public: 65% of the public said the police did a good job while 56% of the select sample rated them average on investigating and solving crimes. Similarly, in terms of crime prevention work, the public was more likely to say the police did a good job in crime prevention work (65%) while the majority of the select group according them an average rating (57%). 61% of the select sample said the police did an "average job" helping people with local area problems, while 69% of the public thought they did a "good job".

**TABLE 11-3 - Public and Select Sample Evaluations of Policing (1989)**

	Policing is:	Public #	Public %	Select #	Select %
Enforce Law/Order	Good	833	75%	31	84%
	Average	255	23%	6	16%
	Poor	29	3%	0	0%
Respond to Calls	Good	694	72%	28	76%
	Average	204	21%	9	24%
	Poor	60	6%	0	0%
Solving Crimes	Good	599	66%	16	44%
	Average	271	30%	20	56%
	Poor	45	5%	0	0%
Approachable	Good	845	81%	28	76%
	Average	168	16%	7	19%
	Poor	36	3%	2	5%

Crime Prevention Info	Good	655	65%	12	32%
	Average	225	22%	21	57%
	Poor	131	13%	4	10%
Help with Local Problems	Good	662	69%	14	39%
	Average	246	26%	22	61%
	Poor	57	6%	0	0%

While the "knowledgeables" generally rated many aspects of police performance as less satisfactory than the more generally positive public evaluation, this generalization should be qualified in a number of ways. On two variables (whether the police were approachable and how well the police responded to calls for service) there was almost no difference between the two samples. In addition, a considerable proportion of the public reported that they were unable to evaluate the police. The "do not know" response was given by 20% of the public on solving crimes; about 16% were unable to evaluate the issues of responding to calls and helping with local problems. Finally, some of the public but none of the knowledgeable gave the local police a "poor rating" on these categories -- at worst for the knowledgeable, the police were average. Among political controllers a "poor" rating might imply their own responsibility to rectify the situation.

Another means of evaluating perceptions of policing needs is to ask whether there are local problems which the police ought to be working especially hard to prevent. When asked, 57% of the public and 36% of the select sample could not identify any specific problems. 25% of the select sample listed more than one type of offence category for this question. This might again indicate that the knowledgeable are less satisfied with current policing than the general public.

On another set of indicators, however, the reverse occurred. With respect to police community relations, while more members of the public than the select group felt the relationship was excellent (24% vs. 16%), fewer though it was "good" (57% vs. 78%); 19% of the public as opposed to 5% of the select sample thought the relationship was only fair or poor. [I need to discover more about this minority of negative responses. Is this town policing, especially Kentville?]

In terms of the police role, the public wanted to see the police more involved in a number of offence areas, whereas the select group tended to be more satisfied with the current level of police performance. Specifically, 37% of the public vs. 16% of the select sample agreed that more time should be spent enforcing traffic laws; 71% vs. 56% focused on more time for controlling drug use; 67% of the public as opposed to 37% of the select group wanted more time spent investigating spouse and child abuse; and 56% vs. 17% wanted more time spent catching criminals. This difference may reflect the knowledgeable concern about the limited amount of police resources, since the questions directly related to spending more police time on certain areas. For the public, the police were generally doing a good job and, consequently, more policing would be beneficial. These offence categories also tended to have a higher profile

nationally (for example, drugs) or locally (traffic).<sup>5</sup> The difference of opinion on "catching criminals" is also significant since the "knowledgeables" are in a better position to evaluate police work more realistically, understanding that criminal investigations, particularly in the more service-oriented towns, are not a frequent priority.

Not surprisingly, while the public was evenly split on the question whether the police are influenced too much by the rich and powerful (45% agreed and 47% disagreed), only 13% of the select sample agreed while 63% disagreed. Similarly, 72% of the select group as opposed to 45% of the public felt that citizens such as themselves had no influence on what the police do. This difference may reflect the social role of the influentials and their knowledge vis-à-vis the police. For example, the mandate of a Police Commission is to set general policy guidelines for the police, but day-to-day policing is designed to be independent of their influence. We might speculate, as well, that the influence prominent business leaders and members of Police Commissions feel they do have may be less than they feel they ought to have, given their position in the community.

Again, given their role and knowledge, it is not surprising that 32% of the select group as opposed to 11% of the public reported that they had a personal experience of the police treating an arrested suspect unfairly. Members of Police Commissions and other enforcement personnel would have knowledge of specific incidents in the community. Perhaps equally importantly, about equal numbers (85% of the public and 89% of the select group) believed that police misconduct was uncommon in their area.<sup>6</sup>

### **MPD/RCMP Comparisons**

As noted above, it is important to bear in mind that the response to "policing" in general combines experiences and attitudes about both municipal departments and RCMP detachments. Some of the ambiguities in responses reflect different evaluations of these styles of policing. One of the main focuses of the study of policing in the Valley was to assess differences in policing styles and effectiveness between the RCMP and the smaller municipal departments. To this end, the sample of knowledgeables was asked to compare the two organizations and indicate what they perceived to be the major differences between them.

Among users, approximately half believed that the RCMP provided superior policing. The remainder perceived either no differences, or said that rural policing was

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<sup>5</sup> There was a difference among the select sample on the issue of crime prevention: 38% of controllers, 60% of collaborators and 100% of users indicated the police should spend more time on proactive, preventative work. As well, younger respondents (66% versus 34% of those over 45 years) advocated increased crime prevention involvement. Furthermore, 26% of controllers and 60% of collaborators wanted the police to attend more to domestic abuse crimes such as spouse and child abuse.

<sup>6</sup> Among the select respondents, the belief that crime had increased because sentences were not sufficiently severe was correlated with lower levels of educational attainment.

distinct from town policing, but the two groups were otherwise equal. Superiority was normally linked to training and professionalism. Collaborators generally perceived substantial differences, although the general perception seemed to be that there were major differences in the past. They were equally divided on whether any remained.

Most who perceived a difference commented that the RCMP was better trained. One respondent added: "I don't know how well the town police are trained, or even if they are." A federal enforcement officer suggested that, ten years ago, he would have said that the RCMP were different but they are now narrowing the gap in training and equipment and, consequently, their image problem had lessened. Another enforcement officer said that it was only the older MPD officers who were inferior and attributed this to their lack of training.<sup>7</sup>

One common point that emerged from the interviews was the belief that, "As a general rule, the RCMP do better investigations than the municipal officers", because they had more criminal investigative training and "more resources to draw upon". In particular, one respondent mentioned, in cases involving interpersonal disputes, the RCMP have superior interviewing styles and techniques. For example, they ask a child victim open ended questions while the MPD officers, he claimed, typically use "yes and no questions" thereby leading the child. The RCMP are also seen as more willing to re-evaluate the scenario of the case they are investigating and dig deeper rather than relying on "surface evidence".

A provincial enforcement officer thought that you were more likely to find "macho", aggressive police officers in municipal departments. Some respondents mentioned the provincial Police Act which made it difficult to discipline town officers. A corrections worker said, "bad actors" in municipal departments tend to stay around forever and ruin the reputation of the department whereas in the RCMP "they can move people out if there is a problem" and the federal force had better disciplinary procedures.<sup>8</sup> So, while the RCMP and MPD will both have some undesirable officers, he said, the RCMP is better at weeding them out.

However, a media manager did not differentiate among police agencies. While some people complained that the police use undue strength, trying to strong-arm people, he thought in this respect "they are no different from police elsewhere -- it's the nature of the work."

For the political controllers, personality problems, poor attitudes and specific police "trouble makers" headed the list of deficiencies in town policing. Troublesome officers brought personal problems to work, were heavy-handed and lacked common

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<sup>7</sup> A different point of view emerged from a corrections administrator who suggested that part of the RCMP training "is brainwashing".

<sup>8</sup> However, this same corrections worker would like to see a better complaint policy for the RCMP. If one of his clients mentions police abuse, he tells them to contact the in-house RCMP mechanism. They usually respond by saying: "Oh yeah, complain to one cop about another." A provincial enforcement officer, however, thought that the RCMP complaint system was one of the best: "They don't play around. They're out to get you out if they can." This was done, he suggested, to protect the reputation of the force.

sense: "The constables may know what to do but they don't do it." One Police Commissioner said that "the reputation of the officers was a definite weakness".<sup>9</sup>

The difference in the salaries between the two forces was seen as "substantial" and as affecting the officer's self perceptions and the recruitment practices since, according to one respondent, the lower pay attracts a "different type of candidate" to the municipal departments. Since the cost of policing was a problem in the towns, there were limited resources for sending officers away for additional training, "a big failing of small town departments". Lack of money also meant the absence of 24-hour coverage in some towns, limited drug work and limited clerical support staff.<sup>10</sup>

Among prosecutors, the minority view was that there was little difference between RCMP and MPD officers. All departments, one believed, did a good job with their investigations, with the exception that some of the specialized personnel in the RCMP were clearly superior to other officers in both organizations. Another prosecutor said that, while there was a "big difference" between the MPDs and the RCMP, it was difficult to describe or generalize. He felt that the RCMP "do what they have to do really well", but added that sometimes they have to be coached to make sure they are fulfilling all the prosecutor's expectations.

More commonly, prosecutors held those municipal departments were "just not as good"; they were described as "less thorough and less capable". MPD officers asked more "basic questions", one prosecutor mentioned, reflecting a more shallow knowledge of the law. They have less understanding about what charges to lay, are less educated academically and have less in-house training: "I never find myself unable to explain a problem to the RCMP. I have had that problem with the town police." Furthermore, the said, the town police also lay more relatively minor charges such as jumping stop lights and loitering. They are "more inclined to feel that they have to charge someone with something. The RCMP tend to be more lenient" on the small matters. Another prosecutor said MPD officers are more likely to view their work "as only a job", while for most RCMP officers, "it's more than a job".

The reputation of the MPDs was still tarnished by the events that led to the Kentville Police Inquiry.<sup>11</sup> A social service administrator said that the Inquiry adversely affected the credibility of the department, despite recent positive changes: "We don't feel as comfortable calling them as the RCMP"<sup>12</sup> Two prosecutors, however, thought

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<sup>9</sup> A media manager thought all the police in the area were "courteous enough.... I've seen cops elsewhere who treat the whole of society as if they were the criminal element. I don't find that here.... It's a low key situation here." From his viewpoint, however, there was a different basis to this politeness: small town policemen were more courteous by nature, "that is the way they are; the RCMP are courteous because they are told to be."

<sup>10</sup> While many of the towns had 24-hour policing, the RCMP provided about 20-hours coverage with officers on-call between about 4 and 8 a.m.

<sup>11</sup> Nova Scotia Police Commission, "Report of the Inquiry into the Kentville Police Department", 18 July 1984.

<sup>12</sup> This same image was used in a more positive context, however, when one



that this generalization could not be made equally for every town in the area because there was also a significant variation between municipal departments which they attributed to a "product of leadership -- the Chief." The recently hired municipal Chiefs in the Valley were progressive in outlook and provided alternative approaches to policing, professionalism and sound leadership. Not all departments, however, had this forward-looking leadership.

### **MPD/RCMP Comparisons : Social Distance**

Much of the new style leadership in policing is concerned to reduce the social distance between the police and the community. Municipal policing generally has traditionally been close to the community. Officers were recruited locally, lived in the community they policed, developed numerous social and personal ties with the local people and offered a highly discretionary service-oriented policing. The Municipal Department was under more public scrutiny and was more directly under civilian political control -- the Mayor and Council -- to whom the department was accountable. The independence of the police was compromised.

The RCMP, on the other hand, originated in a model which maximized the distance between the police and the community. In a legalistic style of policing, objective enforcement using standardized procedures is designed to reduce officer discretion and provide equitable and objective policing. A routine policy of career transfers was, in part, designed to reduce the police-community contact so that policing would not be contaminated by extra-legal factors and be independent of local control. Because the RCMP get "moved around", while the municipal officers do not, a corrections worker suggested, they are less subject to local politics.

Town policing has also been assumed to be different from RCMP policing because provincial, especially rural, police work in larger, less populated areas while MPD officers, as one respondent put it, "are confined to town boundaries". Municipal police tend to deal closely with the same people repeatedly and may become overly familiar with the people policed. This could "hinder and officer's objectivity or lead him or her to overlook a situation". Another respondent was concerned that town police tend to develop grudges against specific people and may even incur a vendetta from them.

The transfer policy of the RCMP, in the view of one respondent, prevents these local problems from developing and keeps the officers "sharp and fresh". In addition, he said, since they are moved more often they are less likely to form fixed opinions about certain individuals or to label them unreservedly, for example, by assuming that someone who was in trouble as a child would necessarily continue to be a trouble-maker as an adult. "With the RCMP you get letter of the law enforcement", a user commented. The negative side of this formal and distant relationship was, however, clearly in the mind of another respondent who thought that, while being impersonal

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corrections worker characterized the change in MPD policing as: "The Kentville Inquiry style is gone."

may be good for enforcement, "you have to treat people like people....The RCMP are used to dealing with criminals all the time and they tend to treat everyone like one", he said.

There are more consequences of close ties to the community, however, than the loss of objectivity. As another respondent said, the local police "tend to know the population better", are more responsive to the needs of their communities and more sensitive to the victims of crime. They also "know the criminal element better". "The local police are very attuned to what is going on" and are more visible than the RCMP, a corrections worker believed. In a small community, "offenders stand out like a sore thumb". The police basically know with whom they will be dealing and where to anticipate problems: "They know what to expect so they act accordingly most times." One controller noted, "The main strength [of municipal policing] is that they're here, in and about the town, even when they are off duty because they live here." The Chief, a store manager said, "keeps his finger on the pulse of the town. He knows what we want and he is looking after it."<sup>13</sup>

Town police give a more personalized service, another store manager said. "They are more assimilated to the community. The RCMP style is more impersonal and they are not as accepted in the community." He equated the difference to that between a local independent store and a chain store: the town police provide more personal service, but the RCMP have greater resources.

The view that municipal police have intimate community knowledge which the RCMP lacks was contradicted by two respondents. While agreeing that the strength of town police is their knowledge about the community they serve, a corrections worker nevertheless complained that they provide a lower quality of information: "some of those guys don't know what is going on in the town even though they should." On the other hand, a social services worker, said that, in a rural community, the RCMP are usually aware of individual offenders and specific situations and do not require time-consuming explanations of the situation before they respond.

Some of these comments suggested the traditional disparities between MPD and RCMP policing are being narrowed. As town police become more professional and as the RCMP adopts a "Community-based Policing model, the weaknesses and strengths of each type of policing become more balanced.

### **Community-based Policing**

All respondents were asked whether they perceived any significant changing in policing over the last number of years. All of the users and most of the collaborators who were interviewed indicated there had been primarily positive changes. Some said that there were now many more police officers, resulting in higher visibility. The

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<sup>13</sup> A corrections worker added that, because the MPD officers knew people better and had closer interactions with the community, in cases involving fraud they were more likely to act as collection agencies for the police, using subtle intimidation to compel delinquent cheque writers to make good their debts.

municipal departments were regarded as the most changed. They were typified as more professional, having officers who were better trained, were more involved with the community, had improved investigating skills and received better leadership.

As noted above, standards in training among municipal police officers were generally seen as considerably improved. One respondent, who felt that training was better "all the way around", said this was demonstrated daily in court. Now that the MPDs had a training facility (the Atlantic Police College), there were "no differences in training, professionalization or courteousness". More commonly, respondents believed the RCMP to be better trained, but perceived that the "gap was closing" as a result of the initial and in-service training courses taken by the town police. As one school principal said, the town police "are always taking training courses now".

Two respondents added that the MPDs had higher standards of recruitment than in the past. As one peace officer put it: "The days of hiring someone who was six foot six, 300 pounds and putting a uniform on them are over. Today they have to use more tact and diplomacy." Another respondent believed that a different type of person is now being attracted to police work. Towns were also recruiting officers who were older, experienced, professional and compassionate, one respondent claimed. As mentioned by another, the addition of female officers was also very positive because "male officers were forced to confront their prejudices and re-evaluate stereotypical attitudes." In the process of having to accommodate female officers, he believed, they have had "to confront other prejudices" as well. A prosecutor added that the newer officers were trying to be more a part of the community, were doing more proactive work and were developing an improved public image. There was also much less obvious political interference than in the past.

There was some disagreement about whether the police were as visible in their community as they had been in the past. A federal enforcement officer said that the main change was that the police were less visible than they had been. "Years ago they had foot patrols around; now you don't see them as often...in the town and even in New Minas.... Years ago when I lived in [another town] the local police used to do foot patrols all over town." Store managers also said that they wished the police would make a policy of foot patrols through their stores or through the malls. If they did, "A lot of people would know they are here." These comments represent the more traditional, "watch" style of policing.

A corrections worker, however, reflected a newer style when he said that the police were now "more visible" because of their greater community involvement. Another respondent, who complained that the older style was primarily reactive, commented: "Maybe going back to when I was growing up, the police were only there in the event of whatever was construed as criminal activity. Now they seem to be -- want to be -- out there and be part of the community as opposed to this hidden element that only responds when there's a complaint.... They are being much more a part of the community." A social service administrator believed that the police had evolved from an authoritative style of enforcement to a "more social work kind of approach".

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For several other respondents, this increase in community involvement was the most significant element in the new police role. The police, they noted, are involved with community groups and organizations and can explain various aspects of their job to the community. "They are seen; they are available". "They even have special people to do the PR work. They are more involved in the schools especially with drinking and driving and drugs. The town police particularly seem to take the time to talk to people and people talk to them."

For a local Fire Chief, both the RCMP and municipal police were more co-operative with the fire departments than in the past. The two forces work together at fire and accident scenes, and co-operate on arson investigations, he said. The major change in policing was in community service, such as increasing drug awareness and providing public talks to school children, baby sitters and senior citizens. In this involvement, he concluded, "the police have come a long, long way." Furthermore, a corrections worker added, this dedication "provides a positive image for the police force."

Community involvement has reduced the difference between the RCMP and MPDs, a corrections administrator suggested. The RCMP used to be "very distant,... they used to remind me of the military. Where a municipal officer would bring a kid in trouble home to his parents, the RCMP would lay a charge. This is not the same any more. The RCMP have come a long way in being part of the community." Officers also stay longer in the community; "they are more involved." This decrease in social distance, however, also had a weakness: It's great in a way but there goes their objectivity."

A store manager, who was very involved in RCMP sponsored programmes such as Crime Stoppers and bicycle safety, and indicated that he had many informal contacts with the police, was concerned that the police may be doing too much PR work: "How much more can they do, and how does all this PR work impact on crime fighting?" This attitude was more prevalent among police officers than community respondents and may reflect this manager's close social relationship with the police, particularly with experienced officers.

A school principal, pointing to the increased involvement of the town police in public education and safety programmes, said "the municipal police here have a good reputation with the kids.... The kids respect the police." They are friendly, take time to explain things in a way that doesn't "turn children off", and don't come on in a "heavy, authoritative fashion." This new response was attributed to better training in public relations. A media manager said both police forces were more PR conscious, adding: "Small town forces are aware that they would get their comeuppance if they slip up and that starts with the media.... They have gone from being little more than bouncers to a more professional tone."

For most of the respondents, then, changes in policing meant a merging of police styles: municipal police were more professional while the RCMP had become more positively proactive in the community. Both forces had achieved a better balance between objective enforcement and community contact. For a few respondents, especially among the collaborators, however, policing in contemporary society also

faced some important drawbacks. Some significant changes in policing were attributed to the wider environmental forces. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was singled out by one correctional worker as making it harder for the police to do their jobs. A provincial enforcement officer added that, as a result, policing "had not gone ahead but backwards.... The criminal element has more protection than the policeman. They have all the rights and the policeman doesn't have any of these rights. Also, there is no respect for police now. The older people still have a lot of respect, but those in their 20s to 40s don't. They don't care about anyone or anything. They have no respect for law enforcement". This was caused by a new attitude in society disrespecting authority. "It's harder to be a policeman now than it used to be. Policing is more sophisticated..., more complex." Similarly, the Young Offenders Act was singled out as being problematic for police. One corrections worker suggested that there were many problems between the police and the youth. "A lot of police don't like young offenders", or the Young Offender's Act. They feel that it protects the youth too much, that sentences are too lenient, and that there is too much hassle in arresting a young offender.

Another collaborator was concerned that there was a second change in the environment of policing. Crimes were becoming more common generally because the area was becoming more urban. "Problems that cities have, such as drugs, are tending to spread," he suggested. All parts of the Valley have experienced criminal activity, especially property crime, from criminals based in Metropolitan Halifax.

On the other hand, a school principal said that there was less trouble with public order maintenance now than in the past because the coverage in his town was better and the police more visible. The police were doing a better job of "keeping the town quiet". There was less rowdyism -- fights, squealing tires, speeding through town -- than ten years previously. He also believed there were significantly fewer complaints against the police.

### **Accountability**

Both the number and the handling of public complaints are other areas where policing styles have merged somewhat. The types of complaints characteristic of the more discretionary, order-maintenance type of policing common among MPDs in the past -- and typified in the Kentville Inquiry -- are much less frequent. This is a consequence of the higher standards of professionalism demanded of the town police. On the other hand, the number of complaints brought against RCMP members is increasing. This is an unintended consequence of the greater community role of the police; a more open police bureaucracy is more responsive to public concerns and elicits more complaints.

The select sample was asked about their views on police accountability. The majority of the collaborators felt it was important for the police to be responsible to some body to ensure "openness and certainty". Overall, a major change was that the police were now more accountable: "Years ago, the police had unlimited authority; today they are more accountable to their superiors and the Solicitor General's department. That has made for better police work."

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According to a social agency worker, immediate accountability should be to an elected Police Committee which would be close to the people. The committee would hear grievances from the public and, since they were not political appointees and had the respect of the community, would make objective decisions. Such a body, however, would only make recommendations. For example, if a constable was suspended for disciplinary reasons, one controller said, the investigation should be conducted by the Police Commission alone and the Council should have no role at that stage. Depending on the outcome of the internal hearing, however, the town would have the power to fire the officer.

There was disagreement about the proper composition of a complaints body. An enforcement officer thought the majority of internal investigations were done honestly, but he was certain that the investigation tended to be done "according to the guy, not the circumstances." He suggested that accountability required a Board consisting of defence and prosecuting lawyers, a judge and some people from the public. Another enforcement officer said that, while police have to be accountable to "the people, civilians don't know what's going on". A store manager agreed that citizens could not judge the police because they do not do their job. However, accountability required some public influence. He wanted the Police Chief to meet more regularly with the merchants because, he said, "The public must have an input into the system, not just when there are problems but on a regular basis."

There is more than one meaning to "community accountability". For virtually all of the "knowledgeables", the police were legitimately accountable to the public only through their elected representatives. The police should not be subject to more direct local community control and there was a concern that vocal minorities may sometimes have disproportionate influence. One peace officer held that the police ought not to be "accountable to groups or organizations in the community". This would restrict officers in performing their duty. Another officer said enforcement agencies must, at all costs, avoid being controlled by vocal minority groups: "whoever yells the loudest gets the most action ... but often their concerns outweigh the validity of their claims."

In the towns, the municipal police are more independent than in the past. Police Commissions function at arms length from the operations of the police department and determine general policy objectives. The various departments are largely autonomous in their day-to-day activities. In a wider sense, MPDs are still controlled by the Town Councils which pay their salaries and benefits, purchase equipment, and determine the overall budget. There was a fine line, however, between internal police matters and the proper role of local politicians. There was a difference, for most, between fiscal control and the day to day activities of the police department; between political control and political interference. As one controller admitted, "The Chief is in charge of the department and that includes personnel at the department. He can't have his rank undermined."

One County Warden thought it was already undermined. In his words, the notion of control in some small towns had become "warped"; it was excessive and interfered with the effective delivery of police services. County policing, supplied by the

RCMP and paid for through a provincial government contract, is essentially autonomous from any control by County politicians, fiscal or otherwise.

Many other controllers, however, were concerned that the town police had become too independent. For the most part, they felt that the police department should be more accountable to the Council and Police Commission: "They are one hundred per cent accountable to us in the area of policing.... We want to know what they are doing." Most advocated rigorous control of their police departments: "We have to have control.... When we see it slipping we get it back"; "We can't have them sitting around down there doing their thing and us not know what is going on." The Police Commission has to justify the costs to the town taxpayer which means that they must have significant control over expenditures and daily activity. Another respondent agreed, adding he would like to see his police department produce a daily log which detailed the activities of all police personnel. Control was legitimately local, another controller said, because the town and not the province pays the costs of policing. Therefore, policing at the municipal level should be independent from provincial control.

Autonomy at the wider provincial level, however, is already compromised. The creation of the Nova Scotia Police Commission was one powerful cause of the professionalization of municipal policing. In the 1990s, initiatives towards greater standardisation of policing involve the amalgamation of smaller departments into regional forces. Local initiative, however, would prove futile. The success of regionalization ultimately depended on direction and control from the province that was not forthcoming in the Valley.

## **Conclusion**

Small town policing in the Valley is at a cross-roads. Over the last fifteen years two main developments have changed the face of traditional town policing. From being figuratively under the thumb of town council and physically in the basement of town hall, municipal departments have adopted a more professional and legalistic style of policing. At the same time, in some towns more than others, the greater social distance between police and the public which this implies has been reduced by adopting elements of a Community-based Policing (CBP) model. In particular, in the Valley CBP has affected police-community relations and policing ideology more than internal structural reform.

The "knowledgeables" identified as users, collaborators and controllers in this study and sampled to varying degrees, were in a position to appreciate some of these dynamics. The knowledgeables generally perceived more crime in their areas than the general public and identified specific offence categories as more of a problem. While they also had a somewhat lower opinion of police performance than the public, they did not want to see more police resources spent on identified areas such as "catching criminals." This reflected a wider knowledge of the police role and a concern with the expenditure of money.

The municipal departments were seen as closing the gap with the RCMP in such areas as recruitment, training and standardisation. They were also less dependent on

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local politics. However, substantial differences remain between the two styles. This is exemplified by the contrast in the role of the Chief and the RCMP detachment commander. While the characteristics and approach of the sergeant or staff sergeant in charge of a specific detachment does set a tone which is favourable or unfavourable to police-community relations, policy is centrally determined in Ottawa and diffused through the Divisions. In contrast, the ideology and personal style of the Chief of a municipal department is a much greater determinant of the overall policing style of the town police.

The RCMP is politically independent and therefore able to implement a national strategy. Community-based Policing, then, to the extent it characterizes the RCMP, is not so much a response to community demand as it is a response to the requirements of the federal bureaucracy. Municipal policing, in contrast, is ultimately under the fiscal authority of the town which controls the police budget. The greater service-oriented style of MPD policing and their concern for good public relations especially with prominent citizens are, in part, made necessary by the power of citizens over Council and, hence, over the police. Generally, the users, collaborators and controllers in the study all had positive relations with the police reflecting, in part, the higher priority of public-relations in community-oriented policing. The generally more positive rating given by the respondents to the RCMP, then, was qualified by those for whom close community contact was a priority.

Clearly, a close community-police relationship may be sacrificed to the demands of professionalism. The two dimensions vary independently among the various Valley towns. From the responses of the influentials indicated above, some of this debate concerns the pros and cons of the social distance between the police and the community. Clearly, Community-based Policing must not imply, for them, actual control by community groups. The community should provide "input" only, and control, to the extent it should be exercised, is legitimately in the hands of the police administration and Police Commission.

Regionalization appears to pose the most immediate threat to a community-oriented policing. With the release of a Solicitor-General's report late in 1993, advocating the closure of independent police departments with fewer than fifteen members and the creation of a number of regional forces in strategic areas, including the Kentville-New Minas-Wolfville corridor, the provincial government has given notice that the future transformation of policing will come under a provincial umbrella.

Standardisation, however, need not necessarily imply a loss of community identity or a more distant relationship with the police forces. Aspects of Community-based Policing, such as zone-policing, the operation of store-front stations, locally-centered Police Advisory Boards and a continuing emphasis on local crime prevention and community contact can compensate somewhat for the potential loss of community identity and personalised policing brought about by regionalization.