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TUE

PLEASE MUFAX.

3/8
FROM: B A BLACKWELL - SIL
17 MAY 1989

UNDER/ 22715
SEC
22 MAY 1989
CENT SEC

cc Mr Stephens - M
Mr Wilson - M
Mr Thomas
Mr Miles - M
Mr Shannon - M
Mr Bell - M
Mr Masfield - M
Mr Harbison, FPRU - M
(without attachment)
Mr McCusker, CCRU - M

Mr Spence

MR BURNS

CONFIDENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

Through the good offices of Dr Harbison I have now received the attached research project proposal from Professor John Darby for the Centre for the Study of Conflict. The proposal is in the form that Professor Darby and Dr Harbison advise is most appropriate in applying to charitable trusts for funding. Subject to your views and those of copy recipients I believe the NIO's objectives in endorsing such a project could be achieved within this proposal.

2. If you and others are content with Professor Darby's proposal as drafted I suggest that I should then discuss it with Mr Radcliffe to see how far he believes the Chairman and members of PANI would come along with us on this if approached by the Secretary of State. The next step would then be for me to circulate a draft covering submission forwarding the research project proposal to Ministers, recommending it to them and advising the Secretary of State to commend it to the Chairman of PANI, the Chief Constable and the GOC.

3. I should be grateful to know in due course that you and copy recipients are content with the proposal in its present form and are content with the further action I propose.

Brian Blackwell

B A BLACKWELL
SIL Division
17 May 1989
Ext OAB 6587



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The Security Forces and the Public in Northern Ireland
- research proposal

Introduction

There is considerable evidence that sections of the community in Northern Ireland believe that certain people, or categories of people, receive unfair or excessive attention from the security forces'. This could occur where members of the security forces, although in their view operating within both the letter and intent of the wide powers available to them, are nevertheless perceived to be abusing those powers, or alternatively where they consciously abuse or even exceed those powers. The former can be termed perceived harassment and the latter actual harassment. Clearly a large element of subjective judgement is involved in perceived harassment.

Claims and counter-claims on this issue have continued in the absence of any independent assessment of their veracity. The research detailed in this paper will provide a basis for this independent assessment. A number of benefits are likely to flow from this research. On the one hand the findings may help to allay the worries of some of those people who currently have a lack of confidence in the actions of some members of the security forces. On the other hand, it may point to areas where the training and operations of the security forces could be improved, with a view to improving the relationship between the security forces and the public.

Emergency legislation in Northern Ireland gives the security forces wide powers to stop and question members of the public: these include stopping persons and vehicles, searching persons, vehicles or houses, and questioning, detaining or arresting persons. Clearly there is a great deal of discretion involved in the application of these powers. This discretion can be considered to operate through formal or informal procedures. Formal procedures would involve official policy decisions on the application of powers; these policies may be sanctioned centrally by Government or the various security agencies, or they may be sanctioned by senior local officers of the security agencies. Centrally sanctioned policies will be transmitted to local area operatives. Informal procedures operate primarily locally and rely on either the discretionary powers of senior officers or of more junior ranks, and include the way formal policy decisions are implemented or ignored.

It is proposed that the research will proceed on two parallel tracks: one track focusing on the security forces, the second focussing on the public. Both tracks are connected at the interface between the security forces and the public. The remainder of this paper points to possible research areas within these parallel tracks.

¹ See, for example, the Perceptions and Views Survey carried out in June 1986 by the Policy Studies Institute on behalf of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights. This showed, *inter alia* that 32% of Catholic respondents believed that the police treated Protestants much better than Catholics and that this figure increased to 50% when the same question was asked in respect of the UDR. These findings, which clearly suggest a significant level of at least perceived harassment, have been supported by a number of other surveys and community studies.

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Research focussed on the security forces

The guiding model for the research on the security forces consists of three elements:

- (a) the legal context within which the security forces operate;
- (b) the official policy which establishes the operational practice of the security forces;
- (c) the behaviour of the security forces on the ground;

(a) the legal context:

It will be necessary to clarify the legal powers held by the various branches of the security forces (RUC, RUC Reserve, British Army, UDR). The issues include the powers to stop, question, arrest or detain persons; to mount road-blocks; to search persons, vehicles or houses; and, to restrict outside access to arrested or detained persons. Also, it will be necessary to clarify the officially sanctioned responsibilities of each branch of the security forces. The other side of the coin is to clarify the legal rights of persons receiving the attention of the security forces.

Related to this is the collation of basic statistics on security force activity: for example, numbers of arrests, stops, house-searches, vehicle-searches, frequency and location of road-blocks, and data on periods of detention. These data could include outcomes, for example, numbers charged or convicted, and the extent of arms or explosives finds.

(b) official policy on operational practice:

Three aspects of official policy on operational practice will be examined. The first involves formal operational policy: the investigation will examine the way in which such policy is formulated and transmitted to operatives on the ground. Part of this investigation will include an examination of the checks that exist to assess the way formal policy is put into practice.

The second aspect involves an examination of the procedures that should ameliorate allegations of harassment. This includes complaints procedures, and the briefings and training given to members of the security forces. The primary focus here is on the procedures that directly relate to dealing with the public or with particular communities. The most relevant aspects of training include those of the community relations branch and, more generally, police station and patrol procedures. In addition, this investigation might include a retrospective examination of a number of complaints that have gone through the official procedure.

It is believed that members of the security forces are briefed on suspected individuals. The third aspect of official policy concerns an examination of the formal procedures through which individuals become suspect or subject to special consideration. It is possible, for example, that geographical areas are officially identified as 'suspect' as well as individuals. Also, members of the security forces may be briefed to give special attention to particular types of person while on patrol or at embarkation points from Northern Ireland.

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(c) behaviour on the ground:

In contrast to the 'top-down' approach of the previous section, this aspect of the study will be concerned with the perceptions and behaviour of members of the security forces on the ground. At an overall level it is proposed to carry out an attitude and opinion survey of security force members. In addition to seeking information on their attitudes to dealing with the public, the survey could include their knowledge of their legal powers, rights and responsibilities, and their perceptions of the stresses and problems associated with their work.

At a more particular level it is proposed to carry out interviews with members of the security forces. This is seen as complementary to the survey and will provide more in-depth information on their perceptions. An additional source of such information would be a participant-observer study of informal contacts between members of the security forces in order to investigate the role of peer influence on behaviour and attitudes. It may be possible to provide in-depth information on the behaviour of members of the security forces through a participant-observer study of the security forces in action.

Research focussed on the public

The first research possibility in this area is an indirect method of gaining a general picture of the public's perceptions and experience of the security forces. The remaining possibilities deal with more focussed investigations of particular communities and their relationship with the security forces.

(a) the overall situation

A number of surveys have examined the public's perceptions and experience of the security forces²: it is proposed to review this information and, where possible, to carry out additional analysis. A more indirect measure of the extent to which people use, or do not use, the security forces, especially the RUC, for 'normal' crime could be accomplished by extending the British Crime survey into Northern Ireland. PFRU may be in a position to carry out this work, the results of which would be clearly relevant to this study.

(b) particular contexts

In addition to the general level of information described in the previous section, it is proposed to examine attitudes to the security forces within particular communities at a number of levels. The most general level would involve the perceptions of various institutions or organisations operating within communities (for example, political parties, churches, community groups or organisations). This could include their views on harassment and/or their role in mediating disputes between the public and the security forces.

²A Commentary on Northern Ireland Crime Statistics 1987, NIO Statistics Branch, HMSO (1988); Violence and Communities, A Hamilton *et al.*, Centre for the Study of Conflict (1988).

A second level of information would be obtained through community studies which investigated attitudes towards the security forces and the extent of perceived or actual harassment in particular areas. This would include an examination of how harassment is defined by ordinary people and what factors contribute to perceptions of harassment. A number of different areas (nationalist, loyalist and mixed), with different relationships with the security forces, would be targetted for investigation.

The third and final level of investigation would involve participant-observer studies of people who are special targets of security force activity: existing research suggests that the groups involved might include urban working-class young males (both nationalist and loyalist) and Sinn Féin activists.

Management of the project

The project will be based within the Centre for the Study of Conflict and will be under the general supervision of Professor J Darby and Mr A Hamilton. Mr A Hamilton will be the Operational Director. The remainder of the Project team will comprise Dr A Gallagher and Mr C McCartney from Centre staff, and two Research Officers, each to be appointed within the Research Officer 1A scale for two years to work full-time on the project.

The project will be carried out over a period of two years and will involve a total cost of £122,842 (see Appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of costs: this figure includes a 40% overhead cost which the University will not require from certain funding bodies). The project will result in the publication of up to six reports.

A Liason Committee, comprising representatives of the funding bodies, members of the Project team and other co-opted individuals as are deemed necessary, will meet every three months to consider the progress of the project. The Project team undertake to provide written progress reports for meetings of the Liason Committee. In addition, the Liason Committee will have an opportunity to consider drafts of the reports to be published from the project.

Centre staff will have responsibility for administering, analysing and reporting on the survey of members of the security forces. Thereafter, one research officer will carry out the remaining research on the security forces while the other research officer will carry out the research focussing on the public (Appendix 2 provides more specific details on the time-table for this work). The Project team will collaborate on the production of the published reports.

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Appendix 1: Breakdown of research costs

Research Officer for two years	£ 29,372 ^a
Research Officer for two years	£ 29,372
time of Centre staff	£ 16,000 ^a
equipment and consumables	£ 750
travel and subsistence	£ 8,000 ^b
publication of up to six reports	£ 2,000
advertising RO posts	£ 250
Survey of security forces:	
survey materials and running costs	£ 500
computer costs	£ 1,500
total	£ 87,744
overhead (currently 40% of total)	£ 35,098 ^c
<u>Grand Total</u>	<u>£122,842</u>

^aThe point at which either Research Officer is appointed, and hence the total cost under this heading, will vary according to the age and qualifications of the successful applicant.

^aThis includes the time of the Operational Director (20% over two years £6,000), Centre staff administering and analysing the survey of the security forces (40% over one year £5,000) and Centre staff collaboration on report writing (within final six months £5,000).

^bIncludes travel and subsistence within Northern Ireland, including overnight stays, and travel to Great Britain.

^cThe 40% overhead cost is not be required by the University of certain funding bodies.

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Appendix 2: Timetable of activities of Research Officers in months

The administration and analysis of the survey of members of the security forces will take place during the first year of the project.

Research Officer 1:

Month	Activity
1-4	induction training;
1-6	preparation of information on legal context;
1-6	compilation of statistics on security force activities;
4-12	investigation of formal operational decisions: interviews with central figures in the security forces; includes procedures for policy formation and transmission, checks on potential abuses, training, determination of suspects;
6-12	investigation of internal operations for dealing with complaints;
10-18	interviews with security force operatives on the ground: include operatives in a number of different areas;
12-20	transcription and analysis of interview data;
12-24	preparation of reports: 1: report on the formal procedures of the security forces; 2: report on a survey of the security forces; 3: the security forces in action

Research Officer 2:

Month	Activity
1-4	induction training;
1-8	investigation of attitudes to the security forces of institutions of the community: political parties, churches, community groups;
6-18	community studies: including up to five communities (urban nationalist; urban loyalist; rural nationalist; rural loyalist; mixed/peaceful);
15-20	participant-observer study of target groups;
12-24	preparation of reports: 1: report on the attitudes to the security forces of community organisations; 2: report on the security forces and communities - community studies; 3: report on participant-observer studies
