

Examine the importance of policing by consent and the impact it has upon a modern-day police service.

In this essay I am going to be discussing the importance of policing by consent and the impact it has upon a modern-day police service. This essay will include the definition of policing by consent and the Peelian principles, the main idea of policing by consent, what took place in the Brixton riots and the aftermath of the Brixton riots and why the trust of the public is essential to policing. I will then be looking into the statistics of the public's confidence in the police and how good of a job the public think the police are doing. And what the next steps may be to help the police create better relationships with the public in this modern day and age.

The home secretary Sir Robert Peel used the phrase 'policing by consent' to refer to the principles of policing, a long-standing British policing theory. The guidelines outlined in the 'general instructions' that starting in 1829, were given to every new police officer. This strategy is encapsulated in the now famous and frequently used 'Peelian Principles' which are nine simple rules for preserving legitimacy and efficiency. "Essentially, as explained by the notable police historian Charles Reith in his 'New Study of Police History' in 1956, it was a philosophy of policing. Unique in history and throughout the world because it derived not from fear but almost exclusively from public co-operation with the police, induced by them designedly by behavior which secures and maintains for them the approval, respect, and affection of the public." It should be stressed that this is different from governmental power in that it derives from public consensus. It does not imply a person's consent. No person has the option to choose not to cooperate with the police or the law. (Gov.Uk, 2012)

"The Brixton riots happened in 1981, described at the first serious riots of the 20th century in England, and was the first large scale racial confrontation between black British youth and white British police. The riot was sparked by antagonism between black youths and the police." Overall, seven thousand police officers had been involved arresting over two hundred and eighty-two people, mostly who were black. Over a hundred businesses were damaged, many by fire. Multiple people injured and many vehicles destroyed.(Brenton, 2010)

Since the riots, the home secretary promised to respond to the calls from Lord Scarman's reports to create a better relationship between the police and the public. Part of that report stated that "urgent action is needed if it is not to become an endemic, ineradicable disease, threatening the very survival of our society." The report highlighted the fact that modern policing was too complex to be left to the police alone. But a better relationship between the police and the public was needed. (Cook, 2021)

The core idea of 'Policing by Consent' is to prevent crime. Instead of arresting criminals the objective is to prevent crime before it happens. There is no need to punish or repress citizens' rights if police prevent the crime from occurring. A police force that works well does not make many arrests: instead, the crime rate in the area would be low. Gaining the public's support is essential to preventing crime. The responsibility of crime must be shared by every member of the community. The public will support the police if they adhere to community values. Earning the public's trust takes work to establish a reputation for: upholding the law impartially, selecting officers who represent and comprehend the neighborhood, and only resorting to force when necessary. (UW police)

The College of Policing states that the trust and confidence that the public has in the police force and the larger community of law enforcement is essential to the notion of policing by consent. Departments in charge of professional standards can be quite helpful in keeping that confidence and trust. A failure to filter and manage misconduct and complaints, or investigate counter-corruption initiatives, can damage trust and confidence. Therefore, it is crucial that these matters be handled forcefully and transparently in accordance with the code of ethics. (College of Policing, 2021).

'Taking everything into account, how good of a job do you think the police in this area are doing?' was a question asked to the public by the British Crime survey for the police performance assessment framework. Confidence in the police fell during the 1990's and early 00s. However there has been a statistically significant increase in confidence in the local police in recent years- from 47% in 2003/04 to 53% in 2007/08. (Myhill, Beak. 2008).

Confidence in the police was at an all-time high in 2019 reaching numbers of 77% but in recent months that has dropped drastically with only 49% of people in October 2022 having confidence in the police and thought they were doing a respectable job. (Anon,2022)

Unfortunately trust in the police has fallen amongst ethnic minority Briton. Since the summer of 2020 and the Black Lives Matter movement there has been a greater focus on how racial issues are addressed. The findings from a new survey of ethnic minority Briton's show an eight-point drop in trust levels since the year of 2019. From 52% to 44% and is lower again amongst black respondents from 42% to 37%. (Abraham, 2021)

With that in mind the main focus of modern-day policing now for 2025 and so on will be continuing the relationship between communities and the police. Local policing will be customised to meet the complex and varied demands of society, with the provision of public safety being guided by local priorities and a compelling evidence-based demand analysis. The police department will better represent its communities by attracting and keeping a workforce of assured professionals who can work with an elevated level of autonomy and accountability. (NPCC, 2022)

There has been a vast change in Law enforcement over the many years, policing with consent and the impact it will have on a modern-day police service is that the officers of today will face many challenges and will have to continue to work hard towards creating a good relationship with people in the community.

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