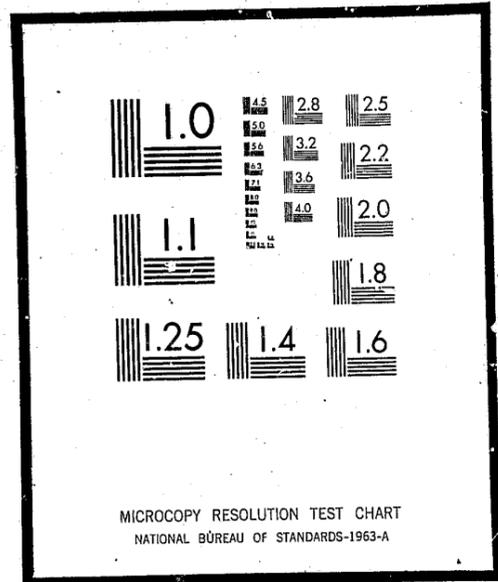


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RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF POLICEMEN'S

WIVES IN TWO SCOTTISH FORCES

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#### INTRODUCTION

There were two main reasons for undertaking this survey. Firstly, there was the specific question of finding out the ways in which a policeman's job affected the life of his wife and family. This clearly has practical importance in itself: for instance, as a factor in man-power turnover since wives who felt that the job involved too many demands on them might encourage their husbands to seek other employment. For a sociologist, the enquiry also had wider interest since the policeman's occupational role is one, like that of the doctor and the clergyman, which pervades his whole life and not just his working hours. Like the doctor and the priest, the policeman can be seen as occupying a position of power with respect to other people. The doctor is seen by the public as having control over life and death (or sickness); the priest is seen as having influence over the supernatural; and the policeman is seen as capable of unleashing the forces of the state against offenders and thus as embodying secular authority. The policeman's role, then, is not only pervasive, so that it must involve also his domestic and social life but also, because it is perceived as potentially dangerous to others, must involve a degree of isolation or apartness from those others. It is therefore of some theoretical interest to examine the extent to which these occupational characteristics are reflected in the experiences of policeman's wives and families.

#### COVERAGE

In order to ensure that the information obtained had some general applicability, two forces with different characteristics were selected for investigation. One was a large City Force in

which a policeman's home tended to be physically separated from his work so that he had more occupational anonymity in his off-duty hours. The other was a County Force which included a substantial proportion of "village hobbies" whose public and private roles must necessarily be very closely intertwined.

In the last quarter of 1968 questionnaires were sent by post (with a stamped addressed envelope for return) to the wives of:-

- (a) all married men in the county force (308), and,
- (b) a sample of one quarter of the men in the city force (455).

The response rate was good (82 per cent) in the county force and reasonable in the city (72 per cent). The lower rate in the city, to some extent, reflects a higher man-power turnover since fifteen of the non-respondents were found to have left the police force in the short period which elapsed between the obtaining of names and the sending out of the questionnaires. In the main, however, it probably indicates less interest in the survey among the city wives. It is difficult to identify the characteristics of the non-respondents but, in the city, the response rate appeared slightly lower for families who lived at a distance from the husband's place of duty which may have meant that the people who felt least identified as "police wives" were also the least likely to bother to complete the, rather long, questionnaire. In the county areas there was no evidence that non-responders fell into any special category with respect to rank or location and failure to respond seemed to be a personal phenomenon reflecting attitude to questionnaires as well as factors such as illness, house removal, etc.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Both groups of respondents - those from the city force and those from the county area - were much alike so far as the husband's ranks and duration of service was concerned. The husbands in the county force had, on average, served for thirteen years while those in the city averaged fifteen. This constitutes a very slight difference and appears to reflect a tendency for more long-service men (i.e. those who have served more than 20 years) to be represented in the city (27 per cent compared with 16 per cent of county respondents). All ranks, including Chief Constable, were included but, as might be expected, most respondents' husbands were constables (69 per cent in each case). The type of duty in which the men were involved did vary from one force to the other. In the county area about two-thirds (63 per cent) were on uniform beat duties, many being responsible for villages and rural areas. In the city, beat officers still formed the single largest category (44 per cent) but C.I.D., traffic and other specialist branches were also more prevalent (39 per cent) than in the county (20 per cent).

So far as the wives themselves were concerned, all but a few were Scottish-born and most had lived in the same locality (i.e. the county or the vicinity of the city) before marriage. They had followed a large range of occupations. About 10 per cent of each group had received professional training (teaching, nursing, etc.) but the majority (67 per cent in the city; 71 per cent in the county) had worked in offices or shops and 4 per cent in each area had themselves been police women before marriage. At the time of the survey nearly half (44 per cent) of the city respondents and one-third of those in the county (33 per cent) were in paid employment. In the county about two-thirds of those working were doing so full-time but in the city, perhaps because of the availability of more part-time

opportunities, only about half the working wives were doing so on a full-time basis. The types of job held reflected those at time of marriage so that about 40 per cent of working wives in each force were employed in a secretarial or clerical capacity and about 20 per cent as shop assistants.

Most of the respondents had considerable experience of being a policeman's wife: more than half (55 per cent in the city, 58 per cent in the county) had been married for at least ten years and only 8 per cent in each group for less than three.

PART I : ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE BY AREA

In this section it is proposed to look at three main aspects of the life of the respondents:-

- (a) The effects of their husband's hours of duty and conditions of work on family life;
- (b) the effects of living in official police housing; and
- (c) the effects of police affiliation on general social interaction.

Clearly these aspects of life are not clearly distinguishable one from another - a wife's reaction to her husband's shift working may be affected by the location of her house and her relations with her neighbours for instance. Nevertheless some separation of these effects is possible and will be attempted before proceeding to an analysis of the factors most associated with dissatisfaction among the wives.

A Effects of Husbands' Working Conditions

Table 1 Organisation of Husband's Working Hours

	<u>County Force</u>		<u>City Force</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
Usually works rotating shift system	136	53.5	229	69.8
Usually works discretionary shift	80	31.5	13	4.0
Usually works straight days	38	15.0	86	26.2
Total respondents	254	100.0	328	100.0

Shiftworking of either an orthodox three-shift pattern, or of a more fluid discretionary type was widespread (see Table I) and presented problems for some wives:

"When he was on shiftwork I disliked the fact that one could never get into any sort of routine with meals, housework, etc."

"Shiftwork cuts out most social activities".

"Although I accept that shiftwork is necessary it does affect my life. I am unable to attend any evening class as I would miss every other week. This goes for Church guilds too and even church attendance while the children are small".

"We are unable to have regular meals, sleep or entertainment".

"I dislike spending so many hours on my own during evening and night shift".

"When he is on late and night shift he does not see much of the (school-age) children".

Such criticisms concerning loneliness and interference with social and domestic arrangements are not limited to the police. They apply with equal weight to any occupation in which there is a rotating shift system. Nevertheless 49 per cent of city police wives and 40 per cent of county ones expressed some criticisms of their husband's hours of work and most of those concerned had husband's who were working rotating or discretionary shifts.

Not all wives disliked the shift system however. Thirty-two per cent in the county area and 30 per cent in the city thought shift working could have advantages:-

"Shifts mean you can get out for the day during the week when it isn't so busy".

"We can get out to the shops together during the week when they're not so crowded".

"If he is at home he can look after the children while I get out - for instance, to the hairdresser".

Perhaps more specific to the nature of the police duties were complaints about long and irregular hours which were made by about 13 per cent of informants in each area:-

"I don't object to the shift system but I do object to the number of hours worked weekly".

"Sometimes we don't see each other for days at a time if our working hours clash as he is usually several hours late in finishing his shift".

"We can never arrange to meet friends as we never know what time he is coming home".

"In theory his hours are 8.30 am - 6.00 pm. In fact they are 8.30 am to 8.00 or 9.00 or 10.00 pm, sometimes later. He rarely sees the children and I think this is a bad thing".

There were also anxieties about danger to the husband when he was on night shift especially in the city area (30 per cent of respondents compared with 21 per cent in the county).

"When he does street work and is late coming home, I worry".

"I worry when he is detained on duty as on occasions he has been injured at his work".

"When he was on night shift I never had a decent sleep worrying about his safety. On back shift I never went to bed until he came in and that sometimes was four or five in the morning".

Another aspect of police work which differentiates it from many other occupations is the necessity of providing a full seven-days-a-week coverage. This means that many policemen must be on duty at weekends and on public holidays. In the city force, two-thirds (67 per cent) of husbands were said to work some Saturday afternoons and Sundays according to shift or to cover particular eventualities; a further 16 per cent were said "almost always" to work on Saturday afternoons and 13 per cent "almost always" on Sundays. In the county area the proportions were very similar with 18 per cent "almost always" working on Saturday afternoon and Sunday and about 70 per cent working such duties occasionally or according to shift. Absence of the husband/father at times which were conventionally available for family activities was something, then, which nearly all police wives had to face. More serious, perhaps, though less prevalent, was interference with holiday plans and arrangements. In the city just under half the respondents (49 per cent) said their holiday arrangements had been upset once or twice and nearly a further quarter (23 per cent) that this happened "nearly every

year". The situation in the county area seemed more secure so far as holiday plans were concerned since more than half the informants (55 per cent) said they had never suffered any interference; 37 per cent had experienced difficulties once or twice; and only 7 per cent felt that their holidays were sabotaged "nearly every year".

One of the main causes of resentment over holidays was the need for them to be staggered over a greater proportion of the year (from May to September) and for specific dates to be allocated by lot or by rota rather than by choice.

"Having to take them either ridiculously early or very late in the year".

"Unable to choose the best weather prospects".

"It is very difficult to arrange holidays when the children are at school because they don't fit in with school holidays".

"My husband's holiday periods did not coincide with the weeks I was allowed when at business".

"We can't arrange to go with friends or relatives".

"Police holidays do not coincide with 'true' fortnights (e.g. might be last week in July and first in August) so it is difficult to book".

These are difficulties which concern the planning of holidays and making arrangements to get away. The main reason for complaint, however, concerned interference with holidays, once started, by the necessity of the husband returning to appear as a witness in judicial proceedings. Though, admittedly, this only appeared to happen on one or two occasions to any one family and is probably unavoidable, it did appear to constitute grounds for considerable resentment.

B Effects of Living in Police Houses

There was a marked difference between the areas in the proportion of families living in police houses. In the county area all but ten of the informants lived in official accommodation and, of those ten,

four had lived in police houses in the past and one (recently married) was just about to move into her first official residence. In the city, however, only 38 per cent of informants currently lived in police houses; a further 16 per cent had done so in the past but 46 per cent had always lived in private accommodation.

All those with experience of living in police houses were asked to give their impressions of the advantages and disadvantages which were entailed. The county wives appeared to be the more enthusiastic of the two groups since 62 per cent of those who had lived in police houses listed at least one advantage compared with only 44 per cent of the relevant citywives. In both forces the main advantage was seen as freedom from paying rent and rates (mentioned by 70 per cent in the county and 62 per cent in the city). The other major advantages stressed in the county force were free maintenance and decoration at reasonable intervals (38 per cent) and the availability of a good standard of housing (30 per cent). The high standard of housing available was also mentioned by the city wives, though less frequently, (18 per cent), but free decoration and repairs were only mentioned by one woman.

Disadvantages were mentioned by 88 per cent of county wives who had lived in police houses and 77 per cent of the city ones. There were, however, considerable differences in the nature of the disadvantages listed by respondents in the two areas. These appear to reflect the different policies in the two forces with respect to housing. In the county area each posting carried its own house so that any change in the man's job (e.g. from village policeman to C.I.D. or promotion to a larger station) meant a change of house also. In the city, houses appeared to be allocated in police blocks in corporation housing estates on a more permanent basis which did not necessarily involve the man's official participation in policing

the area. This greater stability in the city is shown by the length of time that respondents in each force had spent in their present house. A quarter (24 per cent) of county respondents had moved in the previous twelve months and two-thirds had lived in their house for less than three years. These proportions were halved in the city force where only 12 per cent had moved in the last year and only one-third in the previous three years.

As a result of this greater mobility the disadvantages listed by the county wives tended to centre on problems of impermanence and removal. Thus 78 per cent of people who mentioned disadvantages complained that they could not decorate or make structural alterations which would fit in with their own personal preferences, for instance:-

"Not being allowed to decorate when one wants - no sense of permanency - can't make alterations such as building in cupboards, etc".

"We had our house decorated to our taste in January and we moved in April".

"I like my present house but I think we could take a great deal more interest in our house if it were a permanent house while serving in the Police. One would not grudge spending money to make the home more comfortable, and have the garden and paths made tidy with slabs, a nice lawn (sowing grass seeds), fencing, etc".

There were also complaints (36 per cent) that decorations were not renewed frequently enough (every five years) so that one might have to spend some time with the results of previous tenants' "drab taste" or even "dirty habits" (for instance grease marks made by head on wall-paper above bed).

Another very frequent cause of complaint (66 per cent) was lack of standardisation in shape and fittings of police houses:-

"At each removal household soft goods and furnishings are ill-fitting".

"Cutting of curtains and carpets ... switching to gas from electricity for cooking or vice versa".

"Your furniture never looks as if it belongs in the room".

"Even if room dimensions are the same you find that lay-out has been reversed so carpets don't fit".

"Furniture and furnishings never seem to blend in with previous tenant's interior decoration".

Many people (48 per cent of those listing disadvantages) said that they never felt that they could really settle into a house or an area because they were always expecting the next move:-

"A feeling of insecurity and unsettledness in the thought of having to move house at an unknown time in the future".

"One hesitates to spend money on improving the house because at ten days notice you can be moved".

These impressions are substantiated in the answers to a later question which specifically asked about how the wives reacted to house removals. More than a quarter (28 per cent) of respondents said they found them "very unsettling", a further 46 per cent "a little unsettling" and only 14 per cent faced up to moving house with complete equanimity.

Most of the disadvantages of living in a police house listed by county wives then can be seen as relating to material conditions and impermanence of tenure. Complaints about neighbours were rare though 16 per cent said they had not liked being obliged to live in rather "rough" areas and 19 per cent complained that living in a known police house interfered with the privacy of family life:-

"Living in county stations home life is continually disrupted. Children awakened at nights with doorbell and telephone. Meal times also interrupted even when there are visitors in the house".

"In a county station, where there are children attending school, it is not always possible to go away on days off and the public still call at the house for help".

So far we have been considering general reactions to the necessity of moving house at intervals but the county wives also described what they had felt in the specific case of their most recent move. Most informants had either been 'quite pleased' (28 per cent) or even 'very pleased' about the posting. Reasons varied:-

"I was pleased at my husband's promotion".

"The house was in a nice area and we have good police neighbours. Also near a better school for our eldest daughter and nearer my home town".

"It was from a county station to office work which was a new venture for my husband. The children liked moving to town with all the facilities lacking in the country (swimming baths, tennis, golf, nice modern school, etc.)".

"We were moving to a larger house with a garden".

"I enjoy going to a new neighbourhood and new surroundings".

"We were moving from a rented flat with an outside toilet to our first house in a very pleasant district. I was delighted".

At the opposite extreme 9 per cent of informants said they had been 'very unhappy' at moving and a further 14 per cent 'a little unhappy'. In these cases, the reasons given tended to be personal rather than connected with the husband's job prospects (no-one suggested he might have been demoted), for instance:-

"I didn't know (the town) and I didn't like the look of it or the district we were to live in when we moved".

"Leaving my friends and a newly decorated house to come to one that was dowdy".

"Leaving our friends. Our children were also upset. Also the standard of education is much lower here".

"We were given only two weeks' notice of removal which is quite inadequate for a wife who is working as she has also to consider obligations to her employer".

"I had a part-time job which I liked and it was too far to travel".

In the city force, on the other hand, there were no complaints about impermanence of tenure and the difficulty of moving one's family and possessions into new surroundings at irregular intervals.

Here the main disadvantage mentioned was that of living in a "tied" house so that change of jobs meant loss of home also (40 per cent)\* but this was followed by complaints about having to live in rough or undesirable areas (27 per cent) and lack of family privacy (25 per cent):-

"Houses provided in the "worst" housing schemes".

"Being 'colonized' into flats in housing schemes (for after-duty policing?)".

"Until recently we stayed in a police house in ... and found the house alright but the surroundings appalling. We are now resident in ..., also a police house, but in much better surroundings and among other policemen and their families. We find life much easier, more comfortable and more relaxing".

"My husband was forever having people come to the door for assistance when he had just come off duty".

"The neighbours expect a policeman to go out and chase 'Neds' when off duty. Sometimes when policemen have arrested anyone in their own area there are bricks thrown through windows, cars damaged and such like".

The city wives were also more prone to mention difficulties involved in housing police families in groups (19 per cent) and, in particular, to suggest that this caused jealousy among the wives:-

"There is a great deal of jealousy where there are so many police wives and children lumped together and it can cause a great deal of bitterness".

"It is bad for people in the same occupation to live together. This causes petty jealousies and 'keeping up with Joneses' attitudes. Also where many men are on night shift, sleeping is difficult for the men and Hoovering etc., difficult for the women when men are sleeping".

"I think the job should be separate from home life".

"Any occasional meetings with neighbours (in police) we usually find they talk police all the time".

"It is not possible to forget the job if you are surrounded in your off-duty hours by police officers".

"In ... we lived in a police block with six houses - the children played together and the six wives stayed together as friends. Here (in my own house) the children play with neighbours and we are treated like everyone else which I think is a much better atmosphere".

\* This was also mentioned by just under half the county respondents.

All wives in the city group were asked if they favoured provision of police houses for all but only a few (13 per cent) did. Among the 69 per cent who opposed such an idea the main objections were the problem of living in a house tied to the husband's job (23 per cent), the undesirability of setting up separate police communities (22 per cent) and the dangers of infighting and jealousy among wives (12 per cent). Also mentioned were the alternative advantages of having one's own home in the area of one's choice (19 per cent) and for the man to be able to leave his work behind when he went home (19 per cent).

C The Effects of Police Affiliation on Wife & Children

So far we have looked at the effects on wife and children of specific organisational aspects of the policeman's job - his hours of duty and, in the case of county wives, his location. These are aspects of a man's working life which will affect his family whatever his occupation may be. Shift-work affects the wife of the car assembly worker and the miner as well as the policeman's wife; employees of large national concerns may have to move house on promotion, etc. Where the policeman's role differs from most others is in its pervasive nature and its authority. The policeman embodies the forces of the state for maintaining law and order. He personifies the power of the state to punish and to protect its members. People tend to react to policemen, even off-duty policemen, in terms of their official role rather than their private identity and the way these others react (enthusiastically, warily or hostilely) will depend on their present circumstances and past experiences.

To what extent does this general attitude of the public to the police extend to their wives and families also? Here we must distinguish between the effect of the wife becoming directly involved in some aspects of the husband's job and the effects of merely being identified with the "polis".

Direct involvement in a policeman's official duties was almost entirely confined to the county force and, within the county force, to the wives of rural policemen. In the city only thirteen wives (4 per cent) considered that they played some active part in their husbands' work. Of these, seven were the wives of detectives who found themselves taking, and passing on, telephone messages. In the case of the remaining six the involvement seemed rather less direct, for instance:-

"By answering the telephone and dealing with enquiries as to what my husband would advise neighbours and friends to do with abandoned cars, drunks and the like".

In other cases, the involvement was on a purely personal basis, for instance, by helping the husband to study for examinations or reminding him of court appearances.

In the county area, however, 34 per cent of informants said that they played an active part in their husbands' work; 83 per cent of the whole sample said that the public called at their houses on police business and a third of those reporting such visits said they occurred "often". As a result the wives tended to become involved in certain aspects of the policeman's job:-

"On a county station it is essential for a 'police wife' to help - the public call at all hours of the day and night".

"Answering telephone dealing with enquiries day and night. Taking in lost children and animals. Dealing with lost and found property".

"Answering telephone; dealing with enquiries, contacting other stations and relaying information received if my husband is not in".

"Helping in a practical manner or by advice to persons calling in need at Police Station House until husband arrives; answering telephone; delivering urgent messages to people (where relatives urgently required at hospital, etc.)".

In single-man stations, then, where house and police station are structurally united, the wife tends to be seen by the public as an extension of her husband who will also act as his agent in his absence. The extent to which the wives enjoyed such involvement varied. On one hand, there is the type of wife who said:

"On reading through this form I discovered that I identified with my husband's job - we are a team".

and who clearly enjoyed her involvement. At the other extreme were wives who found

"the door going at all hours and the phone ringing late in the evening, wakening the children"

more than they could tolerate. Furthermore, there were complaints that some callers were neither courteous nor, necessarily, sober. The constant publicity of life in a one-man county station could also cause difficulties:-

"You always have to be presentable. If I want to wash my hair I have to wait until my husband is in (which I don't like) or get it done at the hairdresser. If you answered the door in your curlers there would be a great deal of comment".

A possible solution, of course, is to ignore the bell but most people found this psychologically difficult even, for instance, on the husband's day off.

As we have seen such direct involvement really only affected certain categories of wives in the county area. Most wives, however, felt that knowledge of their husband's job tended to affect their interaction with other people at an unofficial level. In both

areas a high proportion of wives (68 per cent in each case) said that many of their social contacts outside the home involved their own relatives and, in general, this appears to be the group of people with whom social interaction was easiest. Only 6 per cent of the city informants and 7 per cent of those in the county thought that their husband's job affected the way in which they were treated by their relatives. As one city wife very aptly put it:-

"Relatives know husband and self and husband's job would make no difference".

In other words relatives generally still reacted to policemen and their wives as private individuals rather than as public officials. Only rarely did wives report that relatives

"feel they have to watch what they say to you".

The main complaints were that relatives

"feel you are privileged in many ways and don't see the restrictions imposed by the job"

or that

"for some reason people are inclined to think policemen and their wives are above it all - that isn't true".

There were also some relatives who were felt to desire advantages for themselves out of the relationship. This usually took the form of seeking free legal advice but there was also the odd person who saw the relationship as having a potentially protective value, for instance:-

"If they come into contact with the police in any ways they always bring up your husband's name and mention they are related even when you haven't seen them in years".

The most popular category of social contact was, however, that involving friends of long standing (83 per cent in the city; 72

per cent in the county). In about half these cases the friendship dated back to before marriage and, so, as with the relatives these were people who could see the policeman's wife as an individual in her own right and not as a representative of officialdom. The main difficulties in establishing relationships seemed to involve new contacts who experienced the informant in her role as 'a policeman's wife' before they knew her as a person - for instance, neighbours, workmates and people met through community organisations such as church guilds.

There was, however, one very significant exception to the prevailing difficulty of establishing good relationships with new acquaintances and that occurred where the person concerned was also a police wife. In the county force 48 per cent of informants said that other police wives were one of their main sources of social contact; in the city the proportion was smaller at 40 per cent but, considering the dispersal of police families in the city area, still very substantial. The reason is not far to seek since it is among colleagues and their families that one can best relax, speak freely and generally let down one's hair without fear of also having to take into account matters such as the need for security and the protection of the police image. Where all participants possess the same authority and share the same problems then again interaction can become a purely personal matter. Talk may be "shop" but at least it reflects community of interest.

This is not always the case where the general public are concerned. For instance 25 per cent of informants in each force felt that their husband's job affected the way they were treated by neighbours (other than police neighbours) and, of these, the majority commented that neighbours tended to be cautious:-

"I feel there is restraint when they know my husband is in the police".

"When conversing one is not wholly taken into confidence by others. On occasions one gets the feeling of being treated as a spy".

"There is a slight barrier but for the most part one is politely tolerated".

"They are very withdrawn and watch every move".

Real hostility was reported only infrequently (by five county informants and nine in the city) and appeared to be connected with residence in particular areas. For instance one wife who had found herself living next to one of the local "problem families" said:-

"I could not leave my house for them shouting abuse at me and if they were near enough they spat on me. When I washed my steps or the close the children came and urinated on them - they also rubbed excreta on my door-mat. Once the woman's daughter and her little girl blocked my path and she pointed to where a dog had fouled the pavement and said: 'See that? - Well that's what the Polis and their wives are made of and if you go near them you will stink of that for the rest of your days'."

This example, however, was undoubtedly the worst one quoted and in most cases the hostility reported was more passive in nature, for instance:-

"They don't speak and sometimes the children make remarks as we pass".

The majority of wives (86 per cent in the county; 90 per cent in the city) did not feel that their husband's job in any way affected their treatment in local shops. Of those in each area who did report differential treatment 54 per cent said this was of a more favourable nature:-

"In the county stations the shopkeepers all know you and are most helpful".

"If I'm not careful I could get 'little extras' quite easily which would be detrimental to the police image".

The occasional complaints of waryness in local shops appeared to stem more from the behaviour of other customers than from that of shop-keepers and shop-assistants, for instance:

"On being recognised in a shop, gossip stops immediately".

Among those wives who were regularly working full or part-time 20 per cent in the city and 26 per cent in the county thought that their relations with workmates were affected by being police wives. The main complaint was that as soon as workmates discovered her husband was in the police they seemed to treat her as in some way representing the police force herself:-

"Whenever any new member joins the staff it is made known my husband is in the Police Force - as though it's something to guard against".

"People at work like to make jokes about not saying too much in front of you because 'Her husband's a policeman'. I feel sometimes they really are subconsciously afraid to say certain things".

"(1) People at work always tell me about their own or their friends' slight brushes with the law (mostly traffic offences) explaining at great length that the police were in the wrong. (2) Whenever there is any bad publicity about policemen they make a point of mentioning it to me, presumably to hear my reactions. (3) They never expect me to have a sense of humour".

Workmates (and other social contact) were also inclined to be curious:-

"They want to ask about the police all the time".

"It is often implied that I must know much of what he knows about certain people and incidents involving his work - which is untrue".

On the positive side, however, some people suggested that being married to a policeman was considered an excellent character reference:

"You automatically gain a position of trust and respect by employers".

Because of these public attitudes - waryness, hostility, fear, curiosity - social life can be difficult for policemen and their families:-

"We never tell people whilst on holiday or in unknown company that my husband is a policeman because they always go on about the law, 'crooked cops', parking tickets, etc., and they never stop".

Relaxation has either to be sought at a distance from place of duty or else only in the company of people subject to similar difficulties - that is fellow policemen or other professionals:-

"We have always been friendly with the doctor in the district we live in - probably because there could be freedom in conversation allied to a certainty of all things being strictly confidential".

What about the position of policemen's children? Most of the informants (88 per cent in the city; 86 per cent in the county area) had at least one child and provided information about the ways, if any, in which they considered that their children were affected by having a father in the police. Many respondents (54 per cent in the county; 36 per cent in the city) thought that their own disciplinary standards in the home were affected:-

"We expect them to maintain a high standard of behaviour in public and not to get involved in anything that would bring their father or the force into disrepute".

"We are more aware of the pitfalls and as a result keep a closer check on where they are going and the company they are keeping".

"They are forbidden to enter a cafe because of the company they might meet - very strict about not coming home alone - must be home early - must never bring anything they find, even a cheap ball, into the house in case it is someone else's - must never buy fireworks - never allowed to play ball in the street as other children do".

"We have to watch the company he keeps. He is not allowed to do a great deal of things other children do (e.g. play football in the street)".

"My husband is part of a disciplined body of men. I have noticed that he exerts and expects discipline at home".

"They have to conform to obeying the law more than other children".

"I think people lose respect for the police if they see a policeman can't control his own children".

Outside the home, 22 per cent of county wives with families and 17 per cent of city ones felt that the father's job might affect their children's relations with other children:-

"When she first started school some of the children called her names and didn't want to play with her as her daddy was a policeman".

"During our service in rather poor districts both children had to learn to stand rough treatment, taunting etc."

"Other children in this area treat them with contempt - challenge them to fight, throw their coats and jackets into dust-bins while at school, etc".

Such occurrences seemed to be localised, however, and not all the comments were unfavourable. In some cases other children were said to find "Daddy's job" a glamorous one (e.g. as a detective) and in other cases children of policemen were encouraged to join in activities as a form of insurance for their peers, for instance:-

"Some boys think they can get away with anything because they are playing with the policeman's son".

Relatively few mothers (3 per cent) in the city thought that their husband's job affected the way their children were treated by teachers and other adults. In the county the situation was the same with respect to teachers (again mentioned by only 3 per cent) but 13 per cent of county wives felt that the general public did tend to have very high expectations concerning policemen's children.

"They seem to think that policemen's children should all be perfect and raise their eyebrows if they do the least little naughty thing".

"Neighbours sometimes seem to be just waiting on them doing something wrong".

"Other people are always very critical of even the slightest childish prank and say a policeman's son should know better, etc".

"They are expected by others not to put a foot wrong regardless of age".

D Respondents' Reactions to their Husbands' Occupation

So far we have been examining specific ways in which a policeman's role can affect the lives of his wife and children. Now, finally, we will look at the responses to items in the questionnaire which dealt in more general terms with the advantages and disadvantages of a policeman's job.

The two main questions here were:-

- (a) "How do you feel about your husband's job?" and
- (b) "Have you ever felt you would like your husband to leave the police force?"

The answers chosen are shown in Table 2 on the next page which suggests that the majority of wives in each area considered that a policeman's job, though subject to drawbacks, was no worse than any other. The remainder of the respondents were more or less equally divided between the two extremes. In the county 10 per cent thought it a good job while 11 per cent felt there were too many problems for the family; in the city the proportions were very similar at 7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

In answering the second question about half the respondents in each area (56 per cent in the county; 49 per cent in the city) said they never or only rarely felt that they would like their husband to leave the police force. A further two-fifths said they would sometimes like their husband to change his job but only 8 per cent in the county area and 10 per cent in the city said that they felt like this often.

The reasons given for wanting their husbands to find another type of employment varied. Some were definitely centred in the work situation rather than in the home, for instance:-

(Text continued on page 25)

TABLE 2 Association between responses to "How do you feel about your husband's job?" and "Have you ever felt you would like your husband to leave the Police Force?"

How do you feel about your husband's job ?	Have you ever felt you would like your husband to leave the police force?				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Total
<u>County Force</u>					
Never thought about it	1	1	1	-	3 ( 1.2%)
Good job providing interest for wife and family	18	2	5	1	26 (10.4%)
No real problems	17	-	2	1	20 ( 8.0%)
Some drawbacks: no worse than other jobs	65	31	67	10	173 (69.2%)
Too many problems for family	2	4	14	8	28 (11.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b> (41.2%)	<b>38</b> (15.2%)	<b>89</b> (35.6%)	<b>20</b> (8.0%)	<b>250</b> (100.0%)
<u>City Force</u>					
Never thought about it	2	3	4	1	10 ( 3.1%)
Good job providing interest for wife and family	13	5	3	-	21 ( 6.6%)
No real problems	14	6	8	1	29 ( 9.1%)
Some drawbacks: no worse than other jobs	75	35	102	17	229 (71.6%)
Too many problems for family	2	2	14	13	31 ( 9.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b> (33.1%)	<b>51</b> (15.9%)	<b>131</b> (40.9%)	<b>32</b> (10.0%)	<b>320</b> (100.0%)

Note: Eight city respondents and four county ones who did not answer both questions are omitted from this table.

"He held his promotion exams for years before he was promoted. I feel he's been overlooked".

"I know my husband is a good policeman and yet he has not had the promotion he deserved. This seems to depend on the whims of an individual or individuals".

"He is a dedicated policeman - always put police first - always went out when needed even on day off and then a junior man was promoted over him".

"I thought he would get better wages in other employment and we would have more of him at home".

"His hours have to be lived with before realising the drawbacks. He always seems to be working when others are on holiday".

"I don't think he is paid enough for the hours he works and the dangers attached".

"Money is the main reason. I find we have a struggle at times".

"I feel he is doing a thankless job".

The situation was well summed up by one wife of a city policeman with some years service:-

"Because of shifts, possible physical danger to him whilst on duty. Lack of his company (both for myself and the children). Almost complete absence of social activities. Life married to a policeman can be lonely, boring, sometimes frightening but it depends entirely on the woman and how she can cope. I have managed but I suspect that for everyone like me there are three who will talk their husbands into a 'normal' job usually early in his police service".

So much for the problems but the wives were also asked to say what they considered to be the advantages of this situation. Here there was a tendency to stress material benefits, particularly in the city:-

"Steady wage and good pension prospects".

"We have a steady weekly income with no fear of unemployment or loss of wages through illness".

"Early retirement (after 25 years service) while he is still young and active enough to find employment of a quite different nature".

"There is security".

"We have a house - something we would have had to wait years for".

Some wives, however, particularly in the county area thought their husband's job provided personal satisfaction either for the husband or for the wife herself. For instance, these wives of constables:-

"My husband enjoys the camaraderie in the police force and the variety in his working life. He's gained in confidence and assurance since he joined the force".

"I think my life has been made more interesting by my husband's job because, although there are many things which we cannot discuss regarding his work, he has such a variety of jobs to do that he has always something new to talk of".

"It is interesting, helping others. I like being associated with the police - good house, good pay, conditions not bad at all. I'm very happy with things as they are".

So far we have been considering separately the answers to each question but Table 2 (page 24) also shows that there was association between the wife's view of her husband's job and the frequency with which she wished him to make a change. Thus, in each area all but two of the wives who frequently wanted their husbands to leave the police force said that they perceived the job as involving at least some drawbacks and 40 per cent saw it as entailing "too many problems for the family". If we look at the other side of the table most of those who thought the police a good job seldom or never wanted their husbands to change jobs. In other words, the responses showed a reasonable degree of consistency. It was therefore possible to use the data in Table 2 to separate out those wives who seemed least satisfied with their lot and to compare them with the other respondents. This is done in the next section.

PART II : ANALYSIS BY DEGREE OF WIFE'S SATISFACTION WITH HER HUSBAND'S JOB

Using the answers to the two questions shown in Table 2 (page 24) it was possible to compute a "satisfaction" score for each respondent by adding the separate scores for each question as shown below:-

Q44: "How do you feel about your husband's job?"

Answers: "Never thought about it." (Score 0)

"It is a good job which provides interest and purpose for his wife and family." (Score 0)

"His job brings no real problems." (Score 1)

"It has some drawbacks but no worse than any other job." (Score 2)

"There are far too many problems for the family." (Score 3)

Q45: "Have you ever felt you would like him to leave the police force?"

Answers: Never (Score 0)

Rarely (Score 1)

Sometimes (Score 2)

Very Often (Score 3)

When the scores for each question are added together this gives us a range of possible scores from 0 (very favourable) to 6 (very unfavourable). Respondents who failed to answer one or both of the questions were omitted from the subsequent analysis as it was felt that incomplete data might lead to a misleading categorisation. The distribution of scores is shown in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3 Distribution of Satisfaction Scores by Area

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	u/c
County (No)	19	20	71	36	74	22	8	4
(%)	7.5	7.9	28.0	14.2	29.1	8.7	3.1	1.6
City (No)	15	22	88	45	106	31	13	8
(%)	4.6	6.7	26.8	13.7	32.3	9.5	4.0	2.4

As Table 3 shows there was little difference between the extent of satisfaction/dissatisfaction existing among city and county wives though the city wives tended to be very slightly more critical. Numbers expressing extreme dissatisfaction were small in both cases. Because of this, and also because the index could only be treated as a rather rough measure, it was decided that there would be advantages in grouping respondents into three categories:

- (a) A "favourable" group of those scoring 0 or 1;
- (b) An "unfavourable" group of those scoring 5 or 6; and
- (c) An "intermediate" group of those scoring 2, 3 or 4.

These categories were then related to the remainder of the questionnaire data in an attempt to assess which factors of police service contributed most to discontent among wives.

(a) Wife's Own Background

In neither force was there any evidence that the wife's opinion of police service was affected by objective factors in her own background. Thus, the "unfavourable" group were just as likely to be locally born and bred as were the others; they had held much the same types of job before marriage and they were equally as likely to be employed at the time of the survey; they were equally as likely to have children. Knowledge of the nature of police life before marriage was not necessarily an advantage. Indeed in the county area the unfavourable group were more likely than the others to have had close blood relatives such as fathers and brothers in the police force before marriage (20 per cent compared with 7 per cent of the intermediate category and none of the "favourable" group).\*\*\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stars will be used to denote degrees of statistical significance as assessed by use of the Chi-square test (with use of Yates correction where applicable as follows:

\* Significant at 5 per cent level; \*\* Significant at 1 per cent level; \*\*\* Significant at 0.1 per cent level. Lack of statistical significance will be denoted by absence of stars.

This did not apply in the city, however, where only 4 per cent of the "unfavourable" group came from police families compared with 11 per cent of the others. In neither area were there any cases of unfavourable opinions being found among those who had themselves served as policewomen but the numbers involved were small.

(b) Rank and Length of Police Service of Husband

In both areas it was found that a wife's acceptance of her husband's job bore some relationship by his rank so that the wives of senior officers (superintendents and above) were the least likely to express criticism while the wives of constables were the most likely. This was most marked in the county area where 90 per cent of the "unfavourable" group were married to constables compared with 70 per cent of the intermediate group and only 54 per cent of those who were favourable.\* A similar though less marked trend was apparent in the city force where 77 per cent of the unfavourable group were wives of constables compared with 57 per cent of those who were favourable. The unfavourable group in the city, however, also contained an unexpectedly high proportion of wives of inspectors and higher ranks, mostly women whose husbands had only recently been promoted.

Length of service was, in itself, unrelated to degree of satisfaction which is not surprising since the long service men included both those who had received promotion and those who had not. However, considering only the constables (i.e. those who had not yet been promoted) it was found in the city that 62 per cent of constables in the unfavourable group had served more than 10 years compared with 43 per cent in the intermediate group and 29 per cent in the favourable one.\* This did not apply in the

county force where length of service among constables remained fairly similar in all three opinion categories.

(c) Husband's Hours of Work

TABLE 4 Working Hours by Wife's Opinion of Job

<u>Husband's Duties</u>	<u>Wife's Opinion</u>					
	<u>Favourable</u>		<u>Intermediate</u>		<u>Unfavourable</u>	
<u>City Force</u>	No	%	No	%	No	%
Usually works days*	16	43.2	63	26.4	6	13.6
Usually works shifts or "24 hours responsibility"*	21	56.8	176	73.6	38	86.4
Almost always on duty on Saturday afternoon	5	13.5	35	14.6	11	25.0
Almost always on duty on Sundays	4	10.8	29	12.1	8	18.2
Holidays affected nearly every year*	6	16.2	49	20.5	17	38.6
<b>TOTAL CITY INFORMANTS</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<u>County Force</u>						
Usually works days	8	20.5	25	13.8	5	16.7
Usually works set shifts	20	51.3	99	54.7	13	43.3
Usually works discretionary shifts or "24 hours responsibility"	11	28.2	57	31.5	12	40.0
Almost always on duty on Saturday afternoons*	2	5.1	34	18.8	9	30.0
Almost always on duty on Sundays*	2	5.1	33	18.2	9	30.0
Holidays affected nearly every year‡	-	-	11	6.1	4	13.3
<b>TOTAL COUNTY INFORMANTS</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

‡ Numbers insufficient to apply Chi-square test.

Table 4 shows that in the city force the wife's antagonism to her husband's job was significantly associated with the working of shifts. In the county there was a similar, if less pronounced and thus statistically non-significant, tendency for day work to be associated

with a favourable attitude while discretionary shifts were associated with an unfavourable one. This emerges even more clearly when we consider the proportion of wives in each opinion category who specifically said that they disliked shifts and much preferred their husbands to work straight days. In the city this applied to 73 per cent of the unfavourable group compared with 43 per cent of the intermediate category and only 16 per cent of those who were favourable.\*\*\* Similarly, in the county force 57 per cent of wives in the unfavourable group disliked shifts compared with 21 per cent and 18 per cent respectively for the other two categories.\*\*\*

Table 4 also shows that the unfavourable group of wives were more likely to feel that their husbands were usually on duty at the weekend when others were free, particularly in the county force. In both areas they were also most likely to feel that their holiday arrangements were frequently endangered by police requirements. It has not been practicable to check whether such statements are empirically "true". It may be that the exigencies of police service put more pressure on some members of the force than on others. On the other hand it may be that the same patterns of duty hours are perceived in different ways by different types of individual according to their own expectations of domestic life and their own personalities. Whatever the reason it is certainly true the unfavourable group were the most likely to give reasons for disliking their husbands' working hours (84 per cent in city; 83 per cent in county). Such reasons were given only by 45 per cent of the intermediate group in the city and 39 per cent in the county and 24 per cent and 26 per cent respectively of the "favourable" category.\*\*\*

This difference in attitude was again shown in connection with night shift since the "unfavourable" group were more likely than

other wives to say that they worried - both on their own behalf and on his - when their husbands were on duty at night (see Table 5).

TABLE 5 Attitudes to Night Shift

	Favourable Group		Intermediate Group		Unfavourable Group	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<u>City Force</u>						
Worried about self/children	16	43.2	147	61.5	40	90.9
Worried about husband's safety*	25	67.6	193	80.8	41	93.2
<u>County Force</u>						
Worried about self/children	18	46.2	90	49.7	22	73.3
Worried about husband's safety*	25	64.1	150	82.9	28	93.3

In both areas the wives in the unfavourable group were the most likely to feel that their mental and physical health was endangered by the anxieties and stresses of their husband's jobs (see Table 6 :)

TABLE 6 Wife's Health by Her Opinion of Police Service

	Favourable		Intermediate		Unfavourable	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<u>City Force</u>						
Health "good"*(1)	32	86.5	184	77.0	28	63.6
Sometimes/often suffers from nerves.***	20	54.1	142	59.4	39	88.6
Illnesses sometimes/usually concerned with husband's job.***	5	13.5	77	32.2	31	70.5
<u>County Force</u>						
Health "good"*(1)	31	79.5	139	76.8	15	50.0
Sometimes/often suffers from nerves	21	53.8	103	56.9	22	73.3
Illnesses sometimes/usually connected with husband's job.***	2	5.1	42	23.2	15	50.0

Note: (1) All but a very few of those whose health was not "good" said it was "reasonable": only one county wife and five in the city said they suffered from "poor" health.

Furthermore, as Table 6 clearly shows, there was a marked association between the wife's opinion of her husband's job and the extent to which she attributed her own ailments to the stresses involved.

(d) Housing

There was no evidence that residence in a police house was, in itself, related to the wife's attitude to her husband's job. Clearly, in the county area, where nearly all respondents lived in such houses, comparison was impossible but, even in the city, where only 38 per cent were affected, there was no evidence that they were more disaffected than others. In fact, only 11 per cent of city wives currently living in police houses fell into the "unfavourable" category compared with 15 per cent of those living in their own accommodation; the proportions classified as favourable were 12 and 11 per cent respectively. In other words, residence in official housing appeared to make no difference to the wife's attitude.

It was also discovered that the "unfavourable" group were just as likely to see advantages in living in a police house as were the other two groups. Indeed, in the county area, they were more likely to do so since 77 per cent of the "unfavourable" group mentioned at least one advantage compared with 46 per cent of the "favourable" group and 61 per cent in the intermediate category. In the city area there was little difference between the three categories (48 per cent of the "favourable" category with experience of police housing, 42 per cent of the "intermediate" and 47 per cent of the "unfavourable"). In both areas there was a tendency for the "unfavourable" group to point out the objective advantages of living in police houses, i.e. that they were rent and rate free and quickly available, but they were less likely than the "favourable" and "intermediate" groups to mention the good quality of the housing provided.

So far as disadvantages were concerned there was found to be a significant association between a wife's liability to complain about police housing and her general feelings towards her husband's job. Thus all the wives in the "unfavourable" groups in each area listed at least one disadvantage. In the city this can be compared with 66 per cent of the "favourable" group who had experience of police housing and 77 per cent of the "intermediate" category\*. In the county area the comparable figures were 79 and 88 per cent respectively\*. On the whole there was little variation in the type of disadvantage mentioned by the different opinion groups within an area but, in the city, the unfavourable group were more likely than the others to complain about factors arising from the grouping together of police houses\*. In the county area, the unfavourable group were more likely than the rest to mention limitations on decoration\* and difficulties concerning lack of standardisation in housing.

As we have already seen (on Page 11) the difficulties of house removal were of considerable moment to the county wives as a whole and there were no grounds for saying that the unfavourable group had been exposed to more than their fair share of upheaval. Indeed their experiences were essentially similar to those of the intermediate category: in each case two-thirds of the group had spent less than two years in their present house and approximately one-third had moved more than three times in the previous ten years. There was, however, a discernable difference in reported reactions to removals and, in particular, to the most recent removal.

TABLE 7 Wives' Attitudes to Removals (County Force Only)

	Favourable Group		Intermediate Group		Unfavourable Group	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Found moves in general "very unsettling" for self	6	16.2	52	29.4	12	40.0
Found moves in general "very unsettling" for children*	5	13.5	49	27.7	15	50.0
Unhappy about most recent move**	3	8.1	41	23.2	13	43.3
Number in Police Housing	37	100.0	177	100.0	30	100.0

As Table 7 shows, the wives in the unfavourable group were more than five times as likely as those in the favourable category to say that they had been upset and unhappy about moving to their present house. In part this seems to have been attributable to specific factors - the area, the house, leaving friends - but it is also noticeable that this group were more likely to describe themselves and their children as easily unsettled by any removal than were the women in the other two groups.

(e) Children

In each of the opinion categories more than four out of five respondents said that they had at least one child. The presence (or absence) of children then did not appear to be associated with the wife's reaction to her husband's job. Nor was there found to be any association between the age of the children and their mother's adjustment to her role as policeman's wife.

As Table 8 shows, the mothers in the unfavourable group were more likely than others to feel that their children were exposed to special treatment outside the family because their fathers were in the police force. This was particularly marked in the county area where only one mother in the favourable group reported any incident

involving differential treatment of her children. Within the home, mothers in the unfavourable group were also the most likely to feel that the father's job affected family discipline but the difference here was small as their view was shared by a substantial proportion of the other two groups of respondents.

TABLE 8 Wives' Perceptions of the Ways in Which Being A "Police Family" Affected Children

	Favourable Group		Intermediate Group		Unfavourable Group	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<u>City Force</u>						
Children's treatment by other children affected* <sup>(1)</sup>	5	16.1	31	14.6	11	28.9
Children's treatment by adults (excluding teachers)** <sup>(1)</sup>	5	16.1	34	16.0	14	26.8
Family discipline affected	11	35.5	71	33.5	18	47.4
Number with Children	31	100.0	212	100.0	38	100.0
<u>County Force</u>						
Children's treatment by other children affected***	1	2.9	29	19.0	13	48.1
Children' treatment by adults (excluding teachers) affected**	1	2.9	19	12.4	8	29.6
Family discipline affected	11	32.4	85	55.6	16	59.3
Number with Children	34	100.0	153	100.0	27	100.0

Notes: (1) Significance assessed on unfavourable v rest because of similarity of favourable and intermediate groups.

So far as future plans were concerned respondents were asked about their reactions if a son wished to join the police force or a daughter wished to marry a policeman. As might be expected the answers closely reflected the mother's attitude to the police. Thus, in the county, none of those favourable to their husbands' police careers said that they would discourage their son from following in his father's footsteps whereas 19 per cent of the intermediate group

and 47 per cent of those unfavourable said that they would try to do so.\*\*\* In the city, the picture was similar though there was less enthusiasm in all three groups with discouragement being offered by 13 per cent of the favourable group, 27 per cent of the intermediate group and 68 per cent of the unfavourable.\*\*\* The unfavourable group in each area also had strong reservations about the desirability of a daughter marrying a policeman with more than 80 per cent saying they hoped it would never happen. The comparable figures for the favourable group were 13 per cent in the county and 32 per cent in the city; for the intermediate category 33 per cent and 51 per cent respectively.\*\*\*

(f) Perceived Effects of Husband's Job on Wife's Interaction with Other People

Again here, as in Part I, I propose to separate the specific case in which the wife sees herself as becoming "officially" involved with her husband's job from the more general case of "guilt by association". As we have already seen (on page 15) actual physical involvement in aspects of the husband's duties really only occurred among the county force wives particularly those in rural areas. Looking only at the county force, then, we found that there was an association between the wife's feeling caught up in her husband's duties and her dissatisfaction with his job so that 47 per cent of the unfavourable group saw themselves as actively involved in their husband's work compared with 35 per cent of the intermediate group and 15 per cent of the favourable.\* Again, answering the question about how often the public called at the house on business, 80 per cent of the unfavourable group said this happened "sometimes" or "often" compared with only 43 per cent of those in the favourable category and 57 per cent in the intermediate group.\*\* The unfavourable group then were more apt to see themselves as caught up in police activity which impinged on their family life and privacy.

In the county area the unfavourable group were also more likely than the other wives to see their role as a police wife affecting their casual unofficial interaction with other people: neighbours, relatives, shopkeepers, etc. (see Table 9).

TABLE 9 Wives Perception of Their Own Interaction with Others as Affected by Their Husbands' Jobs

	Favourable Group		Intermediate Group		Unfavourable Group	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<u>City Force</u>						
Treatment by relatives affected	4	10.8	10	4.2	4	9.1
Treatment by neighbours affected	12	32.4	50	20.9	20	45.5
Treatment in local shops affected	1	2.7	19	7.9	3	6.8
Treatment at work affected	6	16.2	13	5.4	7	15.9
Treatment by other people affected	4	10.8	38	15.9	15	34.1**
<u>County Force</u>						
Treatment by relatives affected	2	5.1	11	6.1	6	20.0**
Treatment by neighbours affected	4	10.3	44	24.3	15	50.0**
Treatment in local shops affected	3	7.7	23	12.7	9	30.0*
Treatment by people at work affected	2	5.1	12	6.6	4	13.3
Treatment by other people affected	6	15.4	57	31.5	15	50.0*

Note: Significant levels in this table are assessed on a 2 x 2 basis of "Unfavourable" v the others and not on all three groups as previously. This has been done because of the small differences between the favourable and intermediate groups in most cases.

In the city the association was less marked, perhaps because of the greater possibility of anonymity. Difficulties with neighbours and with unspecified "others" were the only two types of interaction

in which the "unfavourable" group experienced more problems than the respondents in the other two categories.

In neither area was there any evidence that the "unfavourable" group had been exposed to more active hostility. Rather their main complaint was of "caution" being displayed towards them by other people.

CONCLUSIONS

From the data so far considered it is obvious that certain aspects of the policeman's role in the community can affect - to a less or greater degree - his domestic as well as his working life and, consequently, have an impact also on the lives of his wife and children. For most of the wives who participated in the survey the problems involved were seen as bearable and probably no worse than those encountered in other types of employment. For some, however, difficulties associated with having a husband in the police force clearly assumed a greater importance and formed a source of considerable stress. In our sample of the wives of servicing officers, the proportion of such "unfavourable" wives was admittedly small but this is not necessarily a cause for complacency since many of those who experienced dissatisfaction might have already encouraged their husbands to resign and find other, more congenial employment.

Nearly all the wives were affected to some extent by nature of their husband's job but the extent of its effect on domestic life appeared to be governed by the operation of three sets of factors which interact one with another. These are:-

1. the policeman's own conditions of work;
2. the status of the police within the community where the family lived and
3. the personality of the wife, herself.

1. Conditions of Work

One of the requirements of an efficient police force is that it must supply the community with law enforcement and crime prevention coverage which is comprehensive in terms both of time and of space. In other words there must be adequate coverage of all parts of the police area at all times of day and night, seven days a week. This has two results, so far as conditions of work are concerned. First it means that at least some policemen must work shifts and, secondly, particularly in rural areas, some policemen must live "on the job".<sup>(1)</sup>

Shiftwork, as we have seen, was unpopular with many of the wives because of the interference caused to domestic routine and social life. Many people resented the fact that their husbands were often on duty at weekends and local trades holidays when other couples and families could go out together. Many women were uneasy when their husbands were on night shift. It might be argued that such problems are shared by the wives of other shift workers in occupations where a seven-day week is operated (e.g. public transport) but underlying some of the complaints, in this survey, were two aspects of the husband's job which were more specific to the police-emergency and danger. Obviously these do not affect all policemen at all times but one or the other, or both, can affect any member of the police force at any time and this introduces an element of uncertainty and anxiety into the domestic situation. Emergencies mean, at best, that a man's return home at the end of his duty may be delayed so that even the "favourable" group of wives complained about spoiled meals; at worst, they could mean that he never came home at all. Wives, then, were exposed to both irritation and anxiety because of irregularities in their husbands' hours.

<sup>(1)</sup> Unless such areas are policed solely by mobile patrols based on on the nearest town which was not the case in this area at the time of the survey.

Provision of police housing clearly had advantages for many people who might otherwise have had difficulty in obtaining suitable private accommodation and in the county area where policemen were required to live where they worked such provision was obviously very necessary. Nevertheless, in the county, housing seemed to be one of the major causes of complaint - particularly concerning the necessity of frequent moves at short notice. Again here one of the main reasons for complaint was uncertainty since no-one knew when the next move would come or where they would be sent.

A second problem connected with residence in official houses - particularly where they were attached to the local police station - was that they were easily recognised by the general public. This could merely mean that their inhabitants were identified and reacted to as "polis" or could mean that the house was seen as taking on the information giving and receiving aspects of a local police station. Indeed, in many rural stations, home and office appeared to be inextricably interwoven - a situation which put considerable stress on some wives, even if enjoyed by others.

2. Status within the community

To the general public a policeman is seen as embodying the powers of law enforcement in the community. While to some people, therefore, his proximity may be considered a safeguard, to others it will indicate potential danger. The view taken will depend on the individual's attitude to the law and his past experience with law enforcement agencies but few people will react as neutrally to the presence of a policeman, even if he is off-duty, as they would to that of a plumber or a bank-clerk. From the answers given by respondents in the two forces studied, such attitudes towards the

police appeared to be extended so as to also affect interaction with the policeman's wife. This seemed to apply particularly in cases where the policeman and his wife were identified in their "official" roles before they were known as individuals. Once identified as a "police wife", the individual's experiences probably depend partly on her own personal qualities but they will also be greatly affected by the general status of the police in the eyes of those she meets. In other words the police wife often finds herself being reacted to as one of a category (police wives) and other than as an individual (Mrs Jean Smith). Her actions and words will be judged in the light of people's expectations concerning behaviour appropriate to policemen and their wives. If attitudes to the police are hostile then suspicious "meanings" may be read into perfectly innocuous behaviour on the part of the wife. For instance, questions about the health and welfare of members of a neighbour's family could be seen as a threat if that family had been "in trouble". This suspicion then leads to the "caution" in interaction described by many of the wives.

Favourable attitudes to the police, on the other hand, can also involve disadvantages as they tend to incorporate high expectations concerning the behaviour appropriate to the policeman and, by association, his wife and children. This was mentioned by many of the wives both in the questionnaires and in additional interviews which took place in some cases. Particularly in cases where the public called at their house on police business, wives felt that they were expected to be permanently well-groomed, courteous, efficient and alert, whatever the time or prevailing domestic crisis, and that their children should always be clean, mannerly and well behaved. Many wives appeared to achieve such standards with little

difficulty but for others, who felt they were not living up to expectations and so possibly hindering their husband's promotion prospects, there was considerable strain. This could also apply - though to a reduced extent - even where there was no semi-official contact with the public since wives could still feel themselves under surveillance by other police wives (particularly those of senior rank), neighbours and "the public" in general.

### 3. The Wife's Own Personality

The questionnaire used in this survey was not intended to provide any measurement of personality variables. It is obvious, however, from the preceding discussion that the wives' reactions to conditions of police service were affected not only by their experiences but also by the type of people they were. In general, it appeared that those who were least happy were those who were least self-sufficient and who found it most difficult to adapt to changing or unforeseen circumstances. The "unfavourable" group, for instance, were upset because their husband's conditions of work interfered with their ability to plan ahead - to develop a routine for carrying out household tasks, to cook meals in the knowledge that they would be eaten at the right time, to plan holidays and social outings in advance. They found it difficult to accommodate sudden interruptions to their routine such as telephone calls. They worried more - on their own behalf as well as his - when their husbands were on night shift; they felt less fit and suffered more from "nerves" which they felt were attributable to his working conditions; they missed his support in family affairs at weekends and holidays. For such women, then, their husbands' jobs involved a considerable burden.

Can any solution be suggested? Clearly the wife's own personality is not amenable to change and policemen cannot be advised to marry only wives who will face any exigencies of the service unperturbed. It should, however, be possible to consider and perhaps in some cases remove or reduce, those attributes of police service which appear to constitute the major sources of friction with certain types of personality.

Public attitudes to the police constitute one of the main causes of complaint but again, here, attitudes cannot be changed, at least in the short-run. A long-term improvement might be possible through education and public relations exercises but, for all practical purposes, it seems likely that a degree of caution, or in some cases hostility, is likely to prevail in many of the dealings between policemen and the general public and that these attitudes will be extended to the policemen's wives also.

Further, the impartiality and objectivity which are required of a policeman in his law-enforcing and peace-keeping roles, must militate against his becoming too closely involved at a personal level with those with whom he may potentially have professional dealings. This applies also to his wife and where the policeman lives in his working area it can lead to "separateness" even in friendly communities. This is probably unavoidable and the solution appears to lie in the hands of the couples concerned who must make their close social contacts where it is safest to do so, i.e. with relatives, other police families or friends living in other areas.

The main possibilities of amelioration appear to be concerned with those conditions of service which caused anxiety and irritation. Some of these are unavoidable, for example shift working including nights and duties at weekends, since policemen are often required for public control and crime prevention duties at times when many others are enjoying themselves. The nature of his duty hours must therefore cause some unavoidable hardship to a policeman's family. Equally it would be impossible to remove all sources of wifely anxiety since exposure to danger is always a possibility inherent in the nature of the job. Nevertheless in some of the cases quoted by respondents there seemed to have been exposure to unnecessary worry and irritation which could have been reduced or even avoided with the use of more imagination and consideration on the part of those concerned. For instance, was it really necessary for men to have uniform fittings on their day-off or for someone to be recalled from holiday (admittedly at home) to carry out a public relations duty for one of his superiors? In a disciplined force such as the police it is obviously necessary in times of crisis that senior officers should be able to give clear and decisive orders and that their subordinates should be prepared to obey promptly and without question. But at other times it might be that job satisfaction in the lower ranks would be much improved by more consultation and more explanation about actions affecting a man's career, e.g. why he has not been promoted or why he is being posted. Such explanations would ensure that not only was justice being done in such matters but also that it was seen to be done by those affected (and their wives!)

So far as housing was concerned, as we have seen, many families were very pleased to be provided with a house of a reasonably high standard which they might have had trouble obtaining on the open market. Other wives, in the city, stressed the benefits of living in their own accommodation in an area of their choice where they and

their families could live as private individuals and not as "the polis". In the county, where at the time of the survey it was not permissible, many wives would also have liked the security and independence of their own home. This is now possible to a limited extent since, with the consent of the Chief Constable, families may buy a house after the husband has completed twelve years service or may accept a council house in an area of their choice after twenty years service (subject to allocation by the council concerned). This would appear to offer a solution to some of the problems outlined here without unduly affecting the mobility of personnel.

For those living in police houses one of the main problems for many people appeared to be insecurity arising from lack of knowledge about when the next move would come and where they would go. Even with increased opportunities for house-buying such problems will still exist for those who, because of insufficient money or insufficient service, are unable to take advantage of such opportunities. Since such sudden moves were particularly likely to cause anxiety and irritation one must question whether they are always necessary? In many cases would it not be possible for longer notice to be given or even for the preferences of policemen and their families to be taken into account in determining the next posting in cases where no promotion is involved?

Again, the location of police houses in blocks though economically, and in many cases socially, desirable also involved problems because of identification by outsiders and because of differences between wives, particularly where some husbands were of higher rank than others. Are such blocks necessary or could police houses be dispersed around desirable council housing estates (as well as undesirable ones)?

In this paper I have not attempted to suggest solutions to the problems reported by the wives who filled in the questionnaire. Most of the preventable problems appear to lie in the sphere of police administration where it would be impertinent for an outsider to offer advice. In general, however, it would seem that the solutions might, in many cases, lie not so much in radical administrative changes as in the application of more imagination and consideration to points of friction and in greater consultation between senior and junior ranks in matters which affect the junior man's career.

**END**