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Introduction

- ¹ Amongst the considerable and valuable canon of work on the introduction of public uniformed police services in the nineteenth century, there has been a robust strand of research on the policing agencies and forms that existed before 1829¹, and a smaller body of work on privately-funded agencies of control operating in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries². Whilst research on publicly-funded bodies has largely focused on order-maintenance and preventative crime-control, others have studied the protection that private policing agencies offered to sectional interests. This article seeks to make some connections between the activities of one particular private agency – the Worsted Committee and their Inspectorate – and the development of public policing in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the industrial north of England. The work of this Committee has been discussed in relation to the criminalization of workplace practices in the northern mill towns; alongside a detailed exploration of the methods employed by appropriators, their motivations, and the punishments they suffered when caught by the internal supervisory systems (foremen and overseers) or the private police agency (the Worsted Committee)³. This article focuses on some issues raised by exiting literature, but never before examined in detail: how did a private agency, which was designed to regulate private space, and a public body (Bradford Borough Police), which was supposed to protect public order in public spaces, find a working partnership in the mid- to late-nineteenth century? How successful was this unofficial arrangement? What were the consequences that flowed from this notional partnership for the development of policing in the West Riding, and for the control of labour in the workplace and in the streets?

Background

- 2 In the early years of the Industrial Revolution, the advantages of providing a privately financed form of policing in order to control one's employees were often seen as outweighing the considerable effort and costs involved in maintaining an effectively operative force. For example, Freshfields, solicitors for the Bank of England, had employed their own team of men on a semi-permanent basis to investigate cases of forgery from at least the latter decades of the eighteenth century⁴. Insurance companies have a similarly long history dating back to the eighteenth century of employing 'in-house' surveyors, investigators and assessors⁵. Other institutions also saw advantages in not having to rely on a parish constabulary system that was being viewed as increasingly outmoded and unfit for purpose in an rapidly urbanizing and industrializing England. Most prominent among these were several of the various companies that sprung up in the heady years of canal and railway development in the late-Georgian and early-Victorian period, which by the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 employed their own private police forces. The first half of the nineteenth century saw a blossoming of private police forces in the rapidly growing urban areas and the concomitant boom in trade: Grand Surrey Canal Police (founded 1809), Commercial Docks Police (1810), Admiralty Constabulary (1834), Gloucester Docks Police (1836), Liverpool Markets Police (1837), Hull Docks Police (1840), Regents Canal & Docks Police (1840) and the River Tyne Police (1845).
- 3 All of the private police forces shared one thing in common; they were only responsible to either essentially private committees or organizations – they usually had neither jurisdiction nor interest outside their own spheres of influence, nor were they subject to much external control⁶. They were overwhelmingly concerned with internalized offending such as breaches of trust or internal larceny; they were never created for the good or benefit of the general public, and remained largely unconcerned with external offences or influences. The other common factor was that the newer agencies of the early nineteenth century tended to be sponsored or funded by mercantile or manufacturing interests. For example, with regard to the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Halifax woollen manufacturers sponsored a Woollen Inspector between 1802 and 1807; a Linen Inspector briefly patrolled Barnsley; and there was a Woollen Inspector in Pudsey in the 1830s and also in Huddersfield between 1844 and 1851. Unfortunately, no records of these private prosecution agencies survive in the West Riding archives⁷. However, the most utilized prosecution association in the region dominated by factory production – the Worsted Committee – has left extensive records and can therefore be used to study the impact of private policing in this context.

The Worsted Committee⁸

- 4 The Worsted Committee was established by 17 Geo. III, c.11 (1777) to enforce the clauses of 22 Geo. II, c. 27 (1749), and thereby to retain, intensify and strengthen the employers' supremacy over the production process by facilitating increased recourse to the criminal code. A further act 17 Geo. III c.56 (1777) allowed the creation of a Worsted Inspectorate which was appointed and controlled by the Worsted Committee. A committee such as this obviously needed to maximise its access to people with some expertise and knowledge of manufacturing – if not the workings of the legal system (although such practical

knowledge increased over time). Additionally, they needed to construct and maintain a legitimacy to 'police' the industry, and to occasionally discipline wealthy and powerful manufactures and merchants. Accordingly, the Committee was composed of twenty-seven members – eighteen from Yorkshire and nine from Cheshire and Lancashire respectively – who jointly represented the worsted industry in the North. Although all of the worsted producing regions and towns sent delegates to the Committee, in practice, from its inception till its demise, the Committee was dominated by, and largely run for the benefit of, the Bradford and Halifax manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

- 5 In the eighteenth century the Committee had been composed of what one could term 'gentlemen-manufacturers' who were not only wealthy, but politically astute individuals wielding a good deal of local power. By the time that the introduction of public policing was being discussed in the region the composition had altered in character, with large scale 'professional' manufacturers now running the show. One aspect remained unchanged however. The nineteenth-century members were still enveloped in a mass of overlapping matrices of élite connections: political, matrimonial, familial, and social. Two-thirds of Bradford's Watch Committee – which was responsible for maintaining public order in the borough – were Worsted Committee members. Moreover, three members (Samuel Smith, John Hill and William Rand) all attained the office of Mayor of Bradford. No one political party seems to have colonized the Committee, however, rather the Committee boasted the leading members of both parties who supported manufacturing interests: some 'Free Trade' Tories were members, whilst other Committee members were prominent Liberals⁹. The political and social élite who sat round a table once a quarter to discuss trade, the detection and prosecution of appropriators, and presumably a host of other subjects, presided over the organization that was most determined to strike out appropriation and work-indiscipline from the worsted industry. The losses through deliberate appropriation and the 'wasting of time' by employees were considerable and the factory system, which was partly introduced to try and control this loss, was only partially successful in eradicating workplace theft¹⁰. The Committee were the men who were heavily involved in the transition from cottage industry to the factory age, and they were the men who controlled the prosecution society which would use the criminal law to bolster their authority¹¹.

The Worsted Inspectorate

- 6 The primary objectives of the Inspectorate were to stop the simple theft of workplace materials, whether that took place in the out-worker's cottage, the small manufactory, or the large factory, and also to stop the customary practices that had established themselves over time in the textile trade – in particular the practice of workers converting waste material for their own use. The Worsted Acts also empowered them to prosecute the 'neglect of work' (workers' not completing contracts) and other infractions and breaches of contract. If conviction was secured, the offender was fined £ 20 in most cases, or in default (and most did default because this was an enormous sum to find for most workers – far in excess of their annual wage), they were imprisoned for a period of up to one month.
- 7 The history of the Worsted Committee and their Inspectors in the mid- to late-nineteenth century falls into four distinct phases¹². Initially, the Committee and their Inspectors were brought into life by the 1777 Worsted Acts, and they were charged with suppressing

fraud in the domestic cottage textile industry¹³. The second period was a short one, when the Committee really achieved its zenith after a large-scale centralised textile production system arose in the 1830s, which came to be the dominant mode of production by the 1840s. The Committee and its Inspectors were able to wage war against appropriation because it could call not just on political and social capital, including a large tax remittance on the soap duty paid by manufacturers¹⁴. A considerable amount of soap was used in the preparatory processes of cloth production, and as a concession to manufacturers the government allowed them to drawback a third of all duty paid on the ingredient. The Worsted Committee was entitled to a proportion of this drawback. This percentage was changed periodically by petition to the Leeds quarter sessions, either in favour of the Committee or the manufacturers, but remained the financial mainstay of the Committee's finances until 1853¹⁵. William Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, then drained the financial life-blood away. After this date, the Worsted Committee underwent substantial organizational changes in response to the financial crisis which ushered in a period when they operated at a reduced level. This third phase ended in 1870 when the Inspectorate were re-animated by the employers' response to their self-perceived needs and fears; and this last phase stretched to the Committee's final denouement in 1968¹⁶.

- 8 The Worsted Committee and their Inspectorate spanned a considerable length of time, and operated throughout the shift from domestic modes of production to industrial capitalism at its height. The ways the Inspectors operated 'in the field' in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, however, remained unchanged in many respects from that of the late-eighteenth century. Since material was often temporarily stored in a worker's house or shed before being sold, or used by the worker to decorate or repair his household furnishings, the homes of factory workers were searched as assiduously as the houses and workshops of domestic out-workers had been previously. Inspectors merely had to obtain a warrant signed by two magistrates before searching the house of a suspect, often accompanied by parish constables (later police officers) and/or the suspect's employer (made permissible by 17 Geo III c.56 1777). The Inspectors continued to have little involvement with the direct supervision of the production process once factories had replaced domestic forms of production, although they occasionally placed agents inside the works in order to gain information¹⁷. Rag and waste dealers too, as obvious receivers of appropriated goods, also continued to receive close attention from the Inspectorate, as they had done since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The wide reporting of successful prosecutions also helped to maintain a consensus that manufacturers should continue to fund the Committee's activities; much of the Inspectorate's work was reported upon by local newspapers such as the *Bradford Advertiser*¹⁸. These advertisements served to make the Inspectorate well-known to workers and employers alike, and the range and extent of their activities made them an obvious choice for those who wished to control appropriation.
- 9 The Committee encouraged this view by delineating clearly their area of jurisdiction and expertise. By concentrating their operations within well-defined geographical and legal areas they established a moral authority in pressing their right to police the industry. Although the Worsted Acts covered Lancashire and Cheshire as well as Yorkshire, the Inspectorate were mainly active in Keighley, Leeds, Bradford, and Halifax, the worsted producing regions of the Pennines, such as Newchurch, Colne and Blackburn (as well as Morley and Chorley for a brief period)¹⁹. Each of these districts was patrolled by an

Inspector who reported his actions at every quarterly meeting of the Committee, which also checked the accuracy of the Inspector's recording of prosecutions and convictions.

- 10 If much of the Inspectors' operational methods remained largely unchanged across the nineteenth century, the rise of the factory system did engender one major change in their *modus operandi*. The organization of the factory introduced a physical point at which searches could be conducted, and offenders apprehended – the factory gate. Surprisingly perhaps, only a seventh of the searches conducted by the Worsted Inspector and/or a Constable which led to prosecution took place at the factory gate – although this would seem to be the most beneficial place in terms of the prosecution, proving an intent to steal in any subsequent court case²⁰. Nevertheless, the proportion of people apprehended at the gate, together with those apprehended inside the premises (49.8%), makes it clear that the factory authority structure and physical organization contributed to the successful apprehension of many appropriators²¹. The factory gate, in addition, should also have delineated very clearly where the private sphere controlled by the Worsted Inspectors ended, and the public sphere policed by uniformed public officers started. This was only partly the case.
- 11 The General Inspector of each region in which the Worsted Committee operated were salaried at a £ 130 per annum in 1852, and they also received £ 1 for every conviction²². The original wage of the General Inspectors had been set at £ 50 per annum in 1777 but some were earning a yearly salary of over two hundred pounds by the mid-nineteenth century. Between 1847 and 1867, the General Inspectors' salaries therefore approached that of Bradford's Chief Constable (£ 235), and left Bradford's detectives far behind on £ 65 a year²³. This level of remuneration left only senior police officers earning more than the 'Assistant Inspectors' who were hired on an ad-hoc basis to assist with the searching of houses and arrest of suspects, but who were not given an annual salary.
- 12 It is clear that throughout the period the Worsted Committee attracted men who were able to perform detective duties in the field, as well as being able to act as prosecutors on behalf of victims in court. Until 1853 the Worsted Inspectorate was indisputably the main force for combating illegal appropriation within the worsted industry; they achieved hundreds of prosecutions in the decade up to 1853²⁴. This period had seen the Inspectorate successfully adapt their operational methods to control appropriation in the factory, and, aside from relying on the police to arrest offenders, they remained the supreme external agency for the control of appropriation. As Figure 1 shows, there were generally between 150 and 200 convictions in the 1840s and early 1850s (the trade slump of the late 1840s reduced the number of employees, and therefore the number of convictions).

Figure 1: Convictions for prosecutions initiated by the Worsted Committee 1844-76

- 13 From 1852 onwards there was a steady decline in the number of convictions, as Figure 1 demonstrates. In 1853, the number of General Inspectors had been reduced from eight to three, with a consequent fall in the number of prosecutions the Committee advanced through the courts²⁵. The Committee was forced to cut back on its activities, not because the need for their services had disappeared, but due to the financial crisis caused by the withdrawal of the soap subsidy. The consequences of taking away the government subsidy appeared to have been viewed as nothing less than catastrophic, and prompted the Committee to wonder if they could continue their work. Some Inspectors in this period left to join the higher echelons of the borough/county police forces since it offered a more secure pensioned occupation, but a few policemen journeyed in the opposite direction to join the Inspectorate²⁶.
- 14 The Committee's decision to continue primarily turned on the fact that they considered "the new improved system of Police insufficient for enforcing the Worsted Acts" and eventually they decided that rationalization and cost-cutting could ensure the Committee's survival if at a more circumspect level²⁷. Indeed, once the Committee's funds had dwindled after the 1853 crisis, the fall in the number of prosecutions that had resulted from the Committee's reduced operations, paralleled the financial health of the organization (see Figure 1).²⁸

Professional policing in Bradford and the West Riding

- 15 Whilst the Worsted Inspectorate had been created in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, it was to be another half-century before a full-time professional police emerged in the West Riding. The Municipal Corporations Act 1835 enabled incorporated boroughs to create Borough police forces, and unincorporated boroughs to apply for corporation by charter²⁹. During the next decade or so, over sixty boroughs gradually took advantage of this chance to be incorporated, including Bradford in 1847³⁰. Within a year of a Borough Charter being granted on 24 April 1847, the town council created Bradford Borough Police on 1 January 1848, with an initial strength of sixty-four officers. The West Riding of

Yorkshire remained without a county police force until 1856, when it was forced to introduce a constabulary as a result of the passing of the County and Borough Police Act³¹.

- 16 In the 1840s the relationship on the ground between Worsted Inspectors (who, despite having the power of entry and search within the homes of suspects, did not have any arresting powers) and the attested officers of the newly created police (who had the power of arrest but little working knowledge of worsted production processes) seem in the main to have been cordial and co-operative ; in just under half the cases a Worsted Inspector and a police officer worked in tandem to apprehend an offender³². There also seems to have been considerable crossover with regard as to who took the lead in investigated cases of misappropriation and theft until at least the mid-century ; several cases are reported in both the *Bradford Observer* and the *Leeds Mercury* in which the investigation was instigated by the police and then passed onto a Worsted Inspector. For example, a Leeds police officer thought that two men were storing stolen worsted in their house. After informing a Worsted Inspector of his suspicions, the Inspector obtained a search warrant and, accompanied by the constable they visited the house. Finding it locked the constable kept watch whilst the Worsted Inspector effected entry through the back of the house. The worsted was secured, and the offenders were prosecuted by the Worsted Inspector³³.
- 17 There are numerous other reports of the police and the Inspectors working closely together in order to investigate workplace misappropriation³⁴. But, if anything, the move to factory production encouraged the police to pass even more workplace appropriation cases over to the Worsted Inspectors, as these private areas were seen as being outside the remit of a police primarily created to maintain public order. For example, the 1838 and 1842 guidelines issued to the Leeds Borough Police only spoke of patrolling streets, thoroughfares and houses³⁵. The factory was not suggested as an area which needed supervision. In fact, several police forces, including the Metropolitan Police of London, ordered their officers not to obstruct people from going to work, nor were workpeople to be arbitrarily searched, so that relations between police and the working-classes could improve³⁶.
- 18 Of course, it remained the duty of a constable to arrest anyone he saw committing – or suspected of having committed – a crime. However, appropriation of workplace materials mostly occurred within the workplace, and whilst inside the factory an offender was very unlikely to be caught red-handed by a passing bobby. Indeed, the constable was unlikely to have been allowed by factory owners to freely patrol inside the perimeter fence. A number of Chief Constable's reports for example make it clear that the police felt no responsibility for stopping the numerous thefts taking place in the warehouses and manufactories since they had no right of access to such private locations. Bradford's Chief Constable, Frederick W Grauhan, blamed the robberies on the inattention of factory supervisory staff, and suggested that the responsibility for catching the perpetrators lay with private security forces and not his men³⁷. It is true that the security of material left outside as part of the production process, such as drying cloth on tenter racks was a police responsibility, but tenting was increasingly being carried out inside the factory³⁸.
- 19 Therefore, although the arrest of appropriators was legally the responsibility of the police officer, in practice, constables were unlikely to be involved in the detection of 'theft' within the factory, and were only called upon to exercise the power of arrest at the instigation of the foreman or the Worsted Inspector. The Bradford policeman, then, had the authority, but perhaps lacked the time, resources and inclination to intervene within

the factory walls. They saw their duties only beginning at the factory gate and out into public space, and their concern was the regulation of public space not private space³⁹.

- 20 In reality, the Worsted Inspectors were more capable of pursuing workers for these offences than were the police. In addition to lacking expertise and legal knowledge in this area, the police were seen as intruders into workers' lives⁴⁰. All in all, however, Worsted Inspectors appeared to go about their work with only occasional hindrance or opposition, let alone fear of attack. Compare this to the often open hostility shown to policemen in the textile producing districts of Colne or Bradford, where there were well over a thousand cases of assaults on policemen recorded between 1869 and 1879⁴¹. Policemen, of course, had to deal with aggressive drunks and disorderly vagrants, but even so there seems to be a vast difference in the number of assaults on the officers of these two enforcement agencies. So real was the threat of violence that, until 1856, the police did not dare venture into some industrial parts of Leeds, yet Worsted Inspectors patrolled these areas apparently without fear. Indeed, there were only a few recorded cases of assaults against any Inspector or their families, and these tended to be fairly minor. It may reasonably be assumed that they were disliked, even hated, and certainly feared, but they were not seen as alien to the working class districts in the same way as police constables were⁴².
- 21 The reduction of the numbers of Inspectors in 1853, and the withdrawal of Inspectors from various areas, had left something of a vacuum. Able to step into the space were the borough, and from 1856 county, police forces. However, they were only willing to partially fill the void. Bradford's police force grew by 60 percent between 1848 and 1858, and by 31 percent between 1859 and 1870⁴³. Over that period, the proportion of police to population altered from 1 police officer to every 872 individuals in 1859 to 1 in every 658 in 1870, with the annual cost rising from £ 6,661 to £ 10,654. By the late 1850s Bradford Borough Police were confident enough in their field of operations to launch an offensive against "every species of ruffianism", dog-fighters, prize fights, street games, prostitution, and pawnbrokers⁴⁴. The pursuit of workplace appropriators would not have been out of keeping with this moral crusade. The arrest and formal charging of suspected appropriators had always been the responsibility of the police, but henceforth the police had the staff to test their investigative skills on factory appropriation. Three plain-clothes detective officers were employed in 1843, a progressive development which was a rare and early experiment in detective policing, with an Inspector appointed to head up a Detective Department in 1846⁴⁵. This they effectively failed to do, however.
- 22 If the Worsted Inspectors had left the field, the police forces were disinclined to pick up their swords. So were the officers of the West Riding county force, formed in 1856 following the County and Borough Police Act, which made the introduction of police forces compulsory in every borough or county throughout England and Wales⁴⁶. Neither borough nor county policemen involved themselves with workplace appropriators whilst they remained within the factory, unless they were called in by the foreman or Worsted Inspector to exercise their power of arrest. The police simply lacked the expertise and inclination to usurp the Worsted Inspectorate's specialist policing functions. There still seemed to be a place for the Worsted Committee and their Inspectors.

Effect of the Worsted Inspectorate on the development of borough and county policing in the West Riding

- 23 To what extent did the existence of the Worsted Committee affect the introduction of such formal public police services in the West Riding of Yorkshire? As is well-known, the relationship between industrialization, urbanization, and the development of formal policing agencies in the nineteenth century, is usually represented as a causal one⁴⁷. The theory that the threat to public order posed by the increasing numbers of workers crowding into the manufacturing districts, together with the rise of industrial and political ‘militancy’, ‘provoked’ the middle and upper-classes to call for uniformed and disciplined bodies of men to act as locally controlled police services, is now well-established. However, this theory relies on the assertion that the police forces in the northern manufacturing districts were supported politically – and financially through local taxation – by the industrial élite, and that the police in turn provided services for the manufacturers. These duties included the protection of the mill-owner and his property in the street, in his house, and in his factory, but also the protection of his commercial interests when threatened. Thus for example the legal and operational requirement to preserve the public peace necessitated police governance of strikers’ actions in times of labour disputes⁴⁸. It has been suggested that, for this reason, the working classes resisted the introduction of the police, whilst the urban and industrial elites welcomed them with open arms⁴⁹.
- 24 These assertions can however be challenged, notably on the question of policing industrial disputes. The first problem is that of ‘class sympathy’. Most members of the borough forces previously held agricultural or industrial labouring occupations⁵⁰. The sympathies of a police force drawn from the same social background and living in the same communities as those people on strike may have undermined the loyalty they held to the law⁵¹. Conversely, policemen drawn from a higher social class may have “exacerbated rather than mollified class violence”⁵². It appears that the use of policemen drawn either from within or outside the local community may have handicapped the control of striking workers. This, however, was not the opinion of those northern mill-owners who testified to the Constabulary Force Commissioners in 1836⁵³. This is not surprising; the Commission was after all designed by Chadwick to find evidence that a national police force would be beneficial to many sectors of society. With this in mind, they concluded that for “the want of an efficient preventative force, the peace and manufacturing prosperity of the country are exposed to considerable danger”⁵⁴. No manufacturers from the West Riding contributed to the Commission, however.
- 25 Was this because the mill-owners in that region already had control over a preventative force which acted directly to protect mill-owners’ property? The borough force were charged with controlling labour disputes when they reached the streets, but the truly effective work of dissuading employees from leaving their employment had already been achieved by the Worsted Inspectorate. Naturally, manufacturers were loathe to contribute financially for policing services they did not need, or for a duplication of services⁵⁵. Witness their reluctance to financially support the Worsted Committee between 1853 and 1870 when many manufacturers believed that their internal supervisory structures were sufficient to cope with the appropriation ‘problem’. It must

also be remembered that prominent manufacturers were in a dominant position to affect the development of the borough forces. A quarter of the Watch Committee which oversaw the introduction of Bradford's Borough Police were Worsted Committee members, and two-thirds were manufacturers eligible to subscribe to their services⁵⁶.

- 26 Rather than acting as a positive model for the new police, the Worsted Committee and their Inspectorate impeded the development of both the Bradford borough force and the West Riding county force. The latter was opposed by manufacturers and the West Riding urban elites before its compulsory adoption in 1856, long after the permissive 1839 and 1840 County Police Acts⁵⁷. Criticism of county forces was evident in both rural and industrial areas, and the existence of the Worsted Committee was a contributory factor⁵⁸. The Worsted Inspectors were an efficient and competent force, as one police historian admitted⁵⁹. However, their example had not led to agitation for borough forces, and certainly not for a county force, but rather acted as a constant reminder that privatized police agencies were efficient, cheaper and easier to control than official police agencies. Manufacturers in areas patrolled by Worsted Inspectors saw the police as a necessary and quite expensive agency merely to be tolerated (the local newspapers commented on the costs of policing constantly, and much criticism, see *Bradford Observer* 23 June 1869 for example). No doubt, even in areas where private police agencies existed, manufacturers desired a strong police presence when industrial strife spilled over onto the public streets, and, like many people, they wanted the police to pacify the public streets and keep them clear of crime⁶⁰. However in the districts patrolled by the Worsted Inspectors, there was clearly a noticeably ambivalent attitude towards the police forces. For example, at a meeting of Halifax ratepayers, Inspector Seed, the Halifax Worsted Inspector, together with prominent businessmen, formed a Committee to express local discontent with the Halifax borough force. They declared that "all policemen are evil; but they were a necessary evil"⁶¹. This can hardly be taken as a ringing endorsement. Clearly, police historians should at least recognize the differences in attitude towards the police in those industrial areas which had established private police forces, and those that had not. Some have commented on this relationship, of course. Denys makes a persuasive argument that across Europe policing forms were varied, and that the move to professionalization was partial and uneven. Police agencies in Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands, 'competed' or at least worked alongside public uniformed officers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries⁶². There is clearly not an argument for English exceptionalism. The situation is complex. Indeed one could argue that there was more in common between manufacturing towns in France and England, than between towns in Yorkshire and cities such as London or Birmingham.⁶³ There were also key differences in the experiences of different English towns as well. For example, the towns and cities that had experienced private policing were similar in some ways, and vastly different in other ways, to other towns and cities that had only seen public policing agencies at work.

Bradford and Salford: a tale of two cities

- 27 In order to investigate the extent to which the Worsted Inspectorate affected both the development and policing practices in the West Riding, this article compares the two similarly sized towns – later cities – of Bradford and Salford, the latter being in the cotton-working heartland of Lancashire⁶⁴. Both towns were incorporated as boroughs in the 1840s, with Salford preceding Bradford by three years (1844 and 1847 respectively),

and both experienced similar rapid population growth from the mid-nineteenth century (see Figure 2).

Fig 2: Population of Bradford and Salford, 1857-1892

- 28 However, the development of the respective boroughs' forces proved to be very different, most probably as a result of Bradford also possessing a Worsted Inspectorate, whilst Salford as a cotton-working centre did not possess a similar private police force. Although the populations of the towns as shown in Figure 2 were very similar, with growth patterns being closely paralleled, Figure 3 shows that from the 1870s, when the Worsted Inspectorate experienced something of a resurgence, the annual cost of Bradford Police to the ratepayers was considerably less than that of that borne by the ratepayers of Salford.
- 29 The main reason for this discrepancy appears to lay in the ratio of police officers per head of population in the respective towns. Figure 4 illustrates that from 1870 onward, the number of police officers in relation to the population of Bradford remained noticeably less than that of Salford – averaging 1 police officer for every 794 inhabitants of Bradford compared to an average of 1 police officer for every 693 inhabitants of Salford. This is a considerable discrepancy, suggesting that the presence of the Worsted Inspectorate significantly reduced the workload of the Bradford Borough Police. It must be remembered that, as stated above, many member of the Worsted Committee were also Watch Committee members, responsible for public policing.

Figure 3: Annual cost (£) of Police in Bradford and Salford, 1857-1892

Figure 4: Number of police officers per capita, Bradford and Salford, 1857-1892

- 30 This possibility is reinforced by Figure 5, which shows the number of summary offences prosecuted by the police in both Bradford and Salford between 1857 and 1892. It is clear that following the re-emergence of the Worsted Inspectorate in the early 1870s, Bradford police consistently prosecuted significantly fewer summary offences than their counterparts in Salford – an average of 3,478 offenders per year in Bradford compared to an average of 4,692 offenders per year in Salford.
- 31 There is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the Lancashire town were any more or less law-abiding than their Yorkshire counterparts, or that the Bradford police were otherwise less active, suggesting that the discrepancy may once again owe much to the presence of the Worsted Inspectorate, who remained an active private prosecution agency throughout the period.

Figure 5: Number of recorded summary offences, Bradford and Salford, 1857-1892

Conclusion

- 32 The employers' most faithful servants – the Worsted Committee and its Inspectorate – survived both the 1853 crisis and subsequent downturns, to continue their work until their final dénouement in the second half of the twentieth century. In the length of their service they were an atypical prosecution service. Whilst many of the private police forces described earlier continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, they were increasingly seen as anachronistic in an ever-more centralizing system of policing that was seen as more integral to communities as a whole, rather than representing vested interests. The constabulary (founded in 1285) at York Minster and other cathedrals such as Salisbury were attested (had the power of arrest) until they lost this power during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whilst others such as the Admiralty Police were subsequently absorbed into larger organizations. Many other private prosecution agencies morphed into private security forces, responsible for the day-to-day smooth running of, for example, the Oxbridge colleges, but ultimately dependent on the local police authority to deal with more serious crimes that occurred on their premises.
- 33 The Worsted Committee, by contrast, lasted for nearly two hundred years as a viable concern, continuing to act in the interests of their employers until well after World War Two. Unusual too was the range of their duties, pursuing the suspect from the point of crime through the prosecution of offenders until the final judgement of guilt or innocence was delivered in court. Even in its depressed period between 1853 and 1870, the Committee made an impact, prosecuting over 800 cases. It has been demonstrated that they also had a significant effect of the development of public policing in West Yorkshire, especially with regard to the Bradford Borough Police. It must therefore be concluded that this employers' police, empowered by law to coerce and intimidate the workforce, may have been the most dynamic private policing agency seen in England in the last three centuries and which at first impeded, then accommodated, and lastly partnered, the introduction and operation of public policing in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The complexity of the data means that definitive judgements cannot be made

with complete confidence, but it appears that the interactions between private and public police forces can provide a new perspective on the 'natural' development of professional publicly funded police services in the nineteenth century.

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NOTES

1. Paley (1989) ; Zedner (2006) ; Munsche (1981) ; King (2000) ; Cox (2012) ; Godfrey and Cox (2013) ; Williams 2008.
2. See for example Reiner (2000) ; Johnston (1992) ; South (1987).
3. Godfrey and Cox (2013).
4. McGowen (1999, 2005).
5. See Cox, (2012, p. 86-7) for details of a Lloyds of London investigation.
6. For example, the status of the various docks police forces (with the exception of the Admiralty Constabulary) was consolidated under the Harbour, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847, which enabled two JPs to ‘appoint such Persons as shall be nominated for that Purpose by the Undertakers to be special Constables within the Limits of the Harbour, Dock, Pier, and Premises of the Undertakers, and within One Mile of the same ; and every Person so appointed shall be sworn in by any such Justices duly to execute the Office of a Constable within the Limits aforesaid, and when so sworn in shall have the same Powers, Protections, and Privileges within the Limits aforesaid, and shall be subject to the same Liabilities, as Constables have or are subject to by the Laws of the Realm’.
7. See Soderlund (1992, p. 631). The West Riding was not unique in such development – see for example references to the activities of the Silk Inspectors who operated in Macclesfield, Cheshire, between 1819 and the 1860s in Barrett (1995).
8. Worsted is a particular type of high quality long staple wool, used in the manufacture of tailored goods.
9. *Bradford Observer*, 29 April 1852.
10. Godfrey and Cox (2013, p. 13) ; Godfrey (1999).
11. Soderlund (1992, p. 335).

12. The records of the Worsted Committee are held in the West Yorkshire Archives Office in Bradford. The record sets comprise Minute Books (56D88/1-), and lists of members (56D88/4/3). The Reports of Inspectors (29D/93/1-4), which we analyzed quantitatively (frequency and cross-tabulations using SPSS v.20), contain details of who was prosecuted, for which offence, and with what result. Together they contain details of a huge number of prosecutions from 1777 to 1952.

13. See Soderlund (1992).

14. The percentage claimed from drawback was applicable to all manufacturers in the counties covered by the Worsted Acts. For example, the Manchester Excise Office sent a cheque for £ 67-0-8 in 1847 which represented the payments of the few worsted establishments in Lancashire, thereafter there are entries for cheques from unnamed excise offices outside of Yorkshire ranging from £ 26 to £ 103 for the period 1849-53. See the relevant entries in the *Worsted Committee Account Books 1835-85*, West Yorkshire Archives : Bradford 56D88/1.

15. Three other sources of revenue existed: the share dividends from the Committee's investments in the Leeds to Liverpool Canal Company; money raised from the sale of seized goods which were believed to have been appropriated, but were unclaimed by the owner (although this never amounted to a significant sum); and the proportion of any fine imposed by the courts on convicted appropriators (up to £ 10 per conviction) which was given over to the Committee by the guilty. See Heaton (1965, p. 437) for a discussion of the investments in the canal company. He suggests that these investments were ill-advised. They did, however, provide an income of £ 70 p.a. between 1840 and 1856, and £ 134 p.a. between 1857 and 1862, before falling back to £ 48 p.a. after that date, and this money tided the Committee over some very straitened times. With regard to unclaimed material, the 1777 Worsted Acts stated that any material found by the court to be embezzled must be returned to its rightful owners. If, however, the material remained unclaimed, or if the cloth had no identifiable markings, the material could subsequently be sold publicly for the benefit of the Committee.

16. For a full account of the history of the Worsted Committee and its Inspectorate, see Godfrey and Cox (2013).

17. In January 1888, an Inspector placed a (plain-clothes) agent inside the works in order to find the man who had been stealing patterns from the mill. After identifying the man, the Inspector placed an advert in the *Bradford Observer* stating that he was a new manufacturer looking for patterns. The unsuspecting suspect sent the patterns along with a request for a job, and was convicted.

18. This was vital since the Committee had difficulty in persuading manufacturers to pay over their drawback remission when profits were falling.

19. These districts covered both the main areas of production, and the main living areas of industrial workers, often in outlying parishes. As the century progressed, the district shrank to only include the factory districts.

20. *West Riding QS 1840-80*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Wakefield WYP1.

21. *West Riding QS 1840-80*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Wakefield WYP1.

22. Entry for 5 April 1852, *Worsted Committee Minute Books*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford 56D88/1.

23. *Worsted Committee Account Books*, 1847-76, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford 56D88/3/3; *Borough Watch Committee records*, Bradford, 1847-1865, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford BBC1/2-5.

24. *Worsted Committee Conviction Registers*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford 29D93/2-5.

25. Heaton (1965, p. 43).

26. A former Manchester constable joined the Inspectorate in 1876.

27. 26 September 1853, *Worsted Committee Minute Books*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford 56D88/1.

28. The Committee's bank balance continued to grow after 1853 because of the effective cutting of costs. For example, the dismissal of all but two Inspectors saved hundreds of pounds in wage bills. They also rationalized their assets by selling some shares, and collecting debts owed to them from manufacturers who had not fully paid over their drawback fees by 1853.
29. Incorporation by charter was seen as an important advantage for the populace of a town ; it conferred rights and responsibilities including the election of a Borough Council by ratepayers, and the appointment of a salaried Treasurer and Town Clerk.
30. Bradford achieved city status in 1897.
31. As Stallion and Wall have commented, "before the County and Borough Police Act 1856 made the introduction of police forces compulsory in every borough and county, provincial police reforms were piecemeal, numerous and unfocused". Stallion and Wall, (1999, p. 4).
32. *West Riding QS 1840-80*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Wakefield WYP1.
33. *Leeds Mercury*, 10 October 1857.
34. See for examples *Bradford Observer*, 9 February 1854 and 15 June 1854.
35. *Instructions for Day and Night Police, 1838-42*, West Yorkshire Archive Service : Leeds WYP/LE/A113/424.
36. Police Orders, 4 March, 1840, Metropolitan Police Orders – General regulations and Orders for the Government and Guidance of the Metropolitan Police Force A136/158.
37. Grauhan was Chief Constable from 1859 to 1874. See, for example, the *Bradford Chief Constable's Reports* of 1863, 1869, and 1873 West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford BBC/1/2.
38. *Huddersfield Borough Police Force Occurrence Books, 1873-5* West Yorkshire Archives Wakefield A90/136.
39. 1873 *Huddersfield Police Occurrence Book* West Yorkshire Archives : Wakefield A90/136 ; 4 October, 1864, *John Crossley and Co. Directors Minute Books 1864-66*, West Yorkshire Archives Calderdale MIC : 21/1.
40. Storch (1976 and 1981).
41. *Bradford Chief Constable's Reports*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford BCC1/2.
42. See Godfrey and Cox (2013, p. 126-8) for details of some attacks on Worsteds Inspectors and the response from the Committee.
43. *Bradford Watch Committee Minute Books, 1848-58*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford 56D88/1 ; *Chief Constables Reports, 1859-70*, West Yorkshire Archives Service : Bradford BBC1/2-5.
44. For example, Bradford Police first patrolled visiting fairs and circuses in 1852, and started to attend cricket matches in 1853, see Borough Watch Committee Minute Book, 1852-56 *West Yorkshire Archives Bradford* BBC1/5/2. Policemen were also encouraged in this period to replace Factory Inspectors, which would have brought them physically into the workplace. See Johnston (1992, p. 5).
45. This was within a year of the creation of the Metropolitan Police's Detective Department – although of course the Bow Street 'Runners' had been operating as professional plain-clothes detectives since the mid-eighteenth century. See Cox (2012).
46. Emsley (1983 and 1996).
47. See for example Silver (1967).
48. Living in the towns and cities as they did, "the new manufacturing and merchant urban bourgeoisie lacked certain protection against crime which the rural gentry enjoyed. They did not have the ecological safeguards of large estates and lack of proximity to the 'dangerous classes'" according to Brogden (1981, pp. 49-50). It was therefore necessary, Storch asserted, to create a force which would protect the factories, and also the homes of factory owners, to turn the police into a weapon of the employers. Storch (1981, p. 93).
49. Storch (1976 and 1981).
50. Emsley (1996, p. 180).
51. See for example Reiner (1985, p. 22) ; Foster (1974, pp. 56-61) ; Storch (1976, p. 89, p. 92-3).

52. Silver (1967, p. 10).
53. Emsley (1983) ; Storch (1981, pp. 92-3).
54. *1836 Constabulary Commission Report*.
55. Hay (1975, p. 59). The Bradford Watch Committee were always seeking to reduce the costs of policing the borough, and many entries record their resistance to increases in policemen's wages. They went so far as to regularly commission surveys of other comparative forces to ensure that they paid the very lowest rates of pay. See *Borough Watch Committee Minute Book*, 1862, West Yorkshire Archives : Bradford 56D88/1/5. Again in 1871 the survey revealed that the Chief Constable of Bradford received the lowest salary of all Chief Constables controlling forces of over a hundred men.
56. *Borough Watch Committee records*, 1847, West Yorkshire Archives : Bradford BBC/1/2.
57. All counties and boroughs were required to establish police forces under the 1856 County and Borough Police Act.
58. Emsley (1983, p. 76). Jones believes that the stationing of the military in Bradford's Belle Vue Barracks, who could deal with industrial disorder, also hindered the adoption of domestic police agencies in the industrial West Riding (Jones 1983, p. 157).
59. Smith (1974) believes that the Inspectors helped the burghers of Bradford to decide to establish a professional force of policemen, but offers no evidence for his theory.
60. Witness the fears of Sir Charles Napier in Manchester ; Napier (1857, p. 146).
61. *Bradford Observer*, 22 July 1876.
62. Catherine Denys (2010).
63. What may distinguish the Worsted Committee and their Inspectors from private agencies in Belgium, Spain, Italy and France is that they were professional in a way that the other forces were not, as these had a large voluntary element. The Inspectors were professional non-uniformed police under the bureaucratic command of an organized and capable committee.
64. Salford did not achieve city status until 1926. Figures abstracted from published annual Judicial Statistics. These annual statistics were first compiled in 1857, meaning that no comparisons are available for the period between 1847 (date of the founding of Bradford Borough Police) and 1856. The methods of calculating the statistics utilised in the annual Judicial Statistics changed markedly in 1893, rendering post-1892 comparisons extremely difficult and largely meaningless.

ABSTRACTS

This article discusses the activities of a private policing agency – the Worsted Committee and their Inspectorate – and the development of public policing in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the industrial north of England. It asks: how did a private agency, which was designed to regulate private space, and a public body (Bradford Borough Police), which was supposed to protect public order in public spaces, find a working partnership in the mid- to late-nineteenth century? How successful was this unofficial arrangement? What were the consequences that flowed from this notional partnership for the development of policing in the West Riding, and for the control of labour in the workplace and in the streets? The article suggests that, whilst many private police forces continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, they were increasingly seen as anachronistic in an ever-more centralized system of policing that was seen as more

integral to communities as a whole, rather than representing vested interests. The Worsted Committee, by contrast, lasted for nearly two hundred years as a viable concern, continuing to act in the interests of their employers until well after World War Two. The article concludes that this private agency had a significant effect of the development of public policing in West Yorkshire, especially with regard to the Bradford Borough Police. It must therefore be concluded that this employers' police, empowered by law to coerce and intimidate the workforce, may have been the most dynamic private policing agency seen in England in the last three centuries and which at first impeded, then accommodated, and lastly partnered, the introduction and operation of public policing in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Cet article examine les activités d'une agence de police privée - le Worsted Committee et son service d'inspection - ainsi que le développement de la police publique (Bradford Borough Police, police du district de Bradford) dans le West Riding du Yorkshire, dans le nord industriel de l'Angleterre. Il s'interroge sur la manière dont une coopération professionnelle a pu s'établir du milieu à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, entre une agence privée, conçue pour contrôler un espace privé et une institution publique censée protéger l'ordre dans l'espace public. Quelle fut l'efficacité de cette coopération officieuse? Quelles furent les conséquences de ce partenariat pour le développement de la police dans cette région et pour le contrôle des ouvriers dans l'atelier et dans la rue? L'article suggère qu'en dépit de la persistance de nombreuses polices privées jusqu'à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, celles-ci étaient toujours davantage perçues comme anachroniques par rapport à un système policier de plus en plus centralisé qui apparaissait comme englobant la collectivité dans son ensemble, plutôt que le représentant d'intérêts particuliers. Par contraste, le Worsted Committee perdura pendant près de deux siècles comme un dispositif viable, continuant d'opérer dans l'intérêt de ses employeurs jusque bien après la deuxième guerre mondiale. L'article conclut que cette agence privée eut une influence significative sur la police publique dans l'ouest du Yorkshire, en particulier en ce qui concerne la Bradford Borough Police. Il faut donc en conclure que cette police des employeurs, légalement investie d'un pouvoir de coercition et d'intimidation à l'égard de la main-d'oeuvre, fut peut-être l'agence de police privée la plus dynamique qu'ait connue l'Angleterre depuis trois siècles. Dans un premier temps, elle entrava l'introduction et le fonctionnement de la police publique dans le West Riding du Yorkshire, avant de s'en accommoder puis d'en faire sa partenaire.

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