The democratisation of policing in England and Wales through elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)

Adam Edwards & Sophie Chambers

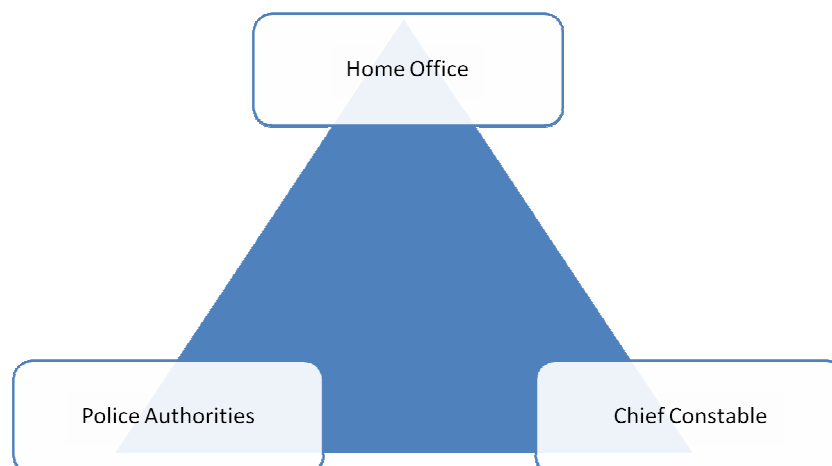Cardiff University

Centre for Crime, Law and Justice

Overview

- Policy background: shifts in police governance

- The Impact of PCCs on Police Governance:
  - Constitutional-legal
  - Financial
  - Organisational
  - Informational
  - Political

- Questioning the impact of PCCs: local case studies

- Prospects for democratisation and the role of PCCs

Policy Background

- Pre-PCCs
  - Police Act 1964:
    - Tripartite Police Governance
  - Crime and Disorder Act 1998:
    - Statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships/Community Safety Partnerships
      - Neighbourhood Management
- Post-PCCs
  - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011:
    - Quadripartite Police Governance
    - Impact of Devolution: Welsh Government and Police Governance
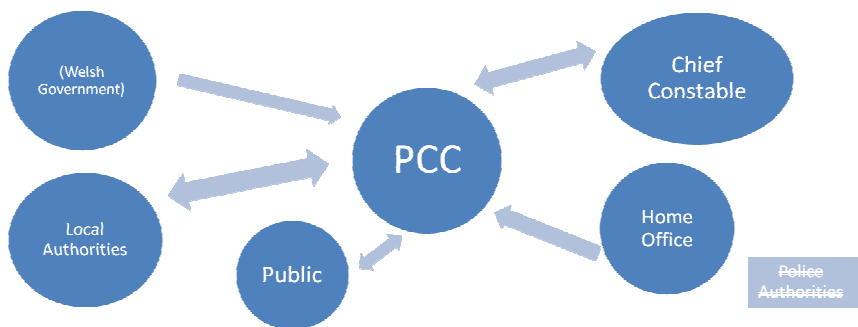
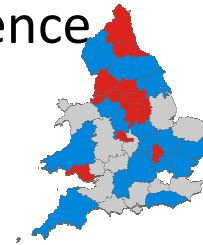# Tripartite Structure of Police Governance (Police Act 1964)

Home Office

Police Authorities

Chief Constable

Quadripartite Structure of Police Governance (Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011)

PCC

Home Secretary

Police & Crime Panels

Chief Constable

Impact of Devolution: Welsh Government and Police Governance

(Welsh Government)

Chief Constable

PCC

Local Authorities

Public

Home Office

Police Authorities

The Impact of PCCs: Tendencies of Power-Dependence

- **Constitutional-legal:**
  - Do PCCs challenge constabulary independence?
  - Do they generate competing mandates for policing?
- **Financial:**
  - Are PCCs a means of better allocating diminishing resources for policing?
- **Organisational:**
  - Are PCCs devolving decision-making to localities?
  - Are they contributing to the regionalisation of policing?
- **Informational:**
  - Do PCCs facilitate or undermine 'evidence-based' policing?
- **Political:**
  - Is the legitimacy of PCCs threatened by low voter turnout?
  - Do PCCs enable a more participative and deliberative democratisation

Tendencies	Local Case Studies		
	Bristol	**Cardiff**	**London**
Constitutional-legal	• PCC has power to set 'local' policing priorities for force • Independent PCC mandate vs. elected councillors of Police and Crime Panel • Recruitment of new Chief Constable and increased scrutiny during scandal	• PCC has power to set 'local' policing priorities for force • Resonance with PCC and Welsh Government and local authorities • 'Critical friendship' between PCC and Chief Constable – 'line between operational and strategic policing is permeable';	• Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) has mandate to set policing priorities for all 32 Borough (municipal) authorities in London ('20:20:20 Agenda'); • Tension over MOPAC setting of strategic priorities and constabulary independence over operational matters.
Financial	• PCC allocates community safety funds, subject to increased scrutiny • Mayoral influence on funding for PCSOs • Merging aspects of policing to save money	• PCC allocates community safety funds – continuation of pre-PCC • Welsh Government funding additional PCSOs • Funding for projects aligned with national priorities	• MOPAC allocate funds according to city-wide target of 20% reduction in 7 'high-volume neighbourhood crimes' between 2012 – 16; • 20% reduction in funding for policing to be absorbed by 'back office' cuts.
Organisational	PCC Police & Crime Plan: • Regionalisation through force-wide priorities / localisation through 9 local district plans	PCC Police & Crime Reduction plan: • Regionalisation through force-wide priorities • Resonance with Welsh Government priorities	MOPAC Police & Crime Plan: •Regionalisation of agenda setting •Tension with 32 London Boroughs over support for Borough-specific problems (e.g. Southwark)
Informational	Prioritises information/opinion from general public over evidence-based research for setting agenda	Facilitates evidence-based analysis of 'crime problems' and solutions: • Consultation with 'experts' • PCC background in government responses to crime and disorder	Progress on 20:20:20 agenda monitored by MOPAC Challenge meetings using city-wide not Borough-level data .
Political	• PCC elected on 19% turnout; • PCC consultation with general public to set agenda and build support – weekly days in community, bi-monthly public forums, 1179 responses to 2013 survey, live web chats	• PCC elected on 15% turnout • PCC consultation with experts and government to pool political legitimacy for agenda • Cynical consultation with general public – 240 responses to 2013 survey on priorities	• Mayor elected on 38% turnout in 2012; • Deliberative consultation about Police & Crime Plan with expert contributors to the 20:20:20 Challenge Meetings + 'Town Hall meetings' in all 32 Boroughs + survey of 4,222 residents + invitation of on-line responses in 1stQtr of 2013.

Prospects

Scenarios

- The punitive case
- The risk-averse case
- The restorative case
- The socially just case
- The deliberative case

- The contradictory case

Regimes

- Maintenance
- Developmental
- Progressive/reformist
- Transformative/social justice

- Regime failure