Policing, Policy and Practice:
Responding to Disorder in North Belfast

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ABSTRACT: Rioting and street disorder have been a recurrent problem in Northern Ireland over the course of the peace process. This article reviews a range of the responses that have been developed to try to address the disorder and to better understand the process of the creation and development of policy. The article starts from interpretation of policy as a process of social relations involving the interaction of different sectors of society and it discusses how government and community actors have responded in different ways to the violence, but over the course of time have come to a broadly shared understanding of the most appropriate means of managing the conflict.

KEYWORDS: community activity, policing, Northern Ireland, policy, interface violence

1. Policy and Practice

Rioting and public disorder have been a recurrent factor of life in Northern Ireland over recent years. Since the declarations of ceasefire by the main paramilitary organisations in 1994 disorder has accompanied many contentious parades during the summer ‘marching season’, while the parades and ongoing political tensions have regularly sparked violence at numerous interfaces, the boundaries between Protestant and Catholic residential areas, particularly in Belfast. The violence has led to a diversity of responses by the government, the police and community-based organisations in attempting to reduce conflict and limit outbreaks of disorder. This article briefly reviews some of the different responses, and in particular it explores the intersection between the responses made by the government and those made by community-based organisations. The aim is to consider how policy and practice are adapted and developed in response to persistent problems of public disorder and in particular to explore the intersection between high-level policy development and low-level policing and conflict intervention work.

Anthropology has long had an ambivalent and uneasy relationship with policy work. Many people who have trained as anthropologists work to apply their understandings in practical situations, but there remains a distance between the attitudes and approaches of those in academia and those working outside. In part this is related to concerns about the compromises that will inevitably be made with regard to issues of methodology, presentation and interpretation (Donnan and McFarlane 1997a, 1997b). But, in part it is because the policy arena is a different world, with different demands and expectations. Policy work requires a level of engagement and positioning which is not always comfortable to take up or easy to maintain, and it does not readily allow enough time and space for reflection and adequately nuanced presentations. But anthropology is not alone,
either as an academic discipline or as a medium of practice, in maintaining an uneasy relationship with the development of policy and governance. For many people working in a variety of areas as academics, for NGOs and as activists, the concept of policy and the process of developing and implementing policy are still often viewed with suspicion. Policy is frequently associated with the process of control and regulation of people. Policy, in its reified form, is regarded as something that is imposed from above, something that is ‘done to’ people rather than ‘done with’ people. It is frequently seen as something remote, distant and abstract, rather than being constructed through dialogue or debate with the erstwhile subjects of policy (Shore and Wright 1997: 3–8). David Graeber, for example, in an otherwise stimulating advocacy of autonomous sociopolitical activity, expresses something of the hostility with which ‘policy’ is viewed, when he claims that ‘policy is by definition something concocted by some form of elite, which presumes it knows better than others how their affairs are to be conducted’ (Graeber 2004: 9). This is a very narrow view, and one that too readily ignores the potential for those outside of the policy web to influence its development or to impact on its implementation.

In contrast Cris Shore and Susan Wright have argued that policy needs to be understood as a social process, and is therefore both a factor in, and a product of, social relationships (1997: 14–18). Policy is not simply something ‘done to’ people, but is also a part of a wider, contested political space and a means through which relationships of power are contested and articulated. As such, policy is something that is constructed both in and through the social, cultural and political landscape and it is the product of an incremental process, something that is built up over time, rather than something that is necessarily presented, fully formed, from on high. This perspective demands a less differential view of government and governance and assumes that the construction of policy can also be initiated from below, rather than simply be imposed from above. It thus assumes that the development of policy can, although not necessarily will, be a product of exchange, dialogue and debate, in which ideas can be incorporated from different sites and spaces. Policy is thus more fruitfully considered from a Foucauldian understanding of multiple sites of power rather than from a perspective of a ‘panoptic’ controlling gaze.

This more diffused understanding of policy and the process of its construction in turn demands a broader and more encompassing understanding of the very concept. As Shore and Wright acknowledge, ‘on closer examination (...) policy fragments’ (1997: 5) and the commonly held assumption that policy exists primarily in terms of text, rhetoric, language and document begins to give way. Instead if one is to understand policy as one element of ‘social relations in action’ (Caplan 1995: 1), then it must include not only both ideas and practices, but also the process of shifting ideas into practice and the translation of practice into formal models. Policy thus becomes a more open and dynamic element of society. Ironically, this view of the development and construction of policy is much closer to Graeber’s view of radical, anarchist action as ‘any collective action which rejects, and therefore confronts some form of power or domination and in doing so reconstitutes social relations’ (Graeber 2004: 45), than his dismissive view of policy might otherwise suggest.

Understanding policy as an element of cultural practice means that it is very much an appropriate field for anthropological inquiry. And although, as noted above, anthropologists may have concerns about the compromises they might have to make when carrying out policy research, such work does, in some circumstances, offer opportunities to be able to work on a subject area over an extended period of time, and thus develop a deeper and richer understanding of cultural processes and practices. This article draws on ten years’ work on low-level conflict in Northern Ireland. This work has
been neither continuous nor full-time, but living in Belfast over a decade of political transition has provided an opportunity for following and engaging with an issue over a sustained period and from a variety of perspectives, which more traditional approaches to research generally do not allow. This article thus briefly reviews the process of the development of policy in relation to the management of disorder in Northern Ireland between 1995 and 2005. It considers the contrasting responses by the government and by local, community-based organisations, offers a brief comparison with wider responses to disorder in the United Kingdom, and then discusses how the approach developed at the grass roots has come to be accepted and incorporated into government policy more generally in relation to policing issues in Northern Ireland.

2. The Local Context

North Belfast is a highly fragmented part of the city. It is a mosaic of intersecting, working-class, Catholic and Protestant areas, with a long history of intercommunal tensions and violence. One in six of all incidents during the Troubles occurred in the area and it has been described as ‘the site of some of the most sustained and intensive sectarian killing’ (Fay et al. 1999: 147). One result of the sustained violence is that the area contains twenty of the forty-one interface barriers or ‘peacelines’ that have been built to provide some degree of security and protection to those living nearby (Jarman 2005). The first barriers were erected in the early years of the conflict but twenty of them have been newly built, heightened or lengthened over the duration of the peace process.

Although the declaration of ceasefires in 1994 signalled the ending of the militarised conflict with the state, they did not mark an end to intercommunal tensions and violence. Rather, they initiated a new phase in the hostilities, with the focus shifting to contestation over local territorial boundaries and access to public space. From early 1995 the Orange culture of parading (Jarman 1997a) was challenged by sections of the Catholic community in numerous locations across Northern Ireland. But the following year the disputes stepped up several gears. In June 1996 protests against the Orange Order’s ‘Tour of the North’ parade through north Belfast led to rioting in many interface areas. Two weeks later the police stopped the Orange Order from parading along the predominately Catholic Garvaghy Road in Portadown, County Armagh, on their return from a church service at Drumcree. This led to rioting by Protestants in towns and villages across Northern Ireland. After four nights of disorder the police decided to allow the Orangemen to walk the Garvaghy Road, and this in turn led to three days of rioting by Catholics. Although the rioting occurred across Northern Ireland, north Belfast was particularly badly affected. Violence continued in many areas throughout the week, numerous properties and vehicles were destroyed and more than one hundred households were forced to abandon their homes due to intimidation and violence. The violence eventually petered out, but tensions remained high and incidents occurred regularly throughout the summer and into the autumn. The police officially recorded ninety riots in north Belfast during 1996.

The disorder largely stopped through the winter months, but tensions rose again with the first parades of the 1997 marching season. The cyclical nature of the highly ritualised Orange marches (Bryan 2000) helped to reignite the tensions between the main ethnonational communities each summer, polarising attitudes, hardening positions and focusing attention on local territorial boundaries. The violence itself often takes on a ritualised character, occurring on cue at well known locations, frequently stimulated by little more than minor insults, rumours or well founded fears of attack that often prompt people to get their ‘retaliation’ in first. In the highly fragmented interface areas of north Belfast, the rioting has also taken on a ‘recreational’ quality for young people, and has become a
means of passing the time during the long summer nights (Jarman and O’Halloran 2001). Thus the pattern of violence has been sustained and perpetuated. Between January 1997 and April 2002 the police officially recorded 285 riots in the main interface areas of north Belfast, while from January 2000 to December 2001, they additionally recorded 692 ‘disturbances’. Over the same period they recorded over 3,000 cases of criminal damage and over 1,000 assaults (Jarman 2004). North Belfast may no longer have been a site of ‘sustained and intensive sectarian killing’ (Fay et al. 1999: 147) but it remained an area of sustained and intensive sectarian hostility, tension and violence.

3. Responding Through Policy

The government did not react immediately to the disputes over parades; instead it exhorted the various parties to engage in dialogue and encouraged them to reach some form of ‘local accommodation’. By this it meant that the opposing sides should attempt to find a mutually acceptable compromise. However, this proved to be difficult in practice, and when it looked as if the disorder that followed the Drumcree parade might reoccur in relation to an Apprentice Boys’ parade in Derry in August 1996, Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State, banned the parade and announced an inquiry into the regulation of parades. The report by the Independent Review of Parades and Marches was published six months later (North 1997). It recommended a thorough revision of the legislation governing parades and the creation of an independent body to rule on disputes over parades in place of the police, who in future would be reduced to simply imposing the determinations of the new body. The government broadly accepted the recommendations in the North Report. They set up the Parades Commission in the spring of 1997 and the following year the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 came into force to replace elements of the 1987 Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order (Bryan and Jarman 1997; Jarman 1999). This was a relatively swift intervention by the government, and the process of initiating a review of policy and then establishing a new framework for addressing a disruptive political problem was in many ways a classic example of a top-down response. The new policy was generally well received by those opposed to the parades, but was opposed by the Protestant parading bodies. The police were initially cautious of the changes, but they soon recognised the benefits of merely having to implement decisions made by another organisation. The changes to the regulation of parades did not have an immediate effect, but over the next few years the Parades Commission had a significant impact in imposing decisions on contested parades and thereby helped to reduce the scale of disorder that had come to be associated with the marching season (Jarman 2003).

A similar rapid response was made by the government when violence erupted in Bradford, Burnley, Oldham and other locations across the north of England in the spring and summer of 2001. Independent panels were established to review the local contexts in Burnley and Oldham (Clarke 2001; Ritchie 2001), while the report of an existing inquiry in Bradford (Ouseley 2001) was also used to inform government policy. The government in turn commissioned an independent review of the various findings, and the subsequent report (Cantle 2001) made a number of recommendations on a diverse range of issues including policing, housing, education and employment. This in turn led to the development of a broad, new strategic policy designed to address a perceived lack of ‘community cohesion’ (Home Office 2001). This new policy was placed under the direction of a special unit within the Home Office, and all local authorities were expected to develop a local community-cohesion strategy. The entire process, from violence, though inquiries, reports and policy formulation, took less than a year. One might therefore have expected that the per-
sistent and recurrent street violence in north Belfast would also prompt a significant response by the government and a broad review of relevant policy. But this was not the case. There were few initiatives specifically designed to stop the violence. Instead, managing the disorder was regarded as a matter for the local police commander, although the Northern Ireland Office always appeared willing to agree to police requests to build a new interface barrier or strengthen an existing one.

The contrast in the scale and speed of the response to the parades disputes in Northern Ireland and the disorder in northern England and the lack of a response to the persistent violence in north Belfast was remarkable. Two main factors seem to have restrained the formal response to the rioting in north Belfast: the overall scale of the disorder and the underlying attitudes about the inevitability of some forms of violence. Although the rioting in north Belfast recurred at many interfaces over many years, it was still relatively localised compared to the scale of disorder associated with the parades. The rioting related to Drumcree in July 1996 had encouraged the media to talk of Northern Ireland being 'on the brink of an abyss' (Please Note—there is no single reference for this but rather the metaphor of the abyss has been used frequently and recurrently over a period of years) and had many predicting the collapse of the peace process. Although the violence in north Belfast was one element of this crisis, once the government had developed a strategy to deal with parades there appeared to be little interest in dealing with ongoing localised disorder. The violence was acknowledged as a problem, but one that should be dealt with at a local level. It is worth noting therefore that although the government initiated a new, overarching legal framework for dealing with parades, their underlying policy remained: they still encouraged local groups to try to reach agreement through dialogue and they only favoured any formal intervention if such attempts failed. Furthermore, they have retained their faith in this approach, even though it has only worked in one location, in relation to parades in Derry city centre, over the ten years of disputes. Thus the approach taken to encourage local conflict management of interface violence could be considered as falling within the overall framework for dealing with conflict over parades.

The reaction to the violence in the north of England was similar to the response to parades and for the same reason, the scale of the disorder. In this case the government felt a need to respond quickly because of a perceived threat that violence between minority communities and white racists or between minority communities and the police would spread to other parts of the country. If the violence had involved rioting in one town or city, the likely response would have been to leave it to local bodies to manage, as was the case with the rioting in the Lozells area of Birmingham in October 2005. It thus appears that public violence needs to reach a somewhat ill defined critical mass in order to trigger a significant response in policy or practice. Major shifts in policy and/or practice occurred, for example, after the riots at Notting Hill carnival in 1976, when the quality of protective equipment for the police was reviewed; in Brixton and elsewhere in 1981, when the Scarman Inquiry focused on relations between the police and the black community; and after riots in 1985, when the 1986 Public Order Act was introduced (King and Brearley 1996). In contrast more localised outbreaks of disorder through the early 1990s, largely involving white youths in sink estates, generated no policy response and were instead regarded as simply a matter for the police (Campbell 1993; Power and Tunstall 1997). The key factor appears to be whether the disorder is perceived to have potentially wider social implications: if the violence will spread or recur; if it has implications for interethnic relations more generally or for police–minority community relations; or if it threatens to undermine forms of social authority. But there is also a suggestion that some
forms of violence are simply left to be managed by the police because little can be done in the short term to resolve the problem, and the violence is regarded merely as criminal, anti-social or simply endemic.

There has long been a view within the British state that the conflict between Protestants and Catholics was endemic and endlessly recurring, and that the violence could only be managed, rather than being brought to an end. This perspective underpinned both Winston Churchill’s famous quote from 1922 about the ‘dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone’ (Churchill 2003: 85) and Reginald Maudling’s comment in 1971 about the need to reduce the conflict to ‘acceptable levels of violence’ (Time 27 December 1971). There is a sense in which the culture of violence in Northern Ireland, by which I refer to the beliefs, practices, commemorations, celebrations, songs, stories, myths, histories, structures of segregation and other elements of contemporary culture and society that serve to legitimise, justify and perpetuate the use of force and violence, is such a deeply embedded phenomenon that it can only ever be managed. However, while the focus inevitably falls upon the supposed perpetrators of the violence, the social acceptance of violence extends more widely across society. This thus helps to explain the levels of force that have been used by the police and the limited response by the courts to those convicted of disorder (Jarman 2004: 428; Jarman 2006). The underlying culture of violence extends not only to an acceptance of violence as an element of political activity, but also to a greater tolerance of violence as an inevitable and continuing cultural presence.

The lack of a government response to recurrent rioting following the first outbursts of violence related to Drumcree in 1996 was thus due in part to it being regarded as a localised issue and in part because some forms of violence are taken to be an endemic problem in Northern Ireland. The violence was thus seen as a problem to be dealt with by local actors, which from the government’s perspective usually means the police. However, the structure and nature of policing in Northern Ireland was, at this time, under review as part of the peace process. Besides the well documented hostility to the Royal Ulster Constabulary by members of the Catholic nationalist community, there was also a wider recognition of the need to move away from the long-established highly militarised style of policing to a more community-orientated and partnership approach to police work. There had already been moves towards developing such an approach from within the Royal Ulster Constabulary, but this became a central theme of the Patten Report on police reform (Patten 1999). In general approaches to community policing have tended to be focused on putting more officers on the ground and increasing levels of accountability to local communities and this has been a prominent theme within the police-reform programme in Northern Ireland. However, the processes of police reform and the emphasis on local approaches to conflict intervention and management also provided a space that encouraged the development of new forms of community-based interventions in north Belfast.

4. Responding Through Practice

When the violence erupted in north Belfast in July 1996 many community-based groups responded by sending people onto the streets to try to reduce the tensions, to prevent further outbreaks and to liaise with statutory bodies in assisting people forced from their homes. When the disorder was eventually brought under control, many people were angry, both at the scale of the violence and the difficulties that were experienced in responding effectively to the crisis. This resulted in initiatives that were designed to elicit an understanding of why the violence exploded in the way it did, why the response by official bodies was inadequate, and how the communities could respond more
effectively in the case of similar violence the following year.

In the autumn of 1996 one of the main community-based organisations in the area, the Community Development Centre, organised what they called ‘a community inquiry’ into the riots of the summer. The inquiry took evidence from communities across north Belfast and gave people an opportunity to tell their experiences and their versions of the events of the summer. The final inquiry report did not contain any recommendations, but rather it told the story of the disorder through a series of localised case studies, each of which was narrated by different voices and from a variety of perspectives (Jarman 1997b). While the report was undoubtedly partial and incomplete, it nevertheless allowed different interpretations to emerge from those recounted through the media and gave people the opportunity to read how their neighbours from the other community viewed the events. This in turn provided an impetus for activists to consider how they could respond more effectively to any future trouble. In particular the report emphasised the importance of sustaining communication between communities to counter rumours from circulating and escalating tensions, while it also highlighted the need to maintain contacts with statutory organisations and improve the quality of the responses by such bodies to serious outbreaks of public disorder.

Partly in response to the findings of the inquiry and partly in response to lobbying from community groups, an interagency working group, which included representatives of the public bodies responsible for housing, social security, health and policing, as well as community workers, was set up to review the emergency-response procedures. Although the report had focused on the limitations of the responses in north Belfast, the working group was given a city-wide remit. The working group established new and less formal arrangements to deal with any disorder, publicised a series of 24-hour emergency phone contacts and made extra funding available for summer diversionary activities for children. Whilst this initiative was initially seen as a response to a specific crisis, the interagency group continued to meet each year to review its policies and practices and has thus became a basic element of wider contingency planning to counter any future disorder.

The third initiative was to formalise the loose networks of community activists that had emerged in 1996 into a more structured network, and to provide members with mobile telephones (in 1997 still an expensive and exotic item) to enable them to maintain contact with each other through the summer. The activists agreed to stay on the streets through the night at times of tension and to monitor the various flashpoints, while the phones enabled them to clarify what was happening in other areas, to dispel rumours and to contact people on the other side of the interfaces in order to synchronise efforts to disperse crowds and reduce tensions. Despite serious concerns from funders about the potential for abuse of the phones, the network worked extremely well and although there were a number of outbreaks of violence in the summer of 1997, there were less than had been feared, and in most cases the disorder was brought under control reasonably quickly (Hamilton 2001).

The members of the mobile phone networks were effectively acting as a form of community-based police in trying to manage the tensions at the interfaces. But they were resistant to seeing their work as ‘policing’, preferring instead to describe it as conflict resolution and peace-building work. This was both because the notion of policing was still contested, and because their work went beyond simple conflict management to include a variety of relationship-building activities. Although the activists retained a critical distance from the police, and many remained deeply suspicious and hostile towards the Royal Ulster Constabulary, their work at times forced them to engage with the police on the ground. Similarly many police officers were suspicious of the activities of ex-paramilitary prisoners in
taking on any form of public ‘policing’ role (Jarman 2002) and for many such work was little more than vigilantism (Jarman in press a). However, some senior police officers soon recognised the value of the work that the community activists were doing and the activists in turn realised that in some situations the police were willing to listen to them. Before long the police began to allow (and even encourage) the community workers to make the first attempt at intervening to reduce emergent disorder. As some degree of trust grew, the police also took informal advice from community workers about when they should intervene and when they should withdraw. Working relationships thus began to be built through practical interactivity. Since the initial experiments in 1997 the creation of a network of community activists, linked to each other and to key statutory agencies by mobile phones, has become a basic element in managing interface areas across Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland (Jarman 2002). And, although relations between the police and local communities are often not very warm, the police have increasingly come to call upon the local community workers to help manage any potential disorder. Furthermore some police officers have suggested, in private at least, that such organised community structures could have a more formal role in ‘policing’ their communities in the future.

5. From Practice to Policy

The practice work on the ground had some success in reducing the scale of the violence in north Belfast. No riots were recorded by the police in 2000, although a significant number of ‘disturbances’ were documented. However, the following year there was serious and sustained disorder associated with the dispute over access of Catholic pupils to Holy Cross Primary School (Cadwallader 2004). Eventually, after several weeks of recurrent rioting, the government set up an independent inquiry to look into the overall problems of the area. The North Belfast Community Action Project, chaired by the Reverend John Dunlop, reported in May 2002. The report noted not only the persistence of public violence, but also the underlying problems of sectarianism, segregation, marginalisation and deprivation, and recommended that the government take a number of steps to address the problems including establishing a special unit to focus resources and strategic planning for the area (Dunlop 2002). The North Belfast Community Action Unit was set up in August 2002 with extra funding available for resourcing local communities. Although the Dunlop Report had identified a number of structural problems and concerns about social and economic issues and inadequate services among local residents, the primary focus of the Action Unit and of government policy has been on resourcing local community structures and building ‘community capacity’ to respond to tensions and conflict. A significant element of government policy has been to try to build the peace from the bottom up rather than simply impose it from the top down. This more formalised policy approach has effectively been built upon the experience of the informal ‘working out’ of practice on the ground in managing intercommunal conflicts. This in turn was a significant change from a few years earlier when the government regarded interface violence as a problem that should be dealt with primarily by the police. Over a relatively short period of time the government has recognised the potential of the wider community sector in a range of peacebuilding activities as well as the potential for informal, community-based policing work to help to maintain public order. Furthermore, although this brief review has necessarily focused on the process in north Belfast, the government have also encouraged other grassroots initiatives that have been set up to respond to problems of violence and disorder. These include the training of marshals to help control crowds at parades and the development of community-based restorative-justice projects as
a response to youth-led antisocial behaviour (Jarman in press a; Jarman in press b). There has thus been a wider shift in official thinking on the issue of community involvement in policing.

There are, however, obviously limitations and reservations about such an approach and a number of brief points are worth mentioning. While the community sector should have a role in peacebuilding work, such activities need to go hand in hand with initiatives to redress structural imbalances and deficiencies. To date the government has focused on building capacity within the community sector rather than seriously addressing the issues of segregation, unemployment, poverty and marginalisation that have helped to sustain the hostilities and conflict. Also, while communities may have a role in maintaining order and responding to conflict and violence, it will be a significant step to move beyond such intervention activities to more sustained forms of ‘policing’ work, and one that many communities have found difficult to make (Marx and Archer 1976). This has already raised issues about forms of accountability, due process and respect for human rights, which have not yet been fully addressed by current, informal practices. These practices have also so far been developed in a very localised manner and have yet to be systematically extended to similar problems and areas in Belfast, let alone more widely across Northern Ireland; it therefore remains to be seen whether these approaches are transferable models rather than interesting experiments. Finally, the work in north Belfast has evolved and developed during a period of political transition, and at a time when local, devolved political structures have barely been working. It has thus been a practice of necessity between high-level government and grass-roots activists, but which has bypassed the largely dormant intermediary political structures. The question posed in each of these cases is therefore whether it is possible for these new practices and relationships to be translated into sustainable policies that can become the basis for longer-term expressions of engaged communities and active citizens.

I argued at the beginning of this article that policy was a necessarily erratic process involving the consolidation and refinement of different forms of practice in the context of ongoing social relationships. This article has tried to explore some of these processes as they have been played out in the management of recurrent bouts of public disorder in north Belfast as part of the transition from paramilitarised conflict to a more peaceful and inclusive society. Over a period of nine years a number of community-based initiatives have been set up to try to shift official practice and thinking about the management of local conflict and the policing of public disorder. This article shows how this has played out in practice, on the ground and in the responses by government. Although this process is still underway and the final outcome still undecided, I would argue that the development of policy, experienced and viewed from within, is a much less structured and controlled practice than Graeber’s (2004) curt dismissal would suggest. Rather the review of the development of policy and practice in Northern Ireland supports Shore and Wright’s assertion of policy as an example of ‘social relations in action’ (Shore and Wright 1997: 14) and therefore as a site and space for constructive engagement and intervention. This includes interventions from the perspective of academia. And, despite Donnan and McFarlane’s (1997b) concerns about the compromises that anthropologists will necessarily have to make if they choose to engage in policy work, such interventions can be useful and necessary contributions to academic understanding and the practical development of social policy. Furthermore, engagement with policy issues also provides another means by which anthropologists can sustain their involvement in fieldwork and their engagement with research issues and subjects. It thus can provide not only another source of funding for work, but also an opportunity to develop an anthropology of policy.
an opportunity that Shore and Wright (1997) identified a decade ago; however, it remains a challenge that is still taken up too cautiously.

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