

12

THE FUTURE OF POLICING

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

It would be historically inaccurate to suggest that policing has been a stable and settled matter that only recently has been subject to pressure to reform. Nonetheless, it remains the case that policing in the second decade of the twenty-first century has faced a 'perfect storm' in terms of the potential cumulative impact of financial restructuring, workforce modernisation, the impact of technology and the changing demands that police continue to face. A policing system which continues to bear more than a passing resemblance to the Metropolitan Police established in 1829 seems to be on the cusp of a series of changes that have the potential to fundamentally reshape this key social institution. There is a danger in suggesting that all that is solid might melt into air, and while what follows is largely focused on areas of potential reform and innovation it is highly likely that policing futures will be characterised by much continuity as well as significant change. With this caveat in mind, the chapter aims to:

- review emerging trends that might transform future internal organisation, culture and operational practices of policing
- review challenges external to policing – in relation to financial austerity and a range of social changes – that seem likely to radically alter the context against which policing is delivered
- consider the impact that the changing landscape of policing might have in terms of the role and mandate of police.

KEY TERMS

culture; evidence-based policing; financial austerity; leadership; pluralisation; police reform; police role and mandate; professionalisation; social transformation and technology

INTRODUCTION

Recent proposals for police reform suggest that the Conservative government regard the service as the last bastion of an unreformed public sector, stuck to insular practices and policies that have not been subjected to the modernisation that neo-liberalism has wrought on other public institutions. As much of the discussion in the preceding chapters of this book testifies, this narrative justification for austerity drives, workforce modernisation and pluralisation does not sit comfortably with the contemporary historical evidence. The police service has been subject to close political attention and successive waves of reform that can be traced back at least as far as the early 1990s.

Neo-liberal reforms might have been applied earlier to the health service, to local government and to education so the police service might be a 'late-adopter' but it has not been excluded from new public management, marketisation, and pressures to deliver in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

This chapter reviews some of the key themes that emerge from the preceding discussion. These are explored in the context of current trends that are likely to shape the future of police and policing in the near future. Reiner (2013: 176) noted that 'criminologists are not gifted with Mystic Meg powers of prophesying the future' and it is apposite to also admit that the discipline finds it difficult enough to reach a consensus on past events without also seeking expert insight into the future. With this in mind the discussion that follows claims no more than to be a tentative foreshadowing of patterns, problems and possibilities that seem likely to be of continuing influence as the service approaches the 200th anniversary of the 'new police'. To this end the discussion is organised around three key topics related to the internal organisation of policing: professionalisation, the potential of 'scientific policing' and technology, and pluralisation. This is followed by a review of broader trends that might influence not only the institutional character of policing but also the role of policing in society more widely. This is focused on the potential impact of economic austerity and social transformation on policing. The conclusion reconsiders the role and mandate of the police service in the light of these future prospects. All of these topics are interrelated and there is no suggestion that this is an exhaustive catalogue of future directions.

PROFESSIONALISATION

Chan (2003) argued that the promotion of professionalism has been an important logic of police reform alongside bureaucratic measures and quasi-market approaches encompassing targets and league tables. More recently, Neyroud's (2011) report into police training and leadership argued that the service needs to develop a more professional approach in order to deliver outcomes that meet public expectations and complement a new framework of democratic accountability. Neyroud (2011) argued that the police service needs to be transformed from one that acts professionally to a service that is professional. This distinction is widely made in much of the recent literature on professionalism (see Sklansky, 2011, 2013; Fleming, 2013) and is based on an understanding that a wide range of occupations might act professionally in terms of providing a high level of service and meeting customer standards but that this is somewhat less than conditions which make for a more ideal type of professionalism. In order to meet the latter, the police service would need to implement professional hallmarks associated with doctors, lawyers, architects and so on. These include requirements for high-level pre-entry qualification (perhaps a tertiary-level qualification), professional licensing and

a degree of self-regulation and autonomy, perhaps such as is offered by the Law Society or the General Medical Council. Following Neyroud's report, the College of Policing was established in 2011 to act as professional body for policing. The College delivers a range of services in terms of training, education, scientific support and dissemination of best practice in order to fulfil five outcomes:

- Understand needs in policing.
- Identify 'what works' in policing.
- Share knowledge and enable its use.
- Develop, maintain and test standards.
- Enable professional development.

Some of these functions were previously delivered by other agencies that have been subsumed within the College, and so are not distinctly new elements. An innovative aspect of the College's role is to licence and regulate training delivered to police forces by external providers, including universities. Establishing policing as a profession will require new officers to complete a Certificate of Knowledge in Policing prior to joining the service, the intention being to provide for a common framework for all officers and to improve standards and expertise. In the longer term the government intends transforming the College into a statutory body, independent of government, and with regulatory powers. These developments indicate that police professionalism will continue to be a significant element of the reform agenda reviewed more widely in this chapter. Other aspects of the professionalism debate that will impact on the police service in the coming years include workforce modernisation and efforts to enhance leadership, possibly through the introduction of direct entry of staff into senior ranks from outside of the service. Workforce modernisation is currently primarily associated with the Winsor (2011) review of police pay and terms and conditions. Winsor, who subsequently became Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, recommended fundamental changes to the structure of the workforce in an effort to allow for greater flexibility in relation to roles and remuneration. This would, the report argued, allow for greater professional specialism. Debates about the quality and effectiveness of police leadership have continued for many decades in Britain, certainly as long ago as the 1930s (Reiner, 2000). In 2010 the Home Office published proposals to allow for talented individuals to be appointed directly into leadership ranks, rather than the established policy that all officers join at the lowest rank and then 'work their way up' to senior positions (Home Office, 2010b). The traditional model, it has been argued, deters talented leaders from a career in policing. In 2013 the government launched a further consultation process and ministers have signalled a commitment to ensuring that direct entry is introduced (Home Office, 2013).

Fleming (2013) noted that, as much as the components of the professionalisation agenda might be laudable, they reiterate aspirations that have been pursued in different countries for many decades. Early in the twentieth century, for example, Augustus Vollmer, Chief of Police in Chicago – often identified as the ‘father’ of modern American policing – proposed that all police recruits be required to complete a degree programme in order to develop the professional status of the service (Polk and Armstrong, 2001). In recognising the historical antecedents of current commitments Fleming (2013) draws attention to the considerable barriers that have thwarted previous ambitions to develop police professional status. These barriers have included resistance from police labour organisations and aspects of police working culture, but are also related to fundamental issues in respect of the role and mandate of police services. Judging the impact that elements of professionalisation might have on police work is made more difficult in the absence of a clear consensus about the mandate of the police service. A crime-control model of policing might emphasise that professional investigations deliver better outcomes in terms of detection and prosecution but the broad range of service roles and symbolic functions fulfilled by police are more difficult to evaluate. The impact of enhanced police officer education – a key element of professionalism – is difficult to assess because it is not clear which criteria should be used to measure officer performance. Wimshurst and Ransley (2007: 107) noted ‘there remains widespread uncertainty in the research literature about what a university education means in terms of doing a “better” job of policing’ and that this uncertainty is rooted in the ambiguity surrounding how ‘doing a “better” job’ is defined.

Other ambiguities relate to established notions of police work that emphasise craft aspects of the role. This model emphasises that policing constitutes a diverse range of practices that are learnt through direct experience and based on understanding gleaned from colleagues that is communicated through informal as well as formal routes. Craft models of policing reflect principles that the police officer is a ‘citizen in uniform’ and that many aspects of police work do not require specialist professional knowledge but are relatively routine and prosaic. A number of studies of police work have suggested that many aspects of the job are unskilled and based upon custom and practice more than professional knowledge (Reiner, 1978; Holdaway, 1983), and policing does not tend to be ranked as a profession in classifications of occupational status. Critics of programmes to professionalise policing have often argued that they risk detaching policing from the public and of elevating expertise over responding to the demands of the community. Sklansky (2013) noted that professionalism in policing has been resisted on the basis that self-regulation and the development of an internal discourse about what constitutes appropriate responses to crime and social problems might be problematic. He characterised the tension about the ambiguity of police professionalism in the following terms: ‘if professionalism means arrogance and a lack of accountability, no one favors it; if it means thoughtful, reflective, ethical policing, no one is against it’ (Sklansky, 2013).

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING AND TECHNOLOGY

Debates about professionalisation are closely related to the potential to improve policing services through the more systematic use of scientific methods and principles. Better understanding of crime hot spots or more sophisticated knowledge of the potential for perpetrators of domestic violence to reoffend can be obtained through robust evaluation and analysis that applies scientific principles used in other sectors to the policing environment. Transforming evidence into intelligence that is useful in operation terms is possible because IT systems and software have the capacity to provide real-time analysis. The National Police Chiefs' Council (undated) acknowledge that 'digital policing' using social media as a means of communication with the public will provide new opportunities, but that the growth of online crime will pose significant challenges. Studies of crime and social media have tended to focus on the capacity of the latter to help police in responding to major incidents (such as the London Riots; see Lewis et al., 2011) or on public reaction to terrorist or significant crime issues (such as the murder of Lee Rigby; see Innes, 2015), but relatively little attention has been paid to the use of social media in more routine police practices (although Schneider's 2016 work adds useful perspective). Bullock (2016) argues that these contemporary online forms of police-public communication strategies amount to a strategic aim to 'manage impressions' of the police – in pursuit of representing police 'order' in a controlled way.

The potential contribution of science to policing has been advocated alongside the promotion of experimental criminology more broadly. Both endorse the application of scientific advances, for example relating to collection and analysis of DNA samples collected at crime scenes, and the use of evaluative methodologies to assess the effectiveness of policing techniques and innovations. In a recent paper advocating that scientific approaches ought to have a central role in policing, Weisburd and Neyroud (2011) noted that law-enforcement contrasts very poorly with sectors such as agriculture and medicine when it comes to investment in technological innovation and evaluation. In the UK, they argued, government investment in medical research amounts to £600 million per year, whereas the annual Home Office budget for crime research amounted to just £2 million. If police services are to be delivered more effectively to meet public expectations in a period of financial austerity, and the professional reputation of policing is to be enhanced, Weisburd and Neyroud (2011: 12) proposed that:

Police science must 'make the scene' and become part of the policing world. Police involvement in science must become more generally valued and rewarded. For that to happen, the policing industry must take ownership of police science. Police science is often irrelevant to the policing world today because it is not part of the policing enterprise but something external to it. To take ownership the police will have to take science seriously, and accept

that they cannot continue to justify their activities on the basis of simplistic statistics, often presented in ways that bias findings to whatever is advantageous to the police. We accept that this is not a straightforward challenge.

Weisburd and Neyroud (2011) argued that it is the political, institutional and cultural contexts of policing that make the development of a new paradigm of police science challenging. Sherman (2013) argued, perhaps more optimistically, that the 2012 establishment of the College of Policing, which has as a primary function the promotion of evidence-based policing, means that British policing is now well placed to build upon positive approaches that have developed in only a piecemeal way over recent years. He suggested that the three 'R's of traditional policing (Random patrol, Rapid response, Reactive investigations) are being replaced by a triple-T (Targeting, Testing, Tracking) model that makes use of scientific principles and practices.

It might be that the contested and ambivalent mandate of policing makes a scientific evidence-based model difficult. If the role and function of the police service cannot easily be identified, then it is difficult to imagine how it can be scientifically evaluated in overall terms. Clearly scientific innovations can contribute to the investigation of crime, enhance police communications and provide for better health and safety of officers, but not all aspects of policing can easily be subjected to scientific evaluation or the rigours of the randomised control trial. Not only are there significant methodological challenges to be overcome in the development of scientific evaluation of police interventions (Hope, 2009), but many key functions of policing are inherently subjective, open to interpretation and fundamentally contested. A classic police function – routine foot patrol – illustrates these conundrums very clearly. It might be that rigorous analysis could measure the impact of routine foot patrol in relation to crime rates, deterrence and public reassurance, three of the primary reasons often advanced for this iconic element of police work, but the performance of officers on the beat remains a matter of subjective interpretation. The value of patrol work in one respect cannot be easily assessed against the impact that it might have in another domain. If patrol work has no impact in terms of deterrence but is positively correlated to public reassurance, for example, then the overall value of patrol work remains a matter for discussion and debate.

Closely coupled to debates about the role of scientific evidence in policing are questions about the capacity of technology to transform traditional practices. Innes (2013) explored the possibility that new generations of web-based technology mean that officers might be able to process and access data more directly than in the past and that this might enable them to make better use of scientific evidence. A limitation of crime analysis has been the difficulty of translating robust evidence about crime problems and patterns into operational practice in an environment where much police work has been continued on a craft basis of custom and practice. Smart phone technology, for example, offers the potential for officers to directly access apps that could enable them to effectively utilise information in a way that can make evidence-based policing a meaningful

part of routine police activity. Innes and Roberts (2011) suggested that the increased scope to apply situational intelligence via new technology to frontline police work could form part of a fundamental transformation in police practice and organisation. More recent work by Chan and Bennett Moses (2017), however, cautions that the capacity of big data to transform police work might be limited since organisational frameworks mean that technological developments continue to be focused on enhancing existing strategies around crime investigation. Wider possibilities to transform policing through using data were recognised by staff engaged in technological work, but their conception often was not shared by those in operational roles. Chan and Bennett Moses' (2017: 315) study of big data and law-enforcement in Australia led them to comment that

[w]hile data was considered useful for past-focused activities (e.g. detection and investigation), future-oriented exercises (e.g. prevention, disruption or risk-reduction), as well as 'real time' operations (e.g. situational awareness, monitoring of events), the focus was almost always on identifying and learning about individuals rather than understanding broader trends.

PLURALISATION

As was outlined in Chapter 10, debates about the pluralisation of policing have tended to focus on the role of the private sector in relation to public police. Internationally, researchers have sought to establish trends in terms of the relative number of private security personnel to public police officers and the range of policing tasks that have passed from public to private hands. Concerns have been raised about the quality and efficiency and about the 'legitimacy deficit' that stems from a lack of democratic oversight of the private security industry. All of these debates continue to be important but the central notion of pluralisation needs to be understood as more than a binary distinction between public and private. Loader (2000) identified five key domains in which policing as a process of social regulation is delivered, as outlined in Figure 10.1. Useful though this conceptualisation of policing is, the future direction of pluralisation might mean that there is increasing co-production and diversification within sectors as well as between sectors. In terms of public policing, for example, it is clear that financial and other pressures to reform the delivery of policing will mean that a blended approach incorporating traditional police and other agencies is likely to become the norm. Some of the change instigated by the professionalism agenda and an enhanced role for science and technology will mean that private companies are likely to become more closely embroiled in the design and delivery of policing services. If policing incorporates social media and web-based technology, then those engaged in the development of software and hardware will have an enhanced role as the nature of police patrol is transformed

(Innes and Roberts, 2011). Scientific analysis to underpin evidence-based policing will mean that technical staff will contribute to the development of strategy and operational deployment, and the evidential basis might be co-produced using universities or private companies with specialist skills. Pluralisation will impact on internal culture and work-force arrangements in an environment where the police technologist and analyst are as significant as the detective or the custody sergeant.

Predicting the future scope or direction of plural policing is difficult, partly due to the clear residual significance of the public police within the cultural and symbolic dimension of civil society. For all that police services and politicians have argued that all aspects of police work could be 'contested' by the private sector, the experiences of Surrey and West Midlands police, as discussed in Chapter 10, suggests that public and political problems remain. While the government remains committed to exploring new frontiers for the private sector within criminal justice – and this has led to the privatisation of prisons and the contracting of private companies to deliver probation – these developments continue to be subject to political contingencies.

Alongside concerns about cost and efficacy of moving policing functions into the private sector are debates over the extent to which democratic oversight can be applied to bodies outside the public sector. Many of these issues have been reviewed in Chapters 4 and 10, but it is important to underline that, coupled with some of the other future trends identified in this chapter, these raise important concerns about legitimacy and public consent. Antipathy towards 'policing for profit' raises significant ethical and political debates that have operational implications given that much of the research evidence suggests that public support for police and belief in the rule of law depends on perceptions of procedural justice (Hough et al., 2010). While private security might behave professionally and with integrity – and on occasion the public police might not – they might remain beyond the democratic oversight that is embodied in established legal and political frameworks.

Although private security has faced some reversal in recent years, as Crawford (2013) noted, the private security industry continues to see policing as an area of potential growth. Their optimism might be well-founded given that financial pressures on the public sector, coupled with increasing public demand for security and the significance of private space all look likely to create increasing opportunities that will see the policing sector becoming further pluralised. The increasing centrality of cyberspace in human interaction and transaction also will mean an enhanced role for private corporations who regulate the virtual world more easily than territorially-based police services. Even when professional specialists from the public police, such as the Child Exploitation Online Protection Service, are engaged in policing the web they will operate in close collaboration with software agencies, internet service providers and other commercial groups. Furthermore, Police and Crime Commissioners play an important role in terms of procuring a range of crime-related services from local providers, including private

and third-sector providers. Their joint oversight of policing and wider community safety partners also encourages the police service to work more closely with a plurality of agencies.

For these reasons, Crawford (2013) advised that policing will continue to become increasingly pluralised in the future. He suggested that we need to focus on the broad definition of policing as social regulation that was outlined in Chapter 1:

[I]t is inappropriate and misleading to think about the future of policing solely, or even predominantly, in terms of the activities carried out by the state agency we refer to as 'the police' ... the future of policing is likely to be increasingly pluralised and multifaceted. This process of pluralisation is to be found occurring both inside the police organisation – in terms of changes to the workforce, the fracturing of the notion of the omnicompetent police constable and the essential role played by civilians, not least PCSOs and 'designated officers' – and outside the police among the diverse providers of specialist policing functions, private security and novel kinds of formalised secondary social control.

The three trends that will shape the future of policing that have been discussed above broadly relate to the internal development of police services. The final two reviewed below will certainly impact upon the interior organisation and delivery of policing but they extend more widely across a host of institutions. General patterns of social transformation and their impact on policing are discussed further below, but the discussion now turns to the impact that financial austerity might have on British policing.

FINANCIAL AUSTERITY

The trajectory of the economy, fiscal policy and government spending plans are beyond the scope of this text and very difficult to forecast, especially given wider uncertainty arising from Brexit. What seems relatively certain is that public expenditure will continue to be subject to downward pressures for the medium term as the economic shock caused by the banking crisis that developed from 2007 continues to be felt in many leading economies. The appropriate political and economic response to that crisis inevitably is a matter of debate but for the purpose of discussion it is assumed that the police service will face ongoing budget restrictions for the foreseeable future. The 2010 government spending review implemented a programme of expenditure cuts that reduced police funding by 20 per cent over the period to 2015. This period of austerity forced police to reconfigure provisions with fewer officers and support staff. This has promoted debate about the most appropriate way to organise and deliver policing functions; as has been discussed, this has driven much of the recent efforts to promote pluralism. Police leaders and politicians have tended to claim that achieving greater efficiency through

pluralisation, better procurement practices and collaboration between police services in terms of the provision of some support services means that public spending on policing can be reduced without cutting 'frontline' services. Inevitably this has led to prolonged discussion of what aspects of the diverse functions the police fulfil should be considered 'frontline' and which might be categorised as 'middle' or 'back office'. Frontline police activities have been defined as those that involve routine interaction with the public, a definition that serves to value some aspects of police work over others. In terms of the internal organisation of public policing, financial austerity looks likely to continue to shape other trends reviewed in this chapter. The professionalisation agenda and further pluralisation are responses, in part, to the impact of financial restrictions on the public sector. In some respects, though, austerity will be in tension with these other trends. A reduction of police salaries, for example, has seen the starting salary for a new recruit fall by £4,000 to £19,000 from 2013 and many forces have imposed recruitment freezes in response to funding cuts. In the 2015 public spending review the government announced that police budgets would not be further reduced and that inflationary rises would be in place until 2019.

Financial austerity clearly has an impact on society as a whole and there are two distinct ways in which the effects of wider reductions in public expenditure might impact on the police. First, public sector spending cuts will see significant reductions in funding for a host of community safety, youth, education and social services that have become increasingly integrated into policing and crime prevention over the last 15 years or so. The development of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships has been a core feature of community safety strategy since the late 1990s. A problem identified by research examining the effectiveness of these partnerships has been the tendency for them to be dominated by police services such that other agencies that might have different perspectives on priorities and approaches to local problems have been marginalised (Hughes, 2007). Funding cuts across all partner agencies might reduce their scope to engage in partnership activities, which might mean that a police-centric approach becomes further embedded. Demands on police resources look likely to increase if other agencies are forced to withdraw their services. Closure of youth service provisions might lead to increasing use of public spaces, which might increase problems of crime and antisocial behaviour. Reductions in funding for emergency and social housing are likely to exacerbate the chaotic lifestyles of prolific offenders and extend their criminal activities. While cuts to public sector provision will be implemented differently between local authorities and will not be uniform either in extent or in terms of the focus of budget restrictions, it seems highly likely that they will have a disproportionate impact upon disadvantaged communities that do not have the social or other capital to withstand a withdrawal in services. The service role of police officers in responding to the needs of vulnerable and marginalised communities – which led Bayley (1994) to describe patrol officers as 'tour guides in the museum of human frailty' – will be greatly extended in a recessionary

period as other social and welfare services are diminished. In addition, demand on the police to intervene might rise from a public more anxious about perceived threats to their safety and security.

Related to cuts in public expenditure is the possibility that the recession will have an impact on crime rates. Previous attempts to research the extent and nature of the relationship between crime trends and the economic environment have been fraught with difficulty and there is little consensus on whether there is any relationship between, for example, unemployment and property crime (see Finklea, 2010, for a recent overview of the literature). As Box's (1987) influential study noted, the evidence linking unemployment to crime is relatively weak, and different conclusions might be reached in relation to different types of offending. While there might be a weak link between unemployment and property crime, such that a rise in the former leads to a much smaller increase in the latter, it might be that a rising unemployment leads to a reduction in other types of offending that might be linked to consumption, such as violence associated with the night-time economy. A reduction in personal income that might prevent individuals socialising, and committing crime, in bars and city streets might, on the other hand, increase domestic violence if the consumption of alcohol is more likely to take place in the home. This echoes Field's (1990) analysis of long-term trends in the relationship between crime and the economy, which suggested that patterns and trends in consumption have a greater influence on offending than does unemployment. What the results of such analysis means in terms of future demands on the police service is uncertain: while it might not be the case that a period of austerity will necessarily increase crime, it might mean that the type and nature of offending will change if the pattern and extent of consumption is altered by the worsening economic climate.

As well as operating in a different environment in terms of crime, policing will be affected by heightened challenges in terms of maintaining public order. While the causes and consequences of the urban unrest of summer 2011 remain contested, if there are associations with social inequality then it seems likely that the police service will face a growing demand in terms of responding to relatively spontaneous incidents of public disorder as well as those associated with more organised political protests. The recent experiences of policing protest groups such as UK Uncut and Occupy London (and equivalent) seem likely to loom larger on the horizon in a period of financial austerity.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

It is likely that every aspect of the discussion in previous chapters illustrates the relationship between policing and social transformation. The historical development of policing over time – whichever interpretation is preferred – and changes to the

legal and institutional powers available to the police reflect developments in wider social and political history. The expansion of constabularies in the nineteenth century reflected wider trends in the development of the infrastructure of the nation state. These in turn influenced frameworks of police governance that have been remodelled and reshaped under new circumstances. More recently nineteenth-century models of policing have come under increased pressure as the sovereignty of the nation state has been transformed by globalisation and by new technological possibilities that make global communications and transactions a central component in the lives of citizens. The impact of social media on the policing of public disorder in the context of the 2011 London riots has been subject of considerable interest as participants were seen to be able to communicate and plan strategies and tactics in ways that were not possible in previous periods (*Guardian/LSE*, 2011; Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012). A few years earlier, similar technology was seen to offer democratic potential in the various uprisings that became known as the Arab Spring, during which citizens were able to communicate and campaign outside of the confines of control of repressive regimes (Skinner, 2011). In terms of police accountability, information technology has proved powerful in many cases: from the video recording of the police assault on Ian Tomlinson at the G20 protests in London (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010) to the cases where mobile phones have been used to record officers making incriminating comments to members of the public (as was discussed in Chapter 11).

Intimately related to technological developments are processes of globalisation that also unsettled the policing landscape. Modern policing systems – that is, as established in the nineteenth century – are organised territorially around individual beats, divisional command units, police service areas and the boundaries of nation states. Increasing mobility – in terms of individuals, capital, technology and security threats such as environmental degradation – mean that social regulation becomes increasingly detached from territory. The security problems posed by climate change that causes flooding and drives human migration mean that challenges police forces in one territory face originate externally, and might ultimately be global in origin. As Stenning and Shearing (2011) noted, the chief of the Australian Federal Police claimed that global warming was a major challenge to law-enforcement agencies in that country, which not only suggests a broadening of the police mandate but also that the geography of policing is being transformed.

Social transformation will also continue to impact on policing in terms of public demand for responsive services that meet heightened expectations. As Innes (2011) and Holdaway (2013) have noted, the 2010–15 coalition government's commitment to the Big Society represents something of a continuum of established ideas of Neighbourhood Policing such that active citizens be encouraged to participate in the design and delivery of the services that they receive. Innes (2011) noted that a key element of this strategy has been that police ought to 'see like citizens' such that they come to understand, and respond to, the interest and demands of the public. The introduction of local crime maps

and the establishment of Police and Crime Commissioners are intended to complement these strategies such that police become more closely enmeshed in local communities and democratic oversight is strengthened at a local level. As has been discussed at various stages in this book, these are bold ambitions and questions remain in relation to cultural barriers within policing that might be resistant to greater involvement in community policing. Additionally the means by which principles of democracy and consent that underpin Neighbourhood Policing can be extended to other agencies within plural policing networks are not clear. It also remains to be seen to what extent multiple and competing community priorities can be reconciled within a coherent operational police strategy. If aspects of current models of community policing, transparency and democratic accountability represent something of a continuation of principles of policing by consent, then it seems likely that wider social transformations in terms of political individualism and the relations of citizens to the state seem likely to create an environment in which policing is increasingly subject to public examination and increasingly tested. In a neo-liberal environment where citizens are 'consumers' of public services it seems likely that the demands placed on policing agencies will increase and become more complex.

CONCLUSION

Each of the previous issues identified as likely to shape the future direction of policing raises, implicitly or explicitly, the fundamental question that was discussed in the first chapter of this book: What is policing? Given that this concluding chapter is an exercise in future-gazing, perhaps that question can be reworked to 'What should policing be?' It was been widely noted in this discussion that the role and mandate of the police is complex and potentially very broad. While there has rarely been a straightforward answer to the question that could bear much scrutiny, it is certainly the case that the various pressures that will shape policing in the future have led to a series of efforts to reconsider the underlying mandate of the police. Millie (2013) argued that the expansion of policing from the mid-1990s until 2010 was about increasing resources and officer numbers but was also reflected in a widening brief for the service. As public police services became enmeshed in networks delivering community safety, offender management provisions and a host of social policy functions, then the mandate of the service became increasingly broad and blurred. A period of contraction, caused by austerity measures, might provide useful, Millie argued, as it provides cause to reconsider the remit of police and to develop a more focused and narrow set of responsibilities. To some extent this is what the coalition government sought to do. In a speech to the Association of Chief Police Officers in 2011, the Home Secretary announced plans to abolish the plethora of targets that had been introduced to measure performance. In their place, the Home Secretary announced

that the police would be subject to only one measure: crime reduction (May, 2011). Loader (2013) argued that this pledge was part of a fundamental government strategy that was intended to 'release the police's inner crime-fighter'. More recently, though, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) (undated, 4) vision for policing to 2025 provided a wider interpretation of the role of the police, rediscovering a broader mandate:

[The mission is] to make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice.

The difference between the Home Secretary and NPCC might seem narrow but in that gap lays a host of potential functions that could hugely expand the horizons of policing. Expectations that the public police might retreat into a relatively narrow crime-fighting role and leave other agencies to take over tasks extraneous to this core mandate might be consistent with political and popular cultural assumptions that police officers are primarily concerned with law-enforcement. As soon as the mandate is expanded, as the HMIC suggests, then the scope of police work broadens considerably. That wider definition is consistent with the historical functions of the police and is inevitable if it is accepted that prevention of crime and disorder could entail a very broad range of tasks. Conceptually this does not provide for a clear or tidy view of the public police mandate. Nonetheless, a broad definition is preferable for other reasons, not the least of which is that the continued provision of a wide public service ethos means that there is at least the opportunity to pursue policing that is legitimate, democratic and accountable.

chapter summary

- Although policing has experienced many waves of reform, current pressures to change are of a far-reaching character and might mean that key principles and organisation will be fundamentally reshaped in the years leading up to the 200th anniversary of the 'new' Metropolitan Police.
- The development of police professionalism has led to a host of changes to internal training and recruitment practices, to leadership and the conduct of police work. The professionalisation agenda focuses on creating police services that are self-regulating and operate high levels of internal regulation and develop a core body of expertise and knowledge. The College of Policing has been established to promote professional policing and it is intended that the College will become a statutory body with regulatory powers.
- Ambiguities relating to professionalisation stem from the difficulties of defining how 'best practice' in policing can be defined. There are also concerns that some elements of professionalisation might mean that the service becomes more insular and less accountable to the general public.

- Evidence-based policing and more effective use of technology form another dimension of police development. The application of scientific principles and practices offer the possibility for more effective practice in terms of officer deployment and crime investigation and prevention. More embedded technology (through smart phones and social media, for example) would provide the means to effectively integrate such evidence into routine police activity.
- Although science and technology can contribute to specific aspects of policing it might be more difficult to see how they can be extended across the broad remit. The value of community policing, for example, is difficult to quantify and measure since much of what it intends to achieve relates to subjective concepts such as 'public reassurance'.
- Pluralisation of policing has usually been examined in terms of the different sectors that contribute to broad processes of policing. It seems likely that delivery of a blended approach within sectors will become increasingly common as public police employ private contractors and volunteers and external agencies provide services to the public sector.
- Concerns about the quality of private provisions have emerged and challenges in relation to accountability and governance will be exacerbated given the transnational operation of many private police agencies. Nonetheless, it seems inconceivable that pluralisation will not continue to develop.
- Financial austerity might impact on policing in three key ways. First, in terms of the pressures wrought by reductions in public spending on police services. These will mean reductions in personnel. Second, concurrent reductions in expenditure on other agencies that also fulfil roles that reduce crime and disorder might mean that the police – the service of last resort – faces an increased workload. Third, demands on police services might also be increased if cuts in welfare spending, rising unemployment and associated social problems fuel a rise in crime or public disorder.
- Social changes in terms of globalisation, environmental change, technology and communications will combine to transform the context in which policing is delivered. They will create new challenges for governments and many agencies but these will be particularly significant for the police since they are difficult to reconcile with the territorial basis of modern policing.
- Other social transitions related to the nature of citizenship will have implications for policing. The principles of community and Neighbourhood Policing might represent early forms of Big Society activity, incorporating inclusiveness, voluntarism and grass-roots engagement in delivery of services.
- It might be difficult to extend democratic accountability to a pluralised policing environment, though, and the development of a more individualistic consumer-based society will mean that increasingly complex demands are made on police services.
- Many of these dimensions that will shape the future direction of policing raise important questions about the role and mandate of policing. Recent statements by the Home Secretary have envisioned a future in which police have crime-fighting as their core mandate. This narrow

perspective may be politically appealing and consistent with popular media and cultural representations. It does not bear much scrutiny, however, in terms of the wide range of functions police have performed historically.

- A wider perspective on the police mandate, which incorporates crime prevention and service roles, is less tidy but at least provides a framework to develop forms of policing that secure public consent and can be legitimate, democratic and accountable.

self-check questions (with answers at the back of the book)

1. Alongside what other factors did Chan (2003) suggest that professionalism had been an important component of police reform?
2. What did Vollmer suggest ought to be required of all Chicago police recruits in order to enhance professionalism?
3. How much did Weisburd and Neyroud suggest the UK government spent on medical research and on crime research?
4. What are the triple-Ts that might underpin scientific models of policing?
5. Which police services withdrew plans to consider privatising police services in the aftermath of problems relating to policing the London 2012 Olympics?
6. What role might Police and Crime Commissioners play in the development of pluralism?
7. What proportion of police funding was cut in the 2010 government spending review?
8. What did Field (1990) suggest had a stronger impact on offending – unemployment rates or patterns of consumption?
9. The chief of which service suggested that global warming would be a major challenge for police?
10. How did Loader (2013) characterise government strategy to refocus police work?

study questions

1. What might be reasons to argue that policing ought not to be understood as a profession?
2. In relation to different police functions consider whether policing can be delivered on the basis of scientific evidence.
3. What would be the consequences of the wholesale privatisation of policing?

annotated further reading

A collection of essays edited by Jennifer Brown (*The Future of Policing*, 2013) provides an excellent overview of contemporary challenges and debates, and includes perspectives from around the world.

Issues relating to the potential for scientific and evidence-based criminology are debated in a series of articles published in volume 9 of *Criminology and Criminal Justice*. In his article in that journal Sherman makes a case for evidence-based criminology, which is critiqued in articles by Hope and Tilley.

The National Police Chiefs' Council website contains useful documentation on current and future developments, including Policing Vision 2025, available at www.npcc.police.uk/.

annotated listings of links to relevant websites

The Police Executive Research Forum was established in the USA in the 1970s and provides a wide range of publications and research reports related to debates addressed throughout this book. The Forum's website is www.policeforum.org/.

The College of Policing website provides a similar range of material and is particularly useful for those interested in learning more about the professionalisation debate: www.college.police.uk. The Society for Evidence-Based Policing website also contains useful information on this strategy: www.sebp.police.uk/

There are a number of useful blogs and websites offering debate and opinion on contemporary policing. Among these are the Police Oracle site www.policeoracle.com/; the British Society of Criminology Policing Network blog <http://bscpolicingnetwork.wordpress.com/pn-blog/>; and the police chiefs' blog www.npcc.police.uk/ThePoliceChiefsBlog/.

annotated links to journal articles

A special edition of *Criminology and Criminal Justice* examined the impact of financial austerity on contemporary policing and the articles below develop many of the debates explored in this chapter:

Millie, A. (2013) 'The Policing Task and the Expansion (and Contraction) of British Policing', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 13: 143–60.

Reiner, R. (2013) 'Who Governs? Democracy, Plutocracy, Science and Prophecy in Policing', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 13: 161–80.

Hough, M. (2013) 'Procedural Justice and Professional Policing in Times of Austerity', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 13: 181–97.

The consequences of insecurity in the urban environment generates demands on policing, and the context of these trends is outlined in:

Sparks, R., Girling, E., and Loader, I. (2001) 'Fear and Everyday Urban Lives', *Urban Studies*, 38 (5–6): 885–98.