Innovative Possibilities

Global Policing Research and Practice

Edited by
Les Johnston and **Clifford Shearing**

ROUTLEDGE

Police Practice and Research

Innovative Possibilities

Innovative Possibilities: Global Policing Research and Practice brings together observations that reflect upon the state of police (and policing) across the globe and associated forms of policing scholarship, with inputs from Africa, Australia, South and Central America, China, Europe, and the USA. Following the introduction, the book begins with a review of the nature of the relationship between policing research and practice of the Victoria Police in Australia. It then moves on to Britain, where the focus is on how the National Improvement Strategy for Policing (NISP) is developing and how research is being used to design, define, monitor, and develop its strategic interventions, using a series of case studies. In the United States the complex American terrain of the police is examined – in particular this chapter examines how crime statistics are used to rationalize, justify, and account for police actions. In Latin America a comprehensive review of research on police reform during the last two decades is given. Africa provides a complex and diverse social terrain, which needs to be understood in relation to its plural policing landscape. The chapter that turns the focus eastward looks at the historical development and current status of police scholarship in China, together with the emerging issues arising there. The overarching concern of all these reflections is with bridging the deep-seated tensions that exist between scholarship and practice within policing across the globe, and the call for a new relationship of mutual respect that is committed to exploring better ways of governing security.

This book was published as a special issue of *Police Practice and Research*.

Les Johnston was formerly a Professor of Criminology at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth. He has research interests in governance; security; and the relationship between state and non-state forms of policing. He has published articles in a wide variety of journals and his books include *The Rebirth of Private Policing* (London: Routledge, 1992) and (with Clifford Shearing) *Governing Security: Explorations in Policing and Justice* (London: Routledge, 2003).

Clifford Shearing is the Chair of Criminology and Director of the Centre of Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town. His most recent books are Ayling, J., Grabosky, P. & Shearing, C. 2009, *Lengthening the Arm of the Law: Enhancing Police Resources in the 21st Century* (Cambridge) and Wood, J and Shearing, C. 2007. *Imagining Security* (Willan).

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Police Practice and Research is a series of books based on special issues of the pioneering peer-reviewed journal *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, which presents current and innovative police research as well as operational and administrative practices from around the world. It seeks to bridge the gap in knowledge that exists regarding who the police are, what they do, and how they maintain order, administer laws, and serve their communities. The journal is published in association with the International Police Executive Symposium (IPES), which brings police researchers and practitioners together to facilitate cross-cultural, international and interdisciplinary exchanges for the enrichment of the policing profession.

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Edited by Les Johnston & Clifford Shearing

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From the Editor-in-Chief[1]

Perhaps the most appropriate way to celebrate ‘what this remarkable journal has been doing since its inception’ (Johnston & Shearing – ‘From a “Dialogue of the Deaf” to a “Dialogue of Listening”: Towards a New Methodology of Policing Research and Practice’), is with this Special Anniversary Issue of *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal* (PPR) on the theme, ‘New Possibilities for Policing Research and Practice,’ edited by two giants in the field of policing research, Les Johnston and Clifford Shearing. A central focus of PPR throughout the last decade has been in building long-term partnerships between police and academics, through a new methodology of engagement between researchers and police practitioners (David Bradley & Christine Nixon – ‘Ending the “Dialogue of the Deaf”: Evidence and Policing Policies and Practices. An Australian Case Study’). Johnston and Shearing handsomely acknowledge PPR’s contribution in building the much-needed bridge between policing research and practice, stating:

> It is an honor for us, as guest editors, to bring together these thoughtful contributions as a way of celebrating this special anniversary and, of course, the vital work that its editors and Editorial Board have done over the past decade.

As it enters its second decade, PPR is proud to enjoy the continuing contribution of nearly a dozen editors, including myself, who have been serving the journal from Day One. They have made untiring and dedicated efforts to carry the mission of the journal forward in all continents of the world. What is the mission of PPR?

In this ‘Editorial’ I propose to reiterate this mission of PPR, its hopes and aspirations as well as its trials and challenges, borrowing relevant thoughts, ideas, and reflections of the world-renowned authors who have so graciously and insightfully responded to the call of Les and Clifford, the Guest Editors of this Special Anniversary Issue.

PPR has been encouraging a new approach ‘in which academics and police work in close and continuous collaborative relationships’ (Bradley & Nixon). True, the editors of PPR are fully aware – as Peter Neyroud, one of Britain’s most high-profile Chief Constables, ruminates with a sense of profound regret, that ‘science is not valued in policing … it is not seen as essential’ (‘Squaring the Circles: Research, Evidence, Policy-Making, and Police Improvement in England and Wales’). They bring home to the PPR readers in more than 45 countries in the world that ‘there remains a fundamental disconnect between science and policing, in that most police practices have not been systematically evaluated’ (Neyroud).

The PPR editors as well as readers will vouchsafe that during the first decade of its existence the writings in this journal by researchers and practitioners have reverberated with the echoes of subtle ironies, veiled sarcasm, and fascinating metaphors Peter Manning evokes in his ‘Policing as Self-Audited Practice.’ They will relate well to

Manning who, a Homer of policing, narrates his sociological epic of the 'canteen culture,' 'an otherwise tedious and boring dirty job,' as well as 'what works.' Manning observes that policing has a poetic character and like 'poetry' it 'communicates by what is omitted as well as what is said. It is a kind of metonymic metaphor.' I would like to add that poetry, as Coleridge says, also calls for 'a willing suspension of disbelief' which is needed to believe sometimes shocking '"cautionary tales" of failure and foul-ups' (Manning).

Bradley, Nixon, and Manning have discussed the state of policing research and practice in a world that is very different from the locales for the next three contributions: South America, Africa, and China. Eminent researcher David Bradley and Christine Nixon, Australia's first female Chief Commissioner of Police, describe Victoria Police as 'an organization that has decided to take full advantage of what the academic world has to offer policing.' They write of its intention to 'put greater emphasis on the role of robust theory and evidence' in formulating policy and operational practices. Neyroud's paper is located in 'Britain – a terrain where much research and thinking along the lines that Bradley and Nixon identify has taken place.' Peter Manning's paper is based on 'what might be thought of as the heartland of the linkage between policing and research – namely, the USA' (Johnston & Shearing).

Alas, as we enter into Latin America, the 'brave new world' of 'New Possibilities for Policing Research and Practice' vanishes. In 'Research on Latin American Police: Where Do We Go From Here?,' PPR's South American Research Editor, Hugo Frühling, a Harvard-educated scholar of repute (Hugo is one of the dozen editors who has been with PPR right from the day it was launched) minces no words in laying bare the truth about the state of policing research and practice in his vast continent: 'The police are still reluctant to use research produced by academics, and relations between independent researchers and the police are generally formal or distant.' Aware of the challenges in policing research and practice, PPR editors in the Spanish-speaking regions of the world, namely, Hugo Frühling (Chile), Lucia Dammert (Chile), Emilio Dellasoppa (Brazil), Elena Azaola (Mexico), and Sebastian Sal (Argentina) have been making redoubled efforts to encourage police researchers and practitioners to contribute to the journal. True, they tend to get disheartened that there are 'many countries' in South America where 'the police will not provide the access needed.' It is regretted that 'most police forces in the region are reluctant to share their data.' Hugo Frühling urges that the police become 'more open to scrutiny by researchers.'

If South America appears to be very different from Australia, Britain, and North America in regard to 'New Possibilities for Policing Research and Practice,' as well as established contributions, Africa seems to be at the other end of the spectrum. In 'Police Practice and Police Research in Africa,' the US-educated criminologist, Etannibi Alemika, expresses grave concerns that 'Police practices in most African countries are inappropriate and fall short of the norms of democratic policing and international human rights provisions.' He adds that 'research on police forces and practices in Africa has also not been influenced by the operational and organizational priorities of the practitioners,' lamenting the 'gulf between police practice and police research and between police practitioners and police researchers.'

The final contribution – 'Police Scholarship in China' – is by Kam C. Wong who has served as a PPR editor since its inception. He also served as Managing Editor for several years. While in Latin America and Africa the relationship between research and practice is tenuous, somewhat suspicious, and distant, Wong claims, 'currently there is no systematic investigation into police scholarship in China.' He even goes to say that his paper in PPR 'is a first attempt to provide one [a systematic investigation].' Wong regrets that 'police scholarship in China suffers from long neglect.' However, like the rest of his PPR colleagues, Wong, is indeed optimistic that as the 'New Possibilities for Policing Research and Practice' expand rapidly, China will be open to more such possibilities. He recommends that the best way to research into policing in China is to adopt an inside-out and bottom-up approach, by embracing local perspectives and using indigenous data.

As Guest Editors, Johnston and Shearing conclude, 'Given constraints of space we are only able to take a selective – albeit a discriminating – peek at the present range of policing scholarship and practice.' The Board of Editors would like to invite proposals for another special issue on the same theme – 'New Possibilities for Policing Research and Practice' – that these two great scholars have extremely competently, diligently, and imaginatively translated into a most impressive issue participated by a galaxy of scholars and practitioners.

PPR is affiliated with International Police Executive Symposium, IPES (www.ipes.info), which provides a forum to foster closer relationship among police researchers and practitioners globally, to facilitate cross-cultural, international, and interdisciplinary exchanges for the enrichment of the law enforcement profession, and to encourage discussion and published research on challenging and contemporary topics related to the profession. One of the most important activities of the IPES is the organization of an annual meeting under the auspices of a police or educational institution. The majority of the participants in the Annual Meetings are usually directly involved in the police profession. In addition, scholars and researchers in the field also participate.

IPES has been critical to the journal as well. Its membership and yearly meetings have been a key component of PPR. IPES has met in numerous countries such as Switzerland, Japan, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Germany, India, the USA, the Czech Republic, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Macedonia, and many others. This shows the diversity and extensive reach of the journal.

Finally, as we celebrate a decade of its growth, expansion, and progress, I am glad to share with PPR's readers, authors, reviewers, and editors that the journal is at a high point. We have increased to six issues per year having started with four issues annually, readership has never been greater, and subscribers come from 45 countries. We have instituted a new award for the best paper and the runner-up in every volume. Extremely distinguished guest editors such as Clifford Shearing, Les Johnston, Peter Grabosky, P.A.J. Waddington, John Crank, Austin Turk, Gary Cordner, David Sklansky, and Monique Marks, among many others, have placed PPR at the cutting edge of contemporary trends in policing. It is an exciting time to be part of the team that has made PPR what it is today.

The Board of Editors would like to offer heartfelt thanks to the Guest Editors including the Book Review Editor, Monique Marks, an illustrious scholar whose works have made an impressive contribution to 'New Possibilities for Policing Research and Practice.' I would like to thank also Ricky Rontsch who assisted with the editing in preparing the Special Issue.

We deeply appreciate the significant efforts and insights of the authors and the book reviewers. Last but not the least the extremely dedicated and highly competent team of editors in the UK Office of Taylor & Francis, namely, Aimee Wood, David Lamkin, Matthew Cannon, and Greig Barclay and our most cooperative Publisher, Tracy Roberts, deserve special thanks for their splendid contribution to this Special Anniversary Issue of PPR.

Notes

1. Four of PPR's outstanding editors, namely, Managing Editor John Eterno (USA), Former Managing Editor Kam Wong (China–America), Assisting Managing Editor Mintie Das (USA), and Alison Wakefield (Australia) participated in the preparation of this editorial. I thank them for their fine contribution.

Dilip K. Das
Founding Editor-in-Chief

Edited at the Office of the International Police Executive Symposium, IPES (www.ipes.info)

From a 'dialogue of the deaf' to a 'dialogue of listening': towards a new methodology of policing research and practice

Les Johnston[a] and Clifford Shearing[b]

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We celebrate this, the 10th Anniversary of *Police Research and Practice*, with a Special Issue that does what this remarkable journal has been doing since its inception. Accordingly, we bring together commentaries that reflect upon the state of police (and policing) across the globe and upon associated forms of policing scholarship.

Given constraints of space we are only able to take a selective – albeit a discriminating – peek at the present range of policing scholarship and practice. In doing so, we offer contributions from Africa, Australia, South and Central America, China, Europe, and the USA. It is an honor for us, as guest editors, to bring together these thoughtful contributions as a way of celebrating this special anniversary and, of course, the vital work that its editors and Editorial Board have done over the past decade.

We begin with an insightful review of the nature of the relationship between policing research and practice by Christine Nixon, arguably one of the most exciting and innovative contemporary police executives, and David Bradley, who has for a very long time been challenging police and scholars to engage with one another. They conclude that irrespective of whether policing scholars have adopted a critical or an intentionally supportive role of their research, their engagement with police has been very much a 'Dialogue of the Deaf.'

This situation, they argue, is not one that we should be willing to accept either as scholars or as policing practitioners – and they make clear that it is certainly not a situation that the Victoria Police has been willing to accept. They describe the Victoria Police as an organization that has decided to take full advantage of what the academic world has to offer policing; and write of its intention to 'put greater emphasis on the role of robust theory and evidence' in formulating policy and operational practices.

As a way out of the dialogue of the deaf, especially in relation to the intentionally supportive rather than critical research tradition, Bradley and Nixon argue for a new methodology of engagement between researchers and police practitioners – a methodology that is built on establishing 'long-term partnerships between police and academics.'

It is precisely such partnerships that Bradley and Nixon have been actively developing in the state of Victoria. What they have sought to accomplish is nothing short of 'full collaborative partnerships' between police and researchers 'throughout the whole process of knowledge generation, validation, diffusion, and use.'

In the 20 partnerships that the Victoria Police has established with university-based researchers the aim has not simply been the production of suitable research products, but the invention of a new methodology for scholarly/practitioner relations. What they have sought to accomplish is not simply a continuation of the existing trajectories of policing research and practice but a reconfiguration of the connection between the two: a reconfiguration that reflects the values of this journal as it enters its second decade.

In the second paper, Peter Neyroud, a renowned British Chief Constable, now Chief Executive of the recently established National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), shifts our focus from Australia to Britain – a terrain where much research and thinking along the lines that Bradley and Nixon identify has taken place. Neyroud looks at how the National Improvement Strategy for Policing (NISP) is developing and in the course of doing so explores how research is being used to design, define, monitor, and develop its strategic interventions. In order to do this, he draws upon a number of case studies to explore both evidence-based policing and the policy process around policing in England and Wales.

The paper begins by reviewing 20 years of what the author terms ‘frenetic activity’ in respect of police reform; first under the Thatcher administrations (where emphasis was placed on efficiency mechanisms, performance by objectives, and enhanced scrutiny of the service); next under the Major government (which sought to reform pay, rank structure, and accountability); and finally under New Labour (with the tightening of target-driven regimes, the introduction of the Police Standards Unit, and pressures for workforce and leadership reform). This third phase culminated in a number of organizational reforms including the establishment of both the NPIA and the Serious and Organised Crime Agency.

However, it is another reform arising during this third period – the aborted proposal to merge 43 local police forces into a smaller number (11 or 12) of regional ones – which forms the basis of Neyroud’s first case study. The failure of this proposal, he suggests, was inextricably linked to the lack of any ‘significant attempt to start with a debate about the evidence and the extent to which all three actors [Chief Constables, the Home Office, and police authorities] agreed with it.’ The absence of any mechanism to allow ‘key policy actors to explore areas of agreement and disagreement, potential solutions, and the management of the process’ contributed, first, to each of these taking entrenched positions; then to wider interest groups, concerned about central, regional, and local governance issues, being sucked into the ensuing policy vacuum. Three years later there remains profound uncertainty about what the evidence on mergers, such as it was, actually demonstrated: ‘whether it is mergers, collaborations, or the status quo.’

By contrast, Neyroud’s second case study (‘from policy with evidence to practice’) involved the creation of a national approach to neighborhood policing and was, he suggests, ‘strongly underpinned by an evidence-based approach.’ Central to this initiative was the marrying of evidence from three sources: Chicago and the COPS program; UK academic research on ‘signal crimes’; and ACPO’s (Association of Chief Police Officers) analysis of the ‘reassurance gap’ (i.e., the conjunction of falling levels of recorded crime with rising levels of public insecurity). In practice, Neighbourhood Policing evolved out of a series of pathfinder pilot projects supported by a small group of Chief Constables, which then evolved into a national program underpinned by research.

Neyroud’s third case study (‘putting evidence in the lead’) concerns the development of the NPIA itself. The NPIA was established in 2007 as an agency responsible for all the major national operational services, such as the Police National Computer and for a national portfolio of programs. As such, it constitutes the ‘single national source of good practice advice’ in respect of policing in England and Wales. In its first two years the NPIA has undertaken a comprehensive ‘mapping’ of its portfolio. This exercise revealed that much of the portfolio was short term, due to the absence of any ‘overall improvement strategy against which to measure progress, make judgments between the relative merits of different approaches, or to prioritize the efforts at evaluation.’ The principal aim of the NISP is to 'establish a framework for taking that longer view over a 10-year strategy for policing improvement.' Neyroud adds that a major task for the NPIA is to develop both its own capability to provide evidence to inform policy and the ability of the academic and professional think tanks to feed into and support this capability in the future. In other words, to support the same 'dialogue of listening' suggested by Bradley and Nixon's analysis.

In our third paper we turn from Britain to what might be thought of as the heartland of the linkage between policing and research – namely, the USA. We are taken there by a policing scholar who has truly become an institution in his own right – Peter Manning. We could have no better guide than Manning to lead us through this complex American terrain.

Manning's guided tour deals with an issue that lies at the very heart of the relationship between research and police practice, namely, the police's use of crime statistics to rationalize, justify, and account for their actions. In examining this matter, he explores how and in what ways crime data are organizational accomplishments intended to present an image of the organization, and its activities, to outsiders. Crime statistics, for Manning, constitute a carefully constructed and very limited window through which researchers (and others) are invited to scrutinize the activities of police. His paper explores the nature of this window and the distorting glass through which the spectators are encouraged to look. One result of this process is to render policing what Manning terms 'a self-audited practice.'

In order to justify this claim, Manning points to the constructed nature of the inputs that researchers and other outside observers construe as empirical data. Manning encapsulates the construction process in two statements. In the first he draws attention to what, in other contexts, might be termed 'creative accounting':

> The tricks of the trade, writing practices, as in all occupations, involve what to leave in and what to leave out when creating a written record of decision-making. These are learned practices, sanctioned within the local culture and rewarded by status honor among one's peers.

In the second, he emphasizes the selective nature of the accounting process itself:

> The question of what police do, how well, why, and when cannot be answered by what they choose to record and account for. They have no responsibility to record all that is seen, said, heard, or smelt.

An interesting feature of this paper is Manning's analysis of the way in which 'evidence' is collected, packaged, and used. This, he argues, is mediated by the occupational culture of police – a culture that is perhaps best understood by what the author refers to as a 'poetics' of evidence and analysis. This is – and has long been – the de facto world of the 'cop on the beat.' It is a poetics that certainly produces 'knowledge,' albeit a very different 'knowledge' from the evidence-based scientific knowledge that has come to be celebrated as the proper grounds upon which to shape practice.

Irrespective of the role evidence-based knowledge has come to play, Manning reminds us that craft-knowledge remains firmly embedded as a primary source of police practice. It is the contest between 'science' and 'craft' that today underpins so much of the discussion about, and tension arising from, policing research and practice. Manning reminds us as we ponder on this science–craft dichotomy that: 'Poetry communicates by what is omitted as well as what is said. It is a kind of metonymic metaphor.' Of course, many of these insights are not new, Manning himself referencing Garfinkel's long-established ethnomethodological research (1967) on the reflexive and self-referential character of members' accounts. Yet, important discoveries need to be rediscovered. In that regard, Manning's paper resonates with significant recent research, such as Steinberg's ethnography of South African police