

Global policing

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Book review by Sally Ramage

Policing has become increasingly complex in the variety and breadth of issues it must confront on behalf of the public and the relationship between visible 'front-end' of policing and the equally vital but unseen work that keeps people safe, is not well understood. British policing is the leader in global policing. British policing is run on a tripartite model: through the three-way relationship between police, police authorities and the Home Office.

There is community policing, community consultation, community feedback, community participation, and community meetings. British police can be said to deliver an efficient and effective police service in challenging financial times. However, responsibility for community safety does not fall on the police alone but also on coordinated contributions from multiple stakeholders, including local councils, community groups and the wider criminal justice system. All across the globe, police face significant reductions in funding and at a time of real pressure on public finances. Chief Police Officers' conclusions are that transformational change is required. Such transformation covers all police activities and there must be restructuring, since people represent 85% of police force cost.

Author James Sheptycki has written other books on global policing, including *Issues in Transnational Policing*.¹ Since 1995, Sheptycki had studied global policing and concerns about it. During the 1990s serious and organised crime moved to the top of the agenda for policing internationally. New information and communications technologies have now been adopted across the policing sector in most European countries and this was driven by the need to counteract serious organised crime.

It has been argued that although much sociological research has been devoted to the study of police (Bittner 1970; Black 1980; Marx 1988) many dimensions of police and policing remain understudied by sociologists and political sociologists have neglected to study police institutions. Max Weber, the sociologist, studied the functions of the modern state, including, 'the protection of personal security and public order.'² Since then, sociologists have shown interest in the state as the centre of power over a territory, but not in the bureaucratic apparatuses of legitimate force the state has at its disposal. Weber defined the state as 'that human community which within a certain territory...claims for itself a monopoly of legitimate physical coercion'.³ The formation of the International Criminal Police Commission in 1923 is historically rooted in a long series of efforts aimed at fostering police cooperation across the jurisdictions of national states. Among the antecedents of international police cooperation are various forms of international police work throughout the 19th century, particularly in Europe. Although it may be problematic to generalize, enough is known about the state of play in the member states of the European Union to suggest that these are a force to be reckoned with (den Boer 2002; den Boer and Doelle 2000). One researcher suggested that the 'pictures' of crime problems based purely (or even principally) on police intelligence are likely to be distorted in ways that have yet to be well understood. More work is necessary if policy makers are to be fully confident in the efficacy of police intelligence systems and if criminologists are to make use of their products in the manufacture of theories about crime in the contemporary context.⁴

¹ Sheptycki, James, ed. (2000) *Issues in Trans-national Policing*. London: Routledge.

² Weber 1922:516.

³ Weber 1919:506.

⁴ Deflem, Mathieu (2000) 'Bureaucratisation and Social Control: Historical Foundations of International Policing', *Law & Society Review* 34(3): 601-640.

Conclusion

In all, this new publication is a welcome addition to the few books on the subject. It contains the bare bones of several doctorate theses including issues with environmental policing and the governance of police.