Policing for the Future: The Recruit's View

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Abstract
Academic literature on future developments in policing emphasises the extent to which 'the local' is now linked to 'the global' (Casey 2010). As many crimes take on a transnational dimension and nation states have become concerned with national security in response to anxieties about terrorism and undocumented immigrants (asylum seekers) crossing national borders, there is concern that policing is moving back in the direction of a paramilitary style of service delivery. On the other hand, as developed nations, such as Australia, have come increasingly to cater to diverse citizenries, strategies such as community policing and problem oriented policing have become vital to build trust and partnership relationships between the police and the communities in which they serve.

In view of the above, it is interesting to examine the expectations of police recruits about (i) the nature of policing in 2030 and (ii) the best way to educate and train recruits to meet these needs. In this paper we examine the views of three cohorts of police recruits, who participated in surveys, interviews and focus groups in 2009 and 2010, in order to see whether their views of likely future developments in their chosen career are consistent with predictions in the academic literature.

Introduction

The academic literature on twenty-first century developments in policing can be contrasted with that of the twentieth century where the focus was on what local police do within their jurisdictions, with a classic example being Robert Reiner's *The Politics of Police* (2000). Through four editions it has been used in policing studies courses to discuss the historical development of the new police in British policing and the different perspectives on them plus his major contribution in outlining the characteristics of 'street cop' police culture. In Australia Mark Finnane's *Police and Government* (1994) has been similarly used but it adds to the conflicting class perspectives identified by Reiner a focus on colonial race relations between the colonizers/settlers and the Indigenous peoples.

In addition to the 'historical approach' there are texts that take an 'issues approach'. In the UK Leishman, Loveday and Savage (2000) produced *Core Issues in Policing* which noted that some non-core policing functions have been increasingly being taken on by 'private police', such as security guards, and links

between the growth in private policing and 'neo-liberal' and risk-based thinking' have been identified (Johnston 2000). Partnerships and crime prevention have been increasingly emphasized as ways of tapping the resources and expertise of agencies outside of traditional police agencies to solve or at least prevent crime problems (Gilling 2000; Mazerolle 2   ). Other issues which have been discussed include the type of service policing organizations provide for women and equal employment opportunities for women in policing organizations (Walklate 2000; Sutton 1992; Heidensohn 2008; Garcia 2008). Other authors focus on increasing ethnic and racial diversity and 'police racism', the challenges of policing a diverse citizenry (Bird 1992; Cherney & Chiu 2009: Shusta et al.;. 20011; Bowling et al. 2008). In Australia authors have also pointed to the disadvantaged position of Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system and the history of hostililty between them and the police (Cunneen 2001; Jeffries & Dillon 2009; Jennett 2001). The concept of 'over-policing' has been used by Cunneen, in particular, to explain the disproportionate rates of arrest and police custody for Indigenous Australians (Williams-Mozley 2010).

In contrast to historical and issues approaches to what police do, why and how they do it and what is good practice are more philosophically based approaches, such as community policing, problem-oriented policing, evidence-based policing (Weisburd and Braga 2006), intelligence-led policing (Tilley 2008), zero tolerance policing (Dixon 2005); knowledge-based policing (Williamson 2008; Reicher et al. 2007). In the wake of inquiries into police agencies, such as the Fitzgerald Inquiry and Wood Royal Commission in Australia, and the Scarman and MacPherson inquiries in the UK, there has been increased emphasis on ethics in police training (Neyroud 2008; Coleman 2008). Police culture has been the subject of much scrutiny and debate (Reiner 2000; Waddington 1999; Chan 2008; Westmarland 2008).

Prior to 9/11 there was considerable discussion of development of a human rights culture in policing (Crawshaw et al. 1998; Crawshaw & Holmström 2001) which was continued in the Commonwealth's human rights training manual for police (Commonwealth Secretariat 2006). However, in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist bombings in New York in 2001 and subsequent bombings in London (2005), Bali (2002 and 2005), Madrid (2004), police in Western liberal democracies have been urged to adopt some paramilitary approaches to their task as governments provide facilitating anti-terrorism legislation. Civil libertarians have expressed anxiety at the erosion of suspects' civil liberties and representatives of visible minorities have expressed concern at police use of racial and ethnic stereotyping (Bowling et al. 2008?).

In a new book entitled *Policing the World* John Casey states that until recent times police operated at a local level, within state or at least national borders. He says

>The police of any one country had only minor interest in criminal acts in other countries, or assisting other national law enforcement authorities in bringing offenders to justice, or collecting evidence for foreign criminal proceedings (UN 2005a)
>
>Now, however, the average police officer's operating environment encompasses much wider horizons: crime threats are increasingly global and most officers find themselves routinely dealing with international and transnational issues such as terrorism, e-crime, and human trafficking, communication technologies allow many criminal acts to be perpetrated remotely ... suspects and offenders move more freely around the globe ... (Casey 2010: x111)

He notes Broadhurst's (2002) observation that wherever their physical beat might be 'every police officer's mental patch is now the world'. So whatever the institutional history of individual police agencies in the twenty-first century, officers operate in a global environment characterized by technological innovation, population movements, states with diverse citizenries, and risk based, neo-liberal, new public sector management philosophies. Governments and the public alike expect the police to be on the look out for terrorists, to protect the law-abiding citizens from alcohol fueled violence and crimes involving weapons, to deal increasingly with the mentally ill, to treat diverse citizens with respect and to attend traffic accidents.

The study

Throughout 2009 and 2010 Bachelor of Justice Studies (Policing) students were surveyed and interviewed on a range of topics. Associate Degree in Policing Pracitce (ADPP) were surveyed and interviewed at two points in 2010. This paper is based on the information provided in 143 surveys and is a sub-sample of a much larger data base. Seventy-five students were surveyed prior to going on lfield placement and 68 post placement. The survey consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, some students did not complete open ended questions and a large number did not complete section 5 (especially among the ADPP students) which is where the questions which are the focus of this paper were located. This was more marked among those completing the survey in the post field placement phase.

The reasons for poor completion of section 5 can only be guessed, possibly people ran out of time, possibly those who had completed these questions before going on placement felt that they had nothing further to add post placement. However, that would not apply to the extremely poor response rate (about 10%) among ADPP recruits in the post placement sample as most of

these had not been surveyed prior to placement. As this question invited the recruits to imagine the situation for police in 2030 perhaps it was seen as irrelevant to those who consider themselves to be 'concrete thinkers', with some even specifying that they had chosen policing because it is a concrete job with order and hierarchy in which they could see a career path for themselves (for many this meant the expectation of promotion but for others doing the same job in different environments as they changed LACs seemed to give a sufficient sense of variety).

Today's presentation is based on the student/recruits' answers to the two last questions of the survey. One concerned the future of policing in 2030, asking students to *'Imagine the policing profession in Australia in 2030. Which major tasks/roles do you think the future police will serve in Australia, which are different from their present roles?'* The other asked '*How do you think education and training for the future policing profession should be structured?'*

The themes which emerged were as follows: a split between those who thought police would still be performing the same major tasks in 2030 as now and those who thought there would be more emphasis on new phenomena. While some emphasized that *terrorism* would continue to be an issue some thought this would lead to a more paramilitary style of policing while others thought 'a higher level of community participation in policing' would be likely to emerge. Some emphasised the need for increased community policing to deal with a diverse citizenry while others predicted that zero-tolerance would be the likely approach'. Many focused on the increasingly sophisticated technological opportunities for criminals to commit crimes and two expected police to be using some sort of hover-crafts by 2030 (B2010   R ; B2010   R   ). Below is a selection of quotations on each theme.

What follows is a discussion of the recruits' reflections about what policing will be like in 2030 and how it might differ from the present plus how they think education and training for the future should be structured. First, those who did not expect there to be much change will be considered then their responses to themes identified from the literature will be discussed.

<u>Stay the Same</u>

Some recruits were of the opinion that policing in 2030 is not likely to differ much from the present.

'I think it will be the same, that the police are there to work for the people and to uphold society's values'. (2009 B1 R14 Male 19)

'Nothing will be significantly different. Powers will come and go. But the police will stay the same'. (2010 B1 R10 Male 20)

''Much the same except to meet the needs of a more technologically experienced community.' (2010 B1 R12 Male 20)

And one with a more cynical tone (one presumes, despite the grammar)

'I believe police roles will relatively remain the same. Although laws will change and the way the police enforce them change, the role to work for the upper class and rule over the working class' [? Will remain the same] (2010 B1 R9 Male 18)

Change

Of those who expected to see either qualitative or quantitative change certain themes emerged: terrorism, technology, policing will become more specialized, policing will become more community based and there will be increasing diversity in the community, crime prevention, drugs, zero tolerance, traffic.

Terrorism

Some writers on the consequences of the focus on national security in the post 9/11 atmosphere for State's upholding human rights have argued that what is emerging is ' "less evil' ethics and 'utilitarian consequentialism' [which] is about as far from an ethics of human rights as one can travel' Wilson 2005: 19). They have formed the opinion that 'the new counter-terror strategy has had deleterious consequences, reinforcing anti-democratic political trends and making the work of human rights activists that much harder' (Wilson 2005: 23). Wilkinson (2006: 61) has argued that in the area of law enforcement and criminal justice the liberal state has adopted a 'hard-line approach' to deal with terrorism. He notes that '[t]he main burden of containing and defeating terrorism in liberal democratic states is carried by police services' (Wilkinson 2006: 77).

Some police recruits focused their predictions for the future of policing on the importance of terrorism.

'A lot of money would be spent on training counter-terrorists and there will be more SWAT and counter-terrorist organisations within the police force.' (2009 B1 R12 Male 22)

'Terrorism; possibly cross training with fire or ambulance; now very separated from each other.'(2010 G1 R9 Female 37)

'Terrorism will still be a high problem;[but] depending on how society is police roles may not change'. (2009 B1 R5 Male 21)

While one student predicted that there would be 'more community style policing' he ended his comment with the caution that 'it may even go the other way and become more paramilitaristic'. (2010 BJSP Male 20)

Technology

Casey's (2010) emphasis on the increasing globalisation of crime and hence policing strategies to combat it raises the issue of e-crime which is one of the ways that criminals breach national borders. Williams & Williams (2008) note that the tools that police use to do their job have altered substantially over the years. The innovations in emerging technologies 'take the officer from a local to global environment at the flick of a switch. They have the potential to improve communication and information sharing, crime investigation and prevention, and public and officer safety' (Williams & Williams 2008: 165).

A number of recruits nominated technology as a key area of change in policing in the future with police, criminals and the general public all being more 'technology savvy'. While some recruits expected there to be more technologically based crime, interestingly a couple suggested that perhaps there would be less crime and therefore less for police to do.

'More high tech. crime and white collar offences will become more community based'. (2009 B1 R10 Male 20)

2010 G1 R1 Female 27 'More "technical" crime i.e. computer etc. Maybe absence of crime, this less police.' (2010 G1 R1 Female 27)

'May have a higher emphasis on controlling technology related crimes (e.g. fraud, piracy) essentially however roles will stay the same.' (2010 G1 R6 Female 23)

2010 B1 R1 Male 19 'Instead of highway patrol, air patrol, flying cars. Lots more computerised.'

2010 B1 R3 Female 20 'Community focused; combating cybercrime; less use of force – no weapons.'

Diverse citizenry

Academic literature notes the increasing diversity of citizens in liberal democracies as a result of global population movements of migrants and asylum

seekers from impoverished and conflict torn countries (Coghlan et al. 2005; UNHCR 2006). Police increasingly need to be able to respond to the needs of people with diverse languages and cultures and to reflect such communities among their recruits (Casey 2010). Police should be representative of the communities in which they work (Bird 1992; Cherney & Chiu 2009).

 'Very multi-cultural; high tech crimes; dealing with very large numbers of people.' (2010 G1 R10 Male 34)

 'Hopefully by 2030 the new generation ... will be better at community policing, more members of different races to break down barriers.' (2010 G1 R11 Male 19)

In Australia, the unhappy history of police relations with Indigenous peoples lhas been a feature of some criminologists writing (Cunneen 2001; Beherendt et al. 2 : Jennett 2001; Williams-Mozley 2009) and one student was hopeful of a better situation in 2030. A few students commented in responses to other questions that as police officers they hopes to make a positive contribution in this area (
)
'I believe they'll have less crime to investigate. Aboriginals will be involved in the cjs. Police will be more mediators than enforcers.' (2010 G1 R13 Male 23)

Policing philosophies

Community policing
Community policing is both a philosophy of policing and a policing strategy through which police aim to work more closely with the communities they police and thereby to generate respect and trust on both sides. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux have outlined the principles of community policing as follows:

> Community policing is both a philosophy and an organization strategy to allow community residents and police to work together in new ways to solve problems of crime, fear of crime, physical and social disorder and neighborhood decay. (Trojanwicz & Bucqueroux as quoted in Rowe 2008: 72)

According to Skogan (2008) the way police 'do' community policing should vary substantially because communities have different problems and different resources that they can use to address these problems, so their solutions will differ. He identifies the three central strategic commitments of community policing as: citizen involvement; problem solving; and decentralization (Skogan 2008: 44). Skogan emphasizes that community policing was developed as a 'bottom up' strategy.

While many students give 'a desire to serve the community' as one of the key reasons they want to become a police officer (Jennett et al. 2009) in imagining the future a few identified community policing as a likely style of policing.

'More community based policing; more respects from the community with them working with the police.' (2009 B1 R2 Male 19)

As previously noted, one had a bet both ways: "More community style policing; police work with the community to gain similar goals; trust and respect between the police and community; it may even go the other way and become more paramilitaristic.' (2010 B1 R15 Male 20)

Zero Tolerance
Much academic writing on zero tolerance is critical of it. Dixon (2005) notes that although the success of the NYPD in reducing crime rates, and one might add Bratton's subsequent success in Los Angeles (Bratton & Malinowski 2008), has been popularly attributed to a zero tolerance strategy, it was actually built on three foundations: targeted deployment of resources to focus on risky places, times and people; managerial reform which revitalized the NYPD; Bratton sold his reforms to his officers in a way that was consistent with their motivation to be police i.e. 'winning back the streets' and 'locking up the bad guys' (Dixon 2005: 11-12).

Apart from community policing, the only other philosophy of policing which students identified as likely to be important in 2030 was zero tolerance.

'More efficient and a focus on zero tolerance'. (2010 B1 R2 Female 20)

Crime prevention and Partnerships

Community-based crime prevention involves police, frequently through their crime prevention units, in encouraging and assisting the public 'to take protective measures on their own behalf' through such measures as Neighbourhood Watch, Safety Houses and Crime Stoppers (Fleming & O'Reilly 2008: 142). In recent years police services have engaged in inter-agency partnerships with both other public sector agencies and the business sector to develop programs and schemes to enhance safety.

Some students were aware of the usefulness of crime prevention techniques and the role of partnerships in them.

'With technology going even further I believe police will serve in more variety of peacekeeping operations and will take on much higher responsibilities in crime prevention.' (2010 G1 R5 Male 21)

'Hammering away at programs to notice children who display behaviours or who are more prone to be criminal – not just a school liaison officer who gives talks.' (2010 G1 R11 Male 19)

'Possibly more integration with private policing, e.g. security etc. Unforseeable changes in legislation; crime prevention may bring new tasks/roles.' (2010 B1 R5 Male 19)

Ethics

Inquiries into police corruption and misconduct have advocated that recruits explicitly learn about ethics. Some appear to embrace this as necessary but others seem to reject it as overkill.

In answer to the question about education and training for the future one said:

'I think a lot of the education should be structured around ethics, and the need for compassion in policing. Correct procedure should be emphasized more.' (2009 B1 R1 Male 20).

Drugs

2009 B1 R6 'A lot more roles in decreasing the amount of drug trafficking, those under the influence of drugs'.

2010 G1 R14 Female 26 'Major drug problems'.

Traffic

2010 B1 R6 Female 21 'I think that police won't be as involved in traffic offences as much, it will move towards RTA.'

General Change

2010 B1 R7 Male 19 'Police would be the man power. Somebody somewhere else would be telling you where to go, where the problems are'.

2009 B1 R13 "More specialized areas – more professional.'

Education and training for the future

The same tensions between policing and academic communities of practice were apparent as discussed in our ANZSOS paper last year (Jennett et a. 2009) with

many students favouring more practical training and field placements and less academic study . This was more marked among the ADPP students but was also apparent among the BJS(P) students.

Of those who had completed a field placement comments were as follows:

'A lot more practical components.' (2010 B2 R4 Female 19)

'I think there needs to be more of a legal focus and more practical elements.' (2010 B2 R20 Female 20).

'It should be based on thinks to kee police more street wise and safe; how to prevent crime etc.' (2010 B2 R13 Male 19)

All ADPP students who answered this question advocated that it should be more practical, more police oriented, less book based. However BJSP also made other suggestions:

'Focus on dealing with mentally ill'. (2010 B2 R6 Male 20)

Those who had not yet been on field placement

'I think it is structured well at the moment. The status quo seems to be effective.' (2010 B2 R8 Male 20

'Need for understanding criminology and understanding outside causes of crime.' (2010 B2 R26 Male 21)

'Better emphasis on developing communication skills; more practical and problem-based.'

'Structure education and training on current and future needs. It would be helpful to allow people to begin specializing if they know what they want to do rather than needing everyone to do general duties. For example, I wish to specialize in white collar crime.' (2010 G1 R6 Female 23)

'Similar to the way it is currently structured. I think you would probably learn about 70% on the job so perhaps incorporate more field placements time and also classes that are more directly linked to roles you will encounter in the job.' (2010 G1 R8 Male 23)

Conclusion

In this paper we have examined police student/recruits' answers to two survey questions, one about the likely roles police officers will have to carry out in 2030 and the other about the type of education and training police officers will need in the future. In general, from this sub-sample of 143 surveys of students, comprised of 75 prior to undertaking field placement and 68 after field placement, we have found that they were conscious of the likely future importance of terrorism, of technological changes, of diverse communities and the need for community based policing techniques and crime prevention. Their attitudes to future education and training needs of police demonstrated a preference for practical, police and legal based education and less 'book work'. Perhaps this is not surprising given that they have entered an occupation which they expect to find stimulating, varied, and not deskbound. A key surprise that some had found since they had started their course was the amount of paper work that police have to do and this was listed as one of the reasons some might consider leaving the job in the long term. Some, especially after placement, were also aware of the dangers and risks in the job and wanted to learn skills which would make them 'street wise' and safe. Danger and the risk of injury or even death was another factor which might make them reconsider their choice of career.

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