

Running on empty

Reinvigorating policing through ‘what matters’

Cahiers Politiestudies
Jaargang 2018-3, nr. 48
p. 179-194
© Gompel&Svacina
ISBN 978-94-6371-033-6



Auke J. van Dijk, Frank Hoogewoning en Maurice Punch¹

The difficulties surrounding the cumbersome Dutch reorganization closely reflect problems with police reform in other societies and this refers to common underlying factors and developments (Van Dijk, Hoogewoning & Punch, 2015). Especially neoliberalism and NPM management – combined with the changing impact of the media – have under conditions of threat and austerity shaped recent European police reforms. At the moment there is an urgent need for reorientation with regard to the future development of policing as a public service. Services essential to the quality of life for many in modern society are perilously on the verge of ‘running on empty’. Three perspectives are of special importance: paradigms of policing, organisational structure and culture, and professionalization. The article concludes that – given societal trends and what matters in policing – there is a need for placing people at the core of future developments, with a strong focus on competences, solidarity and compassion.

Introduction

Where does the Dutch Police – some five years after nationalisation – stand and where should the organization go from here? The *Commission for the Evaluation of the 2012 Police Law (Commissie Evaluatie Politiewet 2012 or Commissie-Kuijken)* has made a critical and useful analysis of the Dutch police reorganization. This analysis is primarily geared to governance and organizational issues and the commission’s recommendations for refinement and improvement (2017; *Doorontwikkelen en verbeteren*) relate predominantly to these issues. Also, the Commission appeals to all parties involved in the governance – minister, mayors, public prosecution and the police – to find common ground and regard the new Dutch police as a common concern. But the key question is, where should the Dutch police be going?

The difficulties surrounding the cumbersome Dutch reorganization closely reflect problems with police reform in other societies and this refers to common underlying factors and developments (Van Dijk, Hoogewoning & Punch, 2015). In this article, our concern is not with the Dutch case in isolation nor primarily with issues of organization and governance. Instead, we will take a closer look at what has been happening in

¹ Drs. A.J. van Dijk, Senior Strategist at Dutch Police Service; Dr. F.C. Hoogewoning, Secretary to the Police Education Council, The Hague, Netherlands; Dr. M. Punch, Senior Visiting Fellow, London School of Economics.

policing in the Netherlands (paragraph 1) and in Scotland (paragraph 2). Next we will identify some key societal developments – looking at the Western world and especially the United Kingdom – that are driving police reform (paragraph 3). Then, we will deal with the question ‘what is policing?’ (paragraph 4) to provide a reference for our evaluation of what is actually happening in policing as a consequence of the identified major societal developments (paragraph 5). Finally, we will argue that based on our findings policing has to undergo a substantial reorientation geared to organizational style, internal functioning and relationship with the public from a perspective of ‘what matters’ (paragraphs 6 & 7).

1. Police reform in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands policing was reorganized into a new National Police Service (NP²) in 2013. This was the largest governmental institutional reform in recent history and with over 60,000 personnel the NP became the largest public agency in the country. Previously the Dutch Police was structured, following a 1993 reorganization, into 25 regional forces and one national agency (*KLPD*³). In this regional system the mayor of the largest or most important municipality within the region was responsible for the day-to-day force maintenance (*korpsbeheer*) while policy decisions on maintenance were made by a board of all the mayors and the Chief Prosecutor within the region. The mayors in charge of regional force maintenance (*korpsbeheerders*) answered to the Ministry of the Interior while the Chief Prosecutor was part of the hierarchical structure of the Chief Prosecutor’s Office under the Ministry of Justice. The Minister of Justice was responsible for the maintenance of the national agency. The traditional dual governance structure in operational matters at the local level was under the mayor for public order and the public prosecutor for crime and prosecutions. Police chiefs had, then, two bosses and engaged with them in the so-called triangle for policy and decision-making on operational matters. This traditional dual governance structure at local level continues to exist under the 2012 Police Act. However, in the new situation maintenance decisions are made at the national level begging the question how to balance local and regional priorities on the one hand and national and international priorities on the other.

Importantly and for reasons beyond the scope of this article, the Netherlands which had been known for its progressive tolerance and enlightened criminal justice system, has in the past decades moved to the political right with a preoccupation on crime and security (Wansink, 2014). This background created a window of opportunity to end an ongoing discussion about the need to centralize authority over the police and to end the difficult decision-making by the informal board of 26 police chiefs as well as that of 25 regional *korpsbeheerders* in relation to the two police ministers. With the 2013 reorganization the 26 forces were merged into one agency under one chief and now only one Ministry, renamed as ‘Security and Justice’⁴. The increased power for the Justice Minister, now responsible politically for the Police Service, went hand in glove with the loss of power

² Originally referred to as ‘*Nationale Politie*’ to indicate the move away from the *regional* police services; more recently, under the new Chief Constable, it became ‘*Nederlandse Politie*’, hence from *National Police* to *Dutch Police*.

³ *Korps Landelijke Politiediensten* – National Police Services Agency.

⁴ In October 2017 with the forming of a new coalition government the name was changed into ‘Justice and Security’.

of the regional mayors. Putting the new force solely under Security and Justice made people frown since it also indicated a possible shift to a primary orientation to crime control and away from local policing.

At the onset of the reorganization critical remarks from the advisory bodies as well as from Parliament, were countered by the government by repeatedly adding new goals to the reform (Terpstra & Gunther Moor, 2012), whereas the presumed savings of ending fragmentation and centralizing force maintenance after reorganization had led to a budget cut of 250 million euro's at the start of the reorganization process in 2013. As with many flagship governmental reforms this substantial operation was accompanied by glowing rhetoric promising enhanced coordination, effectiveness and efficiency regarding crime and security along with substantial economies. However, these promises had largely not been fulfilled by 2015 and led to the so-called 'recalibration' of the process (Ministerie V&J, 2015) while the prolonged process required extra funding to compensate the earlier budget cuts in advance of the presumed economies whereas the reform process dragged on.⁵ The first national police chief had made way for a new chief as of March 2016 who clearly stated that the (political) ambitions had been too high and that the centralization of the Dutch police had gone too far and that rebalancing was needed (Trouw, 27 February 2016). These statements predated similar conclusion of the aforementioned Commission 1,5 years later.

Symptoms of unrest and stress amongst staff are evident in Dutch policing and have been mainly associated with the restructuring processes in which geographical boundaries are changed and police officers have to be redeployed in a new organization with the possibility of being transferred across the country or have to seek employment elsewhere. Furthermore, many Dutch police officers had earlier gone from smaller forces to regional ones and had experienced recurring cycles of reform with successive chiefs and external specialists promoting change.⁶ This constant reform agenda over more than two decades has fostered widespread dissatisfaction, insecurity and lack of motivation. The percentage of absenteeism is in 2017 a worrying structural 7%.

The reorganization of the Dutch police has been subject to evaluation by the *Commissie Evaluatie Politiewet 2012 (Commission for the Evaluation of the 2012 Police Law)* which presented its findings by the end of 2017. The main focus of the evaluation has been on issues of organizational structure and governance. Accordingly, the Commission made sensible recommendations on adaptations of the organizational practices and governance of the police system in order to meet some of the original goals of the reorganization. Unfortunately, the Commission has not been able to pass judgement on the *performance* of the Dutch Police in comparison to the period before the reorganization and how this has impacted on *public trust*. Both items were – next to *economies* and increased *professionalism* – important pillars of the policy theory behind the 2012 reorganization and seen as contributing to a safer and securer society ('t Hart, 2018).

⁵ It didn't help that the Ministry of Security and Justice was itself dogged by affairs with two ministers and a junior minister having to resign in relation to failures in communication and accountability.

⁶ A Dutch officer of long service who was asked to speak about the 'reorganization' relating to the new National Police asked 'which reorganization?' For some 40 years, he had known nothing else but reorganization (Bangma, 2014).

2. ... and in Scotland

The analysis of the Commission is primarily geared to governance and organizational issues and to the Dutch case in isolation (*Commissie Evaluatie Politiewet 2012, 2017*). However, the difficulties surrounding the cumbersome Dutch reorganization are not unique. In recent years we witnessed police reforms in several European societies – England & Wales, Scotland, the Nordic countries and others (Fyfe, Terpstra & Tops, 2013) – and it is useful to look at other countries because the similarities seem at least as important as the differences (Van Dijk, Hoogewoning & Punch, 2015).

Scotland is of particular interest in the context of this article because of the nationalisation of the police at almost the same time as the Dutch. Furthermore, the Scottish reform is also under evaluation. A first assessment after two years of reorganization has been followed by a second dealing with the four year period. As in the Netherlands, the police centralization process in Scotland has also experienced highly negative exposure regarding governance, leadership, accessibility and conspicuous operational failures (Terpstra & Fyfe, 2014 & 2015). As is the case in the Netherlands, the restructuring processes and the redeployment of police officers is seen as the cause of dissatisfaction, insecurity and lack of motivation amongst personnel.

In both Scotland and the Netherlands the withdrawal of local policing, closing of smaller stations, poor communications and lack of local knowledge have all been cited as factors in citizen dissatisfaction (Fyfe, Terpstra & Tops, 2013). In some rural areas with almost no policing criminals seem to have moved into the vacuum for various activities such as wild-life crime in Scotland and drugs production in the Netherlands. Furthermore, police increasingly focus on the so-called core tasks at the expense of for example traffic. The low priority given to traffic duties conflicts with the fact that a vehicle is used in much criminal activity and that many deaths and injuries occur in traffic because of various offences including criminal ones: but such offences have effectively been decriminalized.⁷

There are, then, diverse negative consequences of upscaling and withdrawing from enforcement which attract dissatisfaction and critical debate. Although policing can never be omnipresent there is something disquieting about once visible and accessible police retreating from the local level and which can enhance feelings of insecurity. In the cities the police threaten to become more distant and impersonal at the detriment of – we believe – security and legitimacy. The ideal of a police closely connected to local communities decreasingly resembles what is happening in practice.

Both in Scotland and the Netherlands improving local services was a prominent goal of the reorganization, but in fact service delivery is under pressure due to the emphasis on efficiency and lack of (local) capacity. Of considerable importance societally is that while the Dutch police was reorganized into a national service, several health and welfare services were decentralized putting local government in charge but with smaller

⁷ These include dangerous driving, drunk driving, poor maintenance, underage driving, driving without a licence and not being insured. Sometimes offences can be related to companies which use unlicensed staff, make drivers work beyond legal limits and fail to carry out maintenance: if this leads to deaths or serious injury of personnel or others then this could lead to prosecutions for corporate manslaughter and/or related serious offences.

service budgets. Cuts in wider Dutch public service budgets have also fostered unrest in other sectors, such as education, social work, health care and related front line services. Furthermore, institutions for people with mental health issues have been closed as well as nursing homes for the elderly based on the assumption that ambulant care organized by the municipal authorities is more effective and less costly. Curiously, there has been at the same time a cutting back on home help and community support. All of this has to be related to the impact on the vulnerable and to the predictable rising demands on services – including policing – from an ageing population.

3. Societal trends

Some of the pivotal trends of recent years that have characterized police reform are: centralization, militarization, privatization and civilianization, internationalization and politicization (Van Dijk, Hoogewoning & Punch, 2015). These have collectively brought a major shake-up in the conventional structure and functioning of policing (Brodeur, 2010; Brown, 2014). Behind these trends are important social political developments that have changed the perspective on what policing is about, which we will discuss below. We are conscious of wielding a broad brush and cannot expand on the diversity within policing across cultures; and we remain aware that policing is highly context driven – nationally, regionally and locally (Reiner, 2010 & 2016).

Probably the most influential factor in recent decades has been the predominance of neo-liberalism (Verhaege, 2014; Monbiot, 2017) and New Public Management (NPM). This strongly influenced US and UK governments from the early 1980s and stood for a leaner state, primacy of free enterprise, cuts in public welfare, opposition to unions and tougher approaches to crime and disorder with emphasis on tackling organized crime and combatting terrorism (especially after 9/11 in the US). These approaches drew on the conservative ‘punitive’ ideology in US criminal justice fostering tougher policing, longer sentencing and harsher prison regimes. This ‘tough on crime and on criminals’ was exported through the influential ‘zero tolerance’ style of enforcement (Tonry, 2004; Punch, 2007). This significant shift to harder approaches to social issues has come to dominate government policies in several societies. Later this was even embraced by ostensibly ‘leftish’ governments, as with ‘New Labour’ in the UK (from 1997), and became widely the new normal.

A central pillar of neo-liberal thought was that private enterprise was superior and public services an unreformed burden on the public purse. The answer was to transfer managerial practices – rooted in competition and consumer choice – from the former to the latter (Leishman, Savage & Loveday, 2000). Police leaders were now expected to become ‘executives’ and to consider efficiency, planning, budgets and ‘customers’. Furthermore, they were under increasing pressure to perform and were held to account by diverse government agencies and by the increasingly intrusive media. In the Netherlands we saw the introduction in 2001 of (partial) performance based-financing followed by the National Framework for the Dutch Police 2003-2006 (*Landelijk Kader Politie 2003-2006*) and related regional covenants (performance contracts) as a form of output management under a government programme ‘Towards a safer society’ aimed at 20% reduction of crime and disorder by tougher enforcement of the law (Burger, Hoogewoning & Merten, 2004).

Ostensibly NPM promised improved service and ‘customer’ satisfaction. And in enlightened organizational management development there is advocacy of engaged leadership, room for debate and dissent, a determination to improve with learning from mistakes, investing in personnel and taking customer feedback seriously. But the neo-liberal element in many government policies and corporate practices draws on the bottom-line reductionism within the Chicago School economist Milton Friedman’s free market adage “the business of business is business”. What one sees across the board of services which have been pushed to reorganize with reduced budgets is a top down management style – often with a new layer of highly paid ‘corporate executives’ – pushing to increase productivity with less personnel, cheaper personnel on flexible contracts with less security and benefits along with a time consuming demand for bureaucratic accounting. This goes against all the principles and practices of enlightened management of service agencies leading to high dissatisfaction among personnel and ‘customers’, especially because they are not paying customers. This is also evident in policing and is, we maintain, undermining both police motivation and public satisfaction.

Of fundamental importance emanating from this powerful ideology at governmental level was that services had to be pruned to balance budgets, to stimulate economic success and to advantage a substantial proportion of the electorate. This was particularly dominant during the recent global economic crisis starting in 2008. One consequence in recent years has been to cut substantially policing budgets in the UK and to an extent also in the Netherlands. The results of the budget cuts have been particularly savage in UK policing with reductions in numbers of officers, cuts in pay, freezing of promotions and lengthening the pension age. In some British forces police property is being sold, mounted units disbanded, traffic duties largely abandoned, diverse services outsourced and civilians are increasingly taking over certain policing tasks. In short, many officers are being asked to do more with less: and with fewer qualified co-workers, diminishing resources and with a low chance of reward. As a result there is evidence of widespread disillusion and alienation among police personnel with high rates of sickness and premature retirement.

At the same time, there is abundant evidence in western societies of an increasing gap between the wealthy and the less advantaged with the latter experiencing long-term employment insecurity given the major changes in labour markets along with increasing levels of poverty. For the disadvantaged class or *Precariat* (Standing, 2011) this raises the likelihood of various social and health problems including psychiatric issues, domestic violence and a higher tendency to certain forms of criminal activity than other social groups. In this context the NPM ideology is even more damaging than it would be in more egalitarian conditions.

Furthermore, as a consequence of the changing media landscape – with information and communication technologies as important drivers – politics has become increasingly short-term, media focused and the horizon frequently is reaching the evening’s headlines with a sound-bite. In the UK ministers harass and brow-beat police chiefs who are in their eyes not performing and try to badger them into resigning. And Theresa May as Home Secretary brayed at a police meeting that police officers only task was to cut crime. This not only flies in the face of over 50 years of accumulated research evidence but is also insulting in telling a profession what its mandate should be (Skogan & Frydall, 2004). Police chiefs, then, are under constant political pressure to reorganize and to

achieve goals but with limited means while under intense media scrutiny. Furthermore, this is increasingly the case with other services.

Moreover, policing, crime, terrorism and disorder – increasingly linked to immigration and alien conspiracy threats – have become staple diets of the media and have moved to centre-stage in reporting police failings. For when a force nationalizes there's only one force and one chief to focus on so the news now becomes how incidents reflect police shortcomings at the national level. This has happened in Scotland, the four Nordic countries and the Netherlands.⁸ In the latter there have been some failures in service delivery that were widely reported; scandals related to dubious spending and ineffective accountability; and revelations of resilient racial and gender prejudice (NRC, 2017b). Some negative police conduct is also increasingly being exposed in the social media including through persistent harassing by vloggers and the images are instantly spread on the internet. In the UK in particular certain sections of the populist, right wing media aggressively hound leading people in the various services including policing – especially if the latter are seen as 'soft' on crime – and endeavour to unseat them by malicious campaigns of 'naming and shaming' (Paddick, 2008).

4. What is policing?

To make sense of the trends and developments we have described, to evaluate their impact and suggest possible remedies, we should first establish what 'policing' actually means. This is also of more fundamental importance as it is often glibly spoken of as if it is self-evident. The police in western societies typically refers to a public agency with a legal mandate to enforce the law and maintain public order. But in practice policing is a complex emergency and social service agency with a baffling range of tasks related to regulation, inspection, political intelligence, counter-terrorism, immigration, traffic, diverse forms of crime and crime prevention, patrol of public spaces and aid to those in need. As Marenin (1982) put it, policing stretches from class repression to parking tickets. Hence, it is different at different times in different places to different people in different societies. There are five particular features we wish to accentuate.

Firstly and crucially, the police is the only 24/7 uniformed and (ostensibly) accessible service with the powers to interfere directly in the lives of citizens and if necessary deprive them of their freedom with the use of force including fatal force. Police can kill fellow citizens in the name of the state. This makes the police institution unique. And, 'unique' implies that we should be cautious in treating it like other social agencies.

Secondly, in major emergency response mode policing has to change from devolved and routine functioning to being central, hierarchical and focused on critical incident deployment. Many people have to change roles, sometimes instantly, with different tasks, responsibilities and accountability. This could be regarding a natural disaster, terrorist incident, major fire, serious traffic accident, large-scale riot, major shooting, plane or train crash or large scale criminal investigation. This further implies that everyone

⁸ In the Netherlands a damning incident involved a young woman who had been sexually attacked but was not taken seriously by the police. Yet she was able to trace the offender herself though the phone he had stolen from her (NRC, 2017a). In Scotland it was a road accident that was reported to the police but it took *three days* for officers to respond by which time one wounded passenger had died and another was in a critical condition (Independent, 2017).

involved has been trained, tested and certified for those roles and that they – and the institution itself – are ready to be held to account.

Thirdly, the first officer – or officers – on the scene of incidents, major and minor, is usually low in rank. The worst air disaster in UK history – as a result of a bomb explosion on board a US passenger plane above Lockerbie in 1988 – occurred above a small Scottish town and in the smallest police force in the UK. Burning debris fell on the town and over 200 bodies were spread over a large area. Ordinary police officers were confronted with an extreme situation requiring an immediate response to something they could never have visualized in a peaceful rural area. In the Netherlands, the same instant reality shock occurred when in 1992 a Boeing 747 cargo plane crashed into a block of flats in Amsterdam shortly after take-off causing massive damage and a raging fire. This was right next to the local police station and officers were dramatically confronted with mayhem and had to react immediately before support started to arrive. Those two crashes were mega-incidents but a similar dynamic implies to other small scale emergencies – a house fire, a shooting, missing children, serious car crash, etc. – and the implication is that officers, sometimes on their own, can be relied on to take control temporarily, to report back the details quickly and to direct others until the hierarchy of senior personnel and specialists arrive. Front-line officers have, then, ideally to be able to think for themselves and to be able to take charge independently. They have to be empowered legally to do so and trained for that initial holding role.

Fourthly, allied to the latter is that the organization at all levels is competent to deal with such incidents and is ready to be held to account in public fora. And, that higher ranking personnel are competent and confident in their roles and are prepared to be held to account internally and externally for operations. The lower ranking officers should be able to rely on that and the institution should be able to provide it.

Finally, much routine policing is conducted by one or sometimes two officers – in the Netherlands routinely two officers – who may well face challenging and threatening situations on their own. The consolation is that support is on its way. But what if there is no back-up? Among the complaints in UK policing related to pressure of work and lack of prospects – leading to resignations of once motivated people worn down by the poor work climate – are that there are just not enough personnel. Charman's (2017) longitudinal study of young British officers in their first four years reveals them to be originally motivated but increasingly frustrated at the lack of personnel and quality of equipment. This not only weakens the delivery of service but is also potentially dangerous and raises the issue of the legal responsibility of the organization to display a duty of care to the public and its own personnel.

As we have argued elsewhere (Van Dijk, Hoogewoning & Punch, 2015) policing includes many and diverse tasks and where and when urgent issues occur cannot be fully known in advance. Furthermore, issues that have a low probability of occurring, may have an enormous impact, as shown in the examples above. This broad spectrum of what polices services do can be divided into three main pillars of policing: crime and security management, social-welfare and community outreach, and order maintenance. We argue that policing should be based on a philosophy or *comprehensive paradigm* which is built around all of these three main pillars. Traditional thinking about philosophies of policing tends to distinguish between the *control paradigm* and the *consent paradigm*.

The former focusses on crime control and public order maintenance with a police force at arm's length of the community and with a small mandate, whereas the latter, based on the Peelian principle “the police are the public and the public are the police” places emphasis on police community relations with a police service in close contact with the community and with a broad remit. The *comprehensive paradigm* helps to escape the traditional thinking in terms of *control* versus *consent* and serves to reconcile divisive dichotomies, such as ‘force’ versus ‘service’, ‘crime’ versus ‘social’, ‘hard’ versus ‘soft’, ‘central’ versus ‘local’ by integrating the three main pillars of policing (Van Dijk, Hoogewoning & Punch, 2015).

5. Making sense of what is happening

Earlier, in paragraph 3, we touched upon a range of developments in western societies which raise acute problems in policing as well as in other front-line services to the extent of a major crisis in personnel, motivation and quality of provision. Taking all this into account there is ample reason for concern about the state policing is in and there is the need for a profound review of the pressures and demands being exerted not only on policing but also on other related services with potentially grave consequences (Loveday, 2017). This is an urgent matter, because services essential to the quality of life for many in modern society are perilously on the verge of ‘running on empty’. They will stop functioning as genuine public services if we accept further ‘simplification’ of what a public service – especially policing – is about. For the police there is the added burden that, in the absence of provision elsewhere, people will increasingly turn to the police if they need assistance. In this paragraph we evaluate what is happening in policing using three perspectives: paradigms of policing, organizational structure and professionalization. Our aim here is to find clues on how to reinvigorate policing.

If we look at the changes in policing from the perspective of underlying philosophies or paradigms of policing we come to the conclusion that the *consent paradigm* is under great strain. The tougher approaches to crime and disorder with emphasis on tackling organized crime and combatting terrorism are indicators of a narrowing of the police remit discarding the fact that crime and security management is but one of the three main pillars of policing. This indicates that the *control paradigm* is gaining momentum. In the UK this is a more or less explicit process, whereas in the Netherlands this is happening implicitly or even surreptitiously (Volkskrant, 24 September 2015). In the 2012 Police Reform the espoused paradigm is still that of *consent* as might be deduced from the accompanying rhetoric of strengthening local embeddedness of the police service as one of the many objectives of the nationalization process, while government funding is mainly geared towards counterterrorism and restructuring of the police organization. Recently, the resulting withdrawal of police capacity from the local level creating a vacuum which local governments try to fill in with local ordinances enforcement personnel, has come under much criticism (SMV 2018). It is our view that – regardless of rhetoric – the control paradigm is the current dominant model, at the expense of the police as a legitimate crucial social service.

A second perspective on the changes that have taken place in policing is that of Mintzberg’s (1983) five types of organizational structures. Although police organizations are unique in the sense of their powers to interfere directly in the lives of citizens, they are also front-line service agencies which closely resemble Mintzberg’s professional

bureaucracy. For, at least a part of the police work is done by highly trained professionals providing services to the public that potentially have a huge impact on members of the public who are highly dependent on the service provider. Therefore, the classic image of the professional bureaucracy can help understand some of the mechanisms in today's police organisations. Characteristic of the professional bureaucracy is the tense relationship between highly trained professionals with a great amount of discretionary powers on the one hand and a stringent structure of top down assignments from the management as well as demanding accountability from below on the other hand. It is our view that under the neo-liberal ideology embraced by governments accompanied by the NPM-thinking within organizations the bureaucratic logic has become too dominant narrowing the operational space of professionals and thus fostering widespread dissatisfaction, insecurity and lack of motivation amongst personnel.

The third perspective is that of professionalization. The move to 'professionalize' policing with a body of knowledge disseminated through higher education to improve performance and service delivery as well as to enhance the status of policing is found in several societies. Since much of policing involves working in partnerships with professionals from other agencies, the latter aspect has gained importance. Two currents in professionalization can be distinguished. One emphasizes the content of the profession and embraces the image of the police officer as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983, 1991). Important aspects are ethics and values, a body of knowledge and practice, responsibility and accountability. The other emphasizes the structural aspects of a profession such as professional body and a registered membership. The College of Policing for England and Wales (founded in 2012), for example, is modelled on the medical profession with the aim of an all-graduate membership and with a code of ethics, professional standards and 'evidence based policing' providing the knowledge base (Sherman, 2013). In the climate of neo-liberalism and NPM the institutional current has gained the upper hand leading to a rush towards 'certification' through higher education to enhance the status of policing. This trend is clearly visible in the UK and, to a lesser extent, also in the Netherlands (Huisjes, Engbers & Meurs, 2018).

These developments have raised again the dichotomy of 'management cops' and 'street cops' first flagged by Reuss-Ianni (1983). For UK and US policing was traditionally an artisan institution with everyone starting on the streets and senior officers rising through the ranks. Reuss-Ianni conveyed that this shared culture and experience was evaporating with senior officers espousing new management practices that created a rift with lower personnel. The development has since then brought about a new layer of what we call 'corporate cops' at the top with the 'management cops' becoming the middle layer. This cultural and operational gap with front-line policing has been accentuated by the recruitment and promotion of senior officers largely on educational qualifications and management competence along with direct entry schemes in some forces (Lee and Punch, 2006). There are, then, serious questions about the growing social distance between ranks and also the operational ability of new-style senior officers in demanding situations. This predominance of the bureaucratic side of the professional bureaucracy is increasingly problematic since front-line police work frequently calls for police officers to cooperate with professionals from other front-line agencies which requires a reasonable amount of discretionary powers or 'professional space' to act according to the circumstances.

6. Reorientation

Bearing in mind the unique nature of the police with considerable powers backed up with the potential for use of force and with a broad remit to intervene directly in citizens' lives; that policing is varied, delicate and at times dangerous work which needs to be conducted primarily by fully trained and certified law enforcement officers; that an essential element is surplus capacity for emergency response which can only mean sufficient numbers on duty at any one time (Brodeur, 2010); and that engagement with communities at the local level is essential, what should be done to reinvigorate policing to recover from the fall-out of neo-liberalism and NPM?

The short answer – referring back to the last paragraph – is: policing should be about *people*. Budgets, governance and organizational structure are not the things that matter. What matters in policing is people and we argue that the solution is in focussing on three salient 'human' areas which could underpin improvement and a reorientation within the existing system. These relate to police officers and how they are equipped to do their jobs, on how the organizational style and internal functioning of the police organization supports officers in their work and on how police officers constitute their relationship with the public. Drawing on our analysis above as well as the wider literature in the policing domain we suggest three key focal points to re-orientate policing in a positive direction: competencies, solidarity and compassion. We argue that seriously investing in these three areas will improve relationships inside and outside policing while enhancing institutional effectiveness.

Competencies

We have pointed out that the police service is a unique service with a baffling range of tasks which makes the police a service with a potential (or actual) huge impact on people and society. And, that as a front-line service policing is about direct non-routine contact of professionals with citizens and other agencies which comes down to 'handling the situation' (Wilson, 1968). However, 'handling the situation' is not applicable only to working on the beat, but to all police tasks. Whenever things are unclear, police professionals have to assess the situation they find themselves in, identify other potential actors and agencies, define the situation and act accordingly.

This is not only a characteristic of street level policing or emergency response but the same applies in fields as criminal investigation, crime prevention, cyber, intelligence, traffic, or immigration. This implies that each and every police professional should be equipped for this general role with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes (generic competencies) in initial police education and training as well as trained, tested and certified once working as a police officer. Furthermore, it underlines the need of investments in personnel and to distil the specific competencies necessary for specialist roles and functions and train, test and certify officers for those tasks. We are thinking particularly of higher ranks in operational roles, for example in command & control situations. The key is that it is institutionally irresponsible to put an officer in a command role on the basis of rank who is not fully qualified and not well experienced for the task. It is also about the accountability structure: the higher the command role the greater should be the accountability.

As society becomes more complex front-line professionals should be able to handle complicated situations on their own and to deal with vocal, demanding citizens. Thus, police officers need to be equipped with a broad range of generic competencies relating to, for instance, communication, cooperation, problem solving and 'digital skills' also known as 21st century skills. These broad generic competencies are generally associated with higher levels of education and training. In recent years, police organizations, especially in the Nordic countries, have raised the level of education required to enter the police to associate degree or bachelor degree. In the Netherlands the discussion about raising the entry level for community beat officers (Politieonderwijsraad, 2017) as well as for policing in general is fairly recent (Politieonderwijsraad, 2018), although bachelor and master courses in policing have existed since the restructuring of police education and training in 2002 (Huisjes, Engbers & Meurs, 2018). These are positive developments but as mentioned it is important to see professionalization in the context of the importance of the reflective practitioner and not as a means to enhance the status of policing.

Solidarity

Police organizations are notorious for being segmented into tribes, clans and factions with a strong occupational hierarchy with patrolling rated low and specialist functions (firearms, organized crime and counter-terrorism) deemed high. That's doubtless difficult to eradicate but the organization and its senior officers simply have to hammer away that in policing everyone is important. When a large-scale, pre-planned operation takes place or a spontaneous reaction to major incident occurs, then everyone plays a role including the support staff and the catering. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same should be the case in daily routine operations.

Another factor is that senior officers should be formally obliged to spend time observing operations and experiencing the work of the lower ranks. Everyone should be suffused with the idea that they all work for the same organization and that all ranks play a role. Senior officers simply have to remain in contact with the front-line in order to be effective leaders. In short, 'joined up' policing does not happen of itself but has to be managed.

Furthermore, 'corporate cops' and 'management cops' thinking along the lines of NPM and/or working with smaller budgets tend to believe that police work – as in a machine bureaucracy – can be easily divided into relatively simple tasks that can be done by junior staff, less qualified officers or even civilians. For instance, one feature of recent developments in England and Wales has been to downgrade and downsize the role of community beat officers. Yet, the strongest internal promoters of re-energizing that function are ironically the elite, counter-terrorism squads because they miss the eyes and ears of beat officers noticing the signs of radicalization in largely ethnic or religious communities. Sound local knowledge can prevent attacks and save lives, including police lives. This underlines the importance of organizing policing on the basis of the comprehensive paradigm in which crime and security management, social-welfare and community outreach, and order maintenance are equally important and interconnected fields of the police organization.

This perspective on the police function as 'indivisible' and 'holistic' should be translated into the organizational structure and should be reflected in the way the professionals

are 'equipped'. Obviously, we are not implying to have no specialization, both at the organizational and individual level. We are arguing that there is a limit to specialization because different tasks are interconnected. So, at the organizational level, it would be deleterious to separate investigations totally from, for example, policing in the neighbourhood. At the level of the professionals it means that all police officers – as mentioned above – are in a sense 'general policeman', next to may be being a specialist in a specific task as well. Thus, the comprehensive paradigm places the police professional at the centre of the required future development of policing and 'the police'.

Service, with compassion

'Compassion' is not always associated with policing but we use it here to emphasize that the relationship with diverse publics – especially the vulnerable – is of the essence. That relationship depends on motivation, taking the public seriously and delivering a multi-agency service. Also when police are called to serious emergencies or incidents of violence, sudden death or injury their behaviour strongly influences how victims, bystanders and victims' families assess the legitimacy of policing and, in turn, their willingness to cooperate later with the police. Hence this is enlightened self-interest. Furthermore, police aid to those requiring help has in various forms become increasingly institutionalized and even statutory in recent decades. Police are now involved with aiding the vulnerable – as victims or potential victims or simply needing care and protection – including the mentally ill, sex workers, the disabled, the elderly, traumatized war veterans, the young and females facing domestic violence while officers investigate hate crimes against the vulnerable and historic sex crimes. Much of this work is being conducted in partnerships with other agencies. In short, in the area of 'law enforcement and public health' the police agency is more often taking a proactive, preventive role with widespread cooperation with multiple partners (Punch & James, 2017; Van Dijk & Crofts, 2017).

7. What matters?

We have emphasised that policing is a unique agency within a democracy subject to the rule of law; that it requires engaged leadership closely involved with the primary processes and front-line personnel; that motivation is of the essence and that there is investment in creating skilled and motivated staff who are taken seriously; and that service delivery – especially with the vulnerable and needy – is performed in a professional, concerned and even compassionate manner. If you draw on the accumulated knowledge in police and management studies then this the path to reinvesting meaning in policing and regenerating police officers to do what they want to be doing as professionals. This can be achieved largely within existing structures but it does require reallocation of existing resources, and a paradigm shift. Our position is that we are at a turning-point in policing and that choices need to be made urgently which will not only determine policing for a generation but will also determine in what sort of society we are living.

Bibliography

- BANGMA, K. (2014). 'Sturing versus professionele ruimte', *Symposium veranderingen in het openbaar bestuur*, University of Groningen, 25 February 2014.
- BRODEUR, J.-P. (2010). *The Policing Web*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- BROWN, J.M. (2014) (ed.). *The Future of Policing*. London / New York: Routledge.
- BURGER, H.H., HOOGEWONING, F.C. & MERTEN, R. (2004). 'Telt wat we turven of turven we wat telt?', *Het Tijdschrift voor de Politie*, jrg. 66, nr. 10, pp. 32-36.
- CALESS, B. & OWENS, J. (2016). *Police and Crime Commissioners. The Transformation of Police Accountability*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- CHARMAN, S. (2017). *Police Socialisation, Identity and Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- COMMISSIE EVALUATIE POLITIEWET 2012 (2017). *Evaluatie Politiewet 2012. Doorontwikkelen en verbeteren*. The Hague, November 2017.
- DIJK, A., VAN, HOOGEWONING, F. & PUNCH, M. (2015). *What matters in policing? Change, values and leadership in turbulent times*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- DIJK, A. VAN, & CROFTS, N. (2017). 'Law enforcement and public health as an emerging field', *Policing and Society*, vol. 27, no. 3.
- FYFE, N.R. (2014). 'A different and divergent trajectory: reforming the structure, governance and narrative of policing in Scotland', in J.M. BROWN (ed.), *The future of policing*. London/New York: Macmillan, pp. 493-505.
- FYFE, N.R., TERPSTRA, J. & TOPS, P. (eds.) (2013). *Centralizing forces? Comparative perspectives on contemporary police reform in Northern and Western Europe*. The Hague: Eleven.
- 'T HART, P. (23 January, 2018). *Doorontwikkelen en verbeteren: Evaluatie Politiewet 2012*. Public presentation at the Ministry of Justice and Security, The Hague.
- HMIC (2017). *Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2016*. London: Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary
- HOLMBERG, L. (2013). 'Scandinavian police reforms: can you have your cake and eat it, too?', *Police Practice and Research*, vol. 15, no. 6, pp. 447-60.
- HOOGENBOOM, B. & PUNCH, M. (2012). 'Developments in Police Research', in T. NEWBURN, and J. PEAY (eds.), *Policing: Politics, Culture and Control*. Oxford/Portland, OR: Hart.
- HUISJES, H., ENGBERS, F. & MEURS, T. (2018). 'Higher Education for Police Professionals. The Dutch Case', *Policing* (submitted).
- INDEPENDENT (2017). 'Stirling crash victims lay in car for three days after accident reported to police', 9 July.
- LEE, M. & PUNCH, M. (2006). *Policing by degrees*, Groningen: Hondsrug Pers.
- LEISHMAN, F., SAVAGE, S. & LOVEDAY, B. (2000) (eds.), *Core issues in policing* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.
- LIPSKY, M. (1980). *Street level bureaucrats*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- LOVEDAY, B. (2017). 'The worrying state of policing in England and Wales after seven years of austerity', <http://blogs.BritishPoliticsandPolicy.lse.ac.uk>
- MANNING, P.K. (2010). *Democratic policing in a changing world*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- MARENIN, O. (1982). 'Parking tickets and class repression: the concept of policing in critical theories of criminal justice', *Contemporary Crises*, 6, pp. 241-66.

- MINISTRY OF SECURITY AND JUSTICE (2015). *Herrijking realisatie van de Nationale Politie*, 31 August.
- MONBIOT, G. (2017). *How did we get into this mess?* New York: Verso.
- NRC (2017a). 'Aangerand – de politie wacht nog even', 23 November.
- NRC (2017b). 'Medewerkers politie maken zwartboek discriminatie', 25-26 November.
- PADDICK, B. (2008). *Line of fire*. London: Simon and Schuster.
- POLICEORACLE (2017). 'PC's cut-blaming resignation letter gets huge audience online', 3 March.
- POLITIEONDERWIJSRAAD (2017). *Kwalificaties en opleidingsmogelijkheden voor het wijkagentschap van 2025. Adviesrapport*. Den Haag: Politieonderwijsraad, 10 mei 2017.
- POLITIEONDERWIJSRAAD (2018). *Naar een toekomstbestendige politie. Ongevraagd advies aan de minister van Justitie en veiligheid*. Den Haag: Politieonderwijsraad, 20 April 2018.
- PUNCH, M. (1979). 'The secret social service' in S. Holdaway (ed.), *The British police*. London: Edward Arnold.
- PUNCH, M. (2007). *Zero Tolerance Policing*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- PUNCH, M. & JAMES, S. (2017). 'Researching law enforcement and public health', *Policing and Society*, vol. 27, no. 3.
- REINER, R. (2010). *The Politics of the Police*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (4th ed.).
- REINER, R. (2016). *Crime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- REUSS-IANNI, E.R. (1983). *Two cultures of policing*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
- SCHÖN, D. (1983, 1991). *The Reflective Practitioner*. 1983, New York: Basic Books; 1991, Avebury: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- SHERMAN, L. (2013). 'The rise of evidence-based policing: targeting, testing and tracking', *Crime and Justice*, 42: 377-431.
- SKOGAN, W. & FRYDL, K. (2004). *Fairness and effectiveness in policing: The evidence*. Washington DC: National Academies Press.
- SMV (2018). *Nationale Politie: twee taken, één organisatie. Discussienota*. Den Haag: Stichting Maatschappij en Veiligheid.
- STANDING, GUY (2011). *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury, <http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com/view/The-Precariat/chapter-ba-9781849664554-chapter-001.xml>.
- TERPSTRA, J. & FYFE, N.R. (2014). 'Policy processes and police reform: examining similarities between Scotland and the Netherlands', *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 366-83.
- TERPSTRA, J. & FYFE, N.R. (2015). 'Mind the implementation gap? Police reform and local policing in the Netherlands and Scotland', *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, published online February 19.
- TERPSTRA, J. & GUNTHER MOOR, L. (2012). 'Nationale Politie', *Nederlands Juristenblad*, 2012/399.

- TONRY, M. (2004). *Punishment and politics*. Cullompton: Willan.
- TROUW (2016). 'Agenten krijgen weer meer ruimte. Nieuwe korpschef Nationale Politie wil minder centrale sturing', 27 February.
- TYLER, T. & HUO, Y.J. (2002). *Trust in the law*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- VERHAEGE, P. (2014). *What about me?* Victoria, Australia: Scribe.
- WANSINK, H. (2014). *Het Land van Beatrix*. Amsterdam: Prometheus-Bert Bakker.
- WILSON, JAMES Q. (1968). *Varieties of Police Behavior. The Management of Law and Order in Eight Communities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.