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## Policing: past, present, and future

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## **Policing: past, present, and future**

Ben Bowling, Shruti Iyer, Robert Reiner and James Sheptycki

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### **Introduction**

The question – what is to be done about law and order? – set in motion an important transformation in criminology in an earlier era (Lea and Young 1984). Questions about how policing should be conducted and how the police service can be improved confront the discipline again as the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century draws to a close. But what a difference an era makes! When critical criminologists asked what was to be done in the 1980s, some lamented that the problems of crime and victimisation in poor communities were not taken seriously enough and that the police were ‘losing the fight against crime’ (Kinsey, Lea and Young 1986). Others were critical of the drift towards law, order and the authoritarian state and rejected the contention that the police were the solution to the crime problem (Scraton, 1987). We do not intend to rehearse these older debates here, but it would do to acknowledge them, to forestall the problem of chronocentrism in our understanding of criminology (Rock, 2005) and to tackle head-on new theories of policing which suggest that ‘the police’ have been superseded as objects of enquiry by a more diffuse notion of ‘policing’ (Reiner, 2010).

David Bayley (1985) evocatively expressed the relationship between the state and the body of men and women charged with exercising authority on its behalf: ‘the police are to government as the edge is to the knife’. Although ‘all that is policing does not lie with police’ (Reiner, 2000, p. xi) and under transnational conditions the state has become a different kind of institution than was contemplated by the architects of the modern police, there is good reason to take ‘the police’ seriously as an idea. The police, in one form or another, exist in every country and are an important aspect of a much broader apparatus of social control. What makes the police particularly important is their capacity to use force in social ordering. This chapter seeks to ask how we can improve the quality of policing and make the police accountable to the people that they serve.

The challenge set for us by the editors of this volume was to answer the question: what is to be done about the police? This deceptively succinct question begs a series of theoretical and normative questions concerned with what policing is, who should do it, how it should be done, how its fairness and effectiveness should be evaluated and how it should be made accountable. In order to address these normative enquiries and to focus our arguments about what is to be done, we draw on theoretical and empirical police research and set out to answer six sets of questions.

Our first concern is the function of the police. We ask: what is policing and what do the police do? Before we can offer a prescription for we think that the police should do, we must consider the claims made about the role of the police and the research evidence on what day-to-day policework actually consists of. This leads to our second question: *who carries out the policing function?* The public police are most prominent in discussions about order maintenance, crime investigation and control, but there is competition from private policing and various other providers of security. The so-called pluralisation of policing raises questions about the place of ‘the police’ in social ordering. We turn next to the ways and means of policing. Controversy has raged for decades about police powers and, in particular, the use of force and ‘intelligence-led’ methods including, but not limited to, electronic surveillance and

undercover policework. This generates our third question: *what powers do the police have?*

Our fourth set of questions are concerned with how the police achieve in their overall social function, how well they do it and at what cost? Do the police successfully maintain order and control crime? And at what social and economic cost is this achieved? In short we ask: *what is 'good policing' and how can it be achieved?* Our fifth concern relates to the evidence that police powers have differential effects for different groups in society. The young, the poor, women, and ethnic minorities are more likely to suffer the ill effects of policing such as being stopped, searched and arrested. These same groups are less likely to feel properly protected by the police. We ask: *how does policing impact on different social groups?* With police accountability, under close scrutiny, current debates focus on the relations between police and public; this leads to our sixth question: *how are the police policed?* Finally, in our conclusion, we bring the strands of our analysis together to ask: *what is to be done about the police?*

## **1. What do the police do?**

The question – *what is the police role?* – has been at the centre of debate in the sociology of policing ever since empirical research on police began in the early 1960s in both the USA and UK.<sup>1</sup> The backdrop to the interpretation of early empirical research on the police role was evident in media representations and in popular discourse that framed them as crime fighters in the dominant cultural imaginary of cops 'n robbers. The alternative to this rather constricted conception of the police was a radical Marxist analysis of the police as repressive agents of the capitalist State. According to this view, the police exercised overt class repression and capitalist injustice was disguised by reductive visions of the police mission as suppression of routine street crime. Leaving aside the definitional issues concerning the core concept

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<sup>1</sup> There had been a single precursor, the seminal empirical research conducted by William Westley in the late 1940s, but only published in a couple of journal articles until a belated book in 1970. It was a crucial influence on the early 1960s researchers (Reiner 2015).

of 'crime' it seems reasonably clear that law 'n order, and cops 'n robbers mythologies have been common to both fans and critics of the police. Empirical research findings about police work in practice revealed the shortcomings of these popular understandings.

Observation of police patrol work, still the mainstay of urban policing around the world, showed that the police routinely 'under-enforce' the law. Michael Banton showed this in his pioneering ethnographic research in the UK and the USA (Banton 1964). According to him the predominant role of the patrol officer was peacekeeping not law enforcement. This was subsequently confirmed by numerous studies. In itself this could be interpreted as officers neglecting their duties, taking the easier way out and avoiding the rigours of paper work involved in invoking the criminal justice process. Numerous studies concerning public demand for policing services confirmed that crime calls were only a small part of the policing picture. Most police patrol work is concerned with diverse matters including looking for missing people, dealing with mentally ill people in distress, with accidents and other social emergencies. As Cumming, Cumming and Edell (1965) memorably put it, when people called the cops what they wanted was a 'philosopher, guide and friend'. The police were basically the 'secret social service' (Punch 1979). During the 1980s some research showed that a significant proportion of police calls for service involved 'potential crime' (Shapland and Vagg 1988), nonetheless the evidence suggested that the bulk of calls were not clearly about crime (Waddington 1993).

This was theorised in an influential analysis of the police function by Egon Bittner (1970, 1974). This analysis suggested that, beneath the diversity of problems the police are called upon to tackle there lies, not a distinctive social function, but the core capacity to use force. More recently Jean-Paul Brodeur (2010) expanded this view by observing a wider set of police coercive powers that are not legally available to ordinary citizens. This does not mean that the police typically (or even often) use coercion or force to accomplish the resolution of the troubles they respond to. In putatively democratic societies, the craft of effective policing is to use the background possibility of legitimate coercion so skilfully that it does not need to be foregrounded.

Police work remains contradictory. It is Janus-faced, encompassing both ‘parking tickets and class repression’ (Marenin, 1982). Another way of thinking about this is through the distinction between the reproduction of general and specific order. Policing in the interests of general social order is a general social good. For example, enforcing the rules of the road make the roads safer for all road users and so this is policing in the interests of some sense of the general order. Policing in the interests of specific social order is rather opposite. An example would be policing the social order of the shopping mall, which is largely in the interests of the consumptive enterprise. Such fine distinctions and nuanced analysis has been largely absent in public politics since New Labour adopted its own brand of crime control rhetoric in the 1990s. The class issue remains pertinent, nonetheless, as many recent *causes celebres* indicate. These range from the fabrication of official accounts of the 1989 Hillsborough tragedy (and by the same force five years earlier at Orgreave) to the abuse of police force during the G20 and other political protests (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010, 2012a, 2012b; Hillsborough Independent Panel, 2012, Conn 2015). It has been submerged, however, by a focus on the economics of crime control in which all the conceptual and ethical problems of defining crime are simply bracketed out and the main task becomes efficient repression. This marks a profound shift in official pronouncements about the police role.

From the foundation of the English police by Robert Peel with the 1829 establishment of the London Metropolitan Police, down to the early 1990s, official statements about the purpose of policing played down the straightforward crime control element (implicitly and sometimes explicitly challenging popular conceptions). In its original formulation by Peel and the Commissioners he appointed, Rowan and Mayne, the purpose of policing was the prevention of crime, peace-keeping and the preservation of ‘public tranquillity’. The latter phrase was revived by Lord Scarman in his *Report on the Brixton Disorders* in 1981 which explicitly prioritized peace-keeping over law enforcement. In this conception, public support is crucial for policing, and a broad service role is encouraged to facilitate this. Law enforcement and catching criminals were explicitly downplayed by Peel and Scarman, both of whom saw these as

evidence of failure in the primary police task of peacekeeping, and as potentially undermining order by inflaming tensions.

The historical context in which the British police developed is crucial for understanding the Peelian statement of purpose. The police had an acutely controversial foundation in the teeth of widespread opposition, in and out of Parliament. Although a key motive for their creation was safeguarding threats to public order, this was downplayed by Peel, in favour of preventing routine property crime, in order to get the 1829 Act passed. The prophets of the ‘police science’ of the 18th century which underpinned Peel’s conception – Patrick Colquhoun, Adam Smith and others – saw the police as only a small part of preventing crime: political economy and culture were basic to peace-keeping, with police in the institutional sense only plugging the gaps. This perspective remained fundamental in official enquiries into policing right up to the early 1990s, receiving a major fillip from its centrality to the reform agenda stemming from Scarman, and underpinning the unique 1990 collaboration of the three police professional associations, that produced the Operational Policing Review (Joint Consultative Committee, 1990).

Contemporary government pronouncements about the purposes of policing embody a substantial shift, following the politicization of law and order in the 1970s, but more particularly the embedding of a new consensus on toughness since the early 1990s, as neoliberalism became firmly entrenched (Reiner 2007). Thatcher’s Home Secretaries had largely mounted a ‘phoney war’ on crime (apart from in the public order arena), despite the Leader’s blazing speeches. But real policing policies as well as rhetoric toughened up after 1993. The new orthodoxy was made bluntly explicit in the Conservative government’s 1993 *Police Reform* White Paper: ‘The main job of the police is to catch criminals’ (Home Office, 1993: s.2.2). This thief-taking priority was undercut by the very next sentence: ‘In a typical day, however, only about 18% of calls to the police are about crime.’ But from the law and order perspective, this is a problem rather than an indication of public demand that is to be respected. The hunt was on for identifying ‘extraneous’ tasks from which the police should be liberated, although this initially proved abortive. The 2010 Coalition’s ‘Policing in the 21st

century' pays lip service to Peel's preventive priority, but focuses primarily on 'putting the public in the driver's seat' in order to cut crime through 'common sense' policing (Home Office, 2010: 3). In a 2011 speech in the aftermath of the summer riots that year, Home Secretary Theresa May emphasised that the test of police effectiveness, 'the sole objective against which they will be judged, the way in which communities should be able to hold them to account, is their success in cutting crime'. If the point were not made emphatically enough, at three separate points her speech, the Home Secretary exhorted the police to be 'single-minded crime fighters' (May 2011).

There is no doubt that a variety of innovative methods have boosted the crime control capacity of the police in recent years. It is, of course, vitally important that the police can respond effectively to violent and property crimes, conduct thorough investigations of those that are reported and bring offenders to justice. Nonetheless, this remains only a small part of serious emergency work that the police are called upon for by the public. The police are rightly compelled to maintain a significant proportion of resources to respond to these, and the popular representation of policing as being all about crime (and crime control as being all about the police) is misleading and dangerous. It both threatens the effectiveness of emergency service delivery, and also places unrealistic expectations of *CSI*-level crime fighting upon a police force that could never deliver that.

At present, most public discussion focuses on the role of the police in crime reduction. But, this is a very narrow and distorted view of the police function in terms of policing is and should be about, and what the police actually do. We concur with Jesse Rubin that the 'police are occupied with peacekeeping – but preoccupied with crime fighting' (Rubin, 1972 p25; cited by Kleinig 1996 p11). In our view, the first thing that should be done about the police is to ensure that people understand that policing is not all about crime control. The police are, in fact, an all purpose emergency service charged with responding to a wide range of different urgent social problems. In our opinion, emergency order maintenance – so-called 'fire-brigade



policing’ – is the true purpose of policework and should be protected from budget cuts (Reiner 2012c).

## **2. Who does policing?**

Many agents and agencies can and do perform policing tasks, and always have. Policing may be done by professionals employed by the state in an organization with an omnibus policing mandate—the archetypal modern idea of the police—or by state agencies with primarily other purposes (like the Atomic Energy Authority Police, parks constabularies, the British Transport Police, and other ‘hybrid’ policing bodies; see Johnston 1992: ch 6). Police may be professionals employed by specialist private policing firms (contract security) or security personnel hired by an organization whose main business is something else (in-house security). Patrol may be carried out by bodies without the full status, powers, equipment or training of the core state police, such as Police Community Support Officers. Policing functions may also be performed by citizens in a voluntary capacity within state police organizations (like the Special Constabulary), in association with the state police (like Neighbourhood Watch schemes), or in completely independent bodies (such as the many vigilante bodies which have flourished at many times and places). Policing functions may be carried out by state bodies with other primary functions, like the army in Northern Ireland, or by employees (state or private) as an adjunct of their main job (like concierges, bus conductors, or shop assistants, *inter alios* guarding against theft). Policing is also carried out by technology, such as CCTV cameras or listening devices. Policing can be designed into the architecture and furniture of streets and buildings, as epitomized by Mike Davis’s celebrated example of the bum-proof bench (Davis, 1990). It is increasingly carried out by transnational agencies (Bowling and Sheptycki 2012, 2015).

All these policing strategies are proliferating today, even though it is only the state agency with the omnibus mandate of order maintenance that is still popularly understood by the label ‘the police’. A much-debated question is whether the apparent

shift away from state policing towards private, citizen, and transnational forms amounts to a fundamental and qualitative transformation (Bayley and Shearing 1996). This claim has been subject to cogent critique. Although the personnel employed by private security have indeed grown to be more numerous than public constabularies in many countries, they were already coming close in the supposed heyday of state policing in the post-war decades (Jones and Newburn 2002).

Moreover part of the increase in private security numbers occurred because corporations have increasingly substituted contract for in-house security thus boosting the private security employment statistics. More broadly, Jones and Newburn show that the growth of private security represents an increasing formalization of social control as the number of employees with *secondary* but still substantial security functions (bus and rail conductors and inspectors, park-keepers, roundsmen, etc.) has declined sharply. Some forms of citizen auxiliary police like the Special Constabulary have declined (Jones and Newburn, 2002), but the introduction and rapid proliferation of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) since 2002 indicates the diversity of the 'extended policing family'. The mushrooming of private security performing an increasing array of functions, and the internal diversification of state policing, certainly are significant developments, but what is debatable is whether they amount to a qualitatively new model of policing requiring an entirely new analytic paradigm (cf the arguments in Shearing, 2007, Shearing and Stenning 2012 versus Newburn, 2007, Jones, 2007).

The state has never had a monopoly of security arrangements (Zedner, 2006), even though in stable liberal democracies it has claimed control over *legitimate* force—but there is no evidence that this domination of *legitimacy* is under challenge. The new policing theorists claim that the status and image of private security has been transformative and not just because of their quantitative presence. Whilst they are certainly more in demand, it is far from clear that they have become viewed more positively by the mass of the public. Although for primarily economic reasons it has been government policy to develop civilianization and auxiliaries like the PCSOs, these do not threaten the hold over the mainstream 'sworn' constables in the public imagination. Indeed the popular media have regularly reviled PCSOs ('Blunkett's Bobbies') and similar initiatives. Whilst there has undoubtedly been a pluralization of

policing in recent decades, in neither substance nor symbolism does it amount to qualitative transformation. In our opinion, the public police are, and should remain, the lynchpin of state governance.

### **3. What powers do the police have?**

Police officers usually require only the power of persuasion to do a good job. Coaxing a suicidal person away from a ledge, escorting a drunk from a bar, asking children calmly but firmly to stop disturbing their elderly neighbours can all be achieved with good communication skills and the personal and institutional authority vested in the police uniform. However, as we have argued above, to do the job the police require the power to use ‘non negotiable force’ and the power to intrude into privacy. The reason that people ‘call the cops’ (rather than anyone else) is because they have the ‘capacity and authority to overpower resistance to an attempted solution in the natural habitat of the problem’ (Bittner 1970, pp40-41). This raises the question of what powers the police should have and how powerful they should be.

The police share a number of features in common with the military (Townsend 1993). They are both specialists in the use of force, and are disciplined organisations arranged hierarchically in a rank structured bureaucracy. Both have access to armaments of various degrees of lethality, and share similar uniforms, helmets, and badges of rank. Both are drilled to march in step and have ‘command and control’ systems that guide and manage deployment. The fundamental difference exists because democratic policing emphasises minimal force in the maintenance of social order, whereas military use of force aims to conquer an enemy by ‘killing people and breaking things’ (Dunlap 2001).

The architects of the modern British police emphasised the distinction between soldiers and constables. Indeed, the historical origins of the police lie in the public opposition to the use of military force in domestic situations – the deployment of the

Yeoman at Arms at Saint Peters Fields Manchester in 1819 (the so called Peterloo massacre) – is often cited as a significant feature in the development of non-military means of responding to riot (Townsend 1993). Key ideas have underscored the distinction between police and military forces: the idea of the constable as a ‘citizen in uniform’, the doctrine of the ‘minimum use force’, the ‘rule of law’ and the subordination of police powers to judicial processes required to collect evidence and arrest suspects. These ideas provide legitimacy to the monopoly on the use of force granted to the police in maintaining public order and investigating crime. In Britain this distinction is underscored by the fact that most police officers are armed only with batons (and increasingly Tasers) and do not routinely carry firearms. Elsewhere, of course, the routine arming of the police is usually defended on the grounds of ‘officer protection’.

The police-military boundary is becoming increasingly narrow (McCulloch, 2004) and this trend is not limited to the United States, although it is particularly pronounced there (Kraska 2001, 2007). Military personnel in many ‘new wars’ – ranging from involvement in civil war and intervening in weak, failing and failed states – are frequently called upon to undertake constabulary duties in riot control and crime investigation. At the same time, the threat of serious public disorder, actual or perceived growth in armed criminality and terrorism have led governments to equip police forces with heavier armaments and to develop military training and deployment programmes. Police officers in special paramilitary units are often virtually indistinguishable from soldiers (Goldsmith and Sheptycki, 2007).

Police in Britain rarely shoot people, but when they do the consequences are of course far-reaching for the victims and families of those involved as well as for wider society. The shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes illustrated the capacity of the police to act in a quasi-military fashion. Mistaken for a suicide bomber following a botched surveillance operation in the wake of the 2005 mass casualty attacks on London, no attempt was made to arrest de Menezes who was shot seven times in the head in order to prevent any possibility that a device could be detonated. In 2011, the shooting of Mark Duggan – who was unarmed at the time he was killed – provoked

demonstrations and triggered widespread rioting. In many parts of the world, police shootings are much more common than in Britain. In Jamaica, with a population of around 2.5 million, around 140 people are killed by the police every year. The Brazilian police shoot 2000 people every year. Police violence in the USA shot to prominence in 2014 following the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed teenager, in Ferguson, Missouri, which sparked days of rioting. The issue has remained prominent with the regular publishing of video film of police shooting unarmed civilians. The US government does not collect data on police shootings, but the Guardian newspaper launched a project called ‘the counted’ which has a tally of 709 people shot dead by the police in the USA in the first 9 months of 2015. By contrast, in Britain 23 people were shot dead by police the police between 2004 and 2014 (IPCC 2015, table 2.2).<sup>2</sup> In Ontario, Canada, the Special Investigations Unit, which is responsible for inquiring into cases of police use of force throughout the province, released a report indicating that between 2010 and 2014 police were responsible for 39 fatal shootings, of which 16 took place in Toronto (a city of over 2 million people) (Gillis, 2015).

In much the same way that the police-military distinction rests on restrictions in the use of force, the division between police and spies rests on constraints in the use of intrusive surveillance. In a similar fashion, the police have also sought to distinguish themselves from spies and police services from secret intelligence services. In recent years, however, the lines demarcating police from secret intelligence agencies have blurred. This can be seen in the rise of ‘intelligence-led policing’ and with it the growth of intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination capacity in police services, the convergence between policing and secret intelligence values in the provision of national security (especially in counter terrorism, but in organised crime), the growing role of the secret intelligence and security services in ordinary law policing and increased use of criminal informers and undercover policing tactics

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<sup>2</sup> There are, of course, many other deaths in or following contact with the police; this includes those caused by ‘less lethal’ weapons such as Tasers, the use of restraints, collisions with vehicles and deaths arising when police neglect their duty of care to people in their custody.

(Sheptycki, 2003; Innes and Sheptycki, 2004; Sheptycki, 2004; Fyfe and Sheptycki, 2006).

A number of recent scandals in the UK illustrate the problems arising from these forms of policing (Lewis and Evans 2013). For example, the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU) a 70-strong undercover unit was set up by the Association of Chief Police Officers to monitor 'domestic extremists', that is: environmental activists. In 2010, information about the unit led to the collapse of a trial of six people accused of planning political protest activity. An NPOIU officer Mark Kennedy was revealed to have spent seven years working undercover as part of the environmental protest movement. During this period, he had participated in police operations involving 22 countries which involved initiating long-term meaningful friendships and engaging in sexual relationships under false pretences. An even more remarkable case involves Bob Lambert, a former Special Branch officer with the Metropolitan Police Special Demonstrations Squad (SDS) who embarked on a series of long-term relationships with women activists (one of whom bore his child) as a way to establish a cover story. After these revelations concerning long-term relationships with undercover police officers, eight women initiated legal action against the police for deception. An equally troubling set of cases concern the infiltration of social justice campaigns relating to deaths in custody or failures of policing such as the Stephen Lawrence Family campaign. A series of judge-led public inquiries into the management of undercover policing are now underway.

Public debate about police powers has taken a radical shift in recent times as a consequence of the so-called "IT revolution" which has been a mixed blessing for police agencies (Marx, 2007). Techno-policing has turned out to be a double-edged sword: on the one hand it enhances police power, promises effectiveness, efficiency, expeditiousness and the reduction of administrative burdens (Bowling, Marks and Murphy 2008). On the other, the infusion of technology is giving rise to an increasing sense of insecurity (Ericson, 2007). The shift towards techno-policing should be cautiously received. Luddism is not an option since the history of policing reveals these institutions to be at the forefront of many technological shifts (Brodeur, 2010).

The coming age of techno-policing, predictive analytics, geo-spatial analysis, computer-aided police management (Prox and Griffiths, 2014) should be anchored with democratic and community-led police intelligence analysis (Bullock, 2013; 2014; and Rønn, 2012).

Policing moves with the times, of course. The ‘innovations in policing’ that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s (Weatheritt 1986) arising from the introduction of new technologies such as motor vehicles, two-way radios, computer aided despatch systems, centralised criminal records data bases are now taken for granted by both police and public. Similarly, today’s new scientific techniques, data collection devices and mathematical analytical procedures are shaping numerous aspects of policing, including crime investigation, intelligence analysis and the management of public order (Bowling, Marks and Murphy 2008). Such technologies as ‘body worn cameras’, personal digital assistants, mobile fingerprint and DNA testing analysis devices blur the boundary between evidence collection, evidence testing and punishment. These technologies also blur the boundary between the innocent person and the suspect since they enable the surveillance of entire populations. Numerous policing processes are being automated and temporally and procedurally compressed. This, for Marks, Bowling and Keenan (2016) indicates a move towards an automated policing and criminal justice process that is mediated by technology in ways that minimises human agency and undercuts due process safeguards. Few countries have been able to ensure the social democratic basis of techno-policing (Reiner, 2012a; 2012b). In the United States and Europe there is an observable move towards a highly militarized and invasive form of techno-policing (Kraska, 2001, 2007; Flyghed, 2005; Fassin, 2013). The façade of community policing has been destroyed (Parenti, 2004) and its techniques integrated into a militarised model of policing (DeMichele and Kraska 2001).

#### **4. What is good policing and how can it be achieved?**

The ‘blue uniformed’ police force is a modern invention (Rawlings 2002). Originally policing in England was equated with parish constables, night watchmen, thief takers,

the Charlies (the ‘King’s men’ so named after King Charles) and so forth. The police as an established body of state employees, lightly armed men and women paid to patrol towns, cities and villages with the goal of maintaining order, preventing and investigating crime emerged in the Victorian era. In Britain, traces of the police idea can be found in the late eighteenth century, but police forces really only came into being across the country during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Metropolitan Police Act (1829), the Municipal Corporations Act (1835), The Rural Constabulary Act (1839) and the County and Borough Police Act (1856). The extent of geographical penetration of the police is not that extensive. For example, work carried out by the UK Audit Commission in the 1980s showed that in a British shire force with 2,500 police officers, once headquarters staff, management, specialists and abstractions were accounted for, and the force divided into the four shifts required for 24 hour cover, there would only be 125 police on the streets at any one time. Amounting to one police officer on patrol for every 18,000 residents. In some places police presence is hardly necessary for more or less quiescent social order. But elsewhere people do not see the police as an organisation that can be trusted to be called upon to prevent or detect crime, or to help with other emergency situations. This is especially true in contexts where there is deep-rooted social conflict – and call upon other forms of ‘self help’ policing. The role of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in policing nationalist communities during the ‘troubles’ in Northern Ireland are but one example among many of how non-state paramilitary organisations fill a vacuum in state provision (Mulcahey 2005).

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Policing is ‘carried out by a diverse array of people and techniques’ and can be found in all known societies. The ‘modern idea of police’ is only one of the ways in which policing can be conducted (Reiner 2010, p5). As has been noted by generations of sociologists and criminologists, everyday social order is maintained, for the most part, by ordinary people without police involvement. However, there is a wide range of circumstances, especially in advanced modern societies, that authoritative intervention from specialists in order maintenance is not only valuable but essential. Responding to major accidents and civil emergencies bring this to the fore. Whether the incident is a train crash, flood or exploding bomb, police are required to manage the closure of streets and transport networks; the investigation of serious and volume



crime requiring people skilled in evidence collection, analysis and case preparation; the protection of infrastructure such as power generation and supply, ports and airports, telecommunications. All of these tasks call for well organised state policing that can coordinate with other ‘blue light’ organisations such as ambulance and fire services. And, as argued above, the police in contemporary society operate as the only all-purpose emergency service that is available twenty four hours a day seven days a week to respond to a wide range of social problems.

What, then, constitutes good policing? Here we reiterate Reiner’s ‘neo-Rethian’ perspective (1985; 2010a: 65). It might seem strange for critical policing scholars to draw on the views of Charles Reith, the conservative ‘cop sided’ police historian. We reject Reith’s (1956) romanticised view of the emergence of ‘new police’ as an unequivocally beneficent institution. However, we do think there is value in Rethian principles of policing, derived from those originally formulated by Peel and set out in the first General Instructions issued to the police by Rowan and Mayne the first joint Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police (Reith 1956: 286-7). These may not ever have been realised in practice, but they can be taken as ‘an aspiration for *what a police force should be like*’ (Reiner 2010: 47, emphasis added).

For Peel, peaceful cities rather than the ‘visible activity’ of the police was the criterion on which the police should be judged. This emphasises the point made above that policing is not only about crime control and it is crucial the police – as an institution and as a body of individuals – should be aware of their broader social function. In exercising their functions and duties, the police should recognise that their ‘existence, actions and behaviour’ are ‘dependent on public approval... and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect’. To the extent that policing is concerned with crime and disorder, good policework is not founded on the use of military force, the threat of severe punishment, or infiltration of criminal groups. Rather, it is based on securing public cooperation, bearing in mind that the police are only one agency among many public and private bodies that contribute to social order.

This also relates to principles minimizing governmental use of coercion, surveillance and other intrusive measures. Physical force should be used ‘only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public co-operation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order, and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective’. As Peel’s principles warn, ‘the extent to which the cooperation of the public can be secured diminishes proportionately the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion’. Police powers should be used fairly, kept in check and be democratically accountable. The police should adhere strictly to executive functions and refrain from ‘even seeming’ to usurp the powers of the judiciary in avenging individual or the state or judging guilt or punishing the guilty. Preserving public confidence requires ‘not pandering to public opinion’ but by demonstrating impartiality, service, independence and by offering ‘individual service and friendship to all members the public without regard to their wealth or standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour; and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life.’

The rise of global neo-liberal ideology has had consequences for the way people talk about the economics of policing. In several countries a general pattern has been observed whereby the official crime rates have been dropping for some years and yet the cost of policing has continued to rise (Boyd et al, 2011; Gascón and Foglesong, 2010; Leuprecht, 2014; Ruddell and Jones, 2013; Walker and Archbold, 2014, pp. 248-260). There are strong political cross-currents dictating that the costs of public policing needs to be curtailed while at the same time democratic social forces seek to assert more overt control over public policing (Walker and Archbold, 2014). These forces for change within professional policing are occurring at the same time as an increasing drift towards enhanced forms of High Policing (Brodeur, 2007; O’Reilly, 2015) and other forms of political policing, not least in the context of counter-terrorism (Weisburd, et al, 2009). These raise complex questions about how the quality of policing may be assessed that are at odds with Peelian policing values.

In the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, policing in most Western democracies moved towards predominantly community and problem-oriented approaches (Bayley, 1996). Currently changes in the police operating environment are reshaping the internal structure and governance of policing and these adaptations are weakening the connections between police and public (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2005; McCulloch, 2002). Bayley and Nixon (2010) argue that early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the institutions of policing entered a period of historical discontinuity equivalent to that which presaged the rise of modern policing in London in 1829. It is too early to tell if efforts by coalitions of progressive academics (eg Hough et al, 2010) and police practitioners (eg. Neyroud, 2008) can transcend the historical conditions by melding internal methods of police performance management with external markers of procedural fairness.

The odds are stacked against this for a number of reasons. One is declining budgets for municipal policing and the rise in the costs of sworn police officers. Another is resistance by police rank-and-file, especially in North America where police unionism in urban policing institutions is strong (Police Practice and Research, 2008). This has inhibited innovation and organizational change in many police organizations. Increasingly since the 1960s there has been growing resistance to racially biased policing that, in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has been exacerbated by demographic changes brought about by large-scale transnational migration (Bowling et al, 2012).

One possible response to the growing individuation of police officer accountability would be the development of a corresponding ‘constabulary ethic’ (Sheptycki, 2007). The constabulary ethic stresses the existential position of the individual police agent who is first—and-foremost a human being who freely accepts a professional role that imparts the responsibility of interfering in people’s conflicts with one another for the good of the community as a whole (Sheptycki and O’Rourke-Dicarlo, 2011). What makes this ethic particularly fraught is that, *in extremis*, police agents may use force up to and including deadly force in order to accomplish the goal of social ordering. The constabulary ethic demands that society owes all individuals, including but not

limited to police officers, a duty of care, just as individuals, including police officers, freely accept the responsibilities that go with living in a caring society. Ultimately, what is needed is policing that is ‘good enough’ since it is ‘unhelpful and unrealistic to demand perfect police’ (Bowling, 2007).

## **5. How does policing impact on different social groups?**

For most people, the police are the first point of contact with the criminal justice system and with the coercive arm of government more generally. Therefore, their impact on different social groups – particularly those most marginalised – feeds into inequity in other spheres and can often exacerbate existing inequalities. The impact of policing begins from selective police deployment and targeting, for example with the ‘over-policing’ of neighbourhoods where minority ethnic communities are concentrated. This propensity to treat such areas as intrinsically criminal contributes to the rate at which people of African, Caribbean and Asian origin are brought into contact with the criminal justice system. Such practices contribute to the on-going *criminalisation* of minority communities – the process by which the law is used against minorities to demonstrate their criminality through systemic and selective targeting and deployment of coercive power (Gordon 1983: 33). This leads to the disproportionate rate at which marginalised people come into contact with the criminal justice system, through discretionary practices such as stop and search targeting young men of minority ethnic communities and the consequent disproportionate rates of arrest, conviction and imprisonment.

Concurrent to this process of criminalisation, people from minority communities often experience a failure of *service provision* from the police. They are more likely to be treated by the police in a racially abusive manner, and speak of police apathy towards them as victims of crime (Bowling and Phillips 2002). Numerous reports indicate that the police response to minority ethnic communities as victims has been an unwillingness to provide protection, inactivity, and abuse by the police to complainants. The way in which policing provision is perceived by ethnic minority people is available from survey evidence (Bowling and Phillips 2002: 135). This

tends to indicate that ethnic minority satisfaction with the police tends to be much lower than that of white respondents. Unsurprisingly, this also affects the propensity of minority ethnic communities to cooperate with the police (Bowling and Phillips 2002: 136).

The failure of the police to provide a fair and equal service to ethnic minorities is particularly visible in cases of racist violence (Bowling 1999). Despite a documented rise in racially motivated attacks in the through the 1970s and 80s, the general consensus was that the police were either indifferent to the concerns of minority ethnic people or actively prejudiced. Additionally, the police harassment of minority ethnic people often occurs because of their insecurity about their immigration status, and those arrested after going to the police for help in cases of domestic violence or robbery may be asked to produce their passport, deterring people from seeking police protection. Moreover, immigration checks motivated by racial bias will only confirm such bias: if minority ethnic people are predominantly questioned about their immigration status, more minority ethnic people will be found to be 'illegal', thus confirming the initial suspicions. The effects of such discriminatory policing have been detrimental: not only have the police failed to provide a fair and equal service and protection to minority citizens, but it has also criminalised them through selective targeting and enforcement of laws against them.

The experiences of women at the hands of the police have also been shaped by stereotypes of 'acceptable' or 'conventional' femininity. The criminal justice system tends to mirror everyday stereotypes and assumptions, and the concept of the "guilty victim" (Tchaikovsky 1989: 185) (or the woman who has, in some way, invited harm) is applied to women, and police attitudes to women are based on conditions of "appropriateness" where women may be subject to harsher treatment if they are deemed to be behaving "inappropriately." Police culture, alongside being in many ways institutionally racist, is also entrenched in an occupational culture of sexism. Domestic violence has traditionally been low on the police list of priorities, possibly because convictions in such cases are rare and the attrition rate is high. The police tend to collude with male perpetrators of domestic violence, feeling that they should not intervene forcefully and disrupt the privacy of families. Worse, repeated incidents of domestic violence have been traditionally treated *less* seriously and as 'disputes' or

‘nuisances’. Women of colour are particularly vulnerable to the disbelief, blaming, and dismissal directed at them not only as women, but as ethnic minority people who are stereotyped as criminals, and as women of colour who are sexually stereotyped in different ways (Solanke 2009: 733). Women who arrive in the country as “dependants” and suffer domestic violence too are put at risk of deportation if they approach social services (Sarwar 1989: 48). A lack of response and a refusal to prosecute are common to the police response to racist attacks and their historical response to domestic violence (Sheptycki, 1991). Where the police have taken concerted steps to tackle domestic violence, through multi-agency policing initiatives for example, this has come at the cost of stigmatising households as “problem families” while continuing to hold that “cultural differences” are reasons for a lack of swift and effective police intervention when women call. This is compounded by stereotypes of minority ethnic women as having a “higher tolerance” to male violence and pain (Southall Black Sisters 1989: 43), or being stereotyped as “submissive”.

The experiences of women of colour are crucial nodal points from which we can understand the impact of criminal justice policing on those who face *intersecting* oppressions, or are multiply marginalised (Bowling and Phillips 2002: 50). The experience of women of colour then indicates a higher degree of victimisation along the lines of race, gender, and class, and qualitatively *different* concerns when it comes to improving police response. Such intersectional discrimination goes beyond mere addition, where discrimination is an aggregation of racism and sexism, but rather requires an approach that considers how such characteristics *interact* to produce distinct outcomes. For example, the police response to women of colour who are victims of domestic violence by seeing them as naturally submissive, tolerant to pain, or bound to their cultures is an *interaction* of misogyny and racism to produce an outcome that fails to assist victims rather than mere addition of the racism and sexism that minority ethnic women face.

Minimising the differential impact of policing on marginalised people requires a broader understanding of what it is that gives rise to structural inequality and discrimination in the first place. It is no surprise that those who suffer the most as a result of discriminatory policing practices are those who also suffer the most in other social spheres. We should turn our attention instead to the *sources* of economic,

social, political and structural inequality and cultural marginalisation. Safe and peaceful communities require investment in public services – housing, health, education, and employment – that operate in the interests of marginalised and vulnerable people. The current economic programme of cuts to services and austerity can only exacerbate the conditions of criminalised populations. We should turn away from focusing on the enforcement of laws that penalise people for being the products of a system deeply rooted in inequality and hurtling towards ever greater inequality.

Good policing, ideally, would primarily provide reliable emergency services and assistance. This is not utopian if the infrastructure to alleviate inequality exists elsewhere. Cultural change, where prejudice is tackled and treated as a *cause* rather than a consequence of the conditions of marginalised people, is necessary alongside a broader agenda of economic and political reform. Exclusionism sustains discriminatory practices and reform requires a reorientation and rebalancing of decision-making power. It is this exclusionism that is reinforced by cuts to public services that disproportionately marginalised communities that will have the greatest impact on the poor and widespread xenophobia with the call for tougher immigration measures. If we are serious about challenging discriminatory practices in policing, we must be serious about tackling their root causes.

Prospects for change come from the possibility that those at the receiving end of the sting of ‘total policing’ and ‘law and order’ campaigns may be able to instrumentalise their victimisation as a power base, to claim short-term concessions and long-term reform in the arena of economic and political equality. Alliances between marginalised groups, activists, academics, lawyers and others may provide the basis for effective collective action demanding accountability and the fair use of police powers, in the light of the failure of law to effect the fundamental changes required. While the scope for reform from within representative democracy is limited by the exclusion of minorities from politics and a lack of institutional interest, pressure groups and extra-parliamentary collectives may succeed by uniting people in their shared, if varying, experiences of marginalisation. Achieving both justice and peace depend on short-term interventions with a vision of a long-term future for fair and accountable policing.

## 6. Who polices the police?

Thinking about police accountability takes us to the first question of political philosophy: ‘who will guard the guards?’ Some people, including police officers think that the public should trust the police to get on with the job of protecting society from dangerous criminals, investigating crime and maintaining public order. To such people mechanisms of accountability might seem a bit like ‘handcuffing the police’. Observing Lord Acton’s famous dictum – that ‘power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely’ – we persist in thinking that democratic police accountability matters (Beare and Murray, 2007).

Arguments for the necessity for police accountability derive essentially from the difficulty in holding power in check. The conundrum stems from the empirically observable fact that achieving the goals of policing – the maintenance of peace, order and safety in society – routinely involves the use of physical violence, deception and intrusion into the private lives of people suspected of committing crime or are somehow threatening to the social order. As Kleinig (1996) argues, the exercise of state powers, simply because they interfere with fundamental rights of citizens, are morally suspect, cannot be taken for granted but must be justified in general and in each individual instance in which they are used. Although policing is justified by reference to goods it is intended to achieve, it also inevitably places ‘bads’ or burdens on particular individuals (Bowling 2007). Policework routinely involves the use of force ranging from the persuasion and threat to carry out a search, physical force required to conduct an arrest to the use of deadly force in extreme circumstances. There should always be some mechanism to ensure that that the ‘evil means’ used by the police are used for the ‘good ends’ that they seek to achieve (Kleinig 1996).

Debates about the regulation of law enforcement powers focus on the means by which the police can be held to account in two senses (Marshall 1978). The first dimension, that could be called answerability, requires that the police are explanatory and



cooperative – they can explain what action they have taken, against whom, why and with what effect. The second dimension, that could be called control, requires that the police are subordinate and obedient to some form of legitimate authority. This means that there must be some means by which the use of police powers can in fact be constrained to the minimum required and that there is liability and sanction where lawful powers are exceeded and indeed where there is corruption and incompetence. The precise mechanisms through which both senses of police accountability can be achieved are a matter of debate and internationally there is considerable variety of practice (Goldsmith and Lewis, 2000; Reiner and Spencer 1993).

Police are ‘held to account’ through diverse institutional processes. Police organizations have internal systems of officer accountability. Due to the powerful advances in computing and communications technology in recent years, front-line police officers are constantly measured in terms of a variety of key-performance indicators. This accountability is primarily facilitated through technologies such as the mobile data terminals in police patrol vehicles, but with the miniaturization of computer technology, increasingly officers are being evaluated according to performance metrics communicated to them in the palm of their hands. This internal managerial accountability has been enhanced in recent times through mobile camera surveillance. First in police patrol cars and increasingly in the form of ‘body-worn cameras’, individual patrol officers are highly scrutinized in terms of their occupational performance. The observations of earlier generations of police sociologists – that officer discretion increased as one moved down the hierarchy and that front-line officer’s decisions were made under conditions of ‘low visibility’ – are no longer true (Wilson, 1968; J. Goldstein, 1960). Routine technological surveillance of police officers has fundamentally changed the conditions of the occupational culture.

Police are also held to account through the institutions of law, that is to say, police are compelled to give accounts of their activities during court processes and to legislative and judicial bodies. Traditionally this has been done through one branch of law – criminal law – but increasingly police are drawing on other branches of law – for

example administrative law when undertaking civil proceedings to confiscate proceeds of crime. Law is becoming increasingly complex and so police capacity to give accounts in legal terms has increased. One Canadian study (Malm et al, 2005), determined that the amount of police time spent on paper work had increased by a factor of ten in the preceding twenty years. In other words, whereas in the mid-1980s it might have taken a police officer an hour and a half to fully process a person for driving a vehicle under the influence, by the mid 2000s, that work time had increased to around five hours. Or, to cite another example, at the time of this study the empirical evidence suggested the average domestic violence call would take to police officers about eight hours to complete, whereas historical cases would typically take up about one hour of one officer's time. These increases are due to changing legal requirements that oblige police officers to give account of their actions (Malm et al, 2005).

In some jurisdictions civilian institutions have some political policy purview over policing and this requires both individual police officers and the organization as a whole to give accounts. For example, in Toronto, there is a civilian review board which oversees police policy and there is in Ontario the Special Investigations Unit, a civilian agency charge with the power to investigate police wrongdoing. Although relatively rare, some scholars would argue that, at least in the English-speaking world, there is an increasing tendency towards institutional arrangements of external accountability and review (Goldsmith and Lewis, 2000). In the United Kingdom, numerous bodies are responsible for various aspects of police accountability – the Independent Police Complaints Commission, locally elected police authorities or commissioners, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Parliamentary Committees and so forth.

Studies confirm that in the United Kingdom and North America the avenues by which police, both as individuals and as institutions, are required to give accounts have increased over recent years (Ericson, 2007; Haggerty and Ericson, 1997; Stenning, 1995). In addition to the growing power of technical surveillance of police officers at work and the increasingly complex legal requirements for police accountability, there

is the possibility of criminal prosecutions, disciplinary proceedings and civil actions against police officers. Increasingly, the power of commercial media to expose police to scandal and urgency are being amplified by new social media thereby creating yet more lines of police accountability (Doyle, 2003).

British police forces have traditionally been highly decentralised and the vestiges of that tradition are clearly evident today. With the exception of specialist squads and agencies created to carry out particular policing functions – such as serious organised crime – there is still no national police force. Policing in England and Wales is geographically dispersed to 43 local police forces organised along county or metropolitan boundaries headed by a chief constable who answers to an elected Policing and Crime Commissioner (PCC). This latter role was created by the coalition government in by the introduction of the Police and Social Responsibility Act (2011) which abolished local police authorities. The idea behind the PCCs was to bring public voice to policing, to bring local democracy into the way in which policing was governed. The PCCs replaced the police authorities that were part of local democracy with although they are directly elected, they are not really accountable to the Police and Crime Panels that are linked to the local democratic institutions. The 2010 Conservative election manifesto promised to make the police ‘more accountable through oversight by a directly elected individual’, but the increase in accountability is highly questionable at best. The average turn out in the 2012 election was 15% and there were large numbers of spoiled ballot papers. A review by the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Lord Stephens concluded that the model had ‘fatal systematic flaws’ and should be discontinued once the existing PCCS had served their term.

It can be argued that whether the police are accountable to an elected politician (such as PCC) or a combination of elected and appointed persons, police decision-making will retain a high degree of autonomy. This is because the common law doctrine, of ‘constabulary independence’ which states that police constables should be ‘answerable to the law and the law alone.’ This has been interpreted to mean that police decision-making cannot be directed or controlled by any national or local

politician or institution. Despite decades of changes in accountability mechanisms, the Chief Constable remains sovereign in deciding ‘operational matters’. This, as the former president of ACPO puts it, deliberately insulated from political control makes the police ‘autonomous professional agents of the law’ means that the public must rely on police ‘expertise, judgment and experience in taking professional decisions on operational policing’. This perspective raises fundamental questions about how the police can be policed and by whom.

### **Conclusion: what is to be done about the police?**

Having worked through a description of police powers, their role, control, impact on different social groups and mechanisms for accountability, we turn in our conclusion to the question: *what is to be done about the police?* What ever else, we have to come to terms with the fact that every social order has some kind of formal policing mechanism. Policing is both inevitable and inevitably dirty work (Kleinig 1996, Reiner 2010a). Civilizing the powers of surveillance, coercion and punishment means coming to terms with the police. By way of conclusion we draw from the preceding analysis of policing in order to articulate what we think should be done to improve the quality of policing and the police.

Our first recommendation is that discussions about policing should shift above and beyond the goal of crime reduction; the idea that crime control should be the sole (or even main) job of the police has become a political fetish. It is wrong in theory and is flatly contradicted by the evidence of what policing consists of in practice. Marshalling resources in pursuit of maximal crime control is, in our view, not only unproductive but also skews the reality of the policing task. It is worth noting that the crimes that are recorded by criminal justice systems tend to be ones committed by the disadvantaged against the disadvantaged. The focus on street-crime rather than ‘suite crime’ is deeply embedded, and bolstered by the shackling of police powers in private space, including mass private property. In our view, we should recognize that the police exist primarily as a first line response to people in distress and that the ‘emergency social service’ role of policing should be paramount.

In our understanding the role of the police, we underline the importance of other institutions in helping maintain social order and community safety, including the family, schools, tenants and residents' associations, faith groups, private security guards, wardens, stewards and a plethora of neighbourhood organisations. The police are only one among many public, private and voluntary sector providers of services concerned with order maintenance, crime prevention, crime investigation and the provision of security. This is a highly plural operating environment that needs police, public and government to maximise the potential of these agencies to provide an effective, but also fair and democratically accountable social order for all. This also requires that we ensure that the police service is comprised of the right people in terms of police staffing, leadership and integrity. This is concerned with recruitment, retention, promotion of the people who have the right values and are committed to the highest quality of service and to the highest integrity. These qualities are not only important in relation to public policing, but also because there is a need for leadership across the policing sector.

Police powers should operate on the principled basis of minimization, parsimony and proportionality. That is, the police should use the least possible coercive force and intrusion into privacy to achieve their aims. In all instances, the least intrusive or coercive option should be used. The drift towards militarized policing techniques, equipment, methods and organisation should to be reversed. The use of covert investigative methods is highly problematic; the police should be visible symbols of democratic social order. They cannot be if policy and practice are shrouded in secrecy and routinely performed at the boundaries of legality and ethical conduct. We need more robust accountability mechanisms to regulate 'high policing' and intelligence led forms of policing such as surveillance, undercover policing and the use of informers. Models of assessment and accountability need to be examined thoroughly to reflect the reality of plural policing. Evaluations of policing have to take into consideration the diverse roles and functions of police. Existing mechanisms for the governance of policing are not fit for purpose since they are politicised, yet seemingly unable to hold police action properly to account, and they may in fact inflame police-

community relations. We need a properly democratically accountable and human and humane response to the problems of crime and disorder within communities.

The idea of the police as a public service is vitally important in a democratic society and should be defended. In a world in which everything is up for sale, the police should not be. This is important for a number of reasons, above all the requirement of public accountability for the common good. Legal regulation of policing is necessary, but not sufficient to bring about real change in how the fundamental goals of policing are shaped and moved towards a greater concern with legitimate peacekeeping. To create a more diverse and ethical police force, one in which the use of intrusive and coercive force is kept to a minimum and which can be held to account to the people it serves, requires political and cultural change. Apart from strengthening procedures to hold the police accountable, and improving appropriate training and supervision, it is worth noting that those who bear the brunt of the criminal justice system's coercive power are those who are at the margins of society more generally.

Official responses to police wrongdoing or occurrences involving the police abuse of force and other problematic policing events should be dealt with by an external agency. It is unacceptable for allegations of police misconduct to be investigated by the police themselves. Robust external review is a fundamental requirement of police accountability. Official policies should be enforced through training, supervision, and monitoring that is sensitive to the possible intersecting oppressions that members of the public may face, and the unique obstacles that these pose to current policing practice. The police should be accountable to the citizenry they serve and policing policies need to be monitored so that the emergency social service function can be made most effective at the operational level.

Women, people from ethnic minorities, the poor, the mentally ill and the young (and the various intersections of experience between these distinct categories) are among the most vulnerable members of society, who face political, social, and economic marginalisation in every sphere of public and private life. Those that are the most marginalised come into contact with the police as a consequence of their marginalised

status, and have laws selectively enforced against them, which only serves to entrench their marginalisation. As policing evidently impacts those most marginalised the most, the drift towards paramilitary policing and the use of broader surveillance that undercut safeguards on civil liberties should be reversed.

Understanding why marginalised individuals and communities are disproportionately targeted by the police returns us to understanding the police role is in the first place and more broadly, what activities are deemed to be objects for crime control. The police are the coercive arm of the state and embodying the state's values and interests. If the state embraces neoliberal capitalist values, it will inevitably work in the interests of dominant groups of people. Under such conditions, these minorities fall outside the values of the dominant class and hence become targets of inappropriate policing practice. Policing is ambivalent; its repressive functions reproduce the dominant social order and yet the activity of peacekeeping – if it is done well enough – can also contribute generally to a beneficent social order. Improving policing is, therefore, intrinsically related to refreshing and renewing fundamental democratic values.

**Comment [S12]:** Reword as "social control" (so as to distinguish from "social order")?

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