

Policing and Crime

Week 1 - Introduction

Lecture 1

What Is Policing

- The enforcement of rules in society; and the keeping of order; and the keeping of certain structure; and preventing crime from happening; neutralising the people who commit crime and prevent them committing further crime, or to punish them for the crimes they have already perpetrated.
- ACT OF MAINTAINING ORDER + THE POLITICAL ACT OF PROTECTING A CERTAIN STATUS QUO = '**POLICING**'.

- The main points on policing:
 - o Policing entails a diverse range of activities
 - o The 'police' and 'policing' are not the same thing;
 - the police (series of social institutions, organisation – like the AFP and the NSW State Police).
 - the act of policing refers to a social act, that is done by a lot of actors in society, it is done at some point in time by everyone in society (at a family level, community etc.) – how to maintain a certain set of behaviours that are deemed good or acceptable.

- Definition:
 - o Policing is 'the whole gambit of **oversight, surveillance, intelligence** and **social control** that may be utilised to maintain public order.
 - A huge set of activities, tool, objects and social institutions that are used to maintain public order. These are not exclusively to the use of the police – for example parents enforce certain social controls onto children.
 - Detection and reporting of deviance (ideally) contributes to maintenance of social control – many involved in the process.
 - o Deviance is 'acting outside of socially accepted normalities – henceforth policing is the control of individuals who act outside socially accepted norms (these norms vary from place and time).

Who Does Policing

- State Agencies
 - o State Police
 - o ASIO
 - o AFP
 - o Customs and Border Control
 - o Intelligence Agencies
 - o ATO
 - o ICAC
 - o ACCC
 - o Military
 - o Local Council

- Commercial/Private Entities
 - o Private Security Firms
 - o CCTV Operator
 - o Shopping Centre
 - o Campus Security
 - o Internet Service Provider

- Insurance Company
- Volunteer Organisation and Informal Association
 - Neighbourhood Watch
 - Surf Lifesaver
- Individually
 - Yourself
 - Others
 - An attempt to control from your perspective what is an acceptable form of behaviour.

Coercive Power

- Policing refers to:
 - organised forms of order maintenance
 - peacekeeping
 - rule or law enforcement
 - crime investigation and prevention and other forms of investigation
 - associated information-brokering
 - which may involve a conscious exercise of power (Jones and Newburn 1998: 18-19).
 - Through the use of all these tools, we have the tools to enforce a certain order, coercively, by punishing those who do not comply – it is a decision by these organisations to use these coercive powers to enforce a certain set of rules.

Social Order

- Policing is a set of activities aimed at **preserving the security of a particular social order, or social order in general.**
- Definition that refers to social order highlights a political aspect of policing organisation as protectors of the status quo – *the way thing is at the present.*
 - ***‘policing can only be as fair and just as the system it preserves’.***
- Certain policing maintains social order not in the status quo, but rather protect a certain group of people in power.

Consent v Coercion

- Police and the enforcement of social order may be carried out by **consent** or by **coercion**.
- Whether policing is consensual or coercive depends on the **legitimacy** of rules/laws to be enforced and the organisations involved.
- When law and policing agencies do not enjoy the support of the general public, policing becomes oppressive and involves increasing levels of force – due to the lack of legitimacy in the government – enforcement of social order through coercion.

Characteristics of Policing

- Systems of surveillance coupled with threat of sanctions for discovered deviance – gathering metadata, information from surveillance technology – before its advent of surveillance technology, surveillance was much more complex.
 - An individual’s behaviour would change depending on who is surveillance them – the threat of sanction could change an individual’s behaviour.
- These may be beneficial or harmful depending on who you are, how you are perceived by who is doing the policing, and **where you are situated in social hierarchy** (politically, economically, etc.)
 - Many of the policing institutions that we have are designed for the poor – the institution of law is experienced differently by different people (gender, religion...)
- The agencies involved with policing and the strategies that they employ tell us a great deal about **social values, fairness, legitimacy and inclusivity – THE POLICE MIRROR SOCIETY.**

Police

- In Australia, the police generally refer to the federal and state police forces: NSW Police, Victorian Police, AFP.
- Principal Duties: (85% time)
 - o Patrolling: majority are minor incidents, non-violent or non-criminal).
 - o Crime Investigation: (gathering statements, collecting evidence, interrogating etc.).
 - o Traffic Regulation.
- Other specialised (non-routine) activities include:
 - o Undercover work.
 - o Armed raids/sieges.
 - o Hostage negotiation.
 - o Counter-terrorism.
 - o Bomb disposal.
 - o VIP security.
 - o Escorting and transporting prisoners.
- The police are involved in a range of activities that are not directly associated with policing (i.e. surveillance or sanctions) – these tools create legitimacy of the policing organisation in the feeling of safety and rapport these include:
 - o Dispute resolution.
 - o Community engagement and education.
 - o Emergency and disaster management.
 - o Interacting with media.
 - o Producing crime statistics.

Reading

Patrolling

- Patrolling is by far the biggest assignment in policing. In the United States 65 per cent of police officers are assigned to patrol work 64 percent in Canada, 56 percent in England and Wales, 54 percent in Australia, and 40 percent in Japan.
- These officers work around the clock every day of the year, in uniform, usually in marked radio patrol cars.
- Patrol work is determined almost entirely by what the public ask the police to do. Almost all they do is undertaken at the request of some member of the public
- Driving slowly around their assigned beats, patrol officers wait for radio dispatchers to relay calls that have come over the well-publicised emergency telephone numbers.
- In cities over 90 per cent of the work of patrol officers is generated by dispatch.
- Stopping motor vehicles that have violated traffic law accounts for the largest proportion of self-generated work, at least, in Australia, Canada and the United States.
- Patrol officers spend the rest of their time discouraging behaviour that they view as disruptive or unseemly, such as drunks sleeping in front of doorways, teenage boys hanging around on street comers, prostitutes soliciting, or men urinating against a wall around the comer from a busy bar.
- Very little of the work patrol officers do has to do with crime. British and US studies have consistently shown that not more than 25 per cent of all the calls to the police are about crime, more often the figure is 15-20 per cent.
 - o Moreover, what is initially reported by the public as a crime is often found not to be a crime by the police who respond.
- Most of the genuine crime the police are called upon to handle is minor. In the United States, using the categories provided by the Uniform Crime Reports, one finds that from 1984 to 1990 violent crime (homicide,

forcible rape, aggravated assault, robbery) averaged 13 per cent of all reported serious crime (violent crime plus burglary, larceny theft and auto theft).

- In Australia violent crime accounts for about 2 per cent of reported serious crime.
- The ratio of reported violent to serious crime tends to be higher in large cities.
- Violent crime still represents only 25 per cent of the total of reported crime in New York city, 12 per cent in Houston, 26 per cent in Los Angeles, 16 per cent in Montreal and 17 per cent in Toronto.
- In 1990 violent crimes accounted for around 1 percent of all reported crime in Australia, 9 per cent in Canada, 5 percent in England and Wales, and 1 percent in Japan.
- Not only is crime a minor part of patrol work and often not especially serious, the trail is almost always cold by the time the police arrive, with the culprit having been gone for hours and often days.
 - This is typical of crimes against property, the largest category of serious crimes.
- Police are either fighting crime or restoring order and providing general assistance interrupt and pacify situations of potential or ongoing interrupt conflict – not just criminal law.
 - Evicting
 - Dog Disruptive
 - Obstructing Driveway (etc.)
- They hear all about the petty, mundane, tedious, hapless, sordid details of individual lives. Patient listening and gentle coun-selling are undoubtedly what patrol officers do most of the time.
- The most common, as well as the most difficult, conflict situations the police handle are disputes within families.
 - Officers around the world claim that such disturbances are more common on days when public assistance cheques are delivered, because then people have the money to drink.
 - Research into the handling of domestic disputes in the United States shows that the police
 - routinely pursue eight different courses of action.
 - Most commonly, they simply leave after listening, without doing anything at all (24 per cent).
 - Next, they give friendly advice about how to avoid a re-petition of the incident (16 per cent).
 - Arrest is the next most commonly used action, occurring in 14 per cent of incidents.
 - Police also;
 - pointedly warn people what will happen if they are called back;
 - promise future help if it is needed;
 - give explicit advice to one or the other about what they should do to extricate themselves from the conflict;
 - make sure one party leaves the scene;
 - or suggest referral to third parties, professional or otherwise
- Infrequent Arrests; In the United States in 1990, police officers made an average of 19 arrests a year.
- The power to arrest is what makes their intervention authoritative. Police can forcibly stop people from doing what they are doing.
- Disputes are not the only situations in which the police are called upon to intervene authoritatively. People come to the police with all sorts of urgent problems hoping they are able to help. These requests, which vastly outnumber disturbances, are as varied as the needs of the public. Such calls require service, not force or law enforcement.
- Patrol officers spend a lot of time simply waiting for something to happen. They spend most of the time driving methodically around, guided by their extensive knowledge of where incidents are likely to occur.
 - They can point to houses where they are repeatedly called to mediate family disputes,
 - up-market apartment complexes where young swingers frequently hold noisy parties,
 - troublesome 'biker' bars where drugs are sold, business premises patrolled by a vicious dog,
 - street corners where drug dealers collect, car parks often hit by thieves,

- warehouses with poor alarm systems and places where police officers have been shot and wounded.

Criminal Investigation

- The next biggest job in policing after patrolling is criminal investigation. It accounts for 14 per cent of police personnel in Canada, 15 per cent in England and Wales and the United States, 16 per cent in Australia and 20 per cent in Japan.
- Criminal investigation is done by detectives, who do not usually work in uniform and have more flexible hours than patrol officers.
- Detectives in small police departments or those assigned to field stations tend to be generalists, investigating whatever crime occurs.
 - The rest, usually working out of headquarters, are assigned to speciality units, such as homicide, robbery, vice, narcotics, auto theft, and burglary.
 - In recent years some forces have added new specialities such as bias crime, child abuse, sexual assault and computer crime.
- Preventive effect detectives have come primarily through deterrence - that is, by removing particular offenders from the streets or by demonstrating to would-be offenders that crime does not pay.
- Detectives rarely anticipate crime and prevent it from happening, they occasionally 'stake-out' the sites of likely criminal activity or clandestinely watch known in order to catch them in the act.
- Detectives:
 - talk to people - victims, suspects, witnesses - in order to find out exactly what happened in particular situations and whether there is enough evidence to arrest and prosecute suspects with a reasonable likelihood of conviction.
 - In most cases detectives make very quick judgements about whether an investigation should be undertaken. It depends on **two factors**:
 - first, whether a credible perpetrator has been fairly clearly identified and,
 - second, whether the crime is especially serious or repugnant - the sort that attracts public attention.
 - Except when forced to do so by public pressure, police do not invest resources in cases in which they have no idea who the criminal might be. Such cases are almost always burglaries and most robberies.
- Detectives, quickly formulate a theory about who committed the crime and then set about collecting the evidence that will support arrest and prosecution.
 - They know if perpetrators cannot be identified by people on the scene the police are not likely to find the criminals on their own.
 - Nor is physical evidence especially important in determining whether a case is pursued, it is used as confirmation - to support testimony that identifies suspects. The absence of physical evidence might mean a case cannot be made; it may also disconfirm a theory.
 - But it hardly ever leads to the identification of persons not already suspected by the police.
- Criminal investigations begin with the identification, then collect evidence (rarely collect evidence than identification).
- If a crime cannot be solved more or less on the spot, the case will probably be closed and the detectives will move on to more promising case.
 - Because most crime suspects cannot be identified readily, most crimes go unsolved, of serious crimes that are solved:
 - Japan 58%
 - USA 22%
 - England and Wales 35%
 - Australia 30%

- Canada 45%
- The likelihood of solving a < crime varies with the nature of the offence, with higher rates for confrontational crimes and lower rates for property crimes.
- Detectives spend most of their time talking to people strongly suspected of being involved in crimes in an attempt to get them to confess.
 - Interrogations are generally fairly low key and straightforward. Detectives simply confront a suspect with the evidence they have. They do not have to be very clever because most of the time suspects do confess.
 - Sometimes they make threats which have much more to do with the ability of the police to persist than with physical force. Sometimes they bluff and sometimes they cajole.
- Detectives also work hard to get 'secondary clearances', that is, when a person who is prosecuted - or sometimes convicted - for one crime confesses to other crime – many burglaries are cleared this way.
- Perhaps the most demanding part of a detective's job is developing expertise in the legal requirements for collecting and reporting evidence.
- Detectives complain that paperwork is becoming increasingly more intricate and burdensome as a result of changes in court rulings and legislation.
 - Research shows that for every hour detectives talk to people and search for evidence they spend half an hour on paperwork.
 - Many detectives admit off the record that investigation can be done by anyone who is intelligent, poised and willing to learn the intricacies of the criminal law
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Traffic

- The third big job the police undertake is the regulation of motor vehicle traffic. In Japan 17 per cent of police officers are assigned to traffic units, 10 per cent in Australia, 7 per cent in England and Wales and the United States and 6 per cent in Canada.
- Traffic regulation is important for two reasons;
 - first, the number of people killed or injured in traffic accidents and the monetary value of damage to property are substantially higher than result from crime;
 - second, a larger cross section of the populace comes into contact with the police through the enforcement of traffic laws than in any other way.
- Traffic officers generally work in marked cars patrolling major roads for the purpose of preventing motor vehicle accidents.
 - They do this by enforcing laws against dangerous driving as well as against defective vehicles and by controlling traffic flow in potentially hazardous circumstances;
 - those associated with accidents,
 - spillage of toxic substances,
 - parades,
 - sporting events and construction sites.
- Their work is more self-initiated than that of patrol officers or detectives.
- Enforcement of traffic laws is a means to an end maintaining order and safety.
- Traffic officers, like patrol officers, use the law as a tool for obtaining compliance.
- Traffic policing is highly discretionary, requiring officers to make a lot of decisions on the spot whether the law should be enforced.
- Traffic officers can always find an excuse to stop a vehicle, if not for speeding or driving mistakes then for mechanical vehicle defects.

- Traffic officers can when halting a car;
 - o They can either apply an official penalty with or without a stern lecture, warn the driver, arrest the driver for being intoxicated or for another crime, or take no action.

Other Work

- Patrol, criminal investigation and traffic regulation are the largest areas of modern operational policing occupying about 85 per cent of all police personnel.
 - o Most of the rest is accounted for by administration: 11 per cent in Japan, 10 per cent in Canada, 9 per cent in the United States, 7 per cent in England and Wales and 6 per cent in Australia.
 - Administration includes recruitment, training, public relations and all the housekeeping functions of purchasing, paying, supervising and so forth.
- All the other operational units are very small, designed to support patrol, criminal investigation and traffic regulation in specialised ways.
- The most well-known special units are probably the dog squad and the special weapons and tactics team (or SWAT) - these units are used in incidents such as hostage takings or barricaded suspects or rescue operations.
- Specialised crime prevention units' account for 6 per cent of personnel in Japan by far the largest among the police forces studied. In Australia the figure is 4 per cent, in large United States forces 3 per cent, in Canada 1 per cent, and in England and Wales less than 1 per cent.
- Some police forces are also responsible for a number of other activities including;
 - o inspection and licencing of firearms,
 - o bars,
 - o liquor stores and gaming parlours;
 - o serving of warrants and summons,
 - o dealing with lost and found property,
 - o background checks on government employees,
 - o transporting emergency medical supplies.

Variations in Police Work

- Among the forces studied about 60 per cent of police personnel patrol and respond to requests for service, 15 per cent investigate crime, 9 per cent regulate traffic and 9 per cent administer.
 - o Within countries the proportion of officers assigned to different specialities varies considerably among forces - less in Japan and England and Wales, more in Australia and the United States.
 - Two factors are indicative;
 - First, the proportions of officers on the major assignments differ very little among urban, suburban and rural police stations.
 - Second, the proportion of officers assigned to different sorts of work has not changed significantly among the forces surveyed during the last 20 years.
- Police forces are organised to do the same sorts of work regardless of the social circumstances they confront – there are several reasons for this;
 - o The first is bureaucratic politics. Existing organisational units fight hard to maintain their share of resources.
 - o A second reason is that police forces are sometimes compelled to adhere to national standards for staffing.

Reading 2

- Public fascination with crime and criminal investigation has been spurred by countless television programmes and movies depicting police work as fast-paced and highly glamorous.

- The **'dirty work'** concept was first conceived by sociologist Everett Hughes (1958) to refer to those tasks associated with an occupation that contain elements that may be physically, socially or morally repugnant to outsiders.
 - o Examples of physically polluting sources that many people seek to avoid include filth, debris or bodily waste associated with such things as excrement, sweat, semen, blood, refuse, disease and death and decay.
- What television shows and movies fail to portray and/or to adequately capture is the fact that many of the tasks associated with criminal investigation are, indeed, forms of 'dirty work'.
 - o Specifically, 'dirty work' refers to those occupational activities that are necessary for the orderly functioning of society, but are generally viewed as being physically disgusting, socially tainted or morally degrading
 - They come into routine contact with criminals and other morally suspect people, and places them in highly noxious situations in which they will have to deal with blood, bile and human and other debris – is inherently 'dirty'.
- Also, contamination by **social dirt** occurs when workers routinely come into contact with individuals who hold stigmatised identities, such as drug addicts, sex trade workers and ex-convicts.
 - o In other words, contamination comes by way of members of groups who have elsewhere been referred to as **'social junk'**.
 - The **'courtesy stigma'**, a form of stigma by association. According to Goffman, courtesy stigmas are often based on relationships with family or friends, but can also occur in occupational settings in which workers routinely come into contact with those who are perceived to be social outcasts or otherwise tainted.
 - The **'moral stigma'**, a form of stigma by occupations in which individuals engage in practices seen to be taboo, sinful and/or morally suspect are those to which moral stigma attaches.
- Bittner (1990) recognised policing as a tainted occupation and articulated the view that the **police represent the arm of society deployed to do its dirty work.**
 - o Police detectives are among those workers who are socially tainted as a result of their frequent contact with others who are stigmatised.
 - o Further socially tainted by the fact that their unique mandate necessarily requires individual officers to become the 'fire it takes to fight the fire'.
 - o In responding to murders, detectives are confronted with scenes that contain the after-effects of extreme brutality, rage, with blood and other bodily excretions part of the ways and means of homicide.
 - o Police officers in forensic identification units spend much of their time searching for and analysing material that many people would find objectionable, such as blood, saliva, perspiration, semen, urine, flakes of skin, flesh, bone and body parts.
 - o Even general patrol officers routinely find themselves in physically dirty situations often stop individuals who are drunk or high and who may have urinated or vomited on themselves.
 - o Police officers often have to deal with offenders who are physically dirty, smelling of alcohol, vomiting, defecating, or spitting in their patrol cars or on the officers themselves.
 - o To reduce their exposure to physical taint, officers often wear rubber gloves or even full body suits when at crime scenes and interacting with suspects.
 - o The various unpleasant elements of crime scene work, the most commonly referenced by our participants was the smell of corpses.
- The public perception of policing (law enforcement) is fascination and admiration for glamorous crime-fighter engaged in the identification and chase of dangerous and malevolent criminals.

Method of Research

- Interviews conducted with 31 Canadian police investigators for a study of police perceptions of mass media images of criminal investigation work.
 - o The core concerns of this study were twofold.
 - o The first goal was to determine to what extent media portrayals of police investigative work cohere with actual police roles and functions, which permits us to develop a better understanding of police views of their fictional counterparts.
 - o The second goal was to examine whether police investigators perceive media products as having an influence on public expectations in relation to their investigative role and work duties.
- Police investigators also spoke of how, contra the glamorous image of their immaculately coiffed, groomed and clothed television counterparts, they were often physically dirty.
- Investigators also noted that they looked nothing like their attractive, well-pressed fictional counterparts, because the nature of their work often leads to sleep deprivation and unhealthy meals eaten on the run.
- One forensic identification officer described his usual look while processing a crime scene as 'covered in blood and fingerprint powders and having to wear a mask because of all the chemicals that we use'.
- Interestingly, some officers readily acknowledged that similar glamorised perceptions of criminal investigation work had influenced their desire to pursue a policing career.
- In the present study, police investigators similarly engaged in a reframing of their work that allowed them to feel intellectually and emotionally satisfied with the job.
- Other officers similarly cited the ability to stretch one's intellect and skills during an investigation as a key satisfaction of the job, especially during long periods of performing the tedious, routine tasks that are required during and after an investigation.
- Interrogation of repeat offenders and difficult offenders is deemed enjoyable as they are able to play mind games.
- In regards to career satisfaction;
 - o When someone thanks them;
 - o Commendation by officers
 - o Making a difference to the community.