

Mark Findlay and Ugljesa Zvekic (eds), *Alternative Policing Styles: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*

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For many years, the sociology of policing was theoretically and conceptually stagnant. Much good empirical and policy-oriented work was produced, but there was little which went further. The field has been enlivened recently by two major new initiatives. First, some researchers have looked beyond policing by state officials to the rapidly expanding field of private policing. The best of this work (notably Johnston's *The Rebirth of Private Policing* (1992)) makes us re-think the nature of *all* policing. Second, some researchers have looked beyond the traditional sites of Britain and America to examine policing in other countries. Notable here is Brogden and Shearing's analysis in *Policing for a New South Africa* (1993). The usual approach would have been to see how South Africa could learn from Britain and America. Instead, Brogden and Shearing look to see what the rest of the world can learn from South Africa. Such refocussing of academic work must, of course, be seen in a context of dissatisfaction with what the Anglo-American tradition has produced.

Findlay and Zvekic catch the two waves of informalism and internationalism in this book. Their collection of essays deals with alternative policing styles in a variety of places — Alaska, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Peru, Brazil, Tanzania, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Italy and (what was) Yugoslavia. These are the first essays that I have seen on policing in several of these jurisdictions. The book is useful for this broadening of knowledge alone, even if the quality of the studies is inconsistent. Their book also links with the recent growth of interest in legal pluralism: "alternative policing styles" often mean the co-existence and overlapping of (or conflict and antagonism between) various legal orders.

Even if policing is not done *by* the state, it is (except in its most expansive definitions) almost inevitably conducted in some relationship *with* the state. The essays illustrate the variety of forms such relationships can take. As the editors suggest, this shows the inadequacy of simplistic dichotomies between state and "popular" policing. For example, in Peru, alternative policing grew to replace an ineffective state; in China, it is encouraged and facilitated by local and central states; in the Philippines and Indonesia, "community policing" to supplement the public police was produced by the state; in Brazil, organised crime polices areas abandoned by the state; in Italy, policing by private agencies is produced by the market and regulated by the state; in Northern Ireland and Tanzania, vigilantes oppose the state; in pre-democratic South Africa, an extreme form of policing was conducted by state agents in death squads targeting political opponents.

In lengthy introductory and concluding essays, the editors "attempt to illustrate the contextual complexity of policing by merging the cultural realities of policing styles". They warn that the "combining of diverse cultural viewpoints has proved a volatile and creative process, and ... the complexity of our discourse may at times perplex the reader" (p2). I found the problem to be not so much complexity of discourse, but the enmeshing of interesting ideas in sometimes prolix and obscure writing. There is also some theoretical inconsistency. The combination of a rather ponderous structural functionalism with what they call "interactive perspectives" suggests the differing hands of the two editors. Their argument is that "the particular interactions of interest, power and authority which distinguish the structures and functions of police work should be viewed as constructed around

expectations for policing within a given cultural, political and situational context" (p6). The significance of this approach is that it insists on paying attention to the contexts of policing and warns against drawing simple lessons from research conducted elsewhere: obvious enough as this may seem, it is in considerable contrast to much "police studies" literature. The editors set out to concentrate on policing "as a process whereby authority is negotiated and power is performed" (p14). This is nicely put, and reflects the influence of Foucault which provides the best in the editors' chapters.

The essays vary in style and quality: for good or bad, the contributors seem not to have adhered closely to the "outline" provided by the editors, and there is certainly no theoretical consistency. The section of twelve specific studies begins strongly with an essay on rural Alaska by Otwin Marenin, author of some definitive earlier work on the "police role". His essay is an important contribution to the comparative study of policing aboriginal populations. Also of note is Olgiati's sophisticated discussion of private policing as corporate policing in "the transition from private self-defence as a formal right, to private self-defence as a market product" in Italy (p199). This theme is taken further in Clifford Shearing's essay on relationships between public and private forms of policing, which is the high point of the book. Shearing traces the process of transition from the state's monopolisation of policing (with the correlative dismissal of organised private policing as unnecessary and undesirable), through the conceptualisation of private policing as an acceptable junior partner in the business of policing, to the emergence of corporate private policing which threatens to displace the public police. The contexts are the decline of the private/public divide, the decentring of power, and the "emerging landscape of fractured sovereignty" (p227) in which corporations stand alongside states. The book is worth reading for this essay alone, although, like a couple of others, it is available elsewhere. Shearing's is a shorter version of his paper in the indispensable collection *Modern Policing*, edited by Tonry and Morris (1992). As Shearing suggests, the future may not be policing "by the community" but rather "pervasive and intrusive corporate governance ... If this fear becomes reality, the political realm will be one in which economy infuses governance more completely than even the most instrumental Marxist theorists have proposed. In such a world, definitions of the public interest and the peace will mirror the interests of corporate society" (p228). The insight and theoretical sophistication of Shearing's work exposes the inadequacies of much writing on policing and the need for policing studies to be exposed to theoretical developments in other disciplines.

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