RUNNING ON EMPTY: REINVIGORATING POLICING THROUGH 'WHAT MATTERS'

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Introduction[1]

Our theme is that after more than two decades of police reforms in several western societies driven by neo-liberal politics and New Public Management (NPM)[2], along with recent economies of scale through centralisation in a number of countries, policing urgently needs to undergo a substantial reorientation. This should be geared to organisational style, internal functioning and relationship with the public and should draw on the perspective of 'what matters' rather than on the current mantra of 'what works'.

> We argue that policing should be based on a *comprehensive paradigm* built around the three key pillars of policing: crime and security management, social-welfare and community outreach, and order maintenance.

This comprehensive paradigm evades traditional thinking with divisive dichotomies in terms of 'control' versus 'consent', 'force' versus 'service, 'crime' versus 'social', 'hard' versus 'soft' and 'central' versus 'local' (Van Dijk et al, 2015). It also places the police professional at the centre of the future development of policing. While we have a particular focus on the Netherlands we also take into account developments elsewhere and especially in the UK.

Police reform in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands policing was reorganised into a new National Police Service (NP)[3] in 2013. It is difficult to convey to outsiders how seismic this shift was and how profound the implications were for the governance and functioning of policing and the criminal justice system within Dutch society. For this was the largest governmental institutional reform in recent history and with over 60,000 personnel, the National Police became the largest public agency in the country. Earlier in 1993 the Dutch Police had been restructured into 25 autonomous regional forces and one central force

including specialist units. The responsibility for the day-to-day force maintenance (*korpsbeheer*) was with the mayor of the largest municipality within the region while policy decisions on maintenance were made by a board of all the mayors and the Chief Prosecutor within the region. The mayors in charge of regional force maintenance (*korpsbeheerders*) answered to the Ministry of the Interior while the Chief Prosecutor was part of the hierarchical structure of the Chief Prosecutor's Office under the Ministry of Justice. In operational matters there was as before a dual governance structure at the local level in which the mayor was responsible for public order and the public prosecutor for crime and prosecutions. Police chiefs had, then, two bosses and engaged with them in the so-called triangle for policy and decision-making on operational matters. Following the 2012 Police Act which ushered in a National Police the chief constable became responsible for all maintenance of the new police force – now divided into ten administrative units – answering only to the Minister of Justice. In this new constellation there was no formal role for the mayors of the largest cities within the now ten regional units nor for the Minister of the Interior. Meanwhile, the traditional dual governance structure at the local level continued to exist but importantly the major decisions on force maintenance and operational priorities were increasingly being made centrally at the national level. This raised much concern about balancing local, regional and national priorities as well as issues related to accountability.

Of major significance is that for diverse reasons the Netherlands, with a reputation for having a tolerant and enlightened criminal justice system (Downes, 1988; Punch et al, 2005), had in the decade prior to centralisation moved to the political right with a preoccupation on crime and security (Wansink, 2014). This was reflected in the Ministry of Justice becoming the Ministry of Security and Justice.[4] This rebranding caused considerable concern as it indicated a move to a primary orientation of crime control and away from local policing which had been at the core of Dutch policing since the 1970s (CCPC, 2005). Furthermore, the increased power of the Justice Minister, now responsible politically for maintenance as well as operations of the new police force raised concern. However, from the onset of the reorganisation the critical remarks from advisory bodies as well as from parliament were countered by the government by repeatedly promising

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2 New Public Management is a term used to describe private sector management approaches to running public services, developed in the 1980s.

3 Originally referred to as *Nationale Politie* (National Police) to indicate the move away from the regional system. It has become under a new Chief Constable (in 2016, the second chief since the shift to a national agency) the *Nederlandse Politie (*Dutch Police).

4 In October 2017 with the formation of a new coalition government the name was changed again to 'Justice and Security'.

enhanced coordination, effectiveness and efficiency regarding crime and safety along with substantial economies (Terpstra and Gunther Moor, 2012). As with many flagship governmental reforms this substantial operation was accompanied by glowing rhetoric but for various reasons the promised reform has largely not been fulfilled.[5] There were major problems of implementation, widespread dissatisfaction among personnel and far higher costs rather than savings.

The first national police chief made way in 2016 for a new chief with the remit to reanimate the stalled reorganisation of the early years. A critical analysis of this underperformance has been published but this is primarily geared to governance and organisational issues (Commissie Evaluatie Politiewet 2012, 2017). What is missing in the report, and throughout the entire change process, is a wider look at policing including a comparative perspective. This can provide clues on how to move forward and beyond the rather arid discussions about organisational structure and projected performance targets.

Comparison with other systems

The difficulties surrounding the rather cumbersome Dutch reorganisation closely reflect certain developments in other societies. Here we shall briefly examine diverse developments impinging on policing systems while also positing some resilient features of policing in practice. We take a largely Continental European view, for historically our field has been dominated by the USA and Anglo-Saxon countries to the neglect of other societies[6]. There have recently been, for instance, interesting comparative developments in the Nordic countries and Scotland which reinforce the Dutch experience (Holmberg, 2013; Fyfe, 2014).

5   The earlier move to regional forces meant that many chiefs and senior officers lost their positions and were reassigned or else left the service. And with the founding of the new National Police in 2013 the same painful process of shifting and shedding took place with the loss of some highly experienced personnel. Moreover, the National Police was legally a new institution which meant that all 60,000 personnel had to go through a formal process of assessment with the possibility of reassignment. All of this had a serious impact on morale, as Dutch police work until retirement age and do not have the structured retirement schemes – after 25 or 30 years' service – found in the UK or USA.

6   The USA remains prominent in police research but the US 'non-system' (with 18,000 agencies at the federal, state and local levels) deviates so much in structure, culture and practice from Europe – eg regarding governance, discrimination, use of fatal force and corruption – that it serves more as a negative reference point: there are, however, some useful institutional and operational developments in the more enlightened US forces.

Scotland is of particular interest because the nationalisation of the police occurred around the same time as the Dutch reorganisation, while the Scottish reform has also elicited critical evaluation. As in the Netherlands, the police centralisation process in Scotland has also experienced highly negative exposure regarding governance, leadership, police accessibility and conspicuous operational failures (Terpstra and Fyfe, 2014, 2015).

> In Scotland and the Netherlands, as well as in the Nordic countries, the withdrawal of local policing, closing of smaller stations, poor communications and lack of local knowledge have all been cited as factors in citizen dissatisfaction (Fyfe et al, 2013).

Police have increasingly focused on so-called 'core' tasks in the new systems at the expense of certain offences which have effectively been decriminalised.

A consequence is that in some rural areas with almost no local policing presence criminals have moved in to the vacuum to pursue various activities. These include burglaries in rural areas as well as forms of wildlife crime in Scotland and large-scale synthetic drugs production in the Netherlands. The latter brings with it not only occasional violence between or within criminal gangs but also the large-scale dumping of toxic waste in agricultural areas and attractive countryside. Hence the discussion in the Netherlands is largely about the absence of the police in the countryside but also in certain neighbourhoods in the cities. The long-standing Dutch ideal of a police closely connected to local communities decreasingly resembles what is happening in practice. Often one community beat officer has a large area and a large number of clients to serve; the maximum is set at 5,000.

There are, then, diverse negative consequences of upscaling and withdrawing from enforcement which attract dissatisfaction and critical debate. Although policing can never be omnipresent there is something disquieting about once visible and accessible police retreating from rural areas and this can enhance feelings of insecurity along with a wider sense that other services and facilities are abandoning the countryside. In the cities also, the police threaten to become more distant and impersonal to the detriment of security and legitimacy through lack of visibility and accessibility and especially the absence of local knowledge when police do respond.

Key developments impacting on policing

Some of the pivotal trends of recent years in policing in a number of societies have been: centralisation, militarisation, privatisation, civilianisation, internationalisation and politicisation[7]. These have collectively brought about a major shake-up in the conventional structure and functioning of policing (Brodeur, 2010; Brown, 2014). We are conscious of wielding a broad brush and cannot expand on the diversity within policing across cultures, but we remain aware that policing is highly context driven – nationally, regionally and locally (Reiner, 2010, 2016). However we believe it is useful to look at some common factors across countries as the similarities seem as important as the differences.

> Driving some key changes has been the narrowing of the police mandate to cutting crime, tackling organised crime and combatting terrorism (especially after 9/11 in the USA).

This narrowing of the police remit drew on the conservative and punitive ideology in US criminal justice fostering tougher policing, longer sentencing and harsher prison regimes. This 'tough on crime and on criminals' was exported through the influential 'zero tolerance' style of enforcement to a range of countries (Tonry, 2004; Punch, 2007).

Another significant impact is the move to 'professionalise' policing with a body of knowledge disseminated through higher education. Two strands can be distinguished here. One emphasises the content of the profession and embraces the image of the police officer as a *reflective practitioner* (Schön, 1983). Important aspects are ethics and values, responsibility and accountability. The other emphasises more the structural aspects of the established professions. The College of Policing for England and Wales (founded 2012), for example, is modelled on the medical profession with the aim of an all-graduate membership and with a code of ethics, professional standards and 'evidence based policing' (EBP) providing the knowledge base (Sherman, 2013). This rush to 'certification' through higher education to enhance the status of policing is also visible in the Netherlands.

That development raises again the dichotomy of 'management cops' and 'street cops' first flagged by Reuss-Ianni (1983). For UK and US policing was traditionally an artisan institution with everyone starting on the streets and with senior officers rising through the ranks[8]. Reuss-Ianni conveyed that this shared culture and experience was evaporating with senior officers espousing new management practices that created a rift with lower personnel. This has since then brought about yet a new layer of *corporate cops* at the top with the management cops becoming the middle layer. This cultural and operational gap with frontline policing has been accentuated by the recruitment and promotion of senior officers largely on educational qualifications and management competence along with direct entry schemes in some forces (Lee and Punch, 2006; HMICFRS, 2017). There are, then, serious questions about the growing social distance between ranks and also the operational ability of new-style senior officers especially in demanding situations.

Probably the most influential factor in recent decades has been the predominance of neo-liberalism in western societies (Verhaege, 2014; Monbiot, 2017). This strongly influenced US and UK governments from the early 1980s and stood for a leaner state, primacy of free enterprise, cuts in public welfare, opposition to unions and tougher approaches to crime and disorder. Later this was also embraced by ostensibly 'leftish' governments, as with 'New Labour' in the UK (from 1997), and became widely the new normal. In the Netherlands there was the introduction in 2001 of performance based-financing followed by the National Police Framework (*Landelijk Kader Politie*) and related regional covenants (performance contracts) as a form of output management. This was under a government programme 'Towards a safer society' aimed at a 20 to 25 per cent reduction of crime and disorder by tougher enforcement.

It is noticeable, however, that a range of thoughtful overviews and innovative proposals in several societies have in recent years been side-lined or simply ignored (CPCC, 2005; Cartwright and Shearing, 2012; Stevens Report, 2013). Establishment thinking, in contrast, tends to be reductionist, unreflective, simplistic and geared to production norms. For instance, the former Conservative Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had a '20; 20; 20' strategy for policing the capital. This aimed at 20 per

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7   Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) now control police chiefs in England and Wales which goes against the long-standing notion – or myth? – of constabulary independence (Caless, 2011).

8   This was in contrast to other quasi-military systems with an 'officers' and 'other ranks' caste system based on prior education and a permanent divide between the two as in much of continental European policing, militarised police units and colonial policing.

cent reduction in costs, 20 per cent reduction in crime and 20 per cent improvement in public confidence.

This significant paradigm shift with harder approaches to social issues has come to dominate government policies in several societies.

> A central pillar of neo-liberal thought was that private enterprise was superior and that public services needed reforming.

The answer was to transfer managerial practices – rooted in competition, strict budgeting and consumer choice – from the former to the latter (Leishman et al, 2000). Police leaders were now expected to become a 'CEO', a chief executive officer – and to consider efficiency, planning and budgets; some were surprised to hear they now had 'customers' or 'clients'. Furthermore, they were under increasing pressure to perform and were held to account by diverse government agencies and by an increasingly intrusive media. Of fundamental importance emanating from this powerful ideology at governmental level was that services had to be pruned to balance budgets. This was particularly dominant during the global economic crisis starting in 2008. One consequence in recent years has been to cut substantially policing budgets in the UK. This was less the case in the Netherlands where the presumed savings from centralising led to a short-sighted budget cut of 250 million euros for policing at the start of the reorganisation in 2013. But later fresh financial resources have been provided to the second chief.

The results of the budget cuts have been particularly savage in UK policing with reductions in numbers of officers, cuts in pay, freezing of promotions and lengthening the pension age. In some British forces police property is being sold, mounted units disbanded, traffic duties largely abandoned, diverse services outsourced and civilians are increasingly taking over certain policing tasks. In short, many officers are being asked to do more with less, there are fewer qualified co-workers, diminishing resources and with a low chance of reward. As a result there is evidence of widespread disillusion and alienation among police personnel with high rates of sickness and of premature retirement.[9]

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9   It was also the case that policing in some societies and forces was structured in 'occupational communities' with regard to accommodation, recreation, sport and music: while that could mean a measure of exclusion from society it could also foster social support and being able to relax with colleagues from a similar background and with similar experiences. It is difficult to assess to what extent cutting back in these areas, or abandoning them, has weakened the social cement of the occupation with consequences for collegial support on tough occasions or on general work satisfaction.

Symptoms of unrest and stress are also evident in Scottish and Dutch policing but have been mainly associated with the restructuring processes in which geographical boundaries are changed and police officers have to be redeployed with the possibility of being transferred across the country or else seek other employment. Many Dutch police officers had already earlier experienced recurring cycles of reform with successive chiefs and external specialists promoting change. This constant reform agenda over more than two decades has fostered widespread dissatisfaction, insecurity and lack of motivation. The persistent insecurity along with reform fatigue has led to some 3,000 officers being currently on long-term sickness leave.

Cuts in wider Dutch public service budgets have also fostered unrest in education, social work, medical care and emergency services. Of considerable importance societally is that while the Dutch police was reorganised into a national service, several health and welfare services were at the same time being decentralised putting local government in charge but with reduced budgets. Importantly, various facilities for supporting people with mental health issues have been closed based on the assumption that ambulant care organised by the municipal authorities is more effective and less costly. However, there has been at the same time a cutting back on home help, economies on accident and emergency provision and increased pressures on general practitioners to take on more tasks. In particular, psychiatric services are performing poorly from lack of personnel and with extended waiting lists for the most urgent cases.

This process is evident elsewhere with almost universally high dissatisfaction and deep alienation in diverse agencies related to understaffing, administrative burdens and poor remuneration. This malfunctioning is symptomatic across many frontline services. All of this has to be related to the impact on the vulnerable and to the predictable rising demands on services from an ageing population and the possible consequences for policing.

Furthermore, there is abundant evidence in western societies of an increasing gap between the wealthy and the less advantaged with the latter experiencing long-term employment insecurity given the major changes in labour markets along with increasing levels of poverty. For the disadvantaged class or *Precariat* (Standing, 2011) this raises the likelihood of various social and health problems including psychiatric issues, domestic

violence and a higher tendency to certain forms of criminal activity than other social groups. To a degree this is already happening and we shall deal with that below in relation to 'Law enforcement and public health'. But what all this suggests is that there are developments in western societies which raise acute problems in frontline service agencies to the extent of a major crisis in personnel, motivation and quality of provision.

Taking all this into account we are most concerned about the state policing is in – and what the State is doing to policing – and maintain that there needs to be a profound review of the pressures and demands being exerted not only on policing but also on other related services with potentially grave consequences (Loveday, 2017). For the police there is the added burden that, in the absence of provision elsewhere, people will increasingly turn to the police if they need assistance. We have a strong sense of urgency because services essential to the quality of life for many in modern society are perilously on the verge of 'running on empty'.

What is policing?

It is of fundamental importance to establish what 'police' actually means as it is often glibly spoken of as if it is self-evident. Police in western societies typically refers to a public agency with a legal mandate to enforce the law and maintain public order. But as Marenin (1982) put it, policing stretches from parking tickets to class repression.

> In practice policing is a complex emergency and social service agency with a baffling range of tasks related to regulation, inspection, political intelligence, counter-terrorism, immigration, traffic, diverse forms of crime and crime prevention, patrol of public spaces and aid to those in need.

This means policing is a shifting matrix making it different at different times in different places to different people. Crucially, the police is the only 24/7 uniformed and (ostensibly) accessible service with the powers to interfere directly in the lives of citizens and if necessary deprive them of their freedom with the use of force including fatal force. Police can kill fellow citizens in the name of the state which makes the police institution unique. And 'unique' implies that we should be cautious in treating it like other social agencies. There are two other particular features we wish to accentuate.

Firstly, in major emergency response mode policing has to change from devolved and routine functioning to being central, hierarchical and focused on critical incident deployment. Many people have to change roles, sometimes instantly, with different tasks, responsibilities and accountability. This could be regarding a natural disaster, terrorist incident, major fire, serious traffic accident, large-scale riot, major shooting, plane or train crash or large scale criminal investigation. This further implies that everyone involved has been trained, tested and certified for those roles and that they – and the institution itself – is ready to shift, at times with haste, and can be held to account for their performance following that shift.

Secondly, the first officer – or officers – on the scene of incidents, major and minor, is usually low in rank. The worst air disaster in UK history – as a result of a bomb explosion on board a US passenger plane above Lockerbie in 1988 – occurred above a small Scottish town and in the smallest police force in the UK. Burning debris fell on the town and over 200 bodies were spread over a large area on a late December night. Ordinary police officers were confronted with an extreme situation requiring an immediate response to something they could never have visualised in a peaceful rural area where it was probably often said, *"not much ever happens here"*. In the Netherlands, the same instant reality shock occurred when in 1992 a Boeing 747 cargo plane crashed into a block of flats in Amsterdam shortly after take-off causing massive damage and a raging fire. This was right next to the local police station and officers were dramatically confronted with mayhem and had to react immediately before support started to arrive.

Those two crashes were mega-incidents but a similar dynamic applies to other smaller scale emergencies – a house fire, a shooting, missing children, serious car crash, etc – and the implication is that officers, sometimes on their own, can be relied on to take control temporarily, to report back the details quickly and to direct others until the hierarchy of senior personnel and specialists arrive. Frontline officers have, then, ideally to be able to think for themselves and to be able to take charge independently. They have to be empowered legally to do so and trained for that initial holding role. Allied to this is that the organisation at all levels is competent to deal with such incidents and is ready to be held to account in public fora. And that higher ranking personnel are competent and confident in their roles and are prepared to be held to account internally and externally for operations. The lower ranking officers should be able to rely on that and the institution should be able to provide it.

Furthermore, much routine policing is conducted by one or sometimes two officers – in the Netherlands routinely two officers – who may well face challenging and threatening situations on their own. The consolation is that support is on its way. But what if there is no back-up? Among the complaints in UK policing related to pressure of work and lack of prospects – leading to resignations of once motivated people worn down by the poor work climate[10] – are that there are just not enough personnel. Charman's (2017) longitudinal study of young British officers in their first four years reveals them to be originally motivated but increasingly frustrated at the lack of personnel and quality of equipment. They have no time to do their work properly but rush from incident to incident while, if they need support, *"it's just not there"*. This not only weakens the delivery of service but is also potentially dangerous and raises the issue of the legal responsibility of the organisation to display a duty of care not only to the public but also to its own personnel.

> There is also a discrepancy here between the increasing demand on recruits to have educational qualifications prior to and after joining the police yet treating them as a kind of 'Uber' cops whose only task is to respond to calls.

This represents a wider downgrading of many front-line roles in service, health and emergency agencies by employing cheaper, less qualified and part-time personnel and / or staff from a private company who cost less to employ. This is evident in Dutch policing with Buitengewoon opsporingsambtenaren (BOAs – byelaw enforcement officials) who are uniformed personnel with limited powers to tackle low level order issues such as parking offences, biking in pedestrian areas and licensing offences – taking on limited control tasks to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of police from certain public places and certain functions. In British policing the rough equivalent of BOAs were Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who after a short training, and in a uniform similar to that of the police, took on lighter duties to relieve regular officers. But some forces have cut back on or disbanded their PCSOs as an economy measure which implies that regular officers are once more burdened with those 'lesser' tasks.

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10 After 13 years of service a female constable in Devon and Cornwall resigned because of pressure of work, "total lack of support" from the government and senior officers, having to cope with a large area with just one colleague, and from "hypocrisy and lack of funding" which have caused her to suffer from anxiety, depression and stress (Police Oracle, 2017).

Our thrust is to rescue policing from this 'dumbing down' process by recognising the crucial importance of the policing mission in society, restoring meaning to its mandate and functioning and especially supporting the frontline. Hence, we argue that policing should be based on a philosophy or *comprehensive paradigm* which is built around the three main pillars of policing: crime and security management, social welfare and community outreach, and order maintenance. This perspective on the police function as 'holistic' should be translated into the organisational structure and should be reflected in the way the professionals are equipped. Obviously, we are not implying no specialisation but rather that there is a limit to specialisation because different tasks are interconnected. At the level of the professionals it means that all police are in a sense 'general police officers', next to also being a specialist in a specific task area.

Drawing on all this we maintain there are two key institutional matters requiring urgent attention. One is the shortage of skilled officers at almost every level and the other is the new divide with senior officers who are seen as not always operationally competent and too often distant from the occupational reality of frontline policing. There is a simple answer to the first of these which is a substantial investment in personnel and equipment with a rise in salaries to attract high-level staff. But that is unlikely. It is also impossible to undo the nationalisation of policing in diverse societies which, along with its manifest defects, has had a number of positive features. Furthermore, it is of the essence not to approach these matters piecemeal but to approach them through a comprehensive overview of the nature of democratic policing in modern society (Manning, 2010; Brown, 2014; Stevens Report, 2013, CCPC, 2005). We shall return to this below but here we shall focus on three salient areas which could underpin improvement and a significant reorientation within existing systems.

Reorientation

Drawing on our combined experiences and the wider literature in the policing domain (Brodeur, 2010; Skogan and Frydal, 2004) we suggest three key areas to reorientate policing in a positive direction: competencies, solidarity and compassion. We argue that seriously investing in these three areas will improve relationships inside and outside policing while enhancing institutional effectiveness.

Competencies

We have pointed out that the police service is a unique agency with a baffling range of tasks which makes the police a *service* with a potentially significant impact on people and society. And, that as a frontline service policing is about direct non-routine contact of professionals with citizens and other agencies which comes down to 'handling the situation' (Wilson, 1968). However, handling the situation is not only applicable to working on the beat, but to all police tasks. Whenever things are unclear, police professionals have to assess the situation they find themselves in, identify other potential actors and agencies, define the situation and act accordingly (Lipsky, 1980). This is not only a characteristic of street level policing or emergency response but the same applies in other fields as criminal investigation, crime prevention, cybercrime, intelligence, traffic, or immigration. This implies that each and every police professional should be equipped for this general role with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes (generic competencies) in initial police education and training as well as trained, tested and certified once working as a police officer. Furthermore, it underlines the need of investments in personnel and to distil the specific competencies necessary for specialist roles and functions and to train, test and certify officers for those tasks.

We are thinking particularly of higher ranks in operational roles in command and control situations. Officers at the various command levels – strategy, implementation and deployment (gold, silver and bronze in British terminology) – should be trained for those levels in key areas such as counter-terrorism, public order and firearms. Not just that but also 'silver' level commanders should be on duty on a 24/7 basis to provide immediate back-up in ongoing situations. The key is that it is institutionally irresponsible to put an officer in a command role on the basis of rank who is not fully qualified and not well experienced for the task. This change would make officers in command roles more confident and make other personnel more confident in them especially as this would inform the accountability structure: for the higher the command role the greater should be the accountability.

As societies become more complex, frontline professionals should be able to handle complicated situations on their own and to deal with demanding situations and demanding citizens including vulnerable ones. Thus, police officers need to be equipped with a broad range of generic competencies relating to, for instance, communication, cooperation, problem-solving and digital skills. These broad generic competencies are generally associated with higher levels of education and training and in recent years, police organisations, especially in the Nordic countries, have raised the level of education required to enter the police to bachelor degree.

Solidarity

Police organisations are notorious for being segmented into tribes, clans and factions with a strong occupational hierarchy with patrolling rated low and specialist functions (firearms, organised crime and counter-terrorism) deemed high. That's doubtless difficult to eradicate but the organisation and its senior officers simply have to hammer away that in policing *everyone* is important.

> When a large-scale, pre-planned operation takes place or a spontaneous reaction to a major incident occurs, then everyone plays a role including the support and catering staff. But the same should really also be the case in daily routine operations.

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

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

Service, with compassion

'Compassion' is not always associated with policing but we use it here to emphasise that the relationship with diverse publics – especially the vulnerable – is of the essence. That relationship depends on motivation, taking the public seriously and delivering a multi-agency service. Also when police are called to serious emergencies or incidents of violence, sudden death or injury their behaviour strongly influences how victims, bystanders and victims' families assess the legitimacy of policing and, in turn, their willingness to cooperate later with the police. Hence this is enlightened self-interest. Furthermore, police aid to those requiring help has in various forms become increasingly institutionalised and even statutory in recent decades.

> Policing has gone from being a "secret social service" (Punch, 1979) to being routinely involved with aiding the vulnerable – as victims or potential victims or simply needing care and protection – including the mentally ill, sex workers, the disabled, the elderly, traumatised war veterans, the young and females facing domestic violence while officers also investigate hate crimes against the vulnerable and historic sex crimes.

Much of this work is being conducted in partnerships with other agencies. In short, in the area of law enforcement and public health (LEPH) the police agency is more often taking a proactive, preventive role with widespread cooperation with multiple partners as in violence reduction in the night-time economy, combatting domestic violence and child abuse and tackling drug use among the young (Punch and James, 2016; Van Dijk and Crofts, 2016).

What is stopping us?

We suspect that the suggestions for reorientation sound sensible to many involved in the profession. So why, then, is this not happening? There is even a lack of confidence in some quarters with a sense that the police profession is being undermined and will not be taken seriously in the future. There are three interlinked factors that aid in explaining this serious negativism which are related to politics, the media and the ideological element within New Public Management itself.

As a consequence of societal developments – with information and communication technologies as important drivers – politicians have become increasingly short-term, media focused and their horizon is reaching the evening's headlines or responding to the latest tweet. Indeed, the current UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, when Home Secretary said at a police meeting that their 'only task' was to 'cut crime'. This not only flies in the face of over 60 years of accumulated research evidence but is also insulting in telling a profession what its mandate should be (Skogan and Frydall, 2004). Police chiefs, then, are under constant political pressure to reorganise and to achieve goals yet with increasingly limited means while under intense media scrutiny and this is also the case with other services. Moreover, policing, crime, terrorism and disorder – increasingly linked to immigration and alien conspiracy threats – have become staple diets of the tabloid media which has moved reported police failings to centre-stage.

> Moreover, when a force nationalises there is only one force and one chief to focus on so the main news now becomes how incidents reflect police shortcomings at the national level.

This has happened in Scotland, the four Nordic countries and the Netherlands.[11] In the latter there have been some appalling failures in service delivery that were widely reported; scandals related to dubious spending and ineffective accountability; and revelations of resilient racial and gender prejudice (NRC, 2017b). Some negative police conduct is increasingly exposed in social media including through persistent harassing by vloggers with the images instantly spread on the internet. In the UK in particular certain sections of the media aggressively hound leading people in the various services including policing – especially if the latter are seen as 'soft' on crime – and endeavour to unseat them by malicious campaigns of 'naming and shaming' (Paddick, 2008).

Then there are the unanticipated consequences of change; police reform in the Netherlands drew power to the centre and away from the many separate forces

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11 In the Netherlands a damning incident involved a young woman who had been aggressively sexually assaulted but when she tried to report the incident to the police was told to come back later; yet in the following months she traced the offender and his location herself as he was using her stolen phone. There was still a lethargic police response until there was a witness and a DNA match leading to the suspect being tried and deported (NRC, 2017a). The case attracted much media attention, questions in parliament, an external investigation, new police protocols and an apology to the victim citing 'lack of personnel'. In Scotland it was a serious road accident that was reported to the police but it took three days for officers to respond by which time one wounded passenger had died and another was in a critical condition (Mortimer, 2017). This was seen as a result of reducing the number of call centres and lack of local knowledge.

while enhancing the power of the minister over the leading mayors. But the reorganisation has proved tougher than expected, is facing some major difficulties (loss of experienced personnel, recruitment issues, ICT capacity, rising costs, etc) and has a left something of vacuum in parts of cities and the countryside. In response the mayors have been increasingly appointing BOAs but as these become more prominent they also encounter resistance and are demanding handcuffs, pepper spray and an extendable truncheon. In a way the mayors are recreating local law enforcement forces under their control rather like the former city police but with cheaper and less qualified personnel.

Furthermore, surveys indicate that the public would like to see dedicated community beat officers and neighbourhood teams restored to their areas. All of this has led to the leaders of the National Police devolving more personnel and resources to the cities with more attention to local problems. This illustrates that the move to a national police – one of the largest public reorganisations in decades – was encouraged politically by a far too optimistic scenario of improving police performance while saving costs and also by a 'crime fighting agenda'. This not only underestimated the stresses and strains of such a mega-exercise – while most common crime has been falling for years – but also that many people in neighbourhoods were more concerned with nuisances and petty offences occurring locally. But often there was no police uniform to be seen. In general, most people desire a visible and accessible police in their locality and can usually soon discern the difference between 'real' police and other uniformed control officials.

To an extent, then, the central Dutch Police is having to bend its original paradigm to reinforce the influence of the mayors with their local pressures and priorities and to accommodate to local populations but it may be too little, too late.

For the dominant factor in all this has been the ideological neo-liberal component of New Public Management. Ostensibly it promised improved service and 'customer' satisfaction. Indeed, enlightened organisational management development advocated engaged leadership, debate and dissent, a determination to improve with learning from mistakes, investing in personnel and taking customer feedback seriously. But the neo-liberal element in many government policies and corporate practices draws on the bottom-line reductionism of the free market adage "the business of business is business". What one sees

across the board of services which have been pushed to reorganise with reduced budgets is a top down management style – often with a new layer of highly paid 'executives' – pushing to increase productivity with less personnel, cheaper personnel on flexible contracts with less security and benefits along with a time consuming demand for bureaucratic accounting. This goes against all the principles and practices of enlightened management of service agencies leading to high dissatisfaction among personnel and customers. This is also evident in policing and is, we maintain, undermining both police motivation and public satisfaction.

Conclusion: what really does matter?

We have drawn attention to the debilitating fall-out with New Public Management driving continuous waves of reorganisation and downsizing in frontline service agencies with possible grave consequences. For the reasons given above this is particularly relevant to policing because of its unique nature with considerable powers backed up with the potential for the use of force and with a broad remit to intervene directly in citizens' lives. We maintain, moreover, that this varied, delicate and at times dangerous work needs to be conducted primarily by fully trained and certified law enforcement officers. Also that an essential element is *surplus capacity* for emergency response which can only mean sufficient numbers on duty at any one time (Brodeur, 2010); and that local involvement in communities is essential. In the Netherlands the reorganisation of policing to a national agency is an irreversible given – although certain adaptations are occurring as part of the painful learning process – but we propose that reinvigoration can be achieved by reverting to 'what matters'.

This emphasises that policing is a unique agency within a democracy subject to the rule of law; that it requires engaged leadership closely involved with the primary processes and frontline personnel; that motivation is of the essence and that there is investment in creating skilled and motivated staff who are taken seriously; and that service delivery – especially with the vulnerable and needy – is performed in a professional, concerned and even compassionate manner. If you draw on the accumulated knowledge in police and management studies then this is the path to reinvesting meaning in policing and regenerating police officers to do what they want to be doing as professionals. This can be achieved largely within existing structures but it does require extra funding, or reallocation of existing resources, and a paradigm shift.

Our position is that we are at a crucial turning point in policing and that choices need to be made urgently which will not only determine policing for a generation but will also determine in what sort of society we are living (Lerner, 1980). Sound, solid, and accountable policing close to the public has been one of the bedrocks of development in many western societies since early in the nineteenth century. To weaken it further – along with other emergency, social, health and voluntary agencies – could have grave consequences for the quality of life and for the strength and capacity of civil society.

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