

WHO PATROLS THE STREETS? AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PLURAL POLICING

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Who Patrols the Streets? is an international comparison of plural policing in five different locations: the Netherlands, England and Wales, Austria, Belgium, and Canada's province of Ontario; selected for their comparable levels of partnership and police devolution. Each chapter describes, as the book's title suggests, who polices the (semi-)public domain, ranging from police officers to municipal authorities to private security. It also looks at the trust between the public and these different partners.

Terpstra *et al.* explain that the rise of the plural policing explored is a result of a 'complex of interrelated social, political and economic circumstances and changes' (p11). Their introductory chapter explores some of the key concepts found in the book and provides a succinct explanation of what plural policing is. Within this introduction is an outline of the research questions that each chapter addresses for plural policing in different locations.

Several methodologies are used within this book, with the first step of the process being the gathering and analysis of documents and publications relevant to the plural agencies of each location studied. Questions raised from these documents were posed to people in relevant fields via emails and further documentation was requested. Individual and group interviews were then conducted with six or seven experts, policy makers and practitioners for each location. These participants are listed at the end of the book; however interviewees are numbered randomly (e.g. respondent 1) for anonymity within the text. Finally, the authors drew up country reports to use as a reference point for the chapters of the book.

Unlike many texts utilising primary research in the form of interviews, Terpstra *et al.* use footnotes to reference interviewee responses, which gives the text a sense of fluidity; though footnotes often go unnoticed and points appear to be presented as empirical fact. Whilst it would logically make this an easier read, the reader must remain aware throughout, which is taxing when finding an interesting 'fact'.

Chapters 2 through to 6 are standalone – and rather uniformly structured – descriptions of the plural policing bodies in the nations selected and their functions. Each chapter begins with a brief overview of some political, social and economic factors relevant to the decentralisation of the policing system, alongside a description of the chapter's contents. This is followed by a summary of the structure and policy of the given nation's police service. Chapters then go on to explain the roles and functions of the major plural policing bodies, including the uniforms

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worn and personal protective equipments used by its officers. Some chapters incorporate some more in depth analysis of the social, political and legal reasons for the emergence of these new agencies, though not all follow this pattern.

The next section of each chapter is an examination of the relationship between these agencies and the police, with a feeling of contempt and disdain from the established police towards ‘non-police providers of policing’ (i.e. plural policing entities) apparently running through most nations; the tasks of security officers and wardens being seen as inferior to ‘proper police work’. Unfortunately the book fails to examine partnerships and relations, or lack thereof, between different plural policing organisations. This research has become increasingly important in light of international decentralisation of policing; using partnerships to relieve pressure on the limited resources of established police by delegating surveillance and increasingly enforcement powers. The final sections of each chapter vary according to nation, but most include details of procedures involved in holding policing agencies accountable (e.g. complaints procedures), current points of debate and foreseeable developments to the current organisations.

Despite the heavy emphasis on this being a comparative text, no notable comparisons are made until the concluding chapter. Most of the book focuses instead on describing the functions, affiliations and purposes of different plural policing agencies, as well as their individual relations with the police and public. Much of this text, therefore, arguably provides a descriptive reference to develop the study of plural policing in nations individually.

When reaching the conclusion, it is important not to confuse the purpose of this book. As explained in the preface, the purpose is to ‘comprehend the differences and similarities in the local *pluralization*² of policing’, meaning a comparison of the processes by which plural agencies have emerged in different nations rather than a comparison of the agencies themselves. Primarily, then, the concluding chapter of this book examines the varying effects that different social, political and economic factors have on the decentralisation of policing. This being said, there are some comparisons between the levels of police integration and powers of plural agencies in different nations. There is also an attempt to establish some typologies of non-police policing organisations. The authors outline six ‘types’ of surveillance and enforcement officer based on the status of the auspice and provider, though some of these only encompass one or two examples, making them narrowly applicable in the current sample of locations. Though it is a topic for development, it is somewhat disappointing that this comparative text does not evaluate the similarities and differences in the functions and effectiveness of plural agencies in various nations.

To end the book, the concluding chapter provides a plethora of developmental questions for the reader to consider when planning further research (see page 151). For practitioners, it also illustrates four models that can be considered and possibly adopted for future developments to plural policing, with tables of pros and cons for an easy evaluation of their viability.

² Emphasis added

Who Patrols the Streets? Is undoubtedly aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate students and scholars of criminology; particularly those who focus on partnership policing. It may also be useful to policy makers and plural policing agencies through its intention to ‘provide food for thought and to fuel debate on the future policy and organisation of non-police policing’ (p136). The text is accessible and direct throughout; striking an effective balance between being informative while leaving plenty of scope for development. The book acknowledges that it is an early step and has not tried to address every piece of the puzzle, but it may prove to be a valuable platform upon which to develop research that can improve best practice within policing organisations internationally.