Introduction

These are chaotic times marked by political, economic, and social upheavals that have resulted in war, genocide, mass refugee resettlement, and global and regional terrorism. Between the time of ideation of this book (2018) and its edition, international events seem to support our
questioning about policing in an age of reform. As we begin this journey, we point out that simply living in an age of reform may or may not call for police reform. But, it does mean that the police institution is impacted by political, social, economic, and environmental turmoil in ways that impend over its stability. The French yellow vests ongoing protest could be seen as a first relevant incentive. As we wrote and collected colleagues’ papers, a global pandemic killed thousands, and may threaten the long-term economic stability of the world. At the time we concluded this book, a “defund the police” trend was spreading in the United States following George Floyd’s death, which also sparked worldwide a diffuse movement coalescing anti-racism, social inequality, and also various obvious political agendas. It only confirmed our stance that the police, as an institution, does not stand isolated from these events or from the many other institutions bearing the brunt of their combined force.

Later in this chapter, we describe varying perspectives on police reform. But first, the authors will briefly and broadly describe the conditions under which reform of the police is considered in Great Britain, the United States, and France.

**Conditions for Reform in Great Britain**

For people in Great Britain the impact of contemporary events has been profound. In March 2020, the British prime minister in a bold effort to combat the COVID-19 viral pandemic introduced what looked to many citizens very much like martial law (It is important to clarify that Britain was not under martial law, there were no troops on the street and the country was still fully under the control of a democratically elected government). Everyone in Britain was ordered to remain at home, to stay indoors and only to venture out to buy essential items such as food or medicine. The public was informed that these measures were mandatory not advisory and that the police had been given instructions to take enforcement action in the event of non-compliance. At the same time as these restrictions were being announced, very similar curtailments on
citizens’ lives were being implemented by governments across Europe, most notably in France, Italy, and Spain.

These sudden policy changes had major implications for policing in Britain. There is no national police force in Britain, policing continues to be delivered by a multiplicity of separate regional and provincial forces. Many are small, deploying only a thousand or so police officers. Police officers in Britain are still largely unarmed, an arrangement that most officers wish to continue. Unlike neighbouring countries in Europe, Britain’s police forces are not backed up by a fully armed quasi-military force such as a gendarmerie, carabinieri, or civil guard. Police numbers in Britain have reduced by 20,000 over the period 2009–2016 (Disney & Simpson, 2017) and the country has a very small standing army. So, for police leaders in Britain as well as the British public the imposition of effective martial law by the government had some major implications. It quickly became clear that the police in Britain had neither the resources nor the intention of maintaining this martial law-lite by force or coercion. The aim was to use the well-honed policing techniques of politeness and persuasion, a markedly different approach to that being used in some countries in Europe where rigorous enforcement was the preferred tactic from the start. This approach had further relevance after the incidents of public disorder in London, Bristol and elsewhere in Britain that followed directly from the televised killing of George Floyd, a black man by police in Minnesota, USA on 25 May 2020. This highly controversial incident occurred while Britain was still under strict restrictions on public movement introduced to suppress the global pandemic. Nevertheless, crowds of disorderly and often violent protestors assembled in Central London where officers were violently attacked, property was damaged, and public monuments defaced. In the city of Bristol police officers stood by and watched as the mob toppled a statue and threw it into the nearby river Avon. Such lawlessness and inaction by the police was applauded by liberal news outlets and left-wing politicians. For many in Britain though these events provided an ugly portent of violence and political instability still to come. Under mob rule no one is safe and no property is secure.

It is too early to predict how these drastic changes may affect the longer-term relationship between the British public and their police. With falling numbers and shrinking budgets both police and the public
have been forced to adapt to a shrinking police presence on the streets. That said, crime rates in Britain continue in the main to follow a downward trajectory (Crime in England & Wales, 2019). While there have been more recent upward trends in knife crime, firearms offences, and fraud, there are reasons to be optimistic about the ongoing police capability in reducing and suppressing crime. Where the system is quite clearly letting down the public is in the political prioritising of police resources. The introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in 2012 was an initiative by the government that intended to democratise policing and increase local accountability. In reality these positions have been quickly monopolised by placemen and women installed by the main political parties. These party hacks take their lead from national politicians and offer nothing but banal platitudes to voters. Inevitably this leads to an absence of local leadership and the entrenchment of a political structure that draws vital funds away from operational capabilities and funnels them into bureaucracy and partisan politicking. As the events briefly outlined above serve to illustrate, when police intervention is driven by political expediency rather than the criminal law, there are major ramifications for public safety in the future.

Sir Robert Peel’s vision for a modern police service in Britain, the outline of which was set out nearly two centuries ago has all too often been misunderstood, misrepresented, and misquoted. British policymakers must seize the initiative and undertake a wide-ranging review of the Country’s policing arrangements and introduce a comprehensive programme of structural reform, thereby creating an opportunity to preserve the most desirable aspects of the British policing tradition while facilitating the discontinuance of old, long-obsolete practices, processes, and procedures that cannot be adapted to fast-changing societal needs.

Conditions for Police Reform in the United States

In spring 2020, widespread rioting occurred in many US cities following the death of George Floyd, an unarmed African American man, who died while being taken into custody by the Minneapolis Police for a
non-violent crime. Raw video footage showed four police officers placing Floyd face down on the ground in handcuffs while one of these officers had a knee on his neck. Floyd was seen on the video struggling in pain while telling officers “I can’t breathe”. He can be heard calling out for his mother with his dying breaths. This horrifying scene ignited international outrage. But, incidents like these, unarmed and non-violent African American men being killed by the police, have become commonplace in the United States. There was Eric Gardner in New York City, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Freddy Gray in Baltimore, LaQuan McDonald in Chicago, Antwon Rose in East Pittsburgh, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Philando Castille in Minnesota, Walter Scott in South Carolina, and many more.

Decades of aggressive enforcement for minor crimes under programmes such as the “war on drugs” and “broken windows” policing, has all but destroyed trust in the police in many places, and has contributed to a violent code of the street in which gun violence threatens both the police and the community. Each year in America about 1000 people are shot and killed by the police. This is more than the number of US soldiers killed annually in Iraq during the most violent years of the war. Since late November 2014, when 12-year-old Tamir Rice was gunned down by police while playing with a toy pistol in a Cleveland city park, there have been 162 people with toy guns shot and killed by police. In 2019 in Fort Worth, Atatiana Jefferson was home playing video games with her nephew when the police, who were responding to a call of an open door, fired a shot through the window, killing her. This lethal gun violence—with nearly 300 unarmed people shot and killed by police during the last four years—is significant, but only a fraction of the total police violence at issue.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement initially formed in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, an armed member of a Florida neighbourhood watch group, in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African American teen. BLM was the epicentre of protest following the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York City. It has helped organise street protests in these and many other US cities following the deaths of unarmed African American men at the hands of the police. The message from
BLM reformers easily connected to the chronic discontent many people felt about the police due to decades of aggressive enforcement in their local communities (Levin & Nolan, 2017).

The heavy emphasis on law enforcement outputs, such as arrests and the seizure of illegal guns and drugs, affects the disposition of officers in a way that puts them at odds with the community and increases their own risk for violence. About 100 police officers die in the line of duty each year, more than half of them intentionally murdered. Some of those murdered are selected randomly, but as revenge for particular acts of police violence. For example, in 2014 following the high profile police killings of unarmed African American men in Ferguson, Missouri and Staten Island, New York, a Baltimore man travelled by train to New York City seeking revenge. In Brooklyn, he walked up to a parked police car, opened the car door and shot officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos in the head and upper torso killing them both. Then, in 2016 five Dallas police officers were killed and nine injured as revenge for the police shootings of unarmed black men in Louisiana and Minnesota. Police reform in the United States is often discussed in the context of reducing violence by and against the police.

**Conditions for an Age of Reform in France**

The country of the Revolution and of Human rights, France has a long tradition of political public demonstrations, historically consecrated by the existence of permanent and professional anti-riot units in both police forces, the police nationale and the gendarmerie nationale, the officers of this last one serving under military status. As demonstrations are usually led by political parties or trade unions, identified as the political contact persons to solve the crisis, the political echelon has struggled to understand the dynamics of yellow vests appearing in October 2018. As a spontaneous social movement sparked by the increase of the internal consumption tax on energy products, it exposed the nakedness of the executive branch deprived of police intelligence to foresee the various weekly steps. Quickly, the demands widened to the social and political domains. Although demonstrations mainly took place on Saturdays,
where several violent episodes occurred, notably on les Champs-Élysées, the protest also mobilised inhabitants of rural and peri-urban areas on week-long illegal blockades of roads and roundabouts.

The causes of this movement are certainly entrenched in a widespread and profound discomfort with perceived neoliberal world changes and government management in the French context (standard of living, taxation, feeling of neglect of certain territories, distrust of politicians and intermediary bodies, etc.). While acknowledging the inadmissible heavy casualties incurred by not only police and gendarmerie, but firefighting officers as well (about 2000 acknowledged by the Ministry of Interior as of October 2019), the French police have latterly been criticised in early 2020 for excessive use of violence by the very Minister, who defended it for months. Indeed, organisations such as Amnesty International criticised inappropriate policing, and institutions such as the United Nations and the Council of Europe have questioned the use of non-lethal weapons (Defence ball launchers and grenades), after a scientific article in the Lancet reported indiscriminate and heavy casualties on the demonstrators’ side (Chauvin et al., 2019).

The still ongoing feedback from this unfinished period raises legitimate questions regarding interventions and the policing of demonstrations. It has created renewed tensions between both forces (police corporations have been reviving their request to demilitarise the gendarmerie and absorb it under police command, thereby avoiding the police corporation’s own mismanagement issues, shifting responsibility instead to insufficient human resources). It also put to the front the lack of prior intelligence available beforehand to inform responses to the various episodes of this yellow vests saga, hence, addressing the nature of the relationships between the law enforcement forces and the French population. Indeed, this questioning could not be more relevant at a time when both forces were charged with enforcing what should have been a voluntary COVID-19 confinement, which has been obviously challenged in some suburbs that hosted three weeks of riots at the end of 2005, as a previously unknown in France Black Lives Matter movement following Floyd’s death is reviving pending lethal cases of arraignment.
Where We Converge and Diverge on the Issues of Police Reform

As academics and practitioners, our views have coalesced around some central tenets. We firmly believe in the importance of democracy and democratic policing with all the checks, balances, and accountability mechanisms that are integral to such a model. We are also committed to a policing doctrine that has human rights as an underpinning theme. Importantly, our imagining of human rights in policing does not include a system that provides exceptional privileges and protections for those who would do us harm, neither does it include a legal structure that would prevent severe and condign punishment for offenders who are guilty of grotesque acts of murder, torture, or genocide. It does, however, require an understanding of the human conditions that give rise to these atrocities and others and the limits of punishment alone as a tool for justice.

Where our views on the policy prescription for the future diverge, it is on the potential paths of future societal development. For some of our authors, the future is a liberal one. A future system of policing that seeks to evolve, reinforce, and expand the secular western political settlement. This approach envisions the continuity of rights-based individual freedoms with an internationalist attitude to cross-border cooperation and intergovernmental joint working on policy, protocols, and legal frameworks. A system that embraces and values multiculturalism, gender equality, the end of patriarchy, freedom of expression—within an acceptable liberal framework—and a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity for all people.

For others among our authors the future looks quite different. For them western liberalism has no future and has nothing to offer in an era of reform. This group of writers argue in favour of the nation state, the importance of national identity, shared history, culture, customs, and faith. In this future system of policing, individual rights are paramount and not to be tempered or mediated by an interventionist state. For these authors, rights come with responsibilities and a respect for nation for duty and sacrifice. This approach postulates a conservative route
to reform, a return to fundamentals, a reconnection with the conventions, practices, and principles of the past. Of course, this dichotomist rift does allow for and embrace multiple shades of grey between both views. Regardless of where on this wide-reaching political spectrum our authors sit, they are agreed on the inherent nobility and essential goodness of the policing mission. This book is about doing the right thing. It readily acknowledges that not all police officers are good people, or that they consistently or even regularly do the right thing. It does regard as axiomatic the importance and desirability of police officers being good and virtuous people driven by a sense of vocation and enduring civic duty. Scruton (1998) captures this latter sentiment in the following passages:

Virtuous people have qualities which make them eminently useful to society. They sacrifice themselves for others; they stand up and are counted in the hour of need; they fight off enemies and succor friends; they administer impartial justice; and they are temperate in all their ways, so that long-term commitments come naturally to them. In short, they further the reproduction of society.

Here we confront an ancient paradox, as real for us as it was for the Greeks who first debated it. It seems that virtuous people are exposed to troubles that the weak-willed, the calculating and the vicious avoid. In battle it is the courageous person who takes the risks and the coward who comes home to tell the tale. It is the steadfast person who earns the abuse of the mob, and the weak-willed conformist who escapes their censure. It is the honest person who suffers when the villains call in the chips. (Scruton, R., 1998, Do the Right Thing, 52–53. Demos, London)

In a world where internet use has become ubiquitous and all-pervading, where the new opiate of the people has become social media, where anyone can, usually under the cloak of online anonymity, share with the world their innermost thoughts and feelings (which all too often turn out to be hate-filled, expletive-laden, incoherent, and ill-informed), the police must chart and conform to a new course, a refined mission, a new and evolving societal purpose.
At first, the term police reform could seem unambiguous with a common meaning, understood by all. However, this is not the case. For many, the police mandate is clear. The organisation of policing is aimed at preventing and controlling crime and arresting violators of the law, sometimes referred to as criminals. So, in the interest of professionalism and efficiency, police reform means improving the methods (or strategies) of the profession (Manning, 1978). Evidence-based policing is a popular version of this type of reform, as its various and competing claims about “what works” in policing must undergo rigorous testing to support these claims (Sherman, 2015). For example, a policing strategy known as Project Safe Neighbourhoods (PSN) was implemented in Chicago in the early 2000s. It had three broad goals (1) reduce demand among young gun offenders, (2) reduce the supply of guns by identifying and intervening in illegal gun markets, and (3) prevent the onset of gun violence. The tactics included increased federal prosecution for convicted felons carrying or using guns, lengthy sentences for federal prosecutions, increasing the rate of gun seizures via various policing strategies, social marketing of deterrence, and “social norms” messages at meetings with offenders which were designed to convey the serious consequences that would occur if they chose to use a gun or reoffend. The study used a quasi-experimental design to assess the effectiveness of this strategy. Treatment and control districts were selected non-randomly based on their rates of homicide and gun violence. The results showed that the districts where the treatment was used experienced a 37% drop in homicide rates during the observation period. It was noted by the authors of the study that the control group, and the entire city of Chicago, experienced declines in homicide during this period but were less pronounced than those in the treatment group (Papachristos, Meares, & Fagan, 2007). The Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy in the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society at George Mason University provides the findings from more than a hundred studies in policing similar to the PSN study in Chicago. Along with results of the research, the Center provides recommendations for policy and practice (CEBCP, https://cebcp.org/).
An alternative type of police reform, albeit much less widely known or discussed, is one which seeks to reform the police mandate itself. Manning (1978) suggested that the mandate to prevent and control crime is actually impossible because the police cannot control the social processes that actually breed crime. These processes, he argues, emerge from values, norms, and social traditions in the larger society, and so the police are forced to deploy strategies aimed at managing appearances rather than preventing crime in any meaningful way. We think this point would be contested today. Over the past 20 years or so, sociological studies of crime have brought neighbourhood and community-level social processes more clearly into view (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). We now see that the police mandate to prevent and control crime is not impossible due to lack of control of the social processes that breed crime, but because they fail to see their own contribution to them (Hinkle & Weisburd, 2008; Nolan, Conti, & McDevitt, 2004). From this point of view, the police mandate is part and parcel to the bundle of social conditions that maintain crime and criminality not reduce it.

Perhaps the reform of the police mandate is well beyond the power or scope of reformers inside police organisations, but it may be worthy of close consideration. Reforming the police mandate challenges basic assumptions about the nature of crime and criminality and our beliefs about the role of the police in contemporary society. Manning might suggest that the popular images of the police as warriors and crime fighters is better understood as managing impressions rather than actually suppressing crime.

With these two general types of reform in mind, i.e. those aimed at the methods of policing and those targeting the police mandate, we propose there are actually four general perspectives on police reform that relate to the body of work presented in this book. For clarity we labelled these perspectives (1) maintaining, (2) retrofitting, (3) co-opting, and (4) transforming in Fig. 1.1 and will describe them below.

Maintaining is a perspective on police reform that requires no change in police methods or mandate. It refers to reforming under-functioning police departments which are struggling to meet professional standards. In the United States organisations such as the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA) establish standards for
MANDATE: PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF CRIME AND ARREST OF CRIMINALS

| METHODS: POLICING STRATEGIES/TECHNOLOGIES | SAME | CHANGE |
|------------------------------------------|------|--------|
| SAME                                     | (1) MAINTAINING | (3) COOPTING |
| CHANGE                                   | (2) RETROFITTING | (4) TRANSFORMING |

**Fig. 1.1** Four perspectives on police reform: maintaining, retrofitting, co-opting, Transforming

professionalism in policing and they assist local and state agencies in meeting these standards (CALEA, https://www.calea.org/). Maintaining also reflects the perspective of those who see the police as a stabilising force in an age of reform where the world is tending towards chaotic fluctuations. The police should not change what they do, but rather stay the course of the mandate in ways that provide stability and security.

Retrofitting is a perspective that accepts the existing police mandate, but seeks to add new methods and technology to improve the functioning of the police within the boundaries of that mandate. New technologies such as Shot Spotter\(^1\) for identifying the location of a gunshot, or real-time crime centres,\(^2\) or new intelligence software\(^3\) or sophisticated methods such as social network analysis\(^4\) to track criminal offenders are considered police reform, because they are new tools that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the stable and dependable law enforcement machine.

Co-opting is a perspective that aims at the police mandate itself, while accepting its tradition and methods. Reformers from this perspective challenge basic assumptions about crime and criminality and question the feasibility that the police alone can actually control crime.

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\(^1\)https://www.shotspotter.com/.

\(^2\)https://www.cinemassive.com/solutions/public-safety/?mm_campaign=1D5234FC1CC4C6FE42B7C18C9B6747FD&mm_replace=true&utm_source=bing_desktop&utm_medium=ppc&utm_term=real%20time%20crime%20center&utm_campaign=law_enforcement.

\(^3\)https://www.einvestigator.com/open-source-intelligence-tools/.

\(^4\)https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/power-social-network-analysis/.
Police reform from this perspective starts by introducing new goals and outcome measures, such as social cohesion, trust in neighbours, the willingness to intervene for the common good, and trust in the police to do the right things. These reformers believe that methods of traditional policing, such as the enforcement of public order laws, joint task force operations, forensic investigations and intelligence gathering, and the use of surveillance technologies are well suited for the new mandate, but they must be used as tools with the new end in mind.

Finally, *Transforming* is a perspective on police reform that rejects both the methods and the mandate of traditional policing and seeks total reform of the profession. This is similar to the perspective *co-opting*, but it recognises that traditional methods will fall short in creating the kind of outcome imagined by the new mandate. In what Nolan, Conti, and McDevitt (2004) called situational policing, they show how a new mandate focused on strong, healthy community outcomes will need new strategies that are not currently employed or even considered presently in the law enforcement field. Getting community members mentally and physically engaged in ways that make places safe will take new skills and new metrics for success.

Throughout this book contributing authors approach the subject of reform in different ways and from a variety of perspectives. They show how the status quo in policing is *maintained* and reproduced (Chapter 2), how social change, scientific discoveries, and technological advances require *retrofitting* new methods to the old law enforcement machine (Chapters 4, 7, 8, 10, and 13), and how these retrofitted changes can create new problems and dilemmas (Chapters 3 and 6). Still others argue for police reforms that are transformative, starting with a new mandate and developing new metrics for success (Chapter 5). They also show how traditional police methods can be co-opted for use under a new mandate (Chapter 12). Moreover, a convincing argument is made to let technological advances lead police reforms rather than the other way around as is typically the case (Chapter 11). Whatever the intent of reform, one will need a plan and a way to assess behaviour towards a desired end (Chapter 9), and officers will need to know, specifically, what it means to do the right things (Chapter 14, 15). In the
concluding chapter, we discuss why a consensus view of reform is probably not possible, or desirable, in a book about policing in an age of reform (Chapter 16).

Conclusions

Attempting to match the shape and pace of police reform to parallel evolutions in societal reform will always prove a challenge. Trying to predict with any level of confidence or hope of accuracy, the impending upheavals, cracks, fissures, disruptions, and realignments that may take place in our respective countries. Will nationalism and tribalism prevail over globalism and liberalism? Will the imagined conflict between somewhere, those who identify with nation, community, and cultural identity and anywhere, those who embrace the opportunities of globalism and a liberal new world order (Goodhart, 2017), become more bitter and intense or will it dissipate and disappear over time? Changing demographics in western countries may indeed have a transformative effect. The differing priorities of young urban cosmopolitan citizens may contrast starkly with those of older settled more conservative pensioners. Or it may be the case that the potential for intergenerational conflicts are over-stated and that culture, ethnicity, faith, and tradition prove to be more important dividing lines in our future societies. As White majorities in Europe recede and Black and Visible Ethnic Minority populations assert themselves, will there be a Balkanisation of our communities with different regions, cities, and provinces adopting different cultural norms, laws, and practices? This must surely be the undisputed nightmare of western liberal politicians. And yet, it may transpire to be an arrangement that enjoys widespread popular support.

Whatever the future holds, the need for communities to feel safe, secure, and free from oppression, persecution, and crime will continue to concentrate the minds of citizens and policymakers alike. An ongoing process of police reform must be nurtured and encouraged through democratic discourse, argument, and debate. This book seeks
to contribute to that discourse and to stimulate discussion, disagreement, criticism, and alternative critiques from students, practitioners, policymakers, commentators, and concerned citizens.

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