Theorizing Change in Anglo-American Police Organizations:
On Making Meaningful Change-Claims in Police Scholarship

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Abstract

This paper develops a heuristic device for understanding and claiming change and stability as characteristics of Anglo-American public police organizations. Beginning by emphasizing organizational rather than police sociology, the paper characterizes Anglo-American public police as institutionalized organizations, and outlines the consequences of this view for studying change. The paper develops a vocabulary for describing police organizational change as change to the organization's 'domain', understood within its 'task environment', and outlines the aspects of the public police domain that are likely to remain stable. The paper suggests that analyzing police change through these axes leads to tenable, if modest and often unexciting, conclusions about the breadth and depth of changes actually characteristic of police organizations in recent years. The paper closes by offering guidelines for those seeking to develop tenable and comprehensible change-claims about public police organizations.

Key Words: Anglo-American police, public police, organizational change, organizational sociology

Introduction

What does it mean to say a police organization or the work of the public police has changed? Police scholarship concerned with shifts in policing in Anglo-American[1] societies currently lacks a common vocabulary, though this has not stopped the proliferation of change-claims in literature on

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[1] The use of 'Anglo-American' in this paper follows Manning's (2003; 2010) use of the term. It is intended to connote the common organizational form of public policing in Canada, the USA and UK, though it certainly brushes over important differences between and within these countries.

policing. Authors have claimed *inter alia* that there have been shifts to the command orientation (Reiss, 1992), goal orientation (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997), officer culture (Chan, 1997), or structure more broadly (Bayley and Shearing, 1996) of public police organizations.[2] However, it is often hard to decipher the breadth or depth of change-claims in police scholarship, or whether any real change has actually occurred in each instance that claims of change are invoked. While there is a significant body of scholarship disputing these claims of 'epochal' or other change in policing, and claiming instead that much of policing has remained stable through recent change initiatives (e.g. Jones and Newburn, 2002; Maguire et al., 2003; Manning, 2003), these arguments suffer from often disparate terminology regarding change.

This paper is about how we conceive of change and stability in public police organizations. It seeks to develop a heuristic device for judging the grounds on which we may argue that change or stability characterizes a policing force, region, or organizational form, or more broadly, an era of policing. This entails, first and foremost, defining what the public police essentially *are*, and how we may understand change and stability in light of this form. It will also require, in all cases, determining a break from a policing past, a past which must be established explicitly.

In this paper, it will first be argued that the public police are best understood as an organization following organizational sociology, and so will begin by outlining some relevant organizational sociology concepts. This approach to police change has significant epistemological consequences for how we understand and identify change. It will further be argued that the police are an *institutionalized* organization, meaning that their essential mandate and practice have been formalized and entrenched in Anglo-American societies, which in turn stabilizes their resource base and limits their potential for change.

Following this, the paper will look at the domain - meaning broadly the present and latent areas of action - of the public police in the Anglo-American context. It will then examine examples of change-claims from studies of recent policing initiatives, and it will be argued that change-claims are more tenable when they are coupled with explicit conceptual boundaries around the past and present public police as a research object. It will consequently be asserted that studies that fail to set conceptual limits say little about change from a sociological perspective, though they may retain some political value. The paper concludes by offering guidelines for creating change-claims that are meaningful if modest or unexciting in many cases.

Before we begin this task, it is important for the reader to recognize that in characterizing the public police as an institutionalized organization, certain change/stability mechanisms will be implied and will follow

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[2] This paper is concerned primarily with explicit change-claims regarding public police organizations, and does not deal directly with scholarship that implicitly assumes change or that discusses private, military, or international police organizations.

logically from this model of understanding police. Particularly, it will be asserted that conditions external to the police organization will be the major drivers of meaningful change. However, the actual mechanism by which this happens will not be elaborated upon, as that is outside of the scope of this paper.[3]

Organizations and Institutionalization

Organization is a contested term; this paper follows Etzioni (1961: xi, following Parsons, 1960) in focusing on distinct "social units devoted primarily to attainment of specific goals" and thus bounded by their goal domain. This paper takes an external perspective on organizations (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003), recognizing that this is one perspective of many and a choice that has consequences to understanding change (Van de Ven and Hargrave, 2004). An external perspective asserts that the conditions outside the organization - the organization's 'ecology' (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003) or 'task environment' (Thompson, 1967) - are the primary determinants of the actions of the organization. One consequence of this approach is that internal organizational factors such as culture - seen as extremely important in general managerial and recent police sociological literature (e.g. Chan, 1997) - are treated as arising from, and thus largely reactive to, external conditions. Organizational culture, under this view, is much more symptomatic than causal of the actions of the organization.

But what external conditions are important to take into account? The short answer is the conditions under which resources can be secured. The broadest goal orientation of any formal organization is survival through obtaining resources; this may seem like an inelegant approach, but it remains the most sociologically viable from an external perspective. All other actions and goals are subservient to the goal of survival; this is in many ways a reflexive statement, since if an organizational goal conflicts with its survival, the subservient goal, and not survival, will by necessity perish or change.

Survival, in most cases, is determined by the effectiveness of the organization, not necessarily in achieving its subservient goals but in appearing as the best social unit for achieving goals that are important to those elements in the task environment that control available resources. This notion of effectiveness must be contrasted with ideas like "efficiency" or measurements of material outcomes, since an organization can be effective in securing resources without necessarily producing some result (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003), though organizations in most cases will try to prove both efficiency and effectiveness even with minimal evidence to support their case (Thompson, 1967).

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[3] For anyone interested in the mechanisms that promote stability in police organizations, Manning's (2010) discussion of the police *métier* is an excellent starting point; and for more general change mechanisms, see Van de Ven and Hargrave (2004).

Organizations struggle variably with this central goal of survival. Their survival is aided when other organizations in their field begin to exhibit similarities in structure and practice - a process of 'homogenization' where organizational adaptation becomes 'isomorphic' across the field (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Where an isomorphic organizational field emerges, and through some ''critical juncture' (Thelen, 1999) - a point or period where task environment conditions promote a particular form over others - certain organizational forms become 'institutionalized' (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In these cases, the organization - the goal-oriented social group - and the ways in which that group works to achieve its goals, become a social institution, a set of implicit and explicit rules about how organizations in that field should work. Organizations that violate these rules will do so at their peril. This is not a teleological or even necessarily evolutionary claim; institutionalized rules may be suboptimal or inefficient, but once institutionalized become hard to change (Thelen, 1999; Van de Ven and Hargrave, 2004).

Under institutionalized conditions the organization is not only reactive to, but also its form becomes an essential component of, its ecology or task environment. The organization's success reiterates its predominant position, entrenching its legitimacy against other potential organization forms. This creates a sort of 'myth' (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) that shapes and drastically constrains future options for practice as well as measures of effectiveness, which in turn provides a secure resource base. As Meyer and Rowan state:

> [O]rganizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society. Organizations that do so increase their legitimacy and their survival prospects, independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures. (Meyer and Rowan, 1977: 340)

However, we do not want to build a conceptual foundation on which it is "hard to see any forks in the road at all" (Thelen, 1999: 386). Once past the point of institutionalization, the securing of resources ceases to be a survival issue and becomes largely an issue of growth from, or defence of, the organization's current resource position or 'domain' (Thompson, 1967). At all times an organization maintains a domain which it seeks to expand or defend, depending on task environment conditions. Thompson (1967) offers a tripartite definition of domain as relevant to organizational change, and this definition will serve as the basis for the change vocabulary in this paper:

> In examining the concept of organizational domain... domain is defined by (1) *technology included*, (2) *population served*, and (3) *services rendered*. Major changes in design involve modifications of

the "mix" of these three elements. (Thompson, 1967: 40, emphasis added)

For Thompson the most important domain aspect is the type of technology the organization employs, and 'technology' for Thompson is not only high-technological but also includes techniques and forms of interaction, such that, in the case of police, technology can refer to practices from administration to surveillance to foot patrol to community policing forums (see also Stenson and Edwards, 2000). 'Population served' in the case of the public police is roughly equivalent to the notion of jurisdiction, which will be elaborated briefly below. 'Services rendered' refers broadly to the organization's actions, via their technology, on or on behalf of the population served. Technology and services are thus inextricable and therefore artificially separated for analytical purposes.

Public Police as Organization
The public police are both a collection of organizations and an institutionalized organizational form. Describing police as an organization creates some fuzzy areas around which actors should be included in the social group called public police, given the existence of private police, police volunteers and citizen responsibilization efforts (Garland, 2001) that share goals and practices with "formal common-law vocational" (Manning, 2010: 25) public police organization members. While it is not within the scope of this paper to draw firm boundaries around the police organization, it nonetheless assumes that public police have distinguishing boundaries which can be drawn around them.

Going one step further, we are talking about geographic boundaries as well as goal orientation relationships, such that a jurisdiction - a population within a designated area, and a specified organizational remit over or regarding that population - can be defined with some specificity and be used to identify one public police organization from another, along jurisdictional lines. This is an important if mundane point, since we have to keep in mind that the study of any one policing district may not necessarily have much to do with the study of another policing district (Manning, 1977).

Treating the public police as an institutionalized organization - from an external perspective - does not presume that all domain aspects of each police organization are immutable. While certain rules, practices and structures become institutionalized and are likely to be found in all organizations called public police, other organizational aspects remain open to change based on local task environment conditions. If we consider police organizations under these terms, then we should be highly circumspect about claims about, and the possibilities for, fundamental change to the institutionalized aspects of the public police. It will be useful at this point to identify the essential institutionalized aspects of the public police organizational domain. We may say, following Loader and Walker (2007), that at its essence:

[T]he mandate of modern policing… can without undue strain be gathered under the holistic umbrella of the generation and maintenance of those conditions of general order under which the citizenry are most likely both to be and to feel secure (Loader and Walker, 2007: 96-97).

Further, following Manning (2010: 44), we can also say that they are "authoritatively coordinated, legitimate organizations" that work through "tracking, surveillance, and arrest" and remain "ready to apply force up to and including fatal force" in service of this essential organizational goal. These are the institutionalized aspects of their domain, and also the grounds on which they are a unique social institution (Bittner, 1970).

The public police in the Anglo-American context in the past century can be adequately, if only broadly, defined under these terms. Indeed, since the 1829 advent of Anglo-American public policing, it may be said that police organizations have been concerned with maintaining legitimacy, improving methods of tracking, surveillance and arrest, and limiting but maintaining the use of force and fatal force, in maintenance of 'politically-defined order' (Manning, 2010). It cannot be said that the public police field ever gave up for any amount of time these practices or goals. These are components of their domain that police organizations do not need to actively defend, and they are not aspects that police organizations have much power to alter. Under this view, the last major or 'transformational' (Tolbert and Hall, 2009) institutional change to Anglo-American policing should reasonably be seen as beginning in 1829 in the UK, and then somewhat later in North America (Manning, 2010). While some authors propose a "third type" (Rigakos, 2005: 265) of post- or late-modern policing, these authors are either not, or not compellingly, arguing that these core practices or goals have been superseded by some new formulation of policing.

To claim that an Anglo-American police organization or set of organizations has changed, we should understand and define the domain aspects to which we are ascribing change, as well as the task environment in which these changes occur. Change-claims implicating the core domain of the public police will be hard to sustain, while claims of shifts in other secondary domain aspects are more likely to be empirically tenable. The specific boundaries of the domain of any police organization or set of organizations may be defined in each instance by the investigating author, and these definitions must be defended empirically. The various task environments, services offered and technologies employed will vary between jurisdictions and over time. Through this process of defining past and present on these axes, we can map change.

Why Change Change-Claims? On the Virtues of Being Modest

Maybe the reader at this point is wondering how this conceptual model represents progress over previous attempts to describe police change. Recall that one purpose of this paper is to develop a vocabulary for discussing change; these terms are intended to provide a sort of rubric for assessing change-claims. Perhaps at some level this is only a semantic shift, since these terms could be transposed onto previously articulated change-claims easily with little obvious immediate benefit. However, the conceptual characterization of change and stability has consequences for analyzing the breadth, depth and veracity of change-claims. The subsequent discussion, using claims regarding recent supposed shifts in policing since the advent of community policing (CP), may serve as a useful illustration of some of these consequences.

The proliferation of CP initiatives from the mid to late 1980s through to perhaps the present day in most Anglo-American districts represented a major change, a rhetorical exercise, or a fad in the history of Anglo-American policing. CP has been variously and inconsistently defined since its introduction, but at their core CP initiatives coalesce around the notion that "police should transform communities from being passive consumers of police protection to active co-producers of public safety" (Bayley and Shearing, 1996: 588).

While it is hard to find consensus across police studies on the actual impact of CP reforms to the organization and practices of policing, it is not hard to find numerous well-researched claims regarding the histories and outcomes of CP in various districts. The following examples are from two articles - Maguire et al. (2003) and Deukmadejian and de Lint (2007) - that deal with the limited impact of CP reforms. I believe the differing approaches to change in these articles are exemplary of broader distinctions in police scholarship, and their starting conceptual characterizations of police change have major consequences to their conclusions.

Maguire et al. (2003) have claimed that CP reforms in major American police forces have had equivocal and inconsistent effects on police organizational structures. They explicitly state at the outset of their paper that they are inquiring into changes to one domain (or what I would suggest is one aspect of a broader domain, particularly, a technology)[4], namely organizational structure, of six major American public police forces experiencing CP reforms. They specify the empirical measures which they use to gauge shifts in organizational structure and then analyze data to this end. Through this analysis they come to the conclusion that organizational structure has not changed consistently in line with CP reformers' intentions, and in some cases has changed in an opposite direction which results in equivocal conclusions on a number of research questions. They

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[4] In slight differentiation from this paper, Maguire et al. conceive of organizational structure as one of many 'different substantive domains' of police organizations.

further readily admit that organizational structure –- their measure of the ascent of CP reforms - is restricted in its explanatory value. In turn, at the end of their article, we are presented with a series of modest claims. Based on the evidence, while the organizational structure of American policing is not entirely stagnant in the wake of CP reforms, on the whole it is not changing in major ways, and it is changing in divergent directions. This is similar to arguments made by Manning (2003).

Deukmedjian and de Lint (2007)[5] have also argued that CP did not take hold, in the context of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and that it was subsequently replaced by a new initiative, Intelligence-led Policing (ILP), in recent years. They base their claims on extensive archival research, although in their article they do not specify a methodological approach, or the specific domain aspect to which they are ascribing change. They argue that the RCMP have "consolidate[d] a singular reform view" and that their "mission" has shifted (p. 240). While they do not provide a definition of what a reform view or mission are, they do provide a definition of the core police mission. They claim that the change has occurred, potentially to the entirety or at least to significant aspects of the RCMP organization, though at times it appears that the change is largely a public-relations effort. They begin by characterizing the change from CP to ILP as "radical" (p. 239), while at other times it appears that the shift is "cyclical" (p. 253). They provide some discussion of actual practice ostensibly related to ILP and CP, but more often than not appear to be discussing official or executive posture toward RCMP practice rather than practice itself. They nonetheless concern themselves from time to time with practice and its consequences, and conclude with concerns about the effect of ILP on police trust and legitimacy.

Both Maguire et al. and Deukmedjian and de Lint claim that external conditions in the form of public pressure - an aspect of what I have here referred to as task environment - led to shifts in a particular organizational technology, that is, administrative strategy, in the former case bringing about CP reforms, and in the latter bringing about a shift from CP toward ILP. Maguire et al. set their terms of inquiry clearly at the outset, and thus come to rather mundane and limited conclusions about organizational structure. Deukmedjian and de Lint, on the other hand, do not take pains to define their terms or methods, and thus construct a narrative that leads to the conclusion that the RCMP has undergone a unidirectional and possibly radical shift in its core mission, which may have serious implications for front-line practice.

The notion that initiatives promoting CP have not represented major change to policing is by no means novel (Mastrofski and Greene, 1988). The point here is rather that the degree to which we can call it and subsequent initiatives 'change' is unclear until we set the terms by which we are

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[5] Deukmedjian and de Lint's article is intended as one example among many that confound clear understandings of change through overstatement or lacking specificity. As I state later in the paper, it is useful scholarship on other grounds.

studying change. When we do set these terms clearly, we may find very little change in policing, which can result in modest scholarship. When we do not, our change-claims lack a conceptual anchor on which they can be judged and allow significant ambiguity and potential overstatement.[6] As noted earlier, transformational or fundamental change-claims should be looked on with suspicion. Perhaps in the end the difference between these two examples is, where Maguire et al. seek the empirical grounds for change-claims, Deukmedjian and de Lint seek to provide a warning against future directions and use change-claims as a means to support their warning. Unfortunately, the latter approach does little to aid understanding of police organizational change.

The Political Value of Overstating Change
Perhaps ultimately it is the *importance* of the police in modern civilization that leads to overestimations of change. Police organizations are rarely studied as organizations first (Manning, 2010), and the *police* aspect of the organization remains foremost in the sociology of police and policing. Yet, there is little sociologically special about police organizations. They change as other similar organizations - institutionalized organizations in particular - change, which is to say, rarely and with great difficulty. Police scholars are reticent to see police as mundane, and consequently often sociologically overvalue the potential ramifications of changes in police practice. This leads police scholarship to proclaim serious consequences to 'new' police initiatives and research findings, often without good evidence of either newness or consequences.

Police scholarship often uses proclamations of change as a device to alert people to the danger of certain shifts in specific organizational aspects. This is no more the case than in scholarship in the wake of late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly post-9/11, security-oriented police reforms. Similar to Deukmedjian and de Lint (2007), many scholars were quick to point out the multiple dangers to police practice of conceiving of and legislating public police as a national security or intelligence instrument (e.g. Ericson, 2006; Murphy, 2007; Sheptycki, 2007). These dangers include loss of trust, erosion of the local-level mandate of public policing, a decreasing concern for civil rights in police practice, and at worst an unending justification for police to proceed by exception instead of by rule. These criticisms remain highly relevant. However, we must keep in mind that evidence of trending toward a security orientation in police administration is not adequate to claim that major change has occurred. The public police domain has always at its core been the maintenance of social order through problematic means. Consequent shifts in practice, to the degree they actually occurred, are more a function of the political negotiation of that social order than a change to the institutional form.

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[6] Equally, lacking a grounded vocabulary could result in understatement of change for political ends.

While 9/11 certainly changed the task environment, it is not clear that the public police domain subsequently shifted. To make this claim we must keep in mind the potential domain that is ever-present in the public police. It would be a mistake to assume that prior to 9/11, or really at any point since 1829, there was an era where public police forces entirely shunned security - or intelligence-related activities. The public police domain has always included proceeding by exception: the use or potential use of the technologies of information analysis and distribution, and of surreptitious and deceitful behaviour in warding off perceived or real threats to public safety; and public police have historically provided the services of gathering information and developing informants for distribution to political-administrative powers (Brodeur, 1983; Manning, 2010). In practice, the emergence of securitized public police can probably be interpreted as claims that some secondary aspects of the domain of the public police had changed in response to changes in the task environment, rather than as fundamental changes to the police organization. Incidentally, little empirical study to date has been done to verify the veracity of claims of a securitized public police.

This is not to say that the consequences of these practices or other potential changes do not have significant political value, worthy of pre-emption and over-caution in many cases. The police, "are an agency that distributes and redistributes social goods" (Manning, 2010: 248), and not just the goods of security and safety. As such their actions and practices have more consequences for the lives of citizens, and particularly the least-advantaged citizens, than most other organizations. A literature on policing that fails to recognize this aspect of police activity risks becoming blind to the human cost of bad police practice.

However, an approach to police change that seeks to understand and describe change cannot at the same time risk being alarmist about these consequences (although should not necessarily pre-empt alarms either). This approach needs to set some terms and get comfortable with the possibility that very little is changing in the domain of the public police. In many cases a police practice that may be troubling is unlikely to be new in a meaningful sense, although it may remain troubling.

Meaningful Change-Claims

We define institutional change as the difference in form, quality, or state over time of an institution. Change in an institutional arrangement can be determined by observing the arrangement at two or more points in time on a set of dimensions ... and then calculating the differences over time in these dimensions. If there is notable difference, we can say that the institutional arrangement has changed (Van de Ven and Hargrave, 2004: 261).

The preceding discussion has given us a nascent vocabulary for discussing police organizational change, drawn from more general organizational sociology contexts. Now perhaps the most important hurdle remains - that of determining the difference between change and stability. Unfortunately, no clear dividing line exists, and this determination will remain in the hands of the individual author or investigator. In the strictest sense of the term, any fluctuation in practice, personnel, or technology employed by a police force may be considered 'change' in policing. However, without strong empirical evidence to the contrary, most of these fluctuations should be seen as limited forms of change, and not necessarily meaningful from a sociological standpoint. In other words, seeing the police as an organization, if another organization experienced a similarly limited magnitude of shift in task environment conditions or domain characteristics and we would not call it change, then we should also not call it change in the case of the police. This paper will therefore conclude by offering a set of guidelines for identifying change that may be considered meaningful.

1. Any change-claim must recognize the ever-present potential for police practice
Much of this has been outlined above. In general terms this means that evidence of police organizations undertaking their dominant goal and practice - order maintenance through coercive force, arrest, tracking and surveillance - cannot be evidence of fundamental change, despite the many apparently novel iterations of this practice. Absent consistent empirical proof to the contrary, most police practice is properly understood as in service of or in addition and peripheral to, rather than as an abandonment of, these central domain components. As well, most present practices - even those conceived of as new - have significant historical precedent; researchers ought therefore to look diligently for similarities with the past before proclaiming change. In turn, in most cases initiatives such as CP, ILP or securitization should be understood as minor organizational domain shifts. Again, this is as seen through organizational sociology concepts, rather than an approach that is at its core concerned with political consequences.

2. The police organization's actions on the outside world are of paramount interest
This is, after all, an external model of understanding organizational change, and change in turn should be measured primarily by the differences across time in the actions of police organizations on or on behalf of those in their jurisdiction, and/or by changes in jurisdiction. Major and minor change is expected to be related to changes in task-environment conditions, although given the institutionalized nature of police practice, not all task environment changes will result in changes in domain. It remains of secondary interest whether internal culture or structure have changed, if they are not accompanied by changes to the organization's external actions.

3. Any change-claim needs to be specific about the organizational and temporal locus/loci of change

In this paper, I have proposed that task environment and the constituent elements of domain provide a useful lexicon for describing police change. This is an attempt to develop a shared vocabulary, and other terms could be substituted so long as they perform a similar function. It is most important that when someone claims that the police have changed they are specific about what has changed, and by implication what has stayed stable or at least what has not been examined. Further, they must identify a past that can be differentiated from the present, or they cannot be said to be making a change-claim. This in most cases will result in a dulling, limiting, or making mundane of the change-claim.

4. Describing change and stability are questions of magnitude

In the preceding, I have kept purposefully opaque where the line between change and stability ought to be drawn. Ultimately there is no right answer about, for example, whether the advent of CP or the ascendance of ILP in most of the Anglo-American world was, remains, or will be change. Their magnitude must be gauged through empirical study, and the threshold for claiming change will be set through the initial defining of domain, task environment, past, and present.: "[E]very de-*finition* (i.e. every form of closure) is a *de*-finition (i.e. an incomplete order)" (Quattrone and Hopper, 2001: 410). By necessity the quality of any change or stability claim will rest on the quality of its initial definitions as well as its empirical grounding.

It may prove to be the case, under these terms, that *change* nearly ceases to be an employable term regarding police organizations. Quattrone and Hopper, referring to organizations generally, suggest that *drift* is a better conception of what is usually being described as change:

> When things are drifting ... they cannot accurately define their location or the time though they are likely to continually try to do so ... In organizational terms, drift recognizes the existence of some knowledge of what an organization is, where it is and where it should go ... However, possession of such knowledge does not transcend actions or outcomes to unknown destinations (Quattrone and Hopper, 2001: 426-7).

This conception of change is certainly acceptable to the model proposed in this paper. Often it will be hard, if not impossible, to establish adequately a past of policing in a given district, and it will further be hard to get a sense of the importance or centrality of a certain practice or set of practices relative to the whole organization in the present. This becomes more pronounced of a definitional issue the larger the organization under study is, and large police organizations have been the essential territory of

police scholarship.[7] Of course, this approach also produces an acceptable result - that change-claims regarding police organizations be used cautiously, sparingly and with as much precision as possible.

Conclusion

There are many extant claims about changes facing Anglo-American public policing. By promoting a sociology of police grounded in a sociology of organizations we can begin to determine the breadth, depth, and veracity of many of these change-claims. Looking at examples of claims made about recent police initiatives such as CP, ILP and security-oriented policing, we have seen the different types of conclusions that can be reached based on the initial conceptual orientation of pieces of police scholarship. In some types of police scholarship little emphasis is put on empirical specificity in anchoring or sustaining change-claims. In these cases, change claims may be over-stated and are used as a device to draw attention to troubling police practice, whether or not that practice is actually new. This approach to police change is not commensurable with the approach proposed in this paper, though it remains relevant for other purposes.

By developing a shared vocabulary mapping change-claims along the axes of domain and task environment and recognizing the institutionalized domain aspects of public policing, we face the probability that we will develop often mundane and unexciting claims about the reality of change in police organizations. However, by making this shift in vocabulary we will also create more tenable and comprehensible conclusions, and we can expand our understanding of police organizational change. The paper has offered guidelines for developing these types of change-claims, and argued that the result of this approach probably means sparing use of change as a descriptor of Anglo-American policing. In all cases, determining whether or not to characterize something as evidence of change will be a question of magnitude, and the quality of the change-claim will rest on the quality of the initial definitions of task environment and domain, past and present.

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[7] This should not be seen as a fatal problem for police organizational studies. As Manning (2010: 98) asserts, the best studies of policing are synecdochal or metonymical, studying certain aspects of policing as either an analogy for the whole organization (*synecdoche*) or as an essential part of the organization (*metonymy*). Good police sociology does not need necessarily to provide the entire picture of the organization past or present, but does have to make a case for why the aspect under investigation is essential.

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