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1 I am very honoured to have been invited to this celebration of Jean-Paul Brodeur’s life and work. As one of the leading policing scholars in both the Anglophone and Francophone academic worlds, Jean-Paul of course has had an enormous influence on my own research and writing in this area. I first met him over thirty years ago, and we remained close colleagues until his untimely death last year.

2 I well remember my first meeting with Jean-Paul. At my initiative, he had agreed to meet with me in his beautiful study in his and Nicole’s home in Montreal. He explained to me his (at that time fairly recent) transition from philosophy to criminology, and I particularly remember his comment about how “sloppy” he thought social scientists were in their thinking, compared with philosophers. And to illustrate how philosophers hold each other to rigorous thinking, and do not let ‘sloppy’ generalisations pass without challenge, he told me a story which I have never forgotten, and which, as I recall, he presented as a true story. He had attended a meeting of philosophers at which one speaker announced that his paper was going to be about how it is that two negatives make a positive, but two positives do not make a negative. The speaker had hardly got this introduction out of his mouth when a voice rang out from the back of the room: “*Yeah, yeah!*”, after which the speaker was lost for words.

3 Jean-Paul himself was a master with words (in English as well as in French), and was notable, as much as for anything else, for his very clear, systematic and rigorous thinking and analyses. He always began a talk by saying that he would address his topic in (pick a number) sections, indicating how many sub-sections we could expect in each section, followed by his conclusions! And he always stuck exactly to the format which he had
outlined. His last book, The Policing Web, is as good an example of his mastery of language and intellectual rigour as you will find.

4 I am convinced that The Policing Web will take its place among a small pantheon of ‘classic’ texts on the subject, alongside the writings of other such North American ‘greats’ in the field as Egon Bittner (whom he particularly admired), Jerome Skolnick, James Q. Wilson, William Westley, Albert Reiss Jr., Wesley Skogan, Peter Manning and David Bayley. We are lucky indeed that Jean-Paul managed to complete The Policing Web as a legacy to us before his untimely passing; but the loss of the opportunity to debate the ideas in it with him is indeed a huge loss.

5 In my remarks, I am going to focus on only one chapter of what the English policing scholar Robert Reiner has described as Jean-Paul’s ‘magisterial’ book. I have chosen to do so not only because Peter Manning, and perhaps others too, will be discussing other parts of the book, but also because I regard his treatment of private security in his book as a rare, and very significant contribution to scholarship on this particular aspect of ‘policing’. Indeed his book is, as far as I can tell, the first serious attempt by a ‘mainstream’ policing scholar to develop a ‘theory of policing’ that fully integrates the modern phenomena of private and ‘plural’ policing (or, as I would prefer to describe it, non-state-based policing provision). This is a very ambitious (and in my view largely successful) project in the face of both definitional and theoretical challenges and controversies. Its importance in terms of providing a new starting point for a more holistic view and theorisation of policing cannot be overstated.

6 Interestingly, although in the opening chapters of his book Jean-Paul provides an expansive and inclusive view of the wide variety of policing provision by state-based and non-state-based (private) providers – what he refers to as the ‘police assemblage’ – he does not actually provide us with a comprehensive working definition of ‘policing’ for the purposes of his treatise.

7 Rather, building and expanding on Egon Bittner’s famous writings on this topic, Jean-Paul provides a new definition of a ‘policing agent’, in which he shifts from Bittner’s emphasis on the unrestricted capacity and authority to use force as the defining feature of the police, to the exercise of powers (legal and extra-legal) denied to other citizens, and argues that this definition is just as applicable to private security as it is to the public police. You will probably not be surprised to hear that in my view this is an argument that is quite contestable, since much of the power and authority of the private police is derived precisely from the power and authority available to ‘ordinary citizens’ as property owners, employers, etc.

8 A 53-page chapter (Chapter 8) of Jean-Paul’s book – almost an eighth of the book – is devoted specifically to a consideration of private security. In addition, another chapter considering the ‘edges of policing’ includes discussion of some other non-state policing providers in the modern plural policing environment. In my remarks, however, I will focus exclusively on his discussion of private policing in Chapter 8 of his book and, as he would have said, will confine myself to three main points: (1) his discussion of the difficulties of defining, and measuring the ‘size’ of, private security; (2) his emphasis on security technology, and the implications of this for his ‘theory of policing’; and (3) his characterization of private policing as a form of ‘high policing’.
1. Defining and measuring private security

Rather than addressing the definition of ‘private policing’ and ‘private security’ (and whether these two terms are synonymous or not) directly, Jean-Paul reviews how others have defined this phenomenon, and who and what they have included in their definitions of it. He points out, quite correctly, that too much attention has been paid to manned private security (especially the contract security industry), and not enough has been paid either to the proprietary (‘in-house’) private security sector, or to the ever-expanding security product manufacturing sector. He is very critical of claims that have been made about the size of the manned private security sector, arguing that it has been exaggerated by almost everyone who has made such claims. And he points out, as some others have in the past, that the claimed high private/public police personnel ratios have been derived from combining expansive definitions of private security with narrow definitions of public police. While I suspect he may have felt this was an example of the ‘sloppy’ thinking of social scientists that he had referred to when I first met him, I’m not actually sure that his own argument on this matter in this chapter will withstand close scrutiny, or that it will not also turn out to be somewhat exaggerated. Nevertheless, it is an argument that needs to be heard, is certainly not without any merit, and that will hopefully inspire future scholars to be more rigorous in addressing this issue. He concludes his discussion of this debate, however, with the important observation that “the potential of new security equipment and technology to transform policing is arguably greater than changes in the policing workforce and its governance.”

2. Security technology, the security manufacturing sector, and their implications for a ‘theory of policing’

Jean-Paul’s emphasis on the importance of security technology and the security manufacturing sector for our understanding of the future of policing raises difficult definitional issues for the kind of general ‘theory of policing’ that he was trying to develop in the book. Indeed, it is not clear to me how this ‘hardware’ sector can best be accommodated within such a general theory, particularly since the general theory that he proposed is founded primarily on his definition of a ‘policing agent’, to which I alluded earlier.

Somewhat strangely, I think, his principal example of the relevance of security technology to an understanding of policing involves a five-page “Case Study of Pain-Inducing Technology” (Tasers) (pp. 283-288 in the book). Yet despite appearing in his chapter on ‘private security’ this turns out to be a case study of the influence of the introduction of Tasers on the way the public police do policing, which of course raises the question as to whether the security manufacturing sector is properly (or usefully) regarded as an element of private security (non-state policing provision) or of public policing, or of both. Jean-Paul never really resolves (or even acknowledges) this issue in his book. Rather he speculates on the possible development, in the coming years, of a “police-industrial complex” (my emphasis), comparable to the “military-industrial complex” that was the subject of debate during the later years of the 20th Century.
Yet this speculated police-industrial complex is “deliberately not included” in his diagrammatic presentation of his integrated ‘theory of policing’ because “this notion is still too hypothetical and is meant above all to stimulate further research.” He concludes that: “In the main, the systematic study of police and security technology is only beginning, and it would be premature to try to assess its impact on current conceptions of policing.” But he speculates that the police-industrial complex “could eventually be viewed as providing the base on which [his] diamond-shaped figure [depicting his integrated concept of ‘policing’] is resting.”

We are left, then, I think, with three implicit, and important, conclusions: (1) we are not yet in a position to develop a fully integrated theory of policing because we do not yet know enough about one of the most important elements of ‘policing’, security technology and the security manufacturing sector; (2) attention to security technology and the security manufacturing sector should be a high priority for policing scholars in the future; and (3) When we do know more about this element of policing, any attempt to dichotomise ‘private’ and ‘public’ policing (or state-based and non-state-based policing provision) may well turn out to be unsustainable.

3. Private policing as ‘high policing’

As is well-known, one of Jean-Paul’s most significant contributions to policing scholarship (at least in the English-language literature) was his seminal 1983 article on “High policing and low policing: remarks about the policing of political activities”. Put (too) simply, the argument was that policing undertaken to protect the state and its institutions (‘high policing’) is fundamentally different in character from everyday policing of crime to protect citizens (‘low policing’). In 2006, O’Reilly and Ellison published an article in which they applied these conceptions of ‘high’ and ‘low’ policing to the activities of private security. In Chapter 8 of his book, Jean-Paul takes up O’Reilly and Ellison’s argument and develops it further, arguing that all private security exhibits ‘high policing’ characteristics and approaches. This inevitably, I think, involves a radical revision of these concepts, since if private security demonstrates ‘high policing’ approaches in policing everyday crime and insecurity, the original distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ policing (the former applying to ‘political’ policing, the latter to everyday policing of crime and disorder) seems to be becoming a bit blurred. This, then, represents an aspect of policing theory with respect to which Jean-Paul’s book has left us with a challenge to engage in some further ‘non-sloppy’ thinking.

To conclude, the description of Jean-Paul’s analysis in The Policing Web as ‘magisterial’ is certainly no exaggeration. The book will provide food for thought, debate and controversy for decades to come, and represents the very high standards of scholarship for which Jean-Paul became so well known among his friends and colleagues. I have touched here on a few issues arising from but one chapter of this highly provocative and thought-provoking book. There is, of course, much, much more in it to engender discussion and theoretical development. Tant pis, as they say in his native language, that Jean-Paul himself is no longer here to participate in the debates that his book has undoubtedly initiated, and for which we are all very much in his debt. His fellow policing scholars will miss him greatly as a leader and inspiration in this field of scholarship.
ABSTRACTS

In this contribution I review Jean-Paul Brodeur’s treatment of the subject of private policing in Chapter 8 of his last book, *The Policing Web*. I argue that his book represents the first serious attempt by a ‘mainstream’ policing scholar to develop a ‘theory of policing’ that fully integrates the modern phenomena of private and ‘plural’ policing, a goal which is nevertheless not fully achieved in the book, for reasons that Brodeur himself explained. I review his discussion of the difficulties of obtaining consensus on the definition of ‘private policing’; his emphasis on the importance of evolving security technology, and the implications of this for his ‘theory of policing’; and his characterization of private policing as a form of ‘high policing’. I argue that his treatment of these issues constitutes a significant contribution to the literature, and challenges us to find ways of filling the remaining gaps in our knowledge and understanding of ‘private policing’ in the 21st Century.

Dans cette contribution, je me penche sur la manière dont Jean-Paul Brodeur aborde le sujet de la sécurité privée dans le huitième chapitre de son livre, *The Policing Web*. J'estime que ce livre représente la première tentative « sérieuse » par un chercheur spécialisé dans les questions policières de développer une « théorie du policing » qui intègre le phénomène moderne de la sécurité privée et « plurielle ». Cet objectif n'est toutefois pas complètement atteint dans le livre, pour des raisons que Jean-Paul Brodeur expose lui-même à ses lecteurs. J'examine son argumentaire sur les difficultés d'obtenir une définition consensuelle de la « sécurité privée », l'importance qu'il accordait à l'étude de l'évolution des technologies de sécurité et leurs implications pour sa théorie du policing, ainsi que sur sa qualification de la sécurité privée comme une modalité de la haute police. Selon moi, ses réflexions représentent une contribution significative à la littérature et nous incitent à combler le déficit de connaissances au sujet de la sécurité privée au XXIe siècle.

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