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Book Review: Nathan Pino and Michael D. Wiatrowski (eds), *Democratic Policing in Transitional and Developing Countries*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, £55.00 hbk (ISBN: 0 7546 4719 6), xii+252 pp.

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Nathan Pino and Michael D. Wiatrowski (eds)

Democratic Policing in Transitional and Developing Countries

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, £55.00 hbk (ISBN: 0 7546 4719 6), xii+252 pp.

■ Reviewed by Megan O'Neill, *University of Salford*

One of the first things we teach our undergraduate students who are preparing book reviews is to avoid critiquing the authors for failing to achieve goals that were never theirs to begin with. I am afraid I must make just such a critique about this volume. As a sociologist who volunteered to review a book for *Sociology*, I admit I approached this book from a sociological perspective. It quickly became apparent that this book has no such perspective, nor does it intend to. *Democratic Policing in Transitional and Developing Countries* is a thorough examination of the key aspects of, and barriers to, installing democratic policing in countries coming through periods of political turmoil or economic development. From the outset, it is clear that this book is not only about *how* democratic policing can be achieved, but that it *should* be, and the finger is freely pointed to those groups, processes, systems and even countries (such as the USA) who inhibit this. As a sociologist I was somewhat taken aback by this as the normative tone was not one I had anticipated. Once I recovered, however, I expected to enjoy the book more. While on some occasions this did happen, for the most part it did not. I will explain the reasons for this below.

Democratic Policing in Transitional and Developing Countries is broken into three parts. Part I (Introduction and four chapters) is written entirely by the book's editors and gives an overall, and largely country non-specific, discussion of democratic policing and how it can (and should) be implemented. Part II (Introduction and five chapters) is comprised of 'case studies' written by other authors to demonstrate how democratic policing has been introduced (although not always successfully or completely) in specific nations. Part III is the conclusion. Thus the book is structured in a novel way; I am not sure I have read an edited volume before where six of the 11 chapters (including introduction and conclusion) are written by the editors. What was frustrating about this is that while each of the chapters in Part I has a different focus, the same main message comes across in them all. This message is that democratic policing is necessary in order to support and uphold democracy in new nations but that overall democratic change in the economy, education systems, health systems, political processes, etc., must also be engendered or else democratic policing (which puts human rights at its core) is doomed to fail. While I completely agree with and support this message, it was made rather clearly in Chapter 1, and then largely repeated in the next three chapters. By the end of the first part of the book, I was left wondering if this unique structure had actually worked. I would have preferred either all of Part I to be condensed into one chapter that sets out democratic policing generally as a lead-in to the case study chapters, or, that Part I be its own book so that the issues it raises could be addressed in more detail to make the reading more engaging. As it stands, the general approach of Part I is rather too general to stretch to four chapters. Examples are occasionally

given to how a specific method or principle worked or failed in a named nation. But these chapters largely tend to avoid getting into the social and cultural detail of the implementation of these ideals. As a sociologist, I have a difficult time enduring this for four chapters. However, I must admit that the critique of US practice in this area as a police reform donor (Chapter 2) was welcome reading.

The case study chapters in Part II are where the book becomes much more enjoyable. The nations discussed are Iraq, South Africa, Northern Ireland and Kazakhstan. (Chapter 9 looks at police training with a focus on the rule of law, but with no one nation as a focus.) It is in these case study chapters that we get the social and cultural detail missing from Part I, and a real sense of just how difficult it can be to implement democratic policing in its true form. Indeed, if the world's biggest and first democracy (the USA) has trouble with democratic policing (as is argued in Chapter 2) it is no wonder then that developing and transitional countries struggle as well. Not all the chapters took a theoretically driven approach to their discussions, but the insight nevertheless gained from their case studies more than made up for this.

Overall, I feel this is a worthwhile book, albeit one not structured in an entirely helpful way. There are indeed many lessons to be learned here for the practitioners involved, but for a sociologist reviewing a book for *Sociology*, not enough of these were as theoretically informed as I was anticipating.