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Assessing the Role of 'Entrepreneurial Policing' in Changing Times.

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This blog focuses on a contemporary area of specific concern – namely the emerging concept of 'Entrepreneurial Policing'. In these austere times, change is increasingly being thrust on the Police Service with reform very much on the agenda. For example, the Neyroud Report¹ identified the need for major changes in the way Leadership and Training issues are addressed in England and Wales; and in Scotland the single police service for Scotland looms large. In these recessionary times it is all about protecting the frontline (Neyroud, 2010)². In the 'Flanagan Report', Sir Ronnie Flanagan made a plea for Chief Constables to take an "entrepreneurial approach" to policing and identified the 'Risk Aversion' culture in policing as being a major obstacle in achieving such transformation³. Flanagan further called for a national debate on risk aversion and culture change at a central government level.

The concept of 'Entrepreneurial Policing' entered into academic consciousness in 1987 with the seminal work of Sociologist Dick Hobbs (Hobbs, 1987)⁴ in his study of London Detectives. Bowling and Tong (2006) argue that the craft of policing revolves around important 'entrepreneurial' skills⁵. Although entrepreneurial policing has become an established area of academic study (See Palmer, 2005; and Smith 2008)⁶, it has yet to make a significant impact on policing processes and practices. At present, the term is used 'loosely' by a group of enlightened Chief Officers, Politicians and Policing Scholars for whom it means different things. As a concept it is in its infancy, so much so that Newburn and Neyroud (2008) do not mention it in their highly acclaimed Dictionary of Policing⁷. Putting aside the theoretical and the conceptual underpinnings of the construct, there are many questions to be answered. Will it engender practical outcomes? Should we develop and adopt new systems of entrepreneurial policing? Moreover, what would they look like? What does it mean in 'laymans terms'? A 'Skills for Justice' document⁸ identified various entrepreneurial skills which can be taught including: -

- Enterprise skills: Spotting opportunities, creating new ideas and having the confidence and capabilities to turn them into working realities;
- Intrapreneurial skills: The art of working within an organisation to effect change, by developing new ideas, procedures and by introducing innovative practice;
- Collaborative working skills: Working effectively with colleagues and other forces in procurement of goods and service.

Entrepreneurship as a practice thrives on change. As an ex-police-officer the subject fascinates me but is there substance to the rhetoric, or is it as my old Sergeant once remarked just "Coffee Table Policing"? The purpose of this blog is to initiate Flanagan's national discussion. I invite you to join me in the debate and would love to hear your opinions, views, examples and stories relating to whether entrepreneurship has a place in the new police service as it strives to re-professionalize its 21st century identity (Lester, 2007)⁹.

¹ Neyroud, P. (2011) "Review of Police Leadership and Training", available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/rev-police-leadership-training/report?view=Binary>

² Neyroud, P. (2010) "Protecting the Frontline: The Recessionary Dilemma? *Policing*, 4(1): 1-3.

³ Flanagan, R. (2008). 'The Flanagan Report', London: HMSO.

⁴ Hobbs, D. (1988) 'Doing the business: Entrepreneurship, the Working Class, and Detectives in the East End of London', Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁵ Bowling, B., Tong, S. (2006) "Art, Craft and Science of Detective Work", *Police Journal*, 79(4), 323-329.

⁶ Palmer, D. (2005) "State police in a state of change: remaking the entrepreneurial officer"; Smith, R. (2008) "Exploring the Policing – Entrepreneurship Nexus", SIPR Briefing Paper 2.

⁷ Newburn, T., Neyroud, P. (2008) 'Dictionary of Policing', Willan Publishing.

⁸ Skills for Justice Document – available at

http://www.skillsforjustice-4sight.com/drivers/Entrepreneurial_econ%20themes.pdf

⁹ See Lester, S. (2007). 'On Professions and being professional'. <http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/profnal.pdf> for a detailed discussion on what constitutes professional identity and how the logical model of professionalism may cause a tension with the creative model of professionalism.