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An exploration of the contextual factors affecting the creation of Police Scotland

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An exploration of the contextual factors affecting change to policing in Scotland.

DEVELOPMENTAL PAPER

Organisational Transformation, Change and Development Track

Title: An exploration of the contextual factors affecting change to policing in Scotland.

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An exploration of the contextual factors affecting change to policing in Scotland.

Title: An exploration of the contextual factors affecting change to policing in Scotland.

Summary: This paper will explore some of the predominant contextual factors which were evident in the environment leading up to the creation of Police Scotland in April 2013. By using a PEST analysis key environmental factors are identified and discussed in the context of their impact on the process of change to policing in Scotland.

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Background

On the 1st of April 2013 Police Scotland officially came into being. The creation of one single police through the merging of 8 regional forces was as a result of the enactment of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. This act fundamentally changed how policing services in Scotland were to be delivered and this was the largest scale change in policing in Scotland since the Police (Scotland) Act 1967. A change on this scale is no small undertaking and appropriate management of the change process is essential in order to ensure success.

It is commonly accepted that change is an inherent aspect of organisational life as a result of processes including globalisation, technology development and changing political and economic contexts in which organisations operate. These changes in context result in organisations adapting their practices and evolving to cope with change. This type of organisational change can be referred to as unplanned and evolutionary (Burke, 2014). The change that this project aims to explore is very different from this continuous change. The creation of Police Scotland fundamentally changed the structure, strategy and leadership of the organisation and as a result this can be referred to as a process of 'radical organisational change' as it resulted in a transformation from one organisation form to another (McNulty and Ferlie, 2004)

Change can be analysed at a number of levels within an organisation; individual, group and organizational. (Burnes, 2004, p.321, Burke, 2014, p.74, Cummings and Worley, 2015, p.94) In this context the change is at an organisational level as the unit of analysis is the whole of Police Scotland. Organisational change of this nature is no small undertaking and the effective planning and implementation of an appropriate change programme would be crucial for the success of such an endeavour. This paper presents the finding from stage 1 of larger scale research project currently being undertaken by the author.

Methodology

This project will take a processual approach (Pettigrew, 1990, 1997) to examining the radical organisational change which was carried out in order to create Police Scotland. A longitudinal case study will be produced using both primary and secondary research methods. Yin (2013) states that when research aims to answer 'why' and 'how' questions, and the researcher has no control over the behaviour being studied that the case study approach is appropriate. The unit of analysis for the case study project will be Police Scotland as an organisation focusing on the period between 2008 and

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2015 when the project commences. This paper focuses on stage 1, the retrospective data collection of a longitudinal processual research design (Pettigrew, 2003) and will use secondary research.

The study of strategic organisational change involves examination of three key factors, the content, process and context (Pettigrew, 2003). The importance of context in the change process is further supported by others (Burke, 2014, Cummings and Worley, 2015) and therefore an understanding of the environmental context of policing in Scotland is crucial to begin understand the change process which has occurred. This paper will examine published information including the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, documentation from Audit Scotland, Scottish government reports, and relevant media reports in order to build up a picture of the context in which Police Scotland was created.

In the field of strategic management the PEST analysis is a widely accepted as a useful tool for examining the key environmental factors and their potential impact on the organisation (Chau and Witcher, 2014, Thompson, Scott and Martin, 2014, Lynch, 2015). This is the model that has been chosen to conduct this analysis of the external context in this case.

Findings and discussion

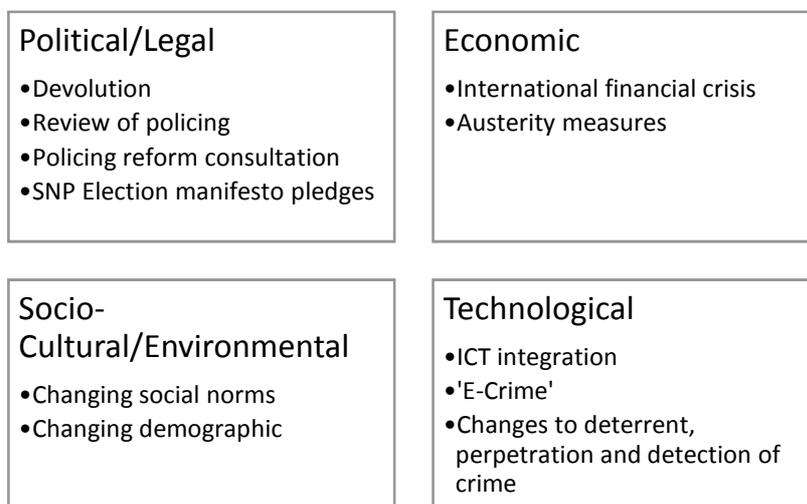


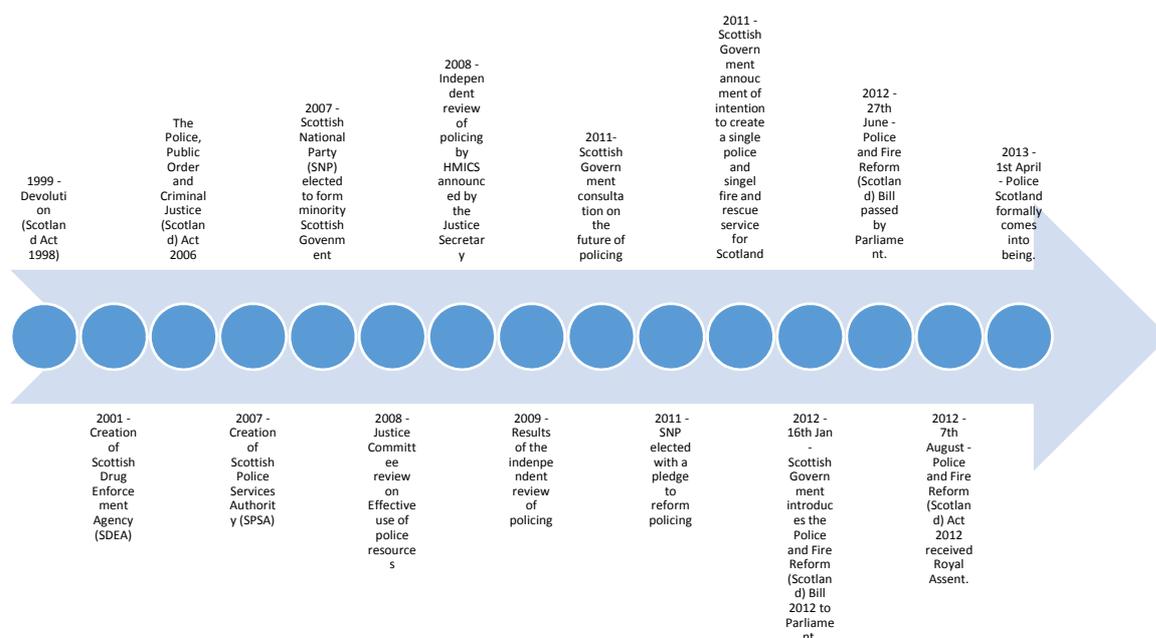
Figure 1: Figure 1: PEST analysis for Police Scotland

The political context of policing in Scotland has undergone some major changes in recent times. Figure 2 shows a timeline of events which occurred in the run up to the creation of Police Scotland. The first of the major changes that have been identified is devolution in 1999. This is a significant change for policing in Scotland as it marks the creation of a new

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legislative framework which allows for divergence of policing policy in Scotland from that of England and Wales. The creation of a Scottish Parliament with a Justice Committee and Ministers responsible for policing ensures that policing in Scotland is no longer dependent on intervention from Westminster but is now controlled by policy and legislation from Edinburgh. There are marked differences in policing policy north and south of the border with England and Wales being influenced by US policy whereas Scottish policy has drawn on Scandinavian and Northern European policy influences. These very different approaches to policing are indicative of the wider policy choices of the respective parliaments and also hint towards socio-cultural differences which may influence policy.

Figure 2: Timeline of events leading to the creation of Police Scotland



The first significant legislative change to policing in devolved Scotland came in the form of the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006. This act, and the creation of the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) represents the first major indication of tendency towards centralisation of policing services in Scotland where approaches to policing had traditionally been local (Scott, 2011). In 2007 the Scottish National Party (SNP) was elected as a minority Scottish Government and it was under this leadership that moves towards police reform began in earnest. The SNP was elected on pledges to increase numbers of police on the streets and to reduce crime to create a safer community. A Justice

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Committee Report in to the effective use of policing resources in 2008 concluded that police resources were inadequate and that there was a need for a more in depth review of policing in Scotland (Scottish Parliament, 2008). The then Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill announced that Her Majesty's Inspector for Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) had been asked to conduct a review of policing "and to make recommendations for the organisation, governance, accountability which best supports delivery of...policing responsibilities." (HMICS), 2009) The results of this review were published in 2009 and there followed a period of consultation on policing reform in Scotland. One of the key election manifesto pledges of the SNP was policing reform (Scottish National Party, 2011) and their subsequent election in 2011 gave them the mandate to push ahead with their changes to policing in Scotland, they introduced their Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill 2012 to parliament on the 16th January 2012. The Bill was enacted on the 27th of June and received Royal Assent on the 7th of August in the same year.

Police Scotland has been created against a backdrop of major economic upheaval across the globe. The economic crisis of 2008 and the subsequent austerity measures imposed by the Westminster Government had a major impact on public spending across the UK. Although the Scottish Government is responsible for managing its own budget the impact of the UK government decisions on public spending in Scotland cannot be underestimated. "The Scottish Government viewed the previous model of eight police forces as unsustainable in a period of reduced public sector spending. Although not a stated objective of reform, one of the main drivers was to save money with savings of £1.1 billion expected by 2026." (Scotland), 2012) This projected saving was on the basis that support services would not need to be replicated across the 8 original regional forces. Whether these saving will materialise or not remains to be seen.

The Social context of policing in Scotland has seen some huge changes in recent years and these changes will have influenced decisions on how to police Scottish communities. These communities have been changing "Between 2002-03 and 2009-10 there was a net migration (i.e. inflow) of almost 100,000 people from overseas and over 70,000 from the rest of the UK" (Scottish Government, 2012) this has led to a diversification in Scottish communities and the changing social norms that result from this will impact the perception of what effective policing should look like.

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Technological advances in recent years have also had a profound impact on policing operations. Technology has changed the way that crimes are perpetrated, detected and prevented and these changes must be considered by a modern police force (Scottish Government, 2012). The specialist skills and knowledge required to effectively police these new emerging 'e-crimes' was not available at a local level. In order to ensure ease of access to these specialist resources for policing in all communities in Scotland, regardless of location, population density or proximity to central services a national model was desired.

This paper has identified the external environmental factors which have been prevalent during the process of radical organisational change by which Police Scotland was created. This is the first stage in a large research project of building a case study to examine this complex change in a public sector organisation. The analysis from this paper will be used to form the basis of a case study examining the process of radical organisational change in policing in Scotland. This will be combined with the results from the second stage of this project which use primary data collection methods to build on the information presented here to form an in depth study of the creation of Police Scotland.

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