

Introduction: Twenty-First-Century Policing—Between Evidence-Based Practice and Reflexivity

Mario S. Staller, Swen Koerner, and Benni Zaiser

From the Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots (1943), to the race riots in Watts (1965) and Detroit (1967), as well as the Stonewall Riots in New York City (1969), all the way to the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, the police in the USA have had a consistent track record of brutality against marginalised groups (Moore, 2016). The corresponding, broad media coverage across the globe makes the USA a suitable canvas to illustrate the contribution

M. S. Staller (⋈)

University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration North Rhine-Westphalia, Cologne, Germany

e-mail: mario.staller@hspv.nrw.de

S. Koerner

German Sport University Cologne, Cologne, Germany

e-mail: koerner@dshs-koeln.de

B. Zaiser

Aurora, ON, Canada

e-mail: connect@bennizaiser.com

we are confident these two volumes will make to conflict management in the police, not only in the USA but beyond.

Intermittent reconciliation efforts have attempted to identify causes and effects and provide the police with recommendations to move towards better relationships with the communities they serve. As a result, trust in the police and corresponding reform efforts have kept progressing and regressing cyclically, keeping the state of policing moving on the spot rather than in a linear fashion towards sustainable improvement. In the 1990s, policing literature started to coin the term "21st-century policing". In the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles Riots and the Rampart scandal—in which, throughout the 1990s, a number of officers of the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) Rampart Division had been found to have systematically abused their authority and were implicated in various forms of misconduct—the US Department of Justice (DoJ), and RAND Public Safety and Justice, published a series of research reports.

In 1992, the DoJ published a research brief on Policing Strategies that Address Community Needs in the 21st Century (Jordan, 1992). The focus-group-based report included a discussion on various trends that determine the potential for conflict during police-citizen interactions. In 1998, the DoJ published Police in the Community: Strategies for the 21st Century (Miller & Hess, 1998), an overview of evidence-based best practices. This report provided guidance for law enforcement agencies on how community policing could be implemented effectively through interpersonal skills, dealing effectively with diversity, and communication. In 2001, the DoJ posted Policing in the 21st Century: What Works and What Doesn't (Mazerolle, 2001), an analysis of the implementation of community policing in Australia. Among others, this report identified an unhealthy social distance between the police and the communities they serve; ongoing emphasis on traditional, reactive policing tactics were found to be major shortfalls. In 2003, RAND Public Safety and Justice published Training the 21st Century Police Officer, the findings of an independent review assessing police training in the areas of use of force, search and seizure, arrest procedures, community policing, and diversity awareness (Glenn et al., 2003).

The crisis-opportunity cycle started over again when, in 2014, Michael Brown was shot by police in Ferguson, Missouri, and unrest unfolded, sparking another international debate on police-community relations and the use of force (Robinson, 2020). As a result, President Obama commissioned *The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), which set out to advance police reform with the successful implementation of community policing to advance trust and legitimacy and improve training and education for the safety of both officers and citizens. Six years later, George Floyd was killed by police in Minnesota in the USA, which led to a higher interval rate of global coverage and public discourse on police reform.

We are now almost one-quarter into the new century, but the police officer and his or her institution keep struggling with a set of challenges that have not changed since the last century.

What we believe to be key in overcoming that same crisis-opportunity cycle, or at least keep these cyclical setbacks on a trajectory of continuous improvement, is an observation that also reaches back into the last century. The periodic public discussions that follow each setback typically fail to distinguish between clearly extra-legal police action and unsanctioned use of force that is simply the result of incompetence (Fyfe, 1986). The focus on malicious misconduct and the corresponding dichotomy between a few bad apples and mostly good officers deprives all the police, the public, and those who study the relationship between the two, of the necessary depth to make meaningful changes. Systemic features—including the law (e.g., qualified immunity, Obasogie & Zaret, 2021), policy and procedures (e.g., lack of de-escalation mandates, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015; or hiring, Hilal et al., 2017), as well as training and education (e.g., lack of interpersonal skills training and education, Police Executive Research Forum, 2015)—have been found to contribute to the negative outcomes of policing. These negative outcomes include excessive use of force (e.g., White, 2001), bad community relations (e.g., Giles, 2002), and ultimately a lack of trust and legitimacy in the police by those that they serve (Kochel & Skogan, 2021; Kyprianides et al., 2021; Tyler, 2002). What all these systemic features have in common is that they are closely associated with the level

of competency of both the individual officers and the institution of the police. As Fyfe (1986) said more than a third of a century ago:

We should take care too to distinguish between legitimate provoked force and incompetence-related violence. The former is that *required* to put down threats against officers or other challenges to official authority. The latter is unnecessary, and occurs only because officers lack the expertise to employ readily available and less frantic means of putting down such threats and challenges. (p. 221, emphasis in original)

This is Volume I of the Palgrave Macmillan book series on "Police Conflict Management" and will provide readers with an overview of the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. As teased out above in this Introduction and worked out through many of the chapters of this volume, many of the challenges of twenty-first-century policing are substantially the same as those of the twentieth century, although they might present themselves in an updated version that reflects the twenty-first-century society that they are now rooted in. This realisation lends much importance to the opportunities of twenty-first-century policing, and we hope to identify those that might help us more adequately address these long-standing challenges.

Already in the 1970s, the USA had seen a demand for building a policing policy and strategy based on independent research and scientific evidence. The Police Foundation (now the National Policing Institute) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) were, to our knowledge, among the first national level research and education organisations to advance policing through innovation and scientific research (National Policing Institute, 2022). Since then, research projects, programmes, and institutions have sprawled across several countries, culminating in the establishment of professional societies of evidence-based policing in the UK in 2010 (Society of Evidence-Based Policing, 2022), in Australia and New Zealand in 2013 (Australia and New Zealand Society of Evidence-Based Policing, 2022), and in the USA (American Society of Evidence-Based Policing, 2023) and in Canada in 2015 (Canadian Society of Evidence-Based Policing, 2022).

There is broad agreement on the need to implement policing practices based on scientific evidence as well as on the success that evidence-based policing has produced (Bennell et al., 2021; Todak et al., 2021). However, we have seen recent reiterations of the crisis—opportunity cycle and the corresponding public sentiment, which is now articulated in the "defund and abolish the police" discussions (e.g., McDowell & Fernandez, 2018), as indicators that conventional research on policing is insufficient to address the needs of society in the twenty-first century. The discourse between the police and the public fails to effectively negotiate the needs of two separate social systems (i.e., the police and the public). Each system filters that much called for evidence through its own socio-perceptual lens. The police and the public lack an epistemic consensus, which we argue seems to perpetuate the crisis—opportunity cycle.

As a consequence, in an effort to better coordinate the creation of mutually agreed upon knowledge between science, the police, and the public, we advocate for reflexivity as a prerogative in modern police practice and research (Koerner & Staller, 2022). Reflexivity calls for the analysis of the preconditions and consequences of scientific perspectives themselves. It is a process upstream from the creation of an evidence-base, as it gives primary attention to the point of view of a second-order observation that critically engages social and individual constraints, such as personal experiences, beliefs and knowledge, or scientific and disciplinary theories and methods, which enable and limit not only *what* can be seen, but also *how* it is seen.

A reflexive practice enables practitioners and researchers to learn conscientiously and deliberately from experiences that range from first-hand frontline occurrences in the field to critically evaluating an evidence-based policy implementation or finding the right research question to address a socially relevant issue in policing (Bolton & Delderfield, 2018). The process of reflection allows them to incorporate the second-order observation to become aware of the biases that naturally come with the perspective, which are operating in the first order. In policing, such insight often includes matters of how the police or research relates to society or the role that culture mediates and moderates between the positive variables under investigation. As such, a reflexive practice can

challenge assumptions, ideological illusions, and damaging biases rooted in both society at large and police culture in particular; it can also question inequalities and personal and institutional behaviours that might silence or marginalise the voices of others (Bolton & Delderfield, 2018). It prevents us from perpetuating an evidence-base of what has often been deemed "best practice" in policing, but which has been created "working backwards", from "within the box" of an assumed hypothesis, contaminated by the presence of a heuristic and confirmation bias (Staller et al., 2022). Think of the 21-foot rule, also referred to as the Tueller drill, as an example. The 21-foot rule states 21 feet to be the distance far enough away for a police officer to safely draw their firearm and shoot a knife attacker, who launches at them with the intent to use the knife (Martinelli, 2014). Since the 1980s, this rule has informed police training and practice, as well as corresponding jurisprudence in the USA (Machacynski, 2020; Martinelli, 2014). Sandel et al. (2020) found that, even though the rule had been discussed throughout its existence, peer-reviewed evidence was lacking. Consequently, the authors ran a series of experiments and concluded that 21 feet was not far enough for officers to defend themselves against a knife-armed citizen launching at them. Despite its methodological rigour and conclusive results, we find the study to be constrained and of limited relevance for practitioners. All of the four studies published were designed to test drawing time in relation to threat distance, measuring running speed and drawing speed and the accuracy of participants, along with playing out a knife attack across 21 feet, in a linear fashion, without any obstruction or any other factors that might determine the way such a scenario might play out in the real world. It is this lack of ecological validity that we argue can be filled so as to make officer safety research more meaningful and applicable for police in the field (and jurisprudence on the corresponding uses of force).

Ultimately, reflexivity enables researchers and practitioners to better understand:

- What they know and what they do not know;
- What they do not know they know and do not know;
- The constraints of their own perspective;

 The complexity of the interactive co-experience, within which all the researchers, the police, and the public continuously negotiate and renegotiate their coexistence.

This is the mindset with which we worked to compile a new set of perspectives on an old line-up of problems. We organised this book series on "Police Conflict Management" in two volumes, *Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century* and *Training and Education*, with the aspiration to cover the full spectrum of encounters between the public and the police, from the merely communicative all the way to the use of lethal force (both ways).

1 The Project

Even though we anticipated that academics and practitioners would have different needs and wants in what they hope to take away from these two volumes, we deliberately chose to address both audiences with each volume and each chapter. This is our attempt to fill the gap between research and practice. In addition, several contributions stem from practitioner researchers, whose immersion in the subject matter, combined with their academic skillset, allows for rigorous research of socially relevant issues. Ultimately, we hope the volumes will invite those readers that are police practitioners to look beyond the organisational and sociocultural constraints of the police and those readers that are academics to take research out of the ivory tower and into the sandbox.

In an effort to widen the geographic scope of the volumes and move their insights beyond those gained from the USA, we are very proud to showcase the contributions of authors from countries where policing literature is rather scarce and evidence-based policing has no or only a very young tradition, such as Russia, the countries in Scandinavia, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Germany. With three methodologically diverse contributions from the Republic of South Africa, the volumes also provide unique insight into police conflict management in a post-conflict society. In contrast with so many others, police systems have been studied by a broader body of literature and is now, too, moving

towards the evidence-based policing paradigm (Newham & Rappert, 2018).

Of course, we would have loved to see more issues addressed, more topics covered, and contributions from authors of a wider cultural and geographical diversity. For that, we rely on the reader and his or her interest in the book series, which will ultimately allow us to make potential future editions as up to date as current events will then require, and even to be more informative and interesting as the two volumes which we are honoured to present to you now.

We can only do justice to the academic standard we set out to live up to with this endeavour by providing the reader with an overview of the process of how the Palgrave Macmillan book series on "Police Conflict Management" came about. Between April and July 2021, we collected abstracts through both calls on researchgate.net and through other academic outlets as well as through the direct invitation of authors we had identified to have a track record of research in any area that was associated with conflict management in policing. Authors were encouraged to propose, from within their area of expertise, the topic they deemed to be the best fit for either volume. Both through open calls for abstracts and open-ended invitations, we set out to let all contributors identify the challenges to and opportunities of—as well as the corresponding training in police conflict management—the twenty-first century, beyond the constraints of potential editorial selection.

After reviewing abstracts and composing the structure of the book series, we notified authors of the acceptance of their abstracts in October 2021. In autumn 2022, Palgrave Macmillan completed two independent reviews of the project (both favourable) and collaboratively worked out its organisation across two volumes as its final form. One reviewer and the publisher requested efforts to be made to acquire more authors from the Global South for a more balanced perspective. Another round of recruitment followed as authors created their manuscripts. The truly global provenance of the authors—who were impacted by the 2019 coronavirus pandemic, the ramifications of the war in the Ukraine, and other challenges both at the national level, such as rotating power outages,

and at the individual level involving personal health and bereavement—warranted several adaptions of the final submission time-line, which we moved from July 31, 2022, to September 30, 2022.

What followed in October was a single-iteration peer review, in which each chapter had a primary reviewer (the author of another chapter) and a secondary reviewer (editor), based on five criteria:

- Does the chapter provide sufficient background of the topic it addresses?
- Does the chapter offer value to both academics and practitioners?
- Does the chapter reflect the current state-of-the-art of the subject matter?
- Is the chapter written coherently and in a way that can be understood by readers not immersed in the subject matter?
- Does the chapter live up to the academic (arguments are based on evidence) as well as the editorial standard (language, APA seventh edition) of a peer-reviewed journal?

The initial review was double-blind. Authors and reviewers were revealed when they were provided with the feedback. In November, revisions were resubmitted to the reviewers for final feedback and votes. In December, authors were informed accordingly. On December 31, 2022, we submitted the manuscripts to the publisher.

The bottom line is that seven submitted abstracts were withdrawn prior to submission of a manuscript, and three chapter manuscripts were rejected by peer-review. This left 17 chapters and an editorial for *Police Conflict Management*. *Volume I: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century*, and 17 chapters and an editorial for *Police Conflict Management*. *Volume II: Training and Education*.

2 A Specific Look at This Volume

Police Conflict Management Volume I approaches Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century from a macro-perspective and narrows down its focus to the micro-level of analysis, chapter by chapter, to take a

more granular look at individual challenges and opportunities. Chapter 2 continues the substantial part of this Introduction and explores Police Trust and Legitimacy in Modern Societies. The author provides an interesting vantage point on fairness and procedural justice and incorporates not only the diversity and complexity that shape modern societies but also often overlooked concepts, such as individualism and the decreasing respect of authorities. Chapter 3 introduces readers to Danger, Fighting, and Badassness: A Social Systems Perspective on Narratives and Codes in Police Conflict Management. The authors provide a novel perspective on police culture, an understanding of which we hope will equip police officers, police conflict management instructors, and decision-makers with greater insight as to how they can mitigate unintended consequences of a negatively skewed worldview. Chapter 4 will add to our understanding of how authority and order maintenance accounts shape police-citizen interactions: Policing in the Light of Social Dominance Theory and the Social Distance Theory of Power will harness new theoretical perspectives that are actionable for the purpose of increasing community relations.

Chapter 5 will zoom in and set the stage for challenges and opportunities associated with the *Psychological Aspects of the Use of Firearms by the Police*. It provides a comprehensive overview on corresponding research and practice in Europe with a specific focus on Germany. Chapter 6 will discuss *Prevalence and Correlates of Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers in the United States: A National Portrait*. It will not only discuss violence against the police that leads to officer-involved shootings but also add nuance to Chapter 3, which discusses danger narratives in police culture, as it offers a timely account of how some of the risks officers face on a daily basis may be precipitated. Chapter 7 will introduce the reader to *Police Conflict Management and the Phenomenon of Suicide-By-Cop in North America* and explore the intricacies associated with this challenge, which is closely associated with policing the mentally unwell.

With de-escalation figuring so prominently in the recommendations that many of the cited reports by the DoJ and the Office of Community Oriented Policing have given, we are proud to introduce a novel, critical, and reflexive perspective on the subject with *A Feminist Ethics of Care Approach to De-escalation in Policing* in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 will demonstrate how common misconceptions in the police act as *Barriers*

to Effective De-escalation, undermining conventional approaches to deescalating. Chapter 10 is Applying the Interpersonal Circumplex Model to De-escalative Communication in Police Services to explore how human behaviour follows certain action-reaction patterns that law enforcement can exploit for training and practice. With a focus on The Nonverbal Behavior and Appearance of Police Officers in the Police Service, Chapter 11 provides an exclusive account of non-verbal communication that puts its solid theoretical underpinning into practice for police officers, conflict management trainers, and decision-makers alike. Chapter 12 provides a state-of-the-art overview of Effective Police Negotiation by Synthesising the Strategies and Techniques that Promote Success Within Hostage or Crisis Situations. Chapter 13 will bring the reader up to speed with the latest contributions of a paramount communication theory in law enforcement that has informed best practice in policing for more than half a century: Community Relations and Policing: A Communication Accommodation Theory Perspective.

Current affairs warrant a closer look at *Policing Hate Rallies*, which Chapter 14 will provide with a critical review of lessons learned from previous events in the USA. Chapter 15 offers a unique and reflexive perspective on *Police Conflict Management in South Africa* with *An Autoethnographic Reconnaissance*. Chapter 16 is on *Police Crowd Management in South Africa* and discusses *Efforts and Challenges of De-escalation*, adding insight to the literature from a different and distinctive jurisdiction. Chapter 17 offers yet another perspective as unique and as valuable on *Police Legitimacy in Russia*, as it is *Explaining Millennials' Obligation to Obey and Willingness to Cooperate*.

Individual chapters have a Key Takeaway section at the end, containing derivations, hints, and recommendations for action. Here we asked all authors to summarise the important key points of their own contribution with regard to three different populations:

1. **Police officers**, understood as frontline workers and street level bureaucrats. Of course, the other populations could also be police officers, yet in the Key Takeaway section they refer to the population that resolves conflict and is engaged in conflict management with citizens directly.

- 2. **Conflict management trainers**, understood as individuals that are assigned to the task of providing learning opportunities for police officers (the frontline workers) as it relates to the management of conflictual situations. As such, this term refers to individuals that are also known as force trainers, de-escalation trainers, communication trainers, firearms instructors, personal protection and self-defence trainers, tactical trainers, and so on.
- 3. **Police decision-makers**, as a term for the individuals that are in charge of changing policy concerning police conflict management as well as the corresponding training and education.

References

- American Society of Evidence-Based Policing. (2023). About ASEBP. https://www.americansebp.org/about_asebp.php
- Australia and New Zealand Society of Evidence-Based Policing. (2022, December 30). *Home*. https://www.anzsebp.com
- Bennell, C., Alpert, G., Andersen, J. P., Arpaia, J., Huhta, J.-M., Kahn, K. B., Khanizadeh, A.-J., McCarthy, M., McLean, K., Mitchell, R. J., Nieuwenhuys, A., Palmer, A., & White, M. D. (2021). Advancing police use of force research and practice: Urgent issues and prospects. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 26 (2), 121–144. https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12191
- Bolton, G., & Delderfield, R. (2018). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. Sage.
- Canadian Society of Evidence-Based Policing. (2022, December 30). *Home*. https://www.can-sebp.net
- Fyfe, J. F. (1986). *Police personnel practices, 1986*. City Management Association.
- Giles, H. (2002). *Law enforcement, communication, and community*. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Glenn, R., Panitch, B. R., Barnes-Proby, D., Williams, E., Christian, J., Lewis, M. W., Gerwehr, S., & Brannan D. W. (2003). Training the 21st century police officer: Redefining police professionalism for the Los Angeles Police Department. Rand. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1745/RAND_MR1745.pdf

- Hilal, S., Densley, J., & Jones, D. (2017). A signalling theory of law enforcement hiring. *Policing and Society, 27*, 508–524. https://doi.org/10.1080/104 39463.2015.1081388
- Jordan, R. E. (1992). *Policing strategies that address community needs in the 21st century.* Department of Justice. https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/policing-strategies-address-community-needs-21st-century
- Kochel, T. R., & Skogan, W. G. (2021). Accountability and transparency as levers to promote public trust and police legitimacy: Findings from a natural experiment. *Policing: An International Journal*, 44(6), 1046–1059. https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-04-2021-0062
- Koerner, S., & Staller, M. S. (2022). Towards reflexivity in police practice and research. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 27(2), 177–181. https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12207
- Kyprianides, A., Bradford, B., Jackson, J., Yesberg, J., Stott, C., & Radburn, M. (2021). Identity, legitimacy and cooperation with police: Comparing general-population and street-population samples from London. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 27*, 492–508. https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000312
- McDowell, M. G., & Fernandez, L. A. (2018). 'Disband, disempower, and disarm': Amplifying the theory and practice of police abolition. *Critical Criminology*, 26, 373–391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-018-9400-4
- Machacynski, B. (2020). *Qualified immunity and the 21-foot rule* [Preprint]. Preprints, https://doi.org/10.22541/au.160091472.26983717
- Martinelli, R. (2014). Revisiting the "21-foot rule". *Police: The Law Enforcement Magazine, 18.* http://www.cainstructor.com/Articles/21%20Foot% 20Rule%20July%202016/Revisiting%20the%2021%20foot%20rule.pdf
- Mazerolle, L. (2001). *Policing in the 21st century: What works and what doesn't*. Department of Justice. https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/policing-21st-century-what-works-and-what-doesnt
- Miller, L. S., & Hess, K. M. (1998). *Police in the community: Strategies for the 21st century*. Department of Justice. https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/police-community-strategies-21st-century-second-edition
- Moore, L. (2016). *Police brutality in the United States*. In Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Police-Brutality-in-the-United-States-2064580/additional-info
- National Policing Institute. (2022, December 30). *About us.* https://www.policinginstitute.org/about-us/
- Newham, G., & Rappert, B. (2018). Policing for impact: Is South Africa ready for evidence-based policing? *South African Crime Quarterly, 64*, 7–16. https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2018/v0n64a2998

- Obasogie, O. K., & Zaret, A. (2021). Plainly incompetent: How qualified immunity became an exculpatory doctrine of police excessive force. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=9769&context=penn_law_review
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. (2015). The President's task force on 21st century policing implementation guide: Moving from recommendations to action. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p341-pub.pdf
- Police Executive Research Forum. (2015). *Re-engineering training on police use of force*. Critical Issues in Policing Series. Police Executive Research Forum. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/reengineeringtraining1.pdf
- Robinson, L. O. (2020). Five years after Ferguson: Reflecting on police reform and what's ahead. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 687(1), 228–239. https://doi.org/10.1177/000271621988 7372
- Sandel, W., Martaindale, H., & Blair, J. P. (2020). A scientific examination of the 21-foot rule. *Police Practice and Research*, 22, 1–16. https://doi.org/10. 1080/15614263.2020.1772785
- Society of Evidence-Based Policing. (2022). About the Society. https://www.sebp.police.uk/about
- Staller, M. S., Zaiser, B., & Koerner, S. (2022). The problem of entanglement: Biases and fallacies in police conflict management. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 24(2), 113–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/146 13557211064054
- Todak, N., McLean, K., Nix, J., & Haberman, C. (2021). The globalization of evidence-based policing. *Faculty Books and Monographs*.
- Tyler, T. R. (2002). A national survey for monitoring police legitimacy. *Justice Research and Policy*, 4(1–2), 71–86. https://doi.org/10.3818/JRP.4.1.200 2.71
- White, M. D. (2001). Controlling police decisions to use deadly force: Reexamining the importance of administrative policy. *Crime & Delinquency*, 47(1), 131–151. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128701047001006