

## Conclusion: A Journey Through the World of Police Use of Force

Edward R. Maguire

### INTRODUCTION

ON MAY 3, 1986, Hong Kong Police investigating a burglary at the Tin Sin Sightseeing Company discovered two Chinese males loitering in the alley behind the building. When one of the men ran away, a 23-year-old police constable chased after him and fired three shots during the pursuit. All three shots missed the man and he was arrested at the conclusion of the chase. A police administrator reviewing the incident concluded that no disciplinary action against the constable was warranted for shooting at the man, because the constable was acting on the knowledge that a serious crime (the burglary) had been committed.<sup>1</sup>

On December 30, 2003, Sergeant Colin Russell and Constable Joe Many Fingers of the Blood Tribe Police Service in Alberta, Canada responded to a call requesting the removal of an intoxicated male who was frightening his daughter and elderly mother. The suspect had a lengthy criminal record and a propensity for violence. When the police arrived he armed himself with a concealed knife. When the officers tried to arrest him, he attempted to stab them with the knife. Sergeant Russell sustained knife wounds to his head and back, while Constable Many Fingers was able to evade the offender's attempts to stab him. The officers succeeded in subduing the offender and arresting him. Both officers were issued a commendation for bravery from the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association for the heroism and selflessness they displayed during this incident.<sup>2</sup>

These two incidents illustrate the wide variety of opinion over time and place about what constitutes acceptable police use of force. In the first case, the suspect may have committed a property crime but presented no direct or imminent threat to the officer, yet the officer shot at him anyway. In the

second, the suspect presented a clear threat, and the officers would have been justified in shooting him, yet they showed great restraint in choosing not to shoot in spite of the danger they faced.

Use of force varies widely across officers, situations, organizations, and political systems at multiple levels. Social science research on police use of force has attempted to understand and explain some of these differences (Alpert and Dunham 2004; Worden 1995). But the vast majority of this research has been conducted in developed western democracies, primarily the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia. This research has focused intently on understanding why some police officers use force more than others; why some situations are more likely to result in police use of force than others; and why some police agencies or communities have greater rates of force used by police than others. Little research, however, has examined police use of force in developing nations, and even less research has compared police use of force across nations.<sup>3</sup> Because most research focuses on one nation at a time, scholarship on the police use of force tends to rely on a narrow range of variation.

The great contribution of this volume is to widen the range of observed variation in police use of force, so that scholars might be able to take a step back and ask some bigger questions. After all, if theories that purport to explain police use of force are robust, shouldn't they be able to explain police use of force across its full range of variation throughout the globe? This volume takes readers on a whirlwind tour of police use of force in many nations, from the heavily armed police death squads of Brazil; to the unarmed police of Norway, England, Scotland, and Wales; from the repressive *mano dura* policies adopted by police in Latin America; to the summary executions carried out by police in India; from the police in Sweden, where officers are taught to shoot at a suspect's legs; to the police in the United States, where officers are taught to shoot at the "center of mass." The purpose of this volume is primarily descriptive: to present the results of research conducted around the world on police use of force. But its implications are more far reaching. By shining light on the incredible level of variation in police use of force around the world, this volume begs the question about why such variation exists. It therefore represents a remarkable opportunity for theorizing about the sources of these differences. Whether you are an undergraduate college student, an experienced police practitioner, a policymaker interested in police use-of-force policy, or a professional researcher, this book challenges you to answer a deceptively simple question: Why does the nature and extent of police use of force vary so tremendously across nations? For such a simple question, the answers are very complex.

## VARIATIONS IN STANDARDS

One of the most compelling patterns that is repeated throughout this volume is the great variety in standards about what constitutes acceptable use of force

by police. In this section we explore some of these variations in standards. In the next section we explore just a handful of possible explanations for why these differences exist.

### Level of Armament

Most, but not all, of the nations represented in this volume issue firearms to police officers to carry during the course of their duties. According to Myhrer and Strype (in this volume), police in Norway are not allowed to be armed "during ordinary duty unless specially authorized by the Chief of Police." They carry firearms "stored in locked and sealed containers" and must receive authorization from the Chief of Police (in all but the most extraordinary circumstances) to break the seal and remove the firearms. Otherwise the police are only authorized to be armed in certain types of assignments or situations. The authors hypothesize that "the time delay inherent in asking for and receiving arming authorization calls for alternative police tactics, such as freezing the dangerous situation. It also seems reasonable to assume that the time delay also provides more optimal conditions for making informed and rational decisions about how to solve critical situations."

Waddington and Wright (in this volume) point out that while most police officers in England, Scotland, and Wales are still unarmed, the police use of firearms in Britain has become more common, "suggesting that the relationship between police and citizen has undergone significant shifts." Knutsson and Norée (in this volume) report that the Danish police were only issued firearms in 1965 "after a tragic episode in which four officers were killed in one incident." Thus the decision about whether to arm the police, or how heavily or thoroughly to arm them, appears dynamic and likely depends, to some extent, on the degree of perceived threat.

Questions about level of armament do not only apply to the use of firearms; several of the authors in this volume raise compelling issues associated with the adoption of less-than-lethal techniques and technologies. Terrill and Paoline, for instance, emphasize that standards about the use of conducted energy devices like the TASER are uneven among police agencies in the United States. The TASER is placed in different locations on use-of-force continua: in some agencies it is placed just above verbal commands and in others it is placed just below deadly force. Agencies have also adopted different standards with regard to the level of citizen resistance sufficient to warrant the use of the TASER. Police in many nations argue that if given the TASER, they will use *lower* levels of deadly force. For instance, Australian police officials have argued that several police shootings of mentally ill people could have been prevented if the officers had been armed with TASERS (see Baker in this volume). At the same time, credible concerns have been raised about the number of deaths caused by police use of TASERS. Concerns have also been raised about the side effects and police misuse of chemical agents like

oleoresin capsicum (OC) (see Kaminski and Adang, in this volume) and CS (see Buttle, in this volume). Many other forms of force used by police have similarly generated public debate, including the police use of chokeholds, batons, and dogs. Throughout the world, there exists significant variation in the forms of force the police are authorized to use and the nature and extent of actual use by police officers on the street.

### Warning Suspects Before Firing and Firing Warning Shots

There also appears to be wide variation in the extent to which police are expected to warn a suspect before commencing fire. For instance, according to Wong (in this volume), Hong Kong Police standing orders require a constable to give a verbal warning to a suspect before shooting. Northern Ireland's policy also requires police to issue a verbal warning of their intent to shoot, unless doing so would endanger life or is clearly inappropriate. That same policy discourages the use of warning shots because they pose serious risks (Police Service of Northern Ireland).

According to Knutsson and Norée (in this volume), "in the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish rules, it is explicitly stated that warning shots should be fired before effective fire is commenced. The concept of using warning shots does not, however, exist in the Finnish regulations." Knutsson's study of Swedish police found that in cases in which firearms were used against a person, "warning shots were discharged in fifty-four percent of the events, a combination of warning and effective fire in fifteen percent of the cases, and effective fire in thirty-one percent." Contrast these examples with police in the United States, who are expressly trained *not* to fire warning shots. For instance, the policy of the Seattle Police Department is premised on the notion that officers must make a decision to use deadly force in a split second and they may only have one brief opportunity to open fire: "the national standard among police agencies is not to fire warning shots. The Seattle Police Department complies with that standard. . . . Making (likely to be ineffective) shots in the air that have the added potential of harming others may not be the best use of that one opportunity" (Seattle Police Department). The model use of force policy established by the International Association of Chiefs of Police represents a moderate position between those that require or encourage the use of warning shots and those that prohibit them. It states that "warning shots may be fired if an officer is authorized to use deadly force and only if the officer reasonably believes a warning shot can be fired safely in light of all circumstances of the encounter" (International Association of Chiefs of Police 2005).

Implicit in the arguments against the use of warning shots are two hypotheses.<sup>4</sup> First, firing warning shots may place officers and bystanders in danger by giving suspects additional time to fire their own weapons or to execute an aggressive act. Second, warning shots fired by police may injure or

kill other people. We are unaware of any rigorous empirical research that tests either hypothesis. One impressionistic review of cases in which warning shots were fired concluded that the shots were effective in convincing suspects to surrender in most cases (Mulroy and Santiago 1998). At the same time, the media has documented many instances of bystander injury and death resulting from the use of warning shots. Also, warning shots are sometimes fired into the air. Because what goes up must come down, research shows that firing weapons into the air can cause serious injuries and death (Ordog et al. 1994). Finally, research shows that bullet ricochets also present significant risks (Burke and Rowe 1992). Given the worldwide variation in the use of warning shots and the gravity of the topic, systematic research to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of using warning shots would be timely.

### Shooting to Injure versus Shooting to Kill

There also appears to be some variation in the extent to which officers attempt to minimize harm to the suspect after making the decision to shoot. For instance, according to Myhrer and Strype (in this volume), the Norwegian police must use their gun in "a proper and proportionate way . . . the gun should be fired in such a way that the damage caused is as little as possible." Officers must assess the effects of each shot before taking additional shots. At the same time, "almost no situations escalate to the point at which the police need to fire guns." Knutsson's (in this volume) study of the Swedish police found it "extremely rare that shots were fired with the intent to kill . . . to get the desired effect with the least amount of force, Swedish officers are taught and trained to initially aim at the suspect's legs . . . in pressing situations of self-defense, officers may of course aim and shoot at the chest." Once again, the *harm minimization* strategies used by Scandinavian police differ considerably from standard doctrine in the United States, as exemplified in the following statement by the Seattle Police Department:

In Seattle as in other law enforcement agencies, officers are trained that the most certain and effective way to stop armed and dangerous assailants is to aim for their "center of mass." Movies and television programs make it seem that shooting at a person's arm or leg is easily done. In reality, such a shot is both improbable and risky. Deadly force incidents evolve in seconds, often presenting officers with limited opportunities to intervene. In light of this, officers are trained to take the high percentage shot, which is center of mass. (Seattle Police Department)

According to Wong (in this volume), police policy in Hong Kong is similar: "All officers should be aware that it is part of their training to open fire at center body mass and not at extremities."

The logic underlying deadly force policies requiring officers to aim at center of mass is implicitly supported in the evidence provided by Morrison (in this volume). He points out that bullet "hit rates" for American police

departments range from 15% to 60%. Put differently, “most police bullets miss their target because hit rates rarely exceed thirty percent.” These findings suggest that shooting policies encouraging officers to fire warning shots and/or to aim for the legs may endanger officers (or bystanders) by wasting precious moments in split-second situations. Although American police agencies do not have explicit across-the-board “shoot to kill” policies, any policy that instructs officers to shoot at center of mass is likely to result in increased fatalities, given the concentration of vital organs located in that region of the body. At the same time, policies encouraging officers to shoot at the limbs may place the officer (or bystanders) at greater risk for injury or death. Thus the decision about which policy to adopt may essentially involve making a judgment about the value of the suspect’s life and the value of the police officer’s life. Deadly force policy requires careful consideration of actuarial notions far more common in military circles, like “acceptable casualties” and “reasonable risk” among personnel (Williams 2000). We are unfamiliar with any systematic research on shoot-to-wound versus shoot-to-kill policies (or point-of-aim policies) throughout the world, but clearly such research would be beneficial.

### Level of Force

Even within the realm of non-lethal force, there appear to be tremendous variations in the level of force viewed as acceptable by the public, the courts, police officials, and scholars. Consider the following quote from one of the leading police executives in the United States, William Bratton, former commissioner in New York City and former chief in Los Angeles:<sup>5</sup> “It is important to define ‘police brutality.’ We defined brutality as unnecessary behavior that caused broken bones, stitches, and internal injuries. But those were not the numbers that had gone up significantly. What had risen were reports of police inappropriately pushing, shoving, sometimes only touching citizens. We were taking back the streets and it wasn’t easy work” (Bratton 1998, 291). Bratton’s comments imply two controversial viewpoints. First, when police use inappropriate force that fails to cause serious injuries, their actions do not constitute police brutality. Second, when “taking back the streets,” it is okay to use inappropriate levels of force, as long as no serious injuries result. In other words, the ends justify the means.

Harvard professor Mark Moore offers a different perspective on the use of force by police. He reminds us that “state authority is one of the most important assets we citizens grant to the police” (2003, 21). Because authority in all its manifestations, including the capacity to use force, are “assets” granted to the police to enable them to carry out their work, . . . it is important to think quantitatively in terms of *how much* authority police are using as well as whether they are using it properly or not. Ideally, a police department

would make minimum use of force and authority in accomplishing its purposes. . . . We have to be sure that there is some *proportionality* in the way they use force and authority—that they do not use much more force and authority than seems necessary to deal with given criminal events or larger crime problems. (Moore 2003, 22)

Bratton boldly asserts a point of view to which many citizens, police, and government officials throughout the world—particularly in communities plagued by violent crime—quietly subscribe. This perspective is based on a premise that police are more effective when they *take the fight* to the criminals; some collateral damage may result from this approach, but that is the cost of living in a safe community. Moore (2003) suggests that police should adopt considerably more restraint in the use of force; that one way for police to think about efficiency is to achieve a given crime control benefit without resorting to excessive or unreasonable force. Over time and place, police agencies tend to vacillate between these two perspectives on the appropriate level of force.

### EXPLAINING VARIATIONS IN STANDARDS

Our brief journey through the world of police use of force has thus far focused on some of the differences between nations. We now examine a handful of potential explanations for these differences. Space limits preclude a more comprehensive review of theoretical explanations, so this section provides just a brief glimpse.

One of the primary reasons for differences in use of force standards and policies over time and place may be the influence of key events. Unfortunately, in the realm of police use of force, such key events are often tragic and tend to occur within the public eye under intense media scrutiny. Organizational researchers refer to sudden, unanticipated, and influential events that have a dramatic effect on organizations as “environmental jolts” (Mayer 1982). Often, key events serve as a sort of environmental jolt or a wake-up call that shocks the system and promotes change in the policy or practice of police use of force. For instance, according to Knutsson and Norée (in this volume), the Danish police were issued firearms in 1965 “after a tragic episode in which four officers were killed in one incident.”

Three noteworthy incidents served as a potent environmental jolt for police agencies in the United States. On April 11, 1986, FBI agents in Miami attempted to stop a vehicle driven by two heavily armed bank robbery suspects with previous military experience. In the ensuing shootout, two FBI agents were killed and five others were wounded; both suspects were killed as well (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1986). Because one of the suspects continued firing at the agents even after he had been shot several times, the incident raised questions about whether the FBI’s handguns were sufficient.

Moreover, some of the agents had difficulty reloading their revolvers during the shootout. As a result, the FBI switched to semiautomatic weapons with greater capacity and more stopping power. The incident also led many local police agencies to switch from revolvers to semiautomatic handguns (Malcolm 1990).

On February 15, 1997, two heavily-armed bank robbery suspects wearing body armor engaged in a shootout with Los Angeles police in North Hollywood. Officers were so heavily outgunned by suspects that they went into a gun store to appropriate more powerful weapons and ammunition. The two suspects were eventually killed by police, but 15 people, including 10 police officers, were injured in the shootout. As a result of the incident, Los Angeles police were authorized to begin carrying .45 caliber semiautomatic pistols to replace their revolvers and smaller caliber (9mm) semiautomatics. In addition, supervisors were authorized to begin carrying AR-15 assault rifles (CNN 1997). Once again, many American police agencies learned from the incident that their weaponry was insufficient to stop heavily armed suspects. For instance, a Washington, DC police commander, in justifying his department's controversial decision to acquire hundreds of AR-15 rifles, cited the Los Angeles shootout as the "one incident in America that got every single police department to look at their weapons. . ." (Klein 2008).

Another tragic event had different implications for use of force by American police: the April 20, 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, Colorado. Before Columbine, conventional police tactical doctrine in "active shooter" situations was for patrol officers to secure the perimeter and wait for a SWAT (or similar tactical) unit to make entry. The Columbine shootings led police in the United States to question this approach. If police officers had made entry sooner, they may have been able to save some lives. The United States has seen a dramatic shift in tactical doctrine for managing active shooter incidents since Columbine. Police are now trained that the first police officers to respond to an active shooter incident should make entry (most such events occur within buildings, often workplaces or schools) and neutralize the shooters, either by forcing surrender or using deadly force. A variety of specific tactical methodologies have been proposed for how to make entry, but they all operate on the same basic principle: "make a controlled and effective entry to stop the violence immediately" (Wood 2001, 80).

All three of these tragic incidents were featured prominently in the American media and had a fundamental influence on the way police think about the use of deadly force in the United States. Across the nation, police agencies have replaced revolvers with semiautomatic pistols with greater capacity and often with larger-caliber bullets; they have also armed themselves with more high-powered weapons, including automatic weapons. Both moves are likely to save police lives, but at the same time, research suggests that more deaths are likely to result from improvements in armament (Carr et al. 2008; Reedy

and Koper 2003; Richmond et al. 2004). Police have also altered their basic tactical approaches to active shooter situations. Similar key incidents in other nations have had similar effects, resulting in increases in police armament or the adoption of more aggressive tactics (*Police Journal* 2007; *Herald Sun* 2008). Given the many avenues through which law enforcement policy tends to diffuse outward from the United States, these changes are likely to have global implications (Newburn 2002).

Key events, however, are not the only factor influencing police use of force. The nature of the population being policed may also have a strong impact on use of force patterns. For instance, Waddington and Wright (in this volume) point out an historical curiosity: while most of the United Kingdom has unarmed police, Northern Ireland has always had an armed police service. They emphasize that

the same coterie of officials under the leadership of the same politician, with much the same vision and facing much the same political opposition, gave birth to two diametrically opposed models of policing. . . . The reasons for policing taking such dramatically divergent paths either side of the Irish Sea, lay in *who* was being policed: on the mainland, the civil population was composed of "free-born Englishmen" for whom full citizenship beckoned; whereas, the majority of the population of the colony of Ireland was composed of a rebellious peasantry to be repressed. (167)

If Waddington and Wright are correct, the nature and tone of policing may depend on the characteristics of the population: if there is an underclass to control or repress, use of force will be greater. This hypothesis is consistent with social conflict theory, which asserts that the majority will seek to control the minority through the enactment of laws and through the actions of state agencies like the police. One study found, for instance, that even after controlling for other factors like crime and rioting, inequality still has an effect on the amount of deadly force used by police, a finding that is also consistent with conflict theory (Jacobs and Britt 1979). This explanation for variations in use of force by police resonates much more loudly when we move beyond the handful of developed nations where most police research takes place. A genuine understanding of police use of force means studying it in the places where it is used most: in the world's slums, squatter communities, and shantytowns.

Another obvious explanation for differences in use of force between nations may be differences in culture. Wong (in this volume) concludes that there is a cultural difference between the east and west with regard to use of force. People in China view fleeing from the police as a more serious offense than people from other countries and therefore would be likely to support the police use of force against fleeing suspects. Similarly, while some people may view extrajudicial killings by police as abhorrent, evidence suggests that residents in some nations support the idea of police summarily executing known

criminals or terrorists (Peters 2006). One study found that “widespread fear of criminals leads many Brazilians to support death squads and police brutality against crime suspects” (Brooke 1990, 3). Another study found that a majority of British respondents supported a police shoot-to-kill policy for suspected terrorists (YouGov.com).<sup>6</sup> Cultural tolerance for police use of force may have a potent effect on international variations in the use of force. Unfortunately there is very little research to test this hypothesis.

Another reason for differences in use of force policies may simply be that some nations (or some agencies) make different value judgments about the risks they are willing to take in endangering the lives of police officers, members of the public and criminal offenders. For instance, one U.S. police officer has written that in active shooter situations, “the proper value system for effective public safety is in the following order: 1. Protection of the officer’s life. 2. Protection of the lives of fellow officers. 3. Protection of the lives of victims and witnesses on-scene. 4. Protection of the rights of the suspect” (Williams 2000, 172). When nations choose not to arm their officers, when they choose to arm them insufficiently relative to the threats they face, or when they adopt tactics that place officers unnecessarily in harm’s way, they are clearly making different value judgments about these priorities. Effective use of force policy means balancing threats to police and civilians against the rights of the suspect.

### ACHIEVING A BALANCE IN POLICE USE OF FORCE

Legitimacy is the foundation of law and legal authority. Improper or excessive use of force by police can jeopardize the perceived legitimacy of the police. Legitimacy is “a quality possessed by an authority, a law, or an institution that leads others to feel obligated to obey its decisions and directives voluntarily” (Tyler and Huo 2002, 102). The notion of voluntary compliance is the defining characteristic of legitimacy. If the majority of people chose not to comply voluntarily with the law or legal authorities, formal social control institutions would become overwhelmed. Legitimacy engenders compliance without invoking the significant social and economic costs of achieving social control through formal institutions like police or courts. According to sociologist Morris Zelditch (2006): “if a regime is legitimate, even the disaffected, no matter how much they dislike the regime, tend, for a time at least, to willingly comply with it. . . .” (325). On the other hand, when people are subject to laws or rules they view as illegitimate, they are more likely to rebel or become defiant (Sherman 1993). A rich tradition of research on “procedural justice” shows that when people believe they have been treated unfairly by legal authorities like police and judges, they are less likely to obey the law (Tyler 2006). Thus it is in the best interest of legal authorities, including police, to sustain public perceptions of their legitimacy.

Legitimacy is the foundation of the law in all cultures, though in different cultures legitimacy may be derived from different sources. Modern liberal democracies, for instance, derive their legitimacy from the free and fair election of representatives by the people. These democratically-elected officials pass laws and enact bureaucratic policies and procedures that (in theory) are consistent with those laws. Many Islamic nations derive their legitimacy from their adherence to Shari’a (Islamic law); deviations from the religious principles embodied in Shari’a and the Quran are considered violations of the law (Jerichow 1998). In China, the world’s most populous nation, traditional cultural values encourage citizens to view individual liberty as secondary to the collective good of the people. Deference to authority is valued. China continues to defy the predictions of democratic theorists by generating interpersonal trust and popular regime support at levels much greater than among the democratic nations in the region (Nathan 2007; Tang 2005). The point is that legitimacy does not have a single universal source; the foundations of legitimacy vary by culture, history, and tradition. Although the sources of legitimacy may vary, the notion that legitimacy underlies the effectiveness of the law and its enforcement is universal.

Inappropriate use of force by the police represents a significant threat to the legitimacy of the state. In the 1960s, a turbulent time in American history, riots engulfed many American cities, often touched off as a result of police use of force perceived by minority citizens as illegitimate. Police actions were so often the catalyst triggering riots that one sociologist termed them *police riots* (Stark 1972). The United States is certainly not alone in suffering collective violence after incidents of police use of force. Riots erupted throughout Greece in December 2008 after police in Athens shot and killed an unarmed 15-year old boy (Carassava 2008). Police in Montreal shot three unarmed youths in August 2008, killing one of them and sparking riots that injured several police officers and a paramedic (*USA Today* 2008). As David Bayley has written, “every country has a Rodney King” (Bayley 1995, 261). These incidents share a common thread: people rebelling against the perception that the state’s use of violence is excessive and inappropriate.

Social scientists from a number of disciplines have found evidence for the “brutalization hypothesis”—the idea that the state’s use of violence may legitimize or encourage the use of violence by the populace (Shepherd 2005). Police in many nations justify the police use of violence against criminals based on a belief that it will reduce crime. If the brutalization hypothesis is valid, then inappropriate use of force by police may not just trigger short-term forms of rebellion like protests and riots, it might increase violent crime over the long-term by facilitating the use of violence and weakening the legitimacy of the law and legal authority. As Glebbeek (in this volume) argues, the tough policing or *mano dura* strategy implemented in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica “feeds the culture of violence that has existed in many Central American countries since the end of the civil wars.”

Many years ago, Herbert Packer (1968) argued that through time and place, legal systems vacillate between concerns with “due process” on one end of the continuum and “crime control” on the other. The due process model values individual liberties and is primarily concerned with principles like fairness and equality. The crime control model values safety and order and is primarily concerned with controlling crime. The two models exist in constant tension with one another. As crime (however it is defined) increases, concern with due process wanes. As the state begins to adopt practices to control crime that infringe on individual liberties and a fundamental sense of fairness, concern with due process increases. In an era in which many nations are grappling with the threat of terrorism, debates about the proper balance between liberty and security make Packer look prescient (Gould 2002).

The notion that police use of force is dynamic, wavering back and forth between liberty and security, between due-process and crime control, is often invoked within the context of western liberal democracies. Yet these observations apply to other contexts that most westerners would view as well beyond their narrow frames of reference. Consider, for instance, the policing of morality in Islamic states. Under a previous reform administration led by Reza Shah, police in Iran once “roamed the streets to snatch scarves from the heads of women” who were observing traditional Islamic dress codes (Mackey 1996, 183). Less than half a century later, “Reza Shah’s police, who beat women for wearing the chador [an Iranian style of veil], had been replaced by Khomeini’s police, who beat women for not wearing the veil” (Mackey 1996, 298; see also Howland 1997). Standards about what constitutes excessive force wax and wane, shifting in response to political, historical, and cultural dynamics.

Nowhere do the philosophical arguments about liberty and security become more real than in the debate over summary executions by police officers. I recently interviewed a police officer in a developing nation with a serious violent crime problem. He admitted to carrying out extrajudicial killings of known violent offenders. He described the process by which the instructions were relayed to him as well as the methods used to carry out the killings. He shared his frustrations of arresting serious violent offenders who are repeatedly released by the courts because witnesses are too afraid to testify. He shared the helplessness he felt when people who had received death threats came to him and asked for his assistance and he was unable to help them. We might assume from our high moral ground that summary executions by police are wrong. This officer made a compelling argument that the extrajudicial killings he carried out were less harmful than allowing known violent offenders to continue hurting and killing other people.

These are the compelling issues that arise when looking at police use of force from a global perspective, as Kuhns and Knutsson and their slate of authors have done in this volume. Published research on police use of force tends to be parochial and ethnocentric. American police and scholars

sometimes dominate the debate, with the British not far behind. But there is great variation in use of force, from Jakarta to Jamaica, from Chicago to Shanghai, and the world over. Researchers relish in variation, both describing and explaining it. This volume illustrates the great variety in use of force policy and practice around the world. Let it serve as a rallying call for police researchers to expand their horizons and begin examining this variety, both for the sake of enhancing the content validity of their industry, and to be of more use to governments and NGOs pondering the weighty questions raised about police use of force.

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# **POLICE USE OF FORCE**

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## **A Global Perspective**

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***FOREWORD BY DAVID H. BAYLEY***

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