

ACJS *today*

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Newsletter



What Ever Happened to Community Policing?

By Brian Forst, PhD

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel revolutionized policing with the founding of the London Metropolitan Police Service, which he distinguished from the former night watchman style of policing with this simple sentence: “The police are the public, and the public are the police.” These were powerful words in the era of entrenched political and social hierarchy.

The new Service was unique for its democratic concept of policing under the consent of the governed; for focusing on crime prevention; for reconfiguring policing as community service by trained professionals, not any ordinary paid job; and perhaps most fundamentally, to win public respect by behaving respectfully (Reith, 1948).

It took well over a century for Peel’s ideas to take hold seriously the United States. Several cities—Boston, New York, and Philadelphia first among them—adopted the outward appearance of Peel’s MPs, with blue uniforms, whistles, and night sticks, but without the civil service and public account-

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ability structures that are essential to good policing. Theodore Roosevelt improved matters by instituting civil service reforms as the first police commissioner of New York City in the 1890s, but police corruption and brutality continued to plague much of policing in New York and elsewhere for the better part of the 20th century.

Then, in the 1980s, a police reform movement was launched, thanks largely to the research and writings of Herman Goldstein (1990), father of “problem-oriented policing,” and the leadership of New York Police Commissioner Patrick Murphy, Atlanta and Houston Chief Lee Brown, and a few others. The central idea of community policing was to convert police from aliens to friends of the neighborhood, by taking them out of their air-conditioned squad cars and into the community, where they could leverage their small numbers—about 500 residents per officer nationally—by getting to know community leaders like ward chiefs, members of the local clergy, and school principals. Emphasis shifted from the stick of arrests to the carrots of mutual respect, partnership, and prevention. Foot and bike patrols became popular in many cities to get individual officers to know and understand unique neighborhood issues and people. Then, in 1991, the videotaped Los Angeles police beating of the Rodney King revealed the failure of the “professional policing” model for dealing with routine traffic stops and other commonplace policing tasks.

Different cities developed variants on com-

munity policing based on unique geographic and sociodemographic settings and needs. Foot patrols were established in Flint, MI; Baltimore, MD; and Newark, NJ. Houston established mini-precinct storefront operations throughout the city. By 1993, 400 cities had adopted some form of community policing (Forst, 1993).

Although the effectiveness of some interventions, like foot patrols, have been validated in field experiments, community policing is itself too variable a concept to lend itself to testing. Still, it is probably no coincidence that rates of reporting criminal incidents increased dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s, as police-community relations improved. The decline in crime during the 1990s has been attributed mostly to a reduced percentage of the population in the crime-prone ages of the late teens and early twenties, but the advance of the community policing movement and adoption of its interventions is likely to have played a role, too.

Fast Forward to 2014

The great strength—and weakness—of community policing is its reliance on consensus and trust. As with the soft underbelly of democracy itself, this makes community policing fragile. A handful of high-visibility killings have now made it difficult for the police to work closely and in mutual trust with the public, especially in poor communities.

Crime remained at low levels nationally during the first several years of the new millennium,



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with relative peace on the police-community front in most places. The calm was disrupted with two police killings in the summer of 2014: Eric Garner in New York City on July 17, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9. Garner was killed by Officer Daniel Pantaleo, by choke hold, on Staten Island. Garner had been suspected of selling cigarettes from packs without tax stamps. Video footage of the killing launched nationwide protests with the slogan, “I can’t breathe.”

Michael Brown was an 18-year-old African American, shot in the predominantly Black St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri. A week of rioting broke out in the community when the shooter was revealed to be a white officer, Darren Wilson. A St. Louis County grand jury examined the evidence and voted not to indict Wilson, and about five months after the incident, a U.S. Department of Justice investigation concluded that Wilson shot Brown in self-defense.

The Garner and Brown killings broke perceptions of police trustworthiness and invigorated the Black Lives Matter movement, which had been launched at the time of the 2013 acquittal of the vigilante George Zimmerman, following his killing of an unarmed Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, the previous year.

Then came two more sensational killings of African Americans by police in 2020: Breonna Taylor in Louisville in May and George Floyd in Minneapolis in June. These only strengthened support of the BLM movement. Taylor was a 26-year-old African-American woman

shot and killed in her home by three Louisville, Kentucky, police officers. The officers entered under the authority of a “no-knock” search warrant. The state did not find sufficient evidence to charge any of the officers with murder; one of the three was charged with murder in a federal court.

The George Floyd case was the most sensational of all. Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man, was arrested for allegedly trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill. One of the arresting officers, Derek Chauvin, chose to restrain Floyd by kneeling heavily on the handcuffed arrestee’s neck—for more than 9 minutes. Two other police officers assisted Chauvin in restraining Floyd, and a fourth kept bystanders from intervening, but not from videotaping the killing. Like Eric Garner, Floyd’s last words were “I can’t breathe.” Chauvin is serving a 22.5-year sentence for murder and manslaughter; the other three officers were convicted of violating Floyd’s civil rights; and Floyd’s family received \$27 million in settlement for wrongful death.

What Went Wrong?

These events reflect a style of policing that violates the fundamental principles of Robert Peel and community policing. What caused things to go awry?

Three explanations stand out. One is that the media are more inclined to report police misbehavior today than they were in the late 20th century. Lincoln Steffens (1931), a prominent muckraker of about a century ago, once de-



scribed how he manufactured the appearance of a crime wave in New York City simply by reporting more ordinary crime incidents than before, to sell more newspapers. Sensationalism has always sold media content, but the extent and nature of sensational reporting have not been constant over time, and sensationalism and conspiracy theories are now trending decidedly upward. Fear has replaced trust, and chaos has replaced social capital.

A second explanation is that enlightened policing has been severely set back by a spike in polarization throughout society in the United States and abroad (Klein, 2020; McCoy, 2022). The police tend to attract more conservative members of society, and increased polarization has turned policing away from the ethics of community policing. This development has only been accelerated by calls for less humane policing from prominent officials in the highest places.

These two explanations are mutually reinforcing, a vicious cycle: acts of polarization are newsworthy, and reporting them creates more fear, feeding the polarization.

A third explanation, related to the second, cannot be ignored: the political vilification of the very idea of community. This was clearly evident in vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin's sarcastic comments about community organizing in the presidential election of 2008, and her dismissing it later as "hopey, changey stuff." The rise of libertarian thought on the right has come at the expense of communitarian logic in solving social problems at

the local level, suggesting that it is somehow associated with socialism. There is some irony here: Robert Peel, founder of the principles of community policing, was also a founder of Britain's modern Conservative Party. There is, of course, nothing socialistic about the idea of the police serving the community by getting to know it better and building cooperative relationships with members of the community. But there are surely more than a few police officers who are persuaded today more by Sarah Palin's thinking than by Robert Peel's.

Can We Return to Community Policing?

What are the prospects for a return to a more humane and effective mode of policing? There is no switch on the wall to bring us back to the trajectory of the 1980s and 1990s. How do we return to Peel's notion of "the police are the public" when ideas of a public sphere and public spaces have been so systematically undermined? Policing has never operated in a vacuum, apart from the developments of the larger society, and this will not change. Nor should we expect the sources of polarization—toxic media, power hungry political opportunists, declines in the status of science and education, widespread acceptance of conspiracy theories, and so on—to reverse themselves soon. We should do everything we can to restore ethical leaders and institutions, to replace the sources of fear with the sources of trust. Trust and social capital took generations to build and have taken a few short years to dismantle.

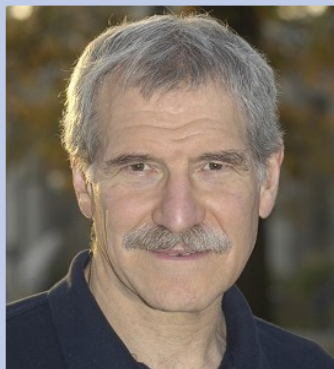


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Community policing is not dead. But it is unlikely to return to its 1990 trajectory until the deeper sources of social harmony are restored. For now, indications of such restoration are not in plain view. ■

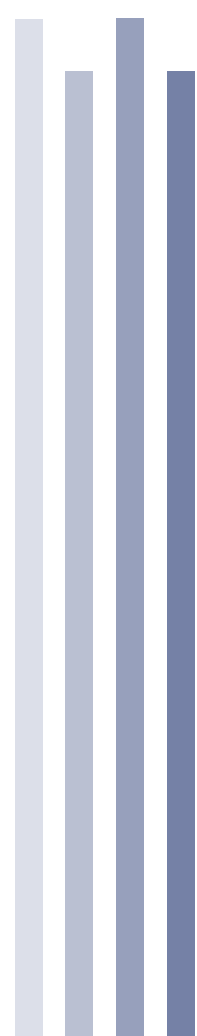
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Please make sure you [register](#) in advance for the **ACJS 61st Annual Meeting, March 19 - 23, 2024, at the Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL. The discounted rate ends February 9**, so if you haven't already done so, hurry to save on your registration fee!

As a registered attendee, sponsor, and/or exhibitor of the Annual Meeting, you will be able to enjoy local Chicago landmarks that are close to the Hilton Chicago hotel like Museum Campus, the Cultural Mile, and Grant Park & Buckingham Fountain, along with a variety of restaurants nearby. Also, this elite meeting will showcase a wide range of session topics, social events, and provide you time to interact with educators and practitioners from around the country.

To view/download a list of sessions, workshops, and special events, visit the ACJS website at <https://www.acjs.org/page/2024AMDraftProgram>. If you are a presenter, remember the deadline to submit any corrections or changes to the program co-chairs (acjsprogram2024@gmail.com) is **January 15**. *This is a hard deadline.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF ACJS

The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences **General Business Meeting will be held on Friday, March 22, 2024, from 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM at the Hilton Chicago, 720 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL in the Joliet ballroom.** Please join us to hear from Executive Board Officers regarding current and future plans, fiscal outlook, and more.

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James Ptacek's *Feeling Trapped: Social Class and Violence Against Women*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
ISBN:978-0520381612

Review by Renee D. Lamphere, PhD and
Walter S. DeKeseredy, PhD

Sociological analyses of violence against women that emphasize the contribution of broader macro-level forces have leveled off or declined in the last 14 years. Why this is the case is an empirical question that can only be answered empirically, but Ptacek's new book reminds us that social class matters and that we must carefully examine the influence of this powerful determinant. Using qualitative data derived from 60 in-depth interviews with poor, working-class, professional, and wealthy women, Ptacek debunks the myth that only women from poor or working-class backgrounds are abused by their current or former male partners. Ptacek's ground-breaking monograph also supports what feminists like us have repeatedly stated for more than 40 years: It is impossible to develop a rich understanding of various types of violence against women without studying the role of patriarchy. What is more, Ptacek's findings tell us that race/ethnicity must also be prioritized in research on the ways in which women are trapped in abusive relationships.

In addition to debunking the above myth, Ptacek effectively challenges the *universal risk theory* of woman abuse that continues to be advanced by many liberal and radical feminists: that all

women are equally situated within patriarchal societies and that violence against women occurs equally in all demography and social groups. Ptacek, though, is not the first feminist sociologist to demystify this theory. Forty years ago, Martin D. Schwartz published a piece in the journal *Contemporary Crises* (now titled *Crime, Law and Social Change*) showing that there are social class differences in woman abuse. Less than a handful of feminists followed in his footsteps, and thus Ptacek should be commended for urging progressives to face up to the fact that, in the words of the late trailblazing Black feminist scholar bell hooks, "class matters."

If class matters in the development of sound feminist perspectives on woman abuse, so does how we define the violence that women experience at home, in cyberspace, and in public places. The title of Ptacek's book and its contents clearly and rightfully name women as the primary targets of violence in intimate, heterosexual relationships. Ptacek's approach is novel today because the prevailing trend is to use gender-neutral terms like *intimate partner violence*. There are many published criticisms of gender-neutral definitions (mostly co-authored by Walter DeKeseredy and Martin D. Schwartz) and they will not be repeated here. Nonetheless, it should be again declared that, despite often-stated claims that they are more inclusive and take into account intimate violence in LGBTQ communities, gender-neutral terms are dangerous tools used by anti-feminists who contend that women are as violent as men and who are intent on eliminating major legislative efforts to curb woman abuse.

Ptacek's book has numerous other unique



features, many of which cannot be covered in a short review. Still, some stand out more than others, one of which is Ptacek making explicit the importance of recognizing his own social location in conducting his study and writing his book. He directs readers to the fact that he is a white, heterosexual man “with no personal experience of being truly terrified, of fearing that someone actually meant to do me serious harm” (p. 10). Many feminists are likely to argue that this is a limitation; however, Ptacek demonstrates that men can do highly sensitive interviews with female survivors and that it is erroneous to assume that only women can do feminist research. We would be remiss if we didn’t reveal that Ptacek has devoted decades of his life to doing feminist studies that meet the highest disciplinary standards and that he is an ally to all women who have suffered from violence in public and private places.

In what is still one of the most widely read and cited social scientific articles in the world, Howard Becker (see his 1967 article in the journal *Social Problems*) asks sociologists, “Whose side are we on?” Ptacek is, and always was, on the side of women and his conceptualization of violence briefly discussed later in this review is a refreshing change from the dominant liberal feminist “unholy alliance” with neo-liberal governments intent on reasserting patriarchy, heteronormativity, and racism. Liberal feminists

sideline the all-important concept of patriarchy and maintain that women are discriminated against based on their sex, as they are denied access to the same political, financial, career, and personal opportunities as men. Ptacek, on the other hand, sensitizes us to the fact that for feminism to advance within the sociological study of violence against women and other fields, it is necessary to continue doing new empirical and theoretical work that pinpoints the highly destructive impact of patriarchy.

Ptacek devotes much space to examining women’s perspectives on the masculinities of their violent partners. Heavily influenced by the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Ptacek contends that “men’s intimate violence against women might best be understood as dramas of masculinity, dramas kept hidden from public view” (p. 21). Ptacek uncovered that men from all social classes were abusive, but some were better at hiding it than others. What is more, nearly half of these men were raised by violent fathers and one-third were abused themselves as children.

Woman abuse is multidimensional in nature and takes many different shapes and forms. One variant that stands out in this book is *economic abuse*, which is often minimized or ignored in the bulk of social scientific writings on woman abuse. It is, as Ptacek uncovered, “a central feature of





intimate violence” (p. 100). Ptacek directs us to harms like men sabotaging women’s employment and educational opportunities, the destruction of property, and withholding child support. These and other types of economic abuse are situated on what Ptacek refers to as *the continuum of sexual abuse*, which is a modified version of Liz Kelly’s widely used and cited *continuum of sexual violence* (see her 1988 book *Surviving Sexual Violence*). Ptacek uses the term *abuse* instead of *violence* because (and we strongly agree), as he puts it:

for many women “abuse” better describes the range of their experiences than does “violence,” which prioritizes physical suffering. This echoes conversations with advocated working in domestic abuse programs and rape crisis centers that were part of the preliminary research for the study. Recent scholarship has emphasized that prioritizing physical violence over psychological, economic, and other forms of abuse obscures the web of coercive control that traps women in abusive relationships. But like Kelly, I argue that these sexually abusive behaviors are interrelated, and that seeing them as part of a continuum helps explain their impact on women. (p. 83)

For reasons provided by Ptacek and the 60 women he interviewed, many nonviolent, highly injurious behaviors are just as worthy of in-depth empirical, theoretical, and political attention as those that cause physical harms. Moreover, a large interdisciplinary literature shows that sexual assault, physical abuse, economic abuse, and psychological abuse are not mutually exclusive. As well, numerous studies show that people who have experienced any type of physical violence frequently say that it is the psychological abuse that hurts the most

and longest. Certainly, the claim that behaviors commonly viewed as less serious or even minor can have life-altering effects is not brand new, but Ptacek’s book establishes that friendly reminders of this reality are occasionally necessary.

There is much more that can and will be said about *Feeling Trapped*, which is destined to become a classic. Our hope is that it will influence early scholars to break free from the shackles of sanitized liberal feminism and to recognize the constant need to examine the ongoing influence of race/ethnicity, social class, and gender/sexuality. The scholarship cited in Ptacek’s book is still relevant today and we cannot afford to forget or dismiss it. Broader forms of structured inequality are still as powerful as ever before, and we are, at least in the United States, seeing a terrifying movement toward a harsher, more unequal, and less secure society. What, then, is to be done? As Ptacek states on page 179, “In the age of the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements, which have inspired campaigns for change across the country and around the world, this is the time to be alive for anti-violence activism. More of us need to get involved in these kinds of justice-making.” ■

Response to Book Review of *Feeling Trapped: Social Class and Violence Against Women* by James Ptacek, PhD

I want to begin my response to this review by outlining the goals of my book. I will then address the issues that are raised in the generous review by Renee Lamphere and Walter DeKeseredy.

My first goal was to theorize why women feel trapped in abusive relationships with men. There are complex matters here, ones that involve much



more than the individual men who harmed them. The responses women received when seeking help from friends and family members are important, along with the actions of the police, the courts, and the so-called “helping professions.” How people react to this violence can either assist women or further entrap them. There is, in other words, a social dimension to women’s experiences of intimate violence. Making these social elements visible is at the heart of the book.

My second goal was to highlight the ways that social class affects women’s feelings of entrapment. I interviewed 60 women for this study, and based on their jobs, household income, and investments, I categorized them as poor, working class, professional, and wealthy. Using these categories, I sought to map the class aspects of the struggles with their abusive partners.

The third goal was to investigate patriarchy from an intersectional framework. Over my years of teaching and public speaking, I have found that people are most comfortable talking about intimate violence in someone else’s community, someone else’s culture. When I began this study, I spoke to many people in hospitals, as this was a source of recruitment for the study. When I described my study to one medical professional, the first thing I was told was that this was especially a problem with foreign doctors! I wanted to create a book that would address patriarchy in all social classes in the United States. I wanted the reader to confront misogyny and violence at all class levels, not just in someone else’s community.

Last, I wanted to have women’s testimony drive the narrative of the book. In part this is to balance

the fact that I am a man writing about women’s lives. But this is also because what the women had to say was so eloquent. I believe that readers will be moved by their words, just as I was.

In their review, Renee Lamphere and Walter DeKeseredy appreciate these elements of the book. They state the need for scholarship that identifies the “broader macro-level forces” affecting intimate violence against women. I use the term social entrapment to link women’s private experiences to the responses they received from friends, family, the police, therapists, and medical professionals. These responses, both good and bad, shaped women’s abilities to resist and escape violence.

Economic issues shaped women’s resistance to abuse, an emphasis that Lamphere and DeKeseredy also find missing in research on intimate violence. There were similarities and differences in how women described economic strain in their relationships. I found that money was a source of conflict at every class level. Further, most men refused to do housework and childcare, which must be seen as its own form of economic abuse. The household is an economic unit; cooking, cleaning, and childcare are necessary tasks. Men’s avoidance of this work was especially pronounced in the professional and wealthy households. It was also common for abusive men to undermine the women’s employment and schooling. This was most prevalent in poor and working-class relationships, which seems counterintuitive since these men’s jobs were either nonexistent or unsteady. The men’s insistence on disempowering their partners was apparently more important than increasing the household’s



economic resources.

Lamphere and DeKeseredy insist that patriarchy is an essential context for making sense of intimate violence against women, and they assert that this must be addressed with attention to both class inequality and racial and ethnic inequalities. I use the concept of patriarchy developed by Sylvia Walby, and I examine this within the context of race and class. Walby's work identifies how cultural rules about masculinity and femininity lie at the roots of gender inequality. I asked women to describe the kinds of masculinity the men displayed in public and in private. The contrast between these kinds of masculinity was often dramatic. For example, women in working-class neighborhoods said their partners wanted to be seen in public as "strong, hard-working, successful, tough, powerful, and superior to women." These men were concerned with how they were seen in public. In private a different kind of masculinity was shown. An African American woman from a working-class household stated, "He was Mr. Nice Guy in front of everybody in the public." One white working-class woman said, "It was street angel, house devil." Professional women related that their partners sought to be seen in public as "loving, trustworthy, strong, good providers, and in control of their world." A white professional woman shared that her husband sought to be viewed as "strong, caring, concerned, and compassionate." In private he called her "stupid" and "compared her to excrement." He beat her, causing bruises and broken bones.

Drawing from their insights, I described the different masculinities of men in poor, working-class, professional, and wealthy communities. Employment

was a source of status for men of all classes, and not having a good job created strain for many men, perhaps causing them to seek status through intimate violence. The poor men, all of whom were men of color, seemed to reproduce the violence of prisons within their relationships. Most had previously been incarcerated. In contrast to this, the ruthlessness of corporate cultures may have shaped the kinds of masculinity expressed by the mostly white professional and wealthy men.

Naming the social location of the author is important to Lamphere and DeKeseredy. The concept of intersectionality should extend to looking at our own social circumstances as researchers, both in terms of discrimination and privilege. Our social location affects how we approach our investigations, and it brings both strengths and limitations to our work. This may be especially important in qualitative research where methods such as in-depth interviews put us in close contact with individuals. I have been working on the issue of violence against women for more than 40 years, as a group counselor with abusive men, a teacher, and a researcher. While this is a strength, my lack of personal experience with terror is a limitation to my abilities as a scholar. I think this has everything to do with the privileges of being a straight, white, cisgendered professional-class man who has U.S. citizenship. I sought to compensate for this in a number of ways. Before I began interviewing women who had been abused, I described my ideas to abuse counselors, advocates, and anti-violence activists, many of whom were men and women of color. I shared my interview guide with women who were working with survivors. I ran drafts of my writing past advocates and abuse survivors. I also explored the feminist scholarship



on trauma, violence, guilt, shame, anger, and intersectionality.

I also shared drafts of my work with my students at Suffolk University. This helped me see where my analysis was clear and where it was confusing. Since most of my students were women, our group discussions greatly benefited my research. I recall one class where I had students look at all the names that the abusive men called their partners. This led to a long conversation about women's roles as lovers, partners, and mothers, and how the men were attacking women's feelings of pride about these identities. This contributed greatly to my work. I had these students in mind when I wrote the final chapter that describes the ways that people are working to stop violence against women and expose the multiple social inequalities that reproduce it. I hope that they will find inspiration in the women's stories and in the activism that many of these women took on as part of their healing. ■

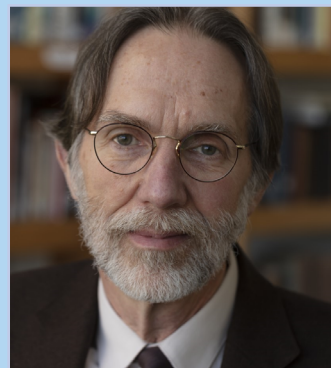


Renee D. Lamphere, PhD, is an associate professor of Criminal Justice in the Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Her areas of academic interest include corrections, mixed-methods research, sexual violence and victimization, family violence, and cyber and digital-media crimes. Dr. Lamphere has a particular interest in teaching and pedagogy and has published in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* and does research on teachers and school leaders and their role in K-12 school violence. In 2022 she co-edited

the book *Survivor Criminology*, which examines the lived survival experiences of professionals teaching and working in the criminal justice field.



Walter S. DeKeseredy, PhD, is Anna Deane Carlson Endowed Chair of Social Sciences, Director of the Research Center on Violence, and Professor of Sociology at West Virginia University. He is also Adjunct Professor in Monash University's Gender and Family Violence Prevention Center. DeKeseredy has published 29 books, over 140 scientific journal articles and close to 120 scholarly book chapters on violence against women and other social problems. Among many other accolades and achievements, he recently received the Ralph Weisheit Lifetime Achievement award from the ASC's Division on Rural Criminology.



James Ptacek, PhD, has been working on the problem of violence against women since 1981. He has been a batterers' counselor and has conducted training on domestic violence intervention for hospital, mental health, and criminal justice professionals. He is the author of *Battered Women in the Courtroom* (Northeastern University Press) and the editor of *Restorative Justice and Violence Against Women* (Oxford University Press). He is Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts.



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2024 SPECIAL ISSUE OF JUSTICE QUARTERLY INNOVATIVE MEASUREMENT APPROACHES TO ADVANCE CRIMINOLOGICAL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH

Although sound measurement is critically important to all research in criminology and criminal justice, there is nonetheless infrequent discourse on current best practices and measurement developments in the field ([Addington, 2014](#); [Freilich & LaFree, 2016](#); [Hibdon et al., 2023](#)). The purpose of this special issue is to publish original articles that place an explicit focus on measurement—including new measurement strategies and/or innovative analytic approaches that address core measurement problems in the field—that generate or support new, significant insights into the causes and consequences of crime and victimization and/or the functioning of the criminal legal system.

The call to focus more explicitly on improving measurement in criminology and criminal justice is not new, but it is one that should be better heeded. For example, Sullivan and McGloin ([2014](#)) have astutely argued the importance of focusing on careful and creative research design and data collection that involves focusing on measurement first including conceptualizing in and across levels, piloting new instruments, triangulating data sources and vantage points, and utilizing methods and validation techniques. Improving measurement, including leveraging enhanced data collection possibilities enabled through societal changes and technological advances (e.g., GPS tracking, health monitors, body-worn cameras), innovative research designs (e.g., measurement burst longitudinal designs, mixed-methods research), and more systematic analyses of existing measures (e.g., assessing measurement invariance), is likely to yield important advances for both basic and applied criminological science.

Though a variety of article types will be considered for publication including empirical tests of theories, manuscripts submitted for publication should: 1) be clearly focused on advancing criminology or criminal justice research through a novel or innovative approach to measurement, and 2) make a significant contribution to the field. We solicit manuscripts that seek to: a) validate a new (or previously unvalidated) instrument that fills a critical measurement gap in the field; b) use one or more innovative data sources to significantly improve measurement (e.g., [McCluskey et al., 2023](#)); c) use an innovative research design that improves measurement (e.g., [Anderson et al., 2016](#)); d) advance a modified or adjusted measure to improve accuracy or utility (e.g., [Chalfin et al. 2021](#)); e) apply an advanced analytic technique to provide new insights and help resolve lingering measurement issues (e.g., [Ward et al., 2017](#)); and, while empirical studies are preferred: f) provide thoughtful commentary on a critical measurement issue of our time (e.g., [Nguyen & Loughran, 2019](#)).

Deadline: Full manuscript submissions due via JQ submission system by January 31st 2024

Format: Articles should follow the standard [JQ format](#) and be submitted through the online system. Cover letters should be addressed to the Special Issue Editor and should clearly indicate that the submission is for consideration in the Special Issue.

Special Issue Editor: Jeffrey T. Ward, Ph.D. (jeffrey.ward@temple.edu)

Call for Papers: *Journal of Gang Research*

The *Journal of Gang Research (JGR)* welcomes qualitative, quantitative, policy analysis, and historical pieces of original research dealing with gangs, gang members, gang problems, gang issues, organized crime, and hate groups.

With over three decades experience as a peer-reviewed quarterly professional journal, the JGR is widely abstracted in the social sciences.

For over thirty years, the *Journal of Gang Research* has published original research dealing with gangs, gang problems, gang issues. These publications have included a wide range of topical areas including promising theory and promising developments in the applied arena of gang intervention, gang prevention, and gang outreach; along with useful policy analysis related to gangs and gang problems. A list of the articles previously published in the *Journal of Gang Research* is published at www.ngcrc.com, the main website for the National Gang Crime Research Center.

Address any question or inquiry to us by email at: gangcrime@aol.com

To submit a manuscript, please send four (4) copies of the manuscript to: George W. Knox, Ph.D., Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Gang Research*, National Gang Crime Research Center, Post Office Box 990, Peotone, IL 60468-0990 or email it to us. Use APA format. The *Journal of Gang Research* is currently in its 31st year of continuous publication as a professional quarterly journal. It is the official publication of the National Gang Crime Research Center, formed in 1990 as a research and training center and clearinghouse for information about gangs.

Call the NGCRC if you have any questions: (708) 258-9111.

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Hate groups are also covered in the JGR. The JGR particularly welcomes scholarly findings related to gang victim, witness, and survivor services. Manuscripts that overlap with the use of credible messengers in the field of criminal justice are especially solicited.

CALL FOR PRESENTERS:

The NGCRC cordially invites you to consider making a presentation at the 2024 Twenty Seventh NGCRC International Gang Specialist Training Conference (August 5 - August 7, 2024 at the Chicago Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel). The 2024 event is described in detail at: <https://ngcrc.com/2024.conference.html>

The specific details for being a presenter are described at: <https://ngcrc.com/callforpresenters.html>

Topics of special interest for 2024: We are especially looking for presentations on victims, victim assistance, survivors, and gang witness services.

Many other topical areas are listed at the website link above.



Impacts of Social Media on Law Enforcement

By Murat Elahi, PhD

Social media has permeated every aspect of modern society and has an impact on a variety of fields, including law enforcement. There are several facets to the link between social media and law enforcement, and they present both opportunities and difficulties. In this article, I delve into the multifaceted impact of social media on law enforcement practices, criminal investigative methodologies, and the dynamics of interpersonal connections within communities. As the prominence of social media continues to ascend, it becomes imperative for law enforcement personnel to both adeptly circumnavigate its challenges and harness its potential benefits when necessary.

Public Perception and Trust

Voices and viewpoints are amplified through social media. Within hours, a single officer's actions can be broadcast and observed by millions of people, affecting how the public perceives law enforcement as a whole. Officers must be mindful of how their conduct may be interpreted and depicted online because it may harm the public's confidence in the agency. Social media puts everything right in front of the citizen who can make their connections without getting all the facts.

Professional and Personal Security

Officers are human just like everyone else and might need protection. Social media can reveal an officer's details, rendering them and their families vulnerable to threats and harassment. Officers can safeguard their safety and privacy by being aware of the advantages and disadvantages of online exposure.

Information Dissemination

To rapidly and effectively inform the public, law enforcement organizations have tapped into the

power of social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Agencies can now instantly reach huge audiences by sending out notifications, safety messages, or asking for information regarding suspects. When minor or major events occur, most people instinctively reach for their phones to get updates. Facebook now offers a "safety check" feature for incidents in your vicinity. Social media platforms are effective in rapidly disseminating information, helping to keep the public informed and safe from potential dangers (Gupta et al., 2013).

Crime Investigation and Intelligence Gathering

One of social media's most noticeable effects on law enforcement is the usefulness of the platform in criminal investigations. Officers and detectives utilize it as a tool for gathering intelligence, whether that entails watching suspects' open posts, figuring out who they are connected to and how, or finding incriminating material. The information obtained from social media can be used as evidence in court with the user's permission or through the correct legal procedures (Denef et al., 2013). As recently as September 30, 2023, a looter in California was apprehended after she livestreamed widespread looting in her vicinity, leading to the capture of several individuals. This incident underscores the impactful role of social media. Social media can offer information about potential dangers, popular opinion, and upcoming rallies, protests, and other events. Law enforcement may predict and react to specific circumstances more effectively by watching social media (Rose, 2023). Another notable example of social media involves Kyle Rittenhouse, who was involved in a shooting in Kenosha, Wisconsin during unrest in August 2020. Videos from the incident, some of which appeared



on social media, were significant pieces of evidence during his trial.

Community Policing and Engagement

Social media use has dramatically increased community engagement. Law enforcement organizations are beginning to have a digital presence so that they may interact with their communities, respond to questions, and handle issues in real time. The police may increase transparency and confidence using Internet platforms, overcoming any communication gaps that would otherwise exist (Crump, 2011).

Recruitment and Training

Law enforcement organizations have started embracing social media as a recruitment tactic as the younger, more technologically adept generation enters the field. Through articles and multimedia content shared online, prospective employees can now learn about job openings, the nature of police work, and the organizational culture (Heverin & Zach, 2010). Officers in the field often receive training materials and updates via social media. Those adept at using these platforms have access to a broader range of professional growth opportunities. Law enforcement officers nationwide can exchange and observe each other's training techniques and methods. Now, training practices can be viewed on a global scale.

Misinformation and Rumor Control

Social media can be helpful, but it also presents the issue of navigating false information. False reports, rumors, or deceptive films have the potential to spread quickly and impede investigations or spark panic (Denef et al., 2013). Recognizing this problem, law enforcement organizations are becoming more proactive in putting an end to rumors and giving correct information through their official channels.

Privacy Concerns and Ethical Implications

Law enforcement's use of social media is not without

controversy. Privacy concerns are a topic of constant discussion, particularly when organizations monitor people without their knowledge or without the proper legal justification. Maintaining the difficult balance between maintaining individual privacy rights and safeguarding public safety demands ongoing ethical reflection (Brunty et al., 2013).

Threats and Cyberbullying

It has been acknowledged that social media may be a double-edged sword for law enforcement organizations. On the one hand, it offers an unrivaled platform for community engagement, reporting of crimes, and communication. On the other hand, it can serve as a forum for intimidation, harassment, and threats directed at law enforcement personnel and organizations. The phenomenon is intricate, diverse, and ever-changing as platforms and technology advance (Reynolds & Helfers, 2018). Here are some ways officers can be bullied:

Direct Threats

Threats against law enforcement officials can be made directly through websites like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. These threats can be general or quite explicit, occasionally outlining the particular ways in which harm will be done.

Doxxing

Doxxing is a form of online bullying where personal details about someone, such as their home address, phone number, or other sensitive data, are published online with malicious intent.

Defamation

False information or rumors about law enforcement personnel or organizations may circulate, endangering their reputations, creating distrust among the public, or endangering existing investigations.



Law Enforcement Actions

When establishing guidelines pertaining to the personal use of social media, organizations should give special consideration to how these guidelines might affect an employee's freedom of expression. These policies should undergo regular evaluation by the organization's legal advisors to ensure compliance with applicable laws and any existing collective bargaining agreements. It's essential to designate a central authority within agencies responsible for approving Internet content. This role is commonly referred to as the Public Information Officer (PIO) in most law enforcement organizations. The PIO should possess the capability to assess and authorize requests for social media usage. Members should maintain signed documentation on record to demonstrate their comprehension of company policies. It is crucial to incorporate social media usage into their annual training plan to ensure that officers are well-informed. Occasionally, officers may inadvertently communicate with the media, leading to the dissemination of information that could be misconstrued (IACP, 2019).

Conclusion

There is little doubt that the digital era, characterized by the emergence of social media, has significantly changed law enforcement. There are several benefits to being able to communicate directly with communities, gather intelligence, and spread information quickly. These advantages do, however, come with drawbacks, including false information, privacy issues, and online threats. The connection between social media and law enforcement will change as technology advances, calling for flexibility, moral judgment, and constant discussion of best practices. ■

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Murat Elahi, PhD, has leadership experience including overseeing law enforcement and security operations in Nevada and protecting American assets on Syria's border. His security expertise extends to

high-profile figures and events, such as the President, Secretary of Defense, Saudi Royal family, nuclear weapon transport, NASA space shuttles, and NASCAR speedways. As a DOD-certified translator fluent in Urdu and Turkish, he undertook undercover roles with the Defense Intelligence Agency. Currently, he serves as a faculty lead at Sonoran Desert Institute and teaches at various universities. He has been married for 20 years and has a 12-year-old daughter.



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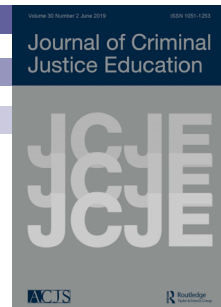
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