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A Process Model of Public Police Violence *

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Abstract

The author proposes and outlines a three stage process model to explain the reactions to public police violence. He argues that this model provides a better explanation of the effects of police violence than "natural history" and "public arenas" models can. The model consists of three stages: arousal, reactions, and outcomes, and four categories of actors: victims, police, public, and government.

I. Introduction

The process by which incidents of police violence[1] come to public, governmental, and police attention and the reactions by various actors in these groups, consists of a complex web of consequences, effects, implications, responses, and reactions, hereafter labelled "outcomes" (Ross, 1992). With the exception of Pierce's (1986) claim that there is a cyclical nature to outcomes of police violence, little else has been written on this phenomenon. He suggests that awareness of police violence goes through five stages: relative calm, a catalytic police incident, community/political outcry, police sensitivity training, and a return to relative quiescence. Pierce's sequence of steps is, however, too simplistic to describe and explain such an intricate process and lacks descriptive or empirical evidence to support it. In order to better explain the pattern, we must move beyond simplistic description to more sophisticated models and show interactions among the important actors and processes as well as order them in terms of presumed significance.[2]

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II. Theoretical Context

Many theorists have examined the reactions to social problems, but have myopic explanations. Henshel (1973), for example, is primarily concerned with intervention. According to him, "[a]lthough it may not be recognized, each strategy is based on a theory of the problem's cause and on a theory of human nature" (p. 3). He identifies six "historical doctrines" of response to social problems: reward and punishment, retribution, deterrence and incapacitation, expiation, and restitution (pp. 4-8).

Two dominant explanations have been developed to explain the "rise and fall" of social problems. On the one hand, are the "natural history" models. These "trace the progression of a social problem through a sequence of stages" (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988: 54). On the other hand, the "public arenas" model "assume[s] that public attention is a scarce resource allocated through competition in a system of public arenas" (p. 55). Spector and Kituse (1973: 73) develop a four stage model in which "groups assert the existence and offensiveness of some condition," "some official agency responds to the claims;" "claims and demands re-emerge expressing dissatisfaction with the official response;" and "alternative parallel or counter-institutions are established" (p. 145). Both of these perspectives are too narrow. Neither is satisfactory as a single explanation of social problems. Although the originators of the public arenas model criticize "natural history theories for an unrealistic...orderly succession of stages" and rarely exploring the competition among other social problems, the public arenas theorists assume that each domain has an inelastic carrying capacity. They negate the possibility that organizations and individuals are flexible and that their capacities to react to social problems change for a variety of reasons. At other times the public arenas model is confusing (e.g., Spector and Kituse, p. 74).

Instead, building on McAdam (1982: Chapter 3), a "political process" model, whereby outcomes to social problems can be better conceptualized as a series of interactive stages in which power and influence are negotiated among different actors, is proposed. No stage is complete. Actions which occur at each level can have an effect on previous efforts and future actions through a process of anticipated reactions and feedback. In general, the author proposes a three stage process model involving arousal, reaction, and outcomes.[3] He does not argue that this representation can be generalized to other social problems, only that this model may explain the outcomes of police violence better than "natural history" and "public arenas" models can. The researcher develops this model in the context of the social and policy problem of police violence.

III. The Model

A. Stage 1: Arousal

Arousal refers to the extent and type of perception created by "news" of public police violence (Ross, 1992). It concerns both the factors surrounding the report of police violence and the types of individuals and groups that might respond. In the main, although individuals may act on their own, it is largely in the context of a group. Each group in the "community of concern" is affected differently, with varying degrees of intensity. Their perception of the incident(s) of police violence is largely dependent, first, on a number of background factors and, second, on the actions of other concerned actors. *Arousal* serves a number of functions. It is a means of increasing group solidarity; a route to achieve publicity for secondary issues; a method for group elites to posture; and a way to renew citizens' feelings that they have a measure of control over government. Most importantly, arousal is a catalyst for reaction in the police department and affects the control initiatives they take, the resistance they put up, and/or the public relations measures they engage in.

1. *Episode characteristics*

Three categories of episode characteristics generally affect the community of concern's arousal to police violence: victims' characteristics, type of police violence, and rate of police violence. Initially, victims' characteristics can help the public identify and empathize with them. For example, the *race* and *ethnicity* of some victims has been noted to have an effect on police treatment of suspects (Black and Reiss, 1967; Black, 1970). In particular, visible minorities and those not speaking the dominant language are singled out for more violence. Similarly, if the victims of police violence belong to a politically vocal visible minority group, there could be some form of public protest against the police action. Likewise *gender* of the victims could also be a factor, particularly if the victims are women and perceived to be physically powerless against male police officers. Closely related to race and gender, the *stature* of the victims could also have an effect on arousal. If the person is a well- known figure (e.g., a respected member of the community or an infamous person like a notorious criminal), or if the general community can identify with that person, then there is likely to be concern from members of the public. The *age* of the victims is important if it contributes to the perception that they were physically defenseless during the confrontation. For

example, children, juveniles, and the elderly are thought to be physically weak in comparison to police officers.

The *demeanor* of the victims, particularly if they are perceived to be overly intoxicated, high on drugs, mentally ill, physically impaired or otherwise easily controlled, can cause a public uproar if it is perceived that the police used excessive force against such people. Additionally, the physical *size* of the victims judged in relationship to that of the police officers committing the violence could arouse sympathy if the victims are smaller in size than the police officers. Related to size and demeanor is the *activity level* of the subject. If the victim was passive during the interaction or conversely was active (e.g., running away or putting up resistance, or carrying a weapon), it could impact on the audience's perceptions of the case.

If the circumstances surrounding the issue are *moral/controversial* (e.g., protesters blocking an abortion clinic who are arrested and then charge the police with brutality), the event has a high likelihood of arousal. Moreover, if the *number* of police involved in the incident outnumbers the number of victims, additional empathy towards the victims is aroused. Furthermore, a *similar situations* occurring in a neighboring jurisdiction can affect the response of the community of concern in another.

More importantly, the more severe the primary type of police violence, the greater the likelihood that the community of concern will react. In many respects this may instigate a moral panic (e.g., Gusfield, 1963; Hall et al., 1978) or a scandal (e.g., Sherman, 1978). Like the process involved with media selection of stories, the types of police violence that should receive the greatest attention, in predicted ascending order of *severity*, are: brutality (unspecified), assaults, beatings, torture, riots, shootings, and killings (unspecified). Closely connected to the type of police violence is the public's perception or official judgment that the events caused by the officers were *illegal*. If illegal, it calls into question the legitimacy of the police which could increase arousal.

The chain reaction that questionable police legitimacy causes could be heightened when *legal sanctions* are applied to the police officers or police departments, particularly when the officers are convicted of an offense, or the police officers or departments are ordered to make financial restitution to the victims or the victim's family. Legal sanctions subsume the actions of judges, justices, crowns, juries, district attorneys and prosecutors. Such actions include the court's considering which law to apply to the case, filing a charge, convicting officers of all or some of the charges, resentencing police, and investigating criminal allegations.

Finally, there could be a threshold (norm) for the amount and type of police violence that is tolerable which would determine when and how police departments, communities, and the government respond. For instance, the

amount of *previous police violence* that a community has experienced or for which the police department has been criticized may serve as a catalyst for administrators, community leaders, members of government, and the public to take notice of and respond accordingly.

Similarly, the *perception of previous police violence* is perhaps more important than the actual amount of police violence (which is usually unknown). The amount and type of media coverage, accessibility of the reports (e.g., through a news index), placement of stories (page number and position on page or in a newscast), whether or not out-of-town media outlets pick up the items, number of different organizations which express concern and demand action, and ways these organizations behave are all contributing factors affecting the intensity of arousal. In sum, episode characteristics are interactive; there is an intimate connection both among them and the actors who are aroused by the event.

2. *Actors/ Type of Group*[4]

Three types of organizations/groups/actors (or constituencies/communities of concern) can respond to public police violence. Each organization has its own interpretation of an incident and/or problem of police violence and consequently of the suitable response(s) approaching what may be characterized as the maximization postulate (Lasswell, 1971). Since these actors' decisions ultimately affect the intensity and duration of arousal, their perceptual understanding of police violence is of prime concern.

i. Public (members of the public and public organizations)

First, and usually least significant, are *national police research and interest organizations* such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Foundation in the United States, or the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Their arousal depends upon their organizational mission, which may fall under the broad categories of research or advocacy.

Second, *businesses and their associations* including legal, illegal, mainstream and marginal types, generally ignore issues of police violence. However, police use of excessive force can encourage gossip, position-taking, and posturing in support of the police, especially if a great deal of a business' revenue depends on officers' financial support (e.g., restaurants, bars, cleaners, manufacturers, etc.). Alternatively, gossip, etc., critical of the police can be fostered if businesses feel they have been singled out for police harassment (e.g., prostitutes, body rub operations, cab drivers, street vendors, etc.).

Third, organizations such as *police unions or associations* ostensibly work in the best interests of their members (Evans, 1972; Hervey and Feuiile, 1973; Reiner, 1981). Consequently, they engage in a variety of activities that often counter police department charges against the officers they represent. They usually learn about incidents from the officers involved, other police officers, the media, or the police department administration.

Fourth, *elected officials*, including members of the government at the national/federal (senate or legislature), provincial/state, and municipal levels (opposition or otherwise), most mayors, and some police chiefs are classified as public representatives since they achieve their positions by voters' choice. They get involved in the aftermath of acts of police violence if it affects their job or constituency, if they are contacted by the media, or if they perceive that there is an opportunity to promote their re-election prospects.

Fifth, *citizen groups/organizations and leaders* often serve as catalysts for issues to gain public attention, particularly if a member they represent is affected by police violence. This subsumes the actions of ad hoc or established groups and organizations (community, interest, minority, political, pressure, protest, professional [pro- and anti-police], and religious), as well as members of government (including parties, opposition, or out of power); prominent, fringe and opinion leaders; professional experts, and academics (see, Barak: 1988).

Sixth, if the event comes to the attention of the *media*, whether or not they have published/aired the initial story, a complex chain of events ensues. The media can treat the events as an everyday occurrences and ignore them, or assign reporters to investigate the claims. Generally, this process can involve many of the components outlined in the previously mentioned under media initiation (Ross, 1993: 49-62).

Finally, and most importantly, the alleged or actual *victims* (if they are still alive) and/or *relatives or friends* of the victims can bring the news of police violence to the attention of the community of concern.

ii. Government

At some point in time, *government agencies*, at various levels, learn about acts of police violence. The Police Commission, Ombudsmen, Commissioner of Public Complaints (if one exists), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Solicitor/Attorney General, public or civil service commissions, ongoing inquiries into the police, and the justice/department/agency monitor these events and are often responsible for investigating or offering explanations to other actors in the system.

In particular, *courts* (from local level arenas to the Supreme Court, including the actions by judges, juries and prosecutors/district attorneys) get

involved if the issue may or actually does result in a criminal charge or civil suit. Prosecutors will consult with judges, the plaintiff's lawyer, and police department officials in assessing whether or not criminal charges can be brought against the police officers.

Additionally, *appointed officials* at the municipal (e.g., city managers, some city council members, police board members, and commissioners), state/provincial (e.g., Attorney/Solicitor Generals, ombudsmen) and federal levels (e.g., senators, Attorney/Solicitor Generals, if appointed) take an interest in the situation if it affects their job or if questioned for comment by the media, community groups, or academics.

iii. Police

Both the *officers* who are alleged to have, or actually have inflicted violence, and the *senior management* (i.e., brass) in the police department to which they belong, will generally become aware of police violence. Typically, the supervising officer receives the accused officer's report, as does sometimes the head of internal affairs. Occasionally, details of the incident may reach public affairs and the office of the chief of police.

In general, this author proposes five types of arousal to police violence: denial, doubt, indignation, surprise, and acceptance. These are not exclusive or successive responses to the news of police violence but can occur repeatedly and in combination as information concerning an event is made public. Undoubtedly, only certain episode characteristics are important. It is predicted that the greater the number of the relevant episode characteristics, the greater the number of groups that are affected, thus the greater the intensity and duration of arousal by the three categories of actors.

Figure 1. Arousal

Initial media report of police violence	+ Episode Characteristics	+	Type of actor/s and their perception/s	Intensity and duration of arousal

B. Stage 2: Reaction

Reaction of each actor is the next stage in the process model of outcomes to public police violence. Where arousal deals with the perception of the event, reaction reflects the behavior of the community of concern. Each individual

and group potentially responds differently to the news of police violence. Goldstein (1977: 316) uses the terms "militant demands," "persuasion," "coaxing," "encouragement," and "assistance" to describe possible reactions. These labels, however, oversimplify the broad range of responses. Alternatively, this researcher conceptualizes reaction as a multistage process.

First, an actor's response can be characterized as one reaction of the four types of reactions classified by this author, listed in increasing degree of effort expended as avoidance,[5] analysis, advocacy,[6] and, public relations, with the understanding that the first three can serve a public relations purpose.[7] Each of these responses can be broken down into three successive substages: evaluation; decision; and, if change is recommended, implementation.[8] Depending on the relationship of the actor to the police, (the former either criticizes or supports, and may or may not seek remedies from the police). The police department usually "does something" to maintain or enhance their legitimacy with the other actors in the respective political and bureaucratic systems. As civil servants who are publicly accountable, they rarely refrain from responding.

As in the arousal stage, the participants should be motivated by a number of episode characteristics and organizational factors (e.g., issue attention span, type and number of members, finances, mandate, relationship with other agencies, etc.). Although there may be genuine interest in the specific incident of police violence, the situation may also serve as a vehicle to promote each actor's mandate (see., McMahon and Ericson, 1984; Ericson, et al., 1987: 35-36). Regardless, the reaction usually acts as a catalyst for the process of negotiation and the outcomes.

1. Public

Initially, but least relevant, are the reactions of private businesses. If they come to the support of the police, these actors might individually or collectively engage in advocacy by sending a letter to the editor of a newspaper, taking out a display ad in a newspaper, purchasing radio or television time pledging support, or helping to sponsor a "Cops are Tops" program/celebration/day. Often times this support is in conjunction with, if not directed by, the police association which provides resources for a public relations campaign. On the other hand, support might be withdrawn by refusing officers discounts on items purchased or services rendered, or by acting in a discourteous manner. Similarly, an insurance company may threaten to or actually cancel the policy on a police department due to increased losses caused by suits launched by plaintiffs as a result of police violence.

National police research and interest organizations may provide research support to police departments and government agencies who implement different police-related programs, but they rarely respond after a particular act of police violence unless questioned by the media or governmental commissions. Their reactions are restricted to disseminating reports, publishing a newsletter or journal, acting as a clearing house for grants on research, and serving as credible and regular sources for the media.

A police association's or union's initial reaction may be one of avoidance, followed by self-analysis, public relations, and then advocacy. They engage in a variety of activities, either to mitigate police department change that may negatively affect their membership or to lobby for policy changes that their constituency desires. Police associations and unions usually come to the aid of the accused officers, especially if they are thought to be wrongfully dismissed. Besides these functions, police associations may file grievances, press for regularizing discipline procedures, minimize ad hoc punishment, limit certain kinds of punishment, sue or threaten to sue the police department or city, promote after-hour contacts between the police and the public, or present the police's interpretation of the incident(s) through their official publication or the press. Most of their activities replicate those of citizen organizations. However, the police union is generally better financed and organized than most community groups and can more easily sustain long-term advocacy and public relations activities. They also have more experience, expertise and political influence and thus can muster a considerable amount of public support (see; Evans, 1972; Gammage and Sachs, 1972; Ruchelman, 1973; 1974; Levi, 1977; Reiner, 1985).

Community groups and leaders generally engage in advocacy. In general, they employ the same strategies and techniques used by victims, their relatives and friends, and police union/associations with the added strength, in some cases, of having more constituents. In particular, they can form or mobilize to make demands on authorities, organize and participate in public demonstration/s, initiate a petition, etc. (see; Woliver, 1986; Zald and McCarthy, 1988).

Elected members of government may use the incident to call for reforms, position-take, or claim credit. Mostly, they engage in the full range of reactions. In particular, they can make their views public (e.g., contact a police reporters) and ask the bureaucracies they manage to investigate the matter, or ask others (e.g., the mayor, the police chief, commissioner, sheriff, public safety director, etc.) to intercede or investigate the matter on behalf of a constituent or constituency.

Like elected officials, the media can also engage in the full range of reactions. Reporters or editors can simply ignore information on police violence. More typically, the media will assign a reporter either to write/shoot

a "matching" or follow-up story, and/or to write a series of postured or actual investigative journalism pieces. Other possible reactions include the production of news analysis segments; the solicitation, writing/shooting, and printing/airing of op-ed pieces; and the writing of editorials either condemning or favoring the police, community or governmental actions. Editors or reporters might also write rebuttals to letters to the editor that their news organization has published. Sometimes editorials are written/shot by a team of specialists in criminal justice issues and, at other times, by generalists in conjunction with the specialist reporters. Typically, however, editorials are written/shot by staff writers who have no more knowledge than what is printed in the news reports.[9]

More importantly, the victims, their friends, or relatives will generally engage in advocacy. In particular, they may register their complaint with a variety of actors (e.g., the media, police, ombudsmen, solicitor/attorney general, their elected representative at the municipal, provincial/state, or federal level, etc.) or simply publicize their plight, including writing letters to the editor of newspapers, paying for advertisements, or holding one or several press conferences. Through these media they may demand an investigation; the resignation of the Police Chief; dismissal of a particular officer or officers; or that certain reforms be implemented in the police department, police complaints division of a police organization, the police commission, or the Civilian Review Board (CRB). They may also hire a lawyer who can sue or threaten to sue the police, or engage in other legal actions. If the victims, their friends, or their families are not satisfied with the treatment by, or the responses of, official bodies, then other types of charges can be laid against the police. This becomes a particularly complicated process when charges concerning the denial of civil liberties have been laid. A civil rights case may extend for decades.

2. Government

Government agencies can also engage the full range of reactions. These include a variety of investigations by different bodies (e.g., Police Commission, FBI, district attorney's office, justice/department/agency, etc.), establishing a Royal Commission/Senate Inquiry/etc.; firing the Police Chief; and, in extreme cases, the suspension of the entire police force.[10] Actions by government agencies may also prevent community advocacy from having any effect on the outcomes (see; Zimmring and Hawkins, 1971; Turk, 1976; Handler, 1978; Zemans, 1983; and Woliver, 1986). This obstruction includes such actions as enacting special legislation and banning public demonstrations, marches and rallies, etc. (Marx, 1981).

Additionally, if the incident makes its way to the courts, then their actions generally involve some sort of analysis or advocacy. In general, the courts' actions include decisions imposed by judges, justices, crowns, juries, and prosecutors/district attorneys. Only if court orders are ignored by the police or other actors will the court advocate. For example, court responses in support of police officers can nullify or exacerbate reactions by other actors in the community of concern. Such court decisions may result after a ruling that the police violence was within legal boundaries or that insufficient evidence was marshalled by the defense or prosecution. If this takes place, the police officers' actions are considered legal. This group of court actions, termed *legal clearance*, covers: acquitting, suspending prison terms, granting bail, upholding acquittals, and striking down lower court rulings on the sentences of officers. Court actions can also affect such processes as "hiring practices, personnel policies, and police responses to political protest" (Goldstein, 1977: 325).

Finally, appointed official's reactions can cover the full spectrum of actions depending on the relevance of police actions to their legislated or perceived mandate. These individuals can launch a departmental inquiry, speak to the media, or resign from their jobs to reflect a real, perceived, or postured loss of public confidence in their ability.

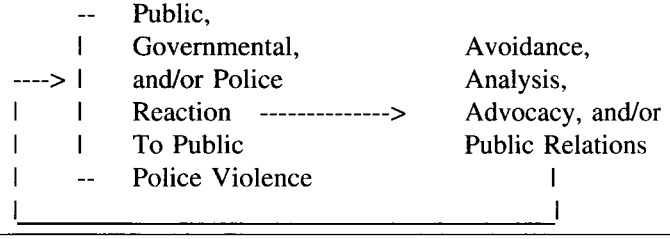
3. Police

First of all, the accused officers generally engage in some form of advocacy or public relations on their own behalf. Those accused of violence may carry-out face saving actions both inside and outside the department (see; Goffman, 1959; Edelman, 1964; Box and Russel, 1971; Manning, 1971; Christensen, Schmidt, and Henderson, 1982). In addition to basic human public relations (e.g., rationalization) with their peers and families, they might initiate letter writing campaigns, hire a private lawyer, utilize a police union lawyer, trade information, increase the production of arrests or issuing of tickets, and appeal departmental decisions. Moreover, they may perform, increase, or draw attention to their work record, community work, and/or sue the police force, the victims, or their supporters.

The most common reaction by the police department is the analysis of the incident because it requires less effort and is less costly than advocacy strategies. This stage can involve the investigation of the incident, production of an internal report, establishment or meeting of internal review or disciplinary committees, and/or formation of joint citizen/police committees (if they do not already exist). The investigation can serve both as a means of analyzing the incident of police violence and public relations. In general, the police department may engage in a two-stage process when they learn of

accusations of police violence: an initial criminal investigation followed by a departmental investigation. In the event of a criminal indictment, then cases may be sent to the district attorney's office for further investigation. In some jurisdictions, police officers are required to fill out a "resistance report" if violence is used in the performance of their duties. These documents are sent to the police officers' sergeants, and if necessary, to Internal Affairs/Investigations (IA/I), and so on up the chain of command.

Figure 2. Reaction



Avoidance, analysis, advocacy, and public relations, can stimulate public, governmental or other police reactions. If the public perceives the police as stonewalling, then they can pursue a variety of strategies (e.g., write letters to the editor of the local newspaper or broadcast news organization calling for an independent investigation, etc.). Public relations by the police may very well pacify a normally aggressive public. But public protest, particularly if it is violent, may stimulate further violence by the police. Any of the four reactions may stimulate another type of reaction. In other words, initial avoidance by the police may change to public relations.

C. Stage 3: Outcomes

Outcomes is the most complicated of the three stages. In general, it is the final result of the exchange or maintenance of influence or power through a process of formal and/or informal negotiation among the concerned actors to ostensively resolve the situation. It could be said that the process has two logical outcomes: change and stability. However, to say that no change has occurred is naive. Even avoidance and public relations may lead to subtle organizational change. For example, it might change the way concerned actors react the next time to news of police violence.

The police department is at the center of this process. How they react strongly influences present and future acts of police violence and police-governmental/public relations (Gamson, 1968: Chapter 6). Furthermore,

police department responses can be ordered along a continuum of "tangible" versus "symbolic" actions (see; Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974: 193; Lipsky, 1968: 1152). Firing an officer, would be an example of a "tangible" process (e.g., Gusfield, 1963; Edelman, 1964; 1971). Holding a press conference would be an instance of a symbolic event. The distinction between tangible and symbolic actions is not absolute because tangible actions carry with them symbolic benefits as well (see; Wilson, 1973).

The most socially relevant outcome to the community of concern is control (Gibbs, 1989). In general, there are two potentially complimentary principal outcomes for police departments: external control initiatives and internal control initiatives. While it was recognized in the reaction stage that the police can engage in avoidance or public relations, resistance (which is similar to avoidance) and public relations are used differently in the context of efforts that demand changes in control.

In the long run, *external control initiatives* (e.g., *Police Act*) that demand, impose, or legislate more control in and of the police department are met with three possible responses by the police force: resistance, public relations, and internal controls. External controls are limited in scope and impact. First, they generally leave the day-to-day activities of patrol officers untouched since most police are mobile, lack continuous supervision, work within a sympathetic subculture, and are suspicious of outsiders (see; Becker, 1963). Second, police actions to solve the problem of police violence are generally inadequate because insufficient resources are allocated to the problem. Third, the controls are generally flawed because they are informed by poor research. Fourth, the policy recommendations are impractical or lack clear goals. Fifth, there may be failures in implementation of the new policies (Hening et al., 1977). Sixth, police administrators interpret external controls as threats and are more reluctant to implement them for they feel that their power is being usurped. Seventh, even when changes are implemented they are often symbolic (Manning, 1971). Eighth, many police administrators have poor managerial skills (Punch, 1983: preface; Johnson, 1981: 191). Finally, decisions are often made in a partisan political context where expedience is more important than long term effects. In sum, police policies are either inadequate, flawed, lack clear goals, or in most cases merely symbolic.

Additionally, how policies and practices are implemented depends on who is responsible for administering the change (see; Murphy, 1977: 23). Outsiders to the police department (e.g., D.A. Offices, reform police chiefs, etc.) are particularly effective if they have developed a trusting relationship or they can clean house quickly. Outsiders gain the trust of departments if they are former police officers, physically work in the police department, routinely ride with police officers, socialize with the police after hours, and in general make themselves available to police officers/and officials. It also helps if the

outsider is aided by a senior officer who is progressive in outlook and actions and is respected by his/her colleagues. Senior officers, on the other hand, must either have the respect in the organization, the power to mete out rewards, and/or the potential to coerce or punish others (e.g., Internal Affairs officers). Regardless of who implements them, external controls can only be revised incrementally. Nevertheless, with respect to reports by external bodies, the bulk of the recommendations are implemented but commonly there is a five to ten year time lag between the recommendation and its implementation. Thus, senior police management constantly deal with the accumulated recommendations of the community of concern.

In addition to external controls, two parallel processes may be operating: resistance and public relations. *Resistance* consists of the conscious or unconscious blockage by police of demands by the public and government regarding change in policies and practices in the police department. Police departments, like other organizations facing a crisis, may respond defensively and rigidly and experience internal conflict (see; Fink, et al., 1971; Niederhoffer, 1967: 13; Ripley and Franklin, 1980: 227-228; Watson, 1967). A defensive reaction by police may involve the Police Chief's writing a letter to other governmental agencies or a newspaper explaining why s/he will ignore certain mandates or recommendations, and/or justifying his/her organization's position. Police stonewalling the implementation of new regulations is a common practice. Much of this behavior depends upon the degree of autonomy the police organization has (see; Johnson, 1981: 189; Marenin, 1988). Niederhoffer (1967: 32) outlined what he referred to as "the struggle for equilibrium" which occurs because police have an "organizational imperative that requires the negation of any and all criticism." Resistance may also be combined with public relations efforts. For example, police departments may try to use the police association to stir up public discontent with the external policy recommendations. Such actions often lead to external arousal, which will start the whole process of negotiation again.

Public relations actions are, at this stage, employing symbols and myths to counter governmental external control initiatives. These public relations practices include continued posturing such as the introduction of vague policies and practices, minimizing or making light of the severity of the events, blaming the victims, criminally charging the victims, suggesting a "bad-apple" explanation for the officers in question, releasing sketchy reports on the violent events, agreeing to reorganization, co-optation, creating new rules, regulations (Murphy, 1977:33), and departments to investigate similar problems, gaining media attention for their ability to combat crime, and increasing the use of community policing and/or relations to improve or restore favorable images of the police.

They may also constitute attempts to minimize the perception of guilt of the officers involved and prevent criminal charges being laid or cases from being successfully prosecuted. Specifically, police public relations actions consist of lifting the suspension on an officer, terminating an investigation, dismissing a departmental charge, rejecting a complaint, submitting letters to the editor of a newspaper or magazine, publicizing the agency's ability to combat crime, refusals to answer reporters' questions, censoring reporters whom they normally would not, and holding a press conference to present their side of the story. The police can also solicit the support of various pro-police community organizations, such as the police association or the police athletic league/organization.

There are both reactive and proactive public relations approaches taken by the police. Reactive public reactions are usually in the form of damage control, proactive are like an insurance policy on future negative publicity. For example, police often try to prevent press coverage and drive reporters from the scenes of beatings, break photographers' cameras, and use other forms of harassment.

Public relations is commonly carried out through the Police Chief's office, Public Affairs, or police conduits such as the Police Athletic League, police or community crime prevention division/department and favorable insider police reporters (Beare, 1987; Garner, 1987; Radelet, 1977). Rather than resolving the initial problem, public relations temporarily diverts attention from the specific incidents of police violence. Most of the programs that will bring some sort of change are not introduced. In short, the event that led to the crisis of legitimacy is ignored, forgotten or inadequately addressed. If the problem of police violence was solved through external controls, it would lead to a reduction in the police's ability (i.e., power) to exercise independent control over their organization. Consequently, public relations are a method that police use to maintain and advance their organizational interests (Reiner, 1983: 145). Public relations efforts may lead to external complacency or increased agitation but will not change police policies. These last two responses have the potential to initiate the whole process again, but at a different stage.

The introduction, resurrection, and implementation of different and "realistic" *internal control initiatives* are hypothesized to be the most important organizational factor affecting the amount of police violence (see; Fyfe, 1988). Not only are internal control initiatives the most complex process in the outcomes stage, but they are also difficult for outsiders to detect. Internal control initiatives are the police's own methods designed to minimize future acts of police violence. The police are more amenable to the implementation of their own internal controls than they are to implementing, in whole or in part, external controls. These internal controls give the police department the

power to interpret the problem and put their stamp of approval on the changes that the department produces.

Internal control initiatives are usually started by the Chief of Police or go out under the Chief's signature. Differences in levels of police violence determine a number of courses of action that a police organization can take. It is expected that controls that are initiated from inside the police department (internal controls) will carry more weight than will those implemented from outside (external controls). And those controls directed against *individual* officers will be more effective than those involving the *entire* police establishment (Lundman, 1979). By the same token, there are a number of organizational impediments to internal controls (Reuss-Ianni, 1984: 91).

Regardless, police organizations implement internal controls because of organizational growth; the presence of reform-oriented police chiefs brought in from the outside; and, most importantly in this context, critical events (Sherman, 1978; 1983). First, organizational growth may lead to the development of organizational units, some of which are responsible for monitoring the institution (e.g., Internal Affairs). Second, at least in the area of police corruption control, police chiefs who are hired externally with a mandate to clean house, and with very few favors owing, can change police departments more effectively than can those who have risen up the rank structure. Finally, critical events such as police violence may stimulate change. However, just because an incident of police violence becomes public, does not mean that it will become a "critical event." Even if it does attain this status, it may not engender organizational change (Sherman, 1983: 124).

Examples of internal control initiatives against the *entire* police force include changes in supervision and reporting. First, new supervisory mandates inside the force may be established, such as an internal affairs and/or public complaints department, if they do not already exist; automatic evaluation of police officers' actions by internal review committees, transfers, immediate suspension or temporary leave, automatic visits to the force's psychologist, and the banning or revision of guidelines on the use of certain controversial practices (e.g., choke holds, deadly force, etc.). Second, there may be changes in reporting requirements (e.g., reports directly to the Chief required for firing a gun or using force).

Internal control initiatives against the entire police force generally prompt officers to better conceal their deviant behavior and/or to set into motion the same processes as those initiated when external controls are resisted. Internal controls directed against the entire organization may elicit the response of the police union or association who may protest on behalf of the police department.

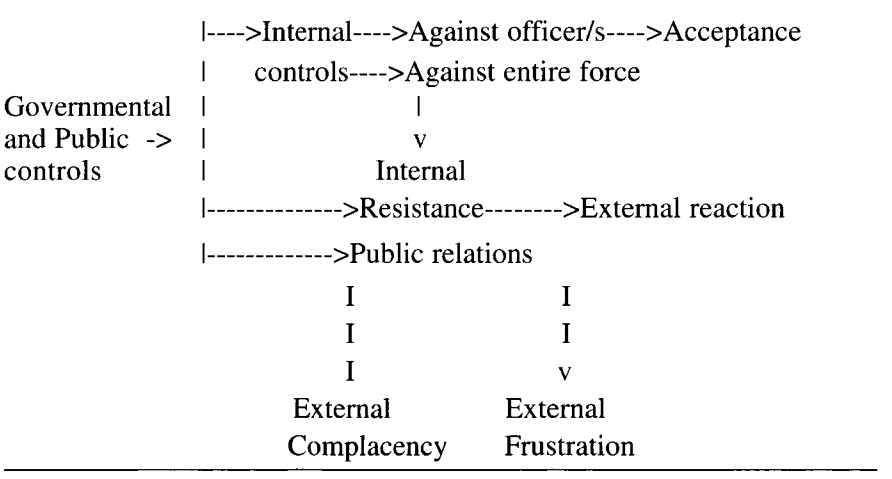
Internal control initiatives against *individual* officers (i.e., disciplinary or administrative controls) may consist, in presumed increasing order of intensity,

of reprimanding, retraining, demoting, transferring, reassigning, suspending, fining and/or firing, and/or bringing criminal charges.[11] Internal mechanisms against individual officers are better accepted by the entire organization. Like internal controls directed against the whole organization, actions against individual police officers can involve the police association.

Finally, rarely mentioned but nevertheless important, is the fact that "it is much easier for a cop [than for a citizen] to get back at another cop for a real or supposed wrong within that [informal] system. Since the civilian is outside the system it is impossible to use its social sanctions against him" (Reuss-Ianni, 1984: 101). Punch (1983: 237) finds that at least in the area of corruption "[p]olicemen who gratuitously broke the code of silence (as opposed to those who excusably 'coughed' under investigation), witnesses, and investigating officers were exposed to informal social control from colleagues in the form of physical threats, black mail, and ostracism."

If the police are receptive to control initiatives, and they are both realistic and adequately implemented, then there is a high probability that police violence will be reduced. If there is resistance, then the problem persists, and antagonism between the police and the community is maintained, or worse, increased. Ironically, public relations may either calm some of the public and government or increase their frustration.

Figure 3. Outcomes



Factors such as community, government, and police arousal and reactions prompted by police violence affect the speed of negotiation and the type, number and quality of resultant outcomes. That is, the greater the intensity of these factors, the quicker the police organization attempts to neutralize or

address the reaction of the community of concern. Yet the relative importance of each of these previously mentioned subprocesses is unknown.

IV. Summary and Conclusions

The process of public police violence can be conceptualized in terms of three stages: arousal, reaction, and outcomes. At any point in the chain of events, a multiplicity of actors can be aroused, react, or produce an outcome. This process is both cyclical and iterative whereby system/power maintenance is the driving motivation of the police department (Koenig, 1985: 1; Sorrentino, 1985:1). The model presented here is a general sketch of the overall process. It guides the collection of evidence and the way information from different sources can be summarized.

Normatively, the most desirable outcomes are the new, practical, internal and external controls imposed upon the police and those implemented by the police. The less desirable outcomes are increased public relations efforts and resistance. This model should ultimately help researchers organize and develop a series of hypotheses to determine whether or not arousal and reaction lead to increased control of police violence.

Largely, the discussion so far has been at a general level. In order to empirically test as many hypotheses of this model as possible, researchers should decide on a research strategy(ies); operationalize and specify as many variables and hypotheses as possible; and choose appropriate level(s) and unit(s) of analysis (e.g., geographic locations/cases and data) such that we can maximize the utility of the model. These steps would be followed by collecting data; and, testing quantitatively and/or qualitatively, those hypotheses which seem the most feasible and important to the model. While on the surface this sounds relatively straightforward, a complex and often very subtle relationship exists between each step of the research process.

Notes

1 In this context, police violence refers to all acts of real or alleged police abuse, brutality, extra-legal or excessive force, riots, torture, shootings, j=killings, and deadly force.

2 For the review of modelling in the social sciences, see for example, Brodbeck (1959); Stogdill (1970); Diesing (1971: Chapter 7); Pindyck and Rubinfeild (1981); and in the criminal justice field see, for instance, Bohingian (1977).

3 The author recognizes that the media is also important in this process. For a discussion of the media's role see Ross (1993: 49-62). This model is

informed by a review of the literature and a series of interviews conducted with police officers, administrators, and union officials, criminal lawyers, police reporters, broadcast journalists, editors, elected officials and other members of the criminal justice system in Denver, Lethbridge, Montreal, New York City and Toronto between 1989-1994.

4 Many of the groups working to change the police, though not necessarily in the context of police violence, are outlined in Goldstein (1977: 311-328).

5 Also known as ignoring issues and apathy. It may also be boiled down to one of the tenets of organizational survival adopted by employees: act surprised, act concerned, and admit to nothing.

6 This category subsumes Goldstein's (1977: 326) and includes protest, mobilization, and upheaval.

7 Admittedly, all reactions may be labelled public relations; separating cosmetic from deep-cutting ones requires a contextual analysis.

8 The fist stage, evaluation, is transitional and of minimal cost. This includes the person or office who receives the news and how it is communicated throughout the bureaucracy. Decision is the choice among police alternatives or strategies. An implementation is the putting into practice those decisions.

9 The majority of reporters interviewed by this author suggested that there was a separation between news reporters and editorial page writers.

10 In April 1977, the 22 man New Platz, NY police force was suspended by town officials after the American Home Assurance Company canceled its policy, citing 10 claims against the city for a total of 1.5 million (*New York Times*, April 3, 1977, p.l 25).

11 Many of these actions are coterminous

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