



TOURISM SECURITY-SAFETY AND
POST CONFLICT DESTINATIONS

CHALLENGES TO US AND MEXICAN POLICE AND TOURISM STABILITY

PETER E. TARLOW



Challenges to US and Mexican Police and Tourism Stability

Tourism Security-Safety and Post Conflict Destinations

Series editors: Maximiliano E. Korstanje and Hugues Seraphin

Since the turn of the century, the international rules surrounding security and safety have significantly changed, specifically within the tourism industry. In the age of globalization, terrorism and conflict have moved beyond individual high-profile targets; instead, tourists, travellers, and journalists are at risk. In response to this shift, the series invites authors and scholars to contribute to the conversation surrounding tourism security and postconflict destinations.

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Challenges to US and Mexican Police and Tourism Stability

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Tourism & More, Inc., USA



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

I dedicate this book to law enforcement with a special dedication to the men and women of the College Station (Texas) police department for whom I have had the honor of serving as a police chaplain for over three decades. I am grateful for your efforts in keeping our community including my family and me safe for these many years.

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Peter E. Tarlow
College Station, TX, USA, October 2022

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Introduction

Police officers around the nation are cognizant of the fact that their job has not been easy during the early years of the twenty-first century's third decade. Since the start of policing in the United States, policing has never been easy nor for the fainthearted. It takes a special person to be a police officer. Policing is both hard and arduous work. Police officers often put their lives at risk and must make split-second decisions. In most other professions the person can correct their error, but in policing a mistake can cost the officer their life or the life of another person (or persons). In such cases there is no do-over, but rather we are left with a fatal mistake.

Even in the best of times, law enforcement officers work long hours, often with a great deal of stress, and in every type of conceivable weather. When a crisis occurs, they are often the first to risk limbs or their lives to save others. Unlike some other professions, acts of bravery, or going beyond the call of duty, are rarely rewarded, they are expected of the officers, and mistakes are harshly criticized especially in the media.

The public hearings of June 9th, 2022, regarding the riots that took place at the United States Capitol on January 6th, 2021, serve as a metaphor for law enforcement's current situation and for the divisions that run through the United States' body politic.

The great majority of Americans condemned the events of January 6th. For some people these disorders bordered on a national insurrection; for others this was an unfortunate protest that turned into a riot. The fact that the public was split evenly what to call the January 6th events demonstrates the nation's deep political divisions. Even the June 9th television coverage of 2022 was controversial. Many people saw the fact that seven major networks ran the same coverage simultaneously was an example of democracy in action; others viewed this uniformity as democracy in decline, a modern form of inquisitorial hearings presented in a Stalinist show-trial format. Tragically, the two opposing camps each accused the other camp of being a threat to the ideals of democracy.

That same theme of threats to democracy was placed on exhibit in a televised speech given by President Joe Biden in which the president stated: "Too much of what's happening in our country today is not normal. Donald Trump and the

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MAGA Republicans represent extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic.”¹ Although the president quickly walked back his remarks, there was a sense that he had accused almost 50% of the nation of undemocratic ideals.

Americans’ attitudes toward law enforcement also reflect the deep political divisions within the United States. For some, law enforcement is the symbol of a nation ruled by equal justice for all; for others, modern law enforcement has become a symbol of darker eras in American history – eras from which we, as a nation, are still suffering and whose aftermath we still need to face and resolve.

The United States’ first African-American First Lady, Michelle Obama, best expressed the sentiments and fears of many people regarding the police when in an interview she noted that her daughters were about to obtain their driver’s licenses. Mrs Obama said in a television interview: “They’re driving. But every time they get in a car by themselves, I worry about what assumption is being made by somebody who doesn’t know everything about them.” Mrs Obama then went onto say that “The fact that they are good students and polite girls. But maybe they’re playing their music a little loud. Maybe somebody sees the back of their head and makes an assumption.” The former First Lady then said: “The innocent act of getting a license puts fear in our hearts.”²

Although not stated overtly, the context made it clear that Mrs Obama was afraid of a police action against her daughters because of the color of their skin, and it is not hard to imagine that she represents many African-American parents who share her fears. The former First Lady made her position clear when in speaking about the Derek Chauvin guilty verdict she then went on to state: “may have been a necessary step on the road to progress” but that “we will need to follow through with the concrete reforms that will reduce and ultimately eliminate racial bias in our criminal justice system.”³

This historic reality means that part of the nation sees its law enforcement as symbolized by the notion of the “good cop,” and another part of the nation holds the view of these same agencies as symbolized by the idea of the “bad cop.”

American law enforcement reflects the nation’s body politic and its political and social undulations. As the reader will see throughout this book, United States policing has had a checkered past. It has not always been an agency for progress and human rights; at other times law enforcement officers have gone beyond the parameters of their profession and sacrificed both body and limbs to aid others no matter what the cost or the color, ethnicity, or religion of the person in need.

The reality is that if one is seeking a particular position on law enforcement, like human beings themselves, we can find both good and less good within law enforcement’s ranks. Not all Americans have had the same experience with law enforcement. For some, law enforcement represents the thin line between

¹<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/joe-biden/biden-give-prime-time-speech-battle-soul-nation-stepped-attacks-republ-rcna45766> <accessed on September 5, 2022>.

²Seddiq, O., *The Insider*, May 7, 2021: <https://www.businessinsider.com/watch-michelle-obama-cbs-interview-fears-for-daughters-blm-2021-5> <accessed on June 21, 2022>.

³See footnote 2.

civilization and social chaos. For others, law enforcement is the instrument by which a ruling class holds the poor and certain minority groups in check.

The public perception of this division between “the good cop” and the “bad cop” came to the forefront during the summer riots of 2020 beginning with the George Floyd murder. For some this summer represented a war of the cops against a public suffering from racial bias. For others this summer turned the police into victims, and it was a summer which we might call a war on cops. During the summer of 2020 the public consistently saw riots and heard antipolice rhetoric. Many interpreted these disorders as symbolic of a wound that if not addressed would metastasize and gnaw at the very foundations of American society. For others, the so-called 2020 “summer of love” was not only hypocritical but also symbolic of a nation unraveling at its seams and the creation of a revolution that in the end would devour all of us.

This political division regarding police is especially important in a time of rising crime. As seen in the chapter on the media, most media attention is paid to urban areas. Because the majority of Americans live in or around urban areas, we should expect this emphasis. Rural areas, however, also suffer from crimes although in some cases the types of crime are different. For example, illegal drugs and the opioid crisis have decimated rural America and are depopulating many of these rural communities.

Despite the antipolice rhetoric and political problems, we desperately need good police officers. Violent crimes, especially mass shootings, have gained our attention. So far in the first half of 2022, Atlanta, Baltimore, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC are poised to outstrip the year 2021’s already tragically high violent crime statistics.⁴ The tragedy of mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, New York City, and Uvalde, Texas, have filled our media. The absolute reasons for this increase in crime are unknown. Some of the reasons cited for the rise in violent crime might be a lack of police morale, increased poverty, a breakdown in the social fabric of society, or foreign gang violence that has come across an open border. What is known is that defunded and often demoralized police forces are expected to tackle an ever-rising crime wave that especially impacts the most vulnerable.

The year 2020 was not only a year of riots but also of death. Officers of the law were no exception to this rule. In 2020 some 415 police officers lost their lives in the line of duty. Those deaths were a sharp increase over the 158 police officers who lost their lives in 2019 and the 188 who lost their lives in 2018. In fact, from the year 2008 until 2019 there was no year in which over 200 law enforcement officers lost their lives in the line of duty. Regarding police officers, 2020 was deadly; the year 2021 was worse with 631 officers losing their lives.⁵ Although some of these deaths are due to the COVID-19 pandemic, law enforcement officers saw 2020–2021 and 2022 as their most violent years suffering not only

⁴Fox News, June 22, 2022: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/six-cities-pace-pass-violent-crime-2022> <accessed on June 22, 2022>.

⁵The number of officers who died on duty is from “The officers Down Memorial”: <https://www.odmp.org/search/year?year=2021> <accessed on June 20, 2022>.

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from death in the line of duty but also from political and media attacks. The combination of attacks on police officers and the lack of political and, at times, public support created a work environment in which many police officers resigned, considered resigning or took early retirement. Neil MacFarquhar writing in *The New York Times* called attention to this problem when he wrote: “Police departments face severe challenges in retaining and recruiting officers, according to new data outlining the steady exodus from an occupation that was the target of protests last year after several high-profile police killings.” He continued by giving an example of the Asheville, North Carolina, police by stating:

“We have lost about one-third of our staff to resignation and retirement,” said Chief David Zack of the Asheville Police Department in North Carolina – more than 80 officers out of a full complement of 238. “Certainly with the way that police have been portrayed and vilified in some cases, they have decided that it is not the life for them.”⁶

The New York Times is not the only publication that called attention to this problem. For example, the research center “The Police Executive Research Forum” took into consideration not only police resignations but also police retirements and found that in 2021:

- (1) On average police agencies are filling 93% of available positions
- (2) Fewer people are choosing to be police officers, but with the reduction in hiring only about 5% nationwide
- (3) The resignation rates in 2020–2021 increased significantly (18%) over the years 2019–2020
- (4) There was a 45% increase in the retirement rate.⁷

The above data are from the first half of 2021 and do not reflect changes during the second half of the year.

The data cited above are national averages and do not reflect any one specific area of the nation. The percentages cited also reflect the size of a department. In smaller departments even a few resignations will result in a higher percentage. Nevertheless, large departments that suffered from lack of political support and were subjected to antilaw enforcement media saw large numbers of police resignations. For example, “The Police Executive Research Forum” noted that “In Seattle, a record 180 officers left the police department in 2020, and 66 more officers have left so far this year.” “I have about 1,080 deployable officers. This

⁶MacFarquhar, N., *New York Times*, Updated November 8, 2021: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/11/us/police-retirements-resignations-recruits.html> <accessed on June 20, 2022>.

⁷“Police Executive Research Forum,” June 11, 2021: <https://www.policeforum.org/workforcesurveyjune2021> <accessed on June 20, 2022>.

is the lowest I've seen our department.” In Minneapolis, Chief Medaria Arradondo told a City Council panel that reduced staffing is making his department “one-dimensional,” with officers mostly responding to 911 calls and not having time to do proactive policing.⁸

The Police Executive Research Forum’s findings are also supported by a May 13th, 2020, *Fox News* article. The news story reported that not only are big city police departments facing staffing problems but also smaller police departments around the United States. The *Fox News* article stated that: “Big-city police departments such as Chicago’s are not the only jurisdictions facing hiring woes, as small- and mid-sized police departments, such as Missouri’s Independence Police Department and New Haven Police Department in Connecticut, are struggling to fill a record number of vacancies. Departments have, in some instances, reached some of the lowest staffing levels they’ve seen, representatives tell Fox News Digital.”⁹

I have written this book from both an academic and personal perspective. Having had the honor of being a volunteer police chaplain for the College Station (Texas) police department for over 30 years, I have seen the human side of policing. I have observed police officers do numerous selfless tasks. I have watched as officers on cold and rainy nights took their coats off and gave them to the victim of a traffic accident or crime. I have seen police officers suffer as they had to deal with the body of a young person who had just committed suicide, and I have ridden with them for long hours on patrol, watching the streets attentively while working hard to stay alert in a pouring rainstorm or on a dark winter’s night.

During these three decades of service, I have listened to officers speak of fear, of having to make split-minute decisions, of worrying about their own families. I have watched in admiration as they sacrificed both personal and family time for the benefit of others.

Even before the summer of 2020 I was acutely aware of some of the criticisms leveled against police officers. I found much of these criticisms to range from the disingenuous to blatantly false. The realities described by some in the media, and many so-called “progressive” politicians, were far from the reality that I have known during my decades of being a volunteer police chaplain. From my personal experience, the officers with whom I work tended to be caring individuals. Almost all of them could have earned the same salary or more in a much less taxing and dangerous profession. They choose to be police officers not out of necessity but out of choice. Most of the officers with whom I work chose law enforcement as a career not for the money nor for the power but rather out of love for the community and a desire to serve and protect their fellow men and women.

The descriptions and social profile of the men and women whom the media describe are very different from the dedicated men and women whom I know and

⁸See footnote 7.

⁹Pagones, S., Fox News, May 13, 2022: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/us-police-departments-cops-job-recruitment-anti-cop-climate> <accessed on June 20, 2022>.

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with whom I have worked. Having spent decades with these men and women, I wanted to understand why some politicians and the media targeted them with so much anger. What I saw on television was entirely different from what I experienced. I wanted to better understand the anger that fueled the “Defund the Police” movements and promulgated by well-protected political elites.

Reading the media, hearing some politicians speak, and seeing the antipolice demonstration made me feel as if I were in a state of permanent cognitive dissidence. What I read, heard, or saw on television could not have been further from my reality. I also understand that my reality might not be others’ reality.

It would be wrong for me to write that I never met a police officer about whom I had no reservations. I have! I also realize that as a member of the clergy and a police chaplain, I might not see the uglier side of policing. I well understand that police officers are human beings, with the same problems, foils, and challenges as all of us. Nevertheless, in my reality, even the worst police officer whom I know did not deserve some of the vitriol that came from media pundits and some politicians.

As stated, it is not easy to be a police officer and law enforcement officers’ margin of error is smaller than that of other professions. Unlike many other professions it is often difficult, or near impossible, to leave work problems at the office and simply forget about them until the next day. To be a police officer is to be on duty even when one is off duty, the responsibilities of the office (and officer) never leave until they either retire or die, and their duties impact not only the employed officer but all too often the officer’s entire family.

Working closely with these officers I also came to realize that many of the police officers with whom I work are extremely young. In fact, I started my police chaplaincy before many of them were born! Despite their youth, we often call on these young men and women to make split-second decisions and the consequences of a mistake might well result in their or another person’s death. Having an entirely different perspective on law enforcement than what I read in the media I wanted to understand if my experience was the exception to the rule or was it the norm. Was my experience similar to other people’s? Was there a war on cops, as authors such as Jeff Rooda and Heather Mac Donald so masterly stated, or did police officers, as a profession, deserve the harsh criticism that was often levied against them, and I simply failed to see?

My encounters and friendships with police officers are not only from the perspective of being a chaplain for my hometown’s police department, but it also comes from my work in tourism security. My volunteer chaplaincy in a university town is not my only professional experience with law enforcement officers. I also hold a doctorate in sociology and my specialty is the sociology of tourism with a special emphasis on tourism security. This academic degree led me to a second or parallel career alongside my being a clergyman. For over 30 years I have developed and taught courses to and for police in the field of tourism safety and security, and I have helped police officers, and other professional security agents, to understand how the needs of visitors and tourists might differ from the needs of members of a local community. Although cousins, community policing and tourism policing, called TOPPs (an acronym for Tourism Policing and Protection

services), are each unique forms of law enforcement. Both types of policing are dependent on the concept of “serve and protect,” but often the needs and implementation differ.

I have had the privilege of being one of the organizers of multiple tourism security and tourism police conferences, and these conferences along with the training I have provided them have permitted me to view many police officers not only as highly trained professionals but also as human beings with the same hopes and dreams, fears and flaws, as any of us. I have trained and worked with police officers from around the globe, from Canada to Argentina, from Malaysia to Australia, and from various African nations to multiple European nations. I have been exposed to multiple police officers whose languages, cultures, religions, and politics differ from mine. Yet despite these differences in almost all cases, I have come to know an extraordinary group of caring men and women. Thus, although not a police officer myself, I have during the last three decades had the privilege to observe law enforcement from multiple angles.

It was from the perspective of this background that I began to wonder what caused the Western media and many politicians to use law enforcement as a political scapegoat. This question does not mean that I excused the actions of police officers such as convicted murderer Derek Michael Chauvin. The courts found Officer Chauvin guilty of George Floyd’s murder and have duly sentenced him. On the other hand, after an extensive investigation in Ferguson, Missouri, a grand jury did not find a reason to try Darren Wilson, and despite the fact that he was not charged with any crime, much of the media judged Officer Wilson guilty. Tragically, Officer Wilson had to leave both his job and his home due to what seemed to be an almost electronic public lynching by many in mainstream and social media.

The impact of the negative publicity has damaged the law enforcement community and also harmed those communities that need police officers’ help the most. Seeing this firsthand I wanted to understand the words of Joe Gamaldi, national vice president of the Fraternal Order of Police, who argued that the law enforcement profession is dying. Gamaldi recently (June of 2022) stated:

For the better part of a decade, we’ve had the media and politicians systematically burning down the *institution of policing* in this country. And now we’re just living in the ashes. Retirements are up nationwide 45%. Resignations are up 20%. . . . This is leading to dangerous understaffing on the streets at a time when violence against us is through the roof to the tune of 157 police officers shot already this year. Response times are through the roof. We don’t even have people to *investigate the crimes*. . . . I’ve been a police officer for 17 years. It is not hyperbole when I say our

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profession is dying. We have been denigrated. We've been demonized. And we've been treated like crap for years. And we're all sick of it.¹⁰

Is Joe Gamaldi correct? Although I recognize that not all police officers are angels, I am well aware that the overwhelming majority of police officers are far from being devils.

Viewing the world of policing both from the inside and the outside I began to question if there was a war on police and if so by whom and for what reasons. I wanted to know how certain communities had come to fear police, and as I am deeply involved in the world of tourism security, how this war on police, assuming it exists, impacts the tourism industry. My professional and volunteer work with police officers not only afforded me an in-depth look into the faceted world of policing but also allowed me to better understand the similarities and differences between these two forms of law enforcement.

Writing this book, I also came to realize just how intertwined are American, Canadian, and Mexican law enforcement agencies. Much of what happens in Canada and Mexico impacts our law enforcement agencies in the United States and vice versa. The United States shares a long common border with both Canada and Mexico. Mexico is also our land gateway to Latin America. Starting in January of 2021 the United States has experienced an incredible surge in illegal immigration and despite what the government might say: an open border. There are thousands if not millions of illegal crossings into the United States from Mexico by people from around the world. At times Mexican and American law enforcement have worked closely together on this and other issues, and at other times there is a wide gap between them. For this reason, the last two chapters of this book are dedicated to the problems of Mexican law enforcement and the relationship between the United States and Mexican police agencies, and how these two nations impact each other.

Although this book is not the first book that I have written on police and tourism security, this book is different. In the past my books have been informational works intended to help those who work in the field of policing, and especially in the field of tourism security, to better perfect their professional duties and for scholars to understand how tourism security and those who work in this field interact with tourism in general. In this book, after long conversations with my Mexican colleague, Manuel Flores, I hope to provide the reader with new and useful insights into the world of American and Mexican policing in general. I also hope that this book will serve the law enforcement community to better understand its profession, its history, its relationship with the media, and its fellow citizens. This book is not meant as a professional "how to" book but to aid both

¹⁰Gamaldi, J., Interview on Fox News, June 21, 2022: <https://www.foxnews.com/media/police-organization-warns-profession-is-dying-amid-lefts-rhetoric-were-living-in-the-ashes> <accessed on June 21, 2022>.