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978-0-521-83773-6 - Understanding Police Use of Force: Officers, Suspects, and Reciprocity

Geoffrey P. Alpert and Roger G. Dunham

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## Understanding Police Use of Force

*Understanding Police Use of Force* focuses on the extraordinary and rare event that develops when physical force is used by the police. Whenever police officers come into contact with citizens, there is always a chance that the encounter will digress to one in which force is used on a suspect. Fortunately, most police activities do not result in the use of force, but those that do take on an interesting pattern of interaction between the officer and the citizen. This volume presents a brief survey of prior research on police use of force as well as original data reported for the first time. The original data on police use of force include the Force Factor, or the relative use of force compared to the level of suspect resistance. The data also include the sequential order of the event and a view from the suspect's perspective. The book proposes a new conceptual framework for examining and assessing police use of force: the Authority Maintenance Theory.

**Geoffrey P. Alpert** received his Ph.D. from Washington State University. For more than twenty years he has specialized in research on high-risk police activities. His work includes research on police use of force, deadly force, emergency and pursuit driving, racial profiling, police decision making, early-warning systems, and the impact of performance measures. Dr. Alpert has been awarded numerous research grants from the U.S. Department of Justice and other governmental funding agencies. He has also worked directly with police departments by assisting with policy development and officer training and has worked with agencies in Canada, England, France, and the United States. Dr. Alpert has written more than fifteen books and 100 research articles. He has been interviewed on leading television news programs in England and the United States.

**Roger G. Dunham** is professor and associate chair of sociology at the University of Miami, Florida. His research focuses on the social control of deviance and crime, including police decision making with respect to use of force, pursuits, and racial profiling. He has coauthored four books on policing with Geoffrey Alpert and has published more than fifty professional papers and chapters. Recent coauthored books include *Critical Issues in Policing*, 4th edition (2001); *Policing Urban America*, 3rd edition (1997); and *Crime and Justice in America*, 2nd edition (2002). In addition, he has coauthored several research monographs with the Police Executive Research Forum, including *Police Pursuits: What We Know* (2000) and *The Force Factor: Measuring Police Use of Force Relative to Suspect Resistance* (1997).

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Roger G. Dunham

*University of Miami*



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Geoffrey P. Alpert  
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