

FEDERAL INTERVENTION IN AMERICAN POLICE DEPARTMENTS

For much of American history, the federal government has played a limited role in local police regulation. That all changed in 1994, when Congress passed a little-known statute that permitted the US Attorney General to reform troubled police departments. Since then, many of the nation's largest police departments – including those in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Seattle, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Albuquerque – have been subject to federal oversight. But until recently, we've known little about how this federal process works. Drawing on original interviews, court documents, statistical data, and media reports, this book provides the first comprehensive account of federal intervention in American police departments. It shows that, under the right circumstances, federal intervention is uniquely effective at combating misconduct in police departments. However, federal intervention is far from perfect. This book concludes by arguing that Congress should expand and improve federal oversight of policing.

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i>	ix
<i>List of Tables</i>		x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>		xi
Introduction		1
I Defining the Problem of Police Misconduct		4
II The Need for Improved Federal Oversight of Local Police Departments		8
A The Hands-Off and Buildup Eras		9
B The Intervention Era		13
C The Path Forward: Expanded Oversight of Local Police		19
III Roadmap of the Book		21
1 The Problem of Police Misconduct		26
Introduction		26
I Why Some Police Agencies Fail to Control Misconduct		29
A Police Discretion: Necessary but Problematic		30
B Decentralization of American Law Enforcement		33
1 Local Variations in Police Practices		36
2 Local Democracy and Police Priorities		39
3 Why Minorities Lose		44
C The Beginning of the Buildup Era		45
1 Exclusionary Rule		46
2 Private Civil Litigation		51
3 Criminal Culpability		55
4 The Problems with the Buildup Era		61
Conclusion		66
2 The Intervention Era		67
Introduction		67

I	Legislative Maneuvering	71	
	A The Rodney King Incident	73	
	B Legislative Response to Rodney King Incident	78	
	C The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act	80	
II	Why Federal Intervention?	86	
	A The Rise of Federal Intervention via Structural Reform Litigation	86	
	B Limited Alternatives	88	
	C Theoretical Advantages of Structural Reform Litigation	91	
III	Emerging Importance of the Intervention Era	94	
	A Comparative Importance over Time	94	
	B Prior Research	97	
	Conclusion	102	
3	Federal Intervention in Action	103	
	Introduction	103	
	I Early Enforcement	109	
	II The Enforcement Lottery	113	
	A Case Selection	115	
	B Preliminary Inquiry	121	
	C Formal Investigation	123	
	III Changes in Enforcement Policy over Time	126	
	IV Influence of Politics on Enforcement	132	
	V Negotiated Reform	134	
	A Settlement Negotiations	135	
	B Content of Negotiated Settlements	141	
	1 Use-of-Force Policies	141	
	2 Early Intervention and Risk Management Systems	143	
	3 Complaint Procedures and Investigations	145	
	4 Training Overhaul	146	
	5 Bias-Free Policing	148	
	6 Community and Problem-Oriented Policing	148	
	C Appointment of Monitor	150	
	D Monitored Reform	153	
	Conclusion	158	
4	Possibilities and Limitations	160	
	Introduction	160	
	I The Bad Old Days in Los Angeles Policing	167	
	A Rodney King: The First Evidence of Systematic Misconduct	167	

CONTENTS

vii

B	Five Years after the King Beating: Reform Efforts Begin in Earnest	175
C	The Rampart Scandal: Evidence of Systemic Misconduct Reemerges	180
D	DOJ Intervention	181
E	Response by Police Union	184
II	Terms of the Negotiated Settlement	187
III	Implementation	189
A	Citizen Opinions of LAPD	194
B	Complaint Management	197
C	TEAMS II	199
D	Use of Force	200
E	Stops and Arrests	204
F	Bias-Free Policing	205
G	Auditing	207
H	Additional Measures	208
IV	Costs of Reforms in Los Angeles	208
A	Upfront Financial Costs	209
B	Long-Term Savings through Reductions in Civil Liability Exposure	212
C	Did Federal Intervention Hurt Police Effectiveness?	217
V	Remaining Questions and Concerns	229
A	The Need for Organizational Cooperation	230
B	Sustainability	240
	Conclusion	242
5	Moving Forward: Improving Oversight of Local Police	244
	Introduction	244
I	The Value of More Data	250
A	Civilians Killed by Law Enforcement	253
B	Additional Data on Officer Behavior	259
C	Civil Rights Suits	261
D	Officer Disciplinary Records	263
E	Citizen Complaints	267
II	Harnessing Data to Incentivize Reform	268
A	Using Transparency to Promote Bottom-Up Reform	269
B	Publicizing Potentially Problematic Police Departments to Promote Proactive Reform	271

C	Monitoring Police Departments after Federal Intervention	274
III	Increasing the Frequency of § 14141-Style Interventions	275
IV	From Reactive to Proactive Federal Oversight	278
A	Moving from Sticks to Carrots: Proactive Federal Investment in Police Reform	278
B	The Voting Rights Act as a Blueprint for Police Reform	281
	Conclusion	284
	<i>Appendices</i>	286
	<i>Index</i>	296

FIGURES

2.1	Section 14141 Cases Opened by DOJ, 1994–2015	<i>page</i> 96
3.1	Number of Negotiated Settlements by Year	130
3.2	Open § 14141 Cases over Time	130
4.1	Resident Assessment of LAPD Police Services	195
4.2	Percentage of Audited Complaints Handled Properly	198
4.3	Categorical Uses of Force per Officer by LAPD	203
4.4	Percentage of Stops by LAPD Resulting in Arrests	204
4.5	Number of Required and Sufficient Audits	207
4.6	LAPD Inflation-Adjusted Expenditures per Resident	209
4.7	Number of Civil Rights and Use-of-Force Lawsuits Against LAPD Resulting in Financial Payouts	214
4.8	Change in Rate of Reported Index Crimes (2000 set equal to 100)	225
4.9	Changes in Violent Crime Rates from 2000 to 2012	226
4.10	Changes in Property Crime Rates from 2000 to 2012	226

TABLES

1.1	Federal Enforcement of 18 USC § 242 in Years Leading up to Intervention Era	<i>page 58</i>	
2.1	Extent of Federal Intervention into Police Departments, 1994–2015	97	
3.1	Stages of Federal Intervention into Local Police Departments		115
3.2	Total Number of Inquiries, Investigations, and Monitor Appointments from January 1, 2000, to September 1, 2013		122
3.3	Allegations Made by DOJ Against Local Police Departments, 1994–2015	125	
3.4	DOJ Action Under § 14141 by Presidential Administration		129
3.5	Approximate Annual Cost of Monitoring Services in Selected Police Agencies	151	
3.6	Length of Reform Process in Selected Police Agencies, 1994–2013	154	
4.1	Change in LAPD Officer Aggressiveness during Federal Intervention	223	

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