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***Policing in France*. Edited by Jacques de Maillard and Wesley G. Skogan. New York and London: Routledge, 2021. ISBN 9780367135249. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. Index. Pp. 360. Paperback \$69.95.**

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Policing in France provides an important overview of police practice in France. France is important in several ways. First, it is a democratic republic with a legacy of democratic tradition. While this tradition has been interrupted by Napoleonic Empire and Vichy tyranny, the French police services provide unique insight into achieving the balance between security and liberty in a modern multicultural society.

Second, this text, part of the “Advances in Police Theory and Practice Series,” edited by Jacques de Maillard, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Versailles-Saint Quentin and Sciences Po Saint Germaine en Leye and a Director of CESDIP (*Centre de recherches sociologiques sur le droit et les institutions pénales*, a research center affiliated with France’s Ministry of Justice) and Wesley G. Skogan, Emeritus Professor of Political Science and a Faculty Fellow at the Institute of Policy Research at Northwestern University, provides unique insights into sustaining police legitimacy in the face of competing—and often contradictory—police goals. Next, it shows how this is achieved—or not—in practical terms. Finally, it offers understanding of the mechanics of French policing, including its two major police organs the *Police nationale* (PN) and *Gendarmerie nationale* (GN), as well as the *Police municipale* (PM), and other elements of national and community security.

Organizing the Discussion

Maillard and Skogan are both eminent scholars of policing. Their criminological experience helps to frame the discussion in this comprehensive edited collection. After a preface and introduction (Chapter 1) by the editors and a preface from the series editor, Dilip K. Das, the book is divided into four parts, “Part I: Historical Background”

includes Chapter 2 on historical developments from the *Ancien Regime* to De Gaulle and the *Police nationale* by Jean-Marc Berlière and René Lévy from the University of Burgundy and the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique*—CNRS. It is followed by a discussion (chapter 3) assessing the colonial legacy and its influence by Emanuel Blanchard at the University of Versailles-Saint Quentin and an detailed description (Chapter 4) of France’s dual police system (police and gendarmerie) in terms of centralization, specialization, and competition by Malcom Anderson from the University of Edinburgh.

“Part II: Organizational Features and Reforms” dissects Police Centralization (Chapter 5) by Christian Mouhanna at CNRS. Chapter 6 by Clément de Maillard of the *Gendarmerie nationale* looks at “Intelligence Led Policing” in criminal investigations; while Chapter 7 by Elodie Lemaire at the University of Picardie Jules-Verne looks at specialization in investigations. Cédric Moreau de Bellaing of the Ecole Normal Supérieure closed the second section recounting police oversight in France.

“Part III: Changing Institutional and Political Context” looks at the expansion of private police (Chapter 9) by Frédéric Ocqueteau at CNRS. Virginie Malochet at the Institute of the Paris Region looks at the pluralization of local policing (Chapter 10); while Thierry Delpuech, CNRS Fellow at Pacte-Sciences Po Grenoble and Jacqueline E. Ross University of Illinois School of Law examine security partnerships (Chapter 11).

“Part IV: Police Problems and Strategies” is comprised of nine chapters and is likely of most interest to practitioners. Chapter 12 by Fabien Jobard, CNRS looks at policing in the *Banlieues*; Chapter 13 by Jobard and Jacques de Maillard looks at identity checks and their controversial role in contemporary police. After Chapter 14 provides a social history of protest policing in France by Aurélien Restelli, Center for Sociological Research on Law and Criminal Justice, the section moves to chapter 15, a discussion on “Domestic Intelligence and Counterterrorism” by Laurent Bonelli (University of Paris X Nanterre). “Border Policing” by Sara Casella Columbeau, French Collaborative Institute on Migration (Chapter 16) follows. Chapter 17 by Sebastian Roché, (CNRS Research Director at Pacte-Sciences Po Grenoble) looks at the police and the public; Chapter 18 (Jacques de Maillard and Mathieu Zagrodzki, Center for Sociological Research on Law and Criminal Justice), looks at community policing.

“Policing and Gender” (Chapter 19) and a discussion of the police and sexual violence (Chapter 20) by Mathilde Darley, Center for Sociological Research on Law and Criminal Justice and Jérémie Gauthier, University of Stasbourg and Océane Perona, University of Aix-Marseille respectively.

The text includes illustrations: 9 figures, 2 tables, and 3 boxes, as well as an index. Together the text provides a compelling and comprehensive assessment of French policing and makes a significant contribution to the comparative policing literature. Indeed, in my estimation the collection provides the best overview of French policing since the late Philip John Stead’s *Police of France* (Macmillan 1983).

Critical Themes

Several critical themes are illuminated in the text. These include the importance of community relations and public trust, oversight, and coordination with political authorities, the judicial system, and other police agencies. Traditionally French policing has been dominated by two national entities: the National Police, and military *Gendarmerie nationale* (GN). The first polices the cities and large towns, and the latter rural communities. Both have parallel capabilities. They have been joined in recent years by municipal police addressing daily urban policing. Three specific themes deserve special attention due to their global importance. These are: *militarization*, *protest policing*, and *domestic intelligence and counterterrorism*.

- *Militarization* is an oft discussed and poorly understood issue in contemporary policing. Readers, therefore, may find Chapters 2 and 4 of particular interest. Ironically, the uniformed GN traditionally had closer community relationships (p. 63, p. 298) than the *Sûreté Générale* (later *Sûreté nationale*), the predecessors to today’s *Police nationale* (PN). While both the PN and *gendarmes* are highly centralized (and now both field uniformed and plainclothes personnel under control of the civilian Ministry of Interior) and accountable to judicial authorities.
- *Protest policing* is a major role for all the French police services (PN, GN, PM). Protest policing relies in part upon mobile cadres available for deployment as formed units. These deployments can

have both positive and negative impacts on communities. In the past, the professional discipline of these entities enjoyed public support. More recently as seen in urban conflicts in the *Banlieues* (pp. 187–202) and the *Gilets Jaunes* (Yellow Vest) (p. 229) protests, Covid-19/anti-vaccine protests—paralleling global discord such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement protest policing is challenged (especially in the *Banlieues*) (pp. 225–227). Here, Chapters 12 and 14 converge—often in the guise of the identity checks (Chapter 12) and high intensity patrols in *zones de sécurité prioritaires* (ZSPs or high-priority safety areas) (pp. 193–195).

- *Domestic intelligence and counterterrorism* comprise the third issue of global importance covered in this text. Specifically, Chapter 15 is an essential read as police agencies worldwide seek to calibrate domestic intelligence and prevent terrorism. This issue also intersects with border policing (Chapter 16) and the aforementioned chapters on policing protest and the *banlieues*.

Conclusion

Policing in France is a useful and important read. It illustrates that the divide between Anglo-Saxon conceptions of policing by consent and Francophone conceptions of policing as a national security endeavor are abstractions—both traditions have much in common and face similar challenges in serving their communities. It should be on the shelves of any police library, in the offices of police strategists, and the topic of discussion in professional education for police commanders and executives worldwide.