

Chapter 6

Police and Mediation: Natural, Unimaginable or Both

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Mediation is a universal intervention process whose roots are as old as the dawn of civilization (Folberg 1983; Moore 2003). While complex definitions have been developed and they can vary markedly depending on the context, in its simplest characterization, mediation is commonly referred to and recognized as an intervention process where third parties provide assistance to disputing parties by helping them to have a difficult conversation and perhaps reach some understandings. As mediation's visibility, utilization, and acceptance have grown worldwide, its diverse applications have become increasingly creative (Mayer 2004). This chapter will address one of the most challenging contexts in which mediation can be and, to a limited extent, has been applied, namely the police context (Cooper 1997; Volpe 1989; Volpe and Phillips 2006), using the United States as a primary example. Depending on circumstances, mediation in the police context can be seen as natural, unimaginable, or both.

Framing the Context for Police Mediation

For starters, how is mediation a natural part of policing? Quite simply, since police work has always involved the handling of a variety of conflict situations, historically mediation related interventions have been a part of routine police work (Goldstein 1977). For the most part, those officers who have felt comfortable serving as a go-between for disputing parties have done so quite naturally, usually by using their intuition and without specific mediation training. They often brought a skill set that was well suited for listening to parties and helping them to move on. Even though their communication and intervention practices can be unique to their work,

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in fact, their practices would be recognizable by those who specialize in mediation in other contexts. Given this impromptu but widespread use of informal intervention between parties, a strong case can be made that mediation has been a natural part of policing worldwide.

On the other hand, an equally compelling case can be made that the use of mediation is unimaginable in the police context. In virtually every part of the world, as an arm of the state, police are authorized to use force to compel parties to comply with their directives and to make crucial decisions that can adversely impact the people involved. For the most part, police are also expected, if not required, to prepare official reports documenting their interventions. Moreover, much of their traditional intervention work occurs in public spaces where control of the situation is an essential component of their routine response efforts. These types of police actions collide against such core mediation principles as self-determination by the parties, voluntary consent by parties to participate in mediation, and confidentiality of communications during the mediation sessions (American Arbitration Association et al. 2005).

The incongruity between police work and general mediation practices is evident in other instances as well, including where the mediation sessions are held and how much time is allocated for the intervention efforts. For police, it is common for interventions to be undertaken in public areas where there is virtually no opportunity for them to manage the physical layout of the surroundings or who else might be present. Moreover, since the number and gravity of the calls for police services are unpredictable, police are unable to plan how much time they can spend when responding to any matter. For mediators in other contexts, more often than not, their mediations occur at deliberately chosen meeting spaces and at scheduled times, all arranged by the mediator with the parties. They have much greater control over who participates, when, where, and how. Given all of the differences between police mediating when responding to calls for assistance and conventionally accepted practices in mediation, it is plausible to argue that any notion of mediation in the police context is an oxymoron and hence totally unimaginable.

Despite the aforementioned contrasts, mediation and policing can and, in fact, do coexist. Mediation has emerged as an invaluable tool for police officers in improving relations with citizens and in helping to create and sustain more peaceful communities. Imagine police using mediation to respond to a situation where a person's loud music has resulted in clashes with his neighbors and repeated calls to the police. Mediation also has been viewed as particularly useful in a variety of situations where conflict situations involve misunderstanding and miscommunication over perceptions in diverse communities. Imagine police using mediation to intervene in a situation where unwanted congregating activity among some new members of the community has resulted in assaults. While mediation is not a panacea and it is unacceptable for police officers to use mediation in response to many situations they are asked to address, especially domestic violence related incidents, in fact, mediation is increasingly recognized as a useful component of the police landscape. Not only do police serve as mediators themselves between disputing parties, they also refer cases to other mediators and participate as parties in mediation sessions for employment related matters.

Police Landscape

Since police work around the world varies depending on where it is performed, there is no simple or uniform characterization of how it has been or is undertaken. Different organizational structures, philosophical approaches, cultural expectations, and leadership practices have all influenced how police officers carry out their work. Despite all of the differences, a unifying theme of virtually all police work, regardless of context, is that police officers universally work for hierarchical, quasi-militaristic organizations and that they have the ability to utilize authoritative power to contain and control situations. Departure from this norm has left officers in a position to draw on their own natural talents, intuition, and cultural traditions especially when intervening in conflict situations.

In the United States, one of the most important developments in policing that arose as a result of the pervasive rethinking of police approaches in the 1960s and 1970s was the introduction of community-oriented policing, a new philosophy about policing that began to take root in the 1980s and has consistently gained popularity around the world (Skolnick and Bayley 1988). Depending on the department, community policing policies, procedures, and practices can vary significantly. Despite all of the variations, generally speaking, community policing values a deeper engagement by police officers in the everyday life of a community, creative ways of partnering with citizens and groups, and identification of resources to assist those who live, work, worship, and play in their respective communities (Trojanowicz et al. 1998; Community Policing Consortium 1994). Officers are expected to examine and address problems even when seemingly intractable. As such, community policing is a distinct departure from rapid response police practices where officers who respond to a call quickly gather the facts, make decisions, and move on to the next call. The expectation for community police officers is that they will take the time to proactively and resourcefully intervene with the assistance of others in the community.

While it could be argued that community-oriented policing is like old wine in new bottles and hence offers nothing new, it could also be argued that this approach to policing subscribes to a philosophy that deliberately immerses police in the community to resourcefully manage situations. The important word here is deliberately. As mentioned earlier, police have a long history of serving as problem solvers on the beat and of being connected with their respective communities, but their interventions were often left to the discretion of officers. With community policing, immersing police in the community is not only accepted practice, but assigned and expected practice.

Of particular note, community policing has provided the infrastructure, context, and philosophy needed for non-adversarial police intervention processes like mediation to begin to have presence in police departments. It allows officers to walk the talk of being creative partners in managing problems in the community. In their study on the changing role of police officers involved in community policing, Buerger et al. (1999, p. 132) have noted that “The community policing movement is creating an institutional context where long-term mediation efforts are encouraged”.

Another philosophical framework closely allied to community policing and mediation is restorative justice (Nicholl 1999a, b). While there are many definitions of restorative justice and it can refer to different things depending on context, central to most understandings is the involvement of victims, offenders, and the community in face-to-face meetings designed to address the harm(s) that have resulted from crimes, the feelings about what happened, and the ways to hold offenders accountable (e.g., see Johnstone and Van Ness 2007). Among some of the better known approaches used are victim offender mediation first used in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada in 1974 (Peachey 2003), peacemaking circles popularized in Canada (Pranis et al. 2003) and family group conferences originally developed in New Zealand (Morris and Maxwell 1998).

How police are involved in restorative programs varies (Hoyle 2007; Hines and Bazemore 2003; [Restorative Justice Online](#); Umbreit 2000), in some instances they serve as facilitators, in other instances as participants. The New Zealand family group conferencing model, which was started by social workers in 1989, served as the impetus for police-led restorative conferencing. By 1991, police in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia established a restorative conferencing model that was subsequently embraced by police organizations in England, Northern Ireland, and North America. Police were trained to lead restorative conferencing sessions with offenders, victims and members of the community (Hoyle 2007).

Intersection of Policing and Mediation: Natural or Unimaginable

At about the same time that community-oriented policing began gaining traction in the 1980s, particularly in the United States, another significant development was emerging, the introduction of mediation as a means of resolving conflicts. One of the settings in which mediation gained visibility early on was in the community context where a wide range of initiatives started to flourish. Over the years, the community-based mediation programs began to creatively and energetically reach out to local organizations and groups, including their local police departments in an effort to identify ways of partnering with them (McGillis 1997). While it is still challenging to find readily accessible data about the many creative mediation-related undertakings involving the police, there is evidence that a significant nexus between community mediation and the police exists. (e.g., see Volpe and Phillips 2003). More so than mediators in any other setting, those in the community have reached out to the police, usually in their local jurisdiction. Among the most visible community mediation efforts with respect to policing are: mediation training for officers, availability of mediation programs for referral of police cases, and mediation of a variety of citizen complaints against the police. Of particular note, the community mediation programs have played a significant role in increasing the number of police officers who have been made aware of mediation and in making mediation resources available to police departments (Volpe and Phillips 2003).

Overall, the convergence of community policing and community mediation efforts has been the singularly most important development in increasing the use of mediation in the police context. Without community policing, it is highly questionable if mediation could have made inroads within police structures, particularly in the United States. Community policing stresses the need for police officers to work with members of the community. Community mediation programs have provided their local police departments with ways in which mediation could be a useful component of the police officers' toolbox.

With increasing emphasis on police officers to demonstrate sensitivity in their interactions and interventions in culturally diverse communities, mediation emerges as an invaluable process (e.g., see Syeed-Miller 2006). Central to mediation are skills and techniques that stress the importance of listening, respect for others, keeping an open mind, finding common ground, and resourceful problem solving. In instances when the police have tried to mediate, refer cases to mediation, or participate in mediation processes, the message sent to the community is that they are trying to use a more collaborative, non-adversarial approach. It may also send a strong signal that mediation related initiatives suggest a more humane approach when police respond to situations.

Applications of Mediation in Policing: Where Mediation Fits in Policing

Despite the fact that the police have been able to apply mediation and related skills in a wide range of ways, there continues to be a dearth of research on police use of mediation. Nonetheless, the anecdotal information, assorted postings online, and limited research provide sufficient evidence that allows for identification of numerous applications of mediation in the police context including collective bargaining, contract negotiations, interventions as mediators, referrals of cases to mediators in other contexts, in specialized contexts, participation in the mediation process, and working alongside mediation experts.

Collective Bargaining

Historically, mediation has been used to resolve collective bargaining between police unions and local governments in the United States. This use of mediation is consistent with how it is used in other collective bargaining contexts, namely, to negotiate compensation packages and working conditions. In Canada, for instance, a detailed examination of the history of police bargaining in Vancouver shows that mediation has been combined with arbitration (Fisher and Starek 1978). The third party initially attempts to mediate contract differences, but when unsuccessful in reaching consensus, serves as an arbitrator.

General Policing: Mediation Skills for Everyday Police Work

While police have always intervened as informal mediators during the course of their patrol work in the community, as noted earlier (Goldstein 1977), recently officers have received mediation training. Depending on where they are trained, the nature and duration of the training will vary from superficial to intense (Volpe and Phillips 2006).

At the superficial end, the training sessions are brief, usually focused on information sharing presentations providing mediation awareness. Police officers learn about how mediation works and how to refer cases to mediators, usually at local community mediation programs. Part of these initiatives can include distribution of information flyers or palm cards. At the more intensive end, officers are trained in in-depth mediation skills, sometimes at sessions where all attendees are police officers, at other times with non-police personnel at department organized trainings or at other settings such as educational institutions or community based mediation programs.

As trained mediators, police officers gain knowledge and techniques that help them to listen to the parties, sort through concerns, identify issues, reflect information, brainstorm options, consider solutions, find creative ways of problem-solving and bring closure to situations. The mediation training also offers officers with knowledge about values that support mediation, including empowerment of the parties, creative ways to make talk work, respectful listening, self-determination by the parties, and non-adversarial interactions. As a result, officers are able to more skillfully and sensitively respond to conflict situations they encounter during the course of their work.

One of the earliest mediation services set up as part of a community policing program that integrated mediation into its police practices was the Hillsboro Police Department in Oregon. In 2007, the Hillsboro Police Mediation Program reported that 10 years after it started offering mediation training to the Hillsboro police officers, all of the officers in the department had been trained as mediators (Cadonau and Williams 2007).

Mediation training for police also can be used as a means of remediating harsh police practices. In a study on the use of force by police in Gauteng Province, South Africa, one of the recommendations made to reduce use of force incidents, as well as their occurrence and severity, was training in mediation skills (Minnaar and Mistry 2006). In 2005, as part of the G8 Action Plan on Expanding Global Capability in Peace Support Operations, the United States and Italy launched the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) in Vicenza, Italy, an international police training mission run by Italian Carabinieri. Among the topics included in the CoESPU curriculum are conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation “to improve the capacities of law enforcement professionals and contributors to peacekeeping operations working in vulnerable societies” (USIP 2009). In 2009, participants came from Burkina Faso, Egypt, Cameroon, Indonesia, Jordan, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Serbia, and Ukraine.

Police Officers as Referrers of Cases to Others for Mediation

On a daily basis, police encounter a wide range of conflicts that they typically do not have the time to process as mediators. In many communities in the United States where mediation programs have been established, police officers can refer selected cases to them, particularly in those instances where there are disputing citizens who have an ongoing relationship or where police must make repeat calls. Rather than spending time on the scene, the police have been able to refer disputing parties to trained mediators who are able to convene more traditional protracted, sit down mediation sessions. In New York State, for example, the recent statewide data for the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program show that 4.2 % of the cases referred to mediation centers are by police and sheriffs (NYS UCS 2011–2012, p. 2).

Police Use of Mediation in Specialized Contexts: Domestic Situations and Hostage Negotiations

Police have historically used mediation-related skills in specific contexts. Most common have been those situations involving responses to domestic situations and when negotiating hostage situations. In the case of responding to domestic violence situations, the use of mediation has been the subject of much debate (see Thoennes et al. 1995; Lerman 1984; Maxwell 1999). Among the concerns raised by experts has been the power disparity between perpetrators and victims, and the resulting potentially dangerous situation created for victims who would not be able to share their concerns in a face-to-face mediation session.

How to address the use of mediation by police in domestic violence situations has been the focus of significant concern to the law enforcement field. A well-known research study conducted in the 1980s examined police responses to simple assault in domestic violence situations (Sherman and Berk 1984). Officers were randomly assigned to one of the following three options, to arrest, give advice to the suspect, or ask the suspect to leave the premises for eight hours. The researchers found that arrest was more effective in reducing recidivism than removing the suspect from the home for the evening or giving advice, also referred to as informal mediation. As a result, the study had a chilling effect on the use of mediation even when circumstances might otherwise be suitable for its use in domestic situations. The study was often relied on and cited by those who supported mandatory intervention or “pro-arrest” policies in domestic violence situations. It was not until the study was replicated that mandatory arrest policies were questioned since the researchers found that arrests did not effectively deter violence (Sherman et al. 1992). In fact, they found that in some instances violence increased and that other options should be considered.

Despite the challenges raised by women’s advocacy groups particularly in the United States, the use of mediation by police in handling domestic violence situations can be found elsewhere. For example, in Jamaica, in 1994, the then

Commissioner of Police established a Police Mediation Unit with 15 police officers trained in conflict resolution to address the problem of domestic violence. These officers then trained other officers (New measures 2001). In Tamil Nadu, India, the all-women police stations provide dowry-related domestic violence victims with an opportunity to negotiate and mediate their issues (Natarajan 2005). The officers, who are trained in dispute resolution, bring all of the parties, wife, husband and family members together to discuss their conflicts over dowry related matters. Natarajan (2005, p. 102) concludes that “it is evident that women from traditional backgrounds are comfortable bringing their problems to women officers for resolution and that, where there is no immediate threat to life, these officers can often help to resolve domestic disputes through negotiation and mediation.” In India, there is precedence for community-based dispute resolution efforts through the use of elders and panchayats, a group of five respected village members who are chosen by the community members to assist with their conflicts (Vincentnathan and Vincentnathan 2007; Wall et al. 2008).

When responding to hostage situations, police negotiators must simultaneously engage the other side and slow down the interactions. Jack Cambria, commanding officer of the New York City Police Department Hostage Team has noted that “Most policing looks to resolve a situation quickly. Negotiation has a different dynamic. People have to work through their emotion” (Ford 2007). In the protracted police hostage negotiation context, a variety of opportunities for mediation occur. For example, since hostage situations and police responses to them can impact the surrounding community, officers often find themselves in the position of informal mediators among all of those on the scene including other police personnel, the media, onlookers, political officials, neighbors as well as the family and friends of those involved in the hostage situation itself.

Police Officers as Participants in Mediation Processes: Civilian Complaints

Many communities have introduced mediation to provide citizens who have a complaint against the police with an opportunity to meet with the officers they have accused (Baker 2006; Berger 2000; Hatch 2005–2006; Patterson 2006; Walker et al. 2002). This option can be an alternative to official investigation by internal affairs. Police departments have different policies about which types of complaints are permitted to go to their respective mediation programs. Generally speaking, the complaints that involve improprieties like rude behavior, insensitive interactions, and, depending on the department, matters involving racial profiling. Complaints involving use of force and arrests are usually not mediated. The mediation sessions are voluntary for both the police and citizens, however if police officers refuse to participate, the police department may take any number of actions including pursuit of a more formal investigation of the charges, taking some other actions to address the situation, or perhaps even order the officer to attend the scheduled mediation sessions.

Mediation of complaints against the police mirror the use of mediation in other contexts. The sessions are confidential and parties themselves play a significant role in defining what is included in any agreements that may be reached (Berger 2000). In their study on level of satisfaction of citizens and police officers whose cases were mediated, Bartels and Silverman (2005) found that complainants who participated in mediation were more satisfied than those whose cases were investigated. They found that police officers who participated in mediation were also highly satisfied.

Working with Mediation Experts: Use of a Mediation Liaison

At the local level, mediators and police departments are developing some innovative initiatives. For instance, the Community Mediation Program (CMP) in Baltimore, Maryland and two districts of the Baltimore Police Department have partnered to create positions known as Police Mediation Liaison to “to assist officers and screen and refer cases that may be more appropriate for community-based mediation than arrest.” A lengthy job description that was posted online ([University of Baltimore CNCM](#)) outlines a variety of tasks that will enhance the officers’ ability to make use of mediation in their interventions. The Police Mediation Liaisons would be expected to:

Help officers educate the community about nonviolent conflict resolution and mediation

Police Mediation Liaisons will ride along with officers 1–2 times per week to assist them in de-escalating conflict and to introduce a referral to mediation in a way that will be well-received.

Help provide trainings or presentations

With the CMP Director of Community Education, train designated officers about mediation on a semi-annual basis, using a one-hour mediation role play, followed by a referral training and question and answer session. Update incoming recruits on the project as they arrive at the District.

Make timely, complete referrals to CMP and educate CMP staff

Referrals to mediation will be completed daily using [repeat call statistics, officer referral pad carbons or cases left by officers in a designated box]. The invitation to mediation will consist of a letter to potential participants directly from the Police Department and signed by the District’s Community Affairs Supervisor, asking participants to contact the CMP Mediation Coordinator directly at the CMP office. An intake form will be generated for CMP staff, and delivered on a twice-weekly basis to the office in person, so that CMP staff can be briefed quickly on any special circumstances that might help bring the participants to the mediation table.

Follow-up on referrals and continually communicate with officers about mediation case status

The Baltimore City Police Department’s Northern and Southwest District Community Affairs Supervisor will act as the Site Supervisor for the Mediation Liaisons, giving them initial orientation and occasionally checking in to educate or head off problems. Detailed

records and a case status matrix will be kept to update officers. Cases which may benefit from a third resource rather than mediation will be referred to appropriate services such as Community Conferencing, large group facilitation, counseling and/or domestic violence services.

Evaluate successes

Liaisons will track the number of referrals, mediation sessions, agreement rates, and 3-month agreement durability.

Attend monthly Community Coordinating Council meetings

Community Coordinating Council Meetings are a monthly opportunity to spread the word about mediation, and educate the community about conflict resolution strategies.

The Challenges to Police Mediation

While there are many diverse efforts underway worldwide that are beginning to formally address how mediation can be used to enhance police work when managing conflict situations, the challenges mediation faces remain omnipresent. Foremost is the inherent clash between values central to mediation and police practices.

Among the most prominent challenges are the following.

(a) Police mediation: an oxymoron

Police officers have the authority to take control, compel parties to comply with their directions, and make decisions about circumstances they encounter. Their initial contact with parties may well occur while the parties are emotionally charged and in need for immediate intervention. Moreover, they encounter the parties on the latter's physical setting where the differences are occurring, the conflicts are potentially ripest for escalation to violent behavior, and the police on the scene are not able to utilize time or space in creative ways. If parties do not follow instructions, police are authorized, and even expected, to take action and use as much force as is needed to control and contain situations. Moreover, given the more authoritarian approach used by police, they can extract information from parties that they might not otherwise reveal. Parties may well fear that not providing information may result in the police taking some action against them.

On the other hand, mediators in other contexts subscribe to key principles including self-determination, confidentiality, and voluntary participation by the parties. For them, the process is subject to careful crafting of conditions to ensure that best practices are followed, even if it means conducting multiple sessions and significantly delaying the process into the future. The mediators pay considerable attention to preparing the parties as well as the setting for bringing the parties together. In short, unlike police practices, mediation relies on parties to voluntarily consent to participate in the process since mediators have no authority to impose solutions on anyone.

Quite simply, when police officers mediate, the core principles valued by mediation can be challenged and compromised. As a result, a strong case can continue to be made that policing and mediation are not a good fit, even when policing is more community-oriented (e.g., see Hoyle 2007, pp. 303–305).

(b) Emerging Professionalization of Mediation

As the practice of mediation becomes more popular, acceptable, and even institutionalized, there are increasing efforts underway to identify the criteria for professionalization of the field. This will mean a growing emphasis on standards of practice that embrace principles maximizing control of the process by the parties. Given the nature of police practices, this emerging professionalization of the mediation field will continue to present ongoing tension between the professional practice of mediation and police use of mediation on the scene.

(c) Police organizational structure and culture

While police have always engaged in some form of go-between when responding to conflicts between citizens, the dominant culture and organizational structure of policing are not designed to be supportive of such interventions. Police are expected to respond rapidly and move on, and the reward system in place for promotions and recognition supports this kind of police culture and organizational structure. It is virtually unheard of for police departments to release news headlines to report on the successful resolution of a conflict between neighbors engaged in ongoing complaints over noise that has included repeated police interventions. More common headlines are those that focus on the police solving a burglary, murder or robbery case. How personnel are recognized is a measure of what kind of police activity is more likely to be valued.

(d) The public's expectations

While the public expects the police to be respectful and understanding, they also expect the police to make decisions when they call upon the police to respond to a situation. The public is not accustomed to police arriving and asking them to play active roles in handling the matter that triggered the need for the call, especially when retributive climates have defined how police should operate. Such would require a significant paradigm shift in how the police role is defined for and by the public. For police to be viewed as mediators, a major public awareness initiative would have to be undertaken. For instance, after many decades, it is now part of conventional wisdom that police hostage negotiators can spend protracted time at a hostage situation by slowing down the process in order to rescue hostages and ensure everyone's safety. Similarly, in other contexts, officers would have to be trained and the public educated to expect a more collaborative problem solving approach in responding to more common conflict situations.

(e) Existing societal belief systems

Mediation's viability gets challenged in societies that do not subscribe to democratic principles. Worldwide there are vast discrepancies over the role of police. Presum-

ably, the more authoritarian the context, the more challenging it will be to introduce a form of policing that empowers the citizens.

In addition to the aforementioned, specific concerns have been raised about police-led restorative conferencing sessions popularized by the police in Wagga Wagga, Australia. While these efforts are not specifically referred to as mediation undertakings, in fact they are mediation-like. Umbreit and Zehr, (1996, pp. 27–28) have identified the following potential dangers of the Australian approach:

1. Inadequate preparation: Lack of preparation prior to a restorative conference could notably impact on the parties' participation during the dialogue.
2. Victim insensitivity and coercion: Since sessions begin with the offenders' story, victims may feel uncomfortable and perceive the session as not addressing their needs.
3. Young offenders feeling intimidated by adults: When officers appear in uniform at the session, the offenders may feel uncomfortable.
4. Lack of neutrality – shaming of offender: Police may not be able to serve as neutral facilitators given the nature of their authoritarian role, thereby leading to shaming and blaming of offenders rather than reintegrative shaming.
5. Inflexibility and assumed cultural neutrality of process: The police conferencing model is highly scripted and may be too inflexible for restorative processes in diverse and multicultural communities.
6. Net-widening: Since minor cases may be identified, labeled and handled as a result of early intervention efforts, more offenders can be taken into the criminal justice system whose offenses might have otherwise been ignored.

The Future of Police Mediation: Some Observations

The use of mediation in the police context has tremendous potential worldwide. By its very nature, mediation provides police with precisely the kind of process and relationship building tools that they need to engage their communities in problem solving. With growing numbers of citizens around the world knowledgeable about mediation, it is safe to say that even if mediation is not fully integrated into police organizations globally, the inclusion of the kinds of techniques and skills integral to the mediation process will be of value to police organizations seeking to demonstrate their responsiveness in their communities. For some police organizations, the potential of incorporating mediation is greater when the mediation efforts can draw on the traditional culture. In their study on Navajo peacemaking, for example, Meyer et al. (2009) noted how the emphasis on restoring harmony in the Navajo culture can play a role in including peacemaking in Navajo peacekeeping work.

Concurrently, mediation in the police context will continue to experience significant challenges and resistance. Police organizational structures, policies, procedures, and culture suggest that the law enforcement setting does not provide the optimal milieu needed for mediation. This is especially true in those cultures

where police are expected to maintain a social distance from the public and to assume unchallenged presence in the community. In fact, the informality of mediation-like processes can in fact be misused and abused by more coercive law enforcement agencies.

Finally, understanding and tracking mediation-like developments and initiatives in the police context globally present researchers with enormous challenges. Since many of the mediation efforts occur at the local level, data are not readily available or accessible. Any innovative effort that is undertaken can be overly cited and relied upon as an example of what is transpiring, thereby creating the illusion that more is occurring than is. Moreover, the varied terminology used to describe mediation makes it very difficult to track or compare mediation efforts longitudinally or across cultures. As a result, ascertaining what the police mediation landscape consists of is confusing and complicated. What is sorely needed is a systematic analysis of police mediation efforts that have been undertaken around the world. Among the beneficiaries would be the police organizations themselves since the information would provide insights about the potential and challenges of mediation in the police context.

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