

## Preface

This book first took shape in the summer of 2006, when a group of scholars from different disciplines and countries came to Buffalo to explore a range of topics from the general perspective of policing as a tool of governance. It advances and expands a project on the police power that began with a workshop in 2004, which yielded *The New Police Science: The Police Power in Domestic and International Governance* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

The police power as a modern technology of governance recommends itself as the focus for interdisciplinary and international exploration for two reasons. First, as a general tool of governance it pervades all aspects and levels of modern government. The police power, understood as the power to maximize the public welfare (or, more colorfully, “peace, order, and good government”) as opposed to, say, the power to do justice, is thought to be so essential to the very idea of government that it (1) underlies such diverse technologies of government as liquor licensing and the criminal law; (2) is claimed by city governments as well as county, state, and national governments, and increasingly even governments in the international realm; and (3) appears, in various forms—and under various names—in the practices and theories of governance of many modern liberal states, including not only the United States and Canada but the United Kingdom and Continental Europe (home of the original “police science”) as well.

Second, part of the problem of writing, and thinking, about police today is that people do study “it” in different disciplines, and from different angles, but without knowing that this is what they—or for that matter others—are doing. The range of disciplines that address various aspects of the power to police is wide, including social and political theory, legal theory and history, criminology, and feminist studies. This book, by combining contributions by people from different disciplines and places, contributes to the rediscovery of police as a common topic of interest and inquiry.

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