

Policing and Media

Public relations,
simulations and
communications

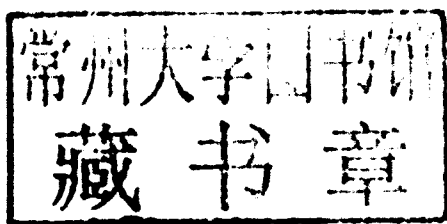
**Murray Lee and
Alyce McGovern**



New Directions in Critical Criminology

POLICING AND MEDIA

Public relations, simulations
and communications



Murray Lee and Alyce McGovern

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Murray Lee and Alyce McGovern have written an innovative and important book. Based on cutting-edge empirical research and covering topics including social media, “simulated policing”, police self-image and self-regulation, this book takes the field of police and media several leaps forward and can genuinely lay claim to being a new direction in critical criminology.’

*Yvonne Jewkes, Professor of Criminology,
University of Leicester, UK.*

‘Lee and McGovern meticulously detail how the media, and especially new media, is fundamentally altering the relationship between the police and the public. *Policing and Media* insightfully illuminates the various ways police are harnessing media to achieve diverse impacts in society and demonstrates how they are reshaping policing of the future by doing so. This highly accessible and invaluable resource is crucial reading for scholars of criminology, sociology and the media and is a must-read for policing and media practitioners.’

*Sharon Pickering, Australian Research Council Professorial
Future Fellow and Professor of Criminology, Monash University,
Australia.*

‘Murray Lee and Alyce McGovern have produced an authoritative analysis of police communications in our increasingly mediated world. They skilfully blend theoretical insights with empirical research to build a convincing argument that the divide between operational policing and police media work is collapsing into “simulated policing”. Police media and public relations are important but under-researched areas and the authors should be congratulated for writing this accessible, accomplished and much-needed book.’

*Rob Mawby, Reader in Criminology,
University of Leicester, UK.*

‘Lee and McGovern realise that, as policing and media continue to evolve in the 21st Century, so too must the theories and methods used to research them. Bringing new theoretical insights, and a methodological clarity and reflexivity that spans a decade of empirical work, the authors engage systematically with the multi-faceted intersections of policing and media. Their analyses of traditional and social

media, news and reality programming, investigative and image work results in an insightful, timely and comprehensive study that genuinely succeeds in moving knowledge forwards. An impressive feat of scholarly work, and an important contribution to the literature.'

*Chris Greer, Professor of Sociology,
City University London, UK.*

POLICING AND MEDIA

This book examines the relationship between police, media and the public and analyses the shifting techniques and technologies through which they communicate. In a critical discussion of contemporary and emerging modes of mediatized police work, Lee and McGovern demonstrate how the police engage with the public through a fluid and quickly expanding assemblage of communications and information technologies.

Policing and Media explores the rationalities that are driving police–media relations and ask how these relationships differ (or not) from the ways they have operated historically; what new technologies are influencing and being deployed by policing organizations and police public relations professionals and why; how operational policing is shaping and being shaped by new technologies of communication; and what forms of resistance are evident in the manufacture of preferred images of police? The authors suggest that new forms of simulated and hyperreal policing using platforms such as social media and reality television are increasingly positioning police organizations as media organizations, and in some cases enabling police to bypass the traditional media altogether. The book is informed by empirical research spanning ten years in this field and includes chapters on journalism and the police, policing and social media, policing and reality television and policing resistances.

It will be of interest to those researching and teaching in the fields of Criminology, Policing and Media as well as police and media professionals.

Murray Lee is an Associate Professor in Criminology at the University of Sydney Faculty of Law. He is the author of *Inventing Fear of Crime* and co-author of *Fear of Crime: Critical Voices in an Age of Anxiety*, both published by Routledge.

Alyce McGovern is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of New South Wales.

New directions in critical criminology

Edited by Walter S. DeKeseredy,
University of Ontario Institute of Technology

This series presents new cutting-edge critical criminological empirical, theoretical, and policy work on a broad range of social problems, including drug policy, rural crime and social control, policing and the media, ecoside, intersectionality, and the gendered nature of crime. It aims to highlight the most up-to-date authoritative essays written by new and established scholars in the field. Rather than offering a survey of the literature, each book takes a strong position on topics of major concern to those interested in seeking new ways of thinking critically about crime.

1. **Contemporary Drug Policy**
Henry Brownstein
2. **The Treadmill of Crime**
Political economy and green criminology
Paul B. Stretesky, Michael A. Long and Michael J. Lynch
3. **Rural Criminology**
Walter S. DeKeseredy and Joseph F. Donnermeyer
4. **Policing and Media**
Public relations, simulations and communications
Murray Lee and Alyce McGovern

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Alyce would like to dedicate this book to the memory of her father, Robert McGovern. She would also like to thank Roslyn, Christopher, Kimberley, Raquel and Skylar McGovern for their support. Special thanks also go to her colleagues at the University of NSW, particularly Dr Sanja Milivojevic and Professor Marc Williams, for their advice and guidance during the process.

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- Lee, M. and McGovern, A. (2013) 'Procedural justice and simulated policing: the medium and the message', *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism, Special Issue: Organisational and Procedural Justice: Applying Theory to Police Practice*, vol. 8, iss. 2, pp. 166–183.
- Lee, M. and McGovern, A. (2012) 'Image Work(s): "Simulated Policing" and the New Police (Popularity) Culture', in K. Carrington, M. Ball, E. O'Brien and J. Tauri (eds), *Crime, Justice and Social Democracy: International Perspectives*, edn. 1st, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK, pp. 120–132.

- McGovern, A. and Lee, M. (2012) 'Police Communications in the Social Media Age', in P. Keyzer, J. Johnston and M. Pearson (eds), *The Courts and the Media: Challenges in The Era of Digital and Social Media*, edn. 1st, Halstead Press, Ultimo, pp. 162–176.
- Lee, M. and McGovern, A. (2012) 'Force to Sell: Policing the Image and Manufacturing Public Confidence', *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy*, vol. 22, pp. 1–22.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| ABC | Australian Broadcasting Corporation |
| CAD | computer-aided dispatch |
| DPA | Director of Public Affairs |
| FLEPIOA | Florida Law Enforcement Public Information Officer Association |
| KPI | key performance indicator |
| LAC | local area command |
| LSA | local service area |
| MDT | mobile digital terminal |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| PEATS | Police External Agencies Transfer System |
| PIO | public information officer |
| PMO | police media officer |
| PMU | police media unit |
| QPS | Queensland Police Service |
| SA | South Australia |
| SAPOL | South Australian Police |
| SMILE | Social Media, the Internet and Law Enforcement Conference |
| SOP | standard operating procedures |
| TC | tropical cyclone |
| WA | Western Australia |

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INTRODUCTION

When Kym Charlton, Director of Police Media for the Queensland Police Service (QPS), a police organization with jurisdiction over one of Australia's largest states, recently left her position she published her farewells to the police and public on social media. It was a fitting farewell given the changes she had overseen in her role:

Tomorrow, I leave Queensland Police Media and Public Affairs after five wonderful years [...].

It was with considerable trepidation that I pressed 'publish' on the QPS Facebook Page in 2010 – I had heard all the horror stories about social media – but I had faith that the service needed to be in social media, so we could talk directly with you. Thanks to your support, the page has gone from strength to strength, and remains a safe place to get and share public safety information. We presently have nearly 363,500 'likes' and last week we reached 1.15 million people on here.

Robert Peel, when he spoke of the Principles of Policing in 1829, could have had little idea how the principle of 'the police are the public, and the public are the police' would be brought to life through social media. Thank you for embracing

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our efforts in social media, and making our social media channels world leaders in law enforcement and emergency services.

On here, you've helped us solve crime, find missing people, and keep each other safe. We've laughed and cried, and proven that social media is a place where great good can happen. We even saved a cow or two [...]. I hope we have given you the chance to get to know the service, and our officers, in a way you may not have previously, and gain a little insight into the challenges our officers face every day [...]

Kym. (*QPS Facebook 2013*)

The text of Charlton's message is instructive on a number of levels. Firstly, one of her key achievements during her five years in the position was obviously the move of QPS into the realm of social media, a move admittedly achieved despite some 'trepidation'. One can almost feel the anxiety as she, having presumably sold the idea of using social media to a police service historically known for its conservative disposition, presses 'publish' and a new era of police public relationship for that service is born.

Secondly, she clearly articulates the capacity of this platform to speak directly to the public. The public, she suggested, got to 'know the service' in a 'way you may not have'. This new power, to speak directly to the public, brought to life the early principles of Peel's police. Peelian or not, as we will illustrate in this book, social media has significantly reshaped police/public communications.

Thirdly, the platform has operated as more than just an opportunity for the police to disseminate information. Rather, Charlton reflects that the public have 'helped us solve crime' and 'share public safety information'. In this sense, social media is constructed as not just empowering the police, but the public too.

Finally, Charlton's statement demonstrates the pace of change in police/public relations. In five years we have moved from pressing 'publish' for the first time on a Facebook posting, to reaching '363,500 likes' for the page and '1.15 million people on here'. In five years the shape of police/public relations has changed irrevocably.

Charlton's post on the QPS Facebook site seems like the obvious introduction to our book. Her farewell sums up much of what