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The Shape of Utility Functions and Organizational Behavior.

This article provides the background to an international project on use of force by the police that was carried out in seven countries. Force is often considered to be the defining characteristic of policing and much research has been conducted on the determinants, prevalence and control of the use of force, particularly in the United States. However, little work has looked at police officers' own views on the use of force, in particular the way in which they justify it. Using a hypothetical encounter developed for this project, researchers in each country conducted focus groups with police officers in which they were encouraged to talk about the use of force. The results show interesting similarities and differences across countries and demonstrate the value of using this kind of research focus and methodology.