Danger, Fighting, and Badassness: A Social Systems Perspective on Narratives and Codes in Police Conflict Management

Mario S. Staller, Swen Koerner, and Benni Zaiser

Reviewer: Raoul Jaccard

1 Introduction

Police narratives play a significant role in police culture and police training (Branch, 2021; Fletcher, 1996; Ford, 2003; Hulst, 2013; Kurtz & Colburn, 2019; Schaefer & Tewksbury, 2017; Sierra-Arévalo,

M. S. Staller (✉)
University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration North Rhine-Westphalia, Cologne, Germany
e-mail: mario.staller@hspv.nrw.de

S. Koerner
German Sport University Cologne, Cologne, Germany
e-mail: koerner@dshs-koeln.de

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2021; Staller & Koerner, 2022a; Waddington, 1999). While these narratives are often transmitted orally via the act of storytelling, there are also other forms and media of transmission. For example, the narrative that the police are the last line of defense against societal chaos is transmitted through the "thin blue line" metaphor (Wall, 2020), which appears on (velcro) patches (Staller, Koerner, & Heil, 2022), in movies (McVey, 2022), or is verbally perpetuated by police trainers (Sierra-Arévalo, 2021). Likewise, the narrative of police officers who engage in non-legalistic practices in service of the greater good can be observed in movies like *Dirty Harry* (Klockars, 1980) and circulates through storytelling within the police system (Hine et al., 2020).

Related to police conflict management, there are certain narratives that implicitly convey what needs to be done in any given situation or how information has to be interpreted: the danger and the fighting narrative. In this chapter, we will describe these two narratives, including their respective forms and different media of occurrence. Based on a social systems perspective on functional differentiation (Luhmann, 2013), we then offer an analysis of their function. Concerning the effects of said narratives, we contend that "badassness" serves as a border for information to be adopted by the system of police training. Through this analysis we hope to enhance the potential of observational reflexivity of the police system, allowing for an informed management of these narratives and a reframing of "badassness".

2 The Danger Narrative

Several studies on the particularities of the social system of policing have found the police profession to be inherently associated with a perception of danger (Branch, 2021; Charman, 2017; Loftus, 2009; Marenin, 2016; Rowe & Rowe, 2021; Sierra-Arévalo, 2021; Simon, 2021;

B. Zaiser
Aurora, ON, Canada
e-mail: connect@bennizaiser.com

Staller & Koerner, 2022a). We refer to the communicative transmission of this idea, in which danger does exist, but in which this danger is also normalized within the police profession and transmitted as ever increasing—as the police danger narrative (Eisenberg (2023), Staller & Koerner, 2022a). As a kind of metanarrative, it comprises the totality of smaller building blocks, such as metaphors, argumentative figures, and stories told within the system, which are used to implicitly and explicitly convey knowledge about the relationship between police work and its inherent dangers. The significance of and the affiliation with the metanarrative in some cases only becomes apparent when viewed as a whole. Various studies from Germany, the USA, and the UK have exposed several elements, which can be interpreted as part of the narrative, including:

- The constant and *ever-present* danger in police operations ("They can pull a knife at any moment"; Behr, 2019, p. 29).
- The narrative of a *continuously increasing* danger for police officers ("The world is getting worse"; "Violence against police officers is on the rise";"Obviously, certain consequences of societal undesirable developments are reflected in the [officially reported crime statistics of the federal criminal police], with which not only police security management, but also every colleague is confronted with in daily service"; Clages, 2021, p. 2).
- Hypothetical "what if" scenarios ("But what do you do when you're standing alone in an alley in front of a 115 kg man?" (Fletcher, 1996, p. 40).
- The dogmatic focus on potential danger at the center of a wide variety of thought and action practices throughout police socialization (Sierra-Arévalo, 2021), e.g., "From a police perspective, [a police officer who, by her behavior, de-escalated a situation as a result] neglects self-protection by sitting down on the edge of the bed. It is a risky behavior, since it cannot be ruled out that the Russian man keeps dangerous objects or weapons under the bed cover or uses the proximity for a physical attack" (Reuter, 2014, p. 69) or "Getting home safe and sound" (Jager et al., 2013, p. 267).

- The construction of police (self-protection) practices as "survival", e.g., "Survival is no accident" (Füllgrabe, 2000), "Don't let them kill you on some dirty roadway" (Lynch, 2017), "My workday looks like watching every shift to make sure my patrol partner(s) get home safe!" (Jager et al., 2013, p. 267).
- Exemplary vivid case descriptions as anecdotal evidence of a present violence problem, e.g., "Through a behavior described as conspicuous in the court hearing that followed later, the Salafist Safia S., a 15-year-old schoolgirl, provoked an ID check on February 26, 2016. In the process, she abruptly stabbed a young federal police officer in the neck with a knife—she was carrying another knife in her backpack" (Goertz, 2021, p. 5).
- Metaphors that focus on the dangerousness of the other party (compared to other aspects worth attending to), such as the "*Gefahrenradar*" (Füllgrabe, 2023).[1]

The danger narrative is omnipresent in the police. As such it has been described as a constitutive part of police culture (Fletcher, 1996; Hulst, 2013; Kurtz & Colburn, 2019; Kurtz & Upton, 2017; Lynch, 2017; Rantatalo & Karp, 2018). Even young police officers at the beginning of their careers are exposed to these narratives and socialized in this way (Hulst & Ybema, 2020). Accordingly, they acquire knowledge that supports that worldview, which, in turn, guides their behavior (Staller & Koerner, 2022b).

In Germany, this narrative can be extended throughout the three years of initial police socialization[2]: during the officers' learning at the police university, where the job is generally framed as dangerous; at the police academy, where "officers' safety" outshines other interactional considerations; and during field training, where anecdotes about dangerous situations circulate amongst staff (Staller et al., 2023).

[1] The German term "*Gefahrenradar*" was introduced by Füllgrabe in the German police literature in 2000 (Füllgrabe, 2000) and could be best translated by the term "danger radar".

[2] In Germany police recruits go through a three-tiered system over the course of three years. This consists of higher education, classroom style training at the Police University of Applied Sciences, practical skills training at the police academy, and several periods of field training. The police officers graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Besides verbal communication, the danger narrative can be traced in the literature as well, such as in popular bestsellers like *The Psychology of Self-protection* (Füllgrabe, 2023) or in scientific journals (Goertz, 2021), where it is often presented as the basic assumption for specific areas worth researching. Even though we are now critical of such portrayals (Bochenek & Staller, 2014; Körner & Staller, 2018; Körner & Staller, 2020; Koerner & Staller, 2022; Staller & Koerner, 2021b, 2021c; Staller et al., 2022; Zaiser et al., 2022), we have to note that, in the past, we had subscribed to this narrative and disseminated it for years ourselves (see, e.g., Bochenek & Staller, 2014; Körner & Staller, 2018).

Regarding the success of the danger narrative, there are also other media involved. The alleged dangers of the profession also circulate in the news media as well as in popular culture (Aiello, 2014; Kurtz & Upton, 2017). There is also a general societal image of what the police are and what they do (Sausdal, 2021a). Thus, those who choose the police profession may already have clear subjective ideas of what is expected (Staller & Koerner, 2022b). The extent to which the subjective view of a constantly and continuously increasing danger for police officers matches reality seems to be of secondary importance, because our own view creates the reality we eventually perceive (Staller & Koerner, 2022a).

There is evidence from research into the psychology of aggression that the individual assumption of a dangerous world leads to individually more aggressive action tendencies (Dodge et al., 2015; Huesmann, 2018). Ambiguous stimuli in interactions are interpreted in a more hostile way, increasing the likelihood of using one's own more aggressive action scripts. This makes it more difficult to shape interactions with the other party. The subjective perception of how dangerous interactions are in one's own work environment builds the foundation for one's own actions regarding the management of conflicts. In this context, a longitudinal study by Baier (2019) exemplifies this problem: police officers' fear of assault was associated with a higher risk of experiencing verbal and, on a longitudinal basis, physical violence in the study.

In essence, the danger narrative forms a coherent perspective on the reality of policing, which leads to another prevalent narrative, which can be viewed—from this coherent perspective—as a solution: the fighting narrative.

3 The Fighting Narrative

The fighting narrative revolves around the notion that the core operation of the police is "fighting". We owe this lens of analysis to the ethnographic work of Sausdal (2020b, 2021a, 2021b), who describes his observations in the context of transnational European policing as a "fighting fetish" (2021a):

> They "have" to fight. They "need" to wage war, they regularly told me in a language of inevitability, even when admitting that their work involves and, arguably, necessitated many other things. (S. 410)

Underlying this need for fighting is the "ideological assumption" (Bowling et al., 2019) that the police are a functional prerequisite for social order and that, without a police force, chaos would break out. This assumption also underlies the artifact of the thin blue line (Staller, Koerner, & Heil, 2022; Wall, 2020)—the police as the border that ensures that society does not descend into chaos. In this logic, fighting "must" take place, since otherwise chaos would prevail.

However, focusing on current policing practices, much of police work is characterized by activities other than "fighting" (Rowe & Rowe, 2021; Sausdal, 2020a, 2021a). A lot of the work police do on a day-to-day basis has nothing to do with face-to-face interactions in conflict situations. Policing is becoming more and more differentiated. The system out-differentiates itself. For example, with policing in the digital space and the raise of cybercrime, the question of to what extent and who needs to be empowered to "fight" in the first place arises even more. Also, concerning the creation of safety and security within society, the police play only a small part in this process (Frevel, 2022). "Fighting", and especially "physical fighting", thus remains the exception—not the rule. However, from the perspective of the police culture a different observation is made within the system: fighting *is* the constitutive element of policing.

Against the backdrop of this inherent assumption, several prevalent observations employ that logic. For example, only frontline work with conflictual police–civilian interactions is understood as "real" police

work. Argumentative positions of individual police officers are strengthened by their respective "combat experience" (Seidensticker, 2021), which elevates their status in the system. Furthermore, according to this logic, the genuine work of police officers is also regularly understood as clear "friend–foe" or "us versus them" constellations (Behr, 2017).

As a consequence, the fighting narrative contains some implications for perceptions of what police work actually entails. The image of many police officers seems to regularly revolve around action, adventure, excitement, and the use of force (Brown et al., 1993; Fletcher, 1996). This is a notion that is also embedded within popular culture, where police work is regularly portrayed as "law and order" policing (O'Sullivan, 2005). This system-external ascription of policing easily passes the system, is applied to police from the outside, and then affects the inside (Pollock et al., 2021; Sausdal, 2021a).

However, there are also observations that partially paint a different picture: police work motivated by sympathy for the fate of crime suspects, for the circumstances that compelled them to act. This is a picture of police officers with differentiated views and perspectives (Sausdal, 2021b). So, on the one hand, there is a reality of policing that has distinctly prosocial overtones, and on the other hand there is the shared narrative that cops must be "hardcore" or "badass": "It's not fucking social work we do. This is police work" (Sausdal, 2021b, p. 191).

The tension between communication related to fighting and the reality of policing has to be negotiated in some way in order to provide a coherent perspective, as this tension has become existential, as a quote from a police officer shows:

> If we don't ultimately have this tough lingo, this way of speaking about our work and seeing the world we live in, if our work is not set against the evils of this world, then why are we even here? (Sausdal, 2021a, S. 413)

The quote also refers back to the danger narrative. Danger ("the evils of this world") is the argumentative prerequisite for fighting. The existence of danger is the logical consequence if there is a police focused

on fighting. The circularity of the argument provides coherence, mutually reinforcing the above-mentioned narratives. This process points us towards social systems theory (Luhmann, 2013, 2020), which allows for an analysis of the communicative processes with its conditions and consequences.

4 A Social Systems Perspective on Narratives

With the framework of modern social systems theory, we focus our analysis of narratives on two questions. First, how come certain narratives are so successful within the police? Our second question relates to that: which problems do narratives actually solve?

Narratives as Succesful Communcation

The question concerning the success of narratives must be posed in the light of the general problem of communication (Luhmann, 1981). Viewed from a Luhmannian perspective, any form of communication is in essence highly unlikely, unless it has found a way to effectively solve the following three problems.

Firstly, one party must understand what the other party means (*improbability of understanding*). This relates to the problem that "[m]eaning can only be understood in context, and context for each individual consists of what his own memory supplies" (Luhmann, 1981, p. 123). Secondly, recipients must be reached, which is much easier in situations where recipients are present (*improbability of reaching recipients*). This is related to the problem of space and time, or as Luhmann puts it: "It is improbable that a communication should reach more persons than are present in a given situation" (p. 123). And thirdly, communication must be successful in that the receiving party takes over the selective content of the communication (the information) as a premise of its own actions, that is it follows its own selections from it (*improbability of success*). The problem is that it is highly improbable for

individuals to accept understood communication, given the high individuality of humans. Furthermore, these improbabilities mutually reinforce one another. When one problem is solved, the others become more difficult. If a person has understood a communication, more reasons exist to reject it. If a communication extends beyond the people present, the more difficult it gets to understand and thus accept it.

The prevalence of the danger and the fighting narratives within the system indicates that they *are successful* in terms of communication, which means that the above-mentioned obstacles have been overcome.

Concerning *understanding*, the two narratives build on a shared understanding of the police by the police. The "cop culture", with its traditionalistic views (compared to other police cultures) on law and order, heteronormative masculinity, and dominance (Behr, 2020; Burke, 1992; Silvestri, 2017), provides the systemic structure that ensures that the narratives are understood. The cop culture structure boils down possible "contexts" for police officers to a shared context of understanding.

The cop culture also provides a structure that allows for the narratives to be conserved, to trespass space and time, and hence solve the problem of the improbability of *reaching recipients*. The culture ensures that danger stories (Fletcher, 1996), danger emblems and ideas (e.g., the thin blue line; Staller, Koerner, & Heil, 2022; Wall, 2020), and metaphors (e.g., the danger radar; Koerner & Staller, 2021b) keep circulating. The implementation of training structures, which emphasize physical coercion and the use of force over other forms of conflict management (Sloan & Paoline, 2021; Staller et al., 2021), can also be understood as systemic structures (network nodes), which ensure the distribution of the danger—and the fighting—narrative.

Finally, the acceptance of the communication, the *success of communication*, is also reinforced on a structural level, for example by a shared identity (e.g., cop culture), shared beliefs about what training should emphasize (e.g., the handling and use of firearms compared to de-escalation strategies), which equipment (e.g., weaponry) is used/worn, or on a general level a shared understanding of what policing actually entails.

The potential of overcoming these obstacles of communication depends on the systemic structures in play. On the other hand, the narratives themselves reproduce these structures. They are consequence and condition at the same time. Narratives and structure reinforce each other in a circular way, ultimately allowing the communication to be successful. The success of communication also points towards a second systemic question worth pursuing: Which systemic problems do the danger and the fighting narratives actually solve?

Narratives as System Reproducing Elements

Narratives successfully circumvent the obstacles of communication. However, successful communication does not guarantee their existence within the system. It can be assumed, from a functional perspective, that narratives solve a specific problem. Since social systems can be described as autopoietic, self-stabilizing systems, the function in question can be analyzed based on this assumption. Specifically, those narratives that enhance the self-stabilizing capacity of the system appear to be functional.

Before we turn to the specific function of narratives, we will briefly describe the autopoietic processes of systems, which are based on self-reference on three different levels (Luhmann, 2013). First, systems refer to themselves via communication as the fundamental and (according to Luhmann, the only) social operation. On a basic level of self-reference, this entails that a certain basic operation (or unit act) is followed by the next basic operation. Whereas for the economy this unit act is payment (payment follows payment), the unit act for the police has been argued to be policing (Koerner & Staller, 2022), with its mandate to control for violence on a societal level (Luhmann, 1995, 2002). Second, on another level of self-reference, reflection entails the self-description of the social system within the social system. For the social system of police, this includes descriptions of the police within the police, which revolve around the identity of the system, capturing its own past, present, and future, determining tasks, and formulating expectations. Through reflection, the police create internal consistency. Third, according to

Luhmann, highly evolved social systems have developed a further level of self-reference: reflexivity, which refers to the adoption of core processes on the core processes itself. For the police, this would entail policing the police. Related to violence, it would mean to control the control of violence. In general, this allows the system to control complexities. However, since the evaluation of social systems is non-normative, the reflexivity of policing has led to the development of a third, "hidden" control mechanism, which controls the control of violence control. These are processes that ensure "that nothing happens when something happens" (Luhmann, 1995). Such mechanisms immunize the system against destabilization.

The danger and the fighting narrative easily connect to the basic operation (basic self-reference): the control of violence indicates that violence is the source of danger and fighting thus the mechanism to control it. Police officers execute their duties (control for violence) by using force. The unit act oscillates between (the perception of) danger and its physical control via physical use of force. Violence is answered with force. Danger is fought.

On the second level of self-reference, this self-description can be observed within the two narratives: danger (of violence) as the continuous, ever-present problem; and fighting (against violence) as the solution. As such, the narratives maintain the system. On this level of reflection, the police's own violence is assumed to be legitimate.

In addition, reflexive mechanisms (the third level of self-reference) safeguard that tenet of "legitimate violence". While there are governance structures that control for the legitimacy of violence, such as regulations, directives, training, or internal affairs divisions (Cabral & Lazzarini, 2015), others have evolved culturally, such as the wall of silence (Conway & Westmarland, 2021; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2022) and the revisionist writing of reports to justify an unjustified use of force (Apuzzo, 2015).

In this context, controlling for violence within the police lies within some ancestral routines that cannot easily be changed from the outside. Reflexivity immunizes against the loss of control and safeguards the police from it. In that vein, narratives can also be viewed as reflexive mechanisms. From this perspective, the danger narrative and the fighting

narrative implicitly convey the message that, in the light of ever-increasing danger (and imminent societal chaos), fighting is the only option.

While fighting as such is constructed to be the solution, it can also be observed as a problem. For example, the focus on fighting renders other options invisible. Fighting may prime officers to address immediate problems, which can create more immediate problems like "officer-induced jeopardy". Fighting de-optionalizes communication. The faster physical force is employed, the less options for conflict resolution are available. If fighting primes for "running towards the danger", the option of "disengagement" as a non-fighting tactic does not easily come to mind.[3] Since fights are fast and chaotic, slowing down appears to be a counter-intuitive strategy. And while chaos prevails during the fight, the lines between legal and illegal actions blur, leading to another problem: the need for the construction of legality (even if it could be observed as illegal from a different perspective) and the need for observed illegality to vanish into latency. From a systems perspective, this refers to "useful illegalities". These can regularly be observed in complex organizational systems and allow the system to operate and to cope with the demands of complex and highly dynamic problems, *despite* the rigid frameworks that control for deviations (Kühl, 2021). Another aspect that could be observed as a problem is how the focus on danger and fighting disregards what led to the conflict in the first place. The danger is already there, and reactive measures to fight it must be taken. However, acknowledging the interactional dynamics of any police–citizen encounter allows for a variety of options to manage conflict beyond fighting or using force respectively (Zaiser et al., 2022).

In a circular manner, the semantics of the narratives can be observed in structural equivalents in the police system: an emphasis on training structures, which emphasizes fighting options (e.g., firearms training, the use of force training), and the increase in the police's fighting potential (e.g., a tendency towards militarization, at least in Germany). These are

[3] We thank the San Francisco Police Department's Crisis/Hostage Negotiation Team, which, during a conference talk, reported on the successful, repeated use of disengagement in dealing with crisis situations. Disengagement or temporary non-engagement elegantly replaces the conventional control of violence through use of force with a response focused on support.

consequences and conditions at the same time, reproducing semantics and structures based on the system's self-reference. As such, the narratives are functional for the system. They are reflexive control strategies that immunize the system against other alternatives for coping with the unit act of the system—controlling for violence.

Over the last decades, the internal organizational structures that focus on providing the potential to deal with the perceived danger have primarily been training departments. As sub-systems, they have to differentiate themselves from their environment (other sub-systems within the police), based on a binary code (Luhmann, 2013). This binary code "regulates the oscillation between positive and negative values, thus the contingency of the evaluations on which the system orients its own operations" (p. 90). Since the system's operations have to be carried out as selections, "[b]inary codes are, in a strict sense, forms, which is to say two-sided forms, that facilitate switching from one side to the other, from value to opposing value and back by distinguishing themselves as forms from other forms" (p. 91). Whereas the binary code for policing in general has been postulated to be legal/illegal (Koerner & Staller, 2022), the sub-system of police training with a strong interconnection to the danger and the fighting narrative has its own code that ensures its autopoiesis. We propose this code to be *badass/not-badass*.

5 The Code of Badassness

In his seminal analysis of *Ways of the Badass*, Katz (1988) describes badassness as a project of constructing one's own identity along several levels of intimidating aggression in an attempt to assert control, status, and recognition from one's peers. On a lower level of aggression, badassness involves the display of behavior and use of symbols and devices that suggest an impenetrable self. In contrast, higher levels of aggression involve the transcendence of moral injunctions and, being mean, based on a logic of domination. While the concept has been used in Katz's analysis in order to explain deviant behavior, a creep of concept (Haslam, 2016) has been observable over the last decades. Initially, the

concept centers around the use of violence and aggression as key intimidating factors, especially by transgressing moral injunctions (Kopak & Sefiha, 2014). However, newer versions of the use of "badass" as a term extend beyond physical forms of aggression and violence in order to be perceived as tough, and to reach a social status that is intimidating to others (Douwen et al., 2022; Johnson, 2014; Maddox, 2019).

Intimidation—along with coercion and power—can be viewed as a key strategy to exert dominance in social interactions (Maner, 2017). As such, badassness relates to the fighting narrative, which in essence advocates for the domination over danger, when danger must be fought. In the sub-system of police training (in Germany), the code of badassness possibly allows information to be processed based on its value for dominance. As a code, badass/not-badass allows us to assign a value—*badass*—as the preference value of acceptance and *not-badass* as the value of rejection. The code acts as a filter for relevance, allowing the system to reduce complexity in decision making (e.g., which information to accept, which information to reject). Simultaneously, it allows the system to control the increasing complexities. Decisions about personnel, training content, equipment, knowledge or told stories, and so on are a frequent feature of the sub-system of police training.

Observations within the German sub-system of police training indicate that organizational decisions can be attributed to this code. For example, we observed that police trainers are selected based on their fighting abilities (Körner et al., 2019) and that knowledge is more easily accepted among police trainers when it comes from Special Operations Units (Staller, Koerner, Abraham, et al., 2022). In turn knowledge is prevented from entering the system (especially the sub-systems of special forces), when it does not fit the logic of a dominance-oriented training paradigm (Koerner & Staller, 2021a; Körner & Staller, 2019; Staller & Koerner, 2021, 2021b).

Concerning the borders of the police training sub-system, the binary code badass/not-badass reduces the complexity of decisions related to the "fit" to the system. Being perceived as "badass" increases the probability of acceptance and, as such, successful communication. As a filter code, it reduces the possibility of other forms of violence control to evolve by ensuring that the danger and the fighting narrative are stabilized as the

reflexive control mechanism for the control of violence. In light of the danger and fighting narratives as reflexive control mechanisms by themselves, badassness may be the result of the reproduction of the narratives in their effort to control for potential threats: events that threaten the danger and the fighting narratives.

6 Concluding Alternative Observations

The analysis of the danger and the fighting narrative through the lens of social systems theory reveals that they serve a functional role: as mechanisms of reflection and reflexivity, they control the complexities of the system by determining its basic logic of controlling violence through reactive violence. The filter code of badassness supports the corresponding decision making. As such, the narratives as well as the filter codes can be observed to be functional solutions from within the system. However, from outside the system, these solutions may appear to be part of the problem, as they stabilize and reproduce semantics and structures that prevent the system from changing the form of its basic operations.

These oppositional observations allow for a third insight: By heightening the potential of observational reflexivity, it becomes clear that the police could be different, and that police conflict management could broaden its perspective on violence control. This would allow the police as a system to manage the danger and the fighting narratives by acknowledging their genesis and their function, and by maybe replacing them with narratives more coherent with different forms of violence control within society. Concerning the code of badassness, reframing and redefining what badassness looks like would allow for assigning different values to information gathered within the system: structures that are reflexive of their observations, officers that have a broad understanding and competence on managing violence and conflict, police trainers that transmit a prosocial worldview, and a police that is oriented towards the communities they serve: that's badass.

Key Takeaways

Understanding the genesis and the function of the danger and the fighting narratives, as well as understanding the code of badassness, allows for the management of these. At the heart of this management is the insightful conduct regarding narratives and filter codes within the system. In line with our key idea to heighten reflexivity within the system of police, we provide some options for reflection on the following populations, without pointing too much towards specific solutions.

Police Officers

- Police officers may reflect on the stories they tell and critically reflect on stories they listen to. It may be worth thinking about what aspects of police work should be granted a center stage within circulating narratives.
- Calling out danger and fighting narratives when confronted with them may heighten the awareness of the narratives as narratives within the police.
- Reflecting on which actions and behaviors are valued and framed as "badass" may valorize prosocial behavior, such as a broad understanding of and competence with managing violence and conflict with human subjects at its center.

Conflict Management Trainers

- A conflict management trainer may want to be critically reflective about anecdotes they provide for training purposes.
- Also, training content (e.g., the curriculum) may be reflected in the light of the described narratives. While there is no doubt that the police profession occasionally engages in physical violence, contextualizing these training settings as "rare, but needed" may help to immunize against the view of an inherently dangerous world. Constructing training settings that account for all problems of frontline officers, e.g., empathetic de-escalation in one case versus physical control in another case, may delimit the inherent danger and fighting narrative within traditional police use of force training.
- A critical reflection of badassness as it relates to the sub-system of conflict management training (e.g., police use of force, defensive tactics, firearms training) may provide the opportunity to valorize

aspects of policing that have not been valued by these sub-systems so far.

Police Decision-Makers

- Police decision-makers may critically reflect on arguments within decision-making processes that are built on the danger or fighting narrative. By acknowledging the drawbacks of giving in to these narratives, more insightful and more informed decisions can be made.
- Thinking about and circulating alternative narratives that transmit a prosocial worldview of policing, and that transmit a different logic to violence control, may be a first step in replacing a latent acting structure.

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