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The effectiveness of tactical immobilization techniques in low-risk scenarios

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Fernando Pereira Carvalho 1

Summary

The use of police force is one of the most sensitive issues in contemporary public security, especially in the context of democratic societies, where state action must reconcile operational efficiency, respect for human rights, and the preservation of life. In this scenario, tactical immobilization techniques emerge as relevant alternatives to the use of lethal or excessively violent force, particularly in low-risk situations. This article analyzes the historical evolution of the use of police force, the conceptual and technical foundations of immobilization techniques, and their comparison with traditional restraint methods. Based on a theoretical and normative review, it examines empirical results, requirements for continuous training, and...
The study highlights the importance of institutional standardization and the main challenges and limitations to its effective implementation. It demonstrates that the effectiveness of immobilization techniques depends on ongoing training, clear protocols, and institutional commitment; isolated or merely symbolic adoption is insufficient. It concludes that tactical immobilization, when correctly institutionalized, represents not only a technical advancement but also an ethical, legal, and political imperative, contributing to the strengthening of police legitimacy, the reduction of unnecessary violence, and the consolidation of policing models compatible with the rule of law.
Keywords: Use of police force; Tactical immobilization; Police and human rights; Proportionality; Democratic policing.

Abstract

The use of police force remains one of the most sensitive issues in contemporary public security, particularly in democratic societies where law enforcement must balance operational effectiveness, respect for human rights, and the preservation of life. In this context, tactical immobilization techniques have emerged as relevant alternatives to lethal or excessively aggressive force, especially in low-risk scenarios. This article examines the historical evolution of police use of force, the conceptual and technical foundations of tactical immobilization, and the comparison of tactical immobilization with traditional restraint methods. Through a normative and theoretical review, the study analyzes empirical observations, the role of continuous training and institutional standardization, and the main challenges and limitations to effective implementation. The findings indicate that immobilization techniques are effective only when supported by regular training, clear protocols, and sustained institutional commitment. The article concludes that tactical immobilization is not merely a technical innovation but an ethical, legal, and political necessity, contributing to reduced unnecessary violence, enhanced police legitimacy, and the consolidation of professional policing models aligned with democratic values and the rule of law.

Keywords: Police use of force; Tactical immobilization; Human rights policing; Proportionality; Democratic policing.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of police force constitutes one of the most sensitive dimensions of public security, as it involves not only the effectiveness of threat containment but also the preservation of life and respect is fundamental rights. The exercise of coercive power by the State has historically been associated with tensions between authority and liberty, making police action a permanent object of legal, political, and social scrutiny (BITTNER, 2014; REINER, 2010).

Security forces are continually required to balance protecting society with managing potentially dangerous situations, especially in routine encounters that do not inherently pose a high level of risk. In democratic societies, this balance is increasingly framed by standards that demand necessity, proportionality, and accountability in the use of force, reinforcing the idea that police legitimacy depends not only on effectiveness but also on restraint (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CHEVIGNY, 1995).

Within this context, tactical immobilization techniques emerge as a critical operational tool designed to reduce reliance on lethal or excessively violent force, particularly in low-risk scenarios. These techniques align with the concept of progressive use of force, which prioritizes the gradual escalation of police responses according to the level of resistance encountered, favoring less harmful interventions whenever feasible (AMARAL, 2018; BRASIL, 2017).

Over recent decades, the debate surrounding the proportional use of force has assumed a central role in public security policies across multiple jurisdictions. International organizations, human rights bodies, and civil society actors have increasingly demanded balanced and transparent responses from the State, pressuring police institutions to modernize their practices and align them with democracy values and human rights standards (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNITED NATIONS, 1990; CANO, 2010).

As a result, the development and institutionalization of immobilization techniques have become not merely operational choices, but also mechanisms of institutional legitimacy and community engagement. By reducing the likelihood of serious injury or death, these techniques contribute to mitigating public distrust in law enforcement and to addressing historical concerns regarding excessive police violence (CHEVIGNY, 1995; SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993).

This article proposes a historical and evolutionary analysis of tactical immobilization techniques, examining their conceptual foundations and practical application in contemporary policing. By comparing their outcomes with traditional containment methods, the study seeks to demonstrate how continuous training and standardized protocols enhance operational effectiveness while reinforcing legality and accountability. Ultimately, the analysis aims to establish tactical immobilization as an

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essential component of policing practices in democratic societies committed to preserving life and human dignity (REINER, 2010; AMARAL, 2018).

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF POLICE USE OF FORCE

The historical exercise of police force has always been closely linked to the social, political, and economic context of each period. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in Europe and North America, policing was predominantly oriented toward the repression of urban conflict, labor unrest, and social disorder associated with industrialization. During this period, intimidation and physical imposition were widely perceived as legitimate tools for asserting state authority and maintaining public order, often without meaningful legal or institutional constraints (REINER, 2010; (BITTNER, 2014).

In this early model of policing, the use of force was frequently discretionary and reactive, shaped more by immediate control imperatives than by standardized principles of proportionality or accountability. Physical coercion, including the use of lipsticks, mass arrests, and aggressive crowd control tactics, was normalized as an extension of police authority. Scholarly analyzes of this era emphasize that public order policing was largely insulated from external oversight, reinforcing patterns of abuse and social inequalities (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CHEVIGNY, 1995).

As the twentieth century advanced, public dissatisfaction with abusive police practices intensified, giving rise to waves of criticism, protest, and reform movements. The expansion of civil rights movements and the growing international recognition of human dignity exposed systemic excesses committed by law enforcement agencies, including in consolidated democracies. High-profile cases of police brutality highlighted the structural risks associated with unregulated use of force and challenges the legitimacy of policing institutions (CANO, 2010; CHEVIGNY, 1995).

The post-World War II period marked a decisive shift in the normative understanding of state violence. With the creation and consolidation of the United Nations system, the principle that forces must be limited by necessity, proportionality, and legality gained international prominence. In the field of law enforcement, this transformation led to the articulation of global standards to curb police violence and align policing practices with human rights obligations (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; OHCHR, n.d.).

A critical milestone in this process was the adoption of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, which explicitly established that police officers may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duties. The Code reinforced the duty of law enforcement officials to respect human dignity and protect fundamental rights, framing the use of

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force as an exception rather than a rule in policing operations (UNITED NATIONS, 1979).
Building upon this framework, subsequent international instruments further refined the limits of the use of force by police. The Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials introduced clear guidance on progressive use of force, emphasized de-escalation, restraint, and accountability. These principles explicitly encourage the development and use of non-lethal alternatives wherever possible, recognizing the risks inherent in excessive or poorly controlled police interventions (UNITED NATIONS, 1990; UNODC, sd).
This evolving international consensus created the conditions for the systematic exploration of less-lethal policing strategies. Rather than relying primarily on physical domination or lethal means, police institutions were encouraged to adopt techniques that balanced control effectiveness with protection of life. Tactical immobilization techniques emerged within this broader transformation, reflecting the shift from force-centered authority toward regulated, professional, and human-rights-oriented policing models (REINER, 2010; AMARAL, 2018).
Consequently, the historical trajectory of police use of force reveals a gradual but significant reorientation: from coercive dominance toward regulated intervention grounded in necessity, proportionality, and accountability. Tactical immobilization techniques must therefore be understood not as isolated innovations, but as products of a long normative and institutional evolution aimed at reconciling public security with democratic values and respect for human dignity (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; UNITED NATIONS, 1979).

3. CONCEPT AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATIONS

Tactical immobilization techniques are a set of procedures aimed at neutralizing, restraining, and controlling individuals through calibrated physical interventions that minimize the risk of serious or irreversible harm. Unlike traditional methods based on sheer physical dominance, these techniques are designed to operate within the logic of proportionality, ensuring that force is applied only to the extent necessary to achieve lawful control of a situation (AMARAL, 2018; BRASIL, 2017).
From a conceptual standpoint, immobilization techniques align with the doctrine of progressive use of force, which establishes a graduated spectrum of police responses based on the level of resistance found. Within this framework, physical techniques occupy an intermediate position between verbal control and the use of less-lethal or lethal weapons, functioning as a critical option in low-risk encounters where resistance exists but does not justify escalated violence (AMARAL, 2018; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

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Technically, these techniques rely on biomechanical principles that allow officers to maximize control while minimizing exertion and injury. The use of leverage, balance displacement, joint manipulation, and gravity enables officers to overcome resistance more efficiently than techniques dependent solely on muscular strength. This approach not only enhances operational effectiveness but also reduces the likelihood of excessive force, especially in encounters involving physical asymmetrical actors (BITTNER, 2014; SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993).

The roots of tactical immobilization can be traced to self-defense systems and martial disciplines such as judo and jiu-jitsu, which emphasize control over impact and prioritize submission through leverage rather than strikes. Over time, these principles were adapted to the policing context, incorporating legal and ethical constraints specific to law enforcement functions. This evolution reflects the shift from confrontation-centered policing toward techniques compatible with professional restraint and accountability (REINER, 2010; AMARAL, 2018).

Correct application of immobilization techniques presupposes detailed knowledge of human anatomy and physiological limits. Understanding joints, muscle groups, pain compliance mechanisms, and positional risks is essential to prevent unintended injuries, such as fractures, nerve damage, or positional asphyxia. Scholarly literature on police use of force emphasizes that technical precision is a decisive variable distinguishing legitimate control from abusive practice (BITTNER, 2014; SKOLNICK, FYFE, 1993).

From a scientific and interdisciplinary perspective, tactical immobilization techniques are supported by contributions from psychology, forensic medicine, and police tactics. Psychology informs the management of stress responses, resistance behavior, and decision-making under pressure, while forensic and medical knowledge guide safe restraint positions and post-intervention monitoring. These elements reinforce immobilization not merely as a physical tactic, but as an integrated operational approach grounded in rationality and risk management (CANO, 2010; BRASIL, 2017).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of immobilization techniques is inseparable from their compliance with international human rights standards. Instruments such as the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms emphasize that coercive measures must preserve human dignity and prioritize the protection of life. Tactical immobilization aligns with these standards by offering a means of neutralizing resistance without escalating to potentially lethal outcomes (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

In practical terms, the legitimacy of tactical immobilization lies in its capacity to achieve control while reducing negative consequences for both officers and subjects. By enabling containment without causing irreversible harm, these techniques help reduce complaint rates, legal exposure, and public distrust associated with excessive force. Therefore, tactical immobilization represents both

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a technical advancement and a normative response to long-standing criticisms of police violence (CHEVIGNY, 1995; CANO, 2010).

Thus, tactical immobilization techniques should be understood as a synthesis of biomechanical efficiency, legal proportionality, and ethical responsibility. Their conceptual and technical foundations reflect an evolving model of police professionalism in which control is achieved not through dominance, but through structured, trained, and accountable intervention compatible with democratic policing standards (REINER, 2010; AMARAL, 2018).

4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND SUCCESS CASES

Traditional methods of police restraint have historically been based on direct physical force and rapidity domination of the subject. Techniques such as punches, kicks, shoves, baton strikes, and aggressive takedowns were often considered efficient due to their immediacy. However, they inherently carry a high risk of serious injury or death. Empirical and theoretical studies on police violence demonstrate that such methods frequently result in fractures, cranial trauma, internal injuries, and long-term physical damage, particularly when applied indiscriminately or under stress (CHEVIGNY, 1995; SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993).

Beyond physical harm, traditional force-centric interventions tend to escalate confrontations rather than solve them. The reliance on pain and impact as primary control mechanisms often intensifies resistance, increases emotional arousal on both sides, and reduces the likelihood of controlled resolution. Sociological analyzes of policing emphasize that these dynamics contribute to cycles of escalation that heightens operational risk for officers and subjects alike (BITTNER, 2014; REINER, 2010).

The use of firearms in low-risk or ambiguous situations represents an extreme extension of traditional force paradigms. Studies on police use of lethal force indicate that deploying firearms when non-lethal alternatives are available not only produces irreversible consequences but also generates profound legal, ethical, and institutional repercussions. Such incidents frequently undermine public trust, provoke legal proceedings, and reinforce perceptions of police illegitimacy, particularly in marginalized communities (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CANO, 2010).

In contrast, tactical immobilization techniques offer a fundamentally different logic of intervention. Rather than seeking immediate submission through impact or intimidation, these techniques aim to control the subject's mobility and resistance by leveraging biomechanical principles, controlling joints, and disrupting balance. This approach allows officers to neutralize resistance while maintaining greater control over the intensity and duration of the force applied (AMARAL, 2018;

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(BRAZIL, 2017).

From an operational standpoint, tactical immobilizations reduce the probability of severe injuries by avoiding strikes to vulnerable body areas and minimizing reliance on pain compliance alone. The controlled nature of these techniques supports safer restraint, particularly in low-risk scenarios where the objective is containment rather than neutralization of a lethal threat. This characteristic aligns immobilization strategies with international standards that emphasize necessity and proportionality in the use of force (UNITED NATIONS, 1990; UNITED NATIONS, 1979).

Another distinguishing factor lies in predictability and standardization. Traditional force methods often depends heavily on individual discretion and physical capability, leading to inconsistent application and variable outcomes. Tactical immobilization techniques, when supported by standardized training and protocols, promote consistency in police responses, reducing decision-making errors and enhancing institutional accountability (AMARAL, 2018; BRASIL, 2017).

From a legitimacy perspective, the comparative advantages of immobilization techniques are particularly significant. Research on police-community relations consistently shows that perceptions of excessive force erodes public cooperation and confidence. By contrast, police actions perceived as measured, professional, and life-preserving are more likely to be viewed as legitimate and lawful. Tactical immobilization contributes to this perception by visibly prioritizing control without unnecessary violence (CHEVIGNY, 1995; REINER, 2010).

Furthermore, the legal implications of immobilization techniques differ substantially from those associated with traditional force. Excessive force cases commonly arise from interventions involving strikes or lethal weapons. In contrast, properly applied immobilization techniques tend to reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse when accompanied by clear protocols and documentation. This legal dimension reinforces the use of immobilization as a risk management tool for modern police institutions (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CANO, 2010).

In comparative terms, therefore, tactical immobilization techniques represent not merely an alternative operational option, but a paradigmatic shift in the philosophy of police intervention. They replace force-dominant practices with control-oriented strategies that balance efficiency, legality, and ethical responsibility. This shift reflects broader transformations in democratic policing, where effectiveness is increasingly measured not by coercive capacity alone, but by the ability to resolve conflicts while preserving life and public trust (REINER, 2010; AMARAL, 2018).

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5. CONTINUOUS TRAINING AND STANDARDIZATION

Empirical observations from different policing models suggest that the professional adoption of tactical immobilization techniques are associated with safer outcomes in low-risk encounters. Comparative analyzes in policing studies indicate that agencies increasing progressive use of force and restraint-based tactics tend to experience fewer severe injuries during routine interventions, particularly when such techniques are embedded in structured training programs and institutional policies (REINER, 2010; SKOLNICK, FYFE, 1993).

Countries whose policing doctrines prioritize de-escalation and proportional responses have frequently been cited in the academic literature as reference points for restraint-oriented practices. In jurisdictions where police training emphasizes control techniques rather than impact-based force, immobilization is treated as a standard response to resistance that does not pose an imminent lethality threat. This orientation reflects a broader institutional commitment to minimizing harm while maintaining operational effectiveness (AMARAL, 2018; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

From a normative perspective, these experiences align with international human rights frameworks that encourage the development of less-lethal alternatives. The Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials explicitly recommend that law enforcement agencies equip officers with methods capable of controlling suspects without escalating to lethal force whenever possible. Tactical immobilization techniques operationalize this recommendation by offering a concrete mechanism for reducing reliance on firearms and high-impact physical force (UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

In the Latin American context, particularly in societies marked by historically high levels of police violence, the gradual incorporation of immobilization techniques has been identified as a meaningful step toward reducing unnecessary lethal outcomes. Studies on police lethality in Brazil emphasize that institutional change tends to be incremental and dependent on training, supervision, and internal culture. Where technical restraint methods are introduced alongside use-of-force guidelines, there is greater alignment with legal standards and a reduction in discretionary escalation (CANO, 2010; (BRAZIL, 2017).

Although national experiences remain heterogeneous due to uneven training standards and organizational disparities, available analyzes indicate that even partial adoption of immobilization techniques contributes to safer operational profiles. The literature highlights that the professionalization of police tactics—rather than solely an increase in coercive capacity—is a decisive factor in mitigating excessive use of force, particularly in routine encounters that do not involves high-risk threats (BITTNER, 2014; REINER, 2010).

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A frequently cited qualitative example in comparative policing studies is the Japanese model of community-oriented policing, which incorporates adapted grappling and control techniques derived from martial disciplines. In this model, the priority is the preservation of public order through minimal harm and rapid containment, reinforcing public trust and institutional legitimacy. Academic discussions portray this approach as consistent with international principles of proportionality and restraint in law enforcement (REINER, 2010; UNITED NATIONS, 1979).

Importantly, the effectiveness of tactical immobilization is not limited to a specific cultural or legal context. Rather, empirical insights suggest that outcomes depend less on geographic location and more on the institutional environment in which these techniques are applied. Agencies that integrate immobilization into coherent use-of-force frameworks, emphasize continuous training, and enforce accountability mechanisms tend to report more consistent and predictable operational behavior (AMARAL, 2018; BRAZIL, 2017).

From an evidentiary point of view, success cases underscore that tactical immobilization techniques are most effective when part of a systemic approach to policing reform. Isolated or informal adoption without doctrinal support risks producing inconsistent results and may even increase liability if techniques are poorly executed. By contrast, when immobilization is supported by standardized protocols and embedded within broader strategies of professional policing, it enhances both safety and legitimacy (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CANO, 2010).

Therefore, empirical observations across multiple contexts reinforce the argument that tactical immobilization techniques constitute a viable and effective alternative to traditional force-centric practices in low-risk scenarios. Their success is best understood not through isolated metrics, but through their contribution to a policing model that prioritizes control, legality, and the preservation of human life (REINER, 2010; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

6. Challenges and Limitations

The effectiveness of tactical immobilization techniques is directly dependent on continuous and systematic training. Unlike purely theoretical norms, physical restraint techniques require repeated practical application to ensure that officers can perform them correctly under stress. Studies on police use of force consistently emphasizes that decision-making and motor responses during critical incidents are heavily influenced by training frequency and realism, making regular practice essential for safe and lawful interventions (BITTNER, 2014; SKOLNICK, FYFE, 1993).

From a physiological and operational perspective, repeated training enables the development of muscle memory and automated responses, which are crucial in high-pressure situations where

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cognitive processing is limited. Without sufficient repetition, even well-designed techniques may be improperly executed, increasing the risk of injury to both officers and restrained individuals. This connection between training intensity and operational safety is widely recognized in policing literature and international training guidelines (AMARAL, 2018; BRASIL, 2017).

Beyond physical conditioning, effective training programs must be comprehensive and multidimensional. Contemporary models of police training emphasize integrating legal instruction, ethical reasoning, and psychological preparedness with technical skills. Understanding not only how to apply immobilization techniques but also when and why to use them reinforces proportionality and prevents unnecessary escalation, aligning police practices with human rights standards (UNITED NATIONS, 1990; OHCHR, n.d.).

Simulation-based training plays a particularly important role in consolidating immobilization techniques. Realistic scenario simulations expose officers to context-specific challenges such as confined spaces, crowd presence, emotional volatility, and resistance dynamics. Research indicates that scenario-based exercises improve judgment, adaptability, and compliance with use-of-force policies, reducing reliance on instinctive or excessive responses (REINER, 2010; AMARAL, 2018).

Institutional standardization constitutes the second fundamental pillar supporting effective immobilization practices. For restraint techniques to serve as protective tools rather than sources of liability, agencies must establish clear, detailed protocols governing their use. These protocols should defines permissible techniques, intensity thresholds, positional considerations, and mandatory post-intervention procedures, including medical assessment of restrained individuals (BRAZIL, 2017; UNITED NATIONS, 1979).

International guidance underscores that standardized procedures are essential for accountability and legal protection. The Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and subsequent United Nations instruments stress that clarity in rules and consistent training reduce ambiguity in the exercise of operational discretion, thereby limiting arbitrary or abusive uses of force. Standardization fosters predictability, both internally—by guiding officer behavior—and externally—by enabling more effective oversight and review (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNODC, sd). [unodc.org]

Furthermore, standardized training frameworks facilitate institutional learning and evaluation. When techniques and procedures are uniform, agencies can more accurately assess performance, identify deficiencies, and implement corrective measures. This structure is critical for sustaining long-term improvements in use-of-force practices and for aligning operational conduct with evolving legal and social expectations (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CANO, 2010).

The absence of continuous training and standardization significantly undermines the benefits of tactical immobilization techniques. Inconsistent instruction, outdated practices, or reliance on

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informal knowledge can produce uneven application and increase the risk of misuse. Empirical studies on police reform highlight that fragmented training regimes often correlate with higher rates of complaints, injuries, and legal challenges (CHEVIGNY, 1995; REINER, 2010).

Therefore, continuous training and institutional standardization are not auxiliary components but structural prerequisites for the effective use of tactical immobilization techniques. Together, they transform immobilization from a mere tactical option into a reliable, lawful, and ethically grounded instrument of modern policing. In democratic societies, this integration is essential to ensure that restraint techniques fulfill their intended role of protecting life while maintaining public security and institutional legitimacy (UNITED NATIONS, 1990; AMARAL, 2018).

7. Challenges and Limitations

Despite normative advances and growing empirical support, the effective implementation of tactics immobilization techniques faces substantial challenges within police institutions. One of the most significant obstacles is cultural resistance. In many law enforcement organizations, especially those shaped by militarized or authoritarian traditions, physical force remains symbolically associated with authority, control, and professional identity. This cultural legacy often hinders acceptance of technically refined, less violent methods, even when they prove operationally effective (BITTNER, 2014; REINER, 2010).

Sociological studies of policing indicate that organizational culture plays a decisive role in shaping day-to-day use-of-force decisions. Officers socialized in environments that prioritize toughness and rapid domination may perceive restraint-based techniques as signs of weakness or operational risk. This perception contributes to resistance against training reforms and delays the institutionalization of immobilization as a legitimate and preferred response in low-risk scenarios (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CHEVIGNY, 1995).

Another critical limitation relates to structural and logistical constraints. In many jurisdictions, chronic understaffing, operational overload, and limited financial resources reduce the feasibility of maintaining continuous, high-quality training programs. When officers are unable to train regularly, the technical advantages of tactical immobilization are substantially diminished, increasing the risk of inappropriate application under real-world conditions (AMARAL, 2018; BRASIL, 2017).

Infrastructure deficiencies further compound these challenges. The absence of adequate training facilities, specialized instructors, and standardized curriculum compromises the consistency and quality of instruction. Empirical analyzes on police reform emphasize that fragmented or sporadic training initiatives rarely produce sustainable behavioral change, especially in high-stress operational

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environments (CANO, 2010; REINER, 2010).

Legal and accountability concerns also represent an important limitation. While immobilization techniques are designed to reduce harm, their improper execution can result in serious or even fatal injuries. Injuries caused by unsafe restraint positions, excessive pressure, or prolonged immobilization exposes officers and institutions to legal liability and public scrutiny. The literature on police accountability highlights that failures in training or supervision are frequently central factors in excessive-force litigation (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CHEVIGNY, 1995).

From a human rights perspective, these risks underscore the importance of strict adherence to international standards governing the use of force. The Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms stress that respect for human dignity and protection of life are non-derogable obligations. Tactical immobilization, when poorly regulated or inconsistently applied, may undermine rather than advance these principles (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

Another concerns uneven implementation across agencies and limitation regions. Even within the same country, the adoption of immobilization techniques may vary due to differences in leadership priorities, training philosophies, and institutional capacity. This lack of uniformity leads to disparities in police conduct and undermines the broader objective of standardizing proportional responses to resistance (BRAZIL, 2017; CANO, 2010).

Furthermore, tactical immobilization techniques are not universally applicable to all operational scenarios. High-risk encounters involving firearms, multiple aggressors, or extreme violence may exceed the practical limits of physical restraint. Recognizing these boundaries is essential to avoid unrealistic expectations and to prevent situations in which restraint-based methods are applied inappropriately, endangering officers and civilians alike (AMARAL, 2018; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

Finally, the effectiveness of immobilization techniques depends on continuous institutional commitment. Without sustained investment in training, supervision, evaluation, and cultural change, these techniques risk becoming symbolic reforms rather than operational realities. Studies on police modernization consistently demonstrates that isolated technical innovations, when not supported by structural transformation, fail to produce long-term reductions in excessive use of force (REINER, 2010; SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993).

Thus, while tactical immobilization techniques represent a significant advancement in democracy policing, their limitations must be acknowledged. Addressing cultural resistance, logistics constraints, legal risks, and implementation disparities are essential to ensuring that immobilization fulfills its promise as a life-preserving and legitimacy-enhancing alternative within modern law

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enforcement practices (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; CANO, 2010).

8. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The future trajectory of tactical immobilization techniques is closely linked to the broader transformation of policing toward models that prioritize professionalism, technological integration, and respect for human rights. Contemporary debates on public security emphasize that effective law enforcement increasingly depends on the capacity to prevent harm, manage conflict, and preserve life rather than merely react through coercion. In this context, immobilization techniques are designed to play a central role in redefining the operational identity of modern police forces (REINER, 2010; SKOLNICK, FYFE, 1993).

One of the most significant future developments involves the integration of technology into the use-of-force monitoring and training. The adoption of body-worn cameras, biometric sensors, and digital reporting systems create new possibilities for real-time oversight and post-incident analysis. Research and policy discussions highlight that these tools enhance transparency, facilitate accountability, and support evidence-based evaluations of police conduct, particularly in cases involving physical restraint (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; CANO, 2010).

In parallel, technological innovation is expected to influence training methodologies. The use of virtual reality and augmented reality environments allow officers to engage in immersive, high-fidelity simulations of complex encounters without exposing themselves or others to physical risk. Studies on police training reform suggest that such technologies improve decision-making under pressure and strengthen adherence to use-of-force principles, thereby reinforcing the correct application of tactical immobilization techniques in dynamic scenarios (AMARAL, 2018; BRASIL, 2017).

Another emerging area is the application of data analytics and artificial intelligence to policing strategies. While still in their early stages, these tools are increasingly discussed as mechanisms for identifying behavioral patterns, operational risks, and situational variables associated with escalation. When aligned with ethical and legal safeguards, data-driven approaches can assist officers in selecting proportionate responses and reinforcing restraint-based practices in low-risk encounters (REINER, 2010; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

From an institutional perspective, future policing reforms are expected to consolidate further the normative emphasis on the preservation of life and human dignity. international human rights frameworks continue to underscore that police legitimacy is inseparable from compliance with the principles of necessity, proportionality, and accountability in the use of force. Tactical immobilization

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techniques are likely to become increasingly embedded in official doctrine as a tangible expression of these principles, rather than as discretionary or auxiliary options (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

Future trends also point toward greater harmonization of training standards across agencies and jurisdictions. Comparative literature on policing reform indicates that shared protocols and transnational exchanges of best practices contribute to more consistent operational behavior and reduce disparities in use-of-force outcomes. In this sense, immobilization techniques may serve as a focal point for international cooperation and professional benchmarking in law enforcement (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; CANO, 2010).

However, these advances will depend on sustained political and institutional commitment. Technological tools and innovative training methods cannot substitute for foundational investments in education, supervision, and organizational culture. Scholars of police reform consistently caution that modernization efforts must be anchored in ethical governance and continuous evaluation to avoid superficial or symbolic change (CHEVIGNY, 1995; REINER, 2010).

In this evolving landscape, tactical immobilization techniques are poised to transcend their role as mere operational tactics and become symbols of a reoriented philosophy of policing. They reflect the shift law toward enforcement models that value control without domination, authority without arbitrariness, and effectiveness without unnecessary violence. As democratic societies continue to demand accountable and humane policing, immobilization techniques are likely to remain a cornerstone of future public security strategies grounded in legality, professionalism, and respect for human rights (AMARAL, 2018; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

CONCLUSION

Tactical immobilization techniques in low-risk scenarios represent a significant milestone in the evolution of contemporary policing practices. As demonstrated throughout this article, these techniques emerge as a rational and safe alternative to force-centric and lethal responses, contributing to a model of law enforcement that prioritizes proportionality, control, and the preservation of life. Their development reflects a broader historical and normative shift in which police legitimacy is increasingly grounded in restraint, professionalism, and respect for fundamental rights (REINER, 2010; SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993).

The historical analysis of police use of force reveals that coercive dominance, once perceived as an inherent attribute of authority, has progressively been challenged by legal, social, and ethical constraints. International human rights instruments, particularly those drawn up under the United

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Nations framework, have consolidated the principles of necessity, proportionality, and accountability as central limits on the use of force by the police. Tactical immobilization techniques materialize these principles by offering concrete operational means to control resistance without resorting to excessive or irreversible harm (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

From a technical standpoint, tactical immobilization is grounded in biomechanical efficiency, anatomical knowledge, and risk management rather than brute force. This foundation distinguishes immobilization from traditional restraint tactics and aligns it with professional policing standards that seek to minimize injuries, reduce escalation, and ensure officer and civilian safety. When properly applied, these techniques respond directly to long-standing concerns highlighted in the literature regarding the physical, legal, and social consequences of impact-based policing (BITTNER, 2014; AMARAL, 2018).

The comparative discussion between traditional techniques and tactical immobilizations further demonstrates that restraint-oriented approaches offer advantages not only in terms of safety but also in institutional legitimacy. Excessive force incidents consistently undermine public trust, expose agencies to legal liability, and deepen social tensions. In contrast, tactics perceived as controlled, predictable, and life-preserving are more likely to reinforce public confidence and voluntary compliance with the law, which are essential components of effective democratic policing (CHEVIGNY, 1995; CANO, 2010).

Empirical observations and success cases discussed in this study support the conclusion that tactic immobilization techniques are most effective when integrated into coherent use-of-force doctrines and supported by institutional commitment. Isolated adoption without standardized training or supervision rarely produces sustainable results. Instead, professionalization, continuous instruction, and adherence to clear protocols are decisive factors in ensuring that immobilization fulfills its preventive and protective function (SKOLNICK; FYFE, 1993; BRASIL, 2017).

However, the analysis also identified important challenges and limitations. Cultural resistance within police organizations, logistical constraints, uneven implementation, and the risks of improper application remain significant obstacles. These limitations confirm that tactical immobilization is not a panacea but rather a tool whose effectiveness depends on broader organizational, legal, and cultural conditions. Without sustained investment and governance, immobilization techniques risk becoming symbolic reforms devoted to practical impact (REINER, 2010; CANO, 2010).

Future perspectives reinforce the centrality of tactical immobilization in ongoing police modernization efforts. Technological innovations, such as body-worn cameras, simulation-based training, and data-driven evaluation, are expected to enhance accountability and support the correct application of restraint techniques. At the same time, international convergence around human

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rights-based policing suggests that immobilization will increasingly be incorporated into official doctrine as an expression of lawful and ethical use of force, rather than as an optional alternative (UNITED NATIONS, 1979; UNITED NATIONS, 1990).

Ultimately, investing in tactical immobilization techniques transcends technical or operational considerations. It constitutes an ethical, legal, and political commitment to policing models that reconcile public security with human dignity. In democratic societies, the measure of police effectiveness cannot rest solely on coercive capacity, but on the ability to manage conflict, enforce the law, and protect life with restraint and accountability. Tactical immobilization techniques, when properly institutionalized, represents a concrete path toward this model of legitimate and professional law enforcement (AMARAL, 2018; REINER, 2010).

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