Title registration for a review proposal:

Training programs to improve attitudes, behaviours and skills of police officers regarding democratic values, civil rights, and human rights and to reduce unlawful use of force by police officers

Submitted to the Coordinating Group of:

√ Crime and Justice
__ Education
__ Social Welfare
__ Other

Plans to co-register:

√ No
__ Yes __ Cochrane __ Other
__ Maybe

TITLE OF THE REVIEW

Training programs to improve attitudes, skills and behaviours of police officers regarding democratic norms

BACKGROUND

Police training programs are a basic feature of all police forces’ organizational approach, with training used not only to socialise new officers into the profession, but as a strategy of reform in cases when a force is not up to the expected standard of professionalism (Mastrofski & Ritti, 1996). The pressing need to understand the impact of training on police behaviour was underscored in the National Research Council’s report on Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing (Skogan & Frydl, 2004). This literature review was not able to find conclusive evidence on training effectiveness regarding content, methods, delivery, timing or dosage, as well as moderating organisational effects.

The proposed Systematic Review will focus on training interventions that target attitudes, behaviour and skills related to democratic policing. The role of police as a supporting institution of a democratic state has received academic attention in the last four decades (Manning, 2010). In democratic policing strategies "competing demands for order made in contemporary multi-cultural societies are responded to in ways that sustain, rather than undermine, considerations for equity and democracy" (Loader, 2006, pg 203). Thus, crime-reducing and order-keeping duties must be performed in a way that recognizes the legitimacy of individuals and group, and enforces their feeling of belonging to a democratic community. This is especially
relevant to the policing of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups.

Bayley (& U.S., 2001) identifies four key norms of democratic policing, regarding which there is wide consensus: serving individual citizens and groups; accountability to the law; transparency in activities; and protection of human rights, especially those relevant to policing such as freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention and impartiality in the administration of the law. This review will focus specifically on training interventions which address these human rights norms either explicitly or by focusing on an activity inherently related to one of them, for example policing of demonstrations as related to freedom of speech and stop & search procedures as related to freedom from arbitrary detention (a full list of activities will be compiled).

The value of behaviour change interventions which target these norms lies in two lines of arguments. The first relates to the potential of police to strengthen the democratic society: The interaction between police and society could contribute to whole groups giving up their commitment to the democratic society, or alternatively to positive construction of that commitment (Loader 2006). The second is that lawful policing may be conducive to social order: Lawful police behaviour is an aspect of procedural fairness, part of the construct of legitimacy in policing, which may play a significant role in the effectiveness of order keeping (Tyler, 2004). A Systematic Review of the effectiveness of police legitimacy interventions is currently underway (Mazerolle, Bennett, M. Manning, Ferguson, & Sargeant, 2010).

Democratic norms and behaviours consistent with Democratic Policing are usually part of the mission statements of police departments in Democratic countries. For example, in the UK the Human Rights Act of 1998 “requires all public authorities – including the police - to act in a way which is compatible with the individual rights and freedoms contained in the European convention on Human Rights” (Northern Ireland Policing Board, 2006). This of course does not guarantee that institutions take the appropriate measures to ensure the realisation of these rights. Within the police, a double-edged message trend has been described; high rank officers set protocols and vision statements which are substantially different from those disseminated by the middle ranks (Herzog, 2002). Thus new strategies of policing, like 'community policing', may stay at the level of declarations (Weisburd, Shalev, & Menachem, 2002).

Training, both initial and as part of continuing education, is seen as a necessary aspect of adequate professional socialisation in several occupations, for example in the medicine (see David A. Davis, Thomson, Oxman, & Haynes (1995); Légaré et al. (2010); Tu & Davis (2002). Notably in medical training, there have been attempts to establish evidence-based training curriculums for physicians, with demonstrated abilities to facilitate different skills or behaviours (Green & Ellis, 1997). As police forces put more emphasis on the professionalization of their personnel, similar efforts to understand professional socialization should be made.

Understanding if training is indeed an effective measure to support behaviour change, or is more of a means for achieving institutional legitimacy by displaying commitment to a goal (Mastrofski & Ritti, 1996) is at the heart of this study. Behaviour change may reflect either a specific skill, like use of non-lethal tactics in riot control, or unlawful behaviour in general. Unlawful-use-of-force and police violence are at the extreme end of a use-of-force continuum (Skogan & Frydl, 2004).
It is important to understand if training can diminish the deterioration of police use of force to an unlawful level. Theorists of democratic policing recognise the fundamental paradox of policing: that as the sole proprietor of coercive power the police is simultaneously the guarantor and the threat to citizen security (Loader, 2006). While rigorous work is being done in developing an evidence base for policing interventions that reduces crime and violence (exemplified in the evidence-based policing matrix (Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2010), there is a gap in research on training interventions to reduce unlawful use of force by police. A literature review carried out by the National Research Council highlighted that while there were recommendations regarding training to reduce police unlawful use of force, they were not based on empirical evidence (Skogan & Frydl, 2004).

Police behaviour, and more specifically police misconduct, is explained by three types of theories: sociological, psychological and organizational (Sklansky, 2008). Empirical evidence is pointing to the organizational framework as more relevant to explaining behaviour, as opposed to personality-oriented explanations (Skolnic & Fyfe, 2005). For example, Herzog (2002) demonstrates that the deviant personality perspective is inappropriate when examining Israeli police violence, and that the phenomenon is best understood as group behaviour. Following this argument, Herzog suggests that the way to deal with these behaviours is through the development of preventive educational training programs for all police officers. This approach sees training as a possible site for organizational socialization towards democratic policing.

Training often aims to affect attitudes as a way of affecting skills & behaviour. There is an assumption of a casual pathway, in which changing knowledge and attitudes is a step towards behaviour change (for example in policing (Mastrofski, Worden, & Snipes, 1995) or more generally in professionals’ behaviour change (Cabana et al., 1999). This assumption is often reflected in evaluation models which focus on the first link in the chain, (i.e. the Kirkpatrick model, see for example Bates (2004). Lesson from Social psychology and public health behaviour change studies point to the limitations of this approach (see for example discussion in (Underhill, Operario, & Montgomery, 2007), but it is still valuable to know if attitudes and knowledge are affected as they may serve as an intervening variable.

A critical systematic review of the evidence would be important step forward in promoting effective training for democratic norms. There is a need to systematically search for and synthesise new research, particularly studies that were not included in the National Research Council’s literature review, or have been published since. Good quality experimental studies may be available in the form of ‘grey literature’, and it will be necessary to contact researchers and police departments to access them.

References:


**The population**

The population included will be all members and units of public police in democratic countries (as identified in the Democracy Index, EIU 2010\(^1\)), not limited to any geographical location. This includes all different ranks of police, in all specializations.

**The intervention**

The review will focus on educational training interventions for police, as part of their initial training or continuing professional development training, which support democratic policing. It will focus only the Human Rights aspect of democratic policing, centring on Human Rights especially relevant to policing: freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention & exile and impartiality in the administration of the law (Bayley 2001). The full protocol will include a list of police procedures and skills which are relevant to these articles, for example (as explained in the background) Stop & Search procedures as related to freedom from arbitrary detention.

Educational interventions may be defined as any attempts to modify attitudes or behaviour of police by communicating topic-relevant knowledge (Davis et al., 1995\(^2\)). Techniques may include use of written, visual or audio-visual materials, modelling, role-play, dilemma spotlighting, facilitated discussion and others. These may be delivered in the context of conferences, seminars or small-group session.

Delivery of interventions: The review will include both short-term (one-off sessions and short training courses) or long-term interventions. Interventions may be delivered either by trained police personnel or by external experts (in topic or skills) commissioned for this purpose. This wide inclusion criterion recognises different police cultures between counties and even in relation to different ranks.

**Comparisons**: These interventions may be compared either to ‘no treatment’ or to an alternative intervention, for example the dissemination of official policy documents.

**Outcomes: What are the intended effects of the intervention?**

**Primary outcome:**
1. Police Behaviour Change as measured by:
   a. Change in deployment of skills
   b. Use of unlawful force by Police, measured by
      - Number of incidents and level of violence as reported by police regulatory bodies and external complaints commissions
      - Specific incidents related to minority groups

**Secondary outcomes:**
2. Measures of Police attitudes to democratic values, civil rights, human rights
3. Public perceptions: Satisfaction with procedural fairness - treatment of people with dignity and respect (part of legitimacy measures described by

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\(^1\) Economist Intelligence Unit. 2010. *Democracy Index*

4. Police feedback, which may include reports of distress or other adverse outcomes to participants.

Duration of follow up - It may be valuable to group studies for analysis according to length of follow up: post intervention (up to 30 days), short term (between 1 month to 1 year) and long term (over 1 year).

OBJECTIVES

This review aims to examine the current state of the evidence regarding the efficacy of police training interventions to increase democratic policing. It will examine the available evidence from published and unpublished empirical studies on the effect of these interventions to effect participants’ behaviour and attitudes. It also seeks to create an inventory of these interventions for future research.

There may be some overlap with the Systematic Review on police legitimacy (Mazerolle et al., 2010). However, our review is concerned with police training interventions only. As some of the concepts are the same (especially the outcomes measures of interest), it may be that some studies I include will also be included in the review on police legitimacy, but as we are interested only in all studies evaluating police training, which focus on human rights, there will be studies we would include that would not included in the legitimacy review.

METHODOLOGY

What types of studies designs are to be included and excluded?

Designs: The review will include both randomised and quasi-experimental designs (as long the design includes a control group).

Inclusion criteria:

All studies evaluating training interventions for police that target democratic norms will be included, as outlined above in the section ‘the intervention’.

Exclusion criteria:

Studies will be excluded if:

- the population is a private police-force
- the population is a military unit, unless it is of a hybrid nature in terms of social order role
- the context is of a non-democratic country
- If the intervention described is not of an educational nature, but is rather of psychologically-oriented one-on-one sessions.
- If no training manual or general plan is available to allow clarity regarding the content of the intervention (upon request from authors and not necessarily within published study).

3 We would appreciate advice regarding the necessity of this criteria
Method of synthesis:
A meta-analysis will be carried out if quantitative synthesis is possible. If two or more studies are included that measure similar outcomes, and contain sufficient information to calculate effect sizes, meta-analysis will be used to quantitatively synthesise these data. Effect sizes for each outcome measure in the studies will be encoded according to the procedures outlined by Lipsey and Wilson (2001). Experimental and quasi-experimental study results will be treated separately in the analyses, because of the greater risk of bias present in non-randomized studies. If possible, meta-analysis will also be used to investigate moderator effects. In line with recommendations by the National Research Council (Skogan & Frydl, 2004), we are interested in the potential impact of training approach, organizational factors and officer characteristics on the variation in effect sizes across studies.

Comprehensive Meta Analysis software Version 2 (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2005) will be used to perform computations of effect sizes and related statistics. RevMan5 software (Higgins & Green, 2009) will be used to construct forest plots for graphical representation of results.

References


SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Internal funding:
Systematic review is carried out as part of Yael Litmanovitz’s DPhil research project. 

External funding:
none

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None known

REQUEST SUPPORT

We would appreciate support in statistics and field expertise.

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- Content: Yael Litmanovitz
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PRELIMINARY TIMEFRAME

Approximate date for submission of Draft Protocol:

March 2011