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The death of an elephant

Matt Torigian*

On December 13, 1929, in the small town of Grantham, Ontario, Canada, a young boy named Haratoun Artinian was born. Haratoun was the proud son of Armenian immigrants, Dickran and Gulvart Artinian. When their son joined the local police department, the irony was not lost on Dickran and Gulvart, who had fled war and persecution at the hands of the deadly authorities during the first genocide of the 19th century. If the sight of their first-born son wearing a uniform triggered images of violence, abuse, murder, and death, they didn't let it deter his noble pursuit. They beamed with pride when their young boy, known to his friends as Harry, standing tall and proud, walked into their home wearing his uniform for the first time. They avoided looking at his gun, and the ominous wooden club dangling loosely from his thick black duty belt, and instead trained their eyes on his cherub grin, which revealed his innocence and genuine belief that he could someday make a difference. A short time into his career, young Harry would become a household name. The pride and joy of the local Armenian community would soon begin a journey that would resonate for decades, and generations to come.

Harry found pride and purpose as a police officer with what later became the Niagara Regional Police Service. Known fondly to everyone as Sergeant Harry, his voice and message was heard almost every morning on the local radio station, 610 CKTB. He engaged with almost every child and attended almost every school throughout the Niagara area. Every year, without fail or fatigue. His mustachioed smile, hearty laugh, and bright round brown eyes lent to his approachable and trusting demeanour. As did his sincere dedication to positively influencing the lives of children, sharing life's lessons while serving as a role model to those who needed one. An endearing quality of Harry's was that he knew that the position and presence he so enjoyed couldn't have been accomplished by him alone. Harry had a partner, his trusted sidekick, the grey, fuzzy, and affable Elmer the Safety Elephant. They were indiscernible, and inseparable.

Throughout the school year, they appeared together on early morning radio shows, followed almost every day by a visit from school to school, throughout the community. Together they shared safety tips with young children, whose wide-eyed, open and accepting embrace helped create a sense of comfort and support, as they gained knowledge and wisdom that many would carry with them through their teenage and adult years. Working together, this first-generation Canadian and this personified gentle giant reflected the nobility of countless women and men who enjoyed the unquestioned trust of their communities.

Elmer, however, was not the brainchild of Sergeant Harry, nor was Elmer local only to the Niagara community. In 1946, then Toronto mayor Robert Hood Saunders visited Detroit, Michigan, where he was introduced to a novel approach to teaching safety tips to children in elementary schools. The city of Detroit used a school safety patrol student as its messenger. Upon the mayor's return to Toronto, he envisaged a similar safety program for his city and sought the assistance of a local newspaper editor as well as the Toronto Police Department.

Undeterred from any erroneous perception hinting at the *politicization of policing*, Toronto Police Inspector Vernon Page, and Toronto Telegram Editor Bas Mason both embraced the mayor's school safety program initiative. They chose to adopt a cartoon elephant as their mascot, noting an elephant's remarkable memory (Canada Safety Council).

Capitalizing on community and police partnerships, whilst involving private industry, the iterations of Elmer the Safety Elephant multiplied, as did the program of relentless engagement. As communities across Ontario asked to join the program, the copyrights were generously handed over by the Toronto Telegram, first to the Ontario Safety League, and then broadly throughout Canada. A moment of community mobilization took root. Those old enough to remember Elmer's visit to their own school will recall that his messages went well beyond crossing only on a green light. They extended to include concepts of community, kindness, and pro-social responsibility.

Sergeant Harry Artinian, school resource officer extraordinaire. Elmer the Safety Elephant, avant-garde community partner. Mayor Robert Saunders, contemporary politician.

As the *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being* closes out an incredibly successful, watermark year, it is remarkably profound that 2023 included editorials and papers focusing on youth. Michael DeValve reminded us of the lessons from Jonathan Livingston Seagull (DeValve, 2023). Contributing Editor Vivien Lee shed light on how our rapidly changing world affects today's youth (Lee, 2023). Fittingly, Robert Chrismas reinforced our purpose and optimism as police strive to inspire a new and diverse generation of young people (Chrismas, 2023). Editor-in-Chief Norm Taylor once again directed the 15th cohort of the 20-year Executive Global Studies Program, where, this year, Canadian police executives

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explored "the intricate dynamics between youth and policing, with a particular focus on [...] trust building in the Canadian context" (CACP, 2023).

At a time when School Resource Officers are being championed, maligned, and debated throughout North America, when police response is being discussed and designed with a view to involving non-police partners, when local politics is forcing a hand in the deployment models of various police activities, and when the radicalization and post-truth social media distractions of young people present real and dangerous threats to the safety of our communities, we take pause and reflect on what was, what we've lost, and how we can recapture our noble pursuits of authentically engaging with our youth for a healthier and safer future. As noted, such was the purpose of the aforementioned research on the 2023 Executive Global Studies Program, sponsored by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Similarly, it was recently discussed in detail at the 9-11 Voices Resilience Symposium in New York City. It is also why the journal's Mission Sponsor, Niche Technology, is indefatigable in their efforts to further research, evidence, and technology to better enable community safety and well-being solutions.

Have the police lost their compasses, or their own bearings, or have broader shortcomings in public policy forced all of us in CSWB off Sergeant Harry's pursuits? Although the answer may be as elusive as climbing atop Disraeli's pole, one thing remains certain: the community needs that inspired Harry and his colleagues some 75 years ago have never been more complex and urgent than they are now and will be in the coming years. Today's policymakers must raise their sights to regain the same kind of courage, innovation, and trust that brought young people into decades of community building.

In the meantime, many police services/departments/forces (words matter) across North America have lost a valuable partner. On September 9, 2023, at the young age of 93, Sergeant Harry Artinian passed away, predeceased by his parents, his brother Charlie, aunts, uncles, friends, and sadly, his trusted elephant.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Mindful police leadership: Opening essential new pathways to 21st-century police leadership and culture

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ABSTRACT

Canadian police managers are facing a series of daunting new challenges that will require significant personal resources to address. Growing research suggests mindfulness training, meditation, and other related contemplative practices appear to benefit leaders in other professions; however, little is known about how these practices may, or may not, be helpful for police leaders. This article contributes to this understanding by sharing results from an exploratory qualitative study that asked senior police leaders who self-identified as regular meditators to discuss how their practices might influence their leadership. Guided by a reflective thematic analysis approach and utilizing NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software, data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 11 Commissioned Officers from a large Canadian police service were analyzed for themes. Broadly organized by influence on job performance, relationships, and well-being, eight distinct themes were developed: enhanced calmness and self-control; better clarity and decision making; improved focus and efficiency; enhanced presence with others; improved conflict resolution practices; greater compassion and empathy; reduced harmful stress; and enhanced resilience and work/life integration. These results begin to extend the literature on mindful leadership from other workplace contexts into the realm of police leadership and suggest that meditation and mindfulness are beneficial practices that may open new and essential pathways towards 21st century police leadership and culture.

Key Words Canadian police leadership challenges; meditation and contemplative practice; mindful leadership; reflexive thematic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, Canadian police managers are facing a series of daunting new challenges. For example, no longer simply responsible for performing their traditional federal, provincial, and municipal law enforcement mandates, today's police leaders must ensure their organizations are also actively involved in meeting the evolving safety expectations of their communities. These expectations are high, even though the foundations of many of these safety needs are not directly related to traditional police work and are embedded in increasingly complex social and public health problems, such as people experiencing homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health crises (Griffiths & Dubord, 2023; Taylor et al., 2022).

Another new challenge for Canadian police managers is they are leading their organizations during a time of reduced positive perceptions of the police (Ruddell, 2022). This has been attributed to high-profile police-involved deaths in the United States and Canada, the role of the police during the global pandemic, and the findings from public inquiries that continue to identify the failures of the justice system for women and for Indigenous, racialized, and marginalized communities. The result is that, for many Canadians, relationships with the police in the early 21st century are strained, and police leaders must ensure re-building trust is a high organizational priority (Roach, 2022; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2022; Wood, 2022).

A further significant challenge facing police managers exists inside their own organizations. In the past 5 years, much more has become known about the depth and breadth of trauma and stress carried by police employees and other public safety professionals (Carleton et al., 2018; Carleton et al., 2020; Heber et al., 2023; Papazoglou et al., 2021). Canadian police leaders are being urged to make the mental well-being of individuals in their workplaces a constant high priority

(Edwards, 2023; Jackson & Theroux, 2023; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2022; Thompson & Tam-Seto, 2023).

It follows that to effectively address these significant challenges, police managers must ensure they have the personal resources to perform their roles, foster positive relationships, and maintain their own well-being. Growing research suggests that engaging in mindfulness training, meditation, and other contemplative practices can benefit leaders in non-police workplaces (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019; Urrila, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). However, research that seeks to understand how these practices may, or may not, support Canadian police leaders has not been undertaken.

The purpose of this article is to add to this understanding by sharing results from an exploratory qualitative study that asked a cohort of Canadian police managers who self-identified as regular meditators to discuss their meditation and leadership practices. Specifically, the primary research question guiding this inquiry was, "How might the practice of meditation influence the practice of leadership for some Canadian commissioned police officers?"

This article begins by canvassing recent research on mindfulness and meditation for leaders in other workplace settings. This is followed by a description of the definitions and methodology used in this study and a presentation of the key thematic results, with supporting quotes. A discussion of how this study's results compare with the cited literature on mindful leadership, and the implications of the results when viewed alongside the challenges facing Canadian police leaders, follows. The article concludes with the study's potential limitations and suggestions for future research.

Workplace Mindfulness and Mindful Leadership Research

Recognizing a surge occurring in mindfulness research, Good et al. (2016) set out to systematically integrate findings from previous empirical studies to create a framework for workplace mindfulness research. Defining mindfulness as "receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experiences" (p. 117), they analyzed studies that explored mindfulness as a temporary mental state, an enduring dispositional trait, a type of practice such as meditation, and a specific training intervention or program. From this, they highlighted published evidence that mindfulness appears to positively influence cognition, emotion, behaviour, and physiology, which in turn can enhance workplace outcomes such as job performance, relationships, and well-being. None of the studies in their review occurred specifically within the context of police leadership.

Several years later, Donaldson-Feilder et al. (2019) conducted a systematic literature review focused on mindfulness and meditation interventions for leaders. Analyzing 19 empirical studies published between 2000 and 2015, they reported that mindfulness and meditation interventions may improve some aspects of a leader's own well-being, resilience, and leadership capability. As with the analysis conducted by Good et al. (2016), none of the studies they reviewed occurred specifically within the context of police leadership.

One of the authors referenced by Donaldson-Feilder et al. (2019) was Janice Marturano (2015). She is the founder and director of the Institute for Mindful Leadership, and an early advocate for positioning mindfulness at the centre of effective leadership. Marturano has argued that regular mediation will develop mindful leaders who "embody leadership presence by cultivating focus, clarity, creativity, and compassion in the service of others" (p. 11).

A more recent systematic review of the literature on mindfulness and leadership was conducted by Urrila (2022) who analyzed 30 empirical studies published from 2009 to 2020. This review concluded that leader-specific mindfulness practice appeared to positively impact various leader developmental outcomes; some were considered essential, such as personal well-being and productivity, while others were considered transformative, such as positive relationships with others and inner growth. This review did not appear to include any studies specifically exploring leader-specific mindfulness practice for policing.

A final example comes from a meta-analysis of leader mindfulness research conducted by Zhou et al. (2023), who drew upon Good et al.'s (2016) framework of workplace mindfulness outcomes to quantitatively synthesize 46 articles published between 1998 and 2022. They concluded that evidence appeared to support the positive influence of leader mindfulness on leader performance, relationships, and well-being, as well as the performance and well-being of the leaders' followers. As with the three other systematic review studies, policing did not appear to be the specific workplace context in any research.

Study Definitions

Although mindfulness training, meditation, and other contemplative practices have existed as part of spiritual traditions for thousands of years, interest in the secular use of mindfulness for the workplace has grown exponentially in the past two decades (Bartlett et al., 2019; Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019; Eby et al., 2019; Good et al., 2016; Urrila, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). With this growth, researchers have identified the potential for misinformation due to the lack of definitional clarity in some mindfulness studies, and they recommend future researchers explicitly state which definitions are being relied upon (Shabaz & Parker, 2021; van Dam et al., 2018). Accordingly, the following conceptualizations of mindfulness, meditation, contemplative practice, and regular meditation practice were used in this study.

Mindfulness

For the purposes of this study, mindfulness was defined as a state of consciousness characterized by "an enhanced attention to and awareness of current experience or present reality" (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 822). It is understood that everyone possesses a basic ability to be mindful, and that mindfulness as a temporary mental state, and an enduring dispositional trait, can be enhanced by regularly engaging in mindfulness training such as meditation and other related contemplative practices (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Jamieson & Tuckey, 2017).

Meditation

From the multiple definitions of meditation, Walsh and Shapiro's (2006) definition is often used in psychological research (Breedvelt et al., 2019; Ganesan et al., 2022; Matko & Sedlmeier, 2019) and was selected for this study. They stated that meditation

is "a family of self-regulation practices that focus on training attention and awareness in order to bring mental processes under greater voluntary control and thereby foster general mental well-being and development and/or specific capacities such as calm, clarity, and concentration" (pp. 228–229).

Regular Meditation Practice

With respect to what constitutes regular meditation practice, the definition from a phenomenological study exploring the influence of meditation on the leadership development of several managers was adopted (Frizzel et al., 2016). Regular meditation practice is understood as training at least three times per week, for at least 3 months.

Contemplative Practice

Contemplative practice is often characterized more broadly than meditation practice. In this study, we drew upon Edwards et al.'s (2017) understanding of contemplative practice as "any activity undertaken regularly with the intention of quieting the mind and developing deep concentration, calm, and awareness of the present moment" (p. 1). For the purposes of this article, mindfulness training, mindfulness practice, and meditation are used interchangeably.

METHOD

As the aim of this study was to deeply explore the "how" and "why" of police leadership practice with a small number of participants, an exploratory qualitative methodology appeared to be a good fit (Yin, 2016; Klenke, 2016). More specifically, the methods of semi-structured interviewing, followed up with focus group discussions, were used to gather in-depth responses from participants. In this section, the details of this approach are outlined, including a description of the participant invitation, selection, and data collection processes. The specific data analysis method used in this study, reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2022b), is also briefly described.

Participant Invitation and Selection

On March 18, 2021, following written institutional approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board and the police service's Human Resources Research Board, an "Invitation to Participate" was emailed to all 605 Commissioned Officers in the police service. Email recipients were asked to contact the author if they regularly practiced meditation and wished to confidentially participate in semi-structured interviews and focus groups. A total of 13 individuals offered to participate. Eleven respondents met the study inclusion criteria of holding the rank of a Commissioned Officer and having a regular meditation practice of at least three times a week, for at least 3 months (Frizzel et al., 2016; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006) and were invited to participate in the study.

Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews occurred between April 9, 2021, and June 24, 2021. All interviews were conducted and recorded on the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform. The interviews were conversational in tone and often became deeply personal. The average interview length was 2 hours and 22 minutes. Participants were later invited to join online follow-up focus group interviews to discuss the full study's preliminary findings. In total, three focus groups, which included eight of the eleven study participants, were hosted between June 15, 2022, and July 5, 2022.

Data Analysis Process

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Each transcript was reviewed in detail, denaturalized (Oliver et al., 2005), and loaded on NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software. Data analysis was then guided by a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun et al., 2022a). A hallmark of this approach is the premise that a researcher's subjectivity is a valuable analytic resource to be highlighted and used, not diminished or eliminated (Gough & Madill, 2012).

RESULTS

One of the most significant overarching results was that every participant (n=11) perceived that meditation positively influenced their practice of leadership in several ways. Drawing again on Good et al.'s (2016) conceptualization of the potential workplace outcomes of mindfulness, these perceptions were broadly organized into three categories: influence on job performance; influence on relationships; and influence on well-being. In total, eight themes were developed. In the following section, each theme is described and illustrated by selected quotes from the dataset.

Influence on Job Performance

Participants in this study were assigned to a wide variety of roles and responsibilities in this large Canadian police service. Regardless of their assignment, the belief in the positive impact of meditation practice on their day-to-day job performance was held by all. Within this first broad category, three significant performance-related themes were developed: enhanced calmness and emotional self-control; better clarity and decision making; and improved focus and efficiency.

Enhanced Calmness and Emotional Self-Control

The ability to remain calm and maintain emotional self-control was identified by several participants as a significant performance-related challenge for Commissioned Officers, and they credited their meditation with enhancing this skill. One participant, using the metaphor of a circus performer, explained:

> I find management is putting yourself constantly on a very tight rope, in difficult situations. There's going to be an emotional component. There's going to be anxiety, but you're also doing it, like most acrobats in a circus, in front of a very large crowd. And the higher you are in management and leadership, the more exposed you are. So that tight rope could lead to some very disastrous results if you're not perfectly balanced. So, to me, meditation has influenced my leadership by keeping me balanced on that tight rope.

Enhanced calmness due to meditation practice was also reported by those who felt they already possessed strong

emotional control. One participant, who attributed this high level of self-control to a lengthy assignment as a member of a high-risk Emergency Response Team (ERT) explained:

> My hair is never on fire. You know? I don't lose control. As ERT members, […] we've been through the fires, and you're able to deal with things calmly and never panic, but with meditation also comes that acceptance of what is. Something's happened? Okay, well, let's deal with it in a practical, sort of calm way.

Better Clarity and Decision Making

A second performance-related challenge raised by some participants was the ability to make clear and correct decisions. Several officers credited meditation with improving this critical skill. As one participant explained:

> When I'm meditating is when I get those thoughts of "Wow! What about this?" As you know with meditation, sometimes your mind takes over, but it brings me down rabbit holes that I find I'm most creative, and I'm most accurate in my assessment of things.

The influence of meditation on decision making was particularly clear to one participant, who concluded, "I think at the end of the day, it comes down to […] you have a better ability to either make decisions, or to work through problems." Linking directly to the practice of police leadership he added:

> So, it will help you stay focused, and then it will help you make decisions. When all seems lost and you have to make those hard decisions, it helps focus you and you'll find that clarity a little bit easier by doing it. Oh, and by the way, when you're a leader, that's what you need to be able to do, is find that clarity.

Improved Focus and Efficiency

A third performance-related challenge was the ability to maintain focus and efficiency while engaged in the many tasks required of Commissioned Officers. Meditation practice reportedly improved this critical skill for several participants. As one participant explained about her yoga practice:

> And as you know, being an Officer, there's so much, there's so much stuff going on in the head, at any given time […] So, if I can be efficient in my yoga practice, knowing that it is going to make me more efficient during my day and give me that clarity of mind, for me, it's an investment of time that is well worth it.

This perception of enhanced efficiency was also echoed by another participant, who said, "So the fact that my meditation practice and the yoga I do calms me, helps me be in the moment and not think too much about everything all the time, that helps me act more efficiently at work."

Influence on Relationships

Participants often mentioned how meditation enhanced the quality of their workplace relationships. Three themes developed in this broad category were: enhanced presence for others; improved conflict resolution practices; and greater compassion and empathy.

Enhanced Presence for Others

As described by participants, the workloads and demands placed on Commissioned Officers are significant. Yet, the importance of being fully present in the moment and undistracted for others was also identified as a critically important relationship skill by some participants. As one participant stressed, "I remember a Police Chaplain telling me once that it's about presence. Sometimes it's not about words, it's about presence. And being deliberately present. So, I think that's one of the biggest challenges in police leadership these days."

The benefit of meditation practice for developing enhanced presence was shared by another participant, who explained, "The first thing that I would point to is […] the fact that if you have a practice of meditation, you have more of an awareness of self, and you're more in the present." Another participant placed similar importance on the connection between presence, relationships, and the practice of meditation when he said, "So, I would tell you that's probably where it helps me most with my leadership. Being as present as I can, in every moment, to ensure that I give my best to the people around me."

Improved Conflict Resolution Practices

An additional relationship challenge mentioned by several participants was the ability to manage workplace conflict effectively. One participant noted that greater mindfulness derived from his meditation practice resulted in a shift in his approach to conflict resolution. He shared:

> I'm finding now as a manager, particularly where I used to hate conflict, I was conflict avoidant, etc., I didn't want to get into difficult conversations. Whereas now it's like … I don't want to say fun, it's not fun. But it's interesting. I use the mindfulness component of this as a practice, I'm curious about it. I'm curious about where the people are, and what they're feeling, and why they're feeling it.

Another participant described an incident that occurred during a recent external assignment to illustrate the role meditation plays for her in managing workplace conflict. She explained:

> I practiced meditation every day while I was there, but also working with the [police agency], they asked […] "Where did you learn to get people together and have those hard conversations?" because unfortunately we had a situation that happened there. I said, "It's just part of meditation, and being who you are." And I truly believe that. They listened to me, and they said, "Can we bring you back?"

Greater Compassion and Empathy

A third way participants perceived that meditation influenced their workplace relationships was by increasing their compassion and empathy. This compassion was for themselves, the people they are leading, and the community at large. For example, understanding the need for self-compassion was described by one participant in this way:

You know, it's all well and good to stay on the diet when everything's calm! (laughs) Whether it's the diet, or contemplation, or meditation, it gets challenging when the pressures are on […] and that's when you need it the most. So, just being kind to myself during those times, but also going "Hey, this would be a good time to do a walk or a meditation."

One participant shared that he felt increased mindfulness and compassion is critical to regaining the public's trust and to justly serve the most vulnerable in society:

I think in a time where public trust [in the police] is wavering, in many ways… I think that the more mindful our officers are, the more compassionate[ly] they present to people, the more we will build and re-build trust, especially with our most vulnerable communities.

Influence on Well-Being

The final broad category drawn from the experiences of participants was how meditation influenced well-being. For several participants, this was the most important category, as they believed well-being was foundational to more than their careers. As one participant explained, "This is actually a technical skill that can be honed, that can be developed and [that] has a broad effect on every aspect of your life." This broad category can be viewed through two themes: reduced harmful stress on the one hand and enhanced trauma resiliency and work/life integration on the other.

Reduced Harmful Stress

Study participants frequently shared that operational and organizational workplace stress was significant in their workplace and was an important reason for practicing meditation. As one Officer explained:

Every employee, of every rank, and every category within the [police service], is faced with tremendous pressure. Whether it be stress or emotional control, I think providing our employees with useful tools like meditation will allow us to be the best person we can be in those moments when the communities really need us.

The same participant went on to comment on the organizational benefits of reducing stress through meditation, including reducing the amount of employees off-duty sick (ODS) and decreasing the frequency of poor leadership caused by excessive stress:

I think it's going to have an impact [on] stress management when it comes to ODS prevention, but also preventing regrettable incidents where our members get overstressed… or even when leaders get overwhelmed by pressures and by stress, and probably [don't] react the way they would have wanted to in a difficult situation.

Enhanced Trauma Resiliency and Work/Life Integration

The need to develop and enhance personal resilience was also frequently raised by participants. As one participant explained:

This is all intertwined with resiliency and looking after yourself, self-maintenance, all the rest of it. We give our people a huge amount of tools to do their job, but if we introduced meditation at an entry-level stage, we would have one resilient population in terms of dealing with stress, not only with police work but the rest of the things that we deal with in society, right?

The need for resiliency was also viewed as essential for successful work/life integration. One participant explained the importance of this by rhetorically framing a series of questions to other police officers:

Another thing I would say as a selling point to members is this, "Hey, do you want to stay married? Do you want a successful relationship? Do you want your kids to like you? Do you want to have friends? You know, do you want to get along well with people? Do you want to be able to sleep at night? Well, this is part of what you're going to need to do. Start building your resiliency practices so that you don't wind up being another story."

DISCUSSION

In this section, the study results are compared with the previously described literature on meditation and mindfulness practice for leaders in other workplaces. The study results are then examined alongside the three real-world challenges facing Canadian police managers introduced at the beginning of this paper. The section concludes with the potential limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

Reviewed Literature and the Study Results

When compared with the reviewed mindful leadership literature (Donaldson-Feilder et al., 2019; Marturano, 2015; Urrila, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023), the eight themes developed in this study are consistent with many of the previous findings (see Table I). For example, Donaldson-Feilder et al. concluded that mindfulness and meditation interventions may improve some aspects of leader well-being, resilience, and leadership capability. In this study, the themes of reduced harmful stress, enhanced trauma resilience and work/life integration, enhanced calmness and self-control, and improved conflict resolution practices align with Donaldson-Feilder et al.'s findings from non-police workplaces.

Urrila (2022) identified that leader-specific mindfulness practice appeared to positively impact essential leader development outcomes, such as personal well-being and productivity, and transformative leader development outcomes, such as forging positive relationships and inner growth. Themes developed in the current study that aligned with essential leader development outcomes included enhanced trauma resilience and improved focus and efficiency. Study themes associated with transformative leader development outcomes included enhanced presence for others, improved conflict resolution practices, greater work/life integration, and greater compassion and empathy.

Zhou et al. (2023) concluded that leader mindfulness appears to have a positive influence on leader performance, relationships, and well-being as well as the performance and well-being of the leader's followers. In this study, the themes

of enhanced calmness and emotional self-control, better clarity and decision making, improved conflict resolution practices, and reduced harmful stress align with the findings of Zhou et al.—although data on how these practices directly influenced followers' performance and well-being was not collected in the present study.

It is in the writing of Marturano (2015), however, that the closest connections can be made with many of the findings of this study. Her definition of a mindful leader as someone who "embodies leadership presence by cultivating focus, clarity, creativity, and compassion in the service of others" (p. 11) is closely aligned with the study's themes of enhanced presence for others, improved focus and efficiency, better clarity and decision making, and greater compassion and empathy.

In summary, the mindful leadership literature referenced from outside of policing suggested that mindfulness and meditation practice may have a positive influence on the practice of leadership. In this study, the themes developed indicated this may also be the case for some Canadian commissioned police officers. Therefore, it is argued that this study begins to extend the findings from the referenced literature into the context of mindful police leadership.

Police Leadership Challenges and the Study Results

When viewed alongside the policing challenges described at the outset of this article—specifically, meeting community safety needs and traditional law enforcement, strengthening public trust in policing, and prioritizing the well-being of police professionals—the themes developed in this study suggest practicing meditation and mindfulness will benefit Canadian police leaders as they address these new responsibilities (see Table II).

Meeting Community Safety Needs and Traditional Law Enforcement

In 2023, Canadian police leaders are expected to ensure that their organizations are focused as much on meeting community safety needs as they are on meeting their traditional law enforcement mandates. This has not always been the case, as Griffiths and Dubord (2023) write:

> In Canada, there has been a significant shift in the role of police influenced by the changing public safety, social, health and economic landscape. Current discourse suggests that police have a more prominent role in the context of broader community safety and well-being. This is especially true, with much of the day-to-day policing activities revolving around social and public health problems—or those committing "social crimes" due to health and social reasons. (p. 19)

At the heart of this challenge is the need for current and future police officers to embrace even greater collaboration with others working in social and public health organizations and to hold a new vision of what it means to be a police leader. As Taylor et al. (2022) explain:

> Policing today and in the years ahead must be as much about public health as it is about enforcing the law. And with this change in mission, also changed are the requisite character, skills, knowledge, and attitudes for those who are to be invested with unique powers and state authorities and to effectively lead a police organization today. (p. 102)

Many of the themes developed in the present study support the necessary character, skills, and attitudes needed

TABLE I Comparison of study themes with cited mindful leadership literature

Study Themes	Mindful Leadership Literature
Job Performance	
Enhanced calmness and emotional self-control	Donaldson-Fielder et al. (2019)
Better clarity and decision making	Zhou et al. (2022), Marturano (2015)
Improved focus and efficiency	Urrila (2022), Marturano (2015)
Relationships	
Enhanced presence for others	Urrila (2022), Marturano (2015)
Improved conflict resolution practices	Donaldson-Fielder et al. (2019), Zhou et al. (2022)
Greater compassion and empathy	Urrila (2022), Marturano (2015)
Well-Being	
Reduced harmful stress	Donaldson-Fielder et al. (2019), Zhou et al. (2022)
Enhanced trauma resiliency and work/life integration	Donaldson-Fielder et al. (2019), Urrila (2022)

TABLE II Comparison of study themes with identified police leadership challenges

Study Themes	Canadian Police Leadership Challenges
Job Performance	
Enhanced calmness and emotional self-control	Community safety, workplace well-being
Better clarity and decision making	Community safety, strengthening public trust
Improved focus and efficiency	Community safety
Relationships	
Enhanced presence for others	Community safety, strengthening public trust, workplace well-being
Improved conflict resolution practices	Rebuilding public trust, workplace well-being
Greater compassion and empathy	Community safety, strengthening public trust, workplace well-being
Well-Being	
Reduced harmful stress	Workplace well-being
Enhanced trauma resiliency and work/life integration	Workplace well-being

in this new vision of a Canadian police leader. Even further, it is argued that the reported outcomes of meditation and mindfulness practice appear to open new and essential pathways to 21st century police leadership and culture. For example, enhanced calmness, emotional self-control, and being present for others are essential characteristics for collaboration. Similarly, clarity in decision making, maintaining focus, and working efficiently are vital skills for police leaders when managing competing law enforcement and community safety demands. Enhanced compassion and empathy for the community is also an attitude that is foundational to the vision of a modern collaborative police leader held by Taylor et al. (2022) and was specifically highlighted by study participants. Taken together, these themes suggest that the practice of mindfulness and meditation will benefit Canadian leaders as they work to ensure their organizations meet community safety needs and traditional law enforcement mandates.

Strengthening Public Trust in Policing

For many Canadians, trust, confidence, and support for their local police organizations were consistently positive between the years 2000 and 2019. After 2020, however, positive perceptions of the police dropped sharply in Canada, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom (Ruddell, 2022). Based on an analysis of Canadian public safety surveys, Ruddell concluded:

> The death of George Floyd in police custody appears to be the primary driver in this loss of the public's trust and confidence. A secondary reason for this decrease may be a growing antipathy towards all government institutions after the onset of the pandemic and making the police responsible for enforcing regulations that a significant proportion of the public perceives as illegitimate. (p. 51)

A deeper view of this change, however, is that Canada's colonial and patriarchal past cemented a systemically racist justice system that has overpoliced and under-protected women, Indigenous, racialized, and marginalized communities for decades (Roach, 2022). Strengthening public trust will not be a quick fix. The outcomes of regular meditation practice identified in this study are critical for leaders to possess if they hope to build greater public trust with their communities in the 21st century.

Prioritizing the Well-Being of Police Professionals

It is within the challenge of prioritizing the well-being of individuals inside police organizations that mindfulness practice may have the most to offer. It has been argued that the profession of policing is experiencing a global mental health and wellness crisis (Edwards, 2023). Although police work has always been understood as stressful, dangerous, and likely traumatizing, when coupled with a stoic organizational culture that can devalue seeking help, the frequency of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental illnesses inside police agencies and other Canadian public safety professions has become staggering (Carleton et al., 2018; Carleton et al., 2020; Heber et al., 2023; Papazoglou et al., 2021).

It is not an exaggeration to say that addressing the well-being challenge is critical to the future of Canadian policing and community safety. As Jackson and Theroux (2023) explain:

> The mental health and wellness of the workforce is not a sector-specific issue; it is a human issue—one facing every single police service in Canada and, indeed, globally […] We recognize that you cannot have safe, healthy, and resilient communities without a safe, healthy, and resilient police workforce. Full stop. (p. S4)

The attitudes and behaviours that police leaders demonstrate inside their organizations has been highlighted as essential to resolving this challenge. As Edwards (2023) argues:

> Police leaders can no longer afford to be passive participants in the declining mental health of those men and women who put service before self […] consciously or not, they play a pivotal role in creating the type of environment that either promotes or erodes mental and emotional safety. (pp. S50–S51)

Based on this study, engaging in meditation and mindfulness practices may benefit police leaders as they work to create psychologically safer police organizations. For example, enhanced leader presence would increase an employee's sense of being heard and valued. Similarly, improved conflict resolution practices could result in employees feeling less stress when workplace disagreements arise.

The experiences of study participants also indicated that leaders who engage in mindfulness practice will support their own well-being. All police leaders begin as frontline police officers. When they are eventually assigned leadership responsibilities, they will be influenced by their own history of traumatic and difficult experiences. Having the ability to enhance their own calmness and emotional self-control, reduce their harmful stress, and enhance their trauma resiliency and work/life integration through mindfulness practice is vital for police leaders' own well-being and is essential if they are to play a role in the well-being of others.

Study Limitations and Suggested Areas for Future Research

This study extends the referenced literature on mindful leadership into the realm of police leadership. It also suggests that mindfulness and meditation practice will benefit Canadian police leaders as they address their most significant leadership challenges. There are, however, several study limitations and areas for future research that require highlighting.

Most notably, only Commissioned Officers who believed meditation positively influenced their practice of police leadership participated in this study. It is possible that other Commissioned Officers, who have practiced meditation and found it had no influence on their leadership practice, chose not to participate in the study. Even further, several studies have concluded that the practice of meditation and mindfulness may be challenging, difficult, and even distressing for some individuals (Lindahl et al., 2017, Britton et al., 2021). However, these perceptions did not appear in this study.

A suggestion for future research, then, is a brief confidential online survey that explores this study's results with all Commissioned Officers from this police agency. This survey would require significantly less investment of participant time and could provide an opportunity for individuals who practice meditation but do not feel it positively influences their

leadership practice, or who have had adverse experiences with the practice of meditation, to add their voices to the discussion.

Further, the participant inclusion criteria for this study were Commissioned Officers with a regular practice of meditation (Frizzel et al., 2016; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). As the percentage of Commissioned Officers in this police agency accounts for approximately 10% of all police officers in formal leadership roles, expanding the study to include Non-Commissioned Officers and other non-sworn police leaders would deepen the understanding of how meditation practice may influence the practice of leadership at different ranks in the police organization.

Finally, this study sought to understand how meditation and mindfulness practice might influence the practice of leadership from the perspective of the leaders. As Zhou et al. (2023) report, leader mindfulness appears to also influence the performance and well-being of the leaders' followers. Future research within the context of policing that examines the perceptions of the peers, followers, supervisors, and community members who regularly engage with a police leader who regularly practices meditation is a necessary next step.

CONCLUSION

The challenges facing Canadian police managers in the early 21st century will require them to possess significant personal resources. Research into mindfulness training and meditation has suggested that these practices can benefit leaders in other workplace contexts; however, until this study, little was known about how these mental practices might benefit police leaders. Results from this study begin to extend the cited literature on mindful leadership from other workplace contexts into the realm of police leadership.

Further, based on the discussions that occurred with these police leaders, adopting a mindfulness or meditation practice may benefit Canadian police leaders as they address the challenges of meeting community safety needs, strengthening public trust, and prioritizing the well-being of police professionals. By doing so, it is possible that meditation and mindfulness practice may open new and essential pathways to 21st century police leadership. Although this study has limitations and further research is warranted, it does suggest that developing a regular meditation practice is something that all current and future Canadian police leaders should begin to contemplate.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Migrant minors in detention: Practical needs and the limits set by the European Convention

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This article is related directly to the First European Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) held in Umea, Sweden in May 2023.

ABSTRACT

State officials report practical needs to put migrant minors in detention, and the European Convention on Human Rights sets legal limits on this practice. This article defines the scope of circumstances under which migrating minors may be detained by analyzing The European Court of Human Rights case law, using judgments in which the detention of migrant minors has been alleged a violation of Articles 3, 5.1, or 8. It also explores states' needs for detaining such children, using data from 19 interviews with Swedish police officers, and compares these views with the case law. Police interviewees primarily describe two needs to detain children: to make deportations of children smooth and dignified, and to prevent minors from committing crimes. The investigation finds that migrant minor detentions are rarely permissible according to the Convention—especially under Article 3—and that the permissible scope is too small to meet the expressed practical needs. The actors involved in the issue of detaining migrant minors might have different perspectives on the issue, but they must not lose sight of the fact that these children are categorized as some of the most vulnerable in society and that their rights must be protected.

Key Words   Children; human rights; law; migration; police.

INTRODUCTION

Migrant children are considered an especially vulnerable group, "combining the special vulnerability of an alien with the general vulnerability of a child" (Turković, 2021, pp. 110–111). Hence, to place such children in detention—often regarded as one of the most severe forms of coercive measures (Bylund, 1993)—is an action that requires careful assessment. In addition, several international organizations, such as the United Nations Child Rights Committee (United Nations, 2023) and the Council of Europe (PACE, 2023), are demanding that governmental authorities put an end to immigration-related detention of children (compare Smyth, 2019).

Nevertheless, some European countries still detain migrant minors. For instance, in Sweden—often considered to be one of the freest and least rights-oppressive countries in the world (Freedon House, 2023)—immigration-related detention of children is expressly permitted in national statutory law (with no minimum age limit) (The Swedish Aliens Act

(2005:716),[1] and also occurs in practice (The Swedish Migration Agency, 2022).[2]

The European Court of Human Rights (the ECtHR or the Court), meanwhile, has not entirely condemned the use of immigration detention of children (Turković, 2021). In most cases, the ECtHR has found such detention a violation of Articles 3, 5.1, and/or 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950), but not in all (see below).

This raises two questions: when is it in accordance with the European Convention to detain migrant minors,[3] and are there important discrepancies between the court-announced

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[1] Chapter 10 Section 2 (expressly permitting detention of a "child") and Chapter 1 Section 2 (defining "child" as a person under 18 years).

[2] However, migrant minor detention seems to be a rare phenomenon according to The Swedish Migration Agency, which registered only 4 sojourns for girls and 3 for boys during 2022; during 2021 only 1 sojourn (of a boy) was registered.

[3] In this article, the terms "child" and "minor" mean persons younger than 18 years.

legal requirements and the needs of state officials carrying out such detentions in practice? The research regarding these questions is limited. For the practitioners—who decide on and carry out the detentions of children—it is fundamental to know in what situations detention is permissible. For the European Court—as well as the national legislator—it is an advantage to be aware of the practical needs when developing the jurisprudence or legislation. Thus, the study of these questions can be fruitful for both actors.

This article aims to explore states' needs for detaining minor children in comparison with the circumstances in which placing migrant children in detention have been held to violate the European Convention. A first objective is to highlight the views of state officials regarding practical needs for migrant child detentions by analyzing police officer interview data previously collected by the authors. A second objective is to define the scope of circumstances under which migrating minors may be legally detained by analyzing the ECtHR case law in which the detention of migrant minors was alleged a violation of Articles 3, 5.1, and/or 8. The third and final objective is to analyze the findings on state migration officials' expressed needs in practice and on the permissible scope in law for such detentions together, to reveal and evaluate discrepancies between the two.

The article is structured as follows. First, an overview of the previous research in the area of migrant minors in detention is given. Next, the methods used—a qualitative interview method and a traditional legal analysis—are described. Then the views of interviewed Swedish border police officers on the practical needs for migrant child detention are presented. In the following sections, the case law regarding Articles 3, 5.1, and 8, respectively, is described, and the scope for permissible detention determined. The final section includes deeper analysis of the case law and interview studies' results and of discrepancies we find between the permissible legal scope for detaining migrating minors and the reported needs for it in practice.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is some previous research concerning migrant children, including studies from a human-rights perspective. One authority in this area is Bhabha (2014), who uses the concept of ambivalence to analyze child migration and human rights in a global age. This ambivalence is expressed by the fact that the state wants to both protect vulnerable children *and* protect the public from threatening outsiders, even if they are children (Bhabha, 2014). Similarly, Bhabha (2014, p. 13) claims that the concept of otherness is ambivalent in our (Western) society—it is "caught between an identification of the other as 'human like me' and a hostility or indifference toward the other as separate or dispensable or threatening."

Research about migrant minors in detention is less comprehensive. Examples of areas that have been investigated are the variation in the practice of detention of unaccompanied minors in some European Union (EU) countries (Khrebetan-Hörhager & Kononenko, 2018), and the compliance of the Common European Asylum System with the right of the child to liberty expressed in human rights law—including the European Convention—when children are detained (Smyth, 2014).

Turković (2021) has recently published an overview of the ECtHR's case law concerning the detention of migrant minors, analyzed primarily by using the concepts of vulnerability and the best interests of the child. Inspired by other international instruments and EU law, Turković (2021) argues that the ECtHR should no longer accept the detention of children primarily on the basis of their immigration status.

The present study analyzes largely the same body of ECtHR case law in a complementary fashion.[4] Focus is on the scope remaining for the legal detention of migrating minors, especially as related to the answers provided by Swedish police officer interviewees involved in migration law enforcement and differences between the two perspectives on this aspect of migration law. As mentioned above, it is fruitful for the practitioners to know the limits of detaining children and for the European Court to know what practical needs there are to put minors in detention. The intended contribution of this article to the already existing literature is to bridge the gap between these two perspectives of migration law.

METHODS

We used a qualitative interview method to study the needs to detain migrating children in law enforcement practice. In total, 19 individual interviews with Swedish border police officers were conducted by one of the authors. Border police are relevant societal actors to study regarding the question of practical needs, since the police—under Swedish migration law—are entitled to choose to use (and then are responsible for carrying out) migrant detentions (The Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716));[5] in addition, the police have more generally—under certain conditions—the right to use force in Swedish society (The Swedish Police Law (1984:387)).[6]

Interview data from an initial 14 interviews have in part been reported in another published article, but for other purposes; there, the interview methodology is more thoroughly described (Hansson et al., 2015). An additional five border police officers were interviewed during 2019 and 2020 (via telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic), in accordance with ethical guidelines (Swedish Research Council, 2022). An additional forthcoming article will describe some basic findings from these final five interviews (Hansson et al., 2023), but the topic of migrating minor detentions specifically is most thoroughly explored in this article. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

All interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis method, done in several steps. First, we read the interview transcripts several times to obtain a sense of the content. Text that explicitly contained information about the informant's views on the practical needs to detain children was marked. The marked sections of the text were divided into condensed meaning units, in other words summarized or labelled in one or several words, line by line, in order to identify the most relevant data for the purpose of this study and to get a general sense of the text's content. The selected condensed text, i.e., text that talked explicitly about practical needs to detain

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[4] Searches were conducted in July 2023 to identify any new or missed case decisions not included in that study.
[5] Chapter 10, Section 12, 13, 17 and 19.
[6] Section 10.

children, was coded. We discussed the condensed meaning units and the codes during this analysis to theorize about the significance of the patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

We used a traditional legal analysis of the case law of the ECtHR, meaning that the precise contents of this case law are interpreted to determine the state of the law. As to the collection of judgments from the ECtHR dealing with minors whom states have held in a manner that the Court considers "detention," one methodological problem has been determining where the ECtHR draws the line between detentions and similar actions (ECHR, 2018, 2022c). As was mentioned, the investigation is limited to cases in which child detentions were alleged to violate Article 3, 5.1, and/or 8, deemed the most relevant articles for this study.[7] The ambition has been to collect most cases that fulfil these criteria.

The research project—within which the article was written—was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2019-02439, regarding the five interviews during 2019 and 2020). Interviewees were informed—via e-mail and orally before the interview—of the purpose of the study and fully informed of their right not to participate and to withdraw at any time. Full confidentiality and anonymity of informants were maintained. Confidentiality was guaranteed by omitting the informants' names and identities in the recorded and transcribed interviews.

POLICE VIEWS ON PRACTICAL NEEDS TO DETAIN MINORS

Reasons Detention of Certain Migrant Minors are Seen as Desirable

The legal possibility of taking children into detention before deportation was discussed when Swedish border police officers (N = 14) were interviewed, as reported in an earlier publication by one of the co-authors and others.[8] Those researchers documented that these officers believe it is more dignified, and preferable, to take children into detention while obtaining travel documents for them and arranging their travel out of Sweden than to show up early in the morning at a temporary foster care placement to try to "catch" a child before he or she runs away from them.

The police officers' collective experience has been that children often "disappear" as soon as they notice police arriving to collect them from the homes where they have been placed temporarily before authorities were ready to complete the children's lawful removal from the country. Subsequently, the children often would come to the attention of state officials somewhere else in the country, and then be placed by social services into another care home. When the police then contact and inform such migrant minors of a new date for deportation, they again run away in the hopes of staying in the country.

Based on this experience in practice, interviewed police officers at two of the police authorities argued for the adoption of legislation making it possible to take children into a form of child-adapted detention, to make more deportations possible and make them more dignified. In addition, some police

officers suggested that, during this type of detention, the social workers together with police could prepare children for the deportation. The police officers emphasized that it would be possible for these professional adults to influence children to start cooperating with Swedish authorities, change their minds and return to their home countries voluntarily (Hansson et al., 2015); these suggestions were made, however, as the authors noted, "without reflecting upon how custody infringes upon the children's human rights and how it would contribute to a criminalization of asylum-seekers" (Hansson et al., 2015, p. 106).

Further Insights from Swedish Officials Involved in Detaining Migrant Minors

In a forthcoming article, the authors found that some of the interviewed government officials reported that it is rare for minors to be taken into longer-term detention, but cases do exist. In addition, a minor may legally be taken into so-called short-term detention for 24 hours in connection with an enforcement, but they are in a guarded hotel and not locked up (The Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716)).[9] According to the police officers (n = 5) in the study, detention is a factor that increases the likelihood of successful deportation. In addition, in this study the police officers argued for a child-adapted detention centre to take care of practical matters before the enforcement trip, instead of going early in the morning to enforce a deportation or take one parent into custody and separate the family.[10]

The perspectives of the police officers are be more thoroughly developed in this article than in the forthcoming article. Several of the border police officers described how short-term detention makes it possible to, for example, deprive the foreigner of the freedom to evade a deportation or to assist with a desired visit to a foreign embassy. However, one of the police officers with vast experience of deportations said it is still logistical issues, depending on where the family is located in Sweden, that lead to most migrant minor detentions. For example, there might be long way to travel to the Arlanda International Airport (near Stockholm) when the family is scheduled for deportation. Further, the respondent argued that the time is limited to 24 hours for a short-term detention and that migrants cannot be locked in. This requires many police officers to watch them when they are staying at a hotel instead of using a family-friendly detention centre where the family could stay overnight while the police officers rest or prepare for the deportation trip. According to several police officers, the existing system requires many resources and much logistical organization from the different authorities involved.

One officer also said the following about what are called family-friendly detentions: "From a child's perspective, I believe, that might even be better, if you dare to see through that it is about a lock-in, without talking about what form it takes." Several border police officers discussed the possibility of a detention centre adapted to keep families and children, with educated staff members who were especially well-suited to care for children and their needs. The premises would be organized so that children could move within the building

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[7]This means that Articles 5.4 and 13 are excluded.
[8]This section summarizes the findings of an earlier qualitative analysis of these interviews, as completed and published by Hansson, Ghazinour, & Wimelius (2015).

[9]Short-term detention is regulated in Chapter 9, Section 12.
[10]This section summarizes the findings of this forthcoming article by Hansson, Eriksson, Hjertstedt, & Ghazinour (2023).

while retaining the possibility of privacy and 24/7 access to the staff.

Thus, the police officers have argued for the possibility of taking minors into detention from a perspective of better enforcing the deportation and making deportation smooth for the child. One situation that was mentioned was a mother with her breastfeeding baby: "I do not think that this little baby will be affected or harmed by sitting in detention with her mother," and "the alternative is that the enforcement of the deportation cannot be done." Several of the respondents said that the strict regulation of detaining minors makes it difficult to enforce deportations. For instance, families can delay the deportation by separating the family so when the police come, the family is not united, causing an impediment to enforcement. In this situation, a possibility for detaining the family for some days while travel is arranged is preferable, instead of arranging the travel and trying to enforce the family's deportation only to cancel the enforcement plans because the family is not united. Further, the respondent explained that they (the family) are to be deported together, and that the police do not separate a family.

Another phenomenon mentioned in one interview involves North African boys who have not applied for asylum and who instead "just drive around and commit crime." The respondent said that it would be beneficial if the police could keep them in detention and then deport them to their country of origin instead of letting them continue to commit crimes that they may have been forced to commit. The respondent specifically mentioned these boys being victims of crime and that "it [detention] would be a free zone for them," implying that this approach would create a safer environment for the children.

All of the police officers argued that detention would help them to enforce deportation. However, they were aware of the restrictive rules when it comes to depriving children of their liberty by using detention. They discussed the adverse consequences of being in detention. One police officer, in particular, reflected upon the lack of tools available to successfully enforce deportation. He said that police officers find other ways to enforce deportations. For example, one parent is taken into detention, thus separating the family, which increases the likelihood that the other family members will not flee before the deportation. Further, he said: "if we think about the best interests of the child, I'm not entirely sure that it's the best [separating the family]."

In the following sections, the permissible scope for detaining minors according to the European Convention is investigated. Does the European Convention allow detention of migrant minors in the situations identified by the police interviewees above?

ARTICLE 3

Article 3 and Migrant Minors in Detention

In the ECtHR case law concerning migrant minors in detention, the applicants have alleged a violation of article 3 in almost all cases (see however, ECHR, 2010, 2018). The court has also found a violation in nearly all of these cases (see however, ECHR, 2019b, 2023c).

Article 3 consists of an absolute prohibition of torture, as well as "inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

There are no exceptions to this prohibition. In order to fall within the scope of article 3, the ill-treatment must attain a minimum level of severity or, in other words, must exceed the "threshold of seriousness" (ECHR, 2006).

Concerning the threshold of seriousness, the ECtHR has emphasized various important circumstances, in particular three circumstances that the ECtHR highlights when assessing whether migrant detention of minors is compatible with the provisions of Article 3: the child's young age, the length of the detention, and the unsuitability of the premises for the accommodation of children (ECHR, 2016b, 2021a, 2021c, 2022b; regarding length, ECHR 2022a). Other factors stressed by the Court are the general conditions of the detention (ECHR, 2012b, 2016a, 2019a, 2021d), whether the child is accompanied or not (ECHR, 2006, 2011b, 2016a, 2020b), while underlining that the presence of a parent does not exonerate the state from fulfilling their positive obligations towards the child (ECHR, 2023b), whether there had been alternatives to the detention (ECHR, 2006), whether the child had had "painful past events" and whether he or she has received legal advice (ECHR, 2021b).

The Scope of Permissible Detention of Migrant Minors

In interpreting Article 3, the Court has found violations of the rights it guarantees in nearly all cases of migrant minor detention.[11] In one case, however, it held that the conditions at a particular refugee centre where migrant minors were placed did not amount to an Article 3 violation, but it found a violation of Article 3 nonetheless, connected to the detention of migrant minors at a different place where they were held in police custody (ECHR, 2019b). Since the circumstances of that case clearly are distinguishable, particularly because of the open nature of the refugee centre,[12] we begin by discussing cases where the Court found a violation but simultaneously elaborated on when detention might not implicate Article 3's protections.

In a series of five cases from 2016 against France, the Court found violations of Article 3 regarding the detention of migrant minors (ECHR, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2016e, 2016f). In *R.C. and V.C. v. France* (ECHR, 2016c), a 2-year-old child was detained, with a parent, for 10 days. The detention centre was modified to house families, and non-governmental organizations underscored that the material condition at the facility was not at issue. Still, the Court noted that the detention centre was located in the vicinity of an airport and that there were significant levels of noise pollution, provoking anxiety in detainees. The Court stated that the length of the detention is of paramount importance to whether the threshold of

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[11] When the Article 3 claims are admissible. For example, in *R.M. and others v. Poland* App no 11247/18 (ECHR, 2023c), the ECtHR found the complaints under Article 3 to be manifestly ill-founded. The Court highlighted that the material conditions at the detention facility had not been an issue in the case, that the children's age, length of detention, and other factors connected to detention had already been handled in the friendly settlement under Article 8. Moreover, one of the children's psychosomatic conditions worsened while in detention but had been closely monitored by health professionals.

[12] The facts of *H.A. and others v. Greece* distinguish themselves from the other cases in several respects underscored by the Court. An open facility was used, the children were older but also unaccompanied by their parents, and it occurred during a migration crisis. Due to the special circumstances of this case, the Court itself specified that its generalizability is limited.

Article 3 is reached. It went on to conclude that the detention of a 2-year-old, for 10 days, under the conditions described, amounted to a violation of Article 3 (ECHR, 2016c). Ten days was therefore not considered a brief period of time in relation to the child's age and the material conditions at the centre.

In a later case, *M.D. and A.D. and others v. France*, the majority found a violation of Article 3 in relation to a 4-month-old child detained for 11 days, together with her mother (ECHR, 2021a, see also 2023b). This centre was, as also had been true in *R.C. and V.C. v. France*, authorized to receive families. However, the Court highlighted that the applicants were exposed to serious noise pollution from an airport, which was increased by a system of announcement speakers at the detention centre, and noted that the conditions were not suitable for an infant and mother, stressing again that the length of detention is an even more decisive factor when the child is placed in an unsuitable facility (ECHR, 2021a).[13] It concluded that detention of a 4-month-old child for 11 days in those conditions breached Article 3. It should be noted that 11 days was considered a long period of time under those conditions, even given that the detention was prolonged from 1 day in detention to 11 because of the mother's refusal to board a flight removing the family from France (ECHR, 2021a). The Court highlighted in that regard that even if the authorities take all reasonable measures to minimize the time in detention, the behaviour of the applicants causing delays does not exonerate the state from its obligations to the child guaranteed under Article 3 (ECHR, 2021a; see also 2023a, 2023b).

In *A.C. and M.C. v. France*, the Court underlined that, although age is only one of the three criteria that should be taken into account, it has previously, citing two cases, found violations when the child is an infant (ECHR, 2023a). Article 3 had been violated because of the very young age of the child (7.5 months), the conditions at the centre, and the period of 9 days in detention.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these cases is that even where material conditions are adapted overall to house families, detentions of 7, 10, or 11 days exceed the permissible brief detention period Article 3 may allow, at least for children 4 months to 4 years old.[14] In relatively poor material conditions, a shorter period of time may amount to a violation of Article 3 (ECHR, 2017).[15] States' discretion to detain migrant minors is minimal under Article 3.

ARTICLE 5.1

Article 5.1 and Migrant Minors in Detention

In almost all of the ECtHR case law concerning migrant minors in detention, applicants have alleged violations of

Article 5.1 (see however, ECHR, 2010, 2017, 2022b). In a majority of cases, however, the Court concluded that a violation of Article 5.1 had occurred (see, however, ECHR, 2012a, 2016 c, 2016 f).

The first section of Article 5 consists of both the rights protected and the prerequisites required for restricting those rights.[16] According to the wording of that provision, it protects two rights: liberty and security of person. However, the focus of the Court in applying the article seems to be deprivations of liberty (Rainey et al., 2021).

If there is interference with the right to liberty protected in Article 5.1, two conditions must be fulfilled to avoid a violation of the Convention: (1) the restrictions of rights must be in accordance with the law, and (2) they must fall into one of the enumerated situations listed within Article 5.1, at sub-sections a–f. The requirement of lawfulness means that the restriction of the right must have support in law, the adjudication must follow legal procedural rules, and that the law must be of satisfactory quality (ECHR, 2021b, 2021c). In addition, a deprivation of liberty should be in keeping with the purpose of protecting the individual from arbitrariness; the ECtHR has even stated—in some cases—that the notion of arbitrariness goes beyond the demand for lawfulness (ECHR, 2021b; compare 2019a, 2020a). Regarding the prerequisite that an interference must fall into some enumerated category of situations, migrant minors kept in detention normally are assigned to category (f):[17] a "lawful arrest or detention of a person to prevent his effecting an unauthorized entry into the country or of a person against whom action is being taken with a view to deportation or extradition." The requirements of the demand for lawfulness—including its prohibition of arbitrariness—are often discussed by the Court.

The ECtHR emphasizes different circumstances of importance in its assessments under Article 5.1 (f). In some cases, the Court describes factors that are important when assessing whether detention is arbitrary: it has to be carried out in good faith,[18] it has to be closely connected to the purpose of Article 5.1 (f), the place and conditions of the detention have to be appropriate, and the length of the detention should be reasonable (ECHR, 2011b, 2016a; compare ECHR 2011a, 2019b). The Court stressed more specifically the importance of ensuring that detention conditions are adapted to minors, since there must be a relationship between the grounds relied on to permit a deprivation of liberty and the place and conditions of detention (ECHR, 2006; compare ECHR 2012b). In several cases, the Court stated that the detention must be a last resort and that the member state has an obligation to explore the possibility of replacing detention with a less drastic measure (ECHR, 2011b, 2012b, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2016f, 2019b, 2019c, 2021a). Another factor is the existence of procedural safeguards, such as information in a language that the migrant can understand (ECHR, 2021b).

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[13]The facility had made adjustments to house children, but the Court deemed it unsatisfactory for infants.

[14]Children in the five cases ranged in age from 4 months to 4 years, and detentions from 7 to 18 days.

[15]The case of *S.F. and others v. Bulgaria* (ECHR, 2017) concerned three children aged 1.5 to 16 years old who were kept at a border police detention centre for under 41 hours, accompanied by their parents. The material conditions were deemed unsuitable even for a short period of time because their cell was "[…] extremely run-down […] dirty […] with limited possibility for accessing the toilet […]." There was also allegedly no food or drinks accessible for over 24 hours. Thus, the Court found a violation of Article 3.

[16]In section 5.2–5.5 there are some procedural safeguards, which will not be scrutinized in this study.

[17]More rarely, category (b) is discussed, see ECHR 2021 b.

[18]It can be questioned if it is good faith when the state did not consider whether it was a measure of last resort and did not consider the best interest of the child, (ECHR, 2011b, 2019b).

The Scope of Permissible Detention of Migrant Minors

There were three cases—*A.M. and others v. France; R.C. and V.C. v. France; Mahmundi and others v. France* (ECHR, 2023b, 2016 c, 2012a)—where the Court found no violation of Article 5.1 (f) regarding minor migrants in detention (ECHR, 2023a). However, all of these included violations under Article 3. Hence, the scope of permissibility for detaining minors under Article 5.1 (f) is minimal, but wider than under Article 3 (Turković, 2021).

In *A.M. and others v. France*, two minors, the first aged 2.5 years old, and the second 4 months old, were detained together with a parent for 7 days. The Court stated that depriving a child of its liberty accompanied by a parent is only in accordance with Article 5.1 if it is a matter of last resort and the authorities have concretely verified that no other less intrusive option is available (ECHR, 2023b). Applying these principles to the facts of the case at hand, the Court concluded that the domestic authorities had ruled out less intrusive options because the applicants had refused to contact the border police to arrange the departure, they had insufficient identity documentation, and their housing situation was uncertain. Therefore, the Court concluded that the authorities had effectively investigated whether detention was a measure of last resort. It found no violation of Article 5.1 (f).

Similarly, the Court found that the detention of a 2-year-old together with a parent for 10 days was not arbitrary, concluding that the state had not violated the right protected by Article 5.1 (f). The Court noted that in *R.C. and V.C. v. France* in particular, the national authorities verified that no other means were available because the applicants were sentenced for serious crimes, displayed no willingness to return to their country of origin, and had an unknown address, and thus the detention was not arbitrary (ECHR, 2016c). Although these failures of the applicant comprised one of the relevant circumstances in these two cases found to affect the risk of absconding, the Court also held in *R.K. and others v. France* that it was not convinced that a refusal to board a removal flight was sufficient alone to constitute a risk of absconding making detention necessary rather than arbitrary (ECHR, 2016d).

Providing only brief reasoning for the decision, the Court held in *Mahmundi and others v. Greece* that the detention of accompanied migrant minors aged 2, 6, and 14 years old for 20 or 22 days was not considered arbitrary; regarding the criterion relating to the material conditions, it stated that it had already examined it under Article 3 and that no distinct question arises under Article 5.1 (ECHR, 2012a). It is a bit difficult to reconcile this with the statement in *G.B. and others v. Turkey* that a breach of Article 3 may on its own result in a violation of Article 5.1; the Court had found in that case a violation of Article 3 (ECHR, 2019a). The detention centre at issue on the island of Lesbos was overcrowded, with an intake of more than four times its capacity, and the *European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* also noted that, when inspected 3 weeks after the applicants' release, the centre was unsanitary beyond description. Greece responded that it had subsequently closed the centre. Although a violation of Article 3 does not directly lead to a violation of Article 5.1 (f), the Court highlighted in *Mahmundi and others v. Greece* that it follows from its case law that the conditions of detention must be appropriate (ECHR, 2012a), and it is therefore puzzling that

it stated that no specific question arose under Article 5.1 and that it found no breach of that provision.[19]

The three cases where the Court found no violation of Article 5.1 (f) are exceptions and should be compared with the case of *M.D. and A.D. v. France*, decided in 2021 (ECHR, 2021a). After 2016, France adopted new legislation in response to the Court's judgments that it had violated the Convention when placing minors in detention.[20] Nevertheless, the ECtHR in the 2021 case found yet another violation of Article 3, connected to the 11-day detention of a 4-month-old accompanied by a parent. French authorities had deemed that house arrest was no longer possible before placing the family in detention because of the risk of absconding revealed by the applicant's statement refusing to board the planned expulsion flight. Still, taking into account the material conditions sufficient to breach Article 3, the authorities had not effectively verified that the detention constituted a measure of last resort; therefore, there was a violation of Article 5.1 concerning the child (ECHR, 2023b).[21] When national authorities fail to consider less intrusive alternatives or limit the time to a strict minimum, Article 5.1 will be violated even if the conditions at the detention centre are satisfactory (ECHR, 2023c).

In sum, finding a violation of Article 3 does not necessarily lead to a breach of Article 5.1 (f). The detention of a minor for a brief time with the material conditions adapted thereafter, and with the authorities concretely validating that detention was a measure of last resort, may be in accordance with Article 5.1 (f) (Turković, 2021). Still, the judgment of *M.D. and A.D. v. France* highlights the restrictive approach of the Court regarding minors in detention (ECHR, 2021a).

ARTICLE 8

Article 8 and Migrant Minors in Detention

In the ECtHR case law concerning migrant minors in detention, very often Article 8 is not relied on by applicants. In some cases, the applicant alleged a violation of Article 8, but the Court considered it unnecessary to examine the complaint under Article 8, alone or in conjunction with other articles, due to its findings under other articles (such as Articles 3, 5.1, and 13). Regarding cases in which Article 8-based allegations have been examined by the Court, it found the member

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[19] This case should be contrasted with an earlier case of *Rahimi v. Greece*, ECHR 2011b, where the Court found a violation of Article 5.1 (f) regarding the detention of an unaccompanied minor in the same detention centre on the island of Lesbos, highlighting that the authorities had in no way considered the best interest of the child and had not investigated whether placing the applicant in custody could properly be considered a measure of last resort. This was even more the case, the Court emphasized, since it already had found in the context of Article 3 that the material conditions at the detention centre with respect to hygiene and infrastructure were so bad that they undermined the very sense of human dignity. It therefore concluded that a breach of Article 5.1 (f) had occurred.

[20] The new legislation includes an exhaustive list of situations in which minors accompanied by parents may be put in detention, requiring that such detention be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest time possible.

[21] See also ECHR 2023b, indicating that it might not be sufficient to only rule out house arrest as an alternative to detention.

states guilty of violating Article 8 in a majority of the cases (ECHR, 2006, 2012b, 2016b, 2016d, 2020b; see, however, ECHR, 2016c, 2016f).[22]

Article 8 is divided into two parts: first it enumerates the protected rights (Article 8.1), then it clarifies under what conditions the rights can be restricted (Article 8.2). There are four rights listed in Article 8.1: rights to private life, family life, home, and correspondence. Regarding migrant minors in detention, the Court ruled that the detention of minors amounts to interference with both the parents' and the children's rights to *family life*, if the detention of a minor means that he or she is separated from his or her parent(s) (ECHR, 2006). When minors are accompanied by parents in detention, the Court concluded that a state's protection of a "child's best interests cannot be confined to keeping the family together and that the authorities have to take all the necessary steps to limit (…) the detention of families accompanied by children and effectively preserve the right to family life…." (ECHR, " 2012b, § 147). The Court found that there had been an interference with (and also a violation of) the right to family life with respect to both the adult and minor applicants (ECHR, 2012b; see also 2016b, 2016c, 2016f, 2018).

If the Court finds that interference with any of the rights protected by Article 8 has occurred, a state must satisfy each of three conditions set forth in Article 8.2 to avoid violating the Convention: (1) the restrictions of rights must have been "in accordance with the law," (2) "necessary in a democratic society," and (3) in pursuit of one or more of certain enumerated state interests. The requirement of lawfulness means that the restriction of the right must have support in law and that the law must be of satisfactory quality (ECHR, 2020b). As regards the prerequisite of necessary in a democratic society, this means that the interference must be both justified by a pressing social need (have a legitimate aim) and proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued (ECHR, 2006, 2012b). Finally, Article 8(2) requires that the measures in question pursue the interests of (a) national security, (b) public safety, (c) the economic well-being of the country, (d) the prevention of disorder or crime, (e) the protection of health and morals, or (f) the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Of these three conditions, the requirement of necessity in a democratic society is often more difficult to assess, and this assessment normally requires that the Court balance the interests.

The ECtHR emphasizes different circumstances of importance when balancing the interests but does not expressly indicate that any are more important and should be weighed more heavily against the others. However, the age of the child, the time in detention, the conditions in detention, and whether the detention was adapted for children seem to be relevant to include in the balancing of interests (ECHR, 2006, 2012b, 2018). In addition, whether the child was unaccompanied and whether the separation of the family members was caused by the detention of the child seem to play a role in the Court's assessment, at least in one older judgment (ECHR, 2006).

Furthermore, the existence of indications that the family might abscond might weigh in favour of a detention being justified (ECHR, 2012b, 2018). In some cases, the ECtHR also considered the detention to have been unnecessary, because there had been alternate measures the state could have used that were equally or more adequate (ECHR, 2006, 2018).

The Scope of Permissible Detention of Migrant Minors under Article 8

Two cases—*R.C. and V.C. v. France* and *A.M. and others v. France*—are identified where the Court found no violation of Article 8 regarding migrant minors (ECHR, 2016c, 2016f). These judgments were discussed above: the Court found violations of Article 3 but also that the detention measures at issue did not also breach Article 5.1 (f).

In the first of these two cases, the domestic authorities had ruled out resorting to less intrusive measures such as house arrest or electronic surveillance and the Court did not call that assessment into question (ECHR, 2016c). The parent had been sentenced to a 3-year prison term together with a 10-year exclusion from French territory. Since the expulsion delay had been caused by the receiving country's authorities' delay in issuing necessary documents, the Court concluded that it could not be attributed to the French authorities (ECHR, 2016c). The ECtHR found that under these circumstances the detention of a family for a period of 10 days was not disproportionate to the aim pursued and therefore Article 8 had not been violated.

In the second case—*A.M. and others v. France,* where anxiety-provoking speakers, a visible yard and other factors were held to violate Article 3 but not Article 5, with respect to a 7-day-long detention of two small children with their parent[23]—the national authorities had evaluated the risk of absconding and alternative measures to detention, taking into consideration the refusal of the applicant to appear for a meeting with the border police arranging the departure, the absence of identity documents, and the applicants' precarious housing situation. The Court did not consider those circumstances insufficient to justify France's assessment that detention was a necessary, last-resort measure (ECHR, 2016f). Moreover, the Court held that domestic authorities took all necessary steps to carry out the expulsion as soon as possible, and that it was only the applicant's refusal to board the plane that prolonged the time spent in confinement (ECHR, 2016f). It was concluded that the detention was not disproportionate to the aim pursued, and accordingly, Article 8 had not been violated (ECHR, 2023b).

These two cases may be compared with *R.K. and others v. France,* belonging to the same series of five judgments against France from 2016. In that case, French authorities had mostly relied on the applicant's refusal to board the plane as support for the risk of absconding. The Court stated that it was not convinced that that element was sufficient to establish the risk of absconding and to eliminate other, less-intrusive options (ECHR, 2016d). Furthermore, the ECtHR highlighted that it clearly represented a lack of desire to be expelled but did not establish a desire to evade the authorities. The Court concluded that other measures could have been considered, such as hotel accommodation combined with regular

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[22]See *Mubilanzila and Kaniki Mitunga v. Belgium*, 2006, § 87; *Popov v. France*, 2012, § 148; *A.B. and others v. France*, 2016, § 156; *R.K. and others v. France*, 2016, § 117: *Moustahi v. France*, 2020, § 115 (finding violations of Article 8). See however *A.M. and others v. France*, 2016, § 97, R.C. and *V.C. v. France*, 2016, § 83 (no violation of Article 8).

[23]The children were 2.5 years and 4 months old.

attendance at a police station (ECHR, 2016d). Thus, the Court found a violation of Article 8.

Article 8 seems not to have been engaged with as often as Article 3 and Article 5.1. However, the cases that have interpreted it have required a properly established risk of absconding for interference not to constitute a violation. The refusal to board a plane alone is likely insufficient (ECHR, 2016d). The state must have ruled out other, less intrusive measures to detention such as house arrest, but also have done its utmost to limit the time in confinement. In *R.C. and V.C. v. France* and *A.M. and others v. France,* the Court expressed that a prolonged time in detention should not be attributed to the state accused of violating the Convention when the delay was caused by the receiving country or the applicant's refusal to board the plane (ECHR, 2016c, 2016f). This position should be contrasted with *M.D. and A.D. v. France,* where the Court held that although the state had taken all necessary steps to minimize the time in detention, the actions of the applicant causing delays did not free the state from its Article 3 obligations regarding the child (ECHR, 2021a).

To summarize, the choice to detain migrant minors was only deemed proportionate to the aim pursued in two of the cases. Still, the scope of their legal ability to detain migrant minors is wider under Article 8 than under Article 3.

DISCUSSION

The Practical Needs Expressed by Police Officers

The police interviewees mainly identify two situations when it could be necessary to detain migrant minors. First, they consider it better to have child-friendly detentions of short duration that make deportations of children smooth and dignified than officials coming early in the morning and enforcing a deportation or separating the family. In this situation, the police officers clearly address the well-being of the children (to have a smooth and dignified departure).

Second, the police officers consider it better to have child-friendly detentions that prevent minors from committing crimes than to let children continue to commit crimes. In this situation, the interviewees address both community safety (fewer crimes are committed) and the well-being of the children (children are less exploited).

The Scope of Permissible Detention under the European Convention

Articles 3, 5.1, and 8 are constructed in different ways: for example, there is an absolute prohibition on interfering with the rights protected in Article 3 if the required level of severity is attained, while the assessment of whether Article 8 has been violated includes a delicate balancing of interests. Nevertheless, the ECtHR relies on the same circumstances to decide whether there has been a violation or not. Regarding Article 3, the age of the child, the standard of the detention centre, and time spent in detention have been particularly stressed, while the age of the child and the time spent in detention have been used only as a last resort in cases citing Articles 5.1 and 8.

Article 3—which protects against torture at the hands of a state party—gives states the least legal room for detaining minors, judging by the fact that all cases identified resulted in a violation of the provision. This might partially be explained by the fact that Article 3 does not allow for a balancing of interests.[24] Hence, when studying the question of the permissible scope for detaining minors, it is of particular importance to scrutinize the cases concerning Article 3. Judging by these cases, if the material conditions at the facility are adjusted for families and the time of detention is brief, a detention might not reach the threshold of Article 3, taking into consideration the age of the children. It is important to stress that the legal room for detaining migrant minors in accordance with the Convention is minimal, and that the ECtHR found at least one violation in all these cases, even though, in a few judgments, the Court concluded that certain human rights had not been violated.

The Practical Needs and the Scope of Permissibility

Is the scope of permissibility for detaining minors enough to meet the practical needs that the police experience, or vice versa?

The first consideration, according to the interviewees, is to make a smooth and dignified deportation by putting the minors in a child-friendly detention centre. Some police officers state that it can take more than 24 hours to execute a deportation, but it is expected to not take more than a few days. If this is the case, it is possible that there is legal room for states to detain children according to the European Convention, at least with respect to older minors, when the timeframe is very brief, and the detention centre is suitable to house children. However, the principle of last resort means that alternatives other than locking up must have been ruled out. Consequently, a detention in this situation might be reserved for migrants who are troublesome and try to escape.

The other need according to the police officers is to have the children in detention and then deport them to their country of origin instead of letting them continue to commit crimes that they may be forced to commit. The interviewees did not elaborate on this situation, but it seems as if this situation is intended to use detention as a tool to *prevent* certain boys from committing crime. However, *preventing* crimes is not one of the enumerated situations listed in Article 5.1, at subsections a–f; also, convicted or suspected criminals—even if they are older children—can be detained according to some of these subsections.[25] Regarding sub-section 5(f)—"… a person against whom action is being taken with a view to a deportation…"—it is reasonable to think that a lengthier time in detention is often needed in this situation and that there are often other alternatives available than to detain the minors. Under such circumstances, it is probably not in accordance with the European Convention to put migrant children in detention. However, in the studied case law of the ECtHR, it is unclear what role the migrant minors' criminality might play in the Court's assessment of the legality of detaining them.

Thus, the permissible scope is too small to meet all the practical needs expressed by Swedish police officers. However, it is important to stress that the necessity to detain children in the situations that the police interviewees mentioned has

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[24]This is also the case regarding Article 5.1, but the assessment of the arbitrariness contains elements of a balancing of interests.

[25]Under Swedish law, it is, however, possible to put children who are suspected of having committed certain crimes in detention, if there are exceptional reasons; see The Swedish Law (1964:167) with Particular Regulations about Juvenile Offenders, Section 23.

not been examined more closely in this article. For instance, one might argue that it is more child-friendly to pick the children up early in the morning without many onlookers than to detain them overnight.

The Gap between the Legal Requirements and the Views of the Practitioners

Naturally, the ECtHR and the police practitioners have different starting points regarding the question of putting migrant minors into detention: the overall aim of the ECtHR is to protect individuals' human rights, while the police interviewees stress the perspective of enforcing a deportation. This could illustrate Bhabha's statement that the state's attitude towards migrant minors is ambivalent: the ECtHR wants to protect vulnerable children, while the police desires to protect the public from threatening outsiders (even if they are children).[26] In addition, the police and the Court sometimes make completely different evaluations of the significance of certain circumstances: regarding age, the position of the ECtHR is that the circumstances under which a state may use detention must be narrower for younger children, while one police interviewee claims that an infant will not be affected by sitting in detention with his or her mother.

However, in many respects, the ECtHR and the police officers have the same views. For instance, some police interviewees stress the restrictiveness of putting minors into detention, while the Court emphasizes detention as a last resort and only in a few cases found that the detention was in accordance with some of the Convention articles. Likewise, both the police officers and the ECtHR stress the importance of the conditions in detention and that family members not be separated.[27]

Making comparisons between the Court and the interviewees is complicated by the concept of detention, i.e., what constitutes detention. When speaking about detention, it is natural to think about locked-up facilities. In the interviews, the police officers mention short-term detention—when the children are in a guarded hotel and not locked up—as an alternative to the more traditional, closed detention (The Swedish Aliens Act (2005:716)).[28] Similarly, the ECtHR in some cases concluded—regarding the principle of detention as a last resort—that other measures such as hotel accommodation and regular attendance at the police station should have been considered.

CONCLUSION

Can migrant minors put in detention ever be in accordance with human rights law? International organizations such as the United Nations Child Rights Committee answers "no" (United Nations, 2023), while the ECtHR rules "yes" but with very strict limitations in place. The diverging positions of the two organizations shows the fragmentation in this legal framework. In addition, there is a dissonance between the legal requirement and the practical needs identified by the police respondents.

Are there any lessons to be drawn from this study by the actors? The state officials must adhere to the limits set out by the Court, which have been explored in this article, so one immediate action that the Swedish border police might consider is to prioritize educational efforts regarding the scope of permissible detention of migrant minors. However, what is permissible when it comes to detaining migrant minors is not always easily foreseen, since the Court has found a violation of Article 3 in nearly all of the investigated cases while highlighting that the practice can be in accordance with the Convention. Thus, it would be useful if the Court clarified its stance as to where the line between permissible and not permissible detentions is to be drawn, keeping in mind that each case is unique. In addition, with a significant part of the relevant case law only existing in French, the question should be posed whether language barriers make it difficult for national actors, such as judges and police, to access the precedent set by the ECtHR, and in turn follow the limits set by the European Convention.

The actors involved in the issue of detaining migrant minors might have different perspectives on the issue, but they must not lose sight of the fact that these children are categorized as some of the most vulnerable in society and that their rights must be protected. This begs the question of whether the time has come for the ECtHR to close the door completely regarding the detention of migrant minors (Turković, 2021), whether the status quo should be favoured, or whether the Court should take into further consideration the needs of the practitioners on the ground. When answering that question, the best interests of the child need to be at the forefront of everybody's mind.

The vulnerability of detained migrant children also makes the subject of this article an important research field. For instance, it would be relevant to study the views of state officials other than Swedish border police, or the limits set by other human rights law instruments than the European Convention.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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[26]Compare Chapter 2 above.

[27]Regarding the separation of family members, see also, e.g., ECHR, 2016c.

[28]In Swedish law, short-term detention is not even labelled as a detention, Chapter 9, Section 12.

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Interpretation of the SafeGrowth method from a police perspective—Possibilities and hindrances in local crime prevention initiatives

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This article is related directly to the First European Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) held in Umea, Sweden in May 2023.

ABSTRACT

In this article, the focus is on the crime prevention method SafeGrowth and its implementation in Drottninghög, Sweden. We highlight the police perspective on the implementation of SafeGrowth in Drottninghög, a risk area in Helsingborg, Sweden. Contrary to ordinary crime prevention programmes, the police are not the leading actors in the SafeGrowth process; instead, they join, as an equal party, the residents and other actors in the project. This article is partly the result of a process evaluation conducted between August 2021 and October 2022. The data consists of a focus group interview and an on-site visit and was compiled in October 2022. In the analysis, three themes related to the police perspective are identified: (1) the relationship between SafeGrowth, the area's crime problem, and evidence-based policing; (2) the contribution of SafeGrowth in terms of collective efficacy, and (3) problems related to evaluating SafeGrowth within the area. In the results, it becomes clear that, from a police perspective, the implementation of SafeGrowth may become problematic. The problems pertain to the selection of both areas and local problems to work with, the conjunction of different descriptions of realities, and organization within the project. For SafeGrowth to succeed in Drottninghög and similar areas, police perspectives must be included more clearly in order to facilitate cooperation. Despite these problems, we identified that a major advantage of the SafeGrowth method was its contribution to collective efficacy in the area, which, in turn, can be helpful to everyday police work in Drottninghög.

Key Words   Crime prevention; CPTED; evidence-based policing; local crime problems; Swedish police; vulnerable areas; qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this article is the crime prevention method *SafeGrowth* and its implementation in Drottninghög, Sweden. *SafeGrowth* is a Canadian-American method for dealing with crime prevention and safety which has been implemented in several cities in different parts of the world (cf. https://www.safegrowth.org/). Drottninghög was the first residential area in Europe to implement SafeGrowth. The authors followed and evaluated the implementation process (Högdahl & Thodelius, 2022). The SafeGrowth method starts by carrying out work with small, local neighbourhoods in order to fight crime and the fear of crime. With SafeGrowth, residents are taught how to work with crime prevention and how to solve their local problems in a structured way. This article will focus on the role of the police force within the implementation process. One of the conclusions drawn in the evaluation was that the police were not sufficiently involved in the implementation of SafeGrowth, which was mainly due to the method's emphasis on co-creating crime prevention initiatives.

Study Context

The residential area of Drottninghög is named on the list of a total of 61 vulnerable areas in Sweden which have been identified by the Swedish Police authority [Polismyndigheten]. The definition of a vulnerable area is a geographically limited area with a low socioeconomic status, where criminals can have a negative influence on the local community (Police Authorities,

2021, p. 7). Vulnerable areas are, in turn, divided into three different categories: specific vulnerable areas, risk areas, and vulnerable areas. In 2021, the Swedish Police authority concluded that 19 areas could be characterized as specific vulnerable areas, 14 as risk areas and 28 as vulnerable areas (Police Authorities, 2021).

Drottninghög was defined as a risk area (the middle category). Risk areas often have problems with open-air drug dealing, hostility towards society, and outward violence endangering third parties. In Drottninghög, compared with violence, open-air drug dealing is considered as a more serious problem.

Being placed in this category also underlines the need for special interventions to increase the safety of residents and decrease negative social exposure in the area (Backlund, 2018). These interventions are often implemented by the municipality. In Drottninghög, the municipality and the local public housing company (Helsingborgshem) have worked very actively with different initiatives, such as different co-creation projects, neighbourhood development, and a great part of it has been refurbished (Högdahl, 2022).

Areas such as Drottninghög are prioritized in Swedish police work, on both a strategic and an operational level. In 2015, the Swedish Police Authority developed a more focussed strategy targeting organized crime. The strategy highlighted the need to fight against local criminal activities in order to decrease crime and increase safety. In addition, the strategy aimed at strengthening people's confidence in the Rule of Law among residents in vulnerable areas. This strategy is partly focussed on reducing access to weapons, violence, disorder, and drugs (Police Authorities, 2021).

In this context, SafeGrowth was implemented on the initiative of the municipality. SafeGrowth is described as a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) project, but in contrast to other CPTED projects, this method has a bottom-up perspective. This means working with a problem-based process and relying on a "TO-FOR-WITH-BY" principle in order to facilitate long-term work in the area and contribute to participation, inclusion, and local democracy (see Högdahl & Thodelius, 2022 for an overview of the method).

In short, CPTED can be described as a crime prevention strategy that aims to alter physical environments through the use of different design strategies (Cozens et al., 2005, Cozens & Love, 2015). Since such strategies often result in major changes (and costs), they are mainly applied in relation to new constructions or renovations within an area, in order to prevent crime and insecurity. This tradition emphasized the significance of place and situation where crimes occur. While similar to situational crime prevention (SCP), CPTED can be defined as more proactive. It can be applied before a problem has occurred, unlike SCP, which is more reactive (cf. Thodelius & Ceccato, 2022, p. 48ff.).

Objective

The objective of this article is to highlight the police perspective in the implementation of SafeGrowth in Drottninghög. Contrary to ordinary crime prevention programmes, the police are not the leading actors in the process of establishing SafeGrowth; instead, they join as an equal party together with the residents and other actors in the project. By elaborating on the role of the police in SafeGrowth in Drottninghög, we also address the possible effects and consequences of SafeGrowth both for Drottninghög and for similar risk areas.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

In this section, we will stress the importance of place and place-based interventions, such as CPTED, from a police perspective. Traditional policing has mainly focused on individuals and not on places where crime occurs. This can be described as a reactive form of policing founded on crime reports from the public, a kind of policing used in many countries (Lum & Koper, 2017). However, policing has been developing in recent years, and higher degrees of analysis and reflection are being applied to everyday work. Also, there is a greater focus on effectivity and development of policing methods. This, in turn, has also resulted in crime prevention work becoming more intertwined with reactive work. Today, evidence-based policing has become a general term describing the way in which development and research has had a direct influence on the practices of policing. (Lum & Koper, 2017, Police Authorities, 2022).

In addition, the development of environmental criminology, especially studies of place and space, have come to influence policing, and specifically the concept of *law of crime concentration.* Crime concentration refers to the change in focus from individuals or individual motives to the place and time of criminal occurrences (Weisburd et al., 2016).

In praxis, the law of crime concentration stresses the importance of understanding the emergence of hotspots, and why crime does not occur more randomly in a city or residential area. Explanations of crime concentration at a general level are often a combination of characteristics: the geographic location, social context, design and use of the place (Weisburd et al., 2016). Hence, crime concentrations can occur in small geographic units with specific characteristics that make it possible (and promising) to work with place-based interventions and/or design forms, such as SCP and CPTED.

Research Methodology

To fulfil the objective, which is to highlight and elaborate on the police perspective, this article has applied a qualitative approach. The material collected included a focus group interview, informal conversations, and an on-site visit conducted in Drottninghög, Helsingborg, in October 2022. The interviews and on-site visit were part of the evaluation regarding the implementation of SafeGrowth conducted in 2021–2022 (Högdahl & Thodelius, 2022).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for this article consisted of a focus group interview with representatives from the municipality, the local housing company (Helsingborgshem), and the local police department. After the interview, the representatives of Helsingborgshem and of the police met for an on-site visit. The on-site visit in different areas of the neighbourhood provided opportunities for informal conversation. The combination of focus-group interviews and informal conversation offered a clear picture of the role of the police in the SafeGrowth project by combining the interviewees' collective experience in the focus group and subjective experiences in the informal conversations (Dahlin-Ivanoff & Holmgren, 2017)

We applied a deductive qualitative content analysis comparing theoretical concepts and data (Krippendorff, 1980). The analysis brought out three themes: 1) the relationship between SafeGrowth and the actual crime problem; 2) evidence-based policing and contributions to collective efficacy; 3) problems when evaluating SafeGrowth.

Ethical Reflections

The participants in the study were anonymized and all information was kept confidential. Individual responses to our questions or quotes used in the Results section were carefully selected so that they cannot be attributed to any specific participant (Swedish Research Council, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we address the relationship between SafeGrowth and crime problem areas and evidence-based policing. Next, we highlight the contribution made by SafeGrowth in terms of collective efficacy. Lastly, we elaborate on problems related to the evaluation of SafeGrowth.

SafeGrowth in Relation to Identified Crime Problems and Evidence-Based Policing

The implementation of SafeGrowth in Drottninghög can be described as mainly involving the residents of the area. Police involvement in the implementation was rather low. Initially, the police officers participated in some meetings and contributed a presentation of the local situation, an assignment that is in line with the Police authority's crime prevention measures (Police Authorities, 2022). However, over time, the police have mainly acted as observers in the process—including making suggestions related to interventions.

Eventually, when interventions were suggested by the residents, it became clear that there was a discrepancy between the suggested interventions and the local crime problem according to the police. For example, the local situation related to crime underlined the problems at the parking lots and at specific hotspots for open-air drugs. Even though the residents suspected that there was drug dealing in some specific areas, they had no real knowledge as to where to find the actual hotspots. In practice, they concentrated mostly on creating communal activities at the local greenhouse and other places with no obvious connections to actual crime problems. The focus in SafeGrowth shifted from crime to safety, an issue that was more relevant for the residents, most of whom had never experienced any crime in the area.

The local police addressed the fact that the green areas and places where SafeGrowth work had been carried out had not made use of police knowledge regarding place use or the occurrence of crime. Instead, safety strategies from CPTED were applied, such as creating social cohesion in the area and increasing place management. This discrepancy between crime problems and interventions can be understood in the light of Wikström's discussion about pitfalls in crime prevention (2007), who explains that sometimes the gap between the citizens' views on the causes of crime and crime occurrence and the police authority's expertise can undermine the crime prevention approach.

Despite this, the local police perceived SafeGrowth as a positive initiative for Drottninghög since the police and the residents became more acquainted with one another, thereby strengthening their relationship. It was also clear that Safe-Growth strengthened links between the municipality and the local police, which will probably have a positive effect on future cooperation efforts.

However, this indicated that differing values were at stake. Participation in SafeGrowth strengthens relationships and trust between municipalities, residents, and the police. Yet the crime problem will persist. Possibly, the motivation for participating could have been more focused on cooperation than on crime prevention. Paradoxically, this might lead to a greater discrepancy between the residents' perceptions of crime and the police perspective, since this could make it harder to establish a mutual stand regarding the crime prevention initiative. Alternatively, as stated by one police officer: "The police handle their reality, others work with theirs."

The possibility of implementing SafeGrowth in other areas were briefly addressed, mainly since this is part of the method, a fundamental idea of which is that participants in one area will inspire and start processes elsewhere until SafeGrowth has been diffused all over the city. However, this notion might conflict with evidence-based policing in vulnerable areas.

The Swedish Police Authority's strategy for policing in vulnerable areas affirms that the police cannot solve all problems single-handedly. Instead, solutions need to be identified in cooperation with other stakeholders (Police Authorities, 2018). The role held by the police in these areas is directed towards regaining control in an area through increased police presence (BRÅ, 2016) and supporting and enabling the prevention work of other actors. This is especially important in areas that are particularly vulnerable, in which parallel structures and parallel administrations of justice are put into practice. In policing, this strategy often includes an active problem-oriented approach and the physical presence of more police professionals in an area, including foot patrolling, which seems to be having an effect on violent crime at certain hotspots (Weisburd & Telep, 2014; Ratcliffe et al., 2011).

Police presence and contacts made between police and residents are important factors when trying to reverse a negative trend, a reversal which has been facilitated by Safe-Growth. However, in our interview with the local police, we discovered a paradoxical pattern: police presence has both increased and decreased. It has increased in terms of neighbourhood police officers visiting the area and neighbourhood events being held more often but decreased in terms of less hotspot work, fewer visits to schools, and less reactive work. This means that the policing strategy became more difficult to carry out, since different actors worked in parallel with various initiatives to try to address a difficult situation. As a result, the police got closer to the residents in terms of trust and mutual respect—but this also made it harder for them to carry out more reactive work.

Even if SafeGrowth was developed to handle severe crime and safety issues, the method is not compatible with Swedish police work. In order for SafeGrowth to work in Sweden, the method needs to account for how the police work in areas according to the severity of crime problems and local situations. In other words, the police perspective needs to be included from the outset, not added ad hoc. SafeGrowth may be a method that is more suitable to implement in areas with

fewer severe problems, and where the policing resources are not as prominent. It is even possible that the method has had no effect at all on the crime problems in Sweden's vulnerable areas.

Collective Efficacy

SafeGrowth has the ambition to reduce crime and increase safety in an area, mainly from a bottom-up perspective, such as through co-creation, local democracy, and local governance. This approach could increase the degree of collective efficacy in the areas. Collective efficacy is a term defining residents' capacity to exercise control in their neighbourhoods in terms of intervention against crime and disorder (Sampson et al., 1997). Increased collective efficacy in Drottninghög could be a positive factor for the police—especially since it can contribute to a greater willingness to report crime and counteract the code of silence in the area. It could also reduce the degree of legal cynicism and mistrust against the authorities.

Evaluating the Effect of SafeGrowth in Drottninghög

As highlighted in previous research, all crime prevention initiatives need to be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. In the case of the SafeGrowth implementation in Drottninghög, this evaluation would be problematic to conduct. As previously described, Drottninghög is an area with many ongoing interventions and projects, and it would therefore be hard to separate out the effects of one single initiative.

For this reason, it is hard to foresee the effects of SafeGrowth in Drottninghög, in both the short and long term. In addition, Drottninghög might differ from other risk areas in Sweden since the inhabitants of Drottninghög are used to participating in co-creation projects. In addition, housing companies and the municipality are willing to invest resources in the area. This is likely to result in Drottninghög developing into an area with many advantages when it comes to implementing SafeGrowth compared with other risk and vulnerable areas in Sweden (Högdahl & Thodelius, 2022:69-70).

CONCLUSION

As addressed in the previous section, implementing Safe-Growth without including police knowledge and strategies related to the local situation can be problematic. In addition, the aim of SafeGrowth is to work to support crime prevention with CPTED and needs to be interconnected with the identified hotspots. Otherwise there is a risk that the intervention will be inefficient or counterproductive. This problem might also have been built into the method. In SafeGrowth, the residents' description of reality is guiding the work, rather than police expertise. In police work, crime problems are being identified in relation to the law, and not to the experience or description of an area.

The situation mentioned above also explains the shift of perspective in Drottninghög, from crime prevention measures to safety work. As seen in Drottninghög, instead of dealing with crime, the SafeGrowth method focused on social cohesion and community. While this is important for the residents, by labelling the method as crime prevention, there is a risk of lines being blurred and all or nothing becomes crime prevention. Ultimately, there is a danger that this could lead to crime prevention work losing its legitimacy.

Furthermore, in Drottninghög, the role of the police in the SafeGrowth method was not defined, either in the teams or in the processes. For other SafeGrowth projects, resource teams that support local teams are assigned, but there was no such organization in Drottninghög. We argue that the police should always be present as suitable actors within a resource team, in order to support the work at more strategic levels.

Implementing SafeGrowth in areas that the Swedish police define as vulnerable and characterized by severity of crime and criminal networks can lead to controlling and influencing the local community negatively. These areas require reactive policing in order to initially control the area, before crime prevention work can be implemented. This strategy stresses the importance of frequent police presence in the areas, before other actors get involved—especially if the method truly is meant to work with pro-active crime prevention through design and place-based interventions.

In addition, since SafeGrowth is based on the participation of residents in the area and aims for co-creation and autonomous work, the method contributes to an increase in the degree of collective efficacy in the area. This contribution is highly significant since we know that collective efficacy tends to be low in vulnerable areas.

To conclude, from a police perspective, the implementation of SafeGrowth in Drottninghög, and similar areas, might be problematic. Not only is the selection of local problems to work with tricky, so too is the conjunction of residents' and police professionals' different descriptions of reality. This is important to consider in the organization of the project, so that the police expertise is used in the best way. We also see the advantages of the method in relation to collective efficacy, which could ultimately be of support to everyday police work in Drottninghög.

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COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELL-BEING

A Canadian First Nations radon assessment and COVID-19 restrictions: A difficult pairing

Jared Bishop*

ABSTRACT

Radon is a known carcinogen and a by-product of degrading naturally occurring radioactive elements. The North Shore Micmac District Council (NSMDC) board of directors, in Eastern New Brunswick, Canada, were aware of this issue and saw a need for increased radon testing and awareness in their communities. The initial plan was to administer a testing blitz across communities to gauge the current levels of radon exposure in both residential and band-owned structures. This, with Elder consultation and a participant health survey, would create a data set used to guide future strategies effectively and better direct resources to mitigate the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. These plans were put in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in March 2020. The subsequent provincial levels of restriction could not have been predicted. The ever-changing pandemic-related restrictions, and public health's focus on a new deadly pathogen, led to difficulties managing and following through on many health and wellness projects. These circumstances led to a unique situation that delayed results, prolonged exposure to a known carcinogen, and may have consequences in the long term. Few procedures, treatments, or medications do not have side effects, and even warranted pandemic-related measures affect other aspects of health.

Key Words   Pandemic; carcinogen; Micmac; Mi'kmaq.

INTRODUCTION

The North Shore Micmac District Council (NSMDC), situated in Eastern New Brunswick, is a First Nations Tribal Council led by a Board of Directors comprised of seven First Nations Chiefs. The council provides consultation, directs services, and adds capacity to the seven member communities through housing, emergency management, technical supports, health and water resources, to name a few. These leaders saw a need to assess their people's current level of risk concerning radon.

Radon gas is a naturally occurring, radioactive, colorless, odorless gas that is directly associated with an increased incidence of lung cancer. New Brunswick, Canada, has some of the highest incidences of elevated radon levels in housing and public structures and some of the most severe cases nationally (Chen, 2021). Radon is the principal cause of lung cancer in the non-smoking population in Canada, with smoking in addition to exposure to elevated levels of radon gas increasing the lifetime risk of lung cancer in a linear fashion (Garcia-Rodriguez, 2018).

First Nations people have unique housing situations, histories, and autonomy that warrant individual ground-level research in order to yield usable data that improves the quality of life in communities. Demographics such as low rates of home occupant ownership, building code requirements separate from provincial building codes, and cultural differences all make First Nations people a group set apart, with potential for special challenges and risks (Randle & Thurston, 2022). Canadian First Nations communities have high numbers of smokers and are known to typically have higher rates of home occupancy and multigenerational home than off-reserve homes in Canada (Sarkar, 2017). It is well documented that the North Shore Micmac District Council (NSMDC) communities are situated in an area rich with decaying subterranean radioactive elements. Areas of similar geological makeup have been studied in the past, finding that as many as 20% to 40% of homes and public buildings need urgent remediation in surrounding areas (S. Z. Stanley, 2017). Current radon impact assessments are critical as lifestyle and technology allows for more time in the home and less natural home ventilation (F. I. Stanley, 2019). It is now supposed that it will take even greater efforts to alleviate the additional burden of lung cancer attributed to radon than was previously estimated, and home mitigation is the best avenue to reduce the risk (Priyanka, 2019).

Typically, on Canadian First Nations land, the Band is the owner of all or most homes and buildings and manages

renovations, inspections, and maintenance. This lack of a sense of ownership has been connected to lack of interest in individual home radon testing historically (Khan, 2021). Thus, the onus is put on leadership to initiate the testing and mitigation of radon. One avenue for collecting this information uniformly would be to partner with a tribal council such as the NSMDC. This would open the door to multiple communities, each with individual governance but accustomed to sharing information, capacity, and resources based on cultural similarities and mutually beneficial agreements. This Tribal Council represents seven Mi'kmaq communities in New Brunswick (Figure 1). These people are the first known inhabitants of Eastern New Brunswick, as well as large areas of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and parts of Québec (Kovach, 2009).

A Typical Community Radon Testing Study

Testing homes and residential buildings for radon in Canada is done following the guidelines created and regularly updated by Health Canada. These guidelines lay out specific information concerning testing equipment, testing locations, and information for assessing special buildings/interest groups (schools, hospitals, large buildings). These consistent federal guidelines allow for uniform and comparable results nationally. The goal of a typical radon testing drive would be to increase community awareness of radon and mitigators through social media campaigns and in-person consultation with the public, and healthcare staff. After the awareness campaign, kits would be distributed to interested parties either in person, by mail, or using a delivery service.

Single-family homes, attached homes, and apartments are typically tested with a single radon kit placed in a lived-in room far from exterior doors, windows, vents, and well off the floor. Radon levels in homes are ascertained using long-term (>90-day) testing kits. The testing period is most often completed over the coldest season of a country, as this is when doors and windows are open the least, and the test therefore reveals a building's highest annual level of radon. Most test kits have a Teflon disk that allows for easy tracking of the number of alpha particles created by decaying radon gas. A becquerel is a measure of radioactivity. One becquerel (Bq) is equal to one radioactive decay per second. Radon concentrations in the air are usually measured in becquerels per cubic metre (Bq/m^3) (ICRP, 2019). These alpha particles are the primary cause of lung damage and radon-associated
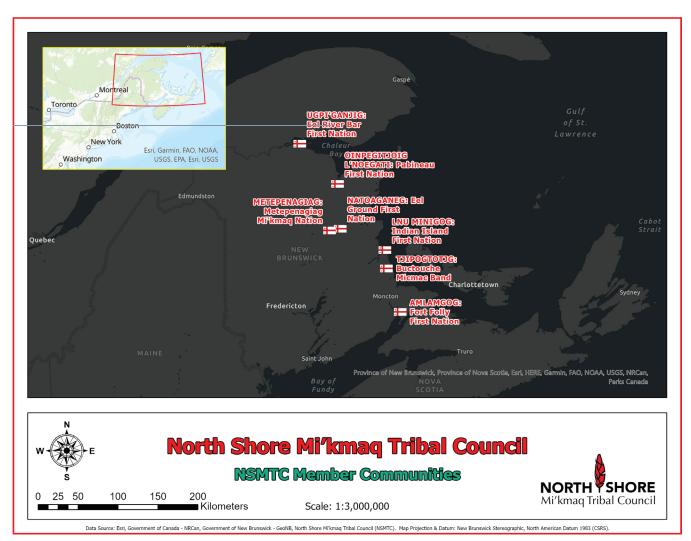

FIGURE 1 ????

cancers. In accordance with Health Canada guidelines, 10% of kits have a duplicate kit to be placed within 30 cm of the first for the same duration of time, and 2% of kits are blank for quality assurance purposes. After the testing period, kits are sent to a lab for assessment, and homes found to have levels greater than the Health Canada Guidelines of 200 Bq/m^3 require mitigation.

The mitigation process varies by home/building design but is typically successful in drastically reducing exposure to radon. For residential homes, mitigation is typically a simple one-day installation of a radon mitigation system, with potential adjustments to air exchanger settings or basement crack sealing supplementing the system. While each home design requires special considerations, the most common system consists of a perforated polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe passed through the concrete basement floor, under the foundation. This attaches to a contained fan that creates negative pressure, drawing air from under the home. Air exhausts from the system via the attic, side wall, or drain tile. Homes with crawlspaces are a unique challenge that require placing a layer of polyethylene barrier on the dirt floor of the crawlspace and sealing the periphery of the floor. This barrier then has the same system installed with the intake pulling air from under the polyethylene barrier. Regardless of home design, these systems are installed by a Certified Radon Mitigator. Public buildings have more specific guidelines and more options for testing. These are the typical methods and strategies employed in Canadian radon testing and mitigation.

The threshold set for this project was to test at minimum 10% of total on-reserve households (there are approximately 1,000 residential units across the seven communities) and three to six community buildings in each community across the participating First Nations. The plan was to follow these strategies to the letter, until the COVID-19 pandemic began.

A PANDEMIC CHANGES EVERYTHING

New Brunswick was successful in delaying COVID-19 outbreaks early on in this pandemic through strict interprovincial travel restrictions and local efforts, but by the beginning of the winter of 2021–2022 the province was more or less indistinguishable from other Canadian provinces (Broschek, 2022). First Nations in Canada have a unique governance structure and are separate nations within the country of Canada (Kuokkanen, 2019), allowing for each individual First Nation to assess its own level of risk and impose pandemic-related restrictions accordingly, whereas municipalities were required to adhere to provincial restrictions. As outbreaks became more widespread, there was a marked increase in local restrictions and a reduced number of in-person events, both on and off reserve land.

Health resources and focus were rightly directed to managing outbreaks, while other health-related initiatives had reduced priority levels. This was not a uniquely First Nations experience, it was global. The radon study was one such affected project. Radon and the risks associated with it are fairly well-known by the public within the province, and its status as a carcinogen is identified by a higher percentage of the public than in most other provinces (Government of Canada, 2022), but in the shadow of an unknown threat, the known threat was difficult to prioritize.

How Does a Pandemic Affect a Community Health Study?

Radon testing requires a physical presence. A person must install a kit, and a test kit has to be handled, transported across large areas, placed, and returned. Each step in the radon testing journey has potential for transmission of a contagious disease (Groth, 2022), and restrictions were put in place by provincial governments to limit the spread of disease through these vectors. The variability over time of provincial restrictions, and the community-specific restrictions in response to community outbreaks, hampered the distribution of tests and the effectiveness of awareness campaigns. One such example was a health centre that partnered with the project and promoted the need for testing homes for radon regularly via Facebook. The health director reported that it was difficult to keep radon on top of the page, as they were being asked to deliver federal, provincial, and community information about the ever-changing nature of COVID-19 several times daily. Other community champions noted fear from potential participants related to handling materials and contact with persons delivering testing equipment.

On the ground, entire communities were locked down and only open to community members at various times, depending on their levels of outbreak. Buildings typically open to the public, such as Band offices and community centres, were shuttered, accessible by appointment only, or limited to community members only at various times through the winter of 2021–2022. Even mailing kits to communities was discouraged due to the risk of transmission (Groth, 2022). Kits had to be distributed by health staff already overwhelmed by a pandemic, or administration staff already tasked with additional job requirements, such as cleaning, temperature checking, security, and occupant monitoring, to name a few. It was not ideal, but these overworked individuals were the only vector available to get testing supplies into the community. There is no doubt that test kit distribution was hampered by our collective efforts to reduce the spread of a very contagious virus.

These obstacles needed to be tackled with creativity. One community champion was also the supervisor for Meals on Wheels and was able to reach interested study participants who may not have been able to enter, or were unwilling to risk entering, public buildings where the community distribution centres were located. When possible, health teams distributed kits outdoors to reduce the likelihood of transmission and limit participants' time indoors. Outdoor community mailbox locations were also used to distribute kits, but these sites had to be staffed by persons in total personal protective equipment (PPE) and they had to brave biting cold weather.

As restrictions would not allow for in-person kit installation, participants were tasked with installing their own radon testing kits. Each participant was supplied a brochure and links to educational material explaining the ideal testing locations in homes. These resources, while beneficial, are no replacement for a Certified Radon Tester. Over 50% of test kits distributed for residential testing were either lost, not returned, or placed inappropriately (next to doors, in crawlspaces, cellars/basements that are not lived in) and had to be removed from the study. Participants stated that, often, they were given poor second- or third-hand information that

led to these kits being placed in locations that would yield false lows/highs. The potential for radon-related cancers increased in a linear fashion depending on the concentration and duration of exposure (Garcia-Rodriguez, 2018), and the restrictions related to the pandemic complicated the process of getting testing equipment into the hands of First Nations people.

CONCLUSION

In the subsequent cold season of radon testing, the number of participants doubled with far less effort. This could be due to compounding awareness campaigns into subsequent years, and knowledge being shared more readily by previous participants. There can be no doubt that in-person meetings and knowledge sharing improved testing uptake and would not have been possible in the previous pandemic environment.

In medicine, there are precious few procedures, treatments, or medications that do not have side effects. Many of these may not become evident for years, or the participant may never become aware of them, but that does not mean that a side effect should not be considered when managing an illness. In the same way, we must review and assess the effects of harsh pandemic-related restrictions during future pandemics. The lives saved in the short term are valued but will always come at a cost. In this specific case, pandemic-related restrictions extended the years of exposure to elevated levels of radon and increased the risk of lung cancer for many First Nations people in New Brunswick.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES
The researcher works for a Tribal Council, that represents and provides services to the seven member communities that participated in the study. The Board of Directors of the Tribal Council is comprised of the Chiefs of each of the seven communities. There was no additional monetary compensation provided to the researcher for taking on this project, and community leaders/participants were afforded no compensation for participation.

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Journal of COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELL-BEING

A healthy state? Geopolitics, health, and safety: A keynote presentation for the European Conference of Law Enforcement and Public Health

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This article is related directly to the First European Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) held in Umea, Sweden in May 2023.

ABSTRACT

Law enforcement and public health agencies operate in the context of their national government policies and resources. But improving and protecting health and community safety are made more difficult by four dark *geopolitical* forces which have been accelerating in recent years. *Neoliberalism* is driving governments to pursue low tax, low regulation small-state policies and aiding the expansion of uncontrolled globalization and colonialization of health-damaging manufacturing and services by multinational companies. The *"Sovereign individuals,"* first described in 1997, are the super-rich who have mastery over information technologies to avoid taxes and hide their wealth from governments. The vast offshoring of wealth has led to increasing inequalities in wealth and health, between rich and poor, further adding to civil distrust and unrest. Loss of revenues prevents government funding of health, welfare, and public protection whilst creating greater need for it. To explain the increasing poverty and harshness of life for the masses, there has been a rebirth and rise of *populism*. This has accelerated political corruption, created culture wars, fomented distrust of others, and added to global political instability. The information revolution has influenced all of these: it has created its own dark geopolitical force through the explosion of social media and industrial *disinformation* undermining individual critical thinking and democratic processes. Law enforcement and public health agencies face the consequences of these dark forces in their daily work, but they also need to understand more and develop more effective partnership responses to counter the worst excesses of the new geopolitical realities.

Key Words   Neoliberalism; commercial determinants of health; public health; community safety; sovereign individuals; offshoring; populism; oligarchy; super-rich; information revolution; disinformation

In many countries and jurisdictions, the police are seen as agents of the state, keeping order and control. There is very little public trust in such police forces and understandable fear and suspicion of them. How the police deliver their role is determined by many factors, including national political culture, the expectations of the ruling classes, systems of accountability, and the rule of law. Public health practitioners can sometimes be seen in the same way, reflecting their earlier incarnations, in some countries, as "sanitary police" (Carroll, 2002), a view being reinforced by some extreme libertarians today, many rising to prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The national landscape in which many police forces and public health services operate is one of declining democracy (Herre, 2022). The perception of corruption in governments is increasing (Transparency International, 2023). Societal fears are rising as people contemplate job loss, climate change, loss of freedoms as citizens, and experiences of prejudice or racism. Trust in governments is in decline. Trust in scientists, on the other hand is largely holding up, alongside trust in co-workers, community members, and in national health services. Two thirds of people believe they are being lied to by journalists, by governments, and by business leaders. Distrust is the default position, with 59% tending to distrust evidence until they see otherwise, and 64% lack the ability to have constructive and civil debates about issues they disagree on (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2022).

There are darker forces in play beyond national boundaries: *Geopolitics* is affecting the ability of police forces and public health services to create healthier, safer communities. *Geopolitics* concerns the influences of geography and economics on politics and on the relations between nations (Britannica, n.d.). *Geopolitics* has always influenced how countries behave and how their institutions are set up to act—whether this was in the era of colonialization, during the Cold War, or, in latter day times, due to neoliberalism. Recent features of the globalized world create new threats and pressures on public health and policing that are not confined within national boundaries. Four dark geopolitical forces have expanded rapidly and dangerously in the last few years: neoliberalism, the idea of the sovereign individual, populism, and disinformation.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism can trace its origins to two Austrian economists, Friedrich Hayek and Ludvig Von Mises. Neoliberalism contends that "markets work: governments don't." Markets allocate scarce resources, promote efficient growth and secure individual liberty better than governments. Government represents bureaucratic bloat and political imposition. Markets embody human freedom. With markets, people get what they deserve; to alter the market is to spoil the poor and punish the productive (Hayek, 1944).

Neoliberalism demands low taxes, small government, no restrictions on trade, and no regulations on who can do what. Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and economist Milton Friedman are widely credited with moving it into the political mainstream starting in the 1980s (Kuttner, 2019). Neoliberalism has been replicated across the westernized world and driven by the major world economic engines, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (Navarro, 2007).

In the health arena, neoliberalism has spurred on the health-damaging behaviours of the big multinational companies, helping them avoid paying taxes, following regulations, and being subject to restrictions to their advertising and marketing campaigns. Learning from the pioneering work of Big Tobacco, they have employed what are termed the *Merchants of Doubt* to subvert scientific evidence (Oreskes & Conway, 2010). They have suppressed impartial studies and funded alternative, and misleading, research. They have fielded their own scientists simply to seed uncertainty. None of their research has been required to prove conclusively their products are safe. Rather, it creates a climate of diversion and confusion, which respectable science is obliged to scrutinize and respond to, thereby wasting its time.

Multinational companies have heaped blame for the harms of their products on individuals who they portray as behaving badly and using their products irresponsibly. Ten multinational companies control most of what we eat (Oxfam, 2014); it is naïve to believe that we as individuals can manage our personal diets healthily without the control of Big Food's production methods and without limitations on their marketing practice. The alcohol industry desperately tries to attribute the blame for drinking and driving on individuals and presents itself as a force for good, doing anything it can but reduce alcohol consumption on the roads (Hoe et al., 2020). The gambling industry's "responsible gambling" campaigns blame individuals for their feckless behaviour with predictable negative effects on the heavily addicted (Marko et al., 2023).

Multinational companies have bought, bribed, and bullied politicians and trade ministries to obtain support for their interests and to remove non-tariff considerations from trade agreements. They have adversely influenced the ability of governments and trade blocs to create legitimate limits on their ability to sell their products (UK Faculty of Public Health, 2018). However, some countries have fought back in justifiably celebrated causes such as the Australian leadership on plain packaging for cigarettes (Hurst, 2015) and Uruguay's successful defence of its tobacco control laws in the Investor State Dispute Resolution against Phillip Morris International Tobacco company (Tobacco Tactics, 2020). Aggressive marketing continues, especially in the Global South, and especially against women and children, where trade regulation is light and public protections are limited (Tobacco Tactics, 2021a). To this end, the much-vaunted Framework Convention on Tobacco Control now presides over a world tobacco market which has increased in size and profitability since the treaty first came in (WHO FCTC, 2023).

The edges blur between organized crime and legitimate business. The tobacco industry has deliberately fuelled and stimulated smuggling of cigarettes, and illegal and counterfeit trading of cigarettes. All of these promote consumption of tobacco and create new markets (Tobacco Tactics, 2021b; Beelman et al., 2000). Supply lines for cocaine and for tobacco were sometimes shared in South American free ports. Colombian drug cartels and other criminal intermediaries have been involved in tobacco industry–stimulated cigarette smuggling. The tobacco industry has been implicated in surveillance, subterfuge, bribery, and corruption in Africa (Tobacco Tactics, 2021a; Titeca et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2021). Tobacco companies were also implicated in a break-in at health policy offices in Brussels, which led to the undermining of a European Union Tobacco Products Directive in 2012 (McKee et al., 2012). Money laundering, fraud, terrorism, and organized crime are all inextricably entwined (Perri & Brody, 2011). To be implicated with criminal intermediaries in smuggling tobacco is to be over the boundary of legal activity (UK Parliament Health Select Committee, 2000).

The Sovereign Individual

Alongside neoliberalism as an economic philosophy, there is an enabling economic mechanism which has accelerated the rise of the super-rich and oligarchs and the offshoring of wealth. It was spelled out in the 1997 book *The Sovereign Individual* (Davidson & Rees-Mogg, 1997). Described as the "most influential book you've never heard of," it is a playbook for the super-rich on how their fortunes can and should be hidden from meddling governments and thereby withheld from what are termed the *undeserving poor*. The sovereign individuals will have mastery over the new information technologies, enabling them to move their wealth offshore at the press of a button, out of sight of governments hungry for their tax revenues, which therefore become unable to provide a basic level of welfare for their citizens. The IT illiterate and those with limited access to the internet or wherewithal to use it will be made poorer. They will become the disenfranchised and disillusioned, progressively angrier, and more rebellious, and would need to be controlled.

The wealth of the super-rich has grown by unimaginable degrees during the pandemic years. The influence of oligarchs

has grown and created wealth sufficient to build private armies and send the super-rich into space or into the depths of the oceans. In 2021, Oxfam reported that the richest billionaires could give $139,300,000,000 away and still be as rich as they were in 2020. These billionaires could end global hunger for about $300 billion, a fraction of their overall wealth. Oxfam is among many calling for wealth taxes (Oxfam International, 2021). For some time, it has been clear that earnings are not increasing in accordance with productivity (Reich, 2011). In the meantime, the offshoring of undeserved profit by a small number of fortunate impresarios progressively takes away wealth which could enrich communities and improve social conditions for the majority. "The Panama papers" revealed a small fraction of this global theft of wealth; the 2016 exposure of the activities of offshoring finance consultancy Mossack and Fontseca showed the offshore holdings of 140 politicians and public officials from around the world with more than 214,000 offshore entities, connected to people in more than 200 countries and territories (ICIJ, 2016). Major banks have enabled the creation of hard-to-trace companies in offshore havens. Prominent clients and beneficiaries included the former presidents of Iceland and Ukraine, David Cameron, and Vladimir Putin (Harding, 2016).

Laundering of large sums of money has been possible onshore in major financial centres such as London. The so-called *London Laundromat* enabled Russian oligarchs to take up residence in London within 2 years, through an investor visa scheme, if they could invest £10 million in the United Kingdom (Neate, 2022).

The Rise of Populism

Neoliberalism is the driving policy, creating wealth for some; sovereign individuals can harness the new information technology to offshore wealth in trillions, accelerating inequality in health, worsening poverty, and inflation, destroying hope and shattering expectations for the masses. Another dark force is needed, to explain and justify what is happening, to refocus blame and pacify the disenfranchised—it is the force of *populism*. Populism is a political movement that attempts to appeal to "the people" by convincing them that its leaders alone represent them and their concerns are being ignored by a real or perceived "elite establishment" (ThoughtCo, 2023). The current brands of populism distract attention from the real profiteers and exploiters and fire up the masses, demonize minorities and migrants, create culture wars and fuel non-stories while real news gets hidden (Horton, 2023). Populism also gets a major boost from the information revolution. Steve Bannon was the high priest of populism, recognizing the power of social media and other information technology applications to influence individuals in their political thinking and voting, and in their personal beliefs. Bannon described the social media world as being divided, not into left and right, but into bubbles, and tribes, a theme fully embraced by President Trump (Roberts, 2017). Bannon highlighted a worldview, popular in far right and alternative religious circles, that believes progress and equality are poisonous illusions. Science and expertise are to be ridiculed, derided, condemned, and rejected.

Industrial Disinformation

The "second information revolution" brings considerable benefits for community safety and well-being, but it also brings risks (McKee et al., 2019). The information revolution fuels neoliberalism, sovereign individuals, and populism. It is directly the cause of another dark force—industrial scale *disinformation*.

Social media can propel credible and appealing—but also dangerous and negative—ideas much more rapidly than rebuttals, counter arguments, and fact checking can respond. Bad ideas gain traction more rapidly than sound rational arguments. Social media enables fringe opinions like a "flat earth," to reach a greater number of susceptible like-minded individuals more rapidly than before. Attention span is declining with the expansion of social media (Mohammed Ashrof, 2021). It is likely an audience has already made up its mind and is not open to new ideas, or to challenging old ones. Tribal thinking is more likely, and strengthened, with rational inquiry and argument further damaged. Public health and law enforcement agencies should be concerned about the power of social media to reinforce division and hostility. They also need to be watchful of the capacity of social media to fuel moral panics (Walsh, 2020).

The spread of inaccurate information may be *misinformation*: *false information that is spread, regardless of intent to mislead*. *Disinformation*, on the other hand, is *false information that is intentionally designed to mislead* (McKee et al., 2019). Disinformation may come from lone operators in the social media world. For example, individuals articulate legitimate concerns about vaccination on social media. What is new is the industrialization of disinformation through new information technologies. Bots, trolls, and click bait drive Russian-led efforts to promote uncertainty and hesitancy about vaccination and stimulate antivaxx sentiments (see Case Study 1) (McKee et al., 2019)

Russian "troll farms," or "factories" and "troll armies" grew out of the propaganda war with Ukraine after the invasion of Crimea (Walker, 2015). They are the driver of large-scale

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Case study 1: A case of disinformation for law enforcement and health first responders

An example of how information can be distorted by deliberate intent can be seen in one sequence of social media during the response to the murder of a police officer on Westminster Bridge in London, in 2017 (Hern, 2017). A photo was posted capturing the actions of bystanders on the scene, which could have been straightforward reporting: social media *information*. How viewers appraise the information may lead to some misunderstanding or misinterpretation, leading to *misinformation*. The photo was retweeted by "@SouthLoneStar" with a caption "Muslim woman pays no mind to the terror" and the hashtag "#banislam." After some British media had picked up on this angle, they subsequently distanced themselves from it, when the photographer and the woman came forward and described the reality of her distress on the scene. The reality was that "@SouthLoneStar" was an operative of a Russian troll farm, paid to seed *disinformation*.

Blue light service responders operate in the social media environment and need to be aware of malicious and mercenary intent, even though it might distract from their urgent humanitarian action.

disinformation. The political philosophy is not always to promote a single cause, but rather to create division and uncertainty and reduce the ability for viewers to act, whether it is with "is vaccination a good thing?" or "will Russia really invade Ukraine?"

On the geopolitical level, industrial disinformation has been a major influence in the election of Trump, the Brexit referendum (Case Study 2; Dearden, 2017) and in other elections around the world. For example, villagers in North Macedonia posted significant pro-Trump disinformation on Facebook before the 2016 election, earning themselves substantially more money through "clickbait" than any regular job in their country could provide (Hughes & Waismel-Manor, 2021). The result of this activity was to amplify the significance of the social media airtime Trump seemed to be generating and contributed to his credibility and electability. Cambridge Analytica harvested Facebook profiles of over 50 million Americans from 2014 onwards and were able to create significant targeted advertising to influence voting towards Trump (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018).

The public health world has been slow to understand industrialized disinformation (Jamison et al., 2019). Studies of social media content often screen out duplicate messages, rather than recognizing them as bot-generated. Abuses of social media are poorly appreciated and unregulated, and social media bosses show inertia over tackling the misuse of their systems (Hoffman et al., 2019).

Geopolitical Health after the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, these four aspects of the geopolitical world have come into stark relief.

Neoliberalism: We now clearly see disaster capitalism in action, with multinational companies operating in ways that harm others—whether they are fossil fuel companies, food suppliers, or public utilities in water or energy. War in Ukraine

has become an opportunity and an excuse for profiteering and speculation.

The Sovereign Individuals: In particular, the Russian oligarchs have come into clear sight and the police have been required to implement sanctions imposed on them while, at the same time, defending the property of those individuals (Cannane, 2022).

The rise of populism: Absurd claims have been made to justify the war against Ukraine—"Ukraine is not a real nation" (Yekelchyk, 2022). The role of Russian interference in the British populist ruling Conservative party has come strongly into the public eye. Some politicians have reflected that "the West" could have acted more strongly and rapidly to prevent the war if it had shown more resolve early on. However, this view omits the reality that British Conservative politicians were, and still are, in thrall to Russian money and influence (Webber, 2022). They were compromised politically; consciously, or carelessly, they were complicit in Russia's world view. They were never going to call for stronger measures against Russia's aggressive stance before the war. The Conservative party actively pursued a policy of attracting major donors—oligarchs, not just of Russian origin, but from other spheres of public and business life. Only in February 2022 did the Conservative party rename and finally close the "Conservative Friends of Russia," a body which had been entertaining Russian diplomats and business people over 12 years. Ben Elliott, formerly a co-chair of the Conservative party, promoted high-class concierge services to an audience of Russian oligarchs from his company Quintessentially (Stone, 2022).

Disinformation: We have seen complex industrial-scale promotion of pro-Russian positions (The Conversation, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The police and public health communities find themselves depleted of resources at a time when neoliberalism and the rise of the super-rich are creating widening inequalities in health and wealth and destroying social cohesion. When populist policies and industrial disinformation, which seek to lay the blame for societal ills on minorities and outsiders, and anywhere other than where it belongs, are added, there is a recipe for igniting social unrest on the one hand, and a collapse of the will to live on the other. Law enforcement and public health colleagues will be seen as people "in authority." Law enforcement particularly will be required to police ever more draconian laws and the restriction of individual freedom. We will need to forge ever closer alliances and make appropriate and effective shared responses to the problems of community safety and well-being. We will need to be seen as wise to the dark forces which are distorting our ability to protect and improve the health and safety of the public. We will need to be seen as humanitarian, not authoritarian. We will need to be seen on the side of people and planet, not on the side of certain politicians and sovereign individuals.

Hayek and von Mises presented neoliberalism as an antidote to the centralized power they saw in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Perhaps they did not foresee the attractiveness of their policy for dictatorships and their oligarchs, and the concentration of wealth and power this policy would inevitably create. Western post-war governments ignored the offer of

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Case study 2: Industrial disinformation and Brexit

Another example of automated or troll-driven disinformation is the case of "David Jones," aka "@DavidJo52951945." Ostensibly from Southampton, England, DavidJo had over 100,000 followers, built up since 2013. "He" tweeted feverishly anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, pro-UK, pro-USA, anti-EU sentiments, interspersed with many pro-Russian, anti-Ukraine tweets. "He" had supported Russian claims to the Crimea and questioned Western reporting of the Malaysian Airline flight MA17 disaster, shot down allegedly as an act of Russian separatists over Crimea. During the Brexit campaign, tweeting was done over 12 hours daily, 7 days a week, at the odd times of 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. UK time; strange working hours, but not in Moscow or St. Petersburg. Many analysts have concluded this was a bot or troll operating from a Russian troll factory (Dearden, 2017).

Alongside the mass automation of messages from other bots and/or trolls, *talking to each other*, these would have amplified the credibility and bandwidth of the Vote Leave message and accelerated support for Brexit.

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neoliberalism and proceeded to create democratic structures with state-led activities and social security; but they also neglected the insidious global growth of neoliberalism.

William Beveridge, architect of the British welfare state, said "We should regard want, idleness, ignorance, squalor, and disease as enemies of us all. That is the meaning of a social conscience; that we refuse to make our separate peace with evil." The language he used was the language of wartime; coming out of World War II, Beveridge was seeking a "country fit for heroes" and "planning for an outbreak of peace" (Wikipedia, 2023). In the post-emergency period of our war with COVID-19 it is necessary for us to recognize the true enemies we face in neoliberalism, in the sovereign individuals, in populism, and in disinformation. We must plan for an outbreak of health and safety for all our global citizens.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES
The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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The police as formal agents of change: Assisting desistance in individuals convicted of sexual offences

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ABSTRACT

Comprehensive and multi-disciplinary public health approaches are necessary to prevent sexual re-offending. However, criminal justice solutions continue to dominate and the arrangement in England and Wales is no exception. The introduction of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) in 2003 brought together the work of the police, prison and probation services in order to manage violent and sexual offenders. This paper focuses specifically on the work of the specialist police officers who are tasked under MAPPA with the Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and whether or not they can assist desistance in those who have been convicted of a sexual offence. We argue that the risk-based, highly politicized model of public protection that MOSOVO staff operate within creates tensions more likely to hinder than facilitate desistance. As indicated by findings in an independent review of the police's management of registered sex offenders (2023), successful desistance journeys are found in people who are supported by formal agents who actively promote hope and optimism and convey a belief that the person attempting desistance can change. In conclusion, we recommend that MOSOVO staff be willing and resourced to help individuals with sexual convictions develop a non-offending lifestyle and identity and support them in achieving this goal, which requires the provision of comprehensive support beyond risk management.

Key Words   Management of sexual or violent offenders (MOSOVO); multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA); assisted desistance; people who have sexually offended.

Understanding how to prevent sexual re-offending requires comprehensive and multi-disciplinary public health approaches (Kewley et al., 2021), yet criminal justice solutions continue to dominate (McCartan & Richards, 2021). Across England and Wales, the *Criminal Justice Act* 2003 saw the establishment of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) that bring together the work of the police, prison, and probation services. Statutory agencies (and, when required, health, education, housing, and so forth) work jointly to protect the public from serious sexual and violent harm. Official data appears to demonstrate success in achieving this aim, with sexual recidivism rates notoriously low. Indeed, the large majority of those convicted of a sexual crime will, within 10 to 15 years of living in the community offence-free, be no more at risk of sexually offending than people who have never been convicted of a sexual offence (Hanson et al., 2018). However, caution is needed when interpreting official data, as not all sexual assaults (including re-offences) are reported or result in a conviction. As such, official data is likely to not represent the true scale of sexual recidivism. Thus, sustained efforts to improve and strengthen approaches (including criminal justice ones) to prevent sexual re-offending must continue.

Management of Sexual or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO)

We turn to a group of specialist police officers tasked under MAPPA with the *management of sexual or violent offenders* (MOSOVO). These staff members carry caseloads of people

convicted of sexual and violent offences and are responsible for the risk assessment and management of MAPPA cases while living in the community. Little empirical analysis of these specialist police teams exists with attention centring on the development of risk tools (Kewley & Blandford, 2017), the quality of risk assessment and management plans (Kewley et al., 2020), the effectiveness of police training (Mydlowski & Turner-Moore, 2023), the experiences of men subject to such management (Mann et al., 2019) and the experience of practitioners during a climate of austerity (Mann et al., 2018).

MOSOVO staff are required to adopt risk assessment and management strategies that blend both control approaches, which serve to punish, and rehabilitative strategies, which aim to reintegrate (Kemshall & Hilder, 2020; Maruna & Mann, 2019). Given that they operate in a risk-based and highly politicized model of public protection (McCartan & Gotch, 2020), the capacity for MOSOVO staff to engage in authentic reintegrative practice requires closer examination (Kewley, 2017). Public protection offender managers' primary goal is to monitor and administer sanctions that are believed to protect the public by deterring future re-offending. Central to this monitoring are the requirements set out in *Sexual Offences Act* 1997 (amended by *Sexual Offences Act* 2003), whereby people convicted of a sexual offence are required to register certain details (often known as the sex offenders register) and notify the authorities of personal information, such as name, address, date of birth, and national insurance number. Until recently, there was little to no evidence in the literature to support the impact of sanctions such as notification and registration requirements on deterrence. This lack of literature has been highlighted in the Home Office's recently published independent review of police-led sex offender management by Mike Creedon (2023), in which one of the recommendations is to review current notification requirements and consider whether such requirements are fit for purpose. Instead, what is known are the unintended consequences experienced by both the person with the conviction and their non-offending family, such as unstable housing (Suiter & Andersen, 2022), high rates of unemployment (Wooldridge & Bailey, 2023), limited access to basic health care, including for those who are elderly and disabled (Tolentino, 2023) and those who need access to mental health and substance use treatment (Huebner et al., 2021). Thus, the ability for MOSOVO offender managers to promote desistance appears somewhat compromised.

This is of concern because to effectively help people desist from sexual offending, MOSOVO policy and practice must respond to individual risk and need while appreciating intersections between the individual/agentic, social/structural, and situational (Weaver, 2019) factors related to sexual re-offending. To prevent sexual re-offending, MOSOVO offender managers need to work within a contextual framework that allows for the implementation of comprehensive risk management strategies. These strategies should promote individual-level change and reintegration, facilitate the development of healthy social relationships and networks, and foster a supportive community and society that enables meaningful contributions from all members. Supporting MOSOVO offender managers in controlling known risks while at the same time promoting protective factors in people convicted of sexual offences could achieve outcomes beyond public protection, including a) the prevention of further harm to future victims, b) reduced social and economic costs to society, and c) the safe reintegration of people into society.

Yet the current and dominant paradigm of public protection remains risk-based, meaning significant tensions exists between MOSOVO policy and practice and the delivery of effective desistance practice. We briefly discuss here the unique nature of MOSOVO staff, who, despite having access to a range of legislative and control tools, can still act as formal agents of change and use integrative strategies to facilitate the process of assisted desistance among individuals convicted of sexual offences (Cresswell, 2020; Villeneuve et al., 2021).

Assisting Desistance

Desistance is a process by which people cease criminal behaviour; although it is not a distinct one-off linear event, as people zigzag into desistance (Maruna, 2001), with periods of intermittency, indecisiveness, ambivalence, lapse, and even relapse (Ouellet, 2019; Piquero et al., 2013). With at least two distinguishable phases to successful desistance, a blend of internal and social shifts is required (LeBel et al., 2008). The initial primary phase sees crime cease; this is purely behavioural and so requires a secondary cognitive phase in which the person shifts their identity from one of "offender" to "non-offender." This phase requires both an internal psychological transformation in which the person disassociates with the "offender" label and external validation from others (Farrall et al., 2010; Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001). Both internal and external validation help with the process of de-labelling, as both the desister and those interacting with them no longer perceive them as an "offender," and the person thus re-gains a sense of belonging to the community (McNeill, 2016). Therefore, in order for people to "go straight," cognitive and behavioural changes made at the individual level are only fortified and realized by and within the social structures and networks in which they exist (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Weaver, 2016).

An authentic sense of agency and self-determination (coupled with external opportunities) provides the bedrock on which identity transformation, behaviour change, and ultimately desistance can be realized (Giordano et al., 2008; King, 2014). This can sometimes be achieved *in spite* of external controls and sanctions. However, pervasive criminal justice controls (McNeill, 2019), punitive legal restrictions (Thomas & Marshall, 2021), and hostile attitudes towards people who have committed sexual offences (McCartan et al., 2015) will likely hinder this process and reinforce feelings of shame and stigma (Bailey & Klein, 2018). Of particular concern is that any interaction that reinforces stigma has the potential to undermine positive working relationships and prevent people from seeking help, making it harder to help them desist from crime (Grady et al., 2019). When shame is stigmatized, that is, the person is degraded, labelled (in this case "sex offender" or "deviant"), and excluded, cognitive transformation becomes more difficult. On the other hand, when shame is reintegrative, meaning feelings of remorse and guilt are still felt, but the person's sense of worth is preserved and not labelled, desistance is more likely (Braithwaite, 1989). True desistance is experienced when the new non-offending identity is both internalized and fully accepted and recognized by others (either informally or formally) (Buchanan & Krohn, 2020).

Interactions with formal agents are powerful as they can both reduce and reinforce stigma. Reports of the nature of formal interactions between MOSOVO staff and people with sexual convictions across England and Wales are inconsistent. Many MOSOVO staff perceive the provision of welfare and support as a detraction from their core proactive policing duties (Christensen et al., 2022; Nash, 2019). Some view people with sexual convictions as monsters (Nash, 2016), who should be managed closely because they are dangerous, untrustworthy, and manipulative (Kewley, 2017). Some MOSOVO staff assume that, if given the opportunity, the risk of people reoffending would escalate (Mann et al., 2018). Such stigmatized attitudes are likely to permeate interactions between the MOSOVO staff and the people they supervise and therefore do little to promote agency or identity transformation. This practice is incongruous with the factors needed to promote the desistance process (Mann et al., 2019), and, indeed, where this occurs, people with sexual convictions report feelings of prejudice, not feeling trusted, feeling judged (Kras, 2019), experiencing hostile supervisory tactics that create resistance, and fearing their crimes repel staff (Farmer et al., 2015).

However, non-stigmatizing practice can also be experienced, even by people with sexual convictions. Many report feeling supported by their offender manager (Mann et al., 2018), who they state expressed care and concern for them and had a personal interest in them (Farmer et al., 2015), believing they could change (Blagden et al., 2016). This meant the person felt safe to discuss sensitive matters without feeling judged (Winder et al., 2020). These instances demonstrate the potential for positive relationships in which formal agents can promote the desistance process and help to reduce stigma.

Desistance is best fostered when formal agents actively promote hope and optimism and convey a belief that the person attempting to desist can change (McAlinden et al., 2017). This is problematic for MOSOVO staff who tend to perceive this group in an unfavourable light, resulting in the design of risk management plans dominated by strategies of control (Kewley et al., 2020). We recognize this is because MOSOVO staff work within a framework of public protection that enforces court-ordered conditions and uses surveillance and risk-management techniques that require proactive policing (Mann & Lundrigan, 2021). When carrying out home visits, the College of Policing advises MOSOVO staff to "always adopt an investigative approach and be aware that offenders could potentially make convincing attempts to befriend and manipulate those who are responsible for managing them" (College of Policing, 2020a). Indeed, as enforcers of *prospective* sentences (sentences to prevent and control future behaviours) (Padfield, 2017), MOSOVO staff are understandably risk averse and their practice is fundamentally framed around the notion that people with sexual convictions are a danger (Nash, 2019). Such distrust or "respectful scepticism" will without doubt help ensure compliance, monitor and manage risk, and gather intelligence, but it is unlikely to create a safe space in which the welfare of people is considered, and thus new identities fostered, developed, and tested.

Kemshall's "4 Pillars of Risk Management" (HMPPS, 2022) require MOSOVO staff to develop risk management plans that include rehabilitative strategies that help people successfully desist from future offending. However, MOSOVO staff report having little desire and insufficient resources to work in a rehabilitative way (Kewley, 2017; Nash, 2016). This is unsurprising given that, to help a person develop a positive future self, through, for example, seeking employment, moving house, starting new relationships, arguably requires a "welfare" rather than a "control-orientated" role (Blagden et al., 2016). A genuine tension therefore exists for MOSOVO staff who, despite efforts, are caught between correctional policy that dictates a moral code to protect the public (prevent and manage risk) and professional norms and values that endorse the belief that people have the autonomy to change (Ward et al., 2021). Without some shift, the aim to protect the public may be compromised as "interventions designed solely to control and manage behaviours should be avoided, as they do not support motivation to change" (Villeneuve et al., 2021, p. 92). Thus, while MOSOVO staff focus solely on surveillance and risk management, relapse and persistence are likely (Ricciardelli, 2018). While MOSOVO staff can, and many do, work with people convicted of sexual offences in a respectful non-stigmatizing manner, the insistence on punitive and pervasive restrictions and requirements is likely to impede the development of trusting relationships and severely interrupt the desistance process (Willis, 2018).

MOSOVO staff are, however, well positioned to assist desistance by helping people manoeuvre this complex transition (Villeneuve et al., 2021) as they spend time with people in their homes during home visits, while monitoring court-ordered conditions and developing and implementing risk management plans. Indeed, adopting a risk-management approach that considers both risk and strengths is supported across most criminal justice agencies. For example, *The HMPPS Approach to the Management and Rehabilitation of People Convicted of Sexual Offending* (HMPPS, 2021) outlines a strengths-based approach that helps formal agents overcome and reduce risk as well as develop and promote a person's strengths. It draws on the bio-psycho-social model of behaviour (Carter & Mann, 2016), which involves building biological capability (e.g., understanding neurological differences in people, teaching new skills); strengthening psychological capability (e.g., challenging offence-related thinking, exposing people with convictions to new ways of thinking, teaching problem solving or emotional coping skills); and strengthening people's social capability (e.g., teaching intimacy or relationship skills, helping to develop new relationships, helping find meaningful employment).

The selection and implementation of appropriate interventions relies on a structured risk management tool known as the Active Risk Management System (ARMS) (Kewley & Blandford, 2017). This tool requires MOSOVO staff to consider and evaluate both risk and protective factors so that risk management plans help to prevent further offending by drawing on both restrictive and constructive interventions (College of Policing, 2020b). MOSOVO staff face challenges here, though, as there is a plethora of restrictive interventions and controls to draw upon, such as residing at approved premises; home visits; restrictions on associations, residence, movement, activities; curfew checks; tagging; satellite tracking; covert surveillance; and use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (College of Policing, 2020b). The options available for strategies that support change are fewer, less specific, and sometimes not available or not suitable. Interventions deemed constructive include attending accredited programs (only

available for people subject to licence or community order conditions), sharing information with appropriate agents/agencies, providing diversion activities such as employment, psychological or psychiatric input, and using support groups in the community (College of Policing, 2020b). It is therefore unsurprising that, in a recent examination of the quality of ARMS assessments, inconsistencies were found between risk and protective factors and subsequent risk management plans, as well as a failure by assessors to provide meaningful actions to support the risks identified (Kewley et al., 2020).

MOSOVO staff are tasked with both managing risk and promoting desistance, yet as offender managers, they face structural and role barriers preventing them from promoting protective factors, building individual strengths, and reinforcing pro-social bonds. In this context, assisted desistance is difficult, as stigmatized interactions in which offending identities are reinforced, together with a focus on managing risk and monitoring compliance, are likely to stimulate a Pygmalion effect that only reinforces "offender" labels (Mann et al., 2019; Stout, 2018). The process of desistance, like all public health approaches, must be multi-level and collaborative; while individual and internal changes from within the person desisting are needed, so too are social and structural changes. Successful desistance journeys are found in people who are supported by formal agents who work collaboratively across all socioecological levels; they are responsive to the unique and diverse needs of people and the communities they live in. Thus, to assist desistance, MOSOVO staff themselves must be supported and willing to not only help people with sexual convictions develop an alternative (non-offending) lifestyle and identity, but to detail *how* this could be achieved (King, 2013). They must provide safe, non-stigmatizing, and stable interactions that explore a future possible self while setting goals and considering appropriate "hooks for change" (Giordano, 2016) in conjunction with community integration strategies (McCartan & Richards, 2021).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Journal of
COMMUNITY SAFETY & WELL-BEING

Police well-being interventions: Using awe narratives to promote resilience

Jeff Thompson, PhD*

This article is related directly to the First European Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) held in Umea, Sweden in May 2023.

ABSTRACT

The well-being of the police workforce needs to be a priority as law enforcement agencies continue to adapt to emerging issues while serving their communities. Reflecting and sharing awe narratives, as well as being exposed to the awe stories of others, can enhance their resilience and support their overall well-being. This article, which is based on a special lecture given during the Law Enforcement and Public Health Conference held May 21–24, 2023, at Umea University in Umea, Sweden, uses phenomenology to examine the awe stories and experiences of police participants who took part in a resilience program as well as feedback during the conference discussion. The analysis demonstrates that awe narratives can serve as a gateway to other resilience practices including cognitive reappraisal, emotional intelligence, gratitude, humility, finding meaning and purpose in life, mindfulness, optimism and hope, self-compassion, self-efficacy, social connection, and managing uncertainty and ambiguity. Based on the findings, awe narratives should be considered for implementation in future police mental health and resilience training as an evidence-based practice to support the police workforce.

Key Words narrative psychology; wellness; story-telling; phenomenology.

INTRODUCTION

Police personnel across the world are facing an increasing number of issues, ranging from mandated reforms to short-staffing and overwork (Barron, 2022; Charlalambous, 2023; Westervelt, 2021). These agency-wide issues can have a detrimental impact on individual officers, contributing to moral injury, cynicism, burnout, mental health conditions, and suicide (Barron, 2022; The Crime Report Staff, 2022; McAward, 2022; NAMI, n.d.; Papazoglou et al., 2019). It is therefore necessary that throughout officers' careers, they are provided with evidence-based, practical wellness and resilience programs to support their well-being.

This article, which is adapted from an invited special lecture given during the Law Enforcement and Public Health Conference held in Umea, Sweden, May 21–24, 2023, addresses these concerns and discusses one such resilience program, The Awe Project, created based on the existing literature, that is minimally time-consuming (Thompson, 2022a). The results indicate that the program can have a positive influence on the resilience of the general public, including police personnel (uniformed and civilian) and their overall well-being. This paper specifically addresses and advances the argument that experiencing awe, through sharing and being exposed to awe narratives, can serve as a gateway to other resilience practices. This concept of awe narratives is part of a broader approach of supporting people's well-being. It is described as narrative health (Thompson, 2023a; 2023b), which is adapted from narrative medicine. Narrative medicine is a model to engage in an effective and humane medical practice (Charon, 2001). The type of narrative health described in this article expands on this medical professional approach of narrative medicine and suggests it is applicable and adaptable to a wider audience, including policing.

AWE

Awe is a complex emotion, and its definition continues to evolve based on the emerging literature. Currently, awe is described as an emotion that is experienced in the presence of

someone or something extraordinary that challenges people's current thinking and perspectives (Stellar, 2021; Thompson, 2023a; 2023b; 2023c). When awe is viewed as a positive experience, it can be described as a gateway to other positive emotions as well as resilience practices (Thompson, 2023a). Positive emotions can include joy, happiness, contentment, and calmness. With respect to other resilience practices, awe has been connected to many, including (and for the scope of this paper) cognitive reappraisal, emotional intelligence, gratitude, humility, meaning and purpose in life, mindfulness, optimism and hope, self-compassion, self-efficacy, social connectedness, and (managing) uncertainty and ambiguity (for example, see Thompson et al., 2022; Thompson, 2023a).

The positive implications of experiencing awe extend beyond the emotional elements, as it can positively impact individuals' neurobiology (Chirico et al., 2017; Stellar et al., 2015; Tabibnia, 2020; van Elk et al., 2019). The benefits of awe are not limited to individuals, as it has also been described as a self-transcendent experience that can promote prosocial behaviours (Chirico & Yaden, 2018; Jiang & Sedikides, 2021; Li et al., 2019; Thompson, 2022a; 2023a; 2023c; Yaden et al., 2017). This is particularly relevant in policing, as supporting the public, often when they are in crisis, is critical to doing police work effectively.

Although, ostensibly, the nexus between awe, resilience, and police work might seem counterintuitive and not established, numerous studies have recently examined this with respect to police leadership (Thompson, 2022b), hostage negotiators (Thompson & Jensen, 2023), homicide and special victim investigators (Thompson, 2023c), and the general police force (Thompson & Drew, 2020). The results indicate how experiencing awe, and specifically both sharing and being exposed to awe narratives, can support police in their work and, importantly, in their personal well-being.

RESILIENCE

Resilience involves engaging in proactive practices to manage adverse moments in life effectively, and it also includes engaging in those practices in the midst of those moments and afterwards as part of recovery (Tabibnia, 2020; Thompson, 2023a; 2023b; Thompson & Jensen, 2023). It is necessary for individuals to engage in a variety of practices based on the context of the situation (Bonanno, 2005). Importantly, resilience is not limited to preparation for, and response to, negative moments.

Resilience also involves engaging in, and reflecting on, positive life-moments (Thompson, 2020). For the purpose of this article, the following evidence-based resilience practices are examined: cognitive reappraisal, emotional intelligence, gratitude, humility, meaning and purpose in life, mindfulness, optimism and hope, self-compassion, self-efficacy, social connectedness, and managing uncertainty and ambiguity (for a review of these skills, see Thompson et al., 2022).

NARRATIVES AND WELL-BEING

Sharing and reflecting on narratives have been established as practices that can support individuals' overall well-being (Adler et al., 2016; Agnew, 2022; Frattaroli, 2006; Koshy et al., 2017; Peterson & Boris, 2017; Strumm, 2022; Tarragona, 2019;

Thompson, 2023a; Zak et al., 2015). Recent research has explored how awe narratives, specifically in relation to supporting individuals' resilience, have shown that both sharing and being exposed to awe stories can support individual well-being (Thompson, 2022b; 2022c; Thompson & Jensen, 2023; Thompson, 2023a; 2023b; 2023c). Importantly, many of these studies specifically examined the impact the awe narratives had on police members.

THE AWE PROJECT

During the Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) lecture, the author shared police-specific data and findings that were extracted from two recent, larger awe narrative research studies (Thompson, 2022a; 2023c). The purpose of the lecture was to examine whether the same positive results and resilience-related themes from the larger studies were also relevant to the police participants.[1]

Briefly, the police data were collected and analyzed using qualitative methodologies, including phenomenology and interpretative phenomenological analysis. Importantly, and consistent with those methodologies, the aim of the lecture and the studies was to gain insight into participants' understanding of the phenomenon under study (awe), and when the researcher analyzed the stories collectively, to identify the meaningful themes that emerged (Frechette et al., 2020; Smith & Osborn, 2003; Smith et al., 2009).

The police participants took part in The Awe Project, an online resilience program they accessed on their cellphones via a private, password-protected classroom in the Google Classroom application. The program involved a pre-survey in which they provided basic demographic data, their definition of awe, and a personal awe story.

During the 5-day program, each morning and evening, participants engaged in a 1-minute breathing practice, watched a short awe-related video, and then were asked to answer two questions that were shared with the group in the virtual classroom. The first question was related to the video, while the second question connected the video with another resilience-related practice (for a comprehensive review of the program, see Thompson, 2022a).

The Awe Project has been implemented and adapted in various formats in policing, including training for newly promoted supervisors, executive leadership, suicide prevention, peer support, hostage and crisis negotiation, criminal investigators (including homicide and special victim crimes), police recruits, and students in college studying to become police officers.

POLICE AWE NARRATIVE RESILIENCE THEMES

The LEPH lecture and this paper used the findings and themes that emerged from the two larger studies as a guide and framework to examine the police participants' experiences of being exposed to awe narratives and sharing their own stories. Based on the review, the following resilience- and well-being–related themes were shared during the LEPH

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[1] For a more in-depth review of the procedures and methodology used to examine the police-specific data for this social innovation article, see Thompson (2022a) and Thompson (2023a).

presentation. It is important to mention, again, and consistent with qualitative research, that the purpose was to examine individual experiences of the phenomenon, awe, and then, based on the researcher's interpretation of the data, to develop themes. This type of qualitative research is concerned with quality rather than quantity, as meaning and themes are derived from the thick descriptions of participants (for more on this approach, see Thompson, 2023b).

The multiple themes that emerged from analyzing the data are presented in Table I. Each of the themes demonstrates how awe can serve as a gateway to these other resilience practices, in addition to the complexity and interconnectedness of each theme with others. For example, one police participant example of mindfulness also includes that this officer was humbled (humility) by the experience.

Although a purpose of phenomenological research, specifically interpretative phenomenological analysis, is the development of themes based on the collective analysis of individual accounts and experiences of the phenomenon under study, individuals' experiences are not diminished or reduced to a collective narrative (Thompson, 2022a). Therefore, the following sections examine a selection of the themes listed in Table I and provide specific narratives shared by different participants to show the thickness of the data (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln & Gubba, 1985; Mills et al., 2010),

TABLE I Police awe narrative resilience themes

Resilience Practice	The Awe Project Participant Example
Cognitive reappraisal	A moment in your life that shocks you into appreciation of simple or extraordinary incidents.
Emotional intelligence	(Terms shared) Beauty, amazement, happiness, gratitude, humbled, calming, soothing, increased positivity, inspirational, admire, wonder, calm.
Gratitude	My heart felt so full, and I could not stop smiling and feeling immense gratitude.
Humility	We are just a tiny speck on this planet.
Meaning and purpose in life	A great feeling inside that makes me feel like I am fulfilling my purpose.
Mindfulness	Being present enough in life to notice the details and be present enough to be impressed and humbled by them.
Optimism and hope	Feels great. Can be inspiring but can also make me feel insignificant. It can make me proud and filled with hope at the same time.
Self-compassion	It's a time that captivates you away from everything else around you. I use these moments to reflect on what's valuable to me and as a stress reducer.
Self-efficacy	I was so proud to be his dad and almost brought to tears.
Social connectedness	Awe is recognizing that you are part of so much of a bigger picture in the world.
(Managing) Uncertainty and ambiguity	An unexplainable feeling that is overwhelming.

further revealing awe's complexity and interconnectedness with other resilience practices.

Cognitive Reappraisal (Negative Events)

It was a very negative job—we were responding to the hospital because a person was sexually assaulted. The weather was terrible and it was a difficult day [to] patrol getting in and out into the snow and navigating the streets and traffic.

We arrived at the hospital and stepped into the slush to go hear about the worst possible category of crimes. As I stepped out of the car, I noticed how beautiful and peaceful the falling snow was.

I told the rookie I was training to take a moment. Stop. And take in the beauty of the falling snow. We stood there for about 1 minute and made a point of taking it in before getting on with the ugly nature of police work. We both found it restorative and reflected on [it] during the following days.

Cognitive Reappraisal (Ordinary Moments)

I was once stopped in my footsteps—by a buttercup. I was working a [police] beat in a very tough inner-city area. Concrete and filth all around. This buttercup decided this was its home and it broke through the concrete. Maybe it was the situation—but I was so taken aback by its strength and its drive to LIVE.

It distracted me for a moment from what I was there for and it's stayed with me—the image of this buttercup breaking through the concrete under the most impossible set of circumstances—for more than 15 years.

Gratitude

I was driving to pick up my son from school. I reflected on how much I have been blessed: my home, marriage, job, family, education, etc. Despite the difficulties I was still facing, it was a moment where I felt at peace and sheer joy.

Humility (Through a Sense of Smallness)

A time I was in awe was when I was in the Bahamas on a boat in the middle of the ocean watching the sunset, and it just made me realize how beautiful the world is and how small we really are.

Meaning and Purpose in Life

The moment I experienced awe, I felt amazing inside. I knew that we are all here for a purpose. I felt enthusiastic and encouraged. That moment I felt that no matter how difficult it may get to go through an everyday routine, there is a reward at the end. The reward is not something physical, but rather a feeling of happiness and balance that comes when you realize all the beauty that surrounds us.

Optimism and Hope

Sadly, my experience will revolve around police funerals, and having attended so many at this point in my career, the feeling of sadness but also that overwhelming feeling of awe as well: police members coming together in solidarity to offer condolences and support to families

that we may never have met and quite possibly to honour the life of an officer that we've never met.

We come together in that one instance because of the commonality we share, a life of service that we've all chosen brings us together … no matter the colours of their skin, no matter their religion, no matter their political views, and in some instances from other police departments and countries.

In sadness there is comfort and, in that comfort, there is my awe. We are part of something bigger than ourselves, and that also gives me hope.

Social Connection

My last experience of awe was returning home from a training in which I was away from my two boys and wife. I missed them, but I did not know how much till I saw them. As we arrived home from the airport, my two little boys were wild. As I watched them be silly, I had a wonderful sense of appreciation. I recalled other men in my life, particularly fathers, who advised me to soak up these moments. The kids will grow up fast. I continued watching them be goofs, laughing, and saying some pretty hilarious things.

Although Keltner and Haidt's seminal work (2003) on awe posits that experiencing awe involves a "need for accommodation" (NFA), or developing a new mental schema to comprehend what is occurring, recent awe research suggests that is not necessarily always the case (Thompson, 2023a). The police participants support this notion of NFA not being present in each story, as some stated they could not fully comprehend their awe experiences yet did not make further attempts to grasp the meaning of what was occurring. This suggests awe can serve as a practice to potentially support the participants' ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty both in the moment as well as in future situations.

Learning how to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty could be helpful to police given that their work often involves situations in which they are not completely aware of what they are responding to and, when arriving on the scene, they further need to determine exactly what is occurring, especially when attempting to discern ambiguities such as the differences between (or overlapping of) who is in crisis, which persons are victims or perpetrators, and/or whether the matter is criminal or a mental health crisis.

Although this article is limited in scope, it is worthwhile briefly to delve further into how police personnel explained how awe experiences involve both uncertainty and ambiguity:

I would define awe as a moment where I'm completely taken aback by something or someone, at a loss for words.

To me, awe means being in a state of disbelief while witnessing something to be true.

I would describe awe like a feeling of shock, disbelief, like, "wow I can't believe this happened."

Being in amazement. Not being able to understand what I'm witnessing or experiencing.

As demonstrated in these comments, the police participants explained the complexity of awe experiences, which can include both uncertainty and ambiguity. These moments have the potential to support police officers in their work, as previous awe research has suggested that awe has had a continuing impact after the awe experience concluded (Bai et al., 2021; Li et al., 2019; Piff et al., 2015; Rudd et al., 2012; Thompson, 2023a).

THE IMPACT OF OTHERS' AWE NARRATIVES

During the LEPH lecture, attendees had an opportunity to engage in an example of an awe narrative video titled *A Walk in a Parking Lot*. The video begins with a 1-minute breathing exercise[2] in which participants could follow along with a visual graphic on screen. Immediately after the breathing exercise, the awe narrative video started. This portion of the video, lasting just under 4 minutes, consisted of a colour-blind young boy walking around a parking lot being filmed by his mother on her cellphone. The video begins with her giving him specially made glasses that allow him to see in colour.

During the video, the young boy walks around the parking lot in awe, identifying various colours he can now see, and at various moments, the boy and his mother briefly exchange comments. As detailed in previous sections, research has shown that personal awe stories can include numerous other resilience practices (for example, see Figure 1; Thompson, 2023a). Table II demonstrates how attendees at the lecture watched this specific awe narrative and had similar reactions. Being exposed to the awe stories of other people can have a profound impact on a person (Peterson & Boris, 2017; Thompson, 2022a; 2023a; 2023c).

The reflections in Table II demonstrate that the viewer can be impacted by the story of another person while it unfolds, just as the story can be transformative for the person experiencing it. The viewer becomes captivated in the moment, and a rippling, self-reflective process is created as the viewer "turns the story into their own idea and experience" (Widrich, 2012, 6th paragraph).

The following sections further demonstrate the positive impression that being exposed to awe narratives can have on police personnel.

AWE NARRATIVES AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Recent research has suggested that being exposed to narratives, including awe, can be supportive of suicide prevention efforts (Franz et al., 2022; Thompson, 2023c), while awe experiences can also have the potential to support countering mental health conditions (Chirico & Gaggioli, 2021). This is particularly important in policing due to concerns over suicide rates and mental health conditions (Brooks, 2022; Bourke, 2023; Stanton, 2022).

An examination of these police participant stories and themes through the lens of suicide prevention efforts shows that the results are promising due to their potential for enhancing suicide prevention protective factors as well as countering risk factors and identifying warning signs.

Suicide prevention protective factors include being proactive about mental health, social connectedness, developing

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[2] See the breathing exercise at https://www.warrior21.com/breathe.

TABLE II   The impact of others' awe narratives on the viewer

Resilience Skill	Lecture Participant Example
Cognitive reappraisal	Discussions included how important it is to not overlook the "little" positive things and the people in their lives.
Empathy	Participants reflected on what the boy was thinking and feeling while walking through the parking lot.
Emotional intelligence	Participants shared and discussed the various emotions they felt while watching the story.
Gratitude	Multiple participants expressed having gratitude for what they have, including seeing colour.
Hope and optimism	Participants explained that the video motivated them to try and practice more of the other mentioned resilience practices; the story reminded them of how it is important to take moments to reflect on the good things in life.
Humility	Based on the comments related to the other skills, participants expressed a sense of feeling humbled as well.
Meaning and purpose in life	Participants expressed that the video reminded them that there is more to their lives than the important police work they do (such as being parents).
Social connectedness	The conversation included discussing how powerful the bond seemed between the boy and his mother and how fortunate it was for him to have her in his life. More broadly, the discussions included how other people have helped us throughout our lives.
(Managing) Uncertainty and ambiguity	Some participants shared that they could not understand some parts of the video, including how, if he was colour blind, he was then able to identify colours.

TABLE III   Police awe-related comments supporting suicide prevention protective factors

Awe Experience Topic	The Awe Project Participant Reflection
Reflecting on awe experiences	[Awe is] a reminder of the beauty in the world in which we live. This was a reminder to me of what's most important in life. I felt grateful … for the things I take for granted. And inspired to not let challenges hold me back.
Responding to watching awe stories (during The Awe Project)	This is what inspiration looks like; it does not boast, it just exudes and radiates authenticity. His message is real and should be our mantra daily, "Don't give up, never give up, stay in the fight, you are braver than you think." Watching the video makes me realize the world isn't all ugly and violent. Beauty exists and in the scheme of things how small we really are. I felt a lot of emotions. I felt inspired by his courage. I also felt hopeful because of his determination. And I felt joy. The first thought that went into my head while I watched this video was the fact that time will always move forward. Whatever uncomfortable situation we find ourselves in, it will soon pass into a new moment of time. The struggles we may face now teach us resilience for the future. … A bad moment or feeling won't last forever.
Participating in The Awe Project	What I like most … I started and ended my day thinking about amazing things. I was surprised by how calming just a few minutes of time to watch something new could be. I want to share my gratitude with the group for this special journey. It's been so interesting hearing the wide range of perspectives on these videos. I like that the Awe Project has been making me take time out for myself. I was surprised how relaxing the videos have been, and how the breathing exercises really calm me down.

problem-solving and coping skills, and creating a strong sense of purpose and self-esteem (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, n.d.; Centers for Disease Control, 2022; Suicide Prevention Resource Center & Rodgers, 2011).

Table III gives a brief snapshot of police participant responses to the awe stories and to taking part in a program that supports these suicide prevention protective factors.

As shown in some of the responses in Table III, participants demonstrated having optimism and hope in response to being exposed to awe stories and their overall participation in The Awe Project. This is noteworthy, as suicide prevention, anxiety, and depression research have demonstrated that having hope and optimism are critical protective factors (Huen et al., 2015; Laranjeira & Querido, 2022; Tucker et al., 2013).

FINDING AWE IN NATURE AND WATER

Finally, although not listed previously as a theme, it is important to highlight the prevalence of awe narratives that were shared relating to nature—and specifically water. A vast body of research has established a beneficial relationship between being in nature (for a review, see Monroy & Keltner, 2023) and around water and well-being (for a review, see White et al., 2020), while emerging awe studies involving water have also shows positive results (Thompson, 2022a; 2023a).

Increasingly, police wellness programs include nature and, specifically, water-based programs.[3]

The following Awe Project police participants shared the positive impact nature, and specifically water, had on their awe narratives:

> The vast Pacific Ocean seemed endless, and monstrous waves were hitting the beaches. A lot of people were enjoying the beach along the way.

> Standing on that beach with my wife just watching the waves crash in made a warm peacefulness wash over me. In that moment, I was able to truly appreciate the natural

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[3]For an example, see http://www.revitalcolorado.org.

beauty of where I was. I was also able to appreciate being in that place with the woman I love.

I experienced awe while vacationing in Hawaii. I felt so grateful to have been able to finally make it to one of my top destinations. Looking at the mountains nearby, looking at the clear blue water and sky while being on a boat felt amazing. After sightseeing for a couple of hours, I felt so refreshed. I felt at peace. I was humbled by the natural beauty that was all around me.

Police participants in The Awe Project shared the following after watching two brief, water-related awe videos:

The second video, if you noticed, no drop falls the same, just like no person is the same. We are all unique and the impact we have in life and the people that are around us is unlike anyone else.

The water drops are mesmerizing. Makes me think how a small change can directly impact the output.

The rainfall video was amazing. The power of weather is amazing to see. The droplet video was my favourite. The video had so much detail in it and showed beauty that we miss from just a raindrop.

Wow. I found both videos fascinating … seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary.

These comments only briefly show the effects of water and its relationship with eliciting awe and supporting other resilience practices. Future research studies should further examine this, while the author is currently in the process of developing a new version of The Awe Project that specifically explores the awe–water relationship.

CONCLUSION

The results show that The Awe Project, and specifically sharing and being exposed to awe narratives, is supportive of the overall resilience and well-being of police participants in a practical, easily accessible manner. It may also be supportive of suicide prevention efforts.

Based on the results, it is suggested that sharing and reflecting on awe experiences be considered for implementation in police agencies at various points of police officers' careers. It is suggested that additional quantitative and qualitative studies be conducted to further examine both The Awe Project's efficacy and awe experiences in general.

Much like modern policing needs to adapt and evolve due to emerging concerns, mental health, well-being, and resilience practices need to change as well. For example, as there is no single cause of suicide, policing agency approaches to prevent it in the workforce must be multifaceted and occur throughout police officers' careers. The LEPH lecture and this corresponding article have shown that awe practices, including sharing and reflecting on narratives, can be implemented practically in a variety of ways. What has remained constant is the results: awe narratives are increasingly becoming a practical, evidence-based practice that can enhance police resilience and support overall police well-being.

As the LEPH conference examined public health and policing, it must not be forgotten that the police are part of the public as well, and equally deserving of support. As future conferences will rightfully continue the conversation on how the police can better support the health of the public, it is imperative that the question is equally turned inward. After all, it is fellow humans who serve in the noble role of policing as servants, protectors, and guardians to their brothers and sisters in the public. Before they are police officers, they are humans; they are men and women, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, partners, brothers and sisters, and friends and neighbours. These awe narratives and practices can ensure that this element of the humanity in policing is not lost.

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Collaborating to safeguard children in Taiwan: Systemic transformation

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This article is related directly to the First European Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) held in Umea, Sweden in May 2023.

ABSTRACT

Child abuse and exploitation pose significant threats to the health and well-being of children. While the Taiwanese government introduced the *Protection of Children and Youth Welfare and Rights Act* in 2011 to address these issues, progress has been slow. This paper aims to examine the evolution of Taiwan's child protection system (CPS), with a particular focus on interdepartmental collaboration. Through the collection of legislation, statistics, conference proceedings, and reports, this study analyzes the working model between law enforcement and public health. Three cases of collaboration between law enforcement and public health at the community level are presented: social safety net programs, early intervention for child abuse, and trauma-informed training for first responders. The accomplishments and challenges of each project are discussed, along with a review of the CPS in relation to the United Nations (UN) strategy INSPIRE's approaches. Although Taiwan has shown a commendable emphasis on prevention and family support, the collaboration between law enforcement and public health is still in its early stages. The next crucial step is to strengthen integration in the early stages of identifying, assessing, and referring cases of child abuse and neglect. This can be achieved by generating more evidence on effective working models and promoting their implementation.

Key Words   Child abuse; prevention; family support; law enforcement; public health; social safety net.

INTRODUCTION

A Global Focus on Preventing Violence Against Children

Violence is estimated to affect one in two children aged 2–17 globally each year (WHO, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) launched the "INSPIRE" program in 2016 to help countries to prevent and respond to violence against children (WHO, 2022). Following the uptake of INSPIRE, building national coordination structures and capacity has been one of the priorities. However, issues have been identified by previous scholars.

First of all, among the government departments most frequently listed, health departments are well represented but underfunded in many countries (WHO, 2021). Child protection to date has received less attention than it deserves. The second issue is the balance between different abuse prevention approaches in the intra-agency decision-making mechanism (Devaney et al., 2022; Sanders et al., 1996). The complex relationship between family support and child protection is demonstrated differently in different contexts, depending on varying organizational arrangements, resource allocation, and program implementation.

Taiwan's Child Protection System (CPS): A Timeline

Child abuse and exploitation have greatly threatened children's health and well-being in Taiwan. From 2011 to 2020, it is estimated that an average of 21.3 children and youth lost lives per year from abuse (Sheu et al., 2021). An earlier study of child physical abuse among children 9 to 15 years old shows that the lifetime prevalence is 34%, with that for boys (38.1%) slightly more than girls (29.8%) (Chou et al., 2011). This survey also shows that 30.7% of these youngsters report full or partial post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. A recent nationwide paired cohort study on the longitudinal health insurance database (2000–2015) found that child abuse increased the chances of psychiatric disorders as much as 2.15-fold (Wang et al., 2020).

Although Taiwan's child protection system (CPS) has not been in existence very long, it went through a dramatic change in the last three decades, beginning with the development of child abuse treatment in the 1990s. The UN 1989 Children's Rights Convention outlined the state's responsibility for preventing children from abuse and exploitation. As a consequence, the 1973 *Child Welfare Act* was amended in 1993, as the first milestone in the CPS development, to include the statutory responses to child abuse and make the "best interest of children" a priority in Taiwan. The CPS has since included compulsory reporting, emergency relocation, and deprivation of guardianship from abusive parents. This "treatment-oriented" child protection in the early days provided very limited leverage for social workers and created a dilemma between "replacement" and "staying at home" when dealing with cases. Social workers usually took a family preservation model rather than "children first" (Hsu & Cheng, 2003).

In 2003, the *Child Welfare Act* and *Juvenile Welfare Act* were combined into the *Child Protection Act*. In addition to strengthening compulsory reporting, the Act requires that "multi-professional collaboration, including doctors, nurses, social workers, clinical psychiatrists, educators, child protectors, and police, should take responsibility to report events of child abuse and neglect" (Chou et al., 2019). It was found that 2 years after the *Child Protection Act* was enacted, the incidence of children hospitalized for physical abuse decreased (Chou et al., 2019). In April 2006, Taiwan introduced a system of severe child abuse case reviews to learn from past failures.

The *Protection of Children and Youth Welfare and Rights Act* 2011 (PCYWRA) outlined the Taiwanese official policy on child and youth wellness and is the first comprehensive policy to address prevention, investigation, and treatment. It expands the horizon of child protection to consider both children and family and exemplifies a turn towards a family preservation approach, with extra resources for the family. In 2013, the newly established Ministry of Health and Welfare combined several central departments to become the highest commanding authority for public health, medical, and social welfare services. Since then, the exchange of information between medical and social welfare systems has become more convenient.

In November 2014, Taiwan further enacted the *Implementation Act of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). Article 5 of this legislation demands that authorities concerned with safeguarding children's rights coordinate and communicate to accomplish their duties. In 2015, the PCYWRA further enacted different procedures for different levels of reports.

In addition, the Ministry of Health and Welfare began a pilot program on "child death review" (CDR) in 2016. It coincides with the 2017 Presidential Committee of Judicial Reform and its conclusions on "reviewing the child abuse policy thoroughly." The newly amended 2019 PCYWRA included an article on compulsory child death review and, since then, has established the office of CDR in Cheng-Kung Hospital. The 2019 revision also stresses early identification and judicial investigation of child abuse cases and increases criminal penalties for abusers.

Three-Tier Prevention of the CPS

Devaney et al. (2022) conceptualize "prevention" as a continuum of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, which is also adopted in Taiwan. Below is a review of the current shortcomings of child abuse prevention in Taiwan.

Primary Prevention

Physical punishment of children is usually tolerated in Taiwan as a way of disciplining children and is not considered a form of physical abuse (Chou et al., 2011). As part of a society which embraces filial piety (Xiao), combined with patriarchal cultural values, Taiwanese parents tend to regard children as their possession, and asserting authority and inflicting punishment on their children are still tolerated (Feng & Levine, 2005). Between 2011 and 2020, 107 children were murdered by their parents, who later committed suicide (Sheu et al., 2021). Parents are the primary abusers in child abuse cases, but the percentage has been decreasing in recent years (Sheu et al., 2021). Physical punishment comprises 7% of all child abuse reports in 2020. The promotion of children's rights as individual rights has yet to be emphasized.

Secondary Prevention

Once a case is reported, it is up to the responsible social worker to decide whether the case needs further attention. However, many vulnerable families remain unidentified as at risk and receive insufficient support from social services. Social workers receive little help from other agencies in terms of risk assessment and family support. Preventing vulnerable families from becoming abusive families has been a challenge. From 2005 to 2019, 240,000 to 490,000 families at high risk were included in local programs of supportive welfare services (Sheu et al., 2021).

Tertiary Prevention

There has been criticism of residential institutions for victims of child abuse as not being safe places. Children who suffered from intra-familial maltreatment are repeatedly mistreated after placement. In addition, the parent abusers are often themselves the victims of adverse childhood experiences and have a high risk of continuing to abuse their other children. The system usually neglects that the abusers also need treatment to prevent them from repeating their offences.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The fragmentation of the welfare and justice system has taken a toll on children's safety. Children at high risk of domestic abuse fail to be identified as early as possible. First responders are either poorly trained in identifying child abuse risk factors or reluctant to report according to the Act. In addition, limited resources and information often prevent the cases from benefiting from continuous follow-up by caseworkers.

The current paper aims to review the last decade's child abuse and exploitation phenomenon and responses to it in Taiwan, focusing on the collaboration between law enforcement and public health. This study examined legislation, statistics, conference proceedings, and reports to identify the working model between law enforcement and public health. A focus group was conducted to review the initial findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Child Protection Statistics in Taiwan 2011–2020

Child protection cases refer to reported cases of violating the PCYWRA 2011, including but not limited to intra-familial maltreatment cases. Taking the year 2020 as an example, the

total number of reported cases is 82,713. Nearly 80% of child protection cases come from educational staff (40%), followed by police (21%) and social workers (19%) (see Figure 1).

Since the Ministry of Health and Welfare took over child protection statistics in 2012, the annual number of abused children is approximately between 10,000 and 17,000. Two milestones are noted in Figure 2. First, the PCYWRA enactment coincides with the peak of reported abused cases in 2012. Both the number of reported cases and police-recorded child victims of violence declined significantly after 2011. Second, police-recorded violent crime against children continued to drop after police reorganization in 2014, and the reported child abuse cases remain steady, without a significant rise, since 2015 (see Figure 2).

Three Projects

We present three cases of LEPH collaborations at the community level: first, the social safety net; second, early intervention of child abuse; and finally, trauma-informed training for domestic violence networks. We then discuss the achievements and challenges of each project.

Social Safety Net Program

The current social safety net program was initiated after a 4-year-old girl, nicknamed "little bulb" was brutally murdered on March 28, 2016. The offender, who was sentenced to life, had a history of mental health problems combined with drug addiction. The long-neglected vacuum in terms of community mental health and welfare service was then brought to light. On the other hand, it has been criticized that the secondary prevention and tertiary prevention of child protection are divided into two different departments, causing policy fragmentation (Wang, 2021). While it is the

Social and Family Affairs administration that deals with vulnerable families, these families fall under the authority of the Department of Protective Services once they are found to suffer from domestic violence. Nevertheless, the boundary is usually blurred and therefore causes policy gaps. The 2017 social safety net program is intended to integrate the services for vulnerable families and high-risk families with a history of domestic violence by screening all of the reported cases through one local case intake agency.

Child abuse has been considered a social welfare matter and suffers from a lack of networking at central and local levels. The social safety net program is supposed to refer vulnerable families to be assessed by the social welfare department and actively provide necessary services, depending on the problem families encounter. The ultimate aim is to prevent future harm. The social safety net program has been through the stages of preparation (2017–2018), infrastructure establishment (2018–2020), and model development (2021–2024). Currently, the focus is on deepening the community-based and family-centred service model. Although the evidence shows that networking is useful, it also reveals great variation in networking practices in different communities.

Early Identification and Intervention

It was not until 1993 that the revised Children's Welfare Law required healthcare professionals to report suspected cases of child abuse (Feng & Levine, 2005). Even so, there are still cases of children under 6 years old dying from abuse that are only discovered when the child is supposed to register for elementary school at age 7. Since the abusers are usually family members, mandatory reporting is often impractical when a younger child is kept isolated from the outside world. Surveys and interviews with kindergarten teachers in
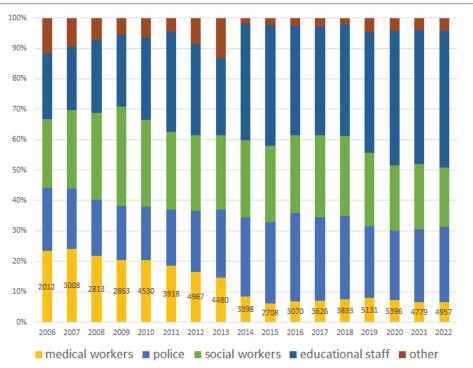

FIGURE 1 Percentage of cases reported by compulsory reporting agencies, 2006 to 2022.
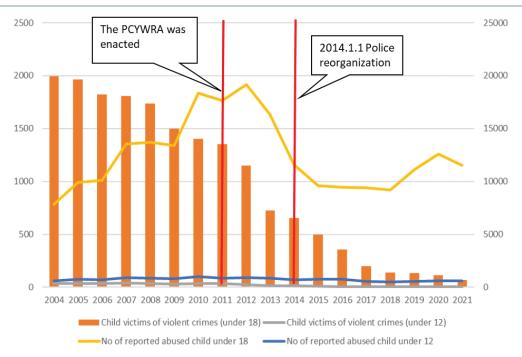
FIGURE 2 Child protection cases and child victims from 2004 to 2021. In 2014, the police re-organized their women and children's affairs, moving this unit from the Criminal Investigation Bureau to the Crime Prevention Division under the Police Agency, which is the headquarters of the central police.

Taiwan found that teachers were reluctant to report suspected child abuse cases, and 11% stated that they had failed to report at least one case in their career (Feng et al., 2009; Feng et al., 2010).

In Taiwan, healthcare providers underreport child abuse because they have inadequate knowledge or training on the mandatory reporting law related to child protection (Feng & Levine, 2005). In a survey of 1,400 nurses, up to 1 in 5 reported failing to report suspected child abuse incidents (Feng & Levine, 2005). A study of 157 hospitalized children aged 0 to 3 between 2007 and 2009, before the PCYWRA 2011 was in place, shows that 13 cases were categorized as child abuse and another 17 cases were categorized as the seemingly high-risk unknown-intent group (Wu et al., 2015). Among them, 11 of the 13 child abuse cases (including one child who died during hospitalization) had at least one missed diagnosis, 8 cases had never been identified as child abuse, and the longest delay in diagnosis was 870 days (Wu et al., 2015).

Several measures have been taken to improve first responders' child abuse identification capabilities. Since 2018, 7 hospitals have opened child protection medical integrative centres. There are plans to expand this number to 10 centres in the future. For those hospitals without integrative centres, a children's protection medical unit must be in place to screen suspected child abuse cases. Admitted children in these centres are evaluated by the paediatrics department, and if it is suspected that these children are abused, their cases will be investigated by the police. The statistics show that among 100 cases admitted to the centres, 42.6 are suspected child abuse and 24 are investigated by the police and prosecutors (see Table I). On 1 May 2019, the Ministry of Justice enacted a protocol for investigating serious child abuse cases.

The goals of the early identification and intervention program are twofold: identifying children who died from abuse and preserving evidence for future prosecution, and categorizing severe child abuse for criminal investigation. In the cases where death has occurred, post-mortem examinations are undertaken to determine the cause. For children under 6, a mandatory death review meeting is held. From May 2019 to July 2021, prosecutors assessed 381 deaths, finding 74 (19.4%) involving child abuse. Cases with victims under 6 undergo further review for policy implications. For serious abuse cases, social workers and police evaluate the need for prosecutor involvement based on medical reports, and the different key players coordinate via social media.

Trauma-Informed Training Programs
Trauma-informed training programs are more bottom-up than top-down measures. They are promoted as the backbone of the child abuse services curriculum for all first responders, including social workers, the police, prosecutors, judges, and medical practitioners. In 2020, the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Centre in Kaohsiung and Kaohsiung Municipal Ta-Tung Hospital cooperated to develop trauma-informed care for treating child abuse victims. In 2021, the Taiwan Coalition Against Violence published the Trauma and Violence

TABLE I Cases admitted to Child Protection Medical Integrative Centres from July 2018 to December 2020

	Number of cases	Percentage
Total cases	759	100%
Suspected child abuse cases	323	42.6%
Investigation by the police/prosecutors	182	24.0%

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare (2021)

Informed Care (TCAV) Toolkit (TCAV, 2021). The TCAV has taken a victim-centred approach to trauma, and the violence-informed care network facilitates cooperation through a series of workshops and conferences.

DISCUSSION

In reviewing the seven strategies recommended by INSPIRE, we found that the current CPS in Taiwan fulfills many approaches but falls short in two areas, namely a safe environment and income and economic strengthening. In other areas, there is also room for improvement. For example, the *Educational Fundamental Act* bans corporal punishment by teachers, but not by parents. We need to build a consensus that punishment should no longer be used as an excuse for child cruelty. Supporting parents and caregivers is also needed at the community level, especially focusing on parenting and social skills (see Table II).

Based on the three projects described, the next challenge in terms of system change is "integration," including shared goals, training, standards, and information and coordination between public sectors. We found that the 2017 social safety net programs created a clear process of care, including identification, reporting, referrals, investigation, treatment, and follow-up. Unfortunately, the CPS has not developed integration at each stage of the process. For example, the community-level case intake agencies have not developed any coordination for case assessment, safety plans and referrals with partner sectors. Creating a safe environment for children in need remains disproportionately shouldered by social workers with too little leverage available to them.

The early identification and intervention mechanisms are criticized for being too passive in prosecuting and punishing abusers, since the current focus is on serious child abuse and death cases. The limited number of child protection medical integrative centres also shows insufficient investment by the

TABLE II   INSPIRE Approaches and the Status of Taiwan

Strategy	Approach	Status of Taiwan
Implementation and enforcement of laws (Justice)	Law banning violent punishment of children by parents, teachers, or other caregivers	Partially achieved *Educational Fundamental Act* bans corporal punishment by teachers, but not by parents. Parents still have the authority to physically punish their children.
	Laws criminalizing sexual abuse and exploitation of children	Yes
	Laws preventing alcohol misuse	No
	Law limiting youth access to firearms and other weapons	N/A
Norms and values (Health, Education, Social Welfare)	Changing adherence to restrictive and harmful gender and social norms	Room for improvement
	Community mobilization programs	No
	Bystander interventions	Yes
Safe environment (Interior, Planning)	Reducing violence by addressing "hotspots"	No
	Interruption of the spread of violence	No
	Improving the built environment	No
Parents and caregiver support (Social Welfare, Health)	Delivered through home visits	Yes
	Delivered in groups in community settings	No
	Delivered through comprehensive programs	No
Income and economic strengthening (Finance, Labour)	Case transfers	No
	Group savings and loans combined with gender equity training	No
	Microfinance combined with gender norm training	No
Response and support services (Health, Justice, Social Welfare)	Counselling and therapeutic approaches	Yes
	Screening combined with interventions	Yes
	Treatment programs for juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system	No
	Foster care interventions involving social welfare services	No
Education and life skills (Education)	Increase enrolment in preschool, primary school, and secondary school	Yes
	Establish a safe and enabling school environment	Yes
	Improve children's knowledge about sexual abuse and how to protect themselves against it	Yes
	Life and social skills training	No
	Adolescent intimate partner violence prevention programs	Yes

health department. Current trauma-informed resources for training first responders are funded by non-government organizations (NGOs), meaning that the majority of practitioners might not have access to the training resources. In addition, a trauma-informed system also needs to recognize that the abusers also need assistance for their traumatic experiences in their earlier life.

CONCLUSION

Devaney et al. (2022) categorize the child protection system into three types: protective risk management, welfare-oriented, and community-oriented. It seems that the current CPS in Taiwan has moved from risk management to more emphasis on the welfare- and community-oriented. This evolution of the system is in keeping with the current child protection trend of prevention through family support (Biehal, 2019; Devaney et al., 2022).

The three projects discussed respond to many priorities put forth by INSPIRE (see Table I). Trauma-informed training is used to raise awareness of child maltreatment among the first responders. Counselling and therapeutic approaches are also proposed through social welfare services in responding to reports. The social safety net project acts as the national coordination structure. Early identification and intervention create a mechanism to implement and enforce laws.

Although child abuse has been emphasized increasingly in the official agenda, the resources remain inadequate in responding to the seriousness of the problem. In the past three decades, the CPS has shifted its focus from treatment-oriented to prevention-oriented. However, it is only when the Ministry of Health and Welfare integrated the protection and prevention system in 2013 that the transfer of context and component became significant.

We, therefore, urge that the community safety net program reinforce the integration of social welfare, law enforcement, and public health as early as the process of identifying, assessing, and referring cases. It will require more pre-employment and onsite training with a trauma-informed element. Secondly, system changes to the CPS fall short of building evidence-based policy and practice. More studies are needed to find out what intervention models are used to support families with children in need. What are the intervention projects that work for preventing child abuse and neglect in our cultural context? In the new era of child protection, we need a comprehensive evaluation of the system reform in terms of its effectiveness and the extent of the balance between prevention, investigation, and treatment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES
The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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