Policing Practices to Build Community Trust and Legitimacy in the Global South[1]

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February 2022

Introduction

What policing practices are most effective for building community trust in the police and fostering public perceptions of police legitimacy in the Global South? Trust and legitimacy are vital for police forces everywhere: the more citizens trust the police and perceive them as legitimate, the more willing they should be to obey the law, report crimes to the police, and cooperate in criminal investigations (Tyler and Huo 2002). But trust and legitimacy are arguably especially important in the Global South, where the police typically operate under severe resource constraints. Resource constrained police forces have limited investigative capabilities, and so are especially reliant on voluntary community cooperation to locate and capture criminals. Resource constraints also limit police officers' ability to respond to emergencies or address the more quotidian problems that afflict the communities they serve. These limitations make it more difficult for the police to gain trust and legitimacy through their interactions with civilians on a face-to-face, day-to-day basis.

In many cases, police forces in the Global South must overcome long legacies of community fear, suspicion, and resentment—dynamics that of course arise in the Global North as well, but that may be more entrenched in countries with histories of authoritarianism, economic instability, or civil war. Moreover, in many countries in the Global South, the criminal justice system is just one of many potential venues for adjudicating crimes and resolving disputes. In these settings, the police must compete for citizens' loyalties with myriad alternative providers of security and justice, including gangs, warlords, and traditional, customary, or religious authorities (Baker 2007; R. A. Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019; Isser 2011). Citizens who do not trust the police or perceive them as legitimate are more likely to seek redress for even the most serious grievances through one of these alternatives (Isser 2011), or through vigilantism and violence. The most basic principles underlying the rule of law—e.g. due process, equal protection, and avoidance of arbitrariness (Bingham 2011; Fuller 1969)—thus depend crucially on citizens' respect for the police and their willingness to rely on the police when crimes are committed or violence occurs (R. A. Blair 2019, 2020).

Trust in the police and perceptions of police legitimacy can have important implications beyond law enforcement. Police-community relations may shape state-society relations more generally—

[1] *Acknowledgements:* Christopher Harris, Leonid Lantsman, Cynthia Lum, Emily Owens, Kara Rose, Julie Schuck, and participants in the *Evidence to Advance Reform in the Global Security and Justice Sectors* public sessions provided helpful feedback on an earlier draft of this report. Lee-Or Ankori-Karlinksi provided excellent research assistance.
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a possibility that researchers have begun to explore, as I discuss below.[3] Some influential indicators of democracy, civil liberties, and the rule of law integrate measures of police competence, fairness, and accountability, including the World Bank's rule of law index,[4] Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" rankings,[5] the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project's civil liberties index,[6] and the Polity 5 project's "political liberalization" scores.[7] Some international organizations and foreign aid agencies also incorporate these and similar indicators into their criteria for membership or standards for giving. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), for example, uses the World Bank index to set a rule of law threshold that countries must meet, the first item of which requires "public confidence in the police force and judicial system."[8] The EU more broadly requires "stable institutions" guaranteeing the rule of law and "respect for and protection of minorities" as prerequisites for accession.[9]

Unfortunately, empirical evidence on the most effective policing practices for enhancing trust and legitimacy in the Global South is scarce. Most studies focus on a very small number of countries in the Global North, especially the US, UK, and Australia. While some policing practices may be equally fruitful in all contexts—the practice of measuring and monitoring public perceptions of the police, for example—studies based in the Global North may not generalize to settings where the police have fewer resources, where crime tends to be more pervasive, and where the rule of law is generally more tenuous. These are the settings where trust and legitimacy are arguably most urgently needed, but where research on mechanisms to build trust and legitimacy is most conspicuously lacking.

Defining high quality empirical evidence

This report summarizes the empirical evidence for six policing practices[10] to build trust and legitimacy in the Global South. It is not a meta-analysis. Rather, it is a review and synthesis of existing research, focused on *high-quality empirical evidence*, which I define as research that attempts to address the challenge of attributing causal effects to particular policing practices. High-quality studies are not necessarily experimental, or even quantitative. But they must do more than simply compare perceptions of the police before and after implementation of some new policing strategy, or compare the perceptions of citizens who are and are not exposed to a new policing strategy without addressing the possibility that these two groups may differ systematically in ways that correlate with trust and legitimacy (i.e. selection bias).

Throughout the report I distinguish between experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational research. I describe studies as *experimental* (or *randomized controlled trials*) if they involve random assignment of particular policing practices across units—neighborhoods, blocks, police

[3] State-society relations may also shape police-community relations, though there is less research on this possibility.
[4] See http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf/rl.pdf.
[5] See https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology.
[6] See https://www.v-dem.net/static/website/img/refs/codebookv111.pdf.
[7] See http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p5manualv2018.pdf.
[8] See https://www.mcc.gov/who-we-select/indicator/rule-of-law-indicator.
[9] See https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-criteria_en.
[10] I selected these six policing practices not because they are the most important or promising, but because they are common, and because they are among the only policing practices for which a (limited) body of credible empirical evidence focusing on the Global South now exists.

stations, etc. I describe studies as *quasi-experimental* (or *natural experiments*) if they involve "as-if" random assignment of policing practices due to some exogenous shock. For example, a quasi-experimental study from Argentina uses the redeployment of police officers following a terrorist attack on the main Jewish center in Buenos Aires to estimate the causal effect of increased police presence on car thefts (Di Tella and Schargrodsky 2004). I describe studies as *correlational* (or *observational*) if they control for potential confounders but otherwise do not attempt to isolate causal effects.

Conceptualizing and measuring trust and legitimacy

Trust and legitimacy can be conceptualized and measured in many ways. Some studies measure trust directly, via surveys. For example, in an experimental study of community policing across six countries in the Global South, survey respondents were asked directly if they trust the police (G. Blair et al. 2021). Other studies use surveys to measure respondents' satisfaction with specific encounters with the police (e.g. Sahin et al. 2017), or their more general perceptions of the police as competent, fair, and effective (e.g. R. A. Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019). As I discuss in my summary of procedural justice and soft skills training below, the relationship between trust, legitimacy, and perceptions of competence, fairness, and effectiveness is theoretically and empirically contested (Nagin and Telep 2017). I do not attempt to resolve this debate here. Instead, I include studies using all these measures and note conceptual ambiguities where relevant.

Other studies operationalize trust and legitimacy more indirectly. For example, an experimental study in Brazil tests whether body-worn cameras (BWCs) reduce police officers' use of deadly force, which could plausibly improve trust and legitimacy (Magaloni et al. 2019). Another experimental study in Iraq tests whether informing citizens about efforts to integrate the Iraqi police force reduces their willingness to use violence against the government, which could plausibly reflect increased trust and legitimacy of the state more generally (Nanes 2020). Again, I include all these studies in the review, but note that the outcomes they measure may or may not be indicative of trust and legitimacy per se. Finally, most studies only measure trust and legitimacy in the relatively short term—rarely more than a year after new policing practices are introduced, and usually less. Generating trust and legitimacy may be a longer-term project, but existing studies are generally not designed to address this possibility.

Distinguishing between policing practices

The report is divided into subsections covering six conceptually distinct policing practices: (1) community policing, (2) hot spots (or "saturation") policing, (3) BWCs, (4) procedural justice and soft skills, (5) integration and descriptive representation, and (6) militarization or constabularization. There is, however, overlap between some of these practices. For example, while saturation and community policing are conceptually distinct, in practice the former often incorporates elements of the latter. Similarly, the officers involved in community policing often receive training in soft skills and procedural justice. I draw distinctions between policing practices where possible and note points of overlap where relevant.

In some cases, two or more practices are so similar, or so often implemented in tandem, that it is nearly impossible to disentangle their effects. For example, while community policing and

problem-oriented policing are conceptually distinct, most community policing interventions entail some amount of problem-oriented policing. In this report I opt to focus on community policing alone. Some studies also evaluate "bundled treatments" consisting of multiple policing practices. Bundled treatments may be ideal from a practical perspective, since new policing strategies may be most effective when implemented in tandem. But they create serious inferential challenges for researchers. The optimal approach to evaluating bundled treatments is a "factorial" design, in which different units are assigned different combinations of components in the bundle.[11] But factorial designs are rare in policing research. In most studies of bundled police reforms it is impossible to isolate the components of the bundle, and thus impossible to draw conclusions about their relative efficacy.[12] I generally omit these studies from my review.

I also omit research focused on efforts to rebuild police forces (or entire criminal justice systems) from scratch, e.g. in the wake of civil war. In Liberia, for example, the UN intervened in 2003 to restructure both the security and justice sectors from the ground up after 14 years of civil conflict. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) established an "integrity bank" with background information on new police recruits, and required that existing officers reapply under more stringent eligibility criteria; it mandated three months of academy training and six months of on-the-job experience for all officers; it conducted joint patrols and "co-located" UN police officers alongside their Liberian counterparts at stations and depots around the country; and it established a quota for the proportion of women on the force, among many other initiatives (R. A. Blair 2020). UN missions have pursued similarly ambitious security and justice sector reform interventions in other contexts. Studies suggest these efforts are generally very effective, especially when undertaken by international organizations like the UN (R. A. Blair 2020, 2021; Howard 2008, 2019). But because these studies do not isolate the effects of individual policing practices, I exclude them from my review.

Finally, there is debate about the primary goals of some policing practices. In some cases—community policing, for example—a primary goal is clearly to build trust and legitimacy. In other cases, increased trust and legitimacy is merely a potential secondary benefit. For example, while saturation policing is typically implemented first and foremost to reduce crime, it may also enhance trust and legitimacy if citizens credit increased police presence for any subsequent crime reduction. I draw distinctions between the goals of specific policing practices where relevant, but include all of them in my review, even if building trust and legitimacy is only a potential secondary benefit.

Six policing practices to build trust and legitimacy in the Global South

[11] For example, in a hypothetical randomized controlled trial, some neighborhoods could be assigned to receive community policing, some could be assigned to receive BWCs, some could be assigned to receive both, and some could be assigned to receive neither. This factorial design would allow researchers to evaluate whether community policing is more effective than BWCs (or vice versa), and whether the combination of the two is more effective than neither, or than either one alone.

[12] See, for example, a 2014 evaluation of USAID-sponsored police reform initiatives in Latin America. These initiatives included "planning by municipal-level committees; crime observatories and data collection; crime prevention through environmental design (such as improved street lighting, graffiti removal, cleaned up public spaces); programs for at-risk youth (such as outreach centers, workforce development, mentorships); and community policing" (Berk-Seligson et al. 2014, 1). It is impossible to tell which of these interventions (if any) was responsible for any subsequent improvements in trust and legitimacy.

Community policing

Community policing is perhaps the most widely adopted policing practice to build community trust in the police and foster public perceptions of police legitimacy around the world (Skogan and Hartnett 1997). In sub-Saharan Africa alone, community policing has been embraced in one form or another in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, and Zambia, among other countries (R. A. Blair, Grossman, and Wilke 2021). It has also been championed by the US government, the EU, the UN, the International Council of Chiefs of Police, and a variety of other donors and international organizations (G. Blair et al. 2021).

Community policing rests on a model of "co-production" in which citizens help officers define, prioritize, and solve the problems that generate crime (Gill et al. 2014). One of the primary goals is to increase trust and legitimacy and induce greater community cooperation, which advocates believe should enable the police to respond more proactively to crime—though as Skogan (2006) notes, crime reduction was originally considered a secondary goal. Community policing encompasses a range of strategies, but most studies focus on one (or a combination) of three interrelated approaches: (1) increased police proximity to communities through foot patrols, town hall meetings, and other mechanisms; (2) increased community involvement in crime prevention through neighborhood watch teams and other fora; and (3) increased devolution of decision-making authority to officers at the beat level.

Community policing is also sometimes described as a *model* of policing rather than a policing *practice*, requiring broader structural and philosophical changes within police departments (Trojanowicz et al. 1998). Most studies do not attempt to evaluate the impact of these broader changes, and it is not clear to what extent they have even occurred in departments that have embraced more narrowly defined community policing practices (Gill et al. 2014). Following previous studies, I focus on these narrower practices alone.

Given the popularity of community policing worldwide, there has been surprisingly little high-quality research on its efficacy. In a review, Gill et al. (2014) find that most studies of community policing are correlational, and almost all are focused on just three countries (the US, UK, and Australia). Based on the limited existing evidence, Gill et al. conclude that community policing increases satisfaction with the police and improves perceptions of police legitimacy. In a more recent review, G. Blair et al. (2021) identify 37 randomized controlled trials evaluating at least one dimension of community policing (e.g. foot patrols), almost all of which are based in the Global North, and almost none of which test the effects of community policing on trust and legitimacy. A correlational study of 17 Latin American countries finds a positive association between community policing and trust in the police (Malone and Dammert 2021), but this association could be confounded by the myriad underlying differences between places that adopt community policing and those that do not.

The most comprehensive high-quality study of community policing in the Global South is a multi-site randomized controlled trial spanning six countries: Brazil, Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Uganda (G. Blair et al. 2021). Variations on community policing were implemented in each of the six sites: in Liberia, for example, the police held town hall meetings,

conducted foot patrols, and organized neighborhood watch teams; in Brazil, they created WhatsApp groups to facilitate communication between citizens and the police. Outcomes were harmonized across the six countries; most were measured using surveys of police officers (874 in total) and citizens (18,382 in total) conducted weeks or months after the end of the corresponding interventions. Importantly, in most cases the authors surveyed randomly selected residents of communities and neighborhoods, regardless of whether they were directly exposed to a community policing initiative. Treatment group residents did, however, report significantly more frequent interactions with the police, and many of the purported benefits of community policing depend on spillover from directly treated residents to their indirectly treated family members and neighbors (on this latter point, see Skogan and Hartnett 1997).

While there is some heterogeneity across sites, a meta-analysis spanning the six countries finds that community policing did not increase trust or legitimacy; did not increase reporting of crimes or crime prevention tips; did not strengthen norms of community cooperation with the police (measured using survey questions about residents' fear of social sanctions for reporting to the police and their belief that citizens should always obey police directives); and did not improve attitudes towards the government more generally. These nulls hold even in settings with the highest levels of (self-reported) exposure to community policing, suggesting they are not artifacts of the decision to measure outcomes among randomly selected residents. The nulls also appear to hold among residents whose participation was guaranteed by the structure of the intervention—e.g. among local leaders in Uganda, who were directly involved in the planning and execution of town hall meetings and foot patrols (R. A. Blair, Grossman, and Wilke 2021).

Other experimental and quasi-experimental studies in the Global South suggest that community policing can sometimes improve trust and legitimacy and increase crime reporting, but that the effects vary depending on the available alternatives for adjudicating crimes and resolving disputes. An experimental study in Papua New Guinea, for example, uses surveys of randomly selected residents and analysis of more than 30,000 historical case records to show that the expansion of community police officers into rural regions improved citizens' perceptions of the police, but only among women, who tend to be disadvantaged under existing traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution—in this case, chiefs. These effects were more pronounced when the community police officer was a woman (Cooper 2019).

Another experimental evaluation of the Liberian government's rural "Confidence Patrols" program finds that exposure to newly reformed, better equipped police officers through town hall meetings, foot patrols, and neighborhood watch teams increased crime reporting, but only among citizens who were systematically disadvantaged under traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution—in this case, "secret societies" (R. A. Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019). The authors find no evidence that the intervention improved perceptions of the police, courts, or national government, as measured using surveys of randomly selected residents and local leaders conducted two to three months after the end of the intervention. Less directly relevant, a quasi-experimental study focused on the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil finds that Pacifying Police Units (UPP)—which were inspired by community policing—reduced fatal police shootings, but that citizens only supported UPPs in communities where they did not already have access to security through gangs (Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, and Melo 2020).

There are several possible explanations for these mixed but overall disappointing findings. One is that community policing may raise citizens' expectations beyond the capacity of resource constrained police forces to meet them (R. A. Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019; Kruks-Wisner 2021). Another is that community policing may prove difficult to implement, demanding time and effort that neither the police nor civilians are willing or able to exert (Banerjee et al. 2021; R. A. Blair, Grossman, and Wilke 2021). This problem is not unique to the Global South: studies of community policing in the Global North have found that police officers often deviate from prescribed community policing procedures, for example by failing to implement "knock and talk" visits or neglecting to pursue leads that citizens provide during these visits (Gill et al. 2014). But the risk of implementation failures may be especially acute in the Global South, where the absence of reliable transportation and communications infrastructure makes it difficult to monitor the (in)activity of rank-and-file officers, and where police forces have limited resources to respond to citizens' complaints (R. A. Blair, Grossman, and Wilke 2021).

The success of community policing in the Global South may thus depend in part on investments in Global South police forces. Some donors are reluctant to make these sorts of investments in settings where the police have a reputation for corruption, nepotism, and brutality. Without more resources, however, police forces may be unable to maintain the additional effort and expenditure that community policing demands. Many Global South police forces also suffer high rates of turnover and instability at all ranks of the police hierarchy (G. Blair et al. 2021), which may reduce the sustainability of community policing (and other) initiatives. Community policing may also require investments in communities themselves (for example, to enable them to organize and attend town hall meetings or mobilize neighborhood watch teams)—a need that the community policing initiatives described above generally do not address.

Especially where community policing programs are not accompanied by investments in communities, they may provoke backlash from citizens who are invested in non-state alternatives to the police. In Liberia, for example, the expansion of police presence into rural areas exacerbated citizens' expectations of social sanctions for reporting crimes or otherwise cooperating with the police, and generated other forms of resistance from previously dominant customary institutions (R. A. Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019). In Papua New Guinea as well, the arrival of community police officers induced men to rely even more heavily on prevailing customary authorities (Cooper 2019). Finally, it is possible that existing studies in the Global South would yield more promising results if they measured outcomes only among citizens who are affected by community policing in some direct way. As G. Blair et al. (2021, 11) rightly note, however, "if community policing is to be used cost-effectively, then it must reduce crime and increase trust in the community broadly, not just for the relatively small number of people directly exposed."

Saturation policing

Like community policing, hot spots (or "saturation") policing has proliferated rapidly around the world in recent years. The goal of hot spots policing is to concentrate resources on small geographical areas with high crimes rates (Sherman, Gartin, and Buerger 1989; Sherman and Weisburd 1995). Hot spots policing can include any one or a combination of tactics, from "stop-and-frisk" to problem-oriented policing; it can also be integrated with the other practices described in this report. (For example, community policing initiatives can target hot spots.) Because existing

studies of hot spots policing in the Global South focus more narrowly on increased police presence without accompanying changes in police tactics, I refer to this practice as "saturation" policing throughout.

While the primary goal of saturation policing is to reduce crime, some studies address trust and legitimacy as potential secondary outcomes. The theory of change here is somewhat ambiguous. Saturation policing could build trust and legitimacy indirectly by reducing crime, for example if citizens credit the police with making their communities safer. Saturation policing could also build trust and legitimacy directly, for example if citizens appreciate seeing the police exert greater effort to secure their neighborhoods (regardless of whether those efforts succeed). Conversely, saturation policing could erode trust and legitimacy if the police use aggressive enforcement tactics or focus disproportionate attention on historically marginalized communities where satisfaction with the police is already low (Kochel 2011; Rosenbaum 2006).

The effects of saturation policing on trust and legitimacy may therefore depend on the tactics officers use while patrolling high crime areas. Unfortunately, existing studies of saturation policing in the Global South do not test for this possibility in any systematic way; meta-analyses and reviews focused on the Global North generally do not either. One exception is Braga, Welsh, and Schnell (2015, 568), who find that saturation policing is more effective when it includes "community and problem-solving interventions designed to change social and physical disorder conditions at particular places," and less effective when it involves aggressive enforcement. Other reviews and meta-analyses focused primarily on the Global North suggest that saturation policing in general has modest but statistically significant deterrent effects on crime (A. A. Braga et al. 2019; A. Braga, Papachristos, and Hureau 2012). Research on the effects of saturation policing on trust and legitimacy is rarer, even in the Global North. Two exceptions are Ratcliffe et al. (2015) and Weisburd et al. (2011), neither of which find evidence that saturation policing affects citizens' attitudes one way or the other.

There appear to be only two high-quality studies of saturation policing in the Global South that measure trust and legitimacy as outcomes, both in Colombia.[13] In an experimental study in the city of Medellín, Collazos et al. (2019) find that residents of street segments that were assigned to saturation policing did not view the quality of police work any more (or less) favorably than those who were not, and expressed no more (or less) satisfaction with the police. In another experimental study in Bogotá, Blattman et al. (2021b) test the effects of saturation policing and municipal services (e.g. garbage collection and street light repair) in a factorial design. They find that when the two interventions were implemented in isolation, they (weakly) improved perceptions of both the police and the mayor. But when they were implemented simultaneously, they had weak or even *adverse* effects on citizens' perceptions. The authors describe these results as "hard to interpret" and warn that they "could reflect noise;" as a result, they are "cautious and avoid drawing conclusions" (Blattman et al. 2021a, 19). Consistent with some research from the Global North (e.g. A. A. Braga, Welsh, and Schnell 2015), it is possible that saturation policing only improves citizens' attitudes when it involves changes in police tactics, rather than changes in police presence alone. Saturation policing may also prove to be an effective mechanism for reducing crime, but not for building trust or legitimacy.

[13] Another high-quality study tests the effects of saturation policing on car thefts in Buenos Aires, Argentina, but does not address trust or legitimacy (Di Tella and Schargrodsky 2004).

Body-worn cameras

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) have been widely adopted over the past decade, especially in the US (Lum et al. 2019). While not as common outside the US, Europe, and Australia, BWCs are beginning to spread to countries in the Global South as well. According to the US Department of Justice, the primary goal of BWCs is to "improve evidentiary outcomes, and enhance the safety of, and improve interactions between, officers and the public."[14] Proponents argue that BWCs may curtail officers' use of force and induce more respectful treatment of civilians (McCluskey et al. 2019), potentially bolstering trust and legitimacy. Advocates also argue that BWCs may encourage citizens' compliance with police directives and disincentivize frivolous or malicious complaints against officers (Ariel, Farrar, and Sutherland 2015), potentially improving officers' perceptions of the communities they serve.

Researchers have evaluated these claims in a variety of settings, most of them in the US. Meta-analyses and systematic reviews focused on the Global North suggest that BWCs generally reduce complaints against officers (though interpretation of this result is ambiguous, as I discuss below), but do not have consistently beneficial effects on the use of force, willingness to cooperate with the police, perceptions of encounters with specific officers, or attitudes towards the police more generally (Lum et al. 2019, 2020)—though high-quality empirical evidence on the link between BWCs and trust and legitimacy remains scarce, even in the Global North (Hyatt, Mitchell, and Ariel 2017).

In contrast, the few existing high-quality studies of BWCs in the Global South suggest they are effective for improving interactions between officers and civilians, and for building trust and legitimacy. In a randomized controlled trial focused on five regions of Uruguay, traffic officers were randomly assigned to wear BWCs (Ariel et al. 2020). Officers were instructed to record all their interactions with citizens while wearing a BWC; they were also told to issue a verbal warning alerting citizens that their encounters were being recorded, and that references to the recordings would be included on any tickets issued. To measure outcomes, the authors conducted a phone survey with a random sample of drivers who were stopped at any point during the period of the study.

Ariel et al. (2020) find that BWCs improved scores on five different indicators of procedural justice (which they call voice, explanation, respect, trustworthiness, and impartiality); increased drivers' perceptions that they were treated safely and fairly; and improved their satisfaction with the encounter. In a related correlational study, Mitchell et al. (2018) observe a reduction in the number of complaints filed against traffic officers in the five regions of Uruguay where BWCs were introduced compared to the 14 regions where they were not. As Lum et al. (2019) note, however, complaints are at best a noisy proxy for police-community relations, since BWCs may discourage citizens from lodging complaints (for example if they believe their cases are more likely to be dismissed) without improving their interactions with officers.

In another quasi-experimental study focused on traffic officers in Eskisehir province, Turkey,

[14] See https://bja.ojp.gov/program/body-worn-cameras-bwcs/overview.

BWCs improved drivers' perceptions of their interactions with the officers wearing them, and also increased their confidence in traffic officers more generally and their trust in the police as a whole (Demir et al. 2020; Demir and Kule 2020). The authors measured drivers' perceptions through a survey administered immediately after each encounter with an officer. In a series of closely related articles based on the same study but using slightly different outcomes and analytical approaches, the authors find that BWCs (1) increased drivers' self-reported compliance with the police during specific traffic stops, and with traffic laws more generally; (2) increased drivers' self-reported willingness to assist and collaborate with the police to solve problems in their communities (Demir, Braga, and Apel 2020); and (3) improved drivers' perceptions of BWCs as a technology—in particular, their perception that BWCs improve police behavior and prevent police corruption (Demir 2019).

Other studies provide further indirect evidence of the benefits of BWCs. In an experimental study in Santa Catarina, Brazil, Barbosa et al. (2021) find that BWCs improved scores on a "negative interaction index" designed to capture the quality of interactions between citizens and the police using three different indicators: resistance or disobedience among citizens, use of force by officers, and arrests. This effect was driven in particular by a reduction in the use of force by officers, and was concentrated in interactions that were classified as "low risk" before the officer was dispatched. While the authors do not measure citizens' attitudes directly, it is possible that a reduction in the use of force may mitigate fear, improve perceptions of fairness, and thus increase trust and legitimacy. The authors contrast their findings with the more disappointing results from studies in the Global North, suggesting that their ability to detect beneficial effects on the use of force is a function of their "exceptionally granular data," and that the weak or null effects in previous studies are an artifact of "coarser evaluation approaches" (Barbosa et al. 2021, 4).

There are several other potential explanations for these apparent discrepancies between the effectiveness of BWCs in the Global North and the Global South. Citizens may be more receptive and responsive to BWCs in countries where baseline levels of corruption and other forms of misconduct are relatively high, and/or where baseline levels of accountability are relatively low. (While these problems of course afflict Global North countries as well, public sector corruption generally tends to be more prevalent in the Global South.[15]) Citizens may also interpret officers' use of BWCs as a signal of increased technological sophistication and thus increased crime fighting capability, which may improve public perceptions of the police even without (necessarily) changing police behavior.

Research from the Global South also provides some reason for caution as BWCs continue to proliferate. A second experimental study from Brazil finds that BWCs reduced the use of force among officers, but that many officers resisted wearing BWCs or intentionally avoided interactions with civilians for which they believed they might later be punished (Magaloni et al. 2019). This suggests that BWCs may in some cases need to be paired with incentives or sanctions to induce officer compliance and prevent officer inactivity; strong supervision may also be needed to ensure that BWCs are used correctly and that accompanying policies—e.g. policies specifying when BWCs should be turned on, when and whether citizens should be told that their actions are being recorded, etc.—are followed carefully.

[15] See, e.g., Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*, available at https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021.

BWCs may also prove to be more trouble than they are worth in some settings, since they are expensive and require IT personnel and communications infrastructure that resource constrained police departments typically lack. These requirements have provoked skepticism even in the Global North (Lum et al. 2019). While promising results from studies in the Global South somewhat belie this concern, the empirical record remains thin, and few if any studies of BWCs (and none of those cited above) include cost-benefit analyses. Some amount of public outreach and education may also be necessary to ensure that the expectations of citizens and officers are aligned when BWCs are introduced. Interestingly, studies in the Global North suggest that BWCs are generally popular among both officers and citizens, but for different reasons (Lum et al. 2019). If BWCs meet the expectations of one group but not the other—for example, by reducing complaints against officers without encouraging more respectful treatment of civilians (or vice versa)—then support for the technology may erode over time.

Procedural justice and soft skills

Theories of procedural justice posit that citizens' decisions to obey the law and cooperate with the police depend on their perceptions of police legitimacy, which, in turn, depend on their belief that the police will treat them fairly and respectfully (Lind and Tyler 1988; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler and Huo 2002). Procedural justice is more a philosophy than a policing practice per se, though it has inspired myriad initiatives aimed at shaping police attitudes and behaviors. Theories of procedural justice also (implicitly) underlie many programs designed to instill soft skills among police officers, such as communication, mediation, de-escalation, and stress management. Like procedural justice theories more generally, these programs are grounded in the proposition that citizens are more likely to obey and cooperate with the police if they perceive the police as fair and respectful.

Procedural justice has been extensively researched in the Global North and, to a lesser extent, the Global South as well. There is evidence from Colombia (Lalinde Ordóñez 2020), Jamaica (Grant and Pryce 2020; Pryce and Grant 2020; Reisig and Lloyd 2009), Kenya (Pryce and Wilson 2020), Pakistan (Jackson et al. 2014), South Africa (Bradford et al. 2014; Prinsloo 2019), and elsewhere that procedural justice is positively correlated with trust and legitimacy in the Global South. A meta-analysis of 56 studies similarly finds that procedural justice is positively correlated with citizens' perceptions of police legitimacy; some (albeit a minority) of these studies focus on countries in the Global South (Bosnia, Ghana, Hungary, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ukraine, Trinidad, Turkey, etc.). But all 56 studies in the meta-analysis are observational, and all but two are cross-sectional. The authors concede that "the causal direction of these relationships could not be tested" (Colin Bolger and Walters 2019, 98).

Indeed, almost *all* studies of procedural justice are observational and cross-sectional, making it very hard to disentangle what is likely a complex causal chain. Procedural justice theories are very difficult to test, and often verge on tautology. For example, the procedural justice model posits a causal relationship between perceptions of fairness on the one hand and perceptions of legitimacy on the other. But perceived fairness is arguably a *component* of perceived legitimacy, and establishing a causal relationship between the two is very challenging. In a 2017 review, Nagin and Telep (2017, 5) note that while studies "consistently show that citizen perceptions of

procedurally just treatment are closely tied to perceptions of police legitimacy," the existing empirical evidence has not yet established "whether these associations reflect a causal connection." In a subsequent review, Nagin and Telep (2020, 771) similarly conclude that "no study has credibly established a causal linkage between procedurally just treatment and legal compliance" or other indicators of trust and legitimacy.

There have been only a few experimental or quasi-experimental studies of procedural justice in the Global South. These studies typically focus on one of two categories of interventions: (1) interventions that give police officers specific, "procedurally just" scripts to read while interacting with civilians (e.g. in the context of traffic stops), or (2) interventions that train police officers in procedurally just practices more generally. Interventions in the first category are advantageous because they ensure that citizens will receive some amount of procedurally just policing, as long as officers follow the scripts they are given; they are disadvantageous because officers may revert to less procedurally just practices when they are not reading from a script. Interventions in the second category are advantageous because they seek to inculcate more generalizable skills, but disadvantageous because officers may neglect to apply those skills when interacting with civilians.

Two high-quality studies in the Global South test procedural justice, both with relatively promising results. In one experimental study in Turkey, police officers were trained to read from scripts that "helped to ensure that key components of a procedurally-just encounter were delivered" during traffic stops; officers were also encouraged to maintain a "polite and respectful demeanor" during interactions with drivers (Sahin et al. 2017, 708). Drivers were surveyed immediately after their encounter with an officer. They were asked four questions to measure their attitudes towards the police in general (e.g. their trust in and satisfaction with the police), and another five questions to measure their attitudes towards the specific officer who stopped them (e.g. their belief that the officer was polite, respectful, and trustworthy). The authors find that procedurally just treatment improved drivers' perceptions of the officers that stopped them, but did not affect their perceptions of the police more generally.

In another experimental study in Mexico, 966 officers from Mexico City's Preventive Police Unit were randomly assigned to receive nine hours of training in procedurally just policing over the course of three days; an additional 888 officers were randomly assigned to control (Canales et al. 2021). The training focused on four principles of procedural justice: giving voice to citizens, showing neutrality, treating citizens with respect, and cultivating trustworthiness. The authors assessed changes in officers' attitudes using a survey administered three months after training, and they measured behavior change using an exercise in which researchers posing as civilians approached officers to request assistance; the resulting interactions were observed and graded by external evaluators. The authors find that procedural justice training induced more procedurally just attitudes and behaviors among officers, and improved officers' perceptions of citizens. It is not clear whether these changes helped build trust and legitimacy among citizens themselves, as the authors measured officers' perceptions of citizens but not citizens' perceptions of officers.

Two other high-quality studies address soft skills training more generally, also with relatively promising results. One experimental study in Rajasthan, India finds that soft skills training improved police "politeness" when interacting with crime victims, and increased victims' satisfaction with the police (Banerjee et al. 2021). Police politeness was measured using a "decoy

crime victim" exercise in which survey enumerators posing as citizens attempted to register complaints at a police station; satisfaction with the police was measured using a survey of 5,895 randomly selected households. Another quasi-experimental study of the *Plan Cuadrantes* program in eight Colombian cities finds some suggestive evidence that soft skills training increased police officers' sense of accountability to the population, which, the authors speculate, may improve police-community relations (García, Mejia, and Ortega 2013). Interpretation of this latter study is complicated by the fact that the training was accompanied by elements of community policing and problem-oriented policing, and by structural and organizational changes within Colombian police departments (though the evaluation focuses on training, the only element of the program that was randomly assigned).

Integration and descriptive representation

The challenges of building community trust in the police and fostering public perceptions of police legitimacy tend to be especially acute among historically marginalized populations. Studies in the US consistently show that racial and ethnic minorities (especially African Americans) express lower trust in the police and view the police as less legitimate than members of majority groups (Schuck, Rosenbaum, and Hawkins 2008; Weitzer and Tuch 2005). In the Global South as well, racial and ethnic minorities often express less favorable attitudes towards the police, particularly in settings where the police have been deployed as instruments of repression by authoritarian regimes (R. A. Blair, Karim, et al. 2021). Women are often similarly wary of the police, especially in countries whose police departments are dominated by men, and where the police have a reputation for ignoring or dismissing crimes that disproportionately affect women (e.g. gender-based violence) (Jassal 2020; Karim et al. 2018).

Descriptive representation policies are designed to mitigate these problems by increasing the proportion of women and racial or ethnic minorities serving on police forces, typically through formal or informal quotas, or through the creation of units or stations staffed by members of historically underrepresented groups. By ensuring greater descriptive representation, these policies are believed to reduce police discrimination, increase police responsiveness, and thus build trust in the police and improve perceptions of police legitimacy among the most disadvantaged populations.

There is little high-quality empirical evidence on the efficacy of these policies, either in the Global North or the Global South. In one survey experiment focused on Iraq, Sunni civilians expressed less fear of the Shia-dominated police when they were told about efforts to incorporate Sunnis into the force, and they expressed less willingness to use violence against the state (Nanes 2020). But experimental studies from Liberia and India suggest that descriptive representation has weak or even adverse effects on various indicators of police-community relations, including police discrimination against ethnic minorities (R. A. Blair, Karim, et al. 2021), police sensitivity and responsiveness to crimes that disproportionately affect women (Karim et al. 2018), access to justice for women, and—most directly relevant—perceptions of the police among women (Jassal 2020).

More generally, citizens may sometimes respond to descriptive representation in surprising and counterintuitive ways. In a survey experiment in India, for example, respondents were shown video

news bulletins describing fictitious crimes in which the nature of the crime and the gender of the responding officer were randomized. The authors find that female police officers were perceived to be more legitimate and trustworthy than male officers when responding to "non-gendered" crimes, but paradoxically *less* legitimate and trustworthy when responding to "gendered" crimes (e.g. gender-based violence) (Jassal and Barnhardt 2021). Another experimental study in India finds that the establishment of private Women's Help Desks (WHDs) in police stations increased registration of cases of gender-based violence—especially when female officers ran the WHDs—but finds no evidence that WHDs improved citizens' satisfaction with their visits to police stations or their perception that they were treated respectfully, and had only modest effects on their level of comfort discussing their concerns with the police.[16]

In another experimental study in Liberia, teams of police officers completed a series of exercises designed in coordination with UN police trainers to mimic the activities that officers typically encounter in the Liberian police academy (e.g. mock crime scene investigations); the authors measured discrimination by observing officers' decisions during these activities (R. A. Blair, Karim, et al. 2021). Teams that were randomly assigned to include officers from both majority and minority ethnic groups were *more* discriminatory against minority civilians than teams that included majority group members alone. Consistent with this result, in focus groups conducted after the experiment, civilians from minority ethnic groups often expected their coethnic police officers to be *more* abusive than non-coethnics.

One possible explanation for this finding is that minority police officers feel pressure to conform to an existing discriminatory police subculture—a phenomenon that has been well documented in the US (Alex 1969; Brown and Frank 2006; Kuykendall and Bums 1980), and that may arise in countries in the Global South as well. Another possible explanation is that female and ethnic minority officers in newly integrated police forces are pigeonholed into roles where they are perceived to be less trustworthy and legitimate. In India, for example, the creation of all-women police stations resulted in a reallocation of cases, such that female police officers became more likely to be assigned "gendered" crimes (Jassal 2020)—assignments that may have diminished their status in the eyes of civilians (Jassal and Barnhardt 2021). It is also possible that descriptive representation alone is insufficient to improve citizens' perceptions, and that integration may need to be accompanied by broader institutional and cultural changes.

Militarization and constabularization

Maintaining a strict separation between the military and the police is generally believed to be important for democracy and the rule of law. Yet in much of the Global South—and, indeed, parts of the Global North as well—this separation is routinely violated as governments rely on soldiers or heavily militarized police officers to combat crime. Scholars distinguish between two variations on this "iron first" approach to law enforcement: militarization and constabularization. Militarization involves equipping police officers with military-grade weapons and hardware; it can also involve the use of paramilitary police forces, which are more centralized and hierarchical, and more likely to be deployed in formed units (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021b). Constabularization

[16] The working paper describing these results was provided to me by the corresponding author, but is not yet publicly available. A description of the study is available at https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/increasing-access-security-and-justice-through-womens-help-desks-police-stations-india.

involves deploying actual soldiers to conduct domestic policing operations. This latter strategy is uncommon in the Global North, but is widespread in the Global South, especially in Latin America (R. A. Blair and Weintraub 2021a, 2021b).

The primary goal of both militarization and constabularization is to reduce crime. But citizens of Global South countries tend to support these policies (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2019; Pion-Berlin and Carreras 2017; Zechmeister 2014), and advocates often hope they will improve perceptions of the state security apparatus. To date, however, only one study has tested this proposition in the Global South. An experimental evaluation of military policing in Cali, Colombia tests whether recurring, intensive military patrols targeting crime hot spots can improve citizens' attitudes towards the military and the police (R. A. Blair and Weintraub 2021a). Attitudes were measured through surveys of randomly selected residents and business owners conducted two to three months after the end of the intervention. The authors find that military patrols improved citizens' perceptions of the military but had no effect on their perceptions of the police. They also find that military patrols increased citizens' demand for additional military involvement in law enforcement, operationalized as the number of calls and texts received by a hotline that citizens could contact to request more military presence in their neighborhoods.

Other studies provide more indirect evidence. Experimental and quasi-experimental studies from Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico suggest that constabularization exacerbates crime and human rights abuses (R. A. Blair and Weintraub 2021b; Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2021a; Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, and Melo 2020). Another quasi-experimental study from Mexico suggests that joint operations between the military and the police have similarly adverse effects on human rights, increasing torture and other forms of police brutality (Magaloni and Rodriguez 2020). But these studies also suggest that militarization and constabularization are nonetheless very popular among citizens, who tend to associate "iron fist" policies with greater efficacy and greater respect for civil liberties (R. A. Blair and Weintraub 2021a; Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2019). It is unclear what explains these apparently discrepant results. One possible interpretation is that citizens support militarization and constabularization not *despite* but rather *because of* the abuses that soldiers and militarized police officers commit, especially if those abuses largely target suspected criminals. In places where crime is rampant, abuses against suspected criminals may not be an aberration, but rather a response to citizens' demands for protection and their distrust of the rest of the criminal justice system as too slow or corrupt to deter criminals effectively (González 2020).

Conclusion and recommendations

The existing evidence on policing practices to build community trust in the police and foster public perceptions of police legitimacy in the Global South is scant. In this report I summarize high-quality research on six of these practices: (1) community policing, (2) saturation policing, (3) body-worn cameras, (4) procedural justice and soft skills, (5) integration and descriptive representation, and (6) militarization or constabularization. While some of these practices have been found to be more effective than others, the evidence is thin and generally limited to a handful of countries and practices. As a result, it is premature to conclude that apparently effective practices should be expanded further, or that apparently ineffective ones should be abandoned altogether. Moreover, some potentially effective practices have not been the subject of much or any high-quality research (e.g. implicit bias training, civilian oversight boards and professional standards units, revisions to

the use of force continuum, or restrictions on transfers, duty rotations, and work hours). Broadening this body of evidence, both substantively and geographically, should be a priority for both academics and practitioners.

As donors continue to invest in police reform in the Global South, they should keep in mind that implementation is key, and that some strategies for increasing trust and legitimacy may fail simply because they are not implemented properly. Gill et al. (2014) and G. Blair et al. (2021) both address this issue in the context of community policing, but similar problems may apply to most if not all of the practices described above. For example, police officers may dedicate insufficient time and energy to patrolling hot spots for crime; may forget or refuse to activate their body-worn cameras; or may deviate from procedural justice scripts during interactions with civilians. These obstacles may be especially likely to arise in the Global South, where capacity for monitoring tends to be low. Donors should provide sufficient resources and oversight to ensure that new policing practices are executed as intended.

Donors should also support innovate policing practices that are tailored to the unique opportunities and challenges of law enforcement in the Global South. For example, as discussed above, the police are often just one of many potential purveyors of security and justice in Global South countries. Rather than ignore this complexity or marginalize alternative venues for adjudicating crimes and resolving disputes, donors should consider ways to incorporate them into the rest of the criminal justice system. For example, an experimental study in Colombia demonstrates that the police can prevent violence and improve police-community relations more effectively by harmonizing their efforts with communal (non-state) institutions known as *juntas de acción communal*, which serve as the primary axis of governance and conflict resolution in most rural Colombian communities (R. A. Blair, Moscoso, et al. 2021). Of course, some non-state security providers are complicit in crimes, human rights abuses, and other forms of misconduct (Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, and Melo 2020); engaging these actors may not be feasible or desirable. But exploiting complementarities between the police and non-state security providers could prove effective in many settings, and could avoid provoking backlash among citizens who are invested in alternatives to the police (R. A. Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019).

Donors should also consider ways to facilitate communication and coordination between the various components of the criminal justice system—not just the police, but also judges, prison wardens, prosecutors, and public defenders. Improvements in police-community relations may prove fleeting if citizens seek redress for grievances only to have their cases dismissed by the courts, or if they report crimes only to see suspected criminals released without trial. Donors should consider mechanisms for strengthening multiple components of the criminal justice system simultaneously. Finally, donors should incorporate high-quality studies into all police reform initiatives *before* they begin. Most donor-driven evaluations are retrospective, based on purely observational and cross-sectional data collected after police reforms are complete. There are fundamental limitations to what we can learn from evaluations of this sort; at worst, they may yield false or misleading conclusions. Evaluation is arguably especially important (if also especially challenging) when donors sponsor multiple new police initiatives simultaneously. Identifying which (if any) of these initiatives is responsible for any subsequent improvements in trust and legitimacy is crucial to understanding whether police reform is worth the cost and effort. This, too, should be a priority for both academics and practitioners in the future.

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