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US POLICE OFFICERS' TRAINING AND SERVICE TRAITS

Police training in the U.S. is most often measured in weeks, while in many other countries it is measured in months or years.

A 2018 Justice Department Study of State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies found that the average length of core basic police training in the U.S. is 833 hours, or less than 22 weeks. A more recent survey by PERF found a similar result, with responding agencies reporting an average of 20 weeks of basic police training.

In comparison, police recruits in Japan get between 15 and 21 months of training. Police in Germany get 2.5 years of training. And in Finland, police education takes three years to be completed.

U.S. law enforcement agencies do often provide additional training for police on the job who serve in specialized police units such as narcotics squads and violent crime suppression teams. But in Memphis, it was one of those special units -- Street Crimes Operation to Restore Peace in Our Neighborhood, or SCORPION -- whose members are accused of fatally beating Nichols during a traffic stop arrest. The unit has now been deactivated following Nichols' death.

A 2020 study by the University of Cincinnati looked at the impact of a training program focused on de-escalation and critical thinking skills in the Louisville Metro Police Department in Kentucky. The program, called Integrated Communications, Assessment and Tactics (ICAT) was developed by PERF. University of Cincinnati researchers found that ICAT

training was associated with a sizeable reduction in use-of-force incidents as well as the number of injuries to both citizens and officers.

Louisville Metropolitan Police Department (LMPD) officers who had participated in ICAT training experienced a 28% reduction in use-of-force incidents and 36% fewer injuries, compared to their peers who had not been given the training. In addition, 26% fewer citizens were injured in encounters with officers who had the training compared to officers who did not.

Using a critical decision model is not only safer for the person you're dealing with, but it's actually safer for police officers [3].

US police academies spend far more time on firearms training than on de-escalating a situation - 71 hours against 21, on average, according to a 2013 US Bureau of Justice Statistics report.

And in the US, the escalation of force is at the discretion of the officer, whereas in countries such as Norway and Finland, there are more rigorous rules as to what is considered justified use of force.

Most of the training in the US is focused on various types of use of force, primarily the various types of physical force. The communication skills are largely ignored by most police academies.

Police officers very rapidly escalating from initial communication to the actual physical use of force, because this is how they train.

More emphasis also needs to be put on mental-health training - both for when officers are responding to suspects and for officers themselves.

Police officers are up to five times more likely to kill themselves than to be killed by homicide. It would be better to emphasize on police officer mental-health training. Currently, they only get a few hours of training - if any - on self-care."

The US spends almost 1% of its GDP on policing - and some activists are calling for this to be cut and directed to other services [2].

About 1,000 people a year are killed by police officers in the US, according to an independent project that tracks police violence. Most are shot dead.

The majority of the world's police forces carry firearms, but no developed nation uses them against their citizens as often as officers in the

US - and disproportionately against African-Americans, compared with the percentage of the population they represent. Part of this is to do with gun culture - the US is home to around half of the world's civilian-held firearms.

In 2020, fewer than 10% of people killed by police were recorded as unarmed. Rashawn Ray, professor of sociology at the University of Maryland, says that in most states people can carry guns either on their body or in their vehicles, so that escalates things for police - they instantly perceive that anyone can be a threat.

The Marshall Project recently looked at 10 big-city police departments and found that most allow officers who have faced allegations of aggressive behavior to become trainers; one academic study found that officers whose trainers had a history of citizen complaints were more likely to draw complaints themselves in their first two years on the job.

Better training alone can't solve every problem with American policing. But because officers are licensed to use force against their fellow citizens, they should at least be equipped to use it wisely [1].

Reference:

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