Interaction and Conflict Management between the Austrian Police and People with Sub-Saharan African Migration Background under Study. Preliminary Findings of the European Project COREPOL (EU-FP7).

by Elisabeth Frankus (.SIAK) and Hemma Mayrhofer (IRKS)
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General Project Information

- **European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013)**
- **Project team:** DHPOL, ERS, .SIAK, IRKS, RTF
- **Project period:** 01.01.2012 – 31.12.2014
- **Project phases:** focusing on Germany, Austria and Hungary
  
  I  Stocktaking of the integration of Restorative Justice

  **II  Research about Minority Policing (current project phase)**

  III  Development of Restorative Justice oriented applications for Minority Policing

‘The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 285166 (COREPOL).’
Field Study Design & Overview Data Collection

• **Main issues:**
  - Acceptance/non-acceptance of police by minority
  - Critical experiences and encounters with the police
  - Conflict resolution between police and minority – elements of RJ?

• **Research paradigm & methods:**
  - Qualitative research strategy & comparative design
  - Qualitative interviews, group discussions, observations etc.

• **Sampling & spatial setting (Austria – current status)**

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<th></th>
<th>African Minority</th>
<th>Police</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Politicians/ Authority</th>
<th>Σ</th>
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<td>16 (2 AM)</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6 (2 AM)</td>
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<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
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Areas of conflict

• Language problems & communication difficulties
• Disrespectful experiences, racist utterances
• Identity checks/ethnic profiling
• Preferences of ‘natives’ during official acts
• Physical violence
Conflict Resolution and Complaint Management: Current situation

- **Existing possibilities for complaining:**
  - UVS-complaint (*UVS* = independent administrative panel)
  - Meeting between the involved officials and the complainant according to § 89 Secure Police Act
  - Complaints offices (NGOs – e.g. ZARA)

- **Feedback regarding the current situation**
  - Few complaints
  - Imbalance of power
  - Mediation during official act is not possible, but subsequent reflection
Conflict Resolution and Complaint Management: Recommendations

• **Recommendations:**
  • *Making use of existing African associations, NGOs, organizations*
  • *Need of improvement of police education*
  • *Development of “Error Culture” within the police*
  • *Need of independent complaint office*

• **Alternative conflict resolution approaches:**
  • *African community: “Council of Elders”*
  • *Police: Community Policing, prevention strategies*
Thank you for your attention!