



Professional Virtues through Dialogue

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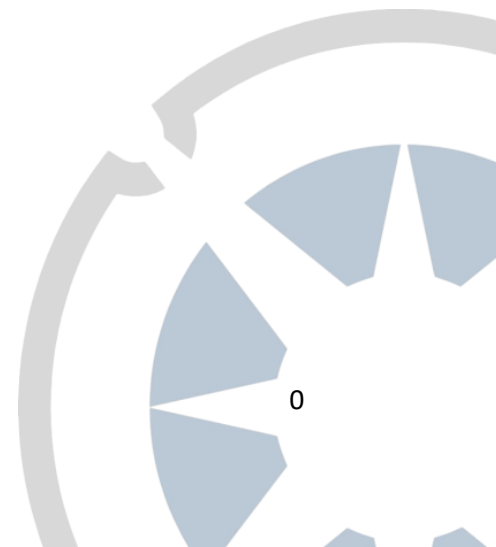
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Professional Virtues through Dialogue

Training Police Officers to Tackle (Racial) Discrimination Emanuel John (HSPV NRW)¹

Educational formats that seek to raise Police Officers' awareness about (racial) discrimination often focus on formal violations of the non-discrimination rule and canons of values. First, this paper argues for a broader understanding of the challenge to tackle (racial) discrimination in policing by pointing to the importance of proactive encounters with affected groups. Second, it outlines a framework for educational formats on this issue that address Police Officers as whole persons, who should, in the context of their professional practice, develop the virtue to understand the perspectives of and to build relationships of care with marginalized persons.

Introduction

When in many countries the debate about discriminatory effects of police work intensified in 2020, the former German Federal Minister of the Interior stated that he fully trusts the police and sees no necessity for inquiries on this issue, because (racial) discrimination is illegal – presupposing the police acts generally lawfully. At the same time activists seem to lose trust and engage with the abolitionist movement – demanding to defund the police. Between these polarized positions, there is a third. It seeks to develop the police as part of the political and social process to combat discrimination and to uphold a pluralistic, inclusive democratic society. The creation of new educational formats for Police Officers is one way to contribute to this development. However, there remains a controversy about how to specify their content and desired outcomes. This is partly due to the fact that there are different opinions about the police's role in such processes and whether there is any need to take action at all.

Notwithstanding such differences, the non-discrimination rule, formalized in human and basic rights, can be taken as a shared point of reference for different approaches to tackle (racial) discrimination in policing. Controversies then concern the question what referring to it implies for the police as an organization and individual Police Officers in their professional practice. At first glance two views may be discerned: (1) A rather minimal understanding of the police's role in the political and social process of combating discrimination and upholding democracy mainly emphasizes the legal character of the non-discrimination rule. Accordingly, Police Officers need legal and professional knowledge that enables them to comply in different situations with the legal norms binding their actions.² (2) Another view also regards the influence of (implicit) prejudices, stressing experiences and social conditions on Police Officers' perception of and attitudes towards their opposite. Hence, the development of the individual character of Police Officers, by reflecting prejudices and fostering their commitment to democracy and human rights, is seen as central aspect of their training. It also implies a more complex role of the police in the mentioned political and social process, especially concerning the involvement with affected groups and civil society.³

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² cf. Tibbitts, F., 2002, Understanding What We Do: Emerging Models for Human Rights Education, in: International Review of Education, 48, S. 165-166.

³ cf. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 2020, General recommendation No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials, CERD/C/GC/36, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/GC/36&Lang=en, 02.09.2022, §§ 43, 45, 48.

This paper adopts to the second view by developing an approach to training Police Officers to tackle (racial) discrimination that focuses on encountering the perspectives of affected groups. It will be shown that such formats presuppose a notion of professional ethics that reaches beyond the professional role. That means, they should address Police Officers as whole persons, who seek to act well by developing and exercising the virtue to encounter perspectives and experiences of others. However, thereby the first view shall not be completely disregarded, as such a notion of virtue can only improve professional practice, if it's compatible with the orientation towards legal norms in police work.

Given this, two inextricably connected goals are pursued in this paper. Primarily, a framework for educational formats that enable Police Officers to tackle (racial) discrimination will be developed. Secondly, such a format can only be specified based on a differentiated understanding of the problem of (racial) discrimination in policing. Regarding this, not statistics or cases will be presented, but implications of different views on how the everyday practice of policing may relate to the non-discrimination rule will be examined (2). Against this background, it will be argued that only virtuous persons can tackle (racial) discrimination in the context of their professional practice (3). This relates to an understanding of human rights and human rights education for which dialogue is central (4).

The Problem

Two Questions

According to the democratic rule of law, nobody should be discriminated against in relation to race, gender, political or religious belief, origin, or disability. Rather, everybody must be treated equally before the law. This is supposed to be guaranteed by the non-discrimination rule as for example formulated in Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In states that are committed to it in form of a basic right in their constitution, it is also binding for all police action. That means, action violating it cannot be legitimized and individuals affected by its violation can file a complaint.

Those who want to ensure that Police Officers actually have the competencies to comply with the non-discrimination rule in practice may pose the following question: How to raise Police Officers' awareness about (intentional and unintentional) discrimination in their professional practice?

Responses to this question have to find

ways to problematize discriminatory effects of policing. It is important to mention that according to the definition of (racial) discrimination in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) awareness about it encompasses more than intended discrimination and explicit racist beliefs. Also unintended discrimination and implicit prejudices (bias) should be regarded. Hence, also institutional and structural injustice and their influence on individual perception and action are of importance.⁴

However, approaching the issue of (racial) discrimination in manner of this question, the focus is primarily the avoidance of concrete violations of the non-discrimination rule. Within this scope, there remains a blind spot for various aspects that are central to combatting (racial) discrimination. By expanding knowledge about hate crime or extremism and related criminal offences this blind

⁴ cf. John, E., 2021, Wie Menschenrechtsbildung eine Beitrag zum Umgang mit Alltagsrassismus in der Polizeiarbeit leisten kann, in: Polizei&Wissenschaft 3/2021, 28-38.

spot is not yet filled. Again, already the ICERD states that protecting affected groups requires not only avoiding discriminatory behaviour, but also further actions, such as their inclusion by developing forms of participation or educational programs.⁵ In its recent recommendation regarding discrimination by law enforcement agencies, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which relates to the ICERD, consequently emphasizes the importance of the participation of affected groups in the development of educational formats about discrimination.⁶ Also the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Training and Education (HRET) implies a broader picture. In Article 2 (1) it directly points at the development of “attitudes and behaviour” and the “promotion of a universal culture of human rights” as its major aim, which clearly requires further action than the mere formal compliance with human rights.

In order to do justice to these aspects, the following question should be considered to be just as central as the first: How to empower Police Officers to uphold human rights and democracy in practice? Obviously, it’s not necessary to start from scratch, as there are already many initiatives in police organizations all over the world that may count as responses to this question, for example regarding community policing. However, the development of educational formats for Police Officers that enable them to respond to demands from civil society and to understand perspectives of affected groups is subject to greater controversies.^{7,8}

Beyond Formal Regulations

Before diving into the details of an understanding of virtues of professionals and an educational format that may contribute to their formation, it’s necessary to briefly consider one controversial answer to the two questions that is as simple as unsatisfying but nevertheless should be taken seriously: Policing is bound to basic rights and the rule of law. Thus, Police Officers are supposed to have knowledge of the non-discrimination rule and further human rights anyway – given they work in a democratic state.⁸

If this answer was satisfying, we could stop at this point. However, the reason why we discuss possibilities for developing new formats for educating and training Police Officers is based on the conviction that tackling (racial) discrimination in policing is more complex. First, in pluralistic societies people are affected by discrimination in everyday life in different ways. Experiences of discrimination may not always be related to bad intentions or any intention at all. They can be related to social power structures or to a countries’ history. Differences among people in this regard are especially significant with regard to the fact that the perspectives of those suffering from it

⁵ cf. International Convention against Racial Discrimination (ICERD) Art. 5 and Art. 7. Thornberry, P., 2018, The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. A Commentary, Oxford, 315-398, 430-455.

⁶ cf. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 2020, General recommendation No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials, CERD/C/GC/36, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/GC/36&Lang=en, 02.09.2022, §§ 43, 45, 48.

⁷ Two examples: <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publications/the-recording-of-police-stops-and-toolkit-for-theanalysis-of-police-identifications>, 07.10.2022; <https://kop-berlin.de/beitrag/die-berliner-kampagne-ban-racialprofiling-gefahrlche-orte-abschaffen>, 07.10.2022.

⁸ the former federal Minister of the Interior of Germany, Horst Seehofer, took this position in public debates about an inquiry about racial profiling in German Police Forces. Such an inquiry was unnecessary, as racial profiling was forbidden in Germany. (<https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2020-07/racial-profiling-studie-polizeiabgesagt-justizministerium-horst-seehofer>, 10.10.2022)

cannot always be fully understood by others. What this means is articulated in the concept of living behind the color line. That is that people of color have to deal with projections and reactions in everyday life others are not affected by.⁹ Therefore, perspectives of those living behind the color line in particular have to be taken seriously. Because, if their suffering is ignored, this would mean to stop seeing and respecting them as vulnerable fellow human beings.¹⁰ Second, upholding human rights and democracy requires thus not only an abstract commitment to a state's constitution and basic rights as justificatory basis of policing, but to live human rights in different situations of everyday life. This would mean to actively recognize and understand the vulnerabilities and needs of others, especially when they are exposed to threats.¹¹

The Pitfall of Foundational Values

There is a considerable approach that theoretically agrees with these two points, but still turns out to be fallacious. This is mainly due to it starting with a different question:

How to shape the value orientation of Police Officers according to foundational values?

When starting with this question one should be careful, as it implies a certain premise about values according to which it's generally possible to determine the "foundational values" Police Officers should uphold in various situations of policing.¹² Once such a premise is in place, rather vertical and hierarchical educational formats deem more apt. That means, they are conceived with the aim to adjust the character of individuals to an a priori determined canon of values. It is not clear though, how such approaches want to sufficiently regard the pertinence of individual experiences and ever remaining ambiguities in practice. Thus, it does not become plausible, how such an idea of forming and reflecting individuals' value orientations can help tackle (racial) discrimination efficaciously in the practice of policing.¹³ To account for this, the

9 cf. DuBois, W. E. B., 1986, *The Souls of Black Folks*, in: *Writings*, The Library of America: New York, 391.

10 cf. Fricker, M., 2010, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 30-59, 72-85.

11 This view on dignity is developed in Bernstein, J. M., 2015, *Torture and Dignity: An Essay on Moral Injury*, The University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

12 This view can be found in recommendation of a workgroup of the Ministry of the Interior of the State North Rhine-Westphalia concerning far right tendencies among Police Officers (Ministerium des Inneren des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Stabsstelle Rechtsextremistische Tendenzen in der Polizei NRW: Abschlussbericht: Band 1, Düsseldorf 2021, online: <https://www.im.nrw/system/files/media/document/file/berichtstrechtsband1.pdf>, 02.09.2022, 10, 16, 71). Cf. for a critical discussion: John, E./Sturm, N. M., 2022, *Menschenrechts- und Wertebildung für Polizist*innen?* in: *Bürgerrechte und Polizei/CILIP* 129, 86-95. 13

cf. John/Sturm, 2022.

concrete practical demands of democratic engagement with colleagues and affected groups should be addressed. Hence, approaches that start in the horizontal, at particular experiences and perspectives, seem more appropriate.

A new Starting Point

Ignorance and Individualism

Training Police Officers to tackle discrimination can be effective neither within the limited scope of a formal understanding of the non-discrimination rule nor on the basis of a canon of values. Such approaches would not do justice to the practical demands of tackling (racial) discrimination. The first step for developing an alternative, ethical approach is hence to specify the practical challenges. In correspondence to the two questions raised in 2.1 – how to raise awareness concerning (racial) discrimination and how to empower to uphold human rights and democracy – they are of two sorts, too.

(1) Ignorance

The aim of raising awareness about (racial) discrimination corresponds to the practical challenge to overcome ignorance. “Ignorance” has been introduced as a term into social philosophy and ethics in order to conceptualize persisting inequalities within a formally democratic society. That basically means that everybody has formally equal rights, but the conditions to enjoy them are not equal. Thus, there is a gap between the formal or ideal notion of a democratic society that guarantees equal rights on the one hand and marginalising living conditions of certain persons on the other hand.⁹ It’s the achievement of the term “ignorance” to create an understanding of this gap. Thereby the crucial point is to explore, how experiences of discrimination and marginalization of some and privileges of a majority are concealed.¹⁰ Raising awareness of such inequalities thus also requires to involve the perspectives of marginalized persons to understand the discriminating effects of (implicit) prejudices, of social policies, or certain institutional practices and regulations.¹¹

(2) Individualism

The aim to empower to uphold democracy and human rights corresponds to the practical challenge to overcome individualism, which stands for a view on persons as independent from social relations, merely driven by particular wishes and autonomous decisions. Endorsing this view, one may be able to tackle discrimination as a sort of legal and ethical misconduct. However, individualism is criticised for not being able to account for the dependencies and needs of especially disadvantaged and marginalized persons. In the wake of reflections on feminist issues one considerable alternative to the atomistic individual has been developed.¹² It takes account of the fact that every person is woven into different sorts of relationships and related power structures: individuals may dominate or be depend upon others. Based on this insight, normative requirements for shaping these relationships in order to alleviate effects of power structures, are explored. The main upshot is that maintaining relationships of care is essential for a democratic society, because they can ensure that everybody’s claims of rights are realized, especially of those who are depended, insofar as they are not able to raise their voice and to represent themselves.¹³ Against this background, the injustice of discrimination is not merely tackled by raising awareness about epistemic ignorance in order to avoid it. Further, it demands for positive action, that is, building relationships of care with members of affected groups. Consequently, it would also be an injustice, not to take care of the perspective and needs of victims¹⁴, not to be a good listener²⁰.

Considering these two points, Police Officers should be enabled

1. to overcome ignorance by developing an understanding for perspectives on and experiences of (racial) discrimination among marginalized individuals in their operation areas.

⁹ Mills, C. W., 1997, *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca; Pateman, C., 1988, *The Sexual Contract*, Polity/Blackwell: Cambridge.

¹⁰ Mills, C. W., 2007, *White Ignorance*, in: Sullivan, S./Tuana, N. (ed.): *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, State University of New York: Albany, 13–38. Alcoff, L. M. (2007): *Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types*, in: Sullivan, S./Tuana, N. (ed.): *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, State University of New York: Albany, 39–57.

¹¹ Medina, J., 2013, *The Epistemology of Resistance. Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*, Oxford University Press: Oxford/New York.

¹² The focus lies here on the ethical and political critique by feminist philosophy and philosophy of race. The aim is not to refute methodological individualism (an overview of this complex debate can be found in the related entry in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* for <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/methodological-individualism/>, 11.10.2022), but to make an alternative view plausible with regard to tackle discrimination in policing.

¹³ cf. Vgl. Schwarzenbach, S. A., 2009. *On Civic Friendship: Including Women in the State*, Columbia University Press: New York, 105-133; Tronto, J., 2013, *Caring Democracy: Market, Equality, Justice*, New York University Press: New York, 46-64; . Hark, S., 2021, *Gemeinschaft der Ungewählten: Umriss eines politischen Ethos der Kohabitation*, Suhrkamp: Berlin, 66-74, 214-223.

¹⁴ cf. Shklar, J., 1990, *The Faces of Injustice*, Yale University Press: New Haven/London, 40-50, 111. 20 cf. Fricker 2010, 81-85.

2. to built relationships of care to these individuals.

Professional Competencies

To overcome ignorance and individualism, competencies to tackle these practical challenges under the claim of human rights, i.e. the non-discrimination rule, are required. When designing educational formats aiming at this, it should be considered that Police Officers are expected to have different sorts of competencies, such as to operate electronic devices and computer programs, to use a gun effectively, to drive with blue light, to apply legal and bureaucratic regulations properly and so forth. The standard of good exercise of such technical competencies can be determined a priori by experts. Thus, they can be taught by training step by step procedures. Training technical competencies is consequently inextricably connected with a rather vertical and hierarchical educational format, such as the above (2.2) criticized value based approach. In contrary, to tackle the practical challenges of overcoming ignorance and building relationships of care, access to hitherto unknown living conditions and experiences of others under particular social and cultural conditions is needed. That applying a step by step procedure proves to be insufficient to meet this demand is also corroborated by studies in the field of "street-level bureaucracy". They show how individual Police Officers often develop informal strategies to cope with different individuals that are more efficient than the correct application of standardized professional knowledge.¹⁵ Even though, certain technical competencies may be central to police work, the ability to tackle (racial) discrimination is located on a different level, rather similar to such informal strategies that adapt to different situations.

Virtuous Persons

Philosophical approaches to virtues in the wake of Aristotle can deliver an alternative conception of Police Officers' ability to tackle (racial) discrimination. Virtue ethics generally seek to understand what is characteristic of the good life of a virtuous person. Following Aristotle's famous ergon argument, this is based on the capacity to act and live well as rational human being.¹⁶ The exertion of this capacity is different from the exercise of technical competencies, because living virtuously as whole person cannot be reached by following a step by step procedure according to a predetermined standard or goal.

Central to this notion of virtues is further that no general principle or codified values can be learned that may serve each person as standard for judging what is good to do, because it would always fall short of the complex reality in which they have to act. Instead, virtuous persons should develop abilities to live and act well bottom up.¹⁷ This is reflected in Aristotle's' conceptual distinction between intellectual virtues, such as competencies to give reasons and to justify what one does, and character virtues, shaped by particular social and cultural conditions under which a person is raised. For virtuous agents this does not lead into a dualism, as intellectual virtues are not apprehended isolated from social impacts of upbringing, affections and situational perception. Rather, they act as a whole person that exhibits practical wisdom (phronesis) by living in a way that both sides are interrelated.¹⁸ That means, virtuous persons see in particular occasions, in which they find

¹⁵ Lipsky, M., 1980/2010, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*, Russel Sage Foundation: New York.

¹⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethic*, 1097b-1098a.

¹⁷ Cf. Burnyeat, M. F., *Aristotle on Learning to be Good*, in: Rorty, A. O. (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, University of California Press: Berkley, 69-92.

¹⁸ McDowell, J., 2002, *Mind, Value, and Reality*, Harvard University Press: London/Cambridge Mass., 27-28, 38-40.

themselves as individuals that are shaped by different social and cultural conditions, which aspects are relevant to acting and living well.¹⁹

In the upshot, this notion of practical wisdom of virtuous persons implies that we henceforth have to address the individual Police Officer as a whole person, in and beyond their professional role. We have to start at the individual, who can develop and exercise competencies to act and judge to live well as human being and is shaped by good and bad experiences as well as by caring and dominating social relationships. With regard to the practical challenges sketched above, this seems suitable, as attention can be shifted to the experiences of and relationships with concrete others. However, even if this notion of virtue ethics is appropriate to overcome ignorance and individualism, from the point of view of policing it may create complications, given that it seems difficult to combine it with the rule and norm orientation that is demanded from Police Officers.

Application

Police Officers as Virtuous Persons

How to relate this general notion of virtues to the specific demands of professional practices of Police Officers? A convincing response to this question may show, why and how being a virtuous person can contribute to a good professional practice of policing in which the claim of human rights is realized in everyday situations, at least insofar as (racial) discrimination is tackled by overcoming ignorance and building relationships of care.

Some may think that this is the point at which something like a list of professional virtues, each Police Officer ought to acquire, should be delivered. But it's not that easy, considering that the Aristotelian notion of virtues requires to address the whole person, not a professional role. Also, when we claim that we can define professional virtues, the difference to technical competencies blurs. Another approach is hence to take professional practices as contexts in which the general human capacity to act and live well is developed and exercised. That is, Police Officers execute their professional duties as virtuous persons. And vice versa, they develop the ability to act virtuously as whole persons also in their professional practice. Within in this picture, becoming virtuous is a life long process as Aristotle suggests, when he says that one only knows at the end of life, whether someone lived well (became an eudaimon).²⁰ Therefore, the social and cultural context that shapes the ways of acting and living of individuals, i.e. their attitudes and ways of responding, should not be taken as fatefully given, but as being constantly developed. Because acting and living virtuously means to "suitably concern" occasion by occasion the experiences of others and the social context they are situated in²¹, it may contribute to this development by overcoming ignorance and building relationships of care. Hence, living and acting virtuously also means to actively shape one's habituated ways of responding and social relationships in the role of a Police Officer, as well as in other roles and contexts in life.

¹⁹ Aristotelians would elaborate here on the interdependence between formal and material cause. With regard to this point I follow Anselm Müller's interpretation (Müller, A., 2008, Formal and Material Goodness in Action, *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis*, 11 (1), 213-228.)

²⁰ cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a 15-20.

²¹ cf. McDowell, J., 2002, *Mind, Value, and Reality*, Harvard University Press: London/Cambridge Mass., 67, 73.

Emphasizing this aspect of virtues may lead to the opinion that educational formats based on it lead to sentimentalization. According to this allegation merely affections and emotional irritations are triggered, but not related to a conceptual understanding and normative judgment.²² Educational formats of which this was true could neither do justice to the notion of acting and living virtuously as proactive engagement with habituated ways of responding and in social relationships. Nor would they be compatible with the aim of involving affected groups for the sake of “promoting a universal culture of human rights” (cf. section 2.2). However, it remains to show that this notion of virtue is not generally located in a different sphere than discussions about human rights, but is coherent with a certain way to judge and act in accordance with them in policing. This has to be different from referring to them top down as formal legal norm. A compatible bottom up understanding of human rights, starting at occasions in which others’ perspectives and experiences are encountered, can be gained from Emmanuel Lévinas’ notion of taking responsibility in the face of the other.²³ This is also inextricably related to his argument for understanding human rights as rights of the concrete other.³⁰ Accordingly, responsibility should not be reduced to formally defined duties and tasks of Police Officers. Standing „face-to-face-with-the-other“ means to enter into a relationship as whole person with whole persons in which nobody can be fully categorized and dominated.²⁴ In such a relationship one may question one’s self-understanding and encounter new needs and claims.²⁵ Against this background, acting virtuously to overcome ignorance and to develop relationships of care with affected groups means to take responsibility in face of the other, that is to enter a dialogical relationship between I and You, so that particular experiences, vulnerabilities, needs, and claims can be understood.²⁶ Given this, the expected complication of relating virtuous agency to professional duties in policing is partly resolved insofar as it proves coherent with human rights, its central norm.

Nevertheless, frictions may remain, as encountering others as human rights holders in this manner requires the time and effort to proceed occasion by occasion with “suitable concern”, which again may challenge routines in the professional practice of Police Officers.

Methodological Framework

The HRET does not only specify the aim of human rights education as the development of “attitudes and behaviour” and the “promotion of a universal culture of human rights” (cf. section 2.1), but also contains a methodological framework for human rights education. It reflects the need to address particular perspectives, experiences and social relationships as suggested by the outlined bottom up understanding. According to Article 2 (2) of the HRET, human rights education should not only inform about human rights, but should on a second level also be carried out as education through human rights, which is to foster participation and the exchange of perspectives and experiences. On a third level, it’s described as education for human rights, which aims at the ability to act for one’s own and other’s rights. Especially with regard to education through and for human rights one could say that a “universal culture of human rights” is not only a yet to be reached goal of human rights education, but already realized in its process. The following three points sketch a framework for

²² cf. Zembylas, M., 2015, Toward a Critical-Sentimental Orientation in Human Rights Education, in: *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 48 (11), 1-17.

²³ cf. Lévinas, E., 1980, *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l’Exteriorité*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers B.V.: Den Haag, 177-178. 30 cf. Lévinas, E., 1995, *Altérité et transcendance*, Fata Morgana: Paris, 134.

²⁴ cf. Lévinas 1980, 291; Bauman, Z., 1994, *Postmodern Ethics*, Blackwell: Oxford/Cambridge Mass., 110-144. Sarah Banks elaborated this point for *Ethics in Social Work* (cf. Banks, S., 2021, *Ethics and Value in Social Work*, Plagrave Macmillian: London, 82-84.)

²⁵ cf. Lévinas 1980, 176-177, 110.

²⁶ Regarding this point, Martin Buber’s notion of Dialogue may also be fruitful (cf. Pauly, M., 2022, *Beyond the political principle: Applying Martin Buber’s philosophy to societal polarization*, in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 48 (3), 437-456.

such educational processes with regard to the specific purpose to develop Police Officers' virtues to tackle (racial) discrimination.

(1) General Learning Goal

The ability to enter a dialogue with others and to endure thereby different experiences and perspectives should be acquired. Thereby ignorance can be detected and relationships of care can be built. By aiming at these competencies, it becomes clear that different from approaches based on a canon of values or professional (legal) knowledge, not adjusting to a certain ethos or order should be the result, but the appreciation of experiences and perspectives that are not yet understood and may remain ambiguous.

(2) Overcoming Ignorance

Furthermore, aiming at this learning goal can help overcoming ignorance, if educational formats offer more than reflection for the sake of coping with professional stresses and stirring experiences made in professional practice, which is for example done in supervision and consultations. Instead, the focus lies on raising awareness by listening to what others say about their experiences and how they present their perspective. This may even trigger new irritations.

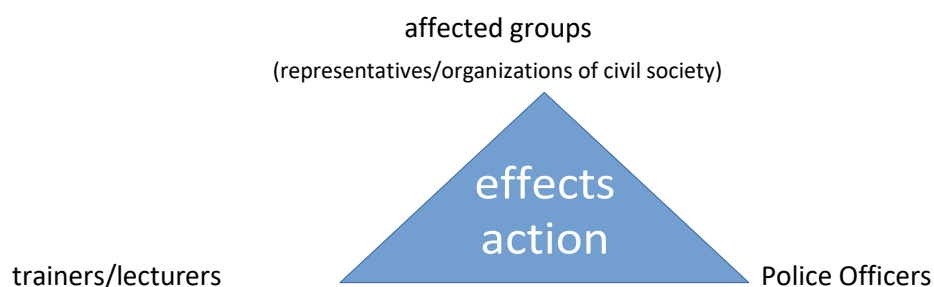
(3) Building Relationships of Care

Educational formats aiming at this learning goal can provide occasions for empowering participants to build relationships of care. Dialogue with and care for others requires forms of interaction and discourse that are different from the execution of rather technical professional competencies. Consequently, not procedures oriented towards quick conflict resolution should be taught, but spaces for raising new questions and ambiguities that require further efforts should be provided. Forms of interaction through which relationships of care can be build should be explored. Thereby, potential frictions with other aspects of the participants professional practice should be considered.

Example

As final point, a format that is being developed in Germany within this framework shall be sketched.

In the context of advanced training it aims at providing the possibility to discuss (racial) discrimination and to develop options for improving action. While in Germany most formats of advanced training for Police Officers are conducted by colleagues, this one tries to integrate different perspectives:



The training is designed and carried out by representatives of organizations of affected groups (Opferberatung Rheinland - Victim Counseling Rhineland). Furthermore, the participating group is composed of Police Officers and lecturers at Universities for Police and Public Administration. This way, participants are confronted with different perspectives on policing and may be challenged to find new ways of speaking about and dealing with (racial) discrimination.

Conclusion

The twofold question, how to raise the awareness of Police Officers about (racial) discrimination and how to empower them to uphold human rights and democracy, finds here a response in educational formats that provide space for dialogue. They seem appropriate based on the argument that tackling (racial) discrimination requires the virtue to encounter perspectives and experiences of affected groups. When individuals develop and exercise this virtue in their role as Police Officers this might be the onset for overcoming ignorance and building relationships of care. At the same time, to develop this virtue in the context of police work especially requires to acknowledge differences and ambiguities and to challenge professional routines and procedures. How organizational structures should be developed so that individual Police Officers can meet this quite challenging demand, would need further inquiry. As well, this pertains to their possible role in the political and social process to combat discrimination. This paper merely tried to develop a framework for formats that make such a demand more feasible. It did so by arguing for addressing Police Officers as virtuous persons for who different perspectives and critique can be related to positive experiences of encounters with fellow human beings – this is the crucial contrast to (racial) discrimination, “group focused enmity”, polarization etc.