

## Policing and public security

The role of the police in persevering law and order is a central function of the state. Interventions may extend policing to areas which have previously been underserved, and so bring the rule of law and reduce violence. Policing interventions may also be introduced in post-conflict settings, following a transitional period from international peacekeepers to the national police force. Finally, the interventions may change the nature of policing, which includes empowering citizens to act as police, introducing community policing which builds local partnerships to enhance cooperation and engagement, and problem-oriented policing which focuses on specific problems related to crime and violence.

The presence of police can increase physical security, with both community policing and problem-oriented policing proving effective in African settings. But a study of community policing in six countries found no effects. Further research is needed to understand the role of intervention design and context in explaining these differences.

There are only small or no effects on other outcomes. Community policing does not increase trust in the police. And where there is little trust in the police, then effects can be negative, as was the case in Afghanistan, where a large police presence reduced election turnout and the use of state dispute resolution. In Papua New Guinea, the creation of police auxiliaries did increase the use of state dispute resolution, but did not displace recourse to non-state dispute resolution through traditional authorities.

And there is a negligible effect on violence and atrocities, suggesting that such phenomena are beyond the capacities of regular police forces.

## Effect of policing and public security

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Outcome sub-domain	Effect size	No. of studies	No. of effect sizes
Government performance	-0.004	5	21
Access to justice	0.045	2	4
Political security	0.034	1	2
Physical security	0.453	3	22
Nature and scale of violence and atrocities	0.007	6	20

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