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Review 1 of "Policing Perspectives Concerning Confusion and Uncertainty in Policing Practices with 'Honour'-Based Crimes and Forced Marriages"

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I enjoyed reading this paper for several reasons. First of all, it is an import subject: a lot of people suffer from crimes committed in the name of the (so-called) honour of the family. Next to that, for the police this is not an easy phenomenon to deal with. The work of researchers that try to deal with the question why this is so complex and come up with recommendations, should be appreciated.

I was trained as an anthropologist and criminologist. In the Netherlands I combine my work as a professor of Anthropology of Law with my job at the Dutch police, where I hold a position as head of research of the National Centre of Expertise on Honour-based Violence of the Dutch National Police Force. Based on my experience working for the Dutch police, I would like to make some suggestions to the author for further elaboration. It is up to the author whether she will do so or not.

The core category identified in the material collected by the author is 'confusion and uncertainty in policing practices'. Within that category she identified three themes 1) Inconsistency in the Use of Terminology; 2) Police Perceptions of Training; and 3) Police Understandings of FM and Perspectives on the Barbaric Cultural Practices Bill to Criminalize It.

Regarding terminology

The author states that the terminology concerns are more than semantics as the issue profoundly affects racialized women, girls, and communities. I could not agree more. Personally I think that **it is important to make a distinction between analysis of a phenomenon and moral condemnation of that phenomenon**. Off course, it goes without saying that I am not an advocate of violence committed in the name of honour. But as a scientist and police officer I need vocabulary and terminology that helps me to grasp what is happening. Next to that, I need language that helps me communicate with the communities involved. Within the Dutch police we now make a distinction between 'domestic violence' and 'honour-based violence'. At first, honour-based violence was seen as a form of domestic violence. But the trouble is that in western societies like the Netherlands, the domestic context is understood as the realm of the nuclear family, neighbours and family friends. In the world of honour-based violence the extended family is a way more important factor. In our training programmes for the Dutch police we make a distinction between violence taking place within the nuclear of within the extended family. When a conflict takes place within the extended family, more people are involved. That has consequences for safeguarding (potential) victims and preventing

further escalation of conflicts. This distinction – are we dealing with a conflict between two individuals or within a group? – is also attractive because it is relatively neutral compared to terms like ‘barbaric cultural practices’. In the Netherlands the term ‘barbaric cultural practices’ is also frequently used. A big disadvantage is, that it makes it difficult to communicate with communities involved. I have no trouble at all explaining to people that female genital mutilation, forced marriage or another form of honour-based violence is unacceptable under the rule of law. But I will never use adjectives like ‘barbaric’: then you lose your line of communication with the people that you are (claiming and) trying to help.

Regarding training and the need of blueprints

In police training we should address the understanding of phenomena (in a Weberian sense of *Verstehen*) with which the police has to deal and, of course, with the way(s) the police has to proceed. In police training programmes **it is important to not further ‘exoticise’ honour-based violence and to explain the relation with the rule of law**. Violating and restoring honour may not necessarily be contrary to the law in force in the Netherlands. Suppose an unmarried woman falls in love, enters into a relationship and falls pregnant. Her family is outraged by this. She then goes on to marry the father of her child, which in the eyes of her family ‘erases’ the shame. The law in force in the Netherlands has not been compromised. There is no task for the police in the offing. As far as the police are concerned, there is work to be done as soon as an affront to honour or restoring honour is contrary to Dutch law. For instance, rape may be considered an affront to honour that is contrary to the law. But codes of honour are mainly brought to the police’s attention when citizens take it upon themselves to use violence to restore the violated honour. In a state under the rule of law, this kind of vigilante justice is unacceptable given that the state has the monopoly on the use of force. The police controls an important part of this monopoly and so it acts when members of the public take it upon themselves to mete out justice (or threaten to do so) using force.

I always get nervous, when I read about ‘blue prints’. At the opening of his novel *Anna Karenina*, the Russian novelist Tolstoy writes ‘All Happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way’. I totally understand that there is a need for standard procedures, but if we really want to help families in need, that we should start with an analysis of what happened. Law enforcement does not or should not function as an assembly line. **In police training we should help professionals to learn to analyse these situations**. Never forget: police officers should not judge people or cases. (Moral) condemnation and judgement does not help to do good police work. We should use our brains!