

# The use of coercion at the intersection of psychiatry and police

## Ethical and psychological contributions

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**EViPRG Meeting**

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**6th November 2023**

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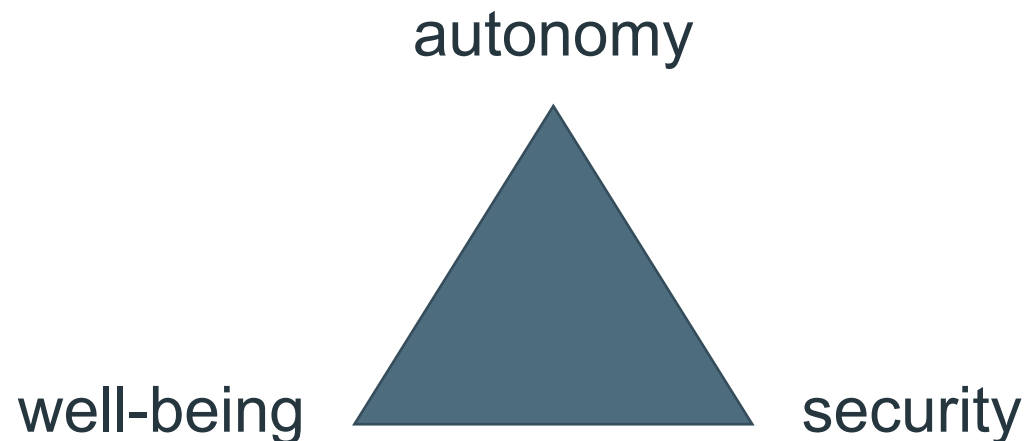
## Outline

- I. (Personal) Introduction
  - II. Police and Psychiatry in Germany
  - III. Project Summary
  - IV. Outlook
-

## (Personal) Introduction

SALUS– The ethics of coercion:

Striking a balance between autonomy, well-being and security in psychiatric practice



1. Ethical aspects in the use of coercion in psychiatry, including informal coercion
2. Ethical challenges in forensic psychiatry
3. Patient advance directives, including self-binding directives
4. Clinical ethical counseling in psychiatry
5. Development of interdisciplinary manuals

## Police and Psychiatry in Germany

- Mental health laws as well as police laws are federal laws in Germany.
- The police frequently encounters people with mental disorders and are often involved in the use of coercion.

Watson et al., 2004  
Coleman & Cotton, 2010  
Livingston, 2016  
Atkins et al., 2019

Involuntary admissions

Assistance in aggressive situations

Absconding

# Police and Psychiatry in Germany

**DW** Made for minds. [DW FOCUS](#) [Israel at war](#) [German colonialism](#) [Ukraine](#) [Latest videos](#) [Latest audio](#) [Live TV](#)

**SOCIETY | GERMANY**

## Killing of youth sparks debate about German police brutality

**Ralf Bosen**  
08/12/2022

Four police operations, four deaths, one week. Germany is once again discussing police violence and racism. The latest victim was a 16-year-old refugee who was shot with a machine gun.

[f](#) [x](#) [v](#)



Photo: Reuters/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

## Police and Psychiatry in Germany

- Mental disorders are affected by a high stigmatization, which is also present among police officers.

→ “Their stigma of dangerousness,  
puts them into danger.”

- The use of firearms by police officers is generally low in Germany, but there is a high amount of people with mental disorders among the victims.

Angermeyer, 2004

Stuart, 2017

Bock et al., 2015

Peter, 2017

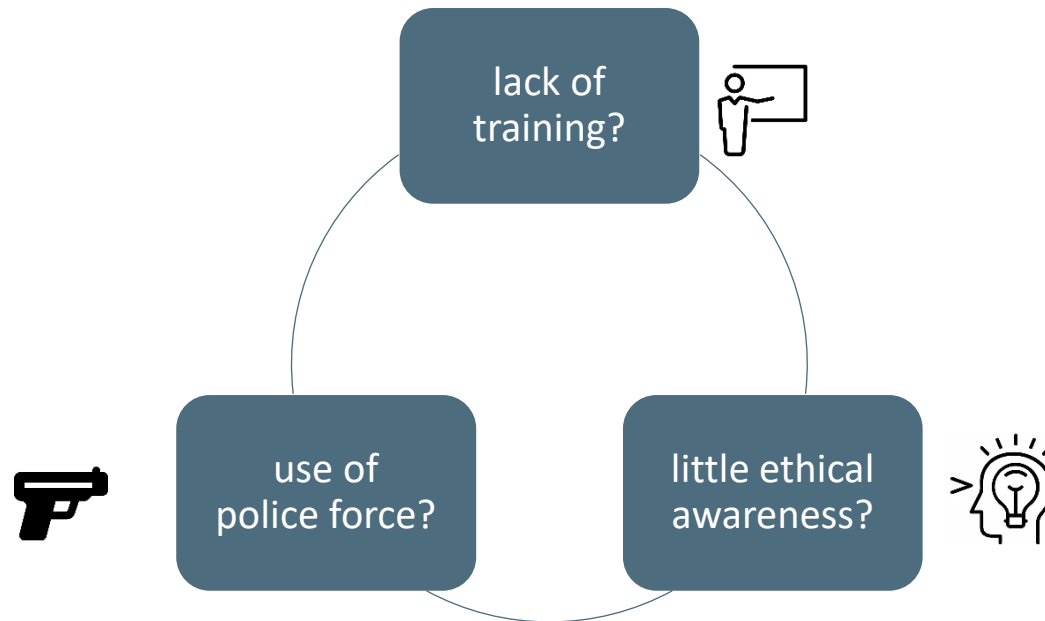
Feltes & Alex, 2020

Finzen, 2014

Kesic, Thomas & Ogloff, 2009

## Police and Psychiatry in Germany

- Previous studies were mostly conducted regarding the view of police officers or people with mental disorders.



Carey, 2001

Ruiz & Miller, 2004

Wells & Schafer, 2006

Watson et al., 2008

Godfredson et al., 2011

Livingston et al., 2014

## Project Summary

→ explorative, qualitative-empirical interview study



n = 10 mental health professionals (nurses and physicians) in a general psychiatric hospital

n = 3 police officers regarding the general procedure of such operations



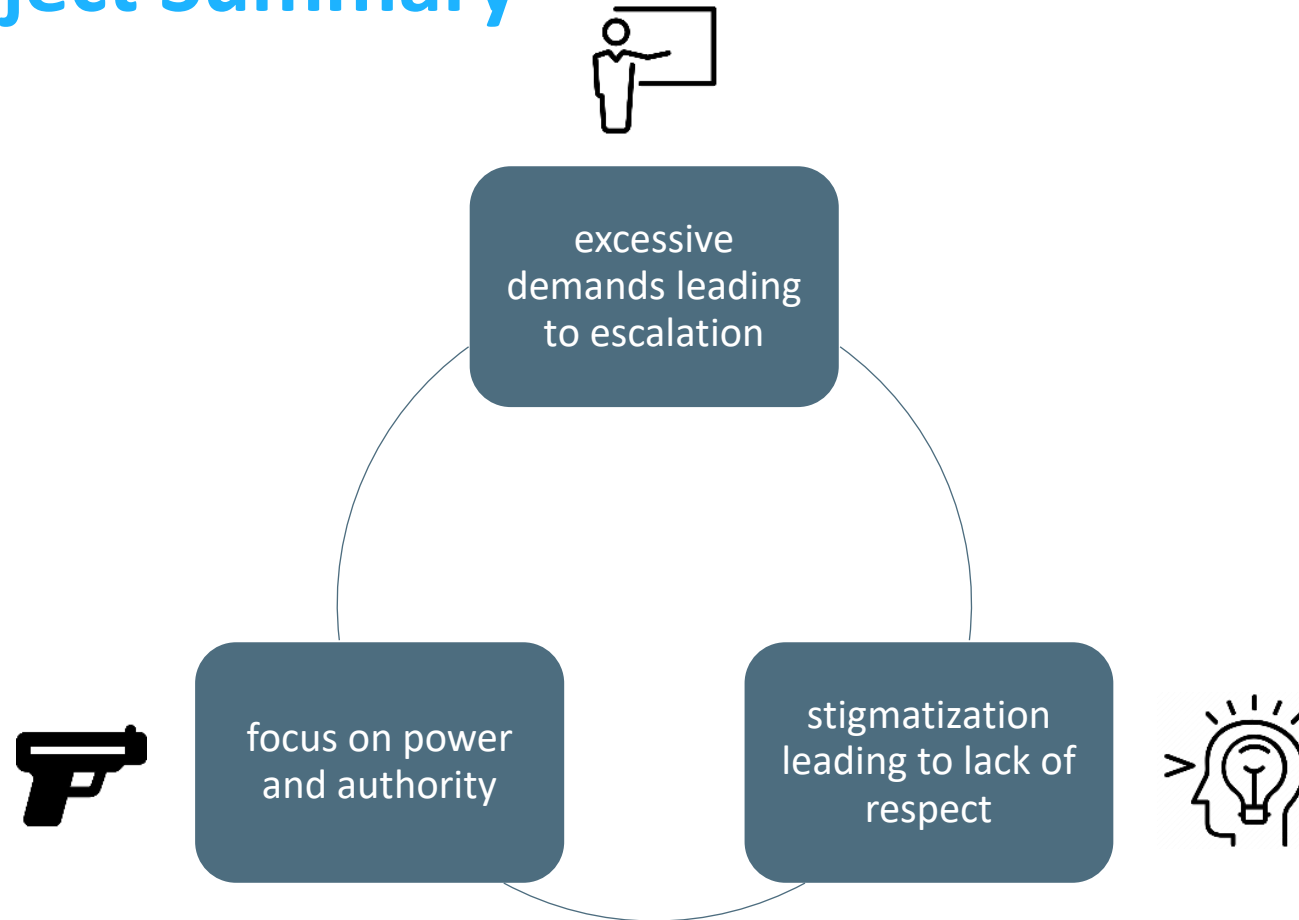
semi-structured interview guideline  
expert interviews



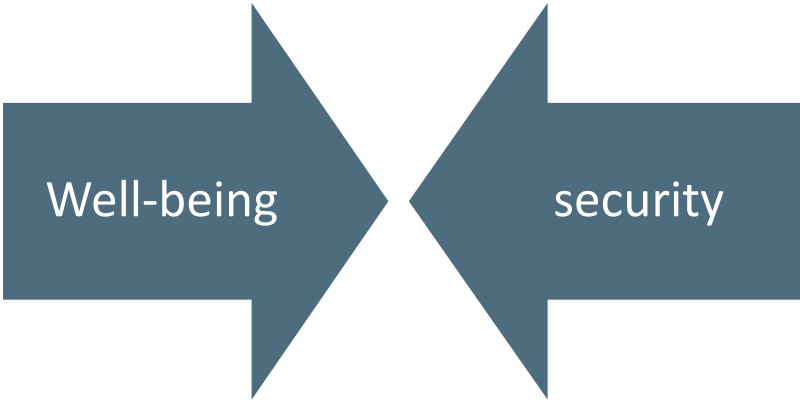
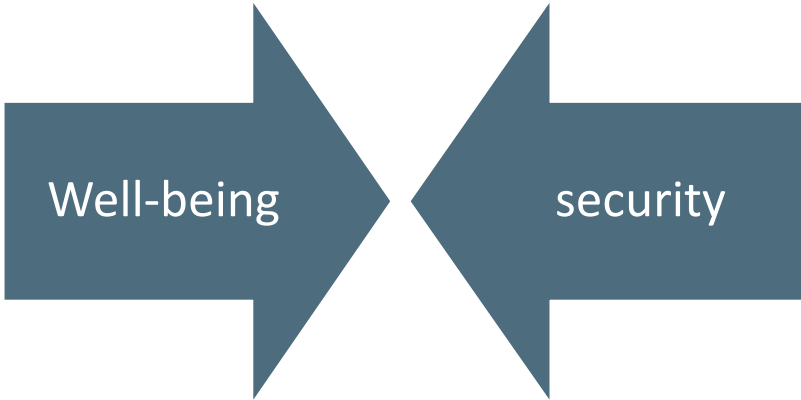
qualitative content-analysis



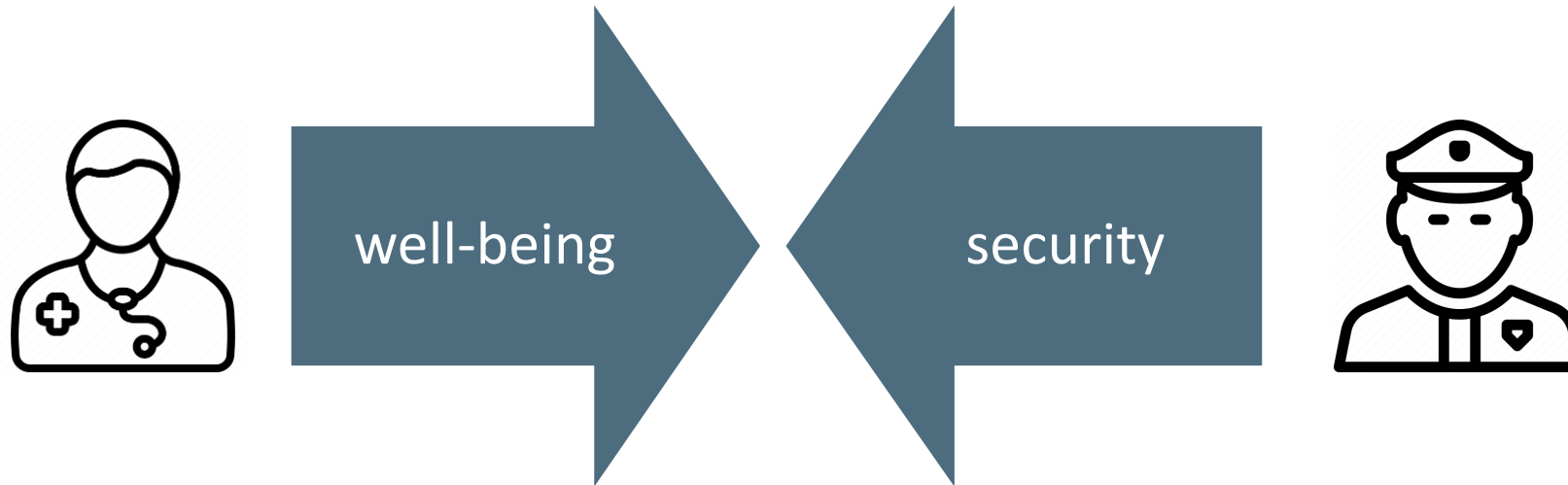
# Project Summary



# Project Summary



## Project Summary



Perceptions from participants regarding the cooperation of police and psychiatric hospitals:

- There is no clear and official distribution of roles.
- There are no joint strategies to handle specific situations.
- Different expectations exist in each institution towards each other.

## Outlook

- Additional training and anti-stigma-projects
    - being developed in Germany after recent events
  - Cooperation between police & psychiatry
    - reduction of coercion at the intersection
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## Outlook

- Baseline data?
  - Evidence-based interventions?
  - International perspectives?
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**Thanks!**

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GEFÖRDERT VOM



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