

'Around here I am the law!'
Strengthening police officers' compliance with the rule of law in Costa Rica

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Abstract

At the end of the last decade many Latin American states initiated public security reform. This included police human rights strategies, which aim to improve police officers' compliance with human rights. Particular strategies emphasized the development of police legal expertise. In Costa Rica this was done through professionalizing police legal training and police legal assistance within the preventive police. Yet the implementation of police human rights strategies is influenced by a wider socio-political and institutional context. 'Around here I am the law' reflects the process of transforming non-professionally trained police officers into professionally trained public officials whose core business is the enforcement of the law. On the basis of empirical research conducted in San José, this paper discusses the effect of implementing police human rights strategies that focus on improving police officers' compliance with the rule of law.

Keywords

public security reform; police human rights strategies; rule of law; preventive police; legal expertise; police training; Costa Rica

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