Some Reflectionss on the Relationship Between the State and Society: Community Policy Concept[*]

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Abstract

The text deals with a review on the origin of the police role in community. The author of the paper points out that concept of police in the community represents a connection with the old understanding of the police as 'citizens in uniform'. We will point out the elements of police profession that affect the relationship between the police and society. The goal of the text is to show that the concept of police in the community is not a new modern concept of the police role as a representative of the state, but that the origin of the concept is part of the historical role of the police, which arose as a need of social community to achieve public order and peace. In the conclusion, it is indicated that the combination of culture, education and quality occupational guidance influence the reduction of the need for social control and police action in society.

Keywords: *police in community, state, society, power, culture*

I. Introduction

It has been noticed for a long time that society is not a simple set of individuals, but that it is a system formed on the basis of their association, which represents a specific reality that has its own characteristics[1]. The relationship between the state and society (community in the broader sense of the word) developed through the need to organize social life, and by maintaining public order and peace, make it safer and more suitable for life. After that, the establishment of certain powers of the state to make society function better and be safer led to the need for the police as an organization that has a dual role, to protect the rules and laws passed by the state and to protect and secure the citizenry.

In this process of association of individuals into society, social character is necessary as a pattern of desirable habits, traits and behavior type, which is most acceptable from the point of view of a certain social system in which "the function of social character is to shape and channel human energy within a given society for the continuous functioning of society"[2].

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[1] E. Durkem, *Pravila sociološke metode [The Rules of Sociological Method]* Beograd, Savremena škola, 1963.

[2] E. From, *Zdravo društvo [The Sane Society],* 1963, Beograd, Rad, p. 95.

The personality of an individual in society is also shaped on the basis of one important aspect of culture – the normative and visionary (utopian) aspect that consists of "elements that define current behavioral tendencies and social requirements in relation to individuals and social groups (traditional habits and customs, social rules and norms, values as accepted goals)"[3]. This aspect should enable a stronger social consensus and contribute to a lower need for social control and therefore for police action. Geertz believes that the concept of culture "denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited concepts expressed in symbolic forms with the help of which people transmit, preserve and develop their knowledge of life and attitudes towards it"[4].

Culture allows a person to develop the ability to communicate using language, the ability to learn and accumulate knowledge, and to adopt common patterns of behavior in a given community in the form of rules, values, norms, through the adoption of orientation frameworks as "cultural constructions of reality." It also affects the formation of opinions and feelings, as well as the development of the ability to perceive the difference between 'I' and 'others' and encourage reconciliation of those differences. Aspects of culture are different, it can serve an individual as a pattern for life, and the content of culture constitutes a social heritage that each group passes on to descendants, it is learned behavior and a series of techniques for adapting individuals to society[5].

The first police officers were defined as 'citizens in uniform'. The history of the origin of policeman personality and profession indicates that: "village constable was the product of a tradition of self-governing, responsible, local communities in the early middle ages. [...] reforms led by Robert Peel succeeded in the introduction professional police force to London in 1829 which rekindled the office of constable and the relationship between police and community. There was no deep divide between police and people; rather, the police were merely 'citizens in uniform'[6]. In the seventeenth century "constables mediated between the norms of village communities and the central state's attempts to impose new standards of moral and social discipline"[7].

The constable's role was not policing in its modern sense but much more general social ordering. The term 'police' first entered the language in the eighteenth century and when people used the word "they were referring to the general regulation or government, the morals or economy, or a city or country. (...) So 'policing' originally referred to the general functions of civil government"[8].

II. Formation of the Policeman's Character

In addition to genetic characteristics, the formation of an individual's character is influenced by the processes that take place through socialization and education. Later,

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[3] Z. Golubović, *Čovek i njegov svet u antropološkoj perspektivi, [Man and his world in an anthropological perspective]*, 1973, Beograd, Prosveta, p. 75.

[4] K. Gerc, *Тумачење културa 1 [Interpretation of Cultures],* Библиотека XX век, Београд, Чигоја штампа, 1998, p. 122.

[5] Z. Golubović, *"Kultura", Sociološki rečnik [Sociological glossary],* (eds.) A. Mimica, M. Bogdanović, Beograd, Zavod za udžbenike, 2007, pp. 268-270.

[6] D. Dixon, *Law in policing: Legal Regulation and Police Practices,* 1997, Clarendon Press. Oxford, p. 50.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 50, Wrightson 1980 according to Dixon.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 51, Kent 1986 according to Dixon.

by getting involved in the work process, the individual internalizes certain characteristics and styles within the profession. The working personality of a police officer is not only a product that arises on the basis of police education and involvement in the police, still is a product of the culture in which an individual matures and shapes his identity.

Precisely in order for police officers to get to know society better and develop special skills and knowledge for the job, the police profession is structured through a hierarchy in the sense that novice begin their professional development by patrolling the streets. Police research has found that the best training programs for police officers consist of three parts. The first part includes lectures by social scientists and lawyers from criminology, criminal law, human resources, and the field of mental health, the second part consists of lectures on the social importance and dignity of police work, in which it is emphasized that this profession requires high requirements such as integrity, wisdom and courage, and the third part refers to lectures on the rules within the police department[9]. The two main variables of the police role are danger and authority, and they should be interpreted through the constant pressure exerted on police officers to be efficient in their work, and through this process the working personality of the police officer is created and developed[10].

Police jobs and tasks have a specific weight that implies high legal and social responsibility. One of the most important features of the police function, which also symbolizes the connection with the state, is the legal character of the police function[11].

In addition to typologies of characteristics, in research on police, there are several typologies of police officers and styles of police action that arise on the basis of greater or lesser expression and strength of representation of police subculture characteristics and attitudes of police members to the law. This is the case, for example, with the typology of an American researcher J. Broderick.

Table 1. *Types of police attitudes towards the law* (J. Broderick)[12]

Emphasis on public order and policy	Emphasis on the law	
	Strong	Weak
Strong	Idealists	Repressors
Weak	Optimists	Realists

Then, one of the typologies of police styles that shows the possible relationships of individuals-policemen towards the law is the one observed by J.Wilson, namely: legalistic, authoritarian, communitarian and routine police style. As Milosavljević explains, idealists in the typology given by Broderick (table 1) belong to Wilson's typology in the legalistic style, repressors in the authoritarian style, optimists in the communitarian style, and realists in the routine style.

The repressors do not respect and ignore the law and regulations if it prevents them from doing their job effectively. Then, idealists strive to establish a balance

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[9] E. Bittner, *The Functions of the Police in Modern Society. A Review of Background Factors, Current Practices, and Possible Role Models*, Maryland, National Institute of Mental Health, 1970, p. 60.

[10] J. Skolnick, *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966.

[11] B. Milosavljević, *Наука о полицији [The Science of Police],* Beograd, Policijska akademija,1997, pp. 187-8.

[12] Source: B. Milosavljević, 1997, p. 201.

between respect for rights and civil liberties and the interests of public order and peace. Police officers who practice an optimistic style give priority to law, respect and protection of civil liberties at the expense of lower efficiency in the field of public order and policy, while realists treat the issue of law routinely, they do not analyze much the essence of the problem and make concessions to one side or the other. Police officers who have internalized the routine style generally have doubts about the values of law and public order "they are said to have a cynical vision and to be recruited among disillusioned idealists"[13].

In the modern sense, the new police operated as disciplinary force in a deeply divided society and "consent to policing is not merely an ideological fiction: but equally it is not a natural condition. Rather, the construction of consent to policing was a long-term, intensive, often deliberate, and never fully successful project of negotiation between police and people"[14].

III. The Image of the Police as an Indicator of the Relationship Between State and Society

As it was noticed a few decades ago "there is a widespread nostalgia about the days when the man on the beat could keep order by personal influence, but those days are going"[15].

Because of the symbolic-latent and manifest role that is reflected in the different degree of power that the police as a social group can have in state, the police has always attracted the attention of ordinary people and those who wanted to penetrate into its work and actions. As one of the consequences of the development of the police profession and actions, stereotypes of the public about the police, as well as stereotypes of police members about citizens, arose. The image of police as a special social group in society was formed in this relationship between the police and the public.

In part, the stereotypes of the police about citizens and vice versa generated the emergence of a police subculture, the characteristics of which determine the positive and negative aspects of the police profession and the image of the police as a whole. However, the subculture in police profession is not separated from the values and norms that society supports, but forms part of the society and culture in which it arises and survives through the actions of policemen in everyday life[16].

At the beginning of the introduction of community police concept in the modern sense, it was considered a new strategy that ensures professionalism in the police, a better image in the public, and a link between the police and other members of society. The justification of this 'new' strategy is defined as – "better satisfy the demands and needs of the citizens they serve".

That is, that strategy should reconsider the role of the police in society: "In the course of the self-examination and creative thinking that are taking place, fundamental questions have been raised about the basic purpose and responsibilities of the police,

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[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

[14] D. Dixon, *Law in policing: Legal Regulation and Police Practices,* 1997, Clarendon Press. Oxford, p. 53.

[15] M. Banton, *The Policeman in the Community*, New York, Basic Books,Inc., Publishers. 1964, p. 265.

[16] A. Vuković, *"Knowledge Management Concept and Subculture: Police Profession Example"*, in *Nauka i društvo: časopis za društvene nauke,* 2020 (12), pp. 16-35.

the capabilities they possess, the types of contributions they can make to society, the optimum methods of their organization and deployment, and the relationship they have with the communities that employ them"[17].

This text also calls into question the traditional organization of police, the so-called "military model and professionalism" because it is considered that police rigidity, which manifests itself through a strict hierarchy adopted according to the model used in the army, is an obstacle to the modernization of the police and should be reduced. Instead of that, police should be reoriented to improving skills – "reducing hierarchy and enriching skills".

Special skills are highlighted, which, according to the author of the text, were not represented in the traditional training of police, and should be learned by community oriented cops:

    a) communications skills – the ability to talk effectively with all types of citizens, from community leaders to ordinary residents;

    b) public speaking –the ability to articulate ideas and motivate others;

    c) problem-solving techniques – how to identify and analyze problems, and develop effective responses and solutions;

    d) conflict resolution and negotiating –how to help citizens resolve disputes within the community[18].

In another official document related to the community policing strategy, the reasons for its implementation are explained by the need to prevent community fear and possible crime and improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods, *"fear of crime has itself become a significant problem. A highly visible police presence helps reduce fear in the community (...) However, because fear of crime can limit activity, keep residents out of their homes, and contribute to empty streets, this climate of decline can result in even more crime. By involving the community, the police will have more resources available for crime prevention activities, rather than being forced to respond to crime after the fact"*[19].

We can see that the obligations and duties to be fulfilled by a police officer are clearly regulated, still controlling of the obligations and duties of an ordinary citizen who, due to the desire for power, or other forms of intentional or unintentional actions, may threaten the rights of other persons is a long and demanding process. That is, compliance with the legal regulations that obligate the police officer as a serviceman of the state and citizenry do not have to be part of obligations of general population if social character as a pattern of agreement about values, habits and forms of behavior (normative and visionary (utopian) aspect of culture) is not generally accepted in society.

That is why in everyday life there are cases of endangering the individual's right to privacy when citizens, for example, make publicly available recordings of private persons, even though they may be legally responsible for the act. So, as some authors pointed out "the police have the special possibility for the maintenance of public order but this mode of administration has fostered among some policemen and some

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        [17] E. Meese, *"Community Policing and the Police Officer"*, in *Perspectives on Policing*, 1993, no. 15. National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, and the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, p. 1.

        [18] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

        [19] *Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994. p. 4. Available at: https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles/commp.pdf.

laymen the idea that public order is the responsibility of the police alone", because of that "the problem of how to develop civic responsibility in an increasingly acquisitive society will long remain"[20].

IV. Conclusion

In police-community relations public criticism is directed towards the police as a special social group (in whole) which, due to the power it has, is perceived first as a symbol of the state and then of society. The goal of implementation of community policing concept was to change the image of the police in society, and in that way, influence a more positive image of the role of the state. This concept is, in fact, of older origin than the second half of the eighties, when it is increasingly being written about as the inevitability of a "new" police strategy.

There are also differences between countries about the historical role of the police in society, which are based on the (dis)continuity of citizens' perception of the historical performance of the police and may differ from society to society. The essence of this concept, broadly speaking, was to enable the exercise of power through the voluntary obedience of citizens. However, some basic repercussions that have gone out of scope are, among other things, the individual's need to get closer to the power (embodied in the person of the policeman) in the way that he uses some police techniques and powers for which he does not have permission. The controversy of the role of the police and citizens has acquired its specific form with modern digitization, where, for example, within the scope of police powers in some cases the citizen's consent is sought, while often citizens implement police techniques (e.g. illegal (secret) recording of other persons, stalking etc.) and threaten another's right to privacy.

Society exists if there is agreement on the principle that the common good is as valuable and important as the good of the individual, and this is perhaps a return to the original idea that police officers are "citizens in uniform". The partial and incomplete adoption of the norms of general culture, morality and basic human values cannot be replaced by "lowering" the state towards society – through a personality of community-oriented police officer, but by a mutual effort through socialization, education and quality occupational guidance to reduce the need for social control through police action.

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[20] M. Banton, *The Policeman in the Community*, 1964, New York, Basic Books,Inc., Publishers, pp. 262-263.

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