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The Universality of the Police Culture

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THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE "POLICE CANTEEN CULTURE"

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INTRODUCTION

Police culture is a topic that has received its fair share of attention and scrutiny. The official policing institution in South Africa, the (former) South African Police (Force) (SAP), which was eventually renamed as the South African Police Service (SAPS), posed a specific topic of interest in the recent past and specifically so during the periods of transition and democratisation. South Africa's apartheid legacy (racial segregation and oppression) made the situation in South Africa exceptional in terms of the South African Police's instrumentality in enforcing apartheid laws. With the launch of South Africa into a democratic dispensation in January 1990, then State President F.W. de Klerk urged the police leadership to remove themselves from the political arena, as "we do not want you anymore as instruments to reach certain political goals" (Nhlanhla 1992).

The abuse of the South African Police as an occupational force during the apartheid era may be seen against the background of the solidarity of certain components of the Afrikaner extremism. Schönteich (2003: 1) mentions that "... Afrikaner nationalists believed that the only way to protect the status and identity of the Afrikaner, and to prevent the group from being dominated by other ethnic groups or races, was to exercise power through self-determination in an ethnically homogenous territory". Waddington (1992) furthermore states that "(T)he Apartheid policies of successive Nationalist governments since 1948, built upon 300 years of colonial racism,

effectively disqualified the majority population from the status of citizenship. Black Africans represented a threat to the white power structures that the SAP were duty-bound to defend".

Despite De Klerk's abovementioned directives and the change of goals, "The dominant ethos within the police force is [remained] traditionalist, conservative, and resistant to change". The South African Police, therefore, remained a "colonial" police force according to Marais and Rauch (1992), while the culture of the South African Police was believed to be unique and irreconcilable with a more universal conception of police culture(s). Furthermore, Waddington (1992), emphasised the intricacy of the South African context: "The context within which the SAP policed South Africa presented a fundamental dilemma: containing the internal pressures akin to a 'Third World Country', by methods acceptable to liberal democracies such as Britain and North America".

It is common case that the dominant South African historical context of colonialism remains British imperialism. The underlying assumption, therefore, is that public police services of England and Wales "reformed" themselves, or were never police forces cpmparable to those policing the British colonies. Contrary to the abovementioned views, Weatheritt (1992) acknowledges the existence of "police malpractice and insensitive and abrasive policing" in both countries.

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The USA is equally fraught with negative events which are apparently related to police culture (see Schmalleger 2003: 225-231). A recent example of wide-spread corruption is the Rampart (LA) case. 'The widening corruption probe began in August 1998, after former Officer Rafael Perez was arrested for stealing eight pounds of cocaine from an evidence room. His first trial ended in a hung jury. Seeking leniency, he began telling investigators about alleged misconduct among fellow officers, contending they beat, framed, stole from and shot innocent people in the city's [Los Angeles] crime-ridden Rampart area near downtown" (Webb 2000: 3).

It therefore transpires that even in liberal democracies police officers are working in an environment that many ordinary citizens would find oppressive, violent, depressing and exacting.

POLICE CULTURE

It is apparent that there is a myriad of different perspectives on what this culture is.

Kluckholm (Kingshott 2003: 281) defined culture as "the set of habitual and traditional ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting that are characteristic of the ways a particular society meets its problems at a particular time".

There are many types of cultures and may be referred to as industry cultures, occupational cultures, or corporate cultures, and within those cultures the organisational structure and managerial practices form distinctive patterns of behaviour for a social unit. The term "organisational culture" has its roots in North American academic literature and opinions differ when it comes to a decision about the degree of influence that national culture exerts on organisational cultures or the other way around (Hofstede, Neujen, Ohayv & Sanders 1990: 286).

Organisational culture can thus be defined as "the integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thought, speech, action, and artefacts and depends on man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations" (Emerson 1989: 3). This definition is acceptable if the content is positive and the norms acceptable to all. The organisational norms are controlled by the individuals who make up the organisational group and it is those same individuals that determine and can change the norms. However, if misogynist, racist, cultural or religious bias or hatred are organisational norms, then the divisive and destructive elements of the organisational culture are exposed.

The police organisation has also been subject of continued scrutiny on specific issues but mostly on the generic term "police culture", with reference to organisational norms, mores, rules, regulations, biases and prejudices that can be found in any organisation. The police culture is neither monolithic nor unchanging. It is not a *carte blanche* abuse of the rules, regulations or procedures, and there are some central core features, which appear to be common to all police forces. Police culture is commonly sustained through the way new members are selected, trained and accepted into the police ranks (Harrison 1998: 2, 3). According to Harrison (1998: 4), most instructors at police academies are other police officers. They tend to use examples and "war stories" in their training. Additionally, most of the courses tend to support the cultural notion of the dangerousness of police work. Skills such as firearms and defensive tactics are introduced to help the officer protect herself or himself. Classes on interrogation and report writing stress the need to be suspicious of people. Profiles of what a criminal looks like tend to perpetuate stereotypes based on race or ethnic origin. Practice courtroom testimony stresses the need to be wary of attorneys as they will attempt to trick the police officer and make him or her look foolish on the

stand. The para-military nature of organisational management is emphasised through requirements such as classroom order, uniform dress, and behaviour.

The significance in terms of other corporate cultures is that the police possess additional powers unavailable to the ordinary citizen. Powers that cause most concern are those of discretion and the use of coercive force to achieve those objectives sanctioned by the law. Harrison (1998: 1) draws attention to the paradoxical nature of policing: "When looking at the concept of organizational culture among police one quickly finds many paradoxes. The literature is filled with accounts of police deviance caused by the existence of cultural traits ... solidarity among the "rank and file" is often cited as the reason for police deviant conduct". Another paradox is that on the one hand, police are criticised for being aggressive, insensitive, and brutal and often corrupt (Gibb & Ford 1997: 1). On the other hand, the media criticise the police for being weak, and failing the public's expectations of them. It is a fact that police forces are criticised simultaneously for being too rigorous or too lax in their performance of police objectives.

It is important to realise that there are significant differences between "management" and "street cop" cultures as well as between groupings, within ranks, and between one department and another (Reuss-Ianni & Ianni 1983: 227-250; 251-274). Greene (in Harrison 1998: 3) states that current trends in policing toward the identification and publication of explicit organisational values can be viewed as illustrating the institutional connections between values, culture and corporate strategy. Conflict between internalised management culture of police organisations and the tactical culture of police organisations can be viewed as evidence of an ongoing struggle for value clarification within police departments. Moreover, current efforts to shift police departments from "traditional" toward "problem oriented" policing can also be viewed as explicitly addressing internal values

within policing.

Kleinig (1996) concludes that although democratic police officers are expected to be public servants *par excellence*, they tend to be socially distanced from the society they serve. Many police officers experience social discomfort and there is, furthermore, the expectation that friendship will have to be sacrificed to the demands of law enforcement. Therefore, police officers tend to socialise within their own group and eventually become isolated from the community they serve. Police officers often experience that the topic of their occupation turns a social gathering into an opportunity for consultation and complaint. An individual officer may even be blamed for the failings of another officer who is serving in another area or institution.

There is an expectation that a police officer should have a social life away from the police service. Some factions of the community do not accept that. Consequently, the officer withdraws into the safe environment of police colleagues and police clubs and accepts the support of a "police culture". It should be acknowledged that such support may be positive, but there are also negative and corrupting aspects to this "culture". Police who tend to isolate themselves organisationally from their communities, often becoming arrogant and consumed with maintaining the organisation for the organisation's sake (Harrison 1998:1). In Australia, a study of a state police service suggested that there was a strong norm of drinking at work or after work, which suggests a culture of acceptance of drinking within the workplace (McNeill 1993: 1-38; 1996). This acceptance is strongly predictive of both the risk of alcohol dependency and negative consequences from drinking in the workplace (Davey, Obst & Sheehan 2000: 69).

Distinctive cognitive tendencies commonly associated with alienation in police cultures, are the following (Harrison 1998: 4-6):

- There is a tendency for police to become isolated from previous friends, the community, the legal system and even spouses and families.

- Police impose social isolation upon themselves as a means of protection against real and perceived dangers, loss of personal and professional autonomy, and social rejection as a result of their outlook on the world and certain outstanding elements in the police milieu, namely danger, authority and efficiency.

- The omnipresent element of danger and police officers' general suspiciousness of everyone in an attempt to be attentive to any possible violence, furthermore precipitates alienation. In the 1990 the murder of police officials reached exceptionally high proportions in South Africa when on average, more than 200 police officers were killed in contrast to the annual average of 67 in the USA (Conradie 2002: 161). In 2001, 163 murders occurred, representing the lowest number of murders since 1990 (Bruce 2002: http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ CrimeQ/No.2/3 Bruce.html).

- The context is furthermore complicated by the fact that a study by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) found that officials killed in the line of action appear to be "good natured and conservative in the use of physical force" compared to their peers in similarly dangerous situations (Schmalleger 2003: 234).

- Police officers are required to enforce laws representing "puritanical morality", underlying political ideology and policy. The element of personal, social and political hypocrisy strengthens attitudes pertaining to the inability of the "non-police" to possibly grasp the problems that exist in policing. In South Africa, for instance, racial segregation was enforced against the background of an illusion of a democratic society. Police officers, however, were constantly confronted with inequality, anti-democratic realities and human rights' abuses.

- Alienation gives rise to police attitudes that legal institutions are uncooperative and non-supportive. Courts are perceived to tolerate crime and to be out of touch with "the reality of the street". This may induce a willingness by some police officers to resent legal restrictions and to violate them.

- Similar to prison subculture(s) and "prisonisation"(Schmalleger 2003: 227, 533; Houston 1999: 86, 86), the police also have an informal moral subculture, such as "Protect your ass – don't trust anyone", "Don't trust the new guy until you have him checked out" and "Don't trust bosses to look out for your interests" (see Harrison 1998:5).

CONCERN ABOUT AND STRENGTHENING OF THE POLICE CULTURE IN THE UK

The United Kingdom, as an acknowledged liberal democracy, continuously expressed concerns about the police, especially over the last three decades. These concerns are often precipitated by some external event that has resulted in calls for and/or the implementation of change. In the 1960s the Royal Commission on the Police was the outcome of a series of *causes célèbres* and concerns about an escalating crime rate and public disorder occasioned by the Notting Hill (London) and Nottingham race riots. The Commission considered the case for a National Police Force; the roles of the chief constable, local Police Authority and Home Secretary; the relationship between the police and the public; the complaints system and police pay. In addition, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 included the police within its provision and resulted in the abandoning of the separate police women's departments in favour of the

full integration of women within the overall police service (Kingshott 2003: 294).

The various research projects of the 1970s published by Reiner, Manning, Punch and Holdaway (Brown 1992: 307) revealed the use of informal working rules by police officers and of accounting rules through which officers retrospectively reported their actions. The police officers were committed to fighting crime with an insatiable need for action and arrests. Times of inaction were said to lead to "easing" behaviour, which led to an interdependency and secrecy within the lower ranks, which strengthened the police culture. There was secrecy; lack of trust with senior ranks and the role of the constable was characterised as being hedonistic, tough and adventuresome (Holdaway in Kingshott 2003: 295). The Policy Studies Institute report on the Metropolitan Police published in the early 1980s drew attention to police culture and highlighted sexism, racial prejudice, use of alcohol, and sexual orientation. The coarse language and use of offensive banter sought to define and affirm male dominance within the police and confirm its association with aggression and strength (Brown 1992: 312, 313).

Although to a lesser degree, racism was and still is a problem within the police service and is not only directed to those outside the organisation, but also towards those within it. The term "racism" may be defined as the determination of actions, attitudes or policies by beliefs about racial characteristics. Racism may be overt and individual, involving individual acts of oppression against subordinate racial groups or individuals, or covert and institutional, involving structural relations of subordination and oppression between social groups (Kingshott 2003). While individual racism consists of intended actions, either against a colleague or a citizen, institutional racism involves the unintended consequences of a system of racial inequality. The Macpherson Report, concerning the murder of Stephen Lawrence in

Britian, would suggest that racism still exists (Macpherson 1999: 1-9). The report identified 80 problem areas relating to police procedure, training and behaviour, concluding that there is institutionalised racism within the Metropolitan Police, which by extension includes the whole of the police service per sé. There is a feeling of pessimism that the morality that the officers adhere to is being eroded and that suspiciousness, conservatism and machismo exist. Holdaway (1991: 325) states "... culture is not seen to have any power in its own right. For many it is an esoteric misguided system of beliefs and/or quaint behaviour held by others ...".

THE DYNAMICS OF THE POLICE CANTEEN CULTURE

There is a mixture of both formal and informal elements of "canteen culture" ("police culture") which seemingly provides an excuse to attach anecdotal historical perspectives to gross and unacceptable behaviour within the police organisation. As already mentioned, and as a result of a combination of interal and external milieu factors, a significant proportion of police officers withdraw into the safe environment of police colleagues and police clubs, thereby isolating themselves organisationally from their communities to share in the support of a "police culture".

The "canteen culture" euphemism of the police organisation is a generic term used by social scientists, such as Skolnick and Holdaway, with publications by the Policy Studies Institute, explaining individual and organisational behaviour found within the police organisation (see Kingshott 1993). Such observations are not only related to policing issues but the whole ambit of human emotions, belief systems, bias and bigotry (culture) displayed by the human resource within the police organisation. Criticism that police behaviour can incite violent crowd reaction (Kingshott 1993: 366-375), or that police response to violent situations is flawed (Kingshott 1992: 297-306), does

not reflect police behaviour and the underlying culture that supports it. There have been many studies, both in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and those studies have identified both positive and negative aspects to "canteen culture" (Kingshott 2003).

On the positive side, it has been argued that it can provide moral support and engender team spirit within the organisation, which is necessary for an effective policing role. It may also provide an officer with a strictly practical perspective in which to exercise her/his duty, and therefore offers justification for a whole host of working practices not taught in training school. Police training is necessarily imprecise, given the variety of scenarios that arise in the "real world" as none are as clear cut as those demonstrated in the training environment. The "canteen culture" will assist a new officer in making sense of the role in which he or she has been thrust (Skolnick 1966). Moral support provided through the "canteen culture" is one issue that has been identified as being both unavoidable and indispensable - the argument being that the very nature of policing has its unique stresses and strains. This means that officers may not have the capacity for leisure and relaxation in their off duty hours without an encroachment of job-related stress that is not found within other occupations. It is this unique perspective offered by some aspects of the police "canteen culture" that can help in the process of rationalising police work.

On the negative side, the "canteen culture" can also create an anti-social atmosphere amongst officers within which social prejudices, racism, religious bigotry, misogyny, bullying and discrimination can flourish. The many out-of-court settlements agreed by a number of police forces bear witness to that. The most public example in the United Kingdom was that of the Alison Halford Inquiry into all the worst aspects of police culture (Kingshott 2003: 297. The existence of double standards was noticed an commented on by the media during the Halford Inquiry and a though provoking comment by a journalist came where a report on Miss Halford was said to contain the following, "... [she has] a tendency to make occasional errors of judgement. Ninety-five per cent of the time she is competent, able ... but five per cent of the time she had problems of unpredictability". The same journalist added, "I'd have though we'd have been grateful for as much as 95 per cent good judgement" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 22 July 1992). In justification of the behaviour towards Miss Halford, at that time an Assistant Chief Constable with Merseyside Police, comments were made that described her as, "Enterprising, ambitious, pushy too" as if confirming the unacceptable aspects of ambition in a woman. Yet ambition and promotion seem to co-exist for male officers, and not demonstrating the right amount of ambition can be seen as a fault. Press commentaries further highlighted some examples of Miss Halford's behaviour, illustrating the different standards which were being applied to men and women: "She was overpowering"; "She was prone to occasional feminine unorthodox"; "Police officers in general ... do drink ... do use foul and abusive language ... yet when accusations of such behaviour are attributed to Alison Halford they suddenly become heinous crimes"; "Her different qualities were not appreciated, but viewed as a threat. If a woman appeared to step out of line of conformity she was seen as a problem. Her male counterpart would be earmarked as a possible high flier" (see Low 1993: 4-5).

In the United Kingdom, the power of the prevailing "canteen culture" to persist through the process of socialising of recruits is enormously potent, despite considerable changes in the probationer-training programme brought about as a consequence of the MacDonald Review in the late 1980s (Brown 1992: 312-313). On the beat training experience subsequent to initial training was likely to generate authoritarian attitudes. "It is clear that early field experiences

introduce young officers to kerbside values of their older, more experienced colleagues" (Brown & Willis 1985: 97). Clearly the culture that allows for career blocking reported by some women officers and career frustrations suggest that there is still some way to go in order to make an impact on the "canteen culture" (Coffey, Brown & Savage 1992: 13-19; Hill & Smithers 1991: 297-323).

The "canteen culture" is intrinsically resistant to outside interference whether it is from senior officers or from outside organisations. In some cases it became apparent that officers who are fully aware of the facts of an incident have kept quiet or refused to assist in the investigation of colleagues, even where they do not approve of the action that is the subject of the complaint (see Policy Studies Institute 1993; Schmalleger 2003: 228-230). Such incidents are rare, but they do exist and should not be ignored although it may be argued that "canteen culture" is more likely to be centred around more prosaic and specific issues. One cultural issue raised for police managers is the effect of uniforms, ranks and the implications of the various management styles adopted.

In the view of the authors, this particular issue is compounded by the paradox that the constable has almost unlimited power, but that after promotion and progressively through the hierarchy, that power is diminished. This then places management training firmly in the arena of interpersonal skills, which is one of the more difficult skills to develop, especially if the majority of those skills are honed under the influence of "canteen culture".

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT OR MILITARY METAPHORS?

There often is a managerial requirement to change an organisational culture. Workplace culture is considered to be the sum of the beliefs and values held in common by those within the organisation, serving to formally and informally communicate what is expected. It is acknowledged that the issue of police culture is complex and that there is a requirement for change, which will be to the benefit of the individual, the organisation and the public. The need for change can only be accomplished by examining the existing workplace culture, and sub-cultures. The transformation of police organisations, and the police culture, has proven extremely difficult, given the conservative nature and general resilience to change (Kingshott 2003: 298). The following may be norms found within the police organisation (Kingshott 2003: 290, 291):

- Conformity
- Discipline elitism
- Formal inter-office memos
- Inflexible organisation
- Interest in technology
- Lateral transfers
- Maintenance of distance from citizens
- Militarism
- Negative perception of innovation
- Numerous meetings
- Organisational loyalty to employees
- Physical fitness
- Reluctance to share credit for results
- Selective recruitment
- Specialised police language
- Coarse language
- Loutish behaviour
- Territorialism
- "Black" sense of humor.

The above list should not be considered definitive and will evolve and change. Against this background, Gould's (1997: 339) definition as "the sum of the beliefs and values held in common by those within the organisation, serving to formally and informally communicate what is expected" would serve to define the police culture. The norms are, in effect, what is "normal" and as most officers do not want to be

considered "abnormal" they do and say what others expect from them. They are influenced by the organisational culture and to be accepted as part of the organisation, they accept the organisational norms even if they disagree with them.

Media exposure tends to highlight the militarism and the metaphors of war that occur within the police organisation. Metaphors are used as powerful linguistic tools that organise thoughts and focus attention on some aspect of the criminal justice system. Kraska and Kappeler (1997: 101) acknowledged that militarism is such a metaphor for the police. The police deal with the general public and a large part of their work is dominated by petty peace keeping problems between neighbours or angry spouses or rowdy youths. Then why do the police use militaristic language? The military metaphor instils focus and direction into tasks that are otherwise difficult to manage. The militarism provides a moral-emotional identity for the police in their war against crime and is a cultural bonding agent.

To expand that argument, the metaphor "war" has illustrated its mobilising potential by providing a way to view police as protectors of society and to view the criminal element of that society as amoral enemies. The language used to describe the police and criminal reveals the nature of the war metaphor. The police are "at war" with the criminal and they are "tasked to target" the criminal fraternity as they "fight crime." The police are the thin blue line that separates order from anarchy. The police must "target" criminals and gather "intelligence" because they are crime-fighters. This language of war provides a vocabulary that unites officers in militaristic identities, creating yet another bonding environment for the police culture. The outward military discipline tends to displace misconduct by officers into areas difficult to regulate. It also intensifies many aspects of the police culture, namely secrecy, criminal activity by the police, as well as deception and line management friction. The

limitation of the military model was identified by Sykes (1989: 286, 287), who acknowledged that while serving important symbolic purposes, it limited reforms. Then symbolically, militarism promotes an image of hierarchical police accountability and rule-bound behaviour.

The police organisation comes under periodic review and concomitant organisational change, such as the infamous Sheehy Report (1993) in the United Kingdom. Prior to that report there was a conflict, albeit somewhat subdued, between the traditionalists who felt that the police service should be run in accordance with strict military criteria and the more radical who wanted the service run by means of the business management criteria of humanism and openness (Kingshott 2003). It is of interest to note that explanations for police brutality in the USA, like in South Africa and Australia, include the narrow outlook of senior police managers; the insularity of police departments; the emphasis in police culture of military metaphors; and the handing down of the value of violence by higher ranking officers to the new officers on the beat (see Skolnick & Fyfe 1993).

The question remains whether business ethics can act as a catalyst for changing organisational culture? Shepard (1995: 577-601) considered the historical roots and intellectual underpinnings of two major business-society paradigms in ideal terms. The search for ethical criteria continues to apply social contract theory to organisations and questions the concept of consent as a viable ethical criterion, in terms of which one argument is put forward as an alternative principle of impartiality for a more appropriate moral norm in a social contract theory of organisation (Keeley 1995: 241). If a social contract theory of organisation were to be adapted to fit the police organisation framework for examining decision making about ethical issues, as well as some form of testing the applicability of a social contract perspective would have to be developed. It is not known if such a framework would

have an effect on police culture, but change in any organisation usually instigates some change in the organisational culture.

Stahl (1983: 402) argued that the introduction of a code into the police service could be seen to be a negative aspect of the police management system. The attempt to codify behavioural rules and standards has its own associated problems. These include the fact that efforts to anticipate and block every avenue of potential wrongdoing will create a bureaucratic infrastructure of detection and enforcement but do little to build the kind of attitudes and morale that develops ethical performance.

To change any organisations culture there will need to be a comprehensive training programme. In relation to the police service in the UK, the Probationer Training (Central Planning Unit 1989) now concentrates on ethics and value judgements examining the rights and wrongs of situations commonly faced by operational officers. The problem exists that in the training environment it is a necessity to have definite boundaries for the quandaries being taught. On the street those quandaries assume indiscernible boundaries and the decisions are not as easy to make.

Massey (1993: 46) queried whether deliberate educational attempts to influence an awareness of moral and ethical problems are effective. This proposition was used to justify formal ethical training in the curriculum of the Queensland Police Academy in their degree course at the Queensland University of Technology and Griffith University. Sherman (1978: 32-38) and Shernock (1992: 18-26) question the value of education and whether that education has any effect upon police culture and organisational attitudes. Tyre and Braunstein (1992: 6-10) argue that education and ethical policing are inextricably linked.

Confusion currently exists between a professional delivery of acquired skills to service the society being

policed, and the fact that the police service is a self-regulating body bound by common entry requirements, a written code of ethical conduct and a governing peer group. The relevance of this change to the ethical position of the police service lies in the fact that an explicit ethical position is generally associated with the status of the profession and the professional. Academic enquiry into professions has identified a number of characteristics which have been found to be prevalent in professions, although it is not mandatory to possess all the general characteristics listed in order to be considered a professional. Even if the police service were to be acknowledged as professional, it would be debatable if such acknowledgement would influence the organisational culture. Literature identifies the following "professional" characteristics (Kingshott 2003: 307):

- Skill based on theoretical knowledge
- An extensive period of education
- A theme of public service and altruism
- The existence of a code of conduct or ethics
- Insistence upon the professional freedom to regulate itself
- Competence testing before admission to the profession.

Sociologists claim that the main function of a profession is to enhance status, prestige and financial rewards for the members of that profession, which provides an explanation why professional status is claimed by so many trades. Accepting that argument implies that becoming a professional will not act as a catalyst for change in the police organisational culture. The conventional, modern conception of a profession is that of a normative enterprise in which standards of good practice are not just technically or contractually, but morally grounded. Carr (2000: 248) argues that, "the normative core of the concept of profession consists in a system of ethical principles expressible as duties or obligations." Clearly the police service has failed to identify, codify or articulate their normative core.

The first responsibility of a professional was spelled out clearly, all of 2500 years ago, in the Hippocratic Oath of the Greek physician: *primum non-nocere* – "Above all, not knowingly to do harm". Drucker (Kingshott 2003: 302) argued that professionals, whether doctor, lawyer or manager, cannot promise to do good for a client, all they can do is try, but they can promise that they will not knowingly do harm. The client, in turn, must be able to trust that the professional will not knowingly do him or her harm otherwise the client cannot trust the professional. Hence professionals must have autonomy and, as such, they cannot be controlled, supervised or directed by the client. The professional has to be private in that he or she has to be entrusted with the decision on the basis of his or her knowledge and judgement. Professionals are private in the sense that they are autonomous and not subject to political or ideological control, but public in the sense that the welfare of their clients sets limits to their deeds and words. Then *primum non-nocere* is the basic rule of professional ethics and of the ethics of public responsibility. Accepting that as an organisational norm will obviously impact upon the individual and the organisation.

It may be argued that the military versus business views actually are stereotypes. One should also guard against an oversimplification of the policing environment. The brief appointment of the South African Breweries chairman, Meyer Kahn, as Chief Executive Officer of the South African Police Services (SAPS) in the recent past, was not only controversial but also uneventful and, in retrospect, futile.

The relative strengths of these two perspectives can be seen in the variations in management styles in forces/services across the UK. One force may operate a more liberal regime in relation personnel and policing styles compared to a neighbouring force, with both forces prioritising different aspects of law enforcement although their respective goals may essentially be the same with both striving to produce a quality of service delivery to the society they police (Kingshott 2003).

The police function is still seen as a disciplined service. Officers have to accept that a breach of discipline will have consequences. A code of conduct provides managers with the opportunity to recognise breaches of discipline for what they are and deal with them appropriately. Whilst minor differences in interpretation and implementation may exist, all forces are subject to these requirements and may be called to account by both judicial review and political pressures if their subsequent actions breach them. It may be argued that in disciplined services, such as in the UK, there should be no variations in interpretation or implementation. However, variations do arise because a unique aspect of policing, namely that "the lower the rank of the police officer, the greater the number of decisions made," is coupled with the fact that by the very nature of policing, decisions are at the discretion of the officer and are usually unsupervised.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES VERSUS CANTEEN CULTURE

Another aspect related to the problems experienced by police management is to be found in the division between the "policing world" according to policies, directives and procedures and the policing world according to the all encompassing milieu that is "canteen culture". Rules and regulations can be conspired against in the secure knowledge that no harm is meant and that it after all bonds the individual to the organisation. That is unless you are the target of such behaviour. Then it will isolate you from the organisation you sought to bond with. Daily police practices still illustrate the variety of possibilities that can result from behaviour, all under the auspices of "police canteen culture", which by its very name, tends to imply tacit agreement of acceptable behaviour rather than castigating it for what it is.

The formal area of official policy within the police service is one that is unavoidably created some distance from street level, and generally addresses wider issues of concern that impact upon society than are apparent to the individual beat officer. For political reasons, public acceptability and media presentation, official policy may "sanitise the truth" without overstating it as perceived by the officers on the ground. It is this apparent dichotomy that allows for operational officers to view official policy statements as suspect and, therefore, confirm a belief that senior officers are out of touch with reality (Policy Studies Institute 1983: 169-172). However, such a sweeping assumption is both unjust and unfounded, as research has shown that senior police officers are well aware of the problems faced by police officers on the ground and see their role as that of policing priorities and "making the best of the limited options available" (see Schmalleger 2003: 228-230).

POLITICAL ORIENTATION

Police regulations have always been implicit; they categorically state that police officers can have no dynamic involvement in political activity. This may seem an anomaly. For example, British police staff associations, the UK Police Federation and the Superintendents Association, actively campaign in the political arena on all issues they see as being closely linked to the police service. Thus media attention is brought to bear on all political parties as both associations call for changes in the criminal justice system and police regulations. However, staff associations in the United Kingdom are usually careful to foster relations with all political parties in their discussions so as to avoid accusations of being aligned with any one political party (Reiner 1985: 97-99).

Underpinning this is the tradition of conservatism that has characterised the British police service. Historically police officers have been known to have favoured the Conservative Party on the grounds that

they have a mutual understanding and agreement of how the effective policing of society should be achieved. There is a suspicion that the Labour Party has not forgotten the police actions during the 1926 General Strike and that belief has entered the police culture and is now accepted as fact. It may be more appropriate to suggest that the vast improvement in police pay and conditions due to the Edmund Davis Report of the 1970s, coupled with the Conservative Party's continued endorsement of improved pay and conditions for the police service, have fuelled the rumour that the Labour Party still bears grudges about police actions as long ago as 1926 (Reiner 1985: 97-99).

Brewer (1992:10) accordingly confirms the politicisation of policing in South Africa with his reference to political debate and intrigue. "... the police 'side' with one party rather than another, and thus directly engage in party political disputes. South Africa provides an example of the strong form. Members of the police have at various times supported Afrikaner nationalism rather than Smuts, the Conservative rather than National Party, and Inkatha rather than the UDF or ANC; it is this partisanship which helps dispute the claim that selective policing reflects incompetence rather than malevolence".

With the social origins of the police service changing, a more diverse selection of political views can be expected. Applied to the UK, the disenchantment of society with a Conservative Government after their continual rule since 1979, maybe reflected in future voting and it remains to be seen as to whether there is any long-term rift in the police service's political orientation. A characteristic highlighted in the studies of police culture is an overall perception of disillusionment with society as a whole, including politicians, a view which is shared by the rest of the population (Vick 1980: 379-390).

The working culture of the police officer is a more

important determinant of his or her political position than any party allegiance he or she may have once felt. The awareness of restrictions on their participation in the political processes and the nature of their work cause officers to adopt a very low key approach to local and national politics. Police officers do have strong views on how society works, what is wrong with it, how it can be improved and the answer to law and order, but rarely is this expressed in party political terms. This internal police opinion and the growing preparedness of the police staff associations to voice those opinions allow for police pressure to be exerted on policy makers without breaching the restrictions on political behaviour (Reiner 1980: 379-390).

The police have long been the centre of an argument as to how their role should be interpreted. The orthodox view shows that the police service is one that is impartial and works for the benefit of society as a whole regardless of race, colour, creed or ethnicity (Critchley 1978). Alternatively it is portrayed from the Marxist perspective namely that the police are "capitalist lackeys" and that the police are seen as agents of social control so that the capitalist bourgeois elements in society can exploit their position. This extreme viewpoint cites as evidence the strong emphasis given by the police and the criminal justice system to offences against property, compared to an alleged weak emphasis on "white collar" crime (see Reiman 2001: 114, 122, 207-225; Shelden 2001: 20, 288).

Police officers are far more closely aligned with the former approach than the latter. Although all officers are fully aware of the inequities in the system, each officer is able to cite examples, often from a personal anecdotal perspective. It may be argued that this is one aspect of the political function that "police culture" addresses in a way that formal policy making could not.

COMPARATIVE POLICE CULTURES

There are a number of examples to be found, mainly in Australia and in the United States of America, where there are potential forms of ethical guidance for the policing function that can be found and adapted (Kingshott 2003: 184-275). These are based upon the experiences of police services founded on a similar law and procedural environment (Lynch 2003: 7). From their earliest days these countries had a strong desire to control their police forces by deregulation. In the USA the formalist procedural approach which was adopted has led to the growth in the debate relating to the ethics of police work, with published work on the ethical content of police practice. These publications covered different aspects of policing such as undercover operations, the use of force, the use of discretion and the employment of female officers, all discussed in ethical terms (see Hefferman 1985). This is in contrast to the British police service where discussion on police practices is limited and more pragmatic, although there are some helpful papers on ethical issues (McKenzie 1993: 17-29). The dual approach of the British police service to balance law enforcement/execution of the law and order maintenance to stabilise society can be seen as an integral balancing mechanism in that a consideration of dual objectives will automatically preclude either from being pursued to excess.

The influence of "police culture" upon police behaviour and organisational norms will also impact and influence the ethical development of the individual and the organisation. For that reason it is necessary to discuss why police officers should be held accountable to a higher standard of ethical conduct.

ACCOUNTABLE TO A HIGHER STANDARD

Communities demand a higher standard of ethical conduct from their police officers than they do of other professions. It may perhaps not always be fair but it certainly is understandable. It is necessary for a

society that sees religious leaders, teachers, bank managers, mayors, councillors, public servants and politicians engage in morally corrupt or even criminal behaviour, to restate its moral standpoint.

Over the past five years, at least 25 young members of Law Enforcement Explorers (a co-ed program affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America) have allegedly been abused by police officers around the United States. According to FoxNews.com (June25, 2003), at least a dozen teenagers have reported being molested over the past year alone. In one case, a 34-year-old officer in San Bernardino, California, was sentenced to 60 weekends in jail after pleading guilty to having sex with a 16-year-old girl on a scout-related camping trip. In pained-yet-eloquent terms, the mother of his young victim expressed her feelings of anger, hurt and disappointment this way: "We trusted him. How could we not? He was a law-enforcement officer. He was our daughter's (Explorer) advisor. He was invited to our daughter's graduation dinner at our home…He shook our hands, gave me hugs, and all of the time, he was betraying our trust." (*Ethics Roll Call* 2003: 5).

In the United Kingdom the Conservative Party coined the term "back to basics" as being the base line of moral standards acceptable by society but they never stated what they were. It is believed that honesty, integrity, chastity, virtue and compassion were explicit but by the same token vague enough not to offend religious or other ethnic minorities. "Law and order", "safety and security" and/or "social control", for that matter, feature in any restatement of individual or community standards of behaviour. By association any person involved directly in societal order maintenance delivery must be of high moral standard. The police officer is seen to exemplify that moral code for he or she touches the lives of the community being policed by advice, guidance, counselling and support of community aspirations in order to achieve a fair and

balanced interpretation of the law. Lawyers, by anecdotal reference, are often considered to be devious and perhaps unethical for defending obviously guilty violent criminals. Such an argument is flawed in that defence and mitigation are often assumed to be the same. Regardless of the arguments founded on poor anecdotal evidence, the perception is that only police officers, and not other participants in the judicial process, are held to a higher moral standard than other professionals by the society they police. A police officer should, therefore, aspire to high ethical standards in both his private life and in his professional capability.

Nontheless, police officers often fail spectacularly in maintaining their ethical standards. In New York the allegation that some NYPD officers used the handle of a toilet plunger to sodomize a male prisoner makes the news (*News Tribune*, 2 March 2000), whilst in London the Metropolitan Police face yet another investigation into CID corruption and the brutality of South African Police dog handlers shocked the world when it was revealed in 2000 that they set their dogs on defenceless illegal immigrants as part of their improvised training exercises (see http://www.sabsnews.com/features/dog-attacks/ and http://www.queensu.ca/samp/midocs/DogAttack.ht ml).

The many thousands of officers of the NYPD and the Metropolitan Police are forever tainted by the actions of the infamous few. The many community schemes, the humanitarian acts, the compassionate actions at serious and fatal incidents, the out of hours youth work, the many letters of appreciation, are all forgotten and pale into insignificance against the stark newspaper headlines. The NYPD are remembered for serious sexual abuse: the Metropolitan Police for corruption; all because of the actions of the minority. The South African Police, or components thereof, will for a long time to come be distrusted as a result of their role during the previous ideological dispensation.

CONCLUSION

Attitudes and perceptions can be changed but only through concerted effort and the belief that good will overcome evil. It is a fact that a "Blue Wall of Silence" exists - so did the Berlin Wall. Policing remains a learning experience. Officials need to learn from both the probationer and veterans, and assist in changing "police culture" for the better. Alternatively, racist and sexist comments, the derogatory remarks and inappropriate behaviour can be rationalised as part of a "police culture". Organisational cultures will always exist and should be acknowledged as part of the informal structures that support the organisation. It must, however, be both a supportive and comforting environment in which to deal with the stress associated with policing. There is no room for bigotry, racism, sexual inequality, bullying and inappropriate behaviour. That culture is under the control of those within the organisation and they alone have the ability to change the culture by rejecting the bad, leading by example and living accountably. Policing remains value-based in its philosophy and actions as a consequence of which role conflict is manifested. Furthermore, it remains symbolic of a collective social nostalgia for the generation and management of issues that would constitute an effective guarantee of freedom, democracy and social progress and, therefore, relevant to security and quality of life.

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