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Immigration, integration and insecurity – the role of police ethics and police training¹

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Migration and Globalisation in Europe

Migration and Globalisation have great influence over the lives of people in Europe and will have even more influence within the next years. For the open societies in Europe which already have to tackle with migration processes, these developments will entail further drastic changes: living together in a multi-ethnic society with a high degree of mobility.

Post-modern society and its institutions are organized along the **principles of fear, risk assessment and the provision of security**. This focus on security in return creates fear and the need for protection. Post-modern institutions are driven by the production and distribution of knowledge regarding risk assessment and security provision. It is important to realize, that police play an important role in this game, but it is also important to realize that there are other players who need to be included in a **concept of mutual security provision**.

The demand for help from or intervention by the police has risen and is still rising. The increasing demand for police services is due to the decreasing readiness and/or capability of citizens to settle conflicts by means of peaceful communication. Victims are less equipped to and capable of helping themselves. More and more frequently official authorities are called in to clear and settle conflicts. This is one of the reasons why it is absolutely necessary to support police training activities in countries in transition and to cooperate with these police forces.

Although presenting major concern, **multicultural conflicts** can be viewed as part of a **systematic transformation of social control and policing** within a unified Europe. We must prepare the rising generations and our police forces in all countries for this new situation in Europe, by fostering understanding for the causes underlying these processes of migration, eradicating irrational fears and judgements, encouraging a keener perception of the positive effects of migration, building a capacity for tolerance in relations with others.

Migration brings people of different races, cultures and languages into closer contact with each other, making enormous demands on their tolerance. In many European countries, increasing numbers of immigrants are moving to cities that already harbour the majority of that country's population along with most of its problems, or to rural areas, where the people are not used to living together and door-to-door with foreigners or "aliens".

Although the issue of multicultural conflicts seems to be of major concern, it is just part of a transformation of the whole system of social control and policing within a unifying Europe. Although states may be enhancing their capacity to control 'unwanted' migration, whether on an individual basis or through cooperation with other states, the mar-

ketization of illegal migration by organized traffickers increased the capacities of the 'unwanted' to migrate.

According to authorities, illegal immigration combined with human trafficking belongs to the top threats and dangers in Europe to be monitored and repelled by security forces. Therefore police work has to be related to these new "threat-scenarios", but we also have to challenge the question whether immigration itself is a "top threat", or special parts of migration or phenomenon, coming together with immigration. It seems to be important to differentiate between the problem of and the causes for migration and immigration, the problem of asylum, and the problems of insecurity, coming along with increasing numbers of migrating people and the increasing cultural and economical gap within Europe and neighbour states.

The sociological and historical background in a given country is very important if we talk about migration and immigration. Some countries like Germany have been experiencing economic problems. Overburdened social and public services, increasing unemployment, the discussion whether to change the social security system, and declining individual financial budgets are challenging the population. There are widening class divisions (the rich are getting richer), more broken families, more juveniles (and especially children) living below the poverty line and growing anger among the disadvantaged. It seems that this anger results in xenophobia and aversion to anyone who is or who looks like a foreigner.

In all empirical studies we conducted during the last years, we found **a common aspect causing public fear: strangers**. If you ask people about the reason for their fear of crime or feelings of insecurity, "strangers" are mentioned by more than three out of four people interviewed, followed by "darkness" or "dark places" (like public garages, train stations etc.) and "incivilities". The places that people find frightening are train stations and other public places where strangers (especially juveniles) are hanging around, behaving disorderly.

Migration and Xenophobic Violence

Right-wing extremist violence has increased dramatically in most of our countries. Such activities can create feelings of fear, not only for foreigners but also for the majority of the population. In general, foreigners and native citizens are united by a strong faith that the state and local police will guarantee their security. On an even more general level, multicultural conflicts are seen as issues of internal security and therefore as a major challenge to social control and, eventually, policing. What we have observed in Germany, as well as in other European countries, is the emergence of **new ethnic conflicts** and the rise of xenophobic nationalist movements, which reach far beyond the right-wing political margin into the centre of society as a whole. The development and expansion of xenophobic attitudes and violence cannot be traced back solely to personality deficits and socialisation problems of individual perpetrators or to social, economic and cultural crises of the society as a whole. What we have to take into account in order to understand and explain what is happening is the manner in which the immigration and integration of foreigners are currently organised in some European countries, and how politicians comment on the problems of immigration. In Germany, all political parties, except the "Green Party" stated during the last years, that there are **too many foreigners** coming to Germany, and that Germany is not an immigration country - contrary to the fact that in reality Germany is a country with a high rate of immigration and needs this immigration due to the age structure of its society. Furthermore, most of

the immigrants are coming from European countries and not from Africa or Asia. Slogans like “Das Boot ist voll” (“The boat is overcrowded”; used by the Federal Minister of the Interior, a member of the Social-Democratic-Party, in 2000) gave certain political signals to the people and made the right-wing extremists believe there might be widespread support for their actions.

Police, Human Rights and Migration

Human rights organizations criticize violations of human rights of refugees and migrants by police and security forces in nearly every European country. In Germany, a documentation of a human rights organization reported a total of 89 dead and 114 injured migrants at the eastern border between 1993 and 2000. Amnesty International has already launched two reports on violence by police in Germany, and a third one will follow.

Some countries have established special courses on “Police and Human Rights”, and the Council of Europe has since some years a “**Police and Human Rights Program**” with a lot of material, brochures, and posters provided. Human Rights standards are available, as some dozen of international instruments and Council of Europe documents on that topic. The brochure “Police Work in a Democratic Society”, published in 2000 by the Council of Europe Police and Human Rights Program in English, French and German, is also a step in the right direction. The “Rotterdam Charter (Policing for a multi-ethnic society”, drawn up at a conference in Rotterdam in May/June 1996), and the 10 Basic Human Rights Standards for Law Enforcement Officials” by Amnesty International are good examples for such papers and recommendations.

Unfortunately, only few European countries make use of these materials, and even fewer include them into their police training curricula. We are still missing the sense for being part of an already Unified Europe. It is not possible to built up new walls – neither concrete ones, nor ones in terms of economy, social aspects or religion. But it is in fact much easier to vote for recommendations, than to act and fulfil what they are asking for in the everyday business, especially in the everyday business of police forces.

Since some years, we realize a trend to establish **guidelines, ethical standards and Codes of Ethic** all over Europe during the last decade. The fact that nowadays nearly every police force has its own “Code of Ethics” might be a result of the discussions on police integrity and police accountability, which started during the last years. But one might question whether there is really a need for such a special “Police Ethic”. The basic ethic and moral aspects of a society, their constitution and their laws should be the ethical background of policing. If one accepts this, we might not need a special Code of Ethics for the police. But what really would be useful are organizations like **police ombudsman** (like in England and Northern Ireland) or special administrations like **IGAI** (Inspector General for Internal Affairs) in Portugal, who take care of complaints by citizens and sometimes even by police officers themselves.

On the other side, we must also realize that police forces are more and more loosing their **old hierarchical structures**, and with this structure a clear and easy understandable organization of accountability. One of the negative side effects of reorganizing and restructuring the police might be, that people who were not used to think and to work independently and to take over responsibility by themselves for what they are doing,

need some time to cope with the new democratic structures. They also need a clear vision what their aims are and whom they are working for.

Generally speaking, there seem to be **two major approaches to guide police discretion**, to improve accountability and to strengthen integrity. The first advocates **rule-tightening** as a means of controlling police actions, while the second believes in **changing the informal culture of police organizations**. In a evaluation of the British law reform in the 80s, McConville et al. question the utility of law reform as a method of changing police practice, since the **occupational subculture** of the police appears resistant to change. To change police practice, an attack upon police occupational culture would be necessary. This is to be achieved by redefining the police mandate and instituting new forms of accountability.

Rob Reiner notes the uneven impact of law reform on police practice and concludes that legal regulations alone is of limited effectiveness for changing police practice: **“The key changes must be in the informal culture of the police, their practical rules”**. It is not the law or an administrative regulation, which influences the activity of an legal organization, but the informal culture of the institution respectively their members. If we compare different regions or areas, the way institutions act or react is definitely influenced by what we may call **“the local institutional culture”**. The habits are strongly affected by the informal norms, attitudes, expectations, practices and procedures of the local systems and protagonists.

Furthermore, the subjective elements of the local police community affect the level of concern with the existing use or misuse of power, the usual way complaints are handled and so on. It is rather obvious that ongoing systems and their actors develop **stable patterns of behaviour**. It is not easy to change those patterns just by imposing a new law or implementing some new administrative strategies. The local institutional culture within which a shared set of values exists, might be upset by a new set of official rules given by legislation or advice, resulting in an even worse situation. New rules may contradict existing values of the local culture and may be viewed as placing an unwelcome burden on the practitioners with the result of **ignoring or “undermining”** the official rules or new norms.

The existence of such a local police culture is a highly plausible explanation for many of the reported failures of past police reform efforts. One could say, that the irony is that the more the legal process squeezes the police to ensure propriety and accountability, the more the police are tempted to circumvent or undermine procedural restraints. It is the police agencies culture and the support by supervisors, seniors, and superiors, that encourage police officers to resist or tolerate certain types of misconduct. And therefore it is this culture, which encourage or de-encourage police integrity.

Police themselves must establish effective borders against misuse of power and unlawful acts by peers. Activities to improve integrity and to strengthen self-control within the police force must start with management training for those who are heading police forces. What I call a **“healthy Police organization”** might be reached with healthy, respectful and accountable supervisors. **Leadership** is an essential element in embracing accountability.

Empowerment and enlightenment of those who are engaged in front line policing and in assuring police integrity is our task. But also to avoid vacuums in accountability and to accept, that accountability is a core institutional value, which should be secured by senior officers.

Police Training

Police today are more highly trained than ever before, and the quality of the training has probably never been higher. This is true for most of the Western European states. Although the positive relationship between training and practice seems to be evident, this effect is not studied very much. The benefits of the training for institutions are generally more assumed, and serve as an important legitimating function for headquarters, rather than empirically demonstrated. Empirical studies have focused on officers' attitudes rather than their actual behaviour. A study by Mastrofski and Ritti some years ago showed that the impact of training depends on organization-level considerations. Training has a significant positive effect in agencies that provide a **supportive environment**, but fails to have an effect in agencies that otherwise are indifferent or hostile to the intentions the officers are trained for.

The effect of the training therefore depends on

- a) the opportunities afforded by the institution to apply it,
- b) on supervisors, who encourage the trained person and their intention, and
- c) on its relevance to the prospects for career advancement.

The supervisor philosophy "Go out there and don't get into trouble" or "Go out and behave properly" is not a good one to encourage highly trained officers (it is not a good one anyway). Because of the changing nature of society and its members, a police reform and a new understanding of police work is necessary.

Highly educated officers and better trained personnel do not per se guarantee better cooperation and communication, but training and education is a sine qua non factor on the way to improve the quality of police contacts. As highly educated police officers could become frustrated in their jobs, grow cynical and look for formal or informal ways out, changes must occur not only in the recruitment, selection and training programs, but in the **organizational environment** as well. Otherwise, new personnel will have little chance of surviving in the organization. The pressures for conformity are so strong that a new officer will either be forced into the police subculture, with the values and orientation of the larger group replacing his own, or his life will be made so unpleasant he will decide to resign.

A consciousness of the importance and the value of the individual's contribution to the overall reliability and the products, the institution (or company) "police" is delivering, is necessary: The attitude and behavior of each individual agent is crucial for the image of the whole agency. One negative incident can annihilate all positive experiences a customer had before. The employees are at the core of any service-oriented institution. They produce the products, perform, communicate with customers, and may **spoil the image** of the corporation.

Police training has to be suited to a modern police force that is evolving constantly along with the society it serves. This is not an easy task and one that requires continuous in-service training to keep up to date with developments inside and outside the police.

Within the training programmes, **communication and conflict solution** abilities will assume an importance equal to that of law, social sciences and police sciences.

The **exchange of information and curricula** between police training institutions all over the world might support the transition processes in different police forces. The exchange of students and teachers is both necessary and useful.

Within today's fast-paced world it is necessary for police executives to cope with the changes that daily confronts them. The police must develop strategies to plan, direct and control change, and to build the **necessity of change** into their own philosophy. Problem oriented policing and community policing are terms reflecting the changing of the philosophy of policing during the last years. Although this change might be for some outstanding visitors too slow, for the internal system of the police it is a tremendous challenge, because the main structures of leadership, the structure and the form of the organization have to be changed. This includes attitudinal, organizational, and sub-cultural changes.

Students should learn to distinguish between the individual culture of the members of the institution, established over time between peers, and the "official" culture of the institution. Since "**Cop Culture**" and "**Police Culture**" are not necessarily the same, changes in "Police Culture" (like C.P.) are useless if "Cop Culture" stays the same or even contradicts the community oriented C.P.-Culture.

Since the complexity of the workload is not only increasing, but also changing with time, **police training must be constantly on the move**. Contents and targets have to be changed and adopted to new circumstances. The police have to cope with an increase in volume, gravity and complexity, aggravated by the expanding international dimension requiring new resources, connections and information exchange. The development of new technologies and a greater mobility due to the abolition of borders affords criminal organizations access to larger markets with easier escape routes and the availability of effective communication systems. Furthermore, the unstable economic and social situation, economic crunch, massive unemployment and further migration waves from third world countries may cause massive problems for the police in the near future.

Police training in most European countries is different to other training systems because of the "**closed circuit**" **system** of police training: Training is organized from the beginning until the end in and by internal police training institutions under the responsibility and supervision of the state ministries of interior. In order to broaden police officers' minds a new strategy of more external training in "open" institutions seems to be necessary. Until this is possible it is necessary to include as many people, topics and methods as possible from outside into the police training system.

New philosophies in policing like Community Policing do not solve these problems per se. But a community oriented strategy broadens the definition of an agency's function. There are many tasks police might fulfil which are not yet discussed or accepted by both troops and management. Police already tackle concerns about local crime and disorder problems, but they also have to discuss the problems of a multicultural society amongst themselves and with the public. In partnership with other agencies, not alone, police are responsible for maintaining peace, order and security in the community. The police can, to a large extent, serve as "detectors" of problems due to their daily contact with many parts of the population.

However, police officers very often have the feeling that their work is currently not very effective or efficient, but highly wasteful and **bureaucratic**. To quote Loveday: "A combi-

nation of extended hierarchies, organizational culture and the lack of effective management had resulted in the police service taking on all the fine **characteristics of a beached whale**". This feeling is often shared by politicians, resulting in mistrust and a steady call for more and closer regulation of the police. This mistrust is not based on the concern that the police might misuse its powers; it is mainly based on lack of knowledge about what they do.

Police are very often placed in a position of having to defend themselves and to arrange intellectual retreat areas. But somebody who has to defend himself, no matter what he or she has done, is not able to act positively, proactively and in a future-oriented way. Communication and conflict resolution abilities are as important as the knowledge of different cultures and cultural peculiarities.

And: A Fool with a Tool is still a Fool. Training which provides just tools without delivering the philosophy and understanding of one's own role as a police officer as an integral part of the community is not only useless, but extremely dangerous for society.

International cooperation in police training is obviously necessary to provide mutual understanding and mutual support in the everyday business of the police. A European standard for police training (requirements, curricula) has to be discussed, and a functioning infrastructure for communication and cooperation has to be established. On the European level, police matters must be seen as equally important to economical matters, and cooperative initiatives on fighting crime and xenophobia must be permanently on the agenda of European institutions.

¹ This paper is a revised version of two articles by the author, where one can also find the references and the literature used: "Policing a Multicultural Society – Germany". In: Policing and Society 7, 2003, pp. 165-196 (with Uwe Ewald) and: "Community Oriented Policing in Germany – Training and Education". In: Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategy and Management (ISSN 1363-951X), 25, 1, 2002, p. 48-59. Both papers are available at the author's homepage: <http://www.thomasfeltes.de/English.htm>