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POLICE STAFF TRAINING: PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN A PAN-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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REPORT

New Police Training Policies in a Pan-European Context

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Preface: What are we training for?

Training police means training those people, who represent the state in everyday situations of:

- Victimization
- Crimes and offenses
- Disturbances of peace and public order
- Traffic accidents and traffic regulations
- Nuisances and disturbances
- Emergencies
- Boarder control and control of (illegal) immigrants
- ... and other situations ...

We also must bear in mind the following facts:

- Police officers are in every situation both representatives of the state and the citizens. They are part of those who are served by the police.
- The tasks of the police are getting more complex and more difficult over time.
- Democratic systems require well-trained police officers with special qualifications.
- Law plays an important role in democratic societies. Police have to protect the law and must respect the law.
- Police officers must be able to communicate and to cooperate with the citizens and to mediate conflicts.

All over Europe, we have different police structures and different police forces. Nevertheless as the tasks of the police forces are the same, as the basic principles of police training.

Consequences for Police training:

- Basic needs and basic topics for police training should be named.
- Police training requires a good to excellent school education (at least 11 years total).
- Job experience helps to cope with the special requirements of police tasks. Therefore, police should also hire people who have passed their vocational training.
- Police should employ freshman only after a special selection process (involving an assessment centre), where external knowledge (and personnel) is used for selection.

Basic Training

This part of the training must enable the future officer to act like a policeman or - woman and to cooperate with citizens as far as possible. It must qualify to act as a junior (or second) partner together with a more experienced senior partner. The training should include the following topics:

- Law (police and penal law, but esp. constitutional law and human rights)
- Psychology and conflict training; management (basic rules)
- Sociology (society), political science, administration

- Self-defence (judo, shooting, verbal-judo as de-escalation strategy)
- Criminology and criminalistics
- Traffic rules etc.
- Informatics and economics
- International relations, eu-regulations, schengen, europol etc.

Different branches of police need different (specialized) police training. Specialized tasks should be handled by experienced police officers only.

Consequences for Police training:

- After the basic training, further advanced training is necessary.
- This advanced training should include specialised topics for different tasks of the police and different branches within the police.

Advanced Training

In today's modern and fast changing society nobody escapes the need for further training on subjects that extend far beyond the classical and purely professional topics.

In certain basic training courses for young officers, fundamentals of management are taught. Older officers, mostly their superiors, never received such training. This may enhance the generation gap and lead to misunderstandings and frustration. To overcome this situation, advanced management training programs for senior officers as well as refresher courses have to be organized. The aim is to help senior officers not only to be efficient policemen, but also to be qualified leaders and managers of the limited resources made available to them by the community.

Management seminars, refresher courses or free studies at police institutes or external management institutes should be taken into consideration as an additional asset for promotion.

Police officers should attend specialised courses at other institutes such as universities or management training institutes.

Topics of such courses include :

Management Techniques and Quality Management, Conflict and Crisis Management, Strategic Management, Organisation, Leadership, Human Resources and Communication. Courses such as Statistics, Finance, Planning and Control, and Information Technology should also be stressed.

Career development and career planning are as important as the processes of training and selection. The criteria for this selection process should be developed and carefully evaluated. Easy to handle people are usually not the best ones for working in a complex organisation: competence is more important than conformity.

Consequences for Police training:

- The selection of police officers who will get a special training, should be very careful and with external consultants involved.
- Only those police officers, which apply for such training, should be accepted. Nobody should be forced to work in a specialised part of the police.

There are two different career profiles and two different possibilities, to structure a police career:

a) The bottom-up career in which case the different (mostly three) levels of training are cumulated and necessary for promotion; you only can be a police leader if you start at the very lowest level of both training and career.

The **"advantage"** of this system is, that police officers are more easy to lead, more "the same", more adjusted to the formal in informal rules of police, more adapted to the old thinking of police work as executing state authority, more dependant from orders and instructions by their supervisors etc. The **disadvantage** of this system is that an inside training is provided which is not controlled by external supervisors and not evaluated by independent institutions. "Success" is implemented in this system, because it is very expensive, and unsuccessful police officers usually cannot be fired due to their civil servant status. The police officers never learn to look into other training institutions and other methods of thinking. They are not able to act independently.

b) A career with (at least the possibility of) a direct entry at a higher level. The training is received not only by police institutions, but also by independent institutions such as Universities etc.

The **advantage** of this system is that you get well trained, well motivated, self depending and reliable police officers who are able to cope with new situations and challenges and who are eager to learn more and to conduct their career on their own.

Consequences for Police training:

- The advantages of both systems should be combined.
- Bottom-up careers should include both theoretical and practical stages outside of the police.
- The system of "hire first, train after" has to be challenged.
- Evaluation of training is as important as the consequent development of curricula.

The Changing Role of the Police in Society

Late modern society consists of institutions organized in relation to fear, risk assessment and the provision of security. This is true in most of the Western European societies and it will be true within the next years for countries in transition as far as the "free economic market" is pushing away and displacing the "planned economy" - with the result that

- Tight social bindings and informal communication between people will vanish or even disappear,
- There is a great unsteadiness among those who remain in the police service, resulting in frustration, aversion against organisational changes and drawing-back from the public,
- Theft, fraud and other economic crimes will become widespread,
- People will call for a powerful police and even a powerful state.

This could be a threat to these new democracies: If police are not able to cope with these problems, and if politicians blame the police for this, problems, conflicts and even riots may occur.

Public opinion and informal social control have a central role in maintaining social order. Many police agencies and local governments have reached a critical point in their response to social unrest, disorder, and crime. They can no longer adhere to traditional forms of police work because societies are changing rapidly and quite often states are in an upheaval.

Large-scale migrations are bringing people of different races, cultures and languages into closer contact with each other, making enormous demands on mutual tolerance. Increasing numbers of immigrants are moving to cities in affluent countries. These cities already harbour the majority of that country's population along with most of its problems. At the same time many of these countries are faced with uncertain economies, overburdened social and public services, and declining educational standards. There are widening class divisions, more broken families, home- and hopelessness, growing anger among the disadvantaged, and a rise in violent crime. Policing must face an increase in protests, civil disobedience and violence. The unsolved problems of unemployment, poverty, homelessness will contribute to social turmoil, with a rising frequency of minority-related crimes.

In situations, when politicians or political systems are under pressure (because of riots, terrorism, up heavings or financial disturbances), police have to be aware of their function and role. The weaker the politicians, the stronger the police should be, while “stronger” must not mean “tough”, but independent, self-confident, well trained, well organized and equipped – and with a leadership, which is able to take over responsibility for the society without depending on day-by-day political decisions, but standing solid on the basis of the law.

Consequences for Police training:

- Police training must be taken seriously.
- Management training must be an important part of police training.
- Law Training is important, but should be combined with the training of communicative abilities.
- Law Training must include constitutional law.

Rational policing as solution

Rational policing means to assess the organizational capabilities of the force, to identify critical issues, threats, and opportunities by assessing the present and expected future environment in which police function. Success should be measured by public values, produced by the police and not by clearance rates, numbers of convicted criminals and so on. Policing must be a political active business. Police should not wait for the politicians to decide what has to be done after special (and very often momentary) problems occur; they should approach the public and serve its demands. These demands are similar in most of the European countries. The public cares very much about everyday disturbances and troubles.

Community in late modern society is different. Bureaucratic institutions and their communication media constitute it. These institutions and the media fundamentally transform community as communication that involves sharing, tradition, quality human relationships, and local spatial arrangements. Late modern institutions are increasingly organized in terms of fear, risk assessment and the provision of security. Security is multifaceted and includes for example security of territory (e.g. safe streets, secure premises), of the environment (e.g. healthy natural environment, safe products), of life course (e.g. social security, private insurance), and of identities (e.g. protection of national and ethnic identities in multi-cultural societies).

As a consequence for police, a community-oriented strategy, which broadens the definition of an agency's function, is required. Such a strategy includes order maintenance, conflict resolution, problem solving and provision of services, as well as other activities. Community oriented policing is a promising strategy to address the rapidly shifting needs in today's societies. Whereas different theories of what "Community Policing" means are discussed, the basis is quite clear: Community Policing is rather a new philosophy than just a new technique of police work. Police and communities are working together in close relationship to name problems in their community and to find solutions for these problems.

The police shall provide the public with high quality services with sensitivity to the particular needs of victims, minorities, and vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly.

Police shall work to reduce the fear of being victimised and concerns about local crime and disorder problems and not to increase the fear by special preventive activities, mass media reports and so on.

The police, in partnership with other agencies, is responsible for peace, order and security within the community.

Consequences for Police training:

- Police officers have to learn how to interact and to communicate with citizens and with the media.
- Fear of crime is an important topic to be dealt with.
- Community crime prevention must be part of the curriculum of police training.
- Community policing has to be taught as a management philosophy rather than a new technique of police work.

Changing Philosophies in Policing

Over the last few years there has been a reappraisal of policing philosophy and the role of the police, which was more or less intensive or radical within the different European countries. The background is difficult to describe, but drives for greater efficiency within the police service played an important role as public dissatisfaction with the police stemmed largely from inappropriate and outdated policing styles.

The traditional delivery of police and public services has frustrated citizens and officers alike. There exists a widespread assumption that police and other

government agencies are too detached from the community's problems, that they are too remote and distant to be able to effectively have an impact on the problems the citizen's experience. The same frustrations can also be found among the police. Patrol officers and those who actually work face to face with the citizens on a daily basis often feel that their work is not given enough appreciation and respect.

Most forces have begun to devise plans to evaluate police performance through local crime surveys and through police activity surveys with the aim of improving the quality of policing at local level. Some countries have even changed the complete structure of their police forces, resulting in a more decentralized system with local and very personal responsibilities.

In some countries the local police force is now responsible for the decision whether a given amount of money is used for more staff, for better training of the staff, for more technical equipment like personal computers, or for more patrol cars and the like. This system of "decentralised budgeting" seem to produce good results: Police officers are eager to discuss budgetary provisions. They are more motivated, as they are involved in financial decisions. Furthermore, police stations are better equipped after introducing this system of decentralised responsibility, because everybody knows now, what the money is used for and why. Money, not used for specific tasks (and was previously wasted), can now be used for tasks, which are important in the eyes of the respective police officers.

Consequences for Police training:

- Economic aspects of policing must be an important part of police training.
- Decentralisation is important not only for monetary decisions, but also for different responsibilities.
- Evaluation of police services is important.

Key words for police management

The key words for management in the police will be flexibility, shared power, autonomous teams and regional responsibility. Police officers of the future will be active problem-solving participants, particularly when given the necessary discretion, encouragement, and opportunities by their supervisors. Small work units, free-flow information, cooperation with private security institutions are some other key words, challenging the former militaristic, bureaucratic structure of the police forces all over Europe.

Consequences for Police training:

- Although it might be a long way to this new philosophy of policing, police training institutions must start now in including the basic principles in their curricula.
- There is no aim, which might be reached within a given time or at the same time in different countries. Police development is a very sensible topic, and every country must find its own way.
- Sometimes it is more important to start the journey than to discuss the different stations to be reached.

Police training and afterwards

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 work. Police today are often more highly trained than ever before, and the quality of the training has probably never been higher. The positive relationship between training and enforcement seems to be evident, but this effect has not yet been studied thoughtfully. The benefits of the training for institutions are generally more assumed or served as an important legitimating function for headquarters than empirically demonstrated, and empirical studies have focused on officers' attitudes rather than actual behaviour.

The impact of training depends on organisation-level considerations. Training has a significant positive effect in agencies that provide a supportive environment, but fails to have an effect in agencies that are otherwise indifferent or hostile to the intentions the officers are trained for. The effect of the training therefore depends on the opportunities afforded by the institution to apply it, on supervisors who encourage the trained person and the intention, and on its relevance to the prospects of career advancement. The supervisor philosophy "Go out there and don't get into trouble" is not a good one to encourage trained officers (it is not a good one anyway). What is necessary is the institutional and personal (by the supervisor) value, given to the intended activity. The supervisor must "live" what he or she wants to be happening.

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.

Consequences for Police training:

- Training without close contact to the police practitioners will fail.
- Training by practitioners only will also fail, because there is no element of challenging old and conventional practises.
- The future supervisors of police students have to be included into the training system. They have to support and follow-up, what starts at police academies, schools or colleges.
- Training has to be followed by an "après-training" on the job.

Résumé: Targets for Police Training: A Holistic Approach

1 As the complexity of workload is increasing and changing by time, Police **training must be constantly on the move**. Contents and targets have to be changed and adopted to new circumstances and advantages.

2 **Communication** and **conflict solution** abilities are as important as the knowledge of **laws, social sciences and Police sciences**.

3 The increasing workload in volume and complexity imposed upon the police agencies and the budgetary restrictions imposed by the authorities require an optimal use of the limited resources. As a result senior police staff members at different levels **need to master modern management skills and techniques** to run their organisation efficiently. They must at least have a good understanding of these techniques and skills.

4 There is a need **to review the organisation** and procedures and to check the mission and objectives against the daily realities and socio-economic changes of the society the institution is supposed to serve.

5 Many police agencies are mainly bureaucracies functioning at an organisational level. Quite a few are essentially static organisations running by structural inertia with little or no managerial capability. Others, especially larger agencies, suffer from organisational gravity. **Cop culture** is not the same as the official **Police culture**.

6 It must be realised that police agencies are big organisations, sometimes the size of large companies. They have to manage thousands of employees, public finances and an increasing range of equipment, with **high technology** being introduced at an increasing pace. There is an urgent need for police managers who master the abilities and skills required to assure an effective functioning of the agency and an efficient use of the limited resources.

7 The training has to be **regularly up-dated** and completed by refresher courses. Advanced training courses are a unique instrument to complete the basic training and adapt to local specifications or punctual needs for further education.

8 The **exchange of information** and curricula between police training institutions all over Europe might support the transition processes in different countries, learning from each other. **A EUROPEAN CENTRE OF EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION** on national and international **law**, on legal universal **values** and on basic **principles** of policing could improve police training, police cooperation and as a result crime fighting and crime prevention in Europe. There is an immense amount of expertise and knowledge available in different countries, which has not been used yet due to problems with communication and structuring of information.