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## **A ONE VIEW ON WORK ETHIC AND POLICE INTERNAL CONTROL\*\***

### **Abstract**

*The paper deals with the analysis of the relationship between work ethic and police internal control. In the first part of the paper, we give a brief overview of the concept work ethic in correlation with the characteristics of police profession and organization. The second part of the paper includes an analysis of the relationship between work ethic and internal control in police. The basic thesis is that the efficiency of work (police) ethics reduces the need for internal control. The aim of this paper is to point out that work ethic is conditioned by the application of rules and Code of Ethics. The author concludes that the internalization of ethical principles, as well as the perception of punishing illicit and unethical behavior, creates work and social environment in which ethics is not understood as pressure but as a duty of an individual, social group and organization.*

**Keywords:** *work ethic, police ethics, internal control, police profession, society*

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## WORK ETHIC AS AN ELEMENT OF POLICE PROFESSION

The term work ethic includes a set of principles that should be internalized by an individual in his professional activities, relation to the function and workplace he performs. It is also an important prerequisite for establishing collegiality among employees, quality working relationships in the organization and preventing violations of duties. The term work ethic is also defined as a belief in work as a moral good, and set of values centered on the importance of doing work and reflected especially in a desire or determination to work hard.<sup>1</sup>

Work ethic should be a necessary precondition for social interactions within organization because it determines ways of communication and dealing with professional obligations and relation towards other coworkers. Low work ethic has a direct impact on work motivation and indirectly can lead to inefficiencies and reduce the benefits within organization.

One of the most influential writing on work ethic comes from the sociologist Max Weber.<sup>2</sup> He tried to explain why people pursue wealth and material gain for its own sake not because necessity, and found the answer partly in Puritan asceticism and the concept of 'calling'. Weber believed that the one of the factors that facilitated capitalism was the development of a moral system, which he called 'the Protestant Ethic'. Predestination and the notion of calling requires individuals to fulfill their duty in this world. By doing that the individual can interpret occupational success as a sign of being elected.

The internalization of work ethic is a form of socialization of an individual in work environment. Group solidarity based on the sharing common principles is a condition of adaptation and can give an individual

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<sup>1</sup> According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/work%20ethic>.

<sup>2</sup> Weber M. (2005). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Routledge (Firts published 1930 by Allen and Unwin).

sense of personal value. The relation between personality and occupational choice is an open question given that the process of professionalization in the job can take a certain or longer period of time (education, length of service, etc).

Another feature of police action, it often encompasses tasks that implement low-visibility decisions, decisions that are very difficult to review, check and analyze, and accordingly determine and control police officers actions in different situations.<sup>3</sup> Symbolic and physical elements of police authority, such as uniform and weapon affects police officers' attitudes toward work ethic and awareness of their role in society and gives them power in social environment. Respecting and sharing the same values contributes to creating stronger ties among police officers and homogeneous them as a social group.

A personality of a police officer may arise from the characteristics of police work such as: danger, isolation and authority. Given the extent to which police officers share the experience of an unpleasant public attitude towards them, they depend more on each other. If they feel that their authority is declining, the importance of internal solidarity will increase. Banton explains the relatively greater isolation of police by highlighting that British police is characterized by isolation, proud, separation and impersonality. Man is the role he plays in society, and the example given through that role should be taken seriously.<sup>4</sup>

Teamwork is another important characteristic of police profession that requires stronger coordination and cooperation among employees. A sense of mission is an element that gives police officers an impression that their work isn't a routine but their way of life. Skolnick's observations of a police 'working personality' based on 'danger and authority'<sup>5</sup> and Reiner's

<sup>3</sup> Banton, M. (1964). *The Policeman in the Community*. New York Basic Books, Inc, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-63.

<sup>5</sup> Skolnick J. H. (1966). *Justice Without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>6</sup> Reiner R. (2010). *The Politics of the Police*, 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

‘core characteristics’ of policing<sup>6</sup> point to existence of a strong sense of solidarity and in-group secrecy that can have strong impact on implementation of rules and ethics.

## **POLICE INTERNAL CONTROL – TERM AND PURPOSE**

Legal restrictions on the police work is a very important aspect of police functioning. Control is a constitutive element of the Rule of law, which is why the attitude of the police towards the instruments of external and internal control is an important indicator of the attitude of the police as a social group towards the law and in the broader scene towards ethics. In a narrower sense, control is a special activity that involves constant monitoring of how much results have been achieved, comparing the results achieved with the goals set. In a broader sense, control involves monitoring and evaluation of the achieved result.

Internal control of the police is a form of self-control because the control is performed by the police themselves, in their ranks. One of the oldest forms is hierarchical control, which originates from traditional societies. Hierarchical control means controlling and supervising whether police tasks are performed in accordance with the rules. The work of the police and the Ministry of the Interior is regulated through legal norms on administrative control which are part of the general legal regime, but the work of the police is controlled and regulated through a special legal regime consisting of special police rules defined in the Law on Police, other police laws, regulations and internal acts. Within the special legal regime, there are also special norms on police control.<sup>7</sup>

Hierarchical control of the administration is important form of internal control. One of the most important and common forms of administrative

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<sup>6</sup> Reiner R. (2010). *The Politics of the Police*, 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Jugović, S. (2013). *The Administrative Function of the Police*. Beograd: KPA, pp.153-161.

control is the control of the application of police power. It is primarily about the control of the use of coercive means and the internal control of the application of police authority that is official. The supervision is performed by a police officer in a higher rank on a hierarchical ladder immediately during the application of authority. This form of control is regulated by laws and internal acts and implies the submission of a written report on the application of police authority. A report is submitted on each use of coercive means – physical force, baton and means of restraint, use of firearms with certain data – day, time, place, data on the person against whom the means were used, reason and basis for the use of force. The immediate superior checks and controls every use of coercive means, and whether it was justified and in accordance with the regulations.

Police law formulates the department for internal control (internal affairs division), and the main goal of unit is to combat crime and corruption within police. The head of the department is responsible for the work and activities to the minister, to whom he regularly or periodically submits reports. The department is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior and the Minister prescribes the forms and manner of performing internal control. It acts in different ways on the basis of: proposals, complaints and petitions of persons, then on the occasion of written addresses of members of the police and on its own initiative on the basis of collected information etc.

One of the reasons for internal police control is checking police ethics in the use of police torture. According to authors, the analysis of the key reasons for the use of police torture „points to two different interests that can be met through torture:

1) organizational - information obtained in this way can contribute to clarifying a specific crime, while punishing' suspects can strengthen police authority; 2) personal - more than any other act, torture gives an individual the opportunity to exercise power and to exercise personal justice', but also to gain benefit, in the true sense of the word, by being

rewarded for a successfully' solved crime".<sup>8</sup>

In recent research on the Code of Ethics and police culture, especially characteristic the 'blue code' of silence, the respondents said that they had no problems working with a whistle-blower, but many didn't trust the anonymous reporting system. Authors think that there have been some changes in attitudes of police officers towards the reporting of misdemeanors, corruption etc, but that confidence in the processes and the means to report such actions may be lacking. Some elements of the 'blue code' are still clear to see „and although both codes can clearly work in tandem, it is revealing to see some of the situations where the Code of Ethics and the 'blue code' of silence compete for prominence".<sup>9</sup>

### EDUCATION FOR PROFESSION AS A PART OF POLICE ETHICS

The police profession characteristics, especially danger and contact with criminals implies stronger referral of police officers to each other. They cooperate on a daily basis, and improve group solidarity through sharing the same value system. If the future police officer had a good education correlated with work ethic throughout a longer period of time he has a better possibility to improve working skills and develop 'policeman's working personality'.<sup>10</sup>

Police officer's psychological profile includes a set of personality traits that are defined by the needs of the police job. One of the most important step in becoming a policeman is the selection process which qualifies the candidate for work. Some of the standards and rigorous requirements are: citizenship, adequate age, no record of felony offense, education and good moral character determined by a complete background-check-

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<sup>8</sup> Zekavica R., Kesić Z. (2020). „Police Torture as a Form of Human Rights Violation”. *Teme*, vol. XLIV, no. 3, 2020, p.1031.

<sup>9</sup> Westmarland L, Conway S. (2020). „Police Ethics and Integrity: Keeping the 'blue code' of silence”. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, Vol. 22(4), 2020, p. 391.

investigation. Good moral character considers that candidates didn't have any unfavorable situation in their past to the requirement to drop friends with unsavory reputations. Candidates are carefully screened from kindergarten to their application and entrance in police department.<sup>11</sup>

Work ethic in more contemporary sense is attachment to work or work commitment. Attachment to work depends on the personal traits and the interpersonal relationships within the police organization. It is believed that people who share high values and work commitment, have a sense of mission, one of the trait correlate with police work that improves their effectiveness and productivity.

But structural differences based on position in hierarchy in police can shape social interactions between police officers of all ranks and lines of work and influence application of the Code of ethics. Also, in a strictly hierarchical organization, obstacles for application of work ethics can be find in bureaucratic and rigid rules focused only on established procedures that prevent police officers from being more efficient in their work. The pressure on police officers to make results in their tasks and duties sometimes can prevent in application of all principles.

Group solidarity is a product of police profession and need of police officers to rely on each other. Because of their solidarity police officers are often inclined to cover up the mistakes of their colleagues. Most often, collegial solidarity is seen through adherence to the informal code of conduct in the structures under which police officers are required to protect one another from internal and external control mechanisms. On the other hand considering the authority and power that members of law enforcement have, such as the ability to enter a private space of citizens, use force, investigate private information, they have higher responsibility to do the work in professional and ethical manner.

<sup>10</sup> Skolnick, J. (1966). *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., pp. 47-48.

<sup>11</sup> Niederhoffer, A. (1967). *Behind the Shield: The Police in Urban Society*. New York: Anchor Books. Doubleday&Company, Inc., pp. 35-47.

## CONCLUSION

Ethical principles are necessary asset to skip obstacles such as the inadequate attitude of employees towards work and their obligations and duties. Then, it is important to motivate the employees to adjust their attitudes and behavior to code of ethics as an important part of organizational rules which aim is to improve work and organizational flexibility. An ethical working environment forms a belief among workers that everyone internally accepts ethical principles, justice, fair decision-making and respect. To interiorize work ethic is to acknowledge the principles and skills in a routine work, but it also depends on the social milieu, culture, and values that prevail in a society. A concept work ethic is twofold, to enable an individual to adapt to the job and to provide a work environment in which the organization goals will be successfully achieved. Internalization of social values and ethical principles, as well as the perception of punishing illicit and unethical behavior, creates a working and social environment in which ethic is not understood as pressure but as a duty of an individual, social group and organization. To understand the police profession within social context is to have an insight that police members face greater and more serious professional challenges in order to affirm ethical principles.

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## **ЈЕДАН ПОГЛЕД НА РАДНУ ЕТИКУ И УНУТРАШЊУ КОНТРОЛУ ПОЛИЦИЈЕ**

### **Апстракт**

*У чланку се разматрају радна етика и унутрашња контрола полиције. У првом делу рада је дат кратак преглед концепта радна етика и обележја полицијске професије и организације. Други део рада обухвата анализу односа између радне етике и унутрашње контроле у полицији. Основна теза је да ефикасност радне (полицијске) етике смањује потребу за унутрашњом контролом. Циљ овог рада је да укаже на то да је радна етика условљена применом правила и етичког кодекса. Аутор закључује да интернализација друштвених вредности и етичких принципа, као и перцепција кажњавања недозвољеног и неетичног понашања, ствара радно и друштвено окружење у коме се етика не схвата као притисак већ као дужност појединца, друштвене групе и организације.*

**Кључне речи:** *радна етика, полицијска етика, унутрашња контрола, полицијска професија, друштво*