

SOCI 446

PENOLOGY

SESSION 4 – The Police

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Session Overview

- With reference to our definition of Penology as a science of sanctions which utilizes the theories of crime to devise measures for the treatment of criminals and the prevention of crime, it is obvious that the police and crime prevention would constitute a significant part in penological studies.
- Oftentimes when issues concerning crime prevention come up, most people immediately think about the police. In other words, all too often we wrongly think that the police are solely responsible for preventing crime.



Session overview cont.

- This perception is explained by the fact that as leading figures in the law enforcement process, the police are highly visible. They occupy a unique and difficult position in the community.
- Because of their high visibility, they are subject to a great many pressures from both inside the force and the outside community, and are more likely than any other agent of control to exercise force and authority directly upon citizens.
- Based on their unique position and the increasing public concern about crime, there are some controversies about the manner in which police handle their assignments as agents of law enforcement.
- Who are the police, and what challenges confront them daily in their work?

Session Outline.

- The main topics to be covered in this session are as follows: -
- Topic One: The definition and functions of the police
- Topic Two: Police and public relations
- Topic Three: A brief history of the Ghana Police

Objectives/Expected outcomes for the session

On the completion of this session, you should be able to –

- Provide a conceptual definition of the police and describe their main roles in crime prevention and the associated challenges
- Explain the nature and content of the relationship that characterizes police and public relations
- Describe the early history of the Ghana Police

Topic One

Definition, functions and challenges of the police

Definition and functions

- The police are mainly a **peace preservation body whose major functions are the protection of life, limb and property on the streets and highways, in places of public assemblage and in commercial and private properties entered illegally from public ways.** The police also perform the function of crime detection, the apprehension and prosecution offenders.
- In specific terms the main functions of the police as these apply to crime prevention can be categorized as follows:

Crime prevention functions

- **Publicity** (public education) on crime prevention strategies, including the dissemination of crime statistics.
- **Provision of advice** to private and public formal organizations, and
- **Preventive patrols** and the apprehension of offenders
- **Working in partnership with local authorities** to implement policies and in designing out crime
- **Organization of neighborhood watch schemes**

Public opinion

- These functions will be examined into some detail as we explore the role of the police in the strategies in crime prevention to be discussed subsequently.
- Although a majority of people interviewed during studies on police effectiveness, thought that on the whole the police are doing a good job, there were considerable differences of opinion about the police **honesty, brutality, effectiveness and courtesy** towards the public. What are some of the challenges that impact the work of the police?

Challenges facing the police

- The main challenge facing the police is that it is not possible for them to enforce the law and to preserve the peace without incurring some hostility and resentment. This is inherent to the very nature of police work. The major criticisms of the police, however, result from the particular methods used in accomplishing their main functions.
- The main difficulty appears to be that **as ordinary human beings, it is extremely difficult for a policeman to maintain his composure in all street situations even though it is expected and demanded of him in nearly all police departments.**
- For example the law Enforcement Code of ethics', which has been adopted by nearly all police departments and police associations worldwide, requires that the policeman should --

Law enforcement code of ethics

- Maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule, develop self-restraints and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others.
- He should never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence his decisions.
- He should enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill-will, never employing unnecessary force or violence.

Pressures

- But the capability of policemen, particularly one who works in a high-crime area or slum neighborhood to act in a restrained manner, is constantly tested.
- **There are countless pressures which increase the difficulty of performing police work calmly and with restraint.** Typically a police officer is expected to maintain order in the street, to keep a 'clean beat' to disperse mobs, to remove undesirables whether or not legal tools for accomplishing these results are available.
- A policeman's authority is challenged daily by unruly juveniles anxious to detect any weakness or fear. In dangerous neighborhoods, he may be mocked, threatened or even spat upon.

Pressures cont.

- Thus a policeman must always live with the prospect that he may be subject to attack without warning.
- Under these testing conditions, even the highest quality police officer might become disillusioned or angry because of his work and the people he must deal with.
- If he is not of the highest quality, or if he has not been properly trained, or if he is prejudiced or hot-headed, he might succumb to his anger or resentment and physically or verbally abuse anybody who offends him.

Allegations of misconduct

- This has led to many allegations of police misconduct or discriminatory treatment. Although some of those allegations may be unwarranted, a Presidential Commission survey in the US revealed that police practices exist which cannot be justified.
- **For example, the Commission found that abusive treatment of minority groups such as blacks and the poor, continued to occur.** Many established police policies such as the use of arrests for investigative purposes alienate the community and have no legal basis.
- **Further, some valuable law enforcement techniques like field interrogation are frequently abused to the detriment of community relations.** Additionally, allegations of corruption and abetment of crime are rife not only in the Third World but also in the developed societies.

Inadequate resources

- Most of the challenges for the Police can also be explained by the fact that there are not sufficient resources available to them to enable them perform the duties which the law assigns them.
- As a consequence, discretion is exercised by the police in deciding how to allocate the resources that do exist. Thus, for example, much of the criminal conduct coming to the attention of the police may not lead to an arrest; often a warning is given.
- These warnings are regularly used in situations where the action is thought not to be serious enough to justify an arrest. In reality however, this use of discretion may have been dictated by absence of adequate personnel or logistics support such as transportation. Thus, some serious offences may not lead to an arrest.
- Factors, such as these, influence the police in their adjustment to law enforcement priorities.

Topic Two

Police Public Relations

Introduction

- Although the concept of preventing crime is obviously not new, modern crime prevention practices which originated from England have gained wide spread acceptance throughout the world.
- Even as a strong police force is an essential part of the crime control mechanism, the organization of an active group of citizens is equally important, as is the initiation of action which would serve to remove the causes of crime and the conditions in which it flourished.
- **Oftentimes however, the relationship between the police and the public has not been the best. There is distrust on the part of the public for the police – principally because of the perceived corruptibility of the police**

Police Corruptibility

- **Police corruption means that they can be influenced to look the other way in situations criminal behavior where their activity is most critical. This makes the public which the police are paid to protect very apprehensive.**
- **But the public shares part of the blame. As far as corruptibility is concerned it is important to remember that it takes two actors for corruption to occur: The bribe giver and the bribe taker. In other words, the police would not take bribes if these bribes are not given by the public.**
- **Aside from police corruptibility, there is also the problem of the culture of silence: These and other issues affecting police –public relations are discussed subsequently.**

Police Isolation by the Public

- There is the problem of the isolation of the police in the general duty of crime control. **Although the policeman sees himself as a specialist in dealing with violence, he does not want to fight alone. He does not believe that his specialization relieves the general public of their citizen's duties.** Indeed if possible, he would prefer to be a **foreman** rather than the **working man** in the battle against criminals.
- If the job of the police is to ensure that public order is maintained the citizen's inclination is to shrink from the dangers of maintaining it. **The citizen prefers to see the policeman as an automaton, because once the policeman's humanity is recognized, the citizen necessarily becomes implicated in his work which, after all, is sometimes dirty and dangerous.**
- Thus at most crime scenes – such as in robberies or brawls, or other breaches of the law involving gang or a group of people or mob activity, members of the public often act as spectators watching the police battle it out!

Culture of silence

- The public do not only withdraw from the fight against crime they also keep knowledge of it from the police in various ways:
- **Members of the public who know about crimes do not report them, and this happens on a large scale.** Reporting to the police is often omitted when it is inconvenient to the notifier, or the offender is regarded as a minor, or when there is a special relationship between the offender and the victim; or because of the fear of retaliation for reporting to the police; or when the victim or the witness is himself/herself involved in the crime.
- Reporting may thus be omitted either because of blackmail, or in a sexual crime against a child (as in rape or defilement) the parents may be afraid that the child may be harmed by a court hearing or press publicity



Culture of silence cont.

- Other examples include theft from, or defrauding a relative or violence towards husband or wife. As a rule, these and other violations of the law are first reported only when the possibility of a private settlement with the offender is ruled out.
- An employer often dismisses his/her employee and does not report the details to the police. Oftentimes, the dismissal is taken as enough punishment, and nothing else is said about the offense committed by the victim to the police.
- Many cases of assault end up in an exchange of invectives (accusations) over the fence wall. Neighbors or colleagues who get involved in fights or other violations of the law prefer to trade accusations or engage in lengthy arguments and threats and then hang up their gloves.

Culture of silence and the Dark Figure

- It is a known practice that the family setting in which it occurs often prevents serious offences like incest, rape, abortion, domestic violence or homosexual offences, from reaching the ears of the police.
- These are often regarded as emotionally flavored crimes and are often hushed up.
- **All these unreported or unknown crimes are referred to in criminal statistics as the 'Dark Figure'.**
- **Because of the Dark Figure, Police crime statistics are bound to under estimate the real volume of crime that has been committed, and there is little that the policeman can do about it.**

Topic Three

A brief history of the Ghana Police

- The Ghana police force was founded in 1894.
- In 1902, the force assumed its present two main branches of Escort and General police comprising illiterate and literate members respectively.
- The Marine police was established in 1916 but disbanded after twenty five years.
- In 1952 the women police was established to deal with juvenile offenders and women criminals.



History - cont.

- The numerical expansion and improvement of the efficiency of the force was largely dictated by urbanization and industrialization which inevitably led to an increase in the incidence and volume of crime.
- Although still far from adequate, the Ghana police currently operates such modern facilities as improved wireless communications systems, walkie-talkies, teleprinters, computers and improved transport facilities such as BMW and Peugeot cars and other faster patrol duty vehicles including motorcycles, jeeps and armoured vehicles.

The Police in Contemporary Ghana.

- **The primary objective of the Service in contemporary Ghana is to provide and ensure internal peace and security by maintaining law and order.**
- Its functions which formed the basis for its vision and mission are stated in the Police Service Act, 1970 (Act 350) to include the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders and the maintenance of law and order, as well as the safety of persons and property.
- Currently, the programs of the Service are guided by a number of provisions including the 1992 Constitution. Other sources include the Five Year Strategic Development Plan, Proactive Policing Paper (2013), the Police Service Act (1970 and the Police Service Regulations (2012)

Interventions to achieve main objectives

- To achieve its objectives, the Service has identified a number of interventions for implementation.
- These, as stated in the Ghana Police Annual Report (2016) include the following:
- The need to enhance discipline within the rank and file through an expedited completion of service enquiries, the need to increase the routes covered by highway patrol teams and generally intensify highway patrols, the need to organize vehicular and personnel escorts for long distance commercial vehicles and the need to increase the number of police visibility locations across the country.

Interventions cont.

- Other planned interventions include the need to increase the number of well-coordinated intelligence-led swoops on known criminal hideouts, deploy well trained counter terrorism teams to patrol vulnerable targets, and work closely with communities to vet, select and train volunteers for neighbourhood watch schemes.
- The need for the decentralisation of some specialised units of the Service was also a part of the interventions identified. These Units include Narcotics, Anti Human trafficking Unit, the Crime Scene Management Team and the Commercial Crime Unit.
- The task force in charge of carrying out road checks is to be resourced to strictly enforce the laws regulating driving, driver qualification and the state of vehicles.

Interventions, cont.

- The Intelligence Unit is to be strengthened to make the proactive strategies of the Service more effective,
- Further the police plan to include training, recruitment of additional personnel, public education on crime trends, establishment of counselling centres for police personnel, clinics and the use of modern technology in crime detection and traffic operation duties.
- These interventions are regarded as strategic by the Police Management Board to the attainment of the overall objectives of the police service

The Inspector General of Police

- The Ghana Police is headed by the Inspector General of Police (IGP).. who is the final authority in the command structure of the Service. He is responsible for the day to day running of the service in the country, with the assistance of the Director-Generals and Regional Commanders.
- He is answerable to the Police Council for the administration of the Service. He is the Head of the Police Management Board which is responsible for policy formulation and implementation.
- His office has a supporting staff including two Senior Police Officers who act his Executive Secretary and ADC and eight other ranks. The supportive staff ensure the smooth execution of the daily schedules of the IGP and the orderliness of his dealings with the public.

Directorates

- There are fourteen Directorates each headed by a Director-General, performing specialised administrative and other tasks. The heads of these specialised units constitute the Police Management Board under the chairmanship of the IGP.
- The Service has a Research and Planning Directorate which is responsible for providing the Service with innovative policy direction through scientific research methods, analyses of research data and the implementation of research findings relevant to the service's administrative and operational strategies.
- This Directorate therefore supports other Directorates with empirical findings which inform the formulation of policies. The Directorate acts also as the monitoring and evaluation organ of the Service.

Numerical strength

- The Ghana Police Service has a manpower establishment of 40, 000 personnel .
- The strength as at 2016 was 33, 213, leaving a vacancy of 6,787.
- The police-citizen ratio by 2016 was 1:833 based on a national population of 27,060,174. The approved United Nations standard is 1:500 or better.
- The Force is made up predominantly of males, totalling 24,627 and a female population of 8,586 giving an approximate ratio of one female to 3 males -as at 2016.

Partners in crime prevention

- The involvement of the police, the community, the judiciary and governmental social intervention measures as allies characterize crime prevention as a partnership approach towards **“the anticipation, the recognition and the appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of action to remove or reduce it.”**

SUMMARY

- The police are a peace preservation body whose major functions are the protection of **life, limb and property** on the streets and highways, in places of public assemblage and in commercial and private properties entered illegally from public ways. They also perform the function of crime detection, the apprehension and prosecution of offenders.
- Their specific functions in crime prevention include public education on crime prevention, preventive patrols and the apprehension of offenders, organization of neighborhood watch schemes, provision of advice to private and public formal organizations, and working in partnership with local authorities to implement policies.

Summary cont.

- Although the policeman sees himself as a specialist in dealing with violence, he does not want to fight alone. He does not believe that his specialization relieves the general public of their citizen's duties.
- The public on the other hand prefers to see the policeman as an automaton, because once his/her humanity is recognized, the citizen would feel the obligation to become implicated in his/her work which after all, is sometimes dirty and dangerous.
- Members of the public who know about crimes do not report them, and this happens on a large scale. Reporting to the police is often omitted when it is inconvenient to the notifier.

Summary cont.

- Further, It is a known practice that the family setting in which it occurs often prevents serious offences like incest, rape, abortion, domestic violence or homosexual offences, from reaching the ears of the police. These are often regarded as emotionally flavored crimes and are often hushed up.
- Most of the challenges for the Police can be explained by the fact that there are not sufficiently resourced to be able to perform all the tasks that the law assigns them.
- Thus the police in Ghana are involved but not effectively in their crime prevention roles compared to their counterparts in the developed societies - mainly because of the significant levels of the inadequacy of personnel, the inadequacy of logistics support and corruptibility.

Summary cont.

- The Ghana Police is headed by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) who is the final authority in the command structure of the Service. He is responsible for the day to day running of the service in the country, with the assistance of the Director-Generals and Regional Commanders.
- He is answerable to the Police Council for the administration of the Service. He is the Head of the Police Management Board which is responsible for policy formulation and implementation.
- There are fourteen Directorates each headed by a Director-General, performing specialised administrative and other tasks. The heads of these specialised units constitute the Police Management Board under the chairmanship of the IGP.

Assignment

- Would you say that the Ghana Police are doing a good job? What are some of the common challenges which have tended to reduce their efficacy and what can be done to improve their work?

Reading List

REQUIRED TEXT

Chris Abotchie (2011)

Distance

Abotchie, C., (2018)
Crime Prevention

Publishing

Penology, Accra,

Institute of Continuing and
Education

Treatment of Criminals and

Accra, Olive Tree Printing and

Chapter One pp 1-12