

The distinction between liberal and authoritarian police forces



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The Police force in England and the USA was invented roughly between the years 1825 to 1865 so as to counter the rise in crime rates during that period.

In addition to plummeting crime rates, the elites used the police force to act in instances of collective actions such as defiant crowds and riots. In the contemporary society, police force and policing play a critical role in post-conflict development. The duty of police officers is to enforce the laws of the society as well as ensure citizens and property are safe. Police are also used in reconciliation process as well as ensuring that they manage conflict in such a way that chances of reoccurrence are minimal. Criminologists and international relation experts divide policing into two major sections i.

e. the authoritarian police force and the liberal police force. It is, therefore, imperative to note that international relationship experts define liberal police force as composed of police officers that are non-conservative people that foster equality and liberty, they have personal beliefs that the government should be proactive in supporting social and political changes whereas some international relation analysts describe authoritarian police force as those police officers that favor and enforce strict obedience to the government at the expense of his freedom. This form of policing explains the intense brutality experienced in the police force (Derek 2004, 89). Authoritarian police force mainly are composed of two categories, the traditional authoritarian as well as the bureaucratic authoritarian police forces. The traditional authoritarian police force act is basing their belief that the person in authority i.

e. the leader of the nation should be in power by all means. The ensure that the leader is in authority through dedicating all their loyalty to the ruling to party by fact that the leader rightfully owns the title of being a leader and that title should be at all time. On the other hand, the bureaucratic authoritarian regime is composed of the police force as well as the military force that act realistically within the context and boundary of bureaucratic mentality. The mode of operation by the authoritarian police raises questions on whether the police are on acquiring negative behavior or to be brutal. This act of brutality is attributed to the psychological predisposition that the authoritarian police force has that they have to be ruthless so as to instill fear on opposing individuals and groups as well as to acquire respect.

A case study of authoritarian police brutality is in the case where a police officer, Darren Wilson, choked a mere civilian, Eric Garner to death. It is thus evident that authoritarian policing is very different from the liberal police force (O'Malley 2007, 76). However, some criminologist such as Mead argue that the authoritarian police force can relate or in a way resemble liberal police force. He posits that the society offers the delight to the value of freedom, he also recognizes that at liberty only exists in instances when the state of the order have been fulfilled. People do not enjoy being free if crime is an issue to their wellbeing, therefore, for liberty to exist in the police force, there must be some degree of authoritarianism so as to regulate the conduct of the citizens by show of might by the police force.

As opposed to giving much emphasis on the state, Liberal police officers draw their thoughts from the society, which is as an intricate relation of exteriority and interiority concerning the country. Therefore, Mead says that <https://assignbuster.com/the-distinction-between-liberal-and-authoritarian-police-forces/>

the government can attain the state of full democracy by replicating the values and beliefs established in the society. Other criminologists such as Facoult argue that the liberal police force is far much different from the authoritarian police force. Policing using the liberal approach means that the police force puts the question of order as well as allowing its citizens have freedom as a priority and use the opposition of authoritarian way of policing as a means of achieve those goals (Rojek 2012, 126). Since the late medieval of inception of the police forces, the liberal police force has been relying on various agencies in addition to building upon the territorial state.

This strategy by the liberal police prompts them to form partnerships or to come into contract with various agencies of interest to the state of policing in a nation that may be non-governmental. The officers with liberal ideology, therefore, are attached to the civil society and tries to give much effort in providing security to its activities. They make this possible by adopting a strategy known as facilitating role where the police force does not impede the sequence of things but let's regulation take a natural course. Thus, the police task in liberal perspective is to enable or guide rather than prescribe or direct (Myers 2007, 74). The authoritarian police force, on the other hand, conditions the police officer to be on a constant lookout so as to identify and punish the people who break the laws or defy the conventional laws. They seem to direct and force the drafted laws on to the citizens.

These laws are drafted by the government that the police are much willing to put their life at stake while defending it. A study to determine whether authoritarian policing is dominant over the liberal one showed that a bigger percentage out of the 116 graduating recruits showed authoritarian traits as <https://assignbuster.com/the-distinction-between-liberal-and-authoritarian-police-forces/>

opposed to liberal traits. They showed aggressiveness and interception. It is also important to note that a study by McNamara showed that the number of authoritarianism increases as time moves. He used F-square test to measure authoritarianism of police recruits who were immediately graduating from a police academy. He also found that a more character of authoritarianism was found in police officers who had more experience.

His research also studied the effect of class on the police personality. He found out that most police officers hail from a working class background that affects one's personality. He argued that class or socio-economic status is inversely proportional to authoritarianism. Since most police officers fall in the working class category, they exhibit authoritarian characteristics; thus, they often display violence than the few liberal, democratic police officers (Klaus 2005, 103). A good policeman, according to the authoritarian point of view, is supposed to be suspicious (Williams 2003, 87).

Their training ensures that they are suspicious so as to be in an intuitive position of detecting the unusual. Therefore, authoritarian police officers are keen on knowing when the stores are open and when they are, the daily activities of people of a particular locality so that he might detect any abnormality in case things do not run as they always do. Liberal police officer, contrariwise, tend to show the citizens or the society that they are at liberty and that they have freedom of doing what they like as long as those activities do not interfere with other people's rights and privileges. Toch and Schulte's conducted research on effects of police training on the perception of violence.

They noticed that for efficient operation, a police officer has to be suspicious. Suspicion enables the police officer to identify suspects as well as abnormalities in the day to day activities of the society or state they have jurisdiction over (Hills 2001, 71). Criminologists argue that authoritarian police officers are against the minority groups. This is contrary to the democratic liberal police officers who tend to foster and promote equity and equality for all regardless of the skin color, class, gender or age.

A study by Reiss showed that most authoritarian police officers in London discriminated the blacks and linked most criminal activities to them. Reiss research was participant observation where he walked and observed the day to day activities of the police officers. He noted that a higher percentage of police officers that displayed authoritarian characteristics were against the black and considered them a sub-human or primitive. Among the majority authoritarian police officers, Reiss identified, some of them had a different personality trait of democracy, and this he called democratic police officers. They were more rational in acknowledging that criminal activities are not by the race a person belongs to but rather is innate or determined by a person's personality.

Liberal police target was mainly demeanor rather than the race of the suspects. This research clearly showed that there is a difference between the liberal police force and the authoritarian police force (Paynich 2009, 97). Most people, both criminologists and police officers, agree that the best way to tackle political unrest or post-conflict situation is to use overwhelming force. This means of combating collective behavior such as riots, strikes, and political unrest justifies the ruthless nature of police officers as well as the <https://assignbuster.com/the-distinction-between-liberal-and-authoritarian-police-forces/>

use of lethal force towards the alleged threat. This point of view lead to police officers displaying paramilitary personalities that are mostly authoritarian in nature that is they shoot civilians in protests which are against the UN conventions on rules and regulations of war, battle where the police officers or military personnel are prohibited to kill an unarmed person or civilian. Therefore, it is imperative to train police officers on how to defuse tense circumstances (Williams.

They can achieve this by acknowledging the importance of investigating a crime before deciding on the means to combat the crime or collective behavior. Most liberal police officers display the trait of being calm and allowing the suspect have their human rights and privileges at their disposal before they conclude their investigation concerning how the suspect is to the charges filed against him or her. This way of distracting the liberal police force from the authoritarian one is valid since we get to know the difference in the way authoritarian and liberal police officers approach a criminal case or a tense situation (Ortmeier 2010, 211). Also, liberal police officers adopt community policing program to combat criminal activities.

This is contrary to the authoritarian police force that tend to be suspicious of everybody's character thus they cannot endow the community with the privilege of policing since they are suspects. Valverde (2011, 91) says that Police administrators who are guided by a liberal perspective of policing deploy their police officers to the local and grass root neighborhoods so as to foster a good relationship with the residents. This strategy is essential and mainly used by the democratic police force so as to reverse the grudge and problem that might be existing between the police force and the citizens or <https://assignbuster.com/the-distinction-between-liberal-and-authoritarian-police-forces/>

locals. The locals may have distrust towards the police force due to their violent nature leading to less willingness of the locals to cooperate with the police force. The authoritarian police force, which is violent in nature, shows fewer signs and willingness to work with the residents.

This clearly distinguishes the authoritarian police force from the liberal police force. Liberal police commandants also strive to reform the manner in which police react or respond to political tensions and demonstrations. Liberal police officers are trained to take a calmer and softer approach to responding to collective behaviors. Authoritarian police officers, on the other hand, are trained to be ruthless and terrible in attempting to combat a political unrest (Colquhoun 1969, 102). However, the attempts to make police force liberal and democratic may fail in some societies due to the increase in the rate of political unrest, protests, riots and violent uprisings. This is because residents find the liberal police officers gentle and soft that they can engage in criminal activities with an assurance that they will not be in the event.

Criminologists and international relation experts, therefore, agree that some degree of violence displayed by the authoritarian police officers is necessary for reducing crime and ensuring that the society is at peace. They argue that it is imperative for police officers to be tough on crime if they have intentions of reducing crime. A case study of Richmond, a city in the USA, where a new police commandant by the name, Magnus took over and tried to reform the police officers in the city from being violent and authoritarian to adopting liberal approach of policing succeeded in reducing crime in the city that was once one of the most violent cities in the USA. The reduction in the crime

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rate is contrary to the assumption that their police officers have to be violent so as to reduce crime rates in the city they preside over. In the year 2013, the city experienced a surprising reduction in delinquency. The city recorded only 16 cases of homicides, the fewest number of homicides the city has ever recorded in the past 35 years (Bonn 2004, 62).

According to (Slavin 2004, 92) the same case where liberal policing force is from the authoritarian police force is when Oakland in the USA has strategized in compensating injured protestors so as to foster and repair the broken relationship that once existed between the police officers and the civilians and was broken due to the violence the police force used in calming protests in Oakland. They adopted this strategy after realizing the praise that Richmond was getting in regards to its mode of policing. Liberal politicians are as anti-police, this leads to the notion that if you elect a liberal politician, chaos is most likely to occur. This is a wrong conception since many cities that have employed liberal police force strategy have shown improvement in the reduction of criminal cases (Hansen 2002, 61). Some studies such as Agee's case study portrays the authoritarian police force as very different from the liberal one.

Agee's study was on bars, where it was illegal to run bars for gays. He argued that authoritarian police officers took bribe so as to allow the bars to run. By saying this, he meant that the authoritarian police force was somewhat more corrupt as compared to the liberal police force. He says that with the onset of liberal government as well as a legal police force, corruption rates significantly reduced in the countries that adopted liberal

police reforms. The liberal reformists started tracking those police officers that took bribes and permitted charges to lay against those officers.

As liberal police reforms gained popularity in the cities that adopted the approach, more owners of gay bars and lawbreaker found themselves in courts to answer the charges filed against them. This meant, therefore, that the liberal police force is more productive as compared to the authoritarian police in terms of reducing and suppressing corruption rates (Hettne 2012, 145). Liberal police force shows a certain degree of categorization of residents that provide it with categories of citizens who can and cannot be by the use of liberal or democratic approach. They also test the possibility of success of a crime free society when they are allowed to have total freedom with no authoritarian restrictions on them. In case the society is not capable of maintaining peace and avoiding criminal activities, liberal police officers retain their authoritarian personality.

Thus, there is a distinction between the two police forces in that the liberal police force fosters independence and freedom of the citizens who can bear the idea of being free without displaying cases of political uprisings and criminal delinquencies that disrupt harmony in the society. The authoritarian police force does not recognize the idea of freedom as it carries out its operation bearing in mind that they have to be strict and violent for the society to be calm and shun away from engaging in criminal activities (Anderson 2012, 67). Several previous police force activities that displayed the trait of authoritarianism are the Nazi Germany's racial hygiene and the policy of one child in China. In the above cases, the police force was used by the government to carry out its operations of ensuring that the policies are <https://assignbuster.com/the-distinction-between-liberal-and-authoritarian-police-forces/>

to the latter. To ensure that these policies were followed, the police officers adopted the authoritarian approach where they had to use force or violent techniques to ensure that policies are to the latter.

This is a wrong notion since it is evident that liberal police force approach is very successful in enforcing policies in the community. Liberal police force uses a more democratic approach where they ensure that the residents have a say in the policies governing them thus they will readily follow them since they are the ones that suggested and made those policies. Liberal thinkers view the enforcement of non-liberal policies, authoritarian, as a distortion to the conduct of the residents as well as the market. It is also imperative to note that some authoritarian policies have been very helpful and useful in maintaining a desirable society. An example is the China's one-child policy that has been effective in curbing the rapid population growth rate in China. The difference in the approach of enforcing policies by the police force shows a distinction between the liberal police force and the authoritarian police force (Cockell 2002, 92).

In conclusion, the distinction between the liberal police force and authoritarian police force is valid the difference between the two is more substantial compared to the similarities. The Liberal police force is different from authoritarian police force in the approach to handling criminal suspects. A police officer is trained to be always suspicious of everybody's activities. They are also violent and ruthless while dealing with criminal suspects as compared to liberal police officers who are more democratic and tend to acknowledge that criminal suspects have their rights and freedom. Liberal

police officers are calmer and smoother on criminal cases compared to the authoritarian police force.

Another distinction between the liberal police force and the authoritarian police force is that the authoritarian police force uses a lot of force in calming collective behavior such as riots, protests, and political unrests. They use a lot of force since they believe that it is only by use of force that the police force can calm down political instabilities. This idea is contrary to the liberal perspective that advocated for calmness in handling political unrests such as strikes and protests. Liberal police force attaches themselves to the residents so as to establish a good relationship with the civilians who are helpful in community policing.

On the contrary, the brutality of the authoritarian police force has made the drift between the police officers and civilians to widen.