

Free policing subculture research paper example

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Introduction

The idea of social groups acting, in the same way, in terms of behavior, actions, attitudes and beliefs lays the foundation for what is called police subculture. People tend to behave in ways that mimic or emulate those of the people they associate with on a daily basis. For instance, the family is the basic unit of society; for that matter, it provides the basis upon which an individual develops and nurtures their belief systems and values. People tend to copy or want to behave like the people they admire or look up to in the society. The law enforcement sector is not left out in this argument (Ortmeier and Meese 2009). This essay, therefore, tries to analyze and expound on the police subculture and what it entails.

Concept of Policing Subculture

The police subculture concept can be easily understood once a person has conceptualized the idea of societies and groups. The beliefs, attitudes and values that can be observed commonly in a majority of the police officers working in various sectors of the law enforcement can be termed as police subculture. The behaviors that police officers exhibit on a daily basis, or the way of life that they exhibit after a few years of practice describes this police subculture concept better. The main reason behind the formation of these subcultures has been linked to the fact that law enforcement officers tend to gain substantially from them (Conser, Paynich and Gingerich, 2013).

Policing Subculture Development

The law enforcement sector comes up with various issues and stressful situations; it is from the various subcultures formed that police officers tend

to find mental and emotional support. The police subculture has developed over the years as a result of police reforms (Uildriks, 2005). The distrust between minorities and police officers lead to the initiation of reforms that would ensure the distrust was ended. The police organizations chose to diversify their recruitment and hiring characteristics. They choose from the minority groups; the least educated, the most educated and the women. This was aimed at reducing the various problems that existed between the public and the police force (Uildriks, 2005).

These changes in the recruitment process were as a result of various assumptions that had been made from previous research. The assumptions had the general idea that the problems being faced between the police force and the public were due to lack of diversity within the police (Uildriks, 2005). For instance, they began hiring police officers from minorities, and they hoped that they would help in solving problems that were related to the minority populations. However, subsequent studies and researches alluded to the fact the problems had not changed (Conser, Paynich and Gingerich, 2013). It was identified that somehow, the police officers expressed a similar personality after some time on the job. The behaviors of all the various groups hired from the diverse groups were similar and gave birth to the subculture concept.

Impact of Police Subculture on Ethics

The specific subculture determines the standard behavior and moral threshold of a specific law enforcement sector. For instance, in the FBI, appropriate standards of behavior are determined by the FBI subculture (Borello, 2012). The police subcultures tend to interfere with the ethics of an

individual officer. Once a police officer is in a subculture, he or she is somehow compelled to act or behave in a specific way. The impact of the subculture of a police officer can either be positive or negative. The negative impact on the police officer, for instance, can be in terms of performing their duty to the public. The ethical standpoint of a police officer can change based on the attitude and values that his or her subculture subscribes to. Once in a while they may forget the professional code and instead shift to the personal ethical code that has been cultivated among their colleague officers. This may result in them undermining their responsibility to protect the society (Ortmeier and Meese 2009).

Influence of Subculture in Determining Ethical Boundaries that are beyond the Norm of society

Time and again the field of law enforcement tends to present the police officers with ethical dilemmas. Issues that have not been stipulated within the societal norms or beyond the ethical parameters of the police are common in the police force. In such situations or incidences the police officers are, therefore, left at crossroads in relation to the ethical parameters that they can employ. The ethics and morals of the police force are deeper and complex than one may think. It is very clear that the any changes or deviation of police ethics may greatly impact and affect the police operations (Ortmeier and Meese 2009). It further results in compromising the ability of the police force to accomplish and achieve its mission to the society.

Some of the ethical problems faced by the police tend to be environment specific. This means that only individuals within the inner circle can discern and understand the situation at hand. When faced with such problems or

situations, the police officers tend to turn to within for support and advice from colleagues. The working environment of an officer can be very demanding, at times requiring an individual to make spontaneous decisions that affect the lives of people. When society and professional codes of ethics and conduct fail to provide guidelines, it is the subculture that might provide solace (Conser, Paynich and Gingerich, 2013).

A number of times, the public perception and judgment of police ethics tend to be erroneous. The public often forgets that the police officers are not superhuman and becomes quick to judge them. Life in the police force is not necessarily clear; it can actually be described as shades of grey and full of uncertainties (Uildriks, 2005). The subcultures provide a cushion and protective barrier that protects individual police officers thus allowing them to face any situation so as to achieve their obligation in society. What may be considered informal practice may result in achieving the desired goals of enforcing security in the society. Therefore, the environment and subculture provides the much-needed justification of any actions that police officers may choose to undertake.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, one can better understand the policing subculture when they compare it to the various societies that people live in. The various social values, beliefs, norms and behaviors that are exhibited in the various societies are a representation of what happens within the police subcultures. It is clear that police officers are human and that they still face human problems in terms of emotional and mental stress. It is, therefore, advisable

for the various police organizations to establish appropriate steps to bring about change that does not tolerate negative subcultures.

References

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