

## **Assessment of violations of (the code of) police ethics (Unethical behaviour as deviancy)**

**Janez Pečar, L.L.D.**, Professor of Criminology, Rozmanova 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Police officers should maintain higher professional standards of conduct than ordinary citizens. Since this has not been a case in Slovenia in recent time, the Slovenian media has revealed a variety of police scandals and stigmatised individual people within the police, all of which has resulted in an impression of the police as a relatively disintegrated organisation with a questionable morality. Finally, investigative journalism has also proved very piercing, dynamic and aggressive for commercial reasons, since providing such information about the police is also a kind of entertainment, although this topic is not necessarily covered by the yellow press.

Unethical and, consequently, deviant police behaviour, reflects a subculture in relation to clients and uncivilised relationships among police officers within their own organisation. No one of these areas should be neglected. However, unethical behaviour among police officers is very damaging and indicates the pathology of the police organisation. This is even more true if such behaviour occurs at the top of the organisation - that is within the police management - and if it arises from a mutual relationship of threat or from tolerance to police excesses. Both can be a source of corrupt behaviour which begins at the top and spreads downwards.

The code of ethics of the Slovenian police has so far been an entirely unimportant means of enforcing ethical values. It has not been taken into account by either the police management or others operating at lower levels, who become directly involved in unethical behaviour of their clients. This leads to conflict relations, encouraging citizens to make complaints against the police officers.

Police unethical behaviour above all raises questions about the establishment and prosecution of ethical violations, the role and meaning of an honorary court of arbitration such as provided by the code of police ethics, and in general, the sense of its existence.

**Keywords:** the police, code of ethics, mass media, police subculture, violations of the code, honorary court of arbitration, police management

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