

STATE AS SECURITY DEALER

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Abstract

This essay explores the position of the state as a security and police services dealer. Its focus is to: (i) improve the understanding and clarify scope of government (or other sovereign authority) in policing; (ii) determine from a historical perspective the factors that influenced the state participation in public life as dealer of security; (iii) inspect with care the events that spurred criminologists on to speak about a 'watershed' (Shearing, 1996a,b) in policing; (iv) define policing as governmental technology (Rose and Miller, 1992); (v) assess the responsibility and impact of the state as security dealer in the private market.

In doing so, the paper in the first part outlines the figure of the state in general and discusses its historic pillars such as the common good of social stability, legitimacy, and authority. Furthermore, it shows the strict correlation between the activity of security and the police services dealer since the appearance of the modern democratic state. The second part, based on the historical background delineated, addresses the events that beset the watershed in policing theories. It also criticises the current view of pluralised, fragmented policing practices (Loader, 2000) that at least theoretically have diminished the role of the state as dealer of security. The third part, instead, deals with the role of the state as means of last resort and its effectiveness in influencing people's lives as well as the private market. Overall, the paper reveals a sound misconception of policing and exposes the importance the state and its administrative apparatus still have in 'rowing' and 'steering' people's lives (ibid)¹.

Keywords: Policing, State policing, State policing Function, Security dealer.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last fifty years or so, we have witnessed radical changes in the European continent with regard to the role of the state, its governmental rationalities and technologies (Rose and Miller 1992, Bayley and Shearing 1996, Loader 2000, Rowe 2008, Reiner 2010, Foucault 1997) as security dealer. Such transformation is marked by an initial ideological shift which ranges from a welfare Keynesian state (O'Malley and Palmer 1996) with its pervasive idea of the government role within every sector of people's lives to a (Neo-)Liberal economic concept of governmentality. This new economic approach defines the human being as homo-economicus, rational-oriented, weighing and selecting options for his needs – for security – based on the best information available in the market place while, at the same time, it alienates the individual from the socio-cultural context in which he is immersed and by which his choice is affected (Regini and Ballarino 2007). Furthermore, this approach, also, depicts and moulds the role of the state around the principle of (non-)intervention in economic processes and people's lives. Yet, it appears far and away distant from the idea of 'economic action' expressed by the Economic Sociology where such action is described as influenced by individual choice as well as by the concurrence of political, social, and economic institutions which are consequently the result of previous historical 'embeddedness' (Granovetter, 1985) created by human interactions.

This new governmental, liberal economic rationality found its most prominent advocate in Europe and was successfully translated in the 1970s England with the Tory governments first and afterwards in the mid-1990s with the Labour party, in practicalities (Cohen 1985, Reiner 2010). Nonetheless, this liberal rationality was also successful in permeating areas of social sciences such as English criminology that experienced a change in the ideological paradigm moving from a 'left realism' to a 'new right realism' (Reiner 2010). However, the vast majority of scholars forgot to look at the root causes that were determining an initial

1 For a more extensive literature see also Crawford (1997), Walker (1999) and Osborne and Gaebler (1992)

transformation of the civil society as well as the system of policing, namely, the way the state interprets its role of dealer of security and police services. Criminology was, instead, focused on the role of the obvious, the police as state representative and the private enterprises, without considering the way they influence one another and the way states problematise their role in the field of security.

Therein lies the need for a historical exploration of the factors shaping the state as dealer of security products, such as the need for safety, legitimacy and authority. And the way governments take action or inaction to achieve their political goals. As Rose and Miller (1992:176) maintain, 'we [need to] begin to understand the...networks that connect the lives of individuals... to the aspirations of authorities in advanced liberal democracy'. Therefore, this essay considers the changes in political aspirations and ways of 'doing' policing as the outcome of older historical transformation and pluralization of state processes. Changes that emerged out of a 'pathdependence' process where the institutions in modern times ensue from earlier outcomes that occurred in the history of states (Page, 2006). An example thereof is the manuscript written by Plato 'The Republic', here, the issue of 'how to govern' already flagged up a well-conceived seminal aspect of daily life which has travelled up to our societies to shape social stability within and outside modern communities. To suggest that metamorphosis in policing is something new and strictly connected to police activities is limited in focus (Rowe, 2008). Rather, an initial broad shift can be traced back, at least, to the end of feudalism (when military power along with other functions came to be managed by only one sovereign authority which consequently causing proliferation of bureaucratic offices at the level of central state) and subsequent consolidation of the nation-state. Nonetheless, 'the art of doing policing' could be considered of as old as the initial need for shelter/safety of prehistoric communities.

The other part of this essay, instead, tries to define the concept of policing more specifically using the historical perspective developed. It addresses one of the main problems that constitutes the subject: the lack of an official definition and an official domain of action (Reiner 2010, Rowe 2008) and the conjecture of radical transformation of the role of the state in delivering security services.

In a broader sense, the concept of policing covers all activities performed by a government to ensure the mechanism regarding the replicability of the state in all its functions can carry out properly designed tasks so to guarantee the perfect maintenance of order needed for the unfolding of social activities (Rose and Miller, 1992). To narrow it down with regard to security issues, it means to shine the great deal of rationalities, practices, activities which codify these issues from a theoretical level to a pragmatic approach. Policing cannot be confined into the sole concept of social control, and in particular within the concept of crime control linked to police activities. It, instead, displays a host of social functions performed by plenty of actors whose peak is represented by the state under the legitimated authority of the government. In modern democratic countries, therefore, policing is synonymous with the way normative political theories achieve security and political stability by dealing with practical approaches. Furthermore, such a holistic approach allows one to compare and confront various forms of government.

This also introduces a second problem: the pluralising, fragmented activity and quality of power relations to which it is connected. Changes in the 1960s in policing activities have been defined as an epochal 'watershed' that marks the end of monopoly of public police (Bayley and Shearing, 1996) or the end of public policing (McLaughlin and Murji, 1995). Nevertheless, this shift has to be put into focus. For the purpose of this essay and the historic dimension applied, the transformation regards those changes taking place in England. It is, in fact, in this particular span that authors as Cohen (1985), Reiner (2010) and, Bayley and Shearing (1996) noticed, respectively a change in the cultural use of term of social control, public and political perception of the idea of security and the rise of new economic entities as providers of safety.

It is by studying this period onwards that some authors (Loader 2000, Jones and Newburn 2002) promote the idea of an expansion of the private sector in providing security services although they neglect to explain the unfolding of and quality of power relations which remain steadily unchanged, with the few exceptions established by law, in the hands of the state (Reiner 2010, Crawford 2006). At the same time, other authors (Rhodes 1997, Shearing 1996a) emphasise the way the occurred reshape in policing involved mostly the level of the state and civil society, consequently thinning down the boundaries between these two spheres. Such a stance, however, is once again misleading as those related to the private sector. Even for this case, it is important to glance at the quality of power relations that intertwine between the state and the general public. Although, it is true that new forms of governance allow citizens to perform some sort of security services within their communities – and therefore legitimated actions take place in limited forms of time and space – under no circumstances could they with their activities overstep in importance those of the public institution. State institutions with their strategies, technologies and techniques cover all the social activities directly and indirectly based upon the conceptualization and operationalization of a body of knowledge that could be defined as 'governmental ideology' (Foucault 1997, Rose and Miller 1992).

To give an example, the role of the police as well as the role of private organizations or citizen-led groups stands only as one of the possible solutions on which administrative state offices have of imprinting their will – under the form of political ideology. In fact, the police never had the monopoly of the force either historically or legally. This could be explained by the fact that the role of the army that oversteps police forces in the hierarchy of power relations, above all as means of last resort. Borrowing a metaphor from political philosophy, the police or any other private agency cannot compete with the 'institutionalised war machine' of the state (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). Even though the police could represent the natural extension of state power nowadays – so to promote the term state fetishism (Reiner, 2010), they just remain one of the possible tools available to the government to reach the goal of social stability. Flagging up this state tool as the custodian of people safety means to completely dismiss the history of modern democratic states.

This essay remarks the importance the state and its administrative apparatus have in 'rowing' and 'steering' people's lives², which goes beyond the simple criminological discourses. Implications in terms of accountability by far fall under the wings of the state administrative apparatus and the ability of its political members to act properly to correct social inequality created by the interactions with the economic and social sphere. It recognises the state akin to a central bank dealing in security and police services. This part is discussed at the end of the essay along with the conclusions.

2. POLICING, A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Far from being a historical socio-political analysis, the aim of this part is to enhance the understanding of and the role played by the state in policing using a historical perspective. What follows is a description of three components of the state thought to still be important when studying the socio-political ambit of the human society: the need for security, legitimacy and authority. Recently, discourses on the role of the state in policing – meant as social function performed by a host of social, economic and political actors – have been left aside or touched upon in favour of a focus predominantly on the practises of security between police and private sector and civil society. 'Policing' says Rowe (2010:4), 'did not come to be associated with the particular activities of a specific institution ... until relatively recently in many societies'. This view can be considered to be only partly true. In fact, as it will be shown, policing with regard to the issue of security was addressed previously as part of political discourses on the constitution of the modern state. Nevertheless, policing has found a place in the modern criminological context only recently due to the rising importance that the state and the private sector play in shaping people's lives, a perspective of interest for the criminological field. The topic of security was, though, of great interest for previous social organizations and what today is defined as the modern democratic state stems from a basic question, how to guarantee the safety/social stability of community members. There appears, as such, to be an impending need for a thorough sociopolitical investigation regarding the need for security, which is not the purpose of this essay. However, a short account of the main points listed above will suffice to elucidate the idea of what policing and the state share together.

For the aim of this study, the state is to be understood as an evolution of former patterns of communities that clustered together so as to satisfy a basic and primeval need/instinct for/of shelter/security. This need/instinct must be regarded equal to other basic needs for survival such as eating, drinking and sleeping. These are elements, following Pareto's postulate in the 'treat of Sociology', that constitute the fixed residue of human beings which spur on to an unwilling action, the one not determined by a rationale but that steers one's deed. It could be argued that from an early stage individuals conceptualised the idea of security by devising basic and primitive strategies of protection. In so doing, communities not only made an attempt to establish a certain degree of safety for their members but also augmented the chances to fulfil other basic needs and ensure an adequate provision of resources for survival and consequently for the reproducibility of their systems. However, this chain of events posed other problems determined by a community's life; perils were not no more sprouting from outside the groups but from internal conflicts, to boot. The need for security was consequently to be dictated not just by possible menaces coming from what is outside a community but also from inside it. A certain degree of order and control was required by all community members and comprised of the idea of social stability, i.e. the defence of status quo (Key and Friensen, 2011).

The sociological tradition from the classical studies to the modern school of Chicago and further schools (Hirschi 1969, Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990) emphasise how to a certain extent order and control within a

² The meaning of these two term is to be assumed as the capacity that political actors have to influence blatantly (steer) or not (row) people's will in order to reach their goals.

community are sought, accepted, promoted and exerted over people by people and by means of their social structure (schools, religious organizations, political agencies, families, work environments, economic entities). These concepts, merged in the sole idea of social stability, are hard to define in only a few words. Nevertheless, it could be synthesised as the appeasement of all social tensions rising between members of a community/state in order to produce that need for security and safety essential to all for the fulfilment of daily functions of the system. In other words, it represents an addiction to an element of certainty. Social stability, therefore, becomes inherently linked to the idea of security as a type of common good (Hobbs 1985, Crawford 2006), necessary to all, likely to be achieved only through formal and informal control of human will. Common goods are an expression of particular cultural values of communities, rooted in time and space (Merton 1968, Hardin 1968). What was of interest centuries ago does not necessarily have the same importance nowadays. However, as regards the safety of society, policing is still a key aspect of public life (Bayley and Shearing, 2001).

If security and, further on, social stability are considered as common goods by using a utilitarian conjecture, one could say that in order to achieve the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of people (Jeremy Bentham, 1823:vi), individuals have to adopt a freely self-constriction of their will. Nevertheless, not many authors (Hardin 1968, Douglas 1992, Arendt 1970) hold a positive view of human nature. The modern state, beyond the main features that characterise it such as common language, unitary law and coinage and so forth, comes along from extensive research of security and social stability. These two aspects are organised around long-term state institutions and organizations as well as informal social agencies empowered by those individuals that accept a reduction of their will to act freely. The reproducibility of the 'state' as system depends on the capacity to furnish security and then social stability. This capacity is a seminal governmental prerogative that cannot be reduced only to control crime and its means to accomplish this task (Garland 2001, Rowe 2008, Bayley and Shearing 1996). The concept of social stability extends the meaning of security far beyond the simple idea of catching criminals, protecting private property and public space. Instead, it widens the triggering agents to all those causes likely to create social disruption such as modes of punishment delivered, ways of use of force, legitimacy to impose decision, poverty, social disorganization, influence of media, public perception of security, stability and certainty.

The second point is the idea of legitimacy, that is, the search for consensus. For the administrative apparatus running the new modern democratic state and for any other social institution that needs to operate in a context of visibility, the first concern is 'being accepted' by others. This does not mean simply the idea of being recognised as person, entity or organization. Instead, here it means the right to influence someone else's way of thinking, acting and deciding (Goffman, 1974). And for governments it means to justify their existence, political manifesto, strategies and authority to 'steer' and 'row' people's lives in order to achieve common well-being and therefore stability, at least ideally. Legitimacy is the answer to the twofold Foucaultian question 'how to govern?' and 'how not be governed like this'. If centuries ago 'doing' policing was perceived as another way for the state to permeate public life, nowadays (neo)liberal governments have changed ways but not the substance. The level of penetration of liberal governments is still quite high with almost no difference in the social approach (Rose and Miller, 1992). As a matter of fact, Rowe (2008:184) writes 'public agency have encouraged...private citizens...looking out of their own...' This whether on one side has theoretically put the accountability of security upon people's heads, on the other it has legitimated liberal governments to use only apparently intrusive methods allowing other arrangements between public and private sector to emerge. However, security and its sense of social stability are still soundly connected to state accountability and legitimacy. As Hobbs (1985:249) remarks

'[t]he office of the sovereign, be it a monarch or an assembly, consisteth in the end for which he was trusted with the sovereign power, namely the procuration of the safety of the people, to which he is obliged by the law'.

Without going too far back in time, all the states in Europe have reached their modern characteristics over the centuries through a bulk of different socio-economic processes and political dynamics among which was the end of the feudal system. This broad transformation resulted in the way legitimacy was idealized and accredited to the natural law, that is, the idea of one unique single authority socially accepted by various layers of the social stratum and tied to them by means of a social contract. Furthermore, to this authority was also recognised the right of the use of force at the condition to deliver security and achieve the object of social stability.

With regard to modern times and the relation between the state and the private sector, White and Gill (2013) have recently underlined that one of the main concerns of private firms supplying security services is related to the attainment of legitimacy through a clear, trustworthy image. Or as sustained by Loader (1997) by producing a need for their products'. However, this type of legitimacy differs in quality from that of

governments in democratic society in so far as the latter has the power (authority) to directly and indirectly influence the will of social action due to its dominant position in the social structure, as Hobbs (1985) and Locke (1976) emphasise in their work.

The third and final point to face is the aspect of the authority of the state. Authority in its general meaning calls for its own legitimisation. It could be understood as the power some 'have' of imposing their will on others by means of or threat of the use of brute force. However, such feature without legitimacy is limited in time as history teaches us. For example the end of feudalism also signed the closure of many authorities imposing arbitrarily their will on feuds. Webber (1968) suggests that in the absence of legitimacy, there is no future for forms of authority which use coercive methods to constrain the will of others. On the other hand, though, legitimated authority can expect to see its will satisfied by law-abiding community members by the acceptance of rules, strategies, technologies, techniques that promote maintenance of order as well as the control over communities.

Once again, back on policing issues, one could say in the wake of this discussion, within modern democratic states, when it comes to security, private enterprise, groups of citizens or other social organizations, they cannot directly challenge or substitute the state in providing public security beyond a certain limit without breaching the traditional accomplished social order of today. All forms of security set out by various social actors are being performed within the limit of the law and therefore subject to the will of governments. Nevertheless, as it is reported in sections of policing literature where the state is depicted as inactive, there is insufficient exploration of the level of influence that this political 'figure' still exerts over the social and private sphere. Furthermore, of particular interest for this paper, it does not explain the extent to which political decisions 'steer' or 'row' the behaviour of private firms and citizens in influencing their choices within a market-based society. The latter point is underlined by the new economic sociology which embeds social actions amongst the folds of history, as was already noted in the introduction to this study. Many of the agreements and diverging manifestations of security services are to be related to the way governments rationalise and intend to trade the common good of security/social stability through its dominant position determined by the level of authority and legitimacy. As will be discussed in the next section, the actual literature on policing provides a somewhat misleading view of the role covered by the state in the practices of security services.

3. POLICING , A MODERN APPROACH

3.1. Developing a new concept

Policing practices and strategies of security, as seen in the introduction, are referred to as 'technologies of government', but what does this 'policing' mean? And what do 'technologies of government' (Rose and Miller, 1992) actually stand for? The matter is not easy to discuss due to both a lack of agreement in the criminological literature on the listed concepts and the confusion that could ensue from the similitude in terminology and cacophony of words such as policy, policing and police.

It is worth starting by exploring the apparent lack of agreement on policing as technology of government. Following the reasoning provided by Rowe (2008) policing is highly controversial in the academic field owing to the double dimension by which it is surrounded. On the one hand, according to the researcher, policing carries out a functional meaning that embodies several institutions among which non-formal (governmental) agencies that are involved in shaping social norms and behaviour as well as the way in which social actors interact between themselves and produce meaningful discourses (ibid). On the other hand, Rowe observes that the subject is played down in academic discourses to predominantly assess the role of the police, an institution that overwhelmingly monopolizes the topic on policing in the English-language-driven criminological mainstream. 'Policing', therefore, has been emptied out of its original meaning of practices and activities that are developed by, constructed by and delivered to achieve government's ideology and rationalities. This has left a door wide open to possible doubts about its real efficiency in understanding phenomena related to security that are partaken in daily life. Furthermore, it has cast doubts on valuable explanations that criminological approaches to security provide when addressing issues, for instance, of order and control. Loader, indeed, (cited in Rowe, 2008:3) criticises this transformation in the meaning of policing and binds it strictly to the way '... English society tells stories about itself...'

Another author providing a meaningful explanation of 'what policing is about' is Reiner. He maintains '...policing is the aspect of control in [the way of thinking] that is directed at the identification and emergency rectification of conflict and deviation' (2010:xiii). Policing, then, could be thought of as implying those techniques, strategies, approaches, planning that concretely affect human actions, interactions and will. To minimise this concept, only to the perception of what the police are and do, means to overlook the subtle social nuances that this criminological area produces. The discourses, then, are to be moved to a macro

level, asserting those spheres that directly affect human perception.

The second problem is given by the closeness in writ and sound of the etymological root of terms: policy, policing and police (Rowe, 2008). Although, such words find their ancestors in the Greek term of 'polis' – city – and the subsequent term 'politeia' – related to the way inhabitants of the ancient Greek cities were governed, they have nothing to do with the actual meaning that is assigned to them by modern societies.

Hence, it seems more appropriate, for the purpose of this paper and in order to reach a better understanding of the phenomenon of policing, to select a socio-political approach which could more easily combine the functional idea of policing, at a broader level, with the issue of security services. Such an approach is preferred to those already present in criminology because it is thought of to better link the concepts of law and order and their comparable jurisdictions, with governmental practices. Furthermore, it facilitates documenting an initial account of the power relations in place, while also explaining the way the governmental rationalities are operationalised in practice. 'Technologies of government', under which 'policing' is defined, refer to

'a domain of strategies, techniques and procedures through which different forces seek to render...' concept, ideas, moral values, personal interests '...operable, and by means of which...connections are established between aspiration of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups (Rose and Miller, 1992:183).

Hence, policing becomes a body of practices, strategies and procedures by which the knowledge of governments, as developed on historical bases (discourses about security, moral expressions of codes of values, and all ideas to reach the common good of social stability, firstly problematised and then transferred into practice) permeates all state's layers horizontally and vertically.

In 'doing' policing, governments constrain and sanction people's behaviour, in order to pursue their aspirations (will) by attempting to influence decisions and actions of the social and the economic sphere. Yet governments, at the same time, are influenced by feedback that could steer the ways they manage power relations with the other spheres, which are also residue of a historical background. Moreover, in order to understand such mechanisms whose main goals are, seemingly, to provide security as good consumption for the reproducibility of the system, we need to recognise the instruments deployed to reach such goals (ibid). These instruments are to be understood as the deployment of police and military forces, taxation, delivery of punishment, techniques to control and strategies to perpetuate the social order, types of law enacted, technology devised and used, statistics, involvement of third parties such as private firms, citizen-led committees, and all means conceived as being useful.

Policing, to sum up, cannot be reduced to a particular activity of this or that institution; nonetheless, it remains the main activity of police forces (Bayley and Shearing 1996, Rowe 2008, Loader 2000). Instead, it has to be contextualised in a broader domain through which the security of the state in all its forms is administered by the passive/active role of government which in so doing becomes a dealer of security and police services, whose position lies at the top of hierarchy in the security trading. As dealer, the government has the capacity or power to read and influence through direct and indirect means (law, police, media, statistics and so on) the market of security goods as well as to restore the status quo³, if threatened, by drawing upon the use of coercive power as means of last resort. It is, therefore, misleading the idea that private firms, organizations, groups or even individual citizens can dispute the authority of the state without being labelled as subversive of the pre-constituted order or without underlining any pathological state of the government.

3.2. Policing, transformation and pluralization of the private sector

Within the academic debate one of the most discussed articles related to the idea of 'transformation' within security activities is the paper written by Bayley and Shearing (1996), stating:

'Modern democratic countries like United States, Britain and Canada have reached a watershed in the evolution of their system of crime control and law enforcement. Future generations will look back on our era as a time when one system of policing ended and another took its place' (1992:585).

For the purpose of this paper, the essay refers solely to the case of Britain and in particular to England. The choice is justified by the different value scales standing in every country and codified within the rules of law (Bayley and Shearling 2001) and the quantity of data present as to England and Wales. As a matter of

³ The one where they are, in fact, always in control although from the shadow.

fact, legislation about political arrangements and relations as well as moral values of societies, diverge notably, thus making it impossible to encompass them in a unique category (Jones and Newburn 2002). Furthermore, there seems to be not enough accessible information to support the idea that transformation in policing has taken place in other European countries in any way, shape and form akin to the case of England.

The main focus raised by Bayley and Shearing (1996) is on the 'watershed' in the provision of security services that appears to emerge between the public and private sector, for the maintenance of social control. This has produced consequently produced a plenitude of actors delivering security services but also a fragmentation of services, highlighting the diversity of tasks performed. In particular they emphasise the 'epochal' change (Jones and Newburn 2002) in the ratio between the growing number of workers in the private sector and the number of police forces; a radical change that at least theoretically has determined the end of the state monopoly of force, visible by a reduction of the activities of police forces within communities and public spaces. However, it has to be said that a number of authors have strongly criticised this difference in ratio (Reiner 2010, Jones and Newburn 2002, White and Gill 2013) as well as the pluralized and fragmented idea of policing (Loader, 2000). In the wake of the above arguments, it should be noted that the monopoly of force managed by means of law by the government could not be affected by police practices. The Police should, in fact, be thought of as just one of the likely tools a government can deploy to pursue its political will. Moreover, it has been already emphasised how reducing the idea of policing to the dichotomy state-police activities is deceiving of the role the state plays as dealer of security and police services. Jones and Newburn (2002:142-3) also argue that this idea of transformation in policing 'tends to exaggerate the degree of change' and that it fails 'to recognize the consistency and continuity that exists' with the period before the 'transformation'. They suggest that more than a pluralization and fragmentation of policing activities, those changes involve a transformation of the concept of social control and the influence it has on people. Whilst, White and Gill (2013) not only dismiss the account of a change in the ratio of public/private actors as did Jones and Newburn before but they also assert a change in the rationalities of policing. These are no more indicators of a neat dichotomy, but a blurry and overlapping area of strategies and practices where 'the ratio between private security to police actors does not suggest anything like radical transformation' (2013:77).

Nonetheless, one can dismiss the blurry and overlapping explanation of White and Gill, if the term of 'policing' is to be explained at the level of governmental rationalities and to what ends it pursues the security and social stability of the state.

Root causes have to be found within a transformation of political rationalities that in England officially took place in the mid-1960s (Cohen 1985, Rose and Miller 1992, Reiner 2010). The Society that came out from WWII was in flux, extending its population and its economic processes, increasing its dependence from the technological determinism and its influence from the mass-media. New values emerged, so did a new concept of 'punishment', 'social control' and way of administering a community. England experienced the end of labour politics and its 'pervasive' presence of the government through the welfare state. This new path, depicted in depth by Stanley Cohen (1982), perfectly matches the changes described by Reiner (2010), in the criminological approaches and practices, the activities of policing and the role of police. The transformation and pluralization of security services has not created that loss of power advocated by the criminological mainstream on policing. Conversely, the state, using the words of Cohen (ibid:37):

'...have become stronger; far from any decrease, the reach and intensity of state control have been increased, centralization and bureaucracy remain; professions and experts are proliferating dramatically and society is more dependent on them...'

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND PYRAMID OF SECURITY

From the critical analysis performed in this study, emerges a state still strongly driven by governmental rationalities more than any other strategy. This is so firstly because governments act within a framework made up by legal norms and historical developments from which it is hard to escape. Secondly, because the issue of security is not just secluded to police practice but it is composed with other areas of human activities such as social and economic ones. So for example, unemployment could cause instability but strong support within a community and political redistribution of wealth could smooth over social unrest and ensure stability and security into plagued communities. Consequently, it could be concluded that stability and security is needed for the correct functioning of the state as a whole. Questioning this power to governments ruling the state means, as matter of principle, to alter the equilibrium of the modern democratic state and its practices of policing.

The government, therefore, sits at the peak of the pyramid of power (a metaphor related to the hierarchy

of money landed by the economic sector) seizing all the power of a group of people on which it rules over, and then releasing it under the 'form of credit', which can be seen as a share of liberty, so to say, of every single citizen to act freely to pursue personal ends. This form of credit is organised and managed through governmental technologies that – as seen – bridge over a vast spectrum of activities of doing policing. In-between the government and the ruled over, these are also the public and private agencies of security trying to regulate the market in which the common good of safety is sold and at times privatised.

The expansion or contraction of the pyramid determines the rise or slump in a number of agencies trying to deliver the services of security and police. This also affects the way in which citizens decide to use or devolve once again their power in order to reach the feeling of security. However, it should not be overlooked that the market for security is also regulated by economic rules (Croward, 2006), as economic entities partake in these activities. This could subsequently create forms of inequality based on the quantity of resources available per person. An expansion of the pyramid might cause, indeed, both a proliferation of private and public entities in a system. Authors affirming the principle of governance (Rhodes, 1997) or networking (Wood and Shearing 2007, Loader 2000) are telling us that policing technologies are being extended in order for the personal capacity of people to self-regulate to rise only temporarily, that is, until the condition for social stability and security as well as the legitimacy and authority of the ruling class are not endangered. On the other hand, a contraction of the pyramid of power shows us a centralization of power in which case the role of a government becomes pervasive of all the social strata. In that case a more 'totalitarian' state could appear blatantly. In either case, however, the state has a central role in steering and controlling the good of security of which it is the first dealer. It trades security every day releasing and accepting responsibility. This position can be defined by studying the power relations between institutions at a macro social level.

Concluding, the government on behalf of the state is still accountable for the security and social stability of a system and of its people. It still has the faculty, by law, to use force as a means of last resort to restore discipline into the system. More discipline appears as a form of contraction of the pyramid of security by augmenting the distance between the peak and the base, whilst elasticity in discipline produces looser vertical and formal relations between the ruling class and the ruled over, thus allowing more self-control within a community.

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