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Crowd Psychology in the Context of Civil Unrest

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Abstract

Most people adhere to legal moral standards. However, even many who consider themselves to be decent citizens break some of the regulations, and their disrespect by the citizens would lead to anarchy. In such a situation, a conflict arises between those who do not respect these legal regulations and those who are legally responsible for their implementation. The police, as part of the security system, is authorized to use force and other repressive measures in accordance with the law in case of need in order to protect the freedoms and lives of citizens, as well as the constitutional and legal order of the state. In order to achieve this, the police must be prepared and trained to suppress civil disorders and riots on a larger scale, which often have a destructive and criminal character. Seen from the point of view of state security, civil disturbances represent one of the most extreme forms of struggle that directly threaten public order and peace, the security of citizens and property, as well as the vital interests of a state. Because of all these characteristics and the consequences that arise from them, it is clear that this is one of the very important problems that the police must confront. The peace, stability and security of a country depend to a large extent on the ability of its organs to apply national laws and effectively maintain public order and peace. The key element of this entire problem is the individual and his behavior in the group and the crowd. Therefore, in order to carry out the tasks of establishing control over civil disturbances, it is necessary to understand the phenomena of behavior of individuals, groups and masses, which are manifested in situations of civil disturbances. Consequently, the topic of my seminar work is the mass and the psychology of the mass, with which I will try to give you certain information, in order to better understand the essence of these phenomena, the way they are organized, the types, the tactics of their action, etc., all with the aim of a more successful fight against these phenomena.

Keywords: Psychology, Civil unrest

1. Crowd in civil unrest

Dealing with the phenomenon of the crowd in our case is significant precisely because the illegal and violent crowd, with its goals and demands, always collides with public order, that is, the police as an instrument of the government for its preservation. One gets the impression, when the term "mass" is mentioned in everyday language, that one immediately thinks of a mob running headlong through the streets, smashing, looting and burning, which is certainly not true, because the term mass also includes those groups of people who have

gathered in a legal way and express their position in accordance with all legal and moral norms. Mass formation is the most unusual form of group behavior. There are as many types of crowds as there are reasons for people to gather. The crowd that gathers to watch the game is a random crowd. However, there is also an organized crowd, which gathers at the invitation of some organization or some leader, and in order to achieve some goal in which those who make up that crowd are interested. In our country, regarding the behavior of the crowd from the aspect of aggressiveness, terms such as calm and restless crowd have become established. A peaceful crowd means a crowd that respects the established norms of behavior at gatherings and does not commit illegal acts. A riotous crowd is understood to mean a crowd that significantly and organizedly opposes the lawful orders of state bodies and authorized officials regarding the prohibition of movement, access or staying in a public place, i.e. a crowd that by its behavior significantly disrupts public order and peace and the safety of people and property.

In order for a multitude of people to grow into a mass, there must be conditions for the creation of a mass:

- 1) The goal of the gathering can be political, religious, national, sports, entertainment and similar.
- 2) The space can be open or closed, and that aspect has a very big impact on the police's actions.
- 3) The number of people is very significant, and it constitutes a quantitative feature of the mass.
- 4) Mass density represents the mathematical relationship between the space where the gathering takes place and the number of attendees.
- 5) Emotional excitement, if it is directed towards destruction, is the most dangerous element of mass behavior, it spreads like an infection, and it appears as a consequence of the previous mood, the characteristics of the goal of the gathering, intentional and accidental actions and the mechanisms of specific social interaction in the masses that were previously mentioned.
- 6) Directing attention to the focus. At political gatherings, this role is usually played by well-chosen slogans, which in one concise sentence give the entire program, as it were.
- 7) Joint action.

Gustav Le Bon in his work "Psychology of the Masses" divided the masses into:

- 1) ordinary or unorganized and 2) psychological or organized.

Then to:

- 1) heterogeneous and 2) homogeneous

He characterized the unorganized mass as a crowd that walks together for some pleasure, and disperses when it gets tired. According to him, psychological is much more complicated because it is linked to some properties that gave the mass a "soul". The number of people is not important for gaining the psychological unity of the mass, it is considered that 20 people are enough for that. A homogeneous mass is organized from individuals of one class, ideology, party, religion, one morality or goal. A heterogeneous mass consists of individual members of different social groups, who have different hereditary aspirations as well as acquired characteristics. Heterogeneous masses have a feeling of irresponsibility towards other members of the mass (because they do not know each other) and towards the state.

For homogeneous and heterogeneous masses, given their basic difference, the author also lists some common properties, which he again classified as:

a) hereditary factors, b) acquired factors, and c) induced factors.

- a) Hereditary factors speak of the fact that a black Slovenian, Anglo-Saxon or other mass will react differently to a problem, due to life habits, passions, religion, morals, upbringing, etc.
- b) Acquired factors speak about the influence of the environment, education, political or social guidelines on the reaction or behavior of the masses in similar situations.
- c) As derived factors, Le Bon states:

- 1) the strength that the mass gives to the individual who belongs to it,
- 2) the anonymity provided by the crowd,
- 3) suggestiveness,
- 4) recklessness,
- 5) impulsivity,
- 6) connection to mass,
- 7) credulity of the masses,
- 8) intolerance,
- 9) authoritarian behavior of the masses,
- 10) conservative tolerance.

1.1. Basic characteristics of crowd behavior in civil disturbance

- 1) Demonstrations that are otherwise peaceful or are organized for benevolent reasons can, under the influence of external factors that shape their behavior, become unreasonable and destructive.
- 2) Skilled leaders can, by applying various procedures and stimulants, move the crowd to unreasonable actions.
- 3) Curious or sympathizers join each mass of demonstrators, attracted by various effects, individually or in groups.
- 4) Demonstrating, the mass expresses its dissatisfaction by transferring other aggressiveness to some other social or economic problems, to some other social group or prominent individual (most often a politician).

Panic is a factor that significantly affects the behavior of both the demonstrating and violent masses as well as the police. It comes about as a result of fear, which leads people to unreasonable and fierce efforts with the aim of achieving personal safety. Panic is contagious and spreads very quickly, and when it takes over the masses, people's reactions become so irrational that they endanger themselves and others.

Panic causes the following situations:

- 1) feeling threatened.
- 2) feeling of partial hopelessness,
- 3) partial or complete closure of the withdrawal routes.
- 4) interruption in communication between the front and rear part of the mass during its withdrawal,
- 5) exposure of the mass to the excessive use of means of dispersal (means of force).

1.2. Factors that limit the behavior of the mass of demonstrators

- 1) Emotional needs. It is possible that individuals from the crowd feel that they can do what they would not otherwise do, but the crowd as a whole does what the majority of its members want.

- 2) Moral attitudes. The behavior of the crowd is limited by the conviction of its members as to what is right to do.
- 3) Leader. The leader significantly influences the intensity and direction of the crowd's behavior. A skilled agitator can turn a group of disillusioned and resentful people into a vengeful mob, and direct their aggression against any object their resentment encompasses.
- 4) External factors: Weather conditions have a significant influence on crowd behavior. Another important factor affecting the behavior of the masses is the actions of local authorities. When these authorities are prepared to deal with the situation before it gets out of hand, mob behavior rarely becomes violent.

2. Socio-psychological behavior of demonstrators

In addition to the demonstrators, the demonstrating mass includes a leader, agitators, observers, sympathizers and accomplices. In order for the police to prepare for an optimal response, apart from having to be ready for such situations, in addition to the mechanism of formation and maintenance of a mass of demonstrators, they must also know the structure (organization), tactics and actions of the people with different roles that make up that mass. Demonstrator leaders play a very important role in the behavior of the crowd. According to some psychologists, the leader is often a convinced fanatic who considers himself an apostle and destined for such a role. In the case of a professional, he is usually the leader of a social organization, although it is not uncommon for him to be part of a subversive organization or movement. In contrast to the crowd, a true leader is mostly aware that the mood of the crowd is often labile and always ready to be moved. Because of this, his actions eliminate calm and reasonable thinking by maintaining constant tension in the crowd. The means by which he influences the masses is a simple and fiery speech in which he suggests a certain belief, adjusts events and formulates ideas. According to some analysts, the process of letting the leader speak is wrong. They believe that this always worsens unrest and disorder. The police must prevent agitators, as well as those who make intrusions, from participating in debates and discussions at the podium. The leader should be moved to leave the meeting as soon as possible with his prior abandonment of the plan. An agitator, by definition, is a person who takes up the cause of a person, party, organization or idea. He can successfully form a violent group, applying his knowledge in the sense of knowing the principles of propaganda and mass psychology. A skilled agitator can use psychological factors to achieve the desired behavior of the group in order to achieve their goals. Propaganda, which is most often carried out by agitators, is created through the so-called mass media, giving leaflets, spreading rumours, etc. This excitement is used by applying specially selected words and phrases, by using preconceptions created through propaganda, to lead the demonstrators to do what, if it were not for that, would not even occur to them. This activity most often takes place according to the following scenario:

- 1) the mass gathered and prepared by propaganda is brought to the maximum level of excitement;
- 2) then the crowd is led to do some actions as desired by the leader;
- 3) then a justification is sought for such activity of the demonstrators, where the government or the police are most often blamed for provoking the demonstrators with their actions.

Inducing demonstrators to engage in illegal behavior, and very often destructive actions, is also carefully planned and implemented. The leader and the agitators know exactly the moment when the tension in the crowd is at the highest possible level, and then provoke its violent behavior by launching fake news, the appearance of irritating persons or groups by showing photos of police brutality, etc. This causes a chain reaction within the crowd that the leader and the agitators use to ignite acts of violence. Agitators mix with demonstrators so that the impression of spontaneity and lack of organization is created. As a means of

imposing their goal on the mass, or as a form of identifying the mass with their goals, agitators use slogans. The slogan is intended to clearly and briefly define the group's attitude towards someone or something. Agitators often use it to highlight demands that partially or completely correspond to the real or imagined needs of the demonstrators. Agitators mobilized by well-known or covert organizers gather around them a certain number of activists, sympathizers and chronically dissatisfied or curious people looking for excitement. This "militant group" forms the nucleus that tries to gather as many citizens as possible with a sense of injustice. It is not a rare case that thugs and criminals are hired for these needs, who arm themselves with wooden clubs, iron bars, etc. The organizers try to present their views, behavior and demands as the views of all demonstrators, although probably many citizens do not agree with such radical demands. According to some estimates, a core of two to three hundred of the most extreme agitators can create very violent demonstrations, in which ten to twenty thousand people participate. Demonstrators are by definition individuals who approach the crowd at the invitation of the leader or on their own initiative, in order to publicly express their opinion, mood or intention. The demonstrator approaches the crowd with the aim of liberating his individuality in an intersociety with unbridled feeling and uncritical faith. In addition, due to the actions of leaders, agitators, and propaganda, demonstrators become an easy object of manipulation and a means to achieve the goal of the organizers of the meeting.

The characteristics of the demonstrators are:

- 1) that they are convinced that what they are doing is right;
- 2) their understanding is based on the customs, understandings and morals of the environment from which they originate, and is the result of previously carried out propaganda and preparation;
- 3) they rely on the moral support of the environment;
- 4) they feel that they can achieve their needs only together
- 5) in this sense, they want to be led and have an authoritative leader.

Demonstration observers can be passers-by attracted by the event (crowd, noise, banners) or sympathizers who for various reasons (fear, indecision, obligations, etc.) do not join the crowd. Most often, they stand on the sidelines, not actively participating in the events, but as an audience in a play, they expect what will happen. Observers are otherwise a special object of interest of the organizers, who strive in an obvious or perfidious way to draw in as many observers as possible into the crowd and in this way the demonstrations are massive. Observers can be people who approach the place of the event out of curiosity and, having convinced themselves of the situation and facts, decide to leave the crowd, either because they are not interested in the demands of the demonstrators, or for some other reason. In contrast to the actions of the organizers to win over and draw observers into their ranks, the actions of the police must be calculated to deter them from joining the crowd.

In well-prepared demonstrations that have a latent danger of turning into riots, the following organizational scheme can be observed among the organizers:

- 1) management (external and internal),
- 2) physical security,
- 3) couriers,
- 4) strike group,
- 5) holders of banners,
- 6) instigators.

Practice and experience have shown that the organizers and participants in riots also apply certain tactics in their actions, which consist of the following:

- 1) Scheduling demonstrations at a time and place when the presence of citizens is the greatest.
- 2) They study the regulations that regulate issues in the field of public gathering of citizens and the application of police powers.
- 3) They organize logistical support in the form of food, drinks, props, emblems, badges, flags, whistles, banners, etc.
- 4) They hire media personalities (singers, actors, athletes, etc.) in order to attract as many citizens as possible.
- 5) They occupy dominant points in order to have a better insight into the situation on the ground and to hinder the police in their deployment and intervention,
- 6) They are dispersing extreme groups over a wider area with the aim of stretching, weakening and exhausting the police force.
- 7) They organize the rapid movement and spreading of the crowd over as large an area as possible in order to prevent blockade and police control.
- 8) They misinform the public, the masses and the police, with the aim of winning over the masses and the public for their intentions, according to the principle "the end justifies the means", and also for the purpose of destabilizing and weakening the police force.
- 9) Women, children, the disabled and the elderly rush to the front lines, in order to thwart the energetic intervention of the police, and if it does happen, to gain the favor of the domestic and foreign public and the condemnation of the police's harsh treatment of these categories of persons.
- 10) They take photos of police officers in order to "remember" them for subsequent prosecution.
- 11) Throwing various objects with the aim of provoking or causing injury to the police.
- 12) Pushing vehicles, containers, barrels or other suitable objects at the police.
- 13) Setting up barricades in order to prevent the passage of police and police equipment (water cannon, special vehicles, etc.).
- 14) Removal of police means to prevent the passage of vehicles and persons;
- 15) Setting and causing fires with the aim of causing damage, causing general dissatisfaction, fear, panic and weakening police intervention.
- 16) Direct physical attack on the police with the use of various improvised means (stones, rods, laths, batons, pieces of broken furniture, bottles, etc.).
- 17) The use of explosives and explosive devices in order to create an atmosphere of chaos and impotence of the security forces.
- 18) The use of firearms as a means of direct attack on the police

Conclusion

In the end, we must conclude that in the fight against threats to public order and peace, the police must deal with the problem of the crowd in detail. Only by knowing the basic causes, characteristics and phenomena of mass behavior can she correctly dose her intervention and apply the means available to her within it. The police must know when to confront a crowd with authority and power, when with combat readiness, and when with humor. The use of police forces will be successful if it is based on basic knowledge of local conditions and terrain, but also good information about the intentions, strength and composition of the demonstrators, as well as about the forces that will join them, support them, whether they originate from people and

organizations from within the country or outside. For the successful operation of the police in such circumstances, police managers of a special quality are needed first of all, decisions must be made by the commander (leader) who, with his unit and its members, is actually striving for the same goal. These qualities of a police leader enable him not only to command his unit, but also to oppose the power of the crowd and its leader, who have completely opposite goals, with his skill in leading and controlling the situation. Due to all of the above in this seminar paper, I tried to cover this area as well as possible, point out the dangers that arise and show the entire organization and principle of action of the demonstrators, all with the aim of our gaining better knowledge in this area and so that tomorrow, in case of need, as future management workers, they would know how to set themselves up as best as possible and successfully solve this not at all easy task.

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