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Two theories on the police – The relevance of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim to the study of the police

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Abstract

The work of Weber and Durkheim is regularly mentioned in police science, but the relevance of these two scholars to the field of study often remains implicit. Weber's perspective concentrates on the police's power to use force, highlighting the moral dilemmas involved with this power. The differences between a definition of the police in terms of force and the notion of 'good policing' as the limitation of violence suggest that this view neglects important elements. This becomes clear when one considers Durkheim's approach, which views the police as a moral agency. The differences between these two perspectives are illustrated with an appeal to the concept of police legitimacy, which shows that they refer to different interpretations of the relation between the police and the public. Each perspective concentrates on one of the two core elements that characterise the police: the power to use force and the moral-symbolic meaning. The relations between these two elements illuminate a fundamental aspect of modern policing.

1. Introduction

Publications in the international field of police science frequently make reference to the work of the classical sociologists Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, published about a century ago. The work of these two scholars is often associated with two issues that are fundamental to an understanding of the modern police. Weber is often cited in reference to the coercive powers of the police. Durkheim is mainly associated with the symbolic meaning of the police. For

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instance, Jackson and Sunshine (2007) recently used a so-called neo-Durkheimian perspective in their study of public confidence in the police.

Although often referred to, the meaning and relevance of the work of these two scholars to the study of the police is rarely dealt with in detail or made explicit. Actually, it is often quite unclear what their work may mean for the contemporary study of the police. If these two classical intellectual giants are cited, or even quoted, it often seems to be only more or less casually and somewhat ritualistically.

Given the reputations of Weber and Durkheim in the field of police studies, it may come to some as a surprise that both actually wrote hardly anything about the police. The relevance of these two classical scholars to police studies is not so much a result of what they themselves wrote about this issue, but rather because of the perspective that each of them created. These perspectives remain useful for the analysis of core issues relevant to the police, even if – as is often assumed – there has been a fundamental change in the development of policing and law enforcement during the past two decades, such as the pluralisation and multilateralisation of policing (Bayley and Shearing, 1996, 2001) or the rise of a so-called nodal governance of security (Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Wood and Shearing, 2007). In the perspectives of both Weber and Durkheim the police are treated primarily as a representative or as a core element of the state. Despite the pluralisation of policing, the state remains more than 'just one node among many' (Crawford, 2003, 2006; Loader and Walker, 2007). However, the rise of other forms of policing, such as private and commercial security, of administrative approaches to criminal problems and of citizen initiatives certainly makes the position of the state and the public police force much more complex and less clear. This calls for more reflection and critical analysis of the position of the police and the state. The present paper is based on the assumption that the classical approaches of Weber and Durkheim may be helpful here.

What I want to show is that in the study of the police the work of both Weber and Durkheim, especially with regard to the role of the state, deserves more than just some ritualistic invocation. I try to do this by setting out the relevance of the perspectives of Weber and Durkheim to the study of the police. Each of these perspectives provides a theory about the police, in both an explanatory and a normative sense (viz., how can we explain the role of the police and what role should the police have in a democratic society?). These two theories differ in that each of them concentrates on one of the two core elements that are central to an understanding of the modern police, i.e., their coercive powers and symbolic function (Bayley, 1994: 34; Manning, 1977; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1997; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Wright, 2002).

I deal first with the work of Egon Bittner, who used a Weber-like perspective. I then pass to the perspective that Weber himself left for the study of the police. This perspective, although it highlights important elements of the modern police, leaves certain questions open that are central to the perspective developed by Durkheim, which I deal with thereafter. Finally, I attempt to illustrate the relevance of and differences between these two perspectives by applying them to the analysis of the legitimacy of the police. In my concluding remarks I deal briefly with the relevance of the relation between the two perspectives to an understanding of certain important contemporary developments with regard to the police.

2. Max Weber: the police as the coercive arm of the state

The best way to explore Max Weber's relevance to the analysis of the police is by first looking at Egon Bittner's theory on the police. This may appear to be a roundabout theoretical route, since Bittner himself stated that originally his theory was not influenced by Weber.

Nevertheless, there are important resemblances between the work of Bittner and Weber (Brodeur, 2003, 2007).

According to Bittner (1970: 132) the police must undertake numerous, very heterogeneous tasks, which raises the question of whether there is a common element in police work. In his view police work is not distinguished by specific types of problems with which police officers deal in the course of their work. On the contrary, the police have to deal with a kaleidoscope of highly different problems, 'entirely without regard to the substantive nature of the problem'. The common element in police work is that it deals with situations in which there is some problem that 'ought not to be happening and about which someone had better do something now!' In these circumstances, when events are urgent and pressing, members of the public believe they are 'entitled and obliged to summon the help of the police'.

What distinguishes the police from other agencies and professions is that the police are able to implement solutions to emergent problems by imposition or coercion, 'without having to brook or defer to opposition of any kind' (Bittner, 1970: 120). In other words, intervention by the police implies that their capacity and authority may be used to 'overpower resistance to an attempted solution'. Citizens, both those who call for the police and those who may be the target of police intervention, know that police work always 'projects the message that force may be, and may have to be, used to achieve a desired objective' (Bittner, 1970: 40).

Instead of the traditional focus on law enforcement and crime control, Bittner's view is that it makes much more sense to say 'that the police are nothing else than a mechanism for the distribution of situationally justified force in society' (Bittner, 1970: 39). If one considers both the public expectations of the police and actual police activities, then the role of the police may be best understood 'as a mechanism for the distribution of non-negotiably coercive force' (Bittner, 1970: 46). In other words, at its core, the police possess the capacity or, in Bittner's terminology, the unique competence to use force if necessary (Rumbaut and Bittner, 1979: 265).

Bittner's view of police work is generally seen as an adequate analytical framework to understand common central elements in a highly diversified type of work (Brodeur, 2003). For instance, the work of community police officers in the Netherlands generally meets Bittner's definition of police work, although as a rule it is less purely reactive and also more oriented to preventative goals than this definition suggests (Terpstra, 2010).

Nevertheless, Bittner's theory is not entirely without problems. Bittner himself realised very well that although the capacity to use force is central to the role of the police, it is rarely used in routine police work (Bittner, 1970: 41), even if the use of force is an important element in the narratives and self-image of many police officers (Waddington, 1999). What matters is that force *may* be used. What is even more important – and this is also Bittner's view – is that 'good police work' will often involve the limitation of force and the advocacy of self-control or restraint (Bittner, 1970: 41; Rumbaut and Bittner, 1979: 267). In other words, in this theory the nature and function of the police are defined in terms of force and coercion, but these elements are actually far less important in the definition of 'good police work'. This contradiction between the definitions of police work and of 'good policing' has also been formulated by Robert Reiner (1997: 1008). He argues that even if police work is defined in terms of the use of force, 'good policing' can often be seen as 'the craft of handling trouble without resort to coercion, usually by skilful verbal tactics'.

However, this raises the fundamental question of the adequacy of a definition of police work that so strongly emphasises the use of force and (physical) coercion. The discrepancy between Bittner's view of the police role and what can be seen as 'good police work' raises the question of whether this perspective perhaps has too limited a view of the police and whether such a strong emphasis on the power to use force may not overlook other important elements.

Bittner's analysis fits in with an intellectual tradition that goes back to the work of Max Weber. The shortcomings of his analysis may be better understood by returning to Weber's view of the state. This may also cast more light on the importance of force in police work.

In a lecture on Politics as a Vocation (*Politik als Beruf*) given in Munich on 28 January 1919 to an organization of left-liberal students, one of the fundamental questions Weber (1977/1919) dealt with was: 'What is a state?' Weber's answer to this question is often used to infer a view about the function of the police. I reiterate, though, that this view can only be inferred indirectly because Weber did not deal with the police in this lecture, even though the lecture is often referred to in this context.

Weber began his analysis with the proposition that the state cannot be defined sociologically in terms of its ends or (as Weber says in the original German text) in terms of the substantial activities it fulfils ('*aus dem Inhalt dessen, was er tut*').[1] In his view the state may only be defined by the specific means that it has at its disposal, of which the use of physical force is the most important. In this context Weber refers to Trotsky's view that 'every state is founded on force', a view he seems to approve of. Weber (1919: 8) defines a state as a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly on the use of legitimate physical force within a certain territory.

In his analysis of the state Weber struggled with a contradiction that may also be found in Bittner's work on the police. In Bittner's analysis the capacity to use force is viewed as the core of police work. On the other hand, however, in his view 'good police work' involves the limitation of the use of force. Using the same line of argument, Weber takes the position that the disposal of the capacity to use force is indeed specific to the state, but this does not imply that the use of force or coercion is 'the normal or the only means of the state' (Weber, 1919: 8).

Some sceptical readers may wonder why one should turn to a lecture delivered more than 90 years ago. After all, this view of the state may be considered rather one-dimensional. Although the use of force may be important in understanding the role of the state and, along the same line of argument, the role of the police, neither institution should be reduced to this dimension. However, in the latter part of his lecture Weber showed that many fundamental, moral dilemmas and problems are hidden between a definition of the state in terms of the use of force and the 'normal' and routine course of events. These dilemmas and problems place severe demands on the political leaders. These demands do not differ fundamentally, as Muir's (1977) study showed, from the moral tasks with which police officers as 'street corner politicians' are often confronted during their daily work.

According to Weber the power of the state to use force raises another question, namely how to do justice to the responsibility connected to this power. What kind of qualities is necessary to do justice to this power and responsibility? In Weber's view there are three pre-eminent qualities that are decisive here: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion. Passion should be understood here as a devotion to or moral involvement with some cause. In addition to passion and a feeling of responsibility there is also a need for detachment from things and 'men'. The requirements of passion and detachment seem to be quite contradictory.

[1] As noted before by other authors (Van Braam, 1980), the translation of Max Weber's writings from German to English was a source of many misinterpretations. This results not only from the fact that Weber used many concepts that are difficult to translate, but also because of the syntax that often characterises traditional German academic writing, which may be much more complex than is usual in contemporary English academic publications. Here I use the original German text as a main source, supplemented with the well-known translation by Gerth and Wright Mills from 1948 (Weber, 1991).

However, Weber pointed out that the power to use force requires the involvement of both the 'head' and the 'soul'. An important consideration for Weber is that politics (and police work, one might add) are 'made with the head, not with some other parts of the body or soul'. The rationality of reason, however, cannot do without a warm passion. Without it, the result may be vulgar vanity. If the use of force becomes an empty gesture, there will no longer be any relation with 'the knowledge of tragedy with which all action, but especially political action, is truly interwoven' (Weber, 1919: 53).

Everyone who has the power to use force is faced with similar ethical paradoxes. He or she should be aware of the 'diabolic forces that are lurking in all (potential) violence' (Weber, 1919: 64).

This issue is dealt with quite regularly in police studies. For example, in Waddington's view (2000) policing is morally ambiguous because police officers are in the unique position that they are licensed to exercise coercion over citizens and intrude into the private life of others. In Weber's words, they are confronted with the diabolic powers that are hidden in any potential to use force. If police intervention concentrates on citizens with a lower moral (and social) status, it may be easier to find an adequate answer to this moral ambiguity. A somewhat comparable view is that of the Dutch police psychologist Denkers (Van Beers, 2001), who holds that individual police officers need a 'moral compass' given the conflicting requirements of the police's mandate: the powers to use force, their own responsibility and awareness of the tragedy of individual citizens, and the need to maintain a professional distance.

However, the use of force does not solely require moral consideration and reflection. Externally, the power to use force or coercion needs legitimation and democratic accountability. Weber certainly recognised this, given the well-known distinction he drew between three forms of legitimation of domination (traditional, charismatic, and legal) (Weber, 1919: 8–10). Nevertheless, this is an issue that is rather neglected in Weber's analysis. Without much further clarification Weber switched from Trotsky's view ('every state is founded on force') to his own, often-quoted definition (a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a given territory). However, essentially this remains a view of the state (and the police) in terms of force and domination: the state is a relation of human beings dominating other human beings, a relation that is supported by means of legitimate (or perceived as legitimate) force or violence (Weber, 1919: 9).

Although Weber clearly recognised the moral dilemmas that result from the monopoly on the use of force, this is still a rather one-dimensional view of the role of the state and, in line with that, the role of the police. This view is implicitly based upon a relation of opposition between the state (the police) and citizens, as if they are strangers to each other, with a lack of mutual identification and common values. It does not seem too far-fetched to suppose that here Weber was strongly influenced by the political and social unrest in Germany at the time he was preparing his Munich lecture, shortly after the end of the First World War. Six weeks earlier Weber had been personally involved in drafting the constitution of the new Weimar Republic. His views on the role of the state and politicians must have been strongly influenced by the fact that this new democratic state did not receive much support from either the political left or the political right. It was in fact strongly contested from both sides, a situation that worried him greatly (Marianne Weber, 1975: 638–641). The newly created democratic republic and large sections of the German population stood in strong opposition to each other. This tense situation raised the question of how the state could be protected from (a significant number of) its own citizens. It seems likely that this situation contributed to Weber's negative and also one-dimensional view of the role of the state, especially in relation to its citizens.

3. State, police and morality: Emile Durkheim's perspective

The limitations present in the views of Weber and Bittner on the role of the state and, by extension, the police (no matter how important these views certainly are), may be clarified by comparing them with the views of another classical sociologist, Emile Durkheim, a contemporary of Weber. While Weber, with his emphasis on the monopoly of violence, had a much more negative view of the state, Durkheim presented a more positive one, according to which the state represents important moral values and is a central, binding social factor in modern societies. Although Durkheim published hardly anything on the role of the police (and insofar as he did, it was within a different context), these assumptions result in a very different view of the police's role.

Durkheim's analysis begins with the observation that it is harder to maintain social solidarity in modern societies with a sharp division of labour than it is in traditional, less complex societies. Following on from this observation, Durkheim raised the question of how social solidarity could be promoted in modern societies and how an erosion of the 'moral cement' might be prevented. In his view there is a need for social institutions that are able to regulate and bind society, both by their relations and by the definitions they provide of (un)acceptable behaviour. According to Durkheim this important task should be performed by the state, in addition to what he called corporations. In his view the state has a moral responsibility to contribute to the normal functioning of society. The state should not be remote, at a distance, but should undertake an active role in the promotion of a common morality (Varga, 2006).

In this way the state might prevent processes of individualization resulting in 'anarchy' and promote what Durkheim called a 'moral individuality', meaning that freedom and equality are the central, basic values for organic solidarity. In contrast to the often prevalent view, that the state is a threat to the citizens' freedom, Durkheim argues that the state actually promotes moral individuality: '(…) our moral individuality, far from being antagonistic to the state, has on the contrary been the product of it' (Durkheim, 1992: 68). As Giddens (1978: 109) noticed, for Durkheim, 'the state is above all a moral agency, which concentrates within itself the values of the broader social community, giving them a clarity of focus that cannot be achieved by the community as a whole'. In this view it is the 'fundamental duty' of the state to 'persevere in calling the individual to a moral way of life'. In other words, the state is above all 'the organ of moral discipline' (Durkheim, 1992: 69 and 72).

Durkheim's analysis of the state has important implications for the moral and social role that should be ascribed to the police, which may be illustrated by Durkheim's view of crime. His analysis of crime begins with the assertion that it appears 'incontestable' that crime is a social pathology. Nevertheless, though, crime should also be seen as a 'normal' phenomenon, not only because all societies are confronted with this problem, but also because crime is 'an integral part of all healthy societies' (provided, as Durkheim adds, it does not surpass a certain level). A society exempt from crime is, in Durkheim's view, 'utterly impossible' (Durkheim, 1964: 65–67). The distinction between the good and the evil must be kept alive in the collective consciousness and to that end it is required that deviant behaviour and infringement exist, which can be labelled wrong or as evil. Without crime the moral basis of social life will be threatened: 'Crime then is necessary; it is bound up with the fundamental conditions of all social life, and by that very fact it is useful, because these conditions of which it is a part are themselves indispensable to the normal evolution of morality and law' (Durkheim, 1964: 70).

This view has given rise to many a misunderstanding. Instead of assuming that crime in itself has a moral and socially binding function (a quite common interpretation of Durkheim, but in

my view a wrong one), it is better to see this function as following from the social reactions to crime. It is precisely in its social reactions that crime time and again confirms and reproduces the distinction between good and evil and this distinction is permanently (re) adjusted to changing circumstances. This view of Durkheim may be seen as an early, rudimentary formulation of the labelling theory (Reiner, 1984), which was presented in the 1950s and became so popular in the 1960s and 1970s (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967).

It is precisely here that an important social and moral meaning of the police can be found. This notion is closely related to the analysis of Loader and Mulcahy (2003: 37–65) of what they term (adapting a notion of Bourdieu) the symbolic power of the police. Following Durkheim they see the police as a source of some powerful, efficacious collective representations about community, order, the distinction between good and evil, and about security and protection. In this context it is important to refer to Durkheim's assumption that a strong emphasis on repression in the reactions to crime may undermine social solidarity (cf. Reiner, 1984: 199–200).

Durkheim's perspective on the function of the state calls attention to the symbolic-moral dimension of policing. Although it has often been argued that this symbolic-moral dimension is at least as important as the instrumental aspects of the police (Bayley, 1994; Manning, 1977; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003), in many countries during the past two decades it seems time and again that this has been neglected or underestimated, possibly as a result of the great influence of dominant utilitarian discourses like the New Public Management (Terpstra and Trommel, 2009). The large dark number of crimes and the limited preventive meaning of criminal law might cause one only to doubt the beneficial effects of criminal investigation. However, the rationality of criminal investigation by the police should not be confined to instrumental considerations; it should above all be sought in the moral and symbolic meaning it may have. It should define and confirm the distinction between good and evil. In this way it shows that the community (as represented by the police) will not let certain forms of behaviour pass.

Durkheim's approach provides a fundamentally different perspective on the social role of the police than the Weberian analysis. While the latter approach places the emphasis on the state's monopoly of violence, the curtailment of individual freedom and a negative relation between the state (as represented by the police) and the citizenry, Durkheim's way of thinking focuses attention on the moral meaning of the police, the contribution that the police may make to important social values and the confirmation of standards of good and evil. When Weber views the state and the police primarily as focusing on the regulation of violence, Durkheim is more interested in the moral ties that contribute to social order (Grutzpalk, 2002).

While Weber and Bittner's approach leaves an important contradiction unresolved between their definition of the police and their view of 'good policing', Durkheim's analysis raises other, equally important questions. For instance, Durkheim does not seem to recognise sufficiently the important difference between the morality of the state and the morality that dominates society. Moreover, he seems to suggest a rather homogeneous moral basis for society. Both issues raise the question of the extent to which Durkheim's analysis may still be valid, especially in a late modern society with a high level of cultural pluriformity and differentiation. However, the study by Loader and Mulcahy (2003) shows that even in a late-modern society with a high level of social and cultural fragmentation, the police still have an important social and moral function. Their study also shows that in contemporary society the specific meaning of the police may differ for different segments of the population.

Other studies demonstrate that even groups of citizens who traditionally have a problematic relation with the police often recognize the symbolic meaning ascribed to the police. This may

result in a more-or-less ambivalent attitude to the police: not a completely negative attitude or anti-police culture, but rather a cynicism that is closely related to unfulfilled, but high expectations about the police and the protection they should offer (see for example Carr et al., 2007).

4. Legitimacy of the police: two dimensions

The differences between the Durkheimian and Weberian perspectives on the police can be illustrated by the different consequences they have for the interpretation of the concept of police legitimacy. As has often been noted before, the concept of police legitimacy is a central issue in police studies, not only because in many countries for the last few decades it has become increasingly difficult for the police to maintain or restore their legitimacy, but also because legitimacy is a complex, multi-dimensional concept (Richardson, 1985; Suchman, 1995; Terpstra and Trommel, 2009). Following the analysis of Beetham (1991) on its main lines, but using a somewhat different terminology, it can be stated that the legitimacy of the police can be distinguished in two principal components: social and normative legitimacy, the former corresponding with the Durkheimian perspective and the latter with the Weberian one.

Social legitimacy provides a framework that explains and justifies the police to citizens (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1966). The police's social legitimacy may be seen as effective if people understand the authority of the police and accept that the police determine their behaviour. Social legitimacy also provides citizens a basis for trust in the police's motives and a belief in their capacity to protect them (Tyler, 2004).

The other dimension, normative legitimacy, is not related to the extent to which citizens accept the authority of the police or trust them. Normative legitimacy is based on fundamental principles and values, of which legality may be seen as one part. However, normative legitimacy may also be based on such values as justice, the correct treatment of citizens, and human dignity. The four criteria of a democratic police force, as formulated by Bayley (2006) (adherence to the rule of law, observance of human rights, external accountability and service responsiveness), may be seen as an elaboration of the normative legitimacy of the police.

Legitimacy of the police demands that they meet the demands of both the normative and the social dimension (Beetham, 1991; Van der Vijver, 2006). These two dimensions differ fundamentally, though. Normative police legitimacy is based on the rationality of law and other formal principles. The main assumption of normative police legitimacy is a (potential) adverse relation between the police and the citizenry, a relation characterised by mutual mistrust. The main function of normative legitimacy is to limit the police's use of force and coercion and to protect citizens against what Weber called the diabolic powers that can be related to any use of violence. This form of legitimacy fits with the quite negative relation that Weber assumed between the state (police) and (large numbers of) citizens. In his view – which, as has already been mentioned, was probably influenced by the social unrest and political tensions of the early Weimar Republic in the months following the First World War – the state and the citizens are in an antagonistic relationship, in which mutual identification and common values are virtually absent. In this view the legitimacy of the police must primarily be achieved from above, with tradition, charismatic leadership or formal rational rules providing the main source of legitimacy. Such a legitimacy may operate independently of any approval by the citizenry and with no basis in shared fundamental values.

In contrast, and following Durkheim's perspective, social legitimacy refers to common values shared between the police and the citizens and presumes a different relation between the

state and the citizenry. Social legitimacy is not a static, steady phenomenon and is not based on fixed norms. Social legitimacy is situationally bound and has to be produced and reproduced in permanently changing relations between the police and the citizens. Social legitimacy requires police and citizens to (re)create a mutual relationship and try to cooperate. Only in that way will it be possible to make common values visible and will the police be able to acquire and activate their social legitimacy.

5. Conclusion

The Weberian and Durkheimian approaches represent two different perspectives on the police. Each of these perspectives focuses on a different core element of the police: the capacity to use force and the moral-symbolic function that the police have. These perspectives differ not only in an analytical-explanatory sense, but also in a normative one.

An important question, of course, is how these two perspectives relate. In other words, what is the relation between the police's ability to use force and their moral-symbolic function? One might assume that it may be possible to reconcile these two elements, at least in part. In this view, in a democratic constitutional society (*Rechtsstaat*) a range of strategies is available to maintain social order: from the enforcement of norms through persuasion and regulation, an appeal to authority, and ultimately to the legitimate use of force or coercion. Although these strategies differ to the extent that they infringe on citizens' life and privacy and as a result may cause resistance, they also refer to and presuppose each other. Following this line of reasoning, one might expect that persuasion may be more effective if there is an awareness that force may be used to support it. Similarly, one might assume that the use of force will probably be perceived as more legitimate if it is preceded by other visible, less drastic ways of restoring social order.

However, the two core elements of the police may also conflict and may be in tension. One might expect that a strong emphasis on the use of force may undermine the symbolic-moral function of the police. The relations between these two elements (switching between interdependence and conflict) concern a fundamental aspect of modern policing.

Moreover, a comparison between the two approaches shows that these two elements may refer to different interpretations and evaluations of the relations between the state (the police) and the citizens. Weber's emphasis on the use of force refers to a negative interpretation between the state and the citizens, where citizens are viewed as a serious risk to the state. Durkheim's approach assumes common values and a common morality between citizens and the state. Here the meaning of the police is seen in the articulation of this morality.

Although both Weber and Durkheim were writing about a century ago and must be seen within the social and political context of their times, their analyses are still relevant today. Their relevance may even have grown now that in some countries (like the Netherlands) police policies may fall under the influence of a more socially exclusive and punitive political climate (Pakes, 2005, 2006). This change has been propelled by increasing mistrust of certain segments of the population (especially certain groups of migrants and people professing the religion of Islam), which are increasingly seen as a risk to Western civilization and the democratic state. Just as in the days of Weber, this mistrust engenders a call for a style of policing that is based more on the use and threat of force.

Both Weber and Durkheim left an analysis that is relevant in circumstances like these. Weber warned against the strong, instrumental use of force and called attention to the moral dilemmas that are inherent in any use of the 'diabolic powers' of force and violence. Durkheim shows us

that policing − seen only as the use of force − is a one-sided view. It should not just be a matter of coercion; fundamentally, it is a matter of morality and a search for common values that bind citizens in a society. In an age when a populist rhetoric of social exclusion and punitive sanctions seems to have a new appeal in some parts of Western Europe, the analysis and message of these two classical sociologists have a new and urgent relevance.

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