

PULL FACTORS TO BECOME A POLICE OFFICER: A PSP PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Joining the Civil Service through the Civil Service Exam is one of the most sought-after careers in Pakistan. With each passing year number of CSS, aspirants are increasing. Among the Civil service, the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP) and the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) are most sought after due to the power and nuisance value that these cadres promise. This paper has tried to address why PSP remains a preferred choice and what are the motivating factors that PSP officers have when they opt for the Police service of Pakistan. The study has adopted an interpretivist epistemology with a constructivist ontological stance and has applied the method of thematic analysis of interviews conducted with Police officers of different ranks in the police service of Pakistan. The study found that the PSP officers view themselves to be in a superior position compared to other groups, the motivations for joining police service include the perception of superiority, power, protection, nuisance value and ability to influence society through police office. The study also found that the PSP officer perceives himself/herself differently. The motivations of noncommissioned officers are however different.

Keywords: Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), Civil Service of Pakistan, Police Reforms, Civil service Reforms, Interpretivism, interpretivist research, constructivism, constructivist ontology. Selection of Police as a Career. Public sector employment.

INTRODUCTION

Civil service in Pakistan is the most sought-after carrier for young graduates in Pakistan. Given Pakistan's colonial history, the massive size of government, the Government's footprint in the economy and job security offered by the Public sector employment, government jobs do enjoy special preference in the minds and hearts of the youth. Public job preference is one of the reasons that youth who have acquired good research degrees and have bright prospects settle for low-pay scale public jobs. In the case of Pakistan Public sector employment is offered by the Federal; Public Service Commission at the Federal level and Provincial Public Service Commissions at the Provincial levels. The FPSC also conducts the CSS examination every year to recruit for the Pakistani bureaucracy. The aspirants have to apply via forms where among other things they mention the preferences of the constituted group that they wish to join. The top preference of all the candidates include the Police service of Pakistan (henceforth, PSP) or the Pakistan Administrative Services (henceforth, PAS) as their groups of choice. This study has attempted to find the motivations of joining the PSP, by interviewing the officers who have joined PSP, passed the training and are posted in different positions. Junior rank officers were also interviewed to see that is there a difference in motivating factors? . There were four female officers also included in the sample including two CSP's and two junior commissioned officers. Thematic analysis was used to discern patterns and see the common motivating factors. The study adopted an interpretivist epistemological approach with a constructivist ontology.

Structure of the Police service Of Pakistan

The PSP has a para- military type strict hierarchical structure. The ranks of the officers' start from entry as Assistant superintended of Police (ASP), who is a BPS -17 officer. The Superintended of Police (SP) is in BPS-18, while the SSP or Assistant Inspector General (Asst. IG) is in BPS-19, the Deputy inspector General (DIG) is in BPS-20 while the Additional. Inspector General (Add. IGP) is in BPS 21 finally the IG is in BPS-22 which is the highest of the police ranks,

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The insignias of the PSP are exactly the same as those of the Army ranks with which they equate themselves with too †, for example ASP is equivalent to a Captain with three stars on the each shoulder, the SP is equivalent to major with a crescent and a star, SSP equals a Colonel with two stars, a crescent and star, the DIG equals a Brigadier while Add. IGP and IGP correspond to Major General and Lieutenant General.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Job security is the most important factor for those who join public service. It is the rather the major factor behind seeking public sector employment/ along with social status that the public sector employment promises, while motivating factor for those who wish to join private sector are different such as the handsome salary packages, opportunities of growth, and better living standards etc. (Khan & Musleh-ud-din, 2009). According to the FPSC annual report, the PAS and PSP remained the most sought after groups. Both these groups promise status, job security, social status and many other advantages which are reason for aspirants seeking employment as CSP's and being allocated in the PAS and PSP. It is important to see and understand the reason behind the youth opting for these groups. Is it just the pay structure or job security? In (Khan & Musleh-ud-din, 2009) the authors have interviewed the aspirants and recorded their perception. The current study has taken it a step further and has interviewed those who have actually been allocated in the PSP and have been posted as officers. The Civil Service Structure of Pakistan has colonial roots (Abdul Qadir, 2011) and it is therefore appropriate to discuss it in the context of post colonialism to unearth why the youth want to join the police service of Pakistan.

The colonial origins of the Police

India had a governance system of its own under different dynasties including the pre-Muslim era and the Muslim era. these dynasties had put in place well-functioning judicial systems, decentralized Governance and also Police structures (Welch & Crane, (1983) (Arif and waqar,2016) (Hakeem et al 2012) (Munir,2012). The type of Government and the pattern of state that the Indians had grown accustomed to was very different from the one the British brought with them. The Indians has been accustomed to a decentralized non-interventionist state that was not so visible in all walks of life. This characteristic remained true for the Muslim as well as the pre Muslim period. The British on the other hand introduced a state system which was intervening in the daily life of the citizens and was visible everywhere with the "police" being a symbol of state visibility (Kaviraj,2005).

The Indian police was first established in Sind(h) by Sir Charles Napier as a force to handle and repel the attacks of the locals on the British Trade convoys. The force was modeled after the dreaded Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) model that was used by England to control the hostile Ireland.

The RIC was known for its cruelty. According to some studies the RIC model was perfected in India. later on following the 1857 war of independence / Mutiny, the India Civil Service Act and the Indian Colonial Police act of 1861 were passed. The police and the Civil service had enjoyed unbridled powers from then on and continued to do so after independence. The colonial structures have persisted making the civil service especially the Pakistan Administrative service and the Police Service of Pakistan a preferred choice for those who join them,

Literature on policing in Pakistan can be seen as revolving around three main

- a) The Colonial Legacy and Police Reforms.
- b) The Corruption prevalent in the Police Service in Pakistan, its causes and implications.
- c) The perceptions of the society towards the Police.

The colonial legacy

After independence Pakistan adopted the same structure as was prevalent in the British Raj. The structure was taken as it is (Qadir 2011). In 1861, following the War of Independence/mutiny the Indian Civil Service Act was passed in the British parliament. The Civil Service was later renamed as the "imperial service of India". The Police Act was also passed around the same time. Although during the British time the police was not part of the Civil Service but later on the after partition, Pakistan added the police to the CSS groups.

† During the discussion the respondents tried to equate their ranks with the Army. Dig called himself Brigadier General, there were many other such instances too.

Police has acted as powerful institution and has remained an organization to be feared (Fida, 2020)[‡]. The 1861 act has remained in practice for the past 70 years or so. There have been number of attempts to change it but none have been successful in total. With the colonial Act still in place, and the Pakistani penal and criminal procedures being the same as those set up by the British, the Police has changed a little. The Police System that Pakistan inherited was in no way fit for administration of the Pakistani society which had recently become independent (Imam, 2011).

The system became more oppressive with time, keeping its colonial character intact (Imam, 2011). The society of Pakistan had been a society where there were divisions, military rule, and political incompetence's. The internal divisions made it possible for the elite to control the Civil Service and Civil Institutions even more (Malik, 1997). The police, in principle should be controlling crime and preventing it, but due to elite control, corruption and its colonial heritage which it has maintained to this day, it's not able to perform as a police force should (Malik, 1997). The police are viewed as a symbol of coercion and something that needs to be feared (Haroon, 2004).

Corruption in the Police Service of Pakistan

Corruption is not just "institutions specific or country specific issue rather a Global issue (Dogar, 2017). Corruption has become a normal thing in Pakistan as is the case with many other developing countries. The society has normalized it and it's not looked at as something criminal rather a part of daily routine (Malik and Qureshi, 2021), (Raza et al 2015). The police are no exception to corruption. In fact, the police and judiciary topped the list the in being the most corrupt institution in the country according to the Transparency International Pakistan's (TIP) various reports [§]. The Punjab police in particular was found to be the most corrupt among the provincial departments but on the whole the, the police were reported as being the most corrupt institution in the country. The police service has been found to be among the most corrupt institution for past many years. For instance Malik and Qureshi (2021) , in their study on the social, political and economic causes of Police corruption quote the TIP report ,of 2017 where in Pakistan was ranked 117th out of 180 countries in corruption. Bribes are common practice and police, an organization that is supposed to fight Crime, has been found to be part of and in some incidents using their police power directly to extort, money and even loot** .

Corruption is complex phenomenon and it cannot be understood on a mere ranking system or surveys. It's a complicated interconnected web of different social political and economic factors and hence needs to be understood in that perspective (Madichie, 2005). Therefore, we can say that Police corruption in Pakistan needs to be studied within the context of its history, socio-cultural dimensions, political influence and role of police in politics and how the Pakistani culture and socio-political norms makes it further complex and interconnected. For instance, Malik and Qureshi (2021) posit that police corruption has to be understood in this fashion and that the corruption in Police has been "institutionalized" and even legitimized. Corruption not only makes the police loose its integrity in eyes of the public but also hinders efficient policing (Madichie, 2005). Police corruption refers to the use of police authority for personal gains, the gains could be financial, economic, social, and political (Punch, 2009). Acts of Bribery, acceptance of bribes, as well as criminal acts like extortion in which the PSP has been alleged to be involved, embezzlement of public funds, use of public facilities for private gains etc.. These are some of the major ways of corruption in the Police Service of Pakistan (Neuburn, 1999) (Roeburk and Barker ,1974). Taking Bribes or asking for Bribes is the first image that comes to mind when talking about police corruption but there are several other types of corruption as discussed by a study conducted by Sayed and Bruce, 1998 cited by many others such as Oluwaniyi (2011) Waite & Allen (2003), Malik and Qureshi, (2021) wherein they have six explained eight types

- 1) **Misuse of Police authority:** Here the police misuse authority not doing something illegal but using their legal powers for achieving personal gains.
- 2) **Kickbacks:** when someone is arrested, the police overpower him or her. The arrest bring with it an opportunity for getting hold of the possessions of the arrestee.
- 3) **Shakedowns:** Acceptance of Bribes for not making arrest or initiating any police procedures against someone who has committed a crime.

[‡] <https://pide.org.pk/research/doing-away-with-the-1861-police-act/>

[§] <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2390359/police-judiciary-top-most-corrupt-in-pakistan-survey>

** <https://www.desiblitiz.com/content/how-corrupt-is-pakistans-police>

- 4) **Bribes:** The acceptance of bribes in return for illegal protection to criminals. The Pakistani police like many other policing forces in developing world has this problem.
- 5) **The fix:** undermining or compromising criminal investigations.
- 6) **Direct Criminal activities:** using of police power to harass businessmen, the community and even be involves in acts of dacoit etc.
- 7) **In-house Bribes:** Taking bribes for giving other police officers choice postings, transfers etc.
- 8) **Flaking:** adding of evidence or creation of false evidence.

Malik & Qureshi, (2021) argue that police corruption starts from the easy tasks or situation which are not as big in magnitude. It's the petty bribes and corruption and from there they move to the most serious and destructive kinds of corruption.

The perception of the Society about the police.

Public cooperation is essential for good policing. Good policing models in the world are based on the consensual policing and community support. There are many examples, the British metropolitan unarmed police can be cited as one example. There exists a trust deficit in between the public and the Police service of Pakistan. This is one of the reason why every police service reform has tried to introduce this in its agenda. The aloofness of the police from the public is rooted in its colonial origins. Post-independence the trust deficit has been seen throughout the history of post-colonial Pakistan. Police is viewed as corrupt inefficient, unprofessional and biased with no regard or respect for the public, (Farhat et al 2016) reported these findings for a district in the Conflict ridden Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

Police stations in Pakistan which are supposed to be spaces where one can report cruelty are often the very places where some of the cruelest and heinous acts are experienced by the ones who go there to file a complaint (Jamal, 2011). According to transparency international report that in 2010 84% of the respondents reported police to be one of the cruel and least trustworthy public institution in the country.

Jackson (2014) also finds the corruption prevalent in the police from the PSP officer cadre to the constable level and their inefficiency to control crime as leading cause of distrust between the public and the police. The study was conducted in the city of Lahore. The public doesn't trust the police and has a hostile view of them. Moreover, the police have established itself as a force to be feared not one that is there to protect. Shabbir et al (2018) reported similar findings for a district in Punjab province with a stratified sample that included lawyers, doctors, students, businessmen, educated and illiterate/semi-literate respondents, they found that the general perception about the police was that it was a corrupt institution, with bad and unacceptable behavior, neglecting its duty and being controlled by those who held political and economic power. Khoso et al 2018 found that even juveniles, had a negative impression of the police since they had witnesses police in criminal activities in the vicinity of their neighborhood.

The Police image in the Pakistani society is not a positive one nor are they looked upon as Civil Servants. They are perceived as a corrupt paramilitary force that gains legitimacy through outmoded colonial legislations, and use of force. There is no cooperation or consensual policing model in place in Pakistan. The people in general do not trust the police and view it negatively.

CONCLUSION

The literature on the Police service of Pakistan can be broadly termed as revolving around three major themes.

- 1) Colonial Legacy and post-independence reforms
- 2) Corruption
- 3) Public image of the police.

The last one has not received as much importance in the literature as it should but the colonial legacy, police reforms and corruption prevalent have been of special interest to researchers who are working in the fields of Governance, Civil service Reforms, Criminal justice, and criminology.

The focus of the studies has either been on the legal side or the historical lineage of the institution. However, the literature is scant on the perceptions of the police officer regarding the colonial history, how does a police officer view the colonial heritage, the corruption prevailing in the modern day institutions of police and the perception of police in the society. The studies put up an emphatic case that the colonial heritage still explains many issues if the PSP today. The literature also seems to

be in consensus that Corruption prevails at all levels in the police service of Pakistan and that the police as an institution doesn't enjoy a positive image in the society. Given all these findings, still the PSP remains the top most option for CSS aspirant's warrants scientific investigation. This study has tried to fill this gap.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an interpretivist approach. A Researcher needs to clarify and clearly state his/her epistemological orientation and ontological stance. It is the first step that a researcher has to take while embarking on the journey (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The ontological assumption and the epistemological lenses will then determine that whether the approach of the researcher is interpretivist or not. If a researcher takes an interpretivist approach he or she will assume the ontological stance positing that reality is not a concrete construction neither is it definite. Rather the reality, or what one perceives to be reality is a product of actions and interactions of human beings (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 14). Reality, particularly social reality is the way the "people define it" as talked by Neumann (1997 p.69) therefore, there is no objective world and that is the key ontological assumption of interpretivist approaches. Context plays an important role in ontological assumptions of the interpretivist researcher. The current study adopted "constructivism" as its ontological stance with an "interpretivist Epistemological orientation".

The question of Epistemology, the epistemological orientation according Guba and Lincoln (1993, p.108) should be in consistence with the ontological stance. There needs to be a constancy between the ontology and the epistemology.

A narrative study

The study adopted Narrative analysis as its research methodology. Narrative Analysis can be best described as a "Process" where in the participants of the study construct meaning through their personal experiences. The researcher then communicates the interpretation as dual layered entity where-in the first layer the participants interpret their lived experiences, and in the second layer the researchers interprets the "narration" of the participants, to convey meaning. The researcher actually focuses on how the narrative was constructed.

Tools of data collection

In-depth Key informant interviews. Were used as tool of Data Collection. The field diaries and recording (where possible) were then used for the transcription process. The Codes were assigned in an iterative process of reading and re-reading the transcripts. Themes were taken out of the data and those sub-themes were also identified leading to final conclusions

FINDINGS

Superiority

The PSP officers who had joined the PSP and opted it as their first choice had a sense of superiority. In their minds the PSP was superior to all other civil service groups. The PSP officers considered PSP group to be the most superior service in the country. The respondents had this urge to make the listener, the society and the Civil service agree to this perception that the police is the most superior of all the constituted groups of the civil service.

Additional IGP: "the best are recruited for police service and the DMG (PAS)."

DIG 1: "the best of the lot are selected for police service"

DIG 2: "I joined the police because I scored the highest"

ASP 1: "it's the best group in the Civil service"

ASP 2: "selecting the police was the best thing that happened to me and finally my prayers were answered and my intense hard work was rewarded".

ASP 3: "...our training, our vision, our attitude is different from all the others. In the Academy our teacher told us that look the garbage was thrown out and couldn't clear the exam, then the Charlies were allocated to other groups, in the police service we have the cream of the nation, the most intelligent minds of this country and the most competent are able to join police"

ASP5: "Being the best group of the civil service there are certain expectations from us "

Given the fact that police has often scored highest or remained among the top 3 , in-terms of corruption it was really illogical to see a senior police officer saying that he believed it's the most

disciplined service. And that It's prestigious and only the best join it. He tries to emphasize the prestigious with adding the phrase "the most prestigious".

The transparency international ranks it among top most corrupt institutions in the country yet its officer's think of it as the best. Throughout my field work, I couldn't summon up the courage to ask this question directly from the Police officers of PSP. It was mainly because such questions were never taken kindly when I asked so I had to ask these questions in an indirect way. The officers kept on repeating the superiority of the police, and this was a common pattern in all the interviews. There appeared a commonality of training in this regard.

Another officer of the rank of SP said that "*Being the best group in the civil service*" points to the fact that the police is actually not considering itself superior than the rest of the society but the rest of the Civil Service Groups as well. This pattern was also found in the conversations of many other police officers as well. They consider the other civil services groups as below them. it is unclear as to what "*the best*" or "*no 1*" actually means to the police officers but judging from the context and the some of the explanations it becomes obvious that their criterion is "power" and influence over society. The Pakistani legal system is not much of help when it comes to protection of the individuals and their civil rights. This idea of being able to shoot someone and then get away with it without consequences, pound someone's vehicle and then answer to no one, the fact that "I" am accountable to no one are the consequences of this sense of superiority.

While all of them stressed the importance of the Police citing its pivotal role in the Pakistani society, some were very open for example a DIG said the following

"Those who clear the CSS^{††} exam are the most brilliant minds of the nation. Those who clear CSS exam, their intellect, their thinking and their analysis are all of very high quality. Its unmatched by anyone the society. The garbage is filtered out at different stages. Then after this filtration, the cream is left and from that cream officers of Police and PAS^{‡‡} are selected. so now you tell me that, the useless couldn't even pass the exam, the average passed the exam but couldn't be allocated, then the cream was allocated to different constituted groups and from among that cream the ones who were the most brilliant, mature and competent were allocated in Police and Pakistan Administrative Services."

Rural background

The socio-economic background also has an impact of employment choice. For instance many respondents reported that it was their rural background which necessitated their joining of the police. A constable, said that

"I belong to a low caste, but since I am in the police there are many higher caste people who have good relations with me, and it because I may prove handy someday".

A DIG said *"...I come from a rural background....my rank is enough to keep my family safe"*. Similarly other respondents reported the rural background as one of the reasons for joining the police force.

My interview guide consisted of questions about socio-economic background. The respondents who mentioned the words "*power*", "*fear*" "*safety*", all belonged to rural backgrounds. The mentioning of police superiority was more of an utterance seen in the respondents with rural backgrounds, the respondents with urban backgrounds were more focused of the psychological stress of the police job.

Police strikes fear in the hearts of everyone: While rationalizing their choice of the PSP officers also made frequent references to the "fear" factor. The PSP officers had a perception that the Police was feared by the society at large and that is what gave them Idea of superiority. The PSP officers, cherished the fact that they were feared. It was this "*Fear*" that the people had in their hearts which made the

^{††} Central Superior Service Examination conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission to select officers for different constituted groups. it's very sought after exam since the perks associated with becoming a civil servant are huge. The Civil service position often is such that the armed forces have a quota in it so officers from armed forces also apply on that quota. They are directly called for interviews. This also puts into question the perception that the Armed Forces are the elite group. if it had been, why would someone leave the army, air force or navy for Civil service?

^{‡‡} Pakistan Administrative services previously known as a District management group (DMG). one of the most powerful constituted groups in Pakistani Bureaucracy

officers make PSP as their first choice and were happy to be selected in it. In many ways it was this societal perception that made them feel superior too. An ASP said during the interview

“ASP 3: Police is one of the most feared and important institution in the country. It’s sort of an army without the army discipline. In police every one is a General in his own domain. So it was the power in the police group, its power to change and make an impact that made me go for it. I had fancied police service since childhood I wanted to join the mighty police service of Pakistan and i have joined it, this is one of the greatest success one can have in life. People envy me, i can see how they look at my uniform and me when I go to some public place of common people. All in all PSP is the best service and is the best constituted group in the Central Superior Service. I would say it’s the most superior group in the Central Superior Service”.

“Fear” is a feeling of threat, pain and danger. The theoretical foundations of a police force don’t rhyme with the word “fear”. Yes, no doubt the criminals should fear it, the police should work as an institutions that deters crime but why should it be feared by the society? For someone saying this there can be many motivations or many things happening at the back of his/her mind.

Power

Power is a factor in attracting young people or anyone into the service. The Power that the Police as a state organization enjoys is unrivaled by other civilian agencies. The use of the word “mighty” is often only attributed to God or when the intention is to show the ability to use power. The police are not only given power but have an unchecked use of power as well. This is another factor in making it behave as the most superior of all civil institutions. Might represents the numbered strength, for instance the Punjab police is the biggest police force in the world (as one senior DIG said during an interview) secondly it points to-- the extreme nature of power, power with no bounds. And on these attributes its one of the greatest success of the officer’s life.

Most of these answers where in the respondents advocated the superiority of the police were in response to questions such as

Why did you join the Police service of Pakistan? what do you think about the system of recruitment thought he central superior service competitive exam? what were the motivation behind your choice to become a PSP?

This narrative of being the best and being the most in control, the well trained was present there in all the interviews. Almost all respondents were viewing themselves and their organization from this position of power.

One of my respondents who was a DIG said *“joining the police was my first priority, the commission only lets those join the police in who they feel are responsible, hey! Everything depends on us so the best go to the police, I come from a rural background. My rank alone in enough to keep my family safe since in rural settings one needs to be a position of power so for me joining Civil service in Police or DMG was a necessity”*

The PSP believes that the PSP as a constituted group is the best choice any one can make. Infact, they believe that they are the most systematic of all the others and are intellectually superior. Another reason is the fear that the police uniforms puts-in, in the hearts of others. For example, the high ranking police officers says that *“I come from a rural background. My rank alone in enough to keep my family safe since in rural settings one needs to be a position of power so for me joining Civil service in Police or DMG (PAS) was a necessity”*. If this is the thinking of the top brass, it can be assumed that that the thinking prevails in the junior officers as well.

By the Rank of DIG, an officer has been sent, to many foreign trainings. Some of my respondent’s even had UN missions and served in many different areas. They had high level trainings. at some elite colleges like the National Defense University and the National Management College. Yet the thinking had remained the same. The desire of being feared, and if someone wants to be feared because of his/her public position, it would mean that he or she has shown or has the ability to use the public resources and power, for his/her own benefits.

The narrative strengthened as I moved further, another senior PSP officer talked about police superiority in the following ways.

“ we who join the police and DMG (PAS) ^{§§} are actually the best of the people who have passed the civil service examination in fact it is our superior intellect that gives us the edge. You will never find stupid police officers or DMG officers because owing to their higher caliber they are placed in these groups. As far as intellect goes we as police officer have more command on understand the right form of security policy needed but we can't exercise that because of the Army and the flawed structure which Lets DMG and Secretariat group officers get into the ministries. This country needs police danda if you want to make it productive state.”

The officer believed that police was the best organization that the country had. They said subliminally and often right-out that the people who are selected are intellectual geniuses of the time. This belief is strengthened by the Commissions high criterion for the Police Service and the District Management Group. These two groups are the most powerful groups in the country, all CSS aspirants want to join these groups since the charm and nuisance value of these jobs is quite greater. But the image of the Job, its importance is further strengthened in the CSA and in the Police academy later on. the first things taught to them is how to behave as an officer and among that the first lesson is to teach them that you are the best of the best and better than all the other youth of your age.

This sense of being the best gives the police a false idea of Power, in their thinking they think in terms of being more powerful than the rest. “Intellect” wasn't a frequent word but words like “the best”, “the highest scorers” etc. were.

“in our organization, even if you are going to write an invitation to someone for a meeting, and you miss a comma in your note, or you make a punctuation error, you will then see the wrath of your boss”.

“The proper use of English language is very much taken care of, English being an official language is given much of the importance even during entry exams”

It's difficult to understand that in a in a security organization such as the police, the punctuation marks are taken so seriously. The strong emphasis on the use of English language, the accent that the officers tried to adopt and the way they spoke with commanding voice in English all pointed to the thinking or perception of the police mind, where the police officer thinks of himself or herself as better and more competent compared to the other groups in the Civil service and the public.

Social status

“if I were in Foreign service, a petty constable could stop me and even order me” while now just the glimpse of my protocol signals the checkpoint from far away who is coming”. “The Police has made me a more respected person. Everywhere that I go, people respect me, my views matter , even in my family my elders listen to what I say”.

The ASP, justifies his employment by quoting a petty officer at the check point. It was again an insight that the officers have been trained to look within this narrow thinking however his statement and the statement of others before him showed another pattern too and that was of the “nuisance value” value of the police job. It is a reflection of the level of penetration of the police mentality in the Pakistani Society. The Job is itself sought after. And the reason is the power that it offers, power over the people. It's also interesting to note that the family members aren't criminal neither is the police officer able to give concessions to criminal that easily but still police job is sought after.

A female ASP said

“I am a totally changed person now, I finally am able to breathe free air and have fallen in love with this country, my entire family is proud that I have been able to become part of the best bureaucracy in the world. I can really be the agent of change””I was on my under-training posting before graduating and many girl's whom I met in my visit to schools and colleges saw mw in uniform and wanted to be like me , it's a feeling, you can't understand, I can't express this feeling”

It's unclear what the metrics are of the police service of Pakistan training and on a broader level the metrics of the Civil Service Academy based on which it puts this in the minds of the inductees that they are the best. What is it that makes them the best? For instance, the Pakistan railways is totally Managed by the Civil Service Officers, there is a constituted group for the railways known as the

^{§§} District management group recently renamed as Pakistan Administrative service PAS is constituted group of the Pakistani Civil service. The junior most officers at this group and of the police group are the senior most powerful officers in a district.

“Pakistan railways group” yet the Railways has deteriorated over time. There is a government postal service yet the private companies have taken away the market, people seldom use Pakistan POST as preferred service unless they’re compelled to by the government. Given the dismal state of affairs it becomes very difficult to comprehend the narrative of “being the best”.

If you want to rig the elections you need the police, if you want your influence to be felt you need the police, the police therefore become the most important institutions in the social setup of the country.

The police have now become accustomed to their role as a powerful institution. The above words are picked from an interview of an ASP, who had just been posted after his training. It’s odd to see a public sector employee boasting about how well does his organization perform in carrying out illicit activities. The police do feel superior since most of the affluent and higher caste members of the society reach up-to them. The police services are bought and sold in this country. This need of the higher caste people to have the police on their side also adds to the superiority complex of the police.

Policing is just as Public Sector Job

Most of the junior commissioned officers that were interviewed for the study also had different answers about joining the police force. it was a professional choice, a job that they were supposed to do. There was nothing special about it however later on when they became trained police officer the Job now became a profession and they therefore did not intend to change it for they looked at themselves as “professionals”.

An inspector said the following

Inspector 1: *“because they accepted me”, he laughed. Actually I had applied for other positions and posts as well but I got a job at the Police. There were other posts but I couldn't get through. Also applied for CSS but didn't clear that. However, after my training ended and my professional career in the force started, I did not want to leave it because by then I had invested enough time in Police and I had to capitalize on it and go ahead. As far as CSS is concerned, no doubt it was a dream but since I couldn't make it, I thought it's not the end of the world. I could still have a good career. I worked in the police and alhumdulillah. Now I am an inspector.*

“Because they accepted me” the officer had applied for other jobs and the Police was one of them. His educational qualifications were the same as the SP he was reporting to, he had a master’s degree in social sciences but to protect the identity of the respondent the details are not shared here. The person was looking for acceptance and just being able to get a job. He applied for various other posts and was able to join the police. So for him it wasn’t the superiority. He didn’t respond with any such comment that because it’s the best force or we are the best or most powerful. But a simple statement that he was searching for a job just like any individual of his age would and in that search he found a job at the police

As the person was searching for a Job, he applied for many other departments as well. Given that public sector Job appointments take a lot of time so it was by the end of training that some of his other application matured but he did not even appear for the finalization or to compete therein. The reason cited by him show professional attitudes rather than a thirst for power for instance he says *“by then I had invested enough time in Police and I had to capitalize on it and go ahead.”* The word “investment” means when you forgo something today and its fruits are reaped sometime in the future. So the officer had “invested” his time and energy and not to mention the opportunities forgone. And now that he was trained in the art of policing, he intended to have carrier in the police, make his training work and use what he has learnt in academy and apply it to the real world. The final words of the excerpt *“and go ahead”* shows an optimism. It’s a positive attitude that if I work well and I do my job professionally I will go ahead. One boundary can be seen here between the PSP and the junior commissioned officer. The particular JCO is talking about a proper carrier growth with no element of romantic superiority while his seniors who came through the civil service exam had very different views as discussed above. Wanting to go ahead is a sign of professionalism and a professional attitude.

Every job has intricacies and minute details. Attention to those details is important for the organization to perform its tasks well and meet its objectives in a better way. However the PSP since they come into the scene directly which can be aptly described as para-landing, they are not aware of many ground realities and in order to get accustomed to those realities they have to spend time in the field. Its is practically impossible to learn about these in few field postings. And therefore there is a dependence on the junior staff. The JNCOS are therefore frustrated to see a new person who has little

professional knowledge but has acquired power and is in a position of authority. The PSP therefore has a superiority complex in different levels, a) they being the best of the society b) they being the best of Entire Civil Service 3) they are superior and should be feared by their juniors, a strict control therefore has to be exercised on the juniors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The reasons for joining police service and the Police organizations vary from cadre to cadre. The PSP, the Cadre to which access is possible through the Civil Service Examination known as CSS has a very romantic view of the Policing job. They think of it as a position of high power and upon joining the group they become something different from the society. The PSP also considers its cadre as “superior” to all other cadres of the Civil Service. The PSP is of the opinion that they are the most important and most responsible of all the other groups of the Civil service and that only the best minds go to it. They refer to their choice of joining the police as the best choice and this is a fact that they openly acknowledge. Another reason for youth joining the police is the social status and the nuisance value that the job carries. It’s for the uniform, the protocol and fringe benefits that people opt for groups such as the PSP. It’s an organization that is being feared and has a hegemonic outlook, joining it in the rank of an officer does add to the social position of a person.

The reasons for the junior commissioned officer were different. For them policing was a job and that they had joined it because during their job search period, this was the one that clicked. Although except from one respondent the others said that they would still go for it even if choice is offered. For the male inspectors, the reasons were professional which meant that they had invested time in it and were best suited for the Job. While for the female JCO , it was more of social phenomenon since being police officials gave them a protection and an acceptance. There were only few PSP officers who looked beyond the “being best” and “superiority” narrative. I found the JCO to be more professional compared to the PSP officers inducted through the Civil Service Exam.

CONCLUSION

The reason why police is feared organization lie in understanding the colonial origins of the Policing organization in the sub-continent and the way it was designed. The police were designed to be an oppressive force securing British interests and maintaining order. It was not designed from a public friendly and public serving institution. The PSP has carried on its legacy from colonial times and since the acts governing it, the trainings and recruitment mechanisms and the lack of accountability has persisted from the colonial times therefore the police emerges as a very powerful force in the society. To improve the police and make it more professional there needs to be through revisit of policing laws and regulations, accountability mechanisms, and most importantly recruitment devices and training mechanisms.

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