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THE SOCIAL SERVICE ROLE STRAIN OF THE CHINESE POLICE

王小海 著

Pre-reform era (1949~1978)

Policing in the pre-reform era was guided by the mass line and manifested the mass line in which the work of the police was to work for the masses...Crime and social service problems were matters for the police as well as community and public.

"opening-up" and reform policy in 1978

Reform era (after 1978)

Since the economic reform, China has begun to modernize or professionalize its social work force to shoulder some of the social responsibility...the problematic practice of Chinese policing on social service, the increasing awareness of human ...underdevelopment of social work profession in ...the scarcity of empirical study have urged me to ...tive social service role strain(PSSRS) among ...lice officers.

中国法制出版社 CHINA LEGAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

Series in Security Governance and Social Order Maintenance

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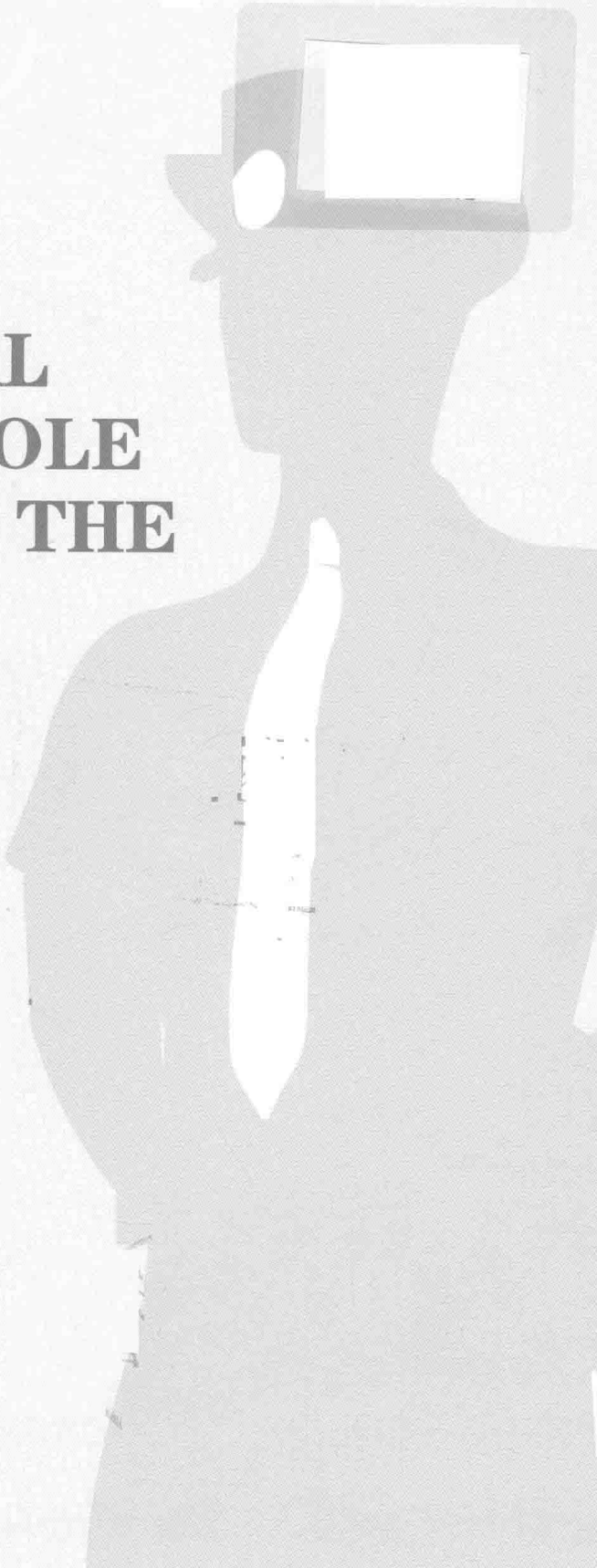

图书在版编目（CIP）数据

中国警察的社会服务角色张力研究 = The social service role strain of Chinese police：英文/王小海著. —北京：中国法制出版社，2015.2

ISBN 978-7-5093-6142-9

Ⅰ.①中… Ⅱ.①王… Ⅲ.①警察-社会服务-社会角色-研究-中国-英文 Ⅳ.①D631.13

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字（2015）第 038475 号

责任编辑：赵宏　　封面设计：周黎明

中国警察的社会服务角色张力研究

ZHONGGUO JINGCHA DE SHEHUI FUWU JUESE ZHANGLI YANJIU

著者/王小海

经销/新华书店

印刷/三河市紫恒印装有限公司

开本/710 毫米×1000 毫米　16　　印张/12.75　字数/213 千

版次/2015 年 2 月第 1 版　　2015 年 2 月第 1 次印刷

中国法制出版社出版

书号 ISBN 978-7-5093-6142-9　　定价：98.00 元

北京西单横二条 2 号　　值班电话：66026508

邮政编码 100031　　传真：66031119

网址：http://www.zgfzs.com　　**编辑部电话：66010483**

市场营销部电话：66033393　　**邮购部电话：66033288**

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To my beloved wife, Zhan Jie(Jenny) and our son, Wang Zi (Edward)

Acknowledgments

There can be no overstating the contributions of so many people who saw me through this book. Their support, kindness, and encouragement have granted me strength and wisdom to go through the toughness in this research. I hereby deliver my sincere gratitude to them.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my greatest gratitude to my wife, Zhan Jie(Jenny), who has always stood by me. She has assisted me on countless occasions by generously devoting her time and energy to support the family. Her kind support and encouragement made the completion of this book possible. Along with her, I want to acknowledge my newborn son, Wang Zi (Edward). He has always been the great sources of love and relief from my scholarly endeavors. In fact, all my family members have been steadfast and supportive. I am grateful to my dearest parents, grandpa, and parents-in-law for their love, understanding and encouragement during the whole process of this research.

Next, I wish to thank the funders who awarded the research grant. Here is a list of the research projects and the funders who made this book possible: Research Institution of Security Governance and Social Order; The Innovative and Experimental Area of Professionals Training Model in Criminalistics (2009); Higher Education Innovation Team Building Project of Chongqing City (KJTD201301), China; Chongqing Institutions of Higher Learning Center of Forensic Science Engineering and Research, Forensic Identification Center, College of Criminal Investigation, Southwest University of Political Science and Law, Chongqing 401120, China.

Last but not least, I sincerely appreciate the revision conducted by my research assistant, Miss Helen Zeng.

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List of Abbreviations

CCP: Chinese Communist Party
CPO: Community Patrol Officer
CPT: Community Patrol Team
FHFS: Four Have's and Four Should's
MLP: Mass Line of Policing
MPS: Ministry of Public Security
PSB: Public Security Bureau
SZPSB: Shenzhen Public Security Bureau
SEZ: Special Economic Zone
NSEZ: Non-special Economic Zone
PSSRS: Police Social Service Role Strain
PSSRA: Police Social Service Role Ambiguity
PSSRC: Police Social Service Role Conflict
PSSRIA: Police Social Service Role Inadequacy
PSSRIC: Police Social Service Role Incongruity
PSSRO: Police Social Service Role Overload
PSSRU: Police Social Service Under-compensation
PSSRSS: Police Social Service Role Stress

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Policing in the People's Republic of China (since 1949) has evolved through two periods (Lu, 1998): pre-reform era (1949-78) and reform era (after 1978). In the pre-reform era (nearly three decades before the implementation of the "open door" policy), China was a closed, stable and closely controlled society. The Chinese police developed successful policing strategies which depended on the police's strict surveillance over the static population through a heavily supervised household administration system as well as through a well-coordinated policing system with mass organizations' participation in the community (Lu & Miethe, 2001). Policing in the pre-reform era was guided by the mass line and manifested the mass line in which the work of the police was to work for the masses.① The Chinese police were actually not a professional force since neither regular crime reporting and recording practices nor standardized patrol and scientific crime fighting strategies were developed. Police officers were ill-trained and poorly equipped (Du, 1997). Policing in the pre-reform era was mass line of policing for mass line played an important role in the operation of policing (Zhong, 2009). Substantial emphasis was put on mass participation at the grassroots level since the Chinese police believed that policing would be fruitless without mass involvement under the Orthodox Marxist Ideology. Crime and social service problems were matters for the police as well as community and public (Luo, 1994).

With the implementation of "opening-up" and reform policy since 1978, China has become an open, diverse and complex society and has experienced a rapid increase

① The mass line was one approach of revolutionary leadership adopted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to educate and mobilize the people in the class struggle for the final establishment of the new People's Republic of China (Wong, 2009). The mass line approach refers to, "for the mass, relying on the mass, from the mass and to the mass".(Du & Zhang, 1990, p. 152) The mass line of policing has two layers: ideologically, mass line of policing advocates the commitment of serving the people wholeheartedly; operationally, mass line of policing emphasizes the close police-people cooperation.

in crime. This socio-economic change has pushed the Chinese police force to become professional, aggressive and responsive.

To begin with, a formalized, legalized and modernized police force was gradually established in the professionalization movement (Wong, 2009). In response to economic reform and growing crime problems, the Chinese police began to reform based on the professionalization. Firstly, the police organization formalized itself along functional lines to increase organizational efficiency. Secondly, police legislation and the conception of rule of laws have been gradually developed. Thirdly, the 110 emergency number system and police patrol have been widely established and used in cities. As a result, professionalization has established a model of Chinese policing in pursuit of rapid response, preventive patrol and professional crime fighting. However, as the police become more and more professionalized, they become more and more isolated from the people they serve and lose mass support.

Also, the Chinese police force has always adopted the heavy-handed policing strategies (especially "strike hard campaigns") to cope with increasing crime. During three national "strike hard campaigns" from 1983 to 2003, the Chinese police spoke highly of professionalization, specialization, harsh crime fighting, and became more offensive and punitive.

Lastly, the Chinese police force has always upheld the Communist ideological commitment to "serving the people wholeheartedly" . It has upheld "service to citizens" as a maxim ideologically and operationally and has taken a series of measures to provide better social service to the community in the course of police reform. In 1996 the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) enacted the policy of "four haves and four shoulds" (FHFS,), which delineated duties for the frontline police officers. According to the policy of FHFS, the police "should handle any crime problems you have" , "should help with any difficulties you have", "should save you from any dangers you have", and "should meet any needs you have". As a result, the social service workload of frontline police officers multiplied since launching the policy of FHFS. As Wang & Wong (2012) reported, the Chinese police force settled 11.35 million cases of social service nationwide in 2005. What was worse, some citizens mishandled the 110 emergency call service by calling to ask the police to send fresh flowers and buying breakfasts (Zhong, 2009). Pledging response, help, rescue upon all requests, the policy of FHFS has brought many problems to frontline police officers, who have become overloaded with social service work and have

suffered from police social service role strain (PSSRS).

Provision of social service is one of the most significant roles of the police. Many studies have demonstrated that the police spend most of their time providing social service to the public. As Greene and Klockars (1991, p. 273) have noted, "...virtually all introductory textbooks on policing now assert that 80 to 90 percent of police work is 'service-related' and less than 10 percent is 'crime-related'." According to the 1999 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data in the United States (Hickman & Reaves, 2001), the first and foremost function of one-fifth of police agencies was search and rescue-related, nearly 60 percent of the police undertook the task of animal control, nearly one-sixth of the police agencies were responsible for providing emergency and medical services and civil defense functions and about one-tenth of the agencies provided fire prevention services. However, "there has been relatively little research reported in the professional literature that deals directly with the service functions of the police... The lack of available and detailed data on police service activities reflects the low priority given to such efforts by the police and the public". (Langworthy & Travis, 1994, p. 273)

The rise of community policing has led to an emphasis on service orientation of police work. "Community policing is a new philosophy of policing based on the concept that police officers and private citizens working together in creative ways can help solve contemporary community problems related to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder, and neighborhood decay." (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990, p.7) The service orientation of community policing requires further delineation of the police social service role. Advocates of community policing urge active police participation in community problem-solving activities and a more emphatic concern with social service. As Blackmore (as cited in Gabor & Law, 1973, p.386), the ex-police chief of San Jose (California, United States), has stated:

> The police cannot operate in a vacuum. We can no longer neglect the social problems that are so prevalent in our community. For many years we have just gone along with the tide of social problems. We are finally beginning to realize that the police cannot remain passive bystanders.... The police must engage in service work.

With the development of economic reform since 1978, the industrialization

and urbanization that accompanied the economic reforms in China resulted in many social problems, such as unemployment, migration homelessness, juvenile crime, drug addiction, and mental illness (Xia & Guo, 2002). The rapid growth of the population leads to a huge demand for social services that can hardly be met because of the scarcity of resources. These significant social changes reflected the increasing awareness and concern of human rights and encouragement of individual responsibility for one's well-being. The Chinese government began to emphasize the importance of respecting and safeguarding individual human rights and intended to adopt a series of effective measures to develop human rights through provision of social welfare. More social welfare programs, such as compulsory education, counseling services, and legal consultancy are delivered or sponsored by the government. At the same time, the Chinese government began to adapt its communist ideology by proposing the 'socialist humanism' that incorporates the Western values of individual rights, dignity and equality. The balance between individual rights and collective concern is highly emphasized to ensure that the individual human rights, to a certain extent, can be appropriately safeguarded.

In the pre-reform era, the Chinese government was mainly responsible for the social service needs of its citizens. In urban areas, social service delivery was mainly undertaken by the residence committees or work units to which all Chinese citizens were attached. Since the economic reform, China has begun to modernize or professionalize its social work force to shoulder some of the social responsibility. Nevertheless, as a developing socialist country, social welfare and social work services in China are still under-developed.

Firstly, the social services delivery is deeply influenced by related political organizations and ideologies. Social services are mainly provided by various departments of government, such as the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Civic Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Labor. The non-governmental organizations, especially the social work force, play a marginal role in social services delivery. Political ideologies, like Communism, Marxism and Maoism, are still the official political ideologies in social work practice (Leung, 2007). The professional social work and social services are seen as an instrument in maintaining social stability and harmony. Without government's support, especially the Chinese Communist Party, the development of social work profession in China would be very difficult.

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