

SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL MECHANISMS OF STATE–SOCIETY COOPERATION IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS BODIES

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Abstract. This article examines the socio-philosophical foundations and practical mechanisms through which the state and society can cooperate in ensuring the social protection of employees of internal affairs bodies. The study proceeds from the premise that social protection in law-enforcement institutions is not reducible to monetary allowances, pensions, housing guarantees, medical care, or compensation for occupational risks; rather, it represents a multidimensional institution through which the state, civil society, professional communities, families, and citizens reproduce relations of justice, dignity, solidarity, reciprocity, and public trust. Using socio-philosophical, dialectical, systemic, institutional, axiological, comparative, hermeneutic, and conceptual-modeling methods, the article analyzes the relationship between employee welfare, organizational justice, public legitimacy, occupational resilience, and cooperative governance. The analysis identifies five interdependent mechanisms: a normative-axiological mechanism, an institutional co-production mechanism, an internal organizational-justice mechanism, a psychosocial-resilience mechanism, and a digital-accountability mechanism. It is argued that the most sustainable model is a reciprocal protection–legitimacy cycle in which adequate protection strengthens officers’ professional capacity and sense of institutional fairness, while procedurally just policing improves public trust and citizen cooperation, thereby reducing social distance and improving the environment in which law-enforcement personnel perform their duties.

Keywords: social protection; internal affairs bodies; state–society cooperation; social philosophy; organizational justice; police legitimacy; co-production; occupational well-being; civil society.

Introduction The social protection of employees of internal affairs bodies occupies a distinctive position at the intersection of public administration, social policy, professional ethics, security governance, and social philosophy. Employees entrusted with maintaining public order, preventing crime, protecting individual rights, and responding to emergencies perform their duties within a sphere characterized by elevated physical danger, psychological pressure, irregular working time, organizational discipline, public scrutiny, and the possibility of moral injury. For this reason, the question of how society protects those who protect public security cannot be treated solely as a technical issue of compensation. It is also a philosophical question concerning the moral obligations of the state, the reciprocal responsibilities of citizens and public institutions, the social meaning of professional service, and the conditions under which authority is perceived as legitimate. A modern social state is therefore expected not merely to command law-enforcement personnel but to create legal, material, medical, psychological, familial, and professional conditions that preserve their dignity and capacity to serve. In Uzbekistan, the institutional significance of this problem has increased within the broader modernization of the internal affairs system. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Internal Affairs Bodies” of 16 September 2016 established a legal basis for guarantees relating to health protection, remuneration, housing, compensation for damage, pension provision, state insurance, and other forms of social support. Subsequent reforms, including Presidential Resolution PQ-4212 of 26 February 2019 on strengthening the social protection of employees of internal affairs bodies and their family members and the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 354 of 4 July 2022 regulating aspects of social protection for personnel of internal affairs bodies and the National Guard, demonstrate that protection is increasingly understood as a systemic component of institutional effectiveness. The Public Safety Concept approved in 2021 likewise situates personnel

incentives, social guarantees, and citizen participation within a broader architecture of public safety. These measures provide an important normative foundation, yet the philosophical and institutional question remains: how should the state's primary obligation be combined with the constructive capacities of society without diluting legal responsibility, professional secrecy, or the chain of command? This question is especially important because the relationship between law-enforcement institutions and society is structurally reciprocal. Internal affairs employees are representatives of public authority, but they are simultaneously members of society, family members, residents of local communities, users of health and educational services, and subjects of social rights. Their welfare is therefore produced through more than one institutional channel. Public budgets, departmental systems, pensions, and insurance are indispensable, but so are social recognition, family stability, access to qualified health and psychological care, professional education, community trust, reliable feedback mechanisms, and the absence of stigmatization when assistance is needed. A narrow administrative model tends to separate "employee welfare" from "public relations," whereas a socio-philosophical approach shows that the two are interconnected through justice and legitimacy. An officer who experiences fairness, predictability, respect, and support within the institution is more likely to perceive the organization as morally legitimate; similarly, citizens who experience respectful and procedurally fair policing are more likely to cooperate with law-enforcement agencies. Thus, social protection can have consequences extending beyond individual welfare to the quality of state-society relations.

The theoretical problem may be formulated through the concepts of reciprocity, solidarity, dignity, justice, and co-production. Reciprocity does not imply that society "pays back" officers for obedience; rather, it refers to a moral structure in which socially necessary risk-bearing creates legitimate claims to protection, while the exercise of coercive authority creates corresponding obligations of accountability and respect for rights. Solidarity means that occupational risk is not privatized and transferred entirely to the individual employee and family. Human dignity requires that protection mechanisms treat personnel not merely as functional resources but as persons whose physical and psychological integrity possesses intrinsic value. Justice requires both distributive fairness—reasonable allocation of benefits, compensation, housing, insurance, and rehabilitation—and procedural fairness—transparent eligibility rules, impartial decisions, meaningful opportunities to be heard, and protection against arbitrary treatment. Co-production, in turn, suggests that public value can emerge when state institutions and citizens or civil-society actors contribute complementary resources within clearly defined legal boundaries. The existing scholarly landscape provides several important but partially separated lines of analysis. Studies of police stress and health demonstrate that occupational and organizational stressors can affect well-being and performance [6; 7]. Research on organizational justice shows that fair internal procedures are associated with beneficial organizational attitudes, reduced misconduct, democratic policing orientations, and officer well-being [8–10]. Legitimacy research emphasizes that citizens' willingness to comply and cooperate is shaped substantially by perceptions of fairness and rightful authority [3], while community-policing scholarship demonstrates the practical importance—and limitations—of relations between police and communities [4]. Ostrom's theory of co-production provides a broader institutional vocabulary for understanding why state capacity and citizen capacity can become complementary rather than mutually exclusive [5]. However, these bodies of literature are rarely integrated into a single framework of social protection for internal affairs personnel, particularly in the socio-philosophical context of a transforming public-security system. Accordingly, the central purpose of this article is to conceptualize the socio-philosophical mechanisms through which state-society cooperation can strengthen the social protection of employees of internal affairs bodies while preserving the state's non-transferable responsibility for legal guarantees. The study asks three related questions. First, which values should normatively guide cooperative social-protection policy? Second, which institutional forms can allow civil society, communities,

families, professional associations, research institutions, and service providers to contribute without interfering with operational authority? Third, how can internal organizational justice and employee well-being be linked analytically to public legitimacy and social cooperation? The article advances the argument that an effective protection system should be understood as a social ecosystem rather than a closed departmental package of benefits. The proposed contribution is a five-mechanism framework that joins normative values to institutional practice. It includes: a normative-axiological mechanism grounded in dignity, justice, solidarity, and reciprocity; an institutional co-production mechanism connecting public agencies with bounded forms of civic and professional participation; an organizational-justice mechanism ensuring fairness within the institution; a psychosocial-resilience mechanism addressing occupational stress, trauma, family needs, and rehabilitation; and a digital-accountability mechanism supporting transparency, access, feedback, and responsible data use. Together these mechanisms constitute what may be described as a reciprocal protection–legitimacy cycle: social protection strengthens institutional trust and professional resilience; institutional fairness supports fairer and more confident service; procedurally legitimate service encourages public trust and cooperation; and higher-quality cooperation improves the social environment in which internal affairs bodies operate. This approach reframes social protection from a peripheral welfare function into an essential dimension of legitimate, sustainable, and socially embedded public security.

Within Uzbek scholarship, the problem of social protection in the security sector has been addressed most directly by Lola Radjapova and Shakhrukh Gaziev, whose studies provide a useful national foundation for a broader socio-philosophical interpretation. Radjapova, analyzing the social protection of employees of internal affairs bodies, treats protection as a necessary condition for the stable and effective functioning of the law-enforcement system and directs particular attention to institutional guarantees such as pension provision, leave, housing-related support, and other forms of compensation associated with the specific risks of service [1]. Her contribution is important because it demonstrates that the legal status of an internal affairs employee cannot be understood separately from a structured complex of social guarantees: professional duty imposes heightened restrictions and risks, and these generate corresponding obligations on the part of the state. Radjapova's analysis therefore implicitly contains a principle of social reciprocity, even though it is primarily developed in a legal-institutional rather than explicitly philosophical vocabulary. The practical orientation of her work also reveals a second important point: the effectiveness of protection depends not only on the formal existence of guarantees but on the coherence, accessibility, and adequacy of mechanisms through which those guarantees are realized. Gaziev develops an adjacent line of reasoning in his study of the social protection of National Guard servicemen, where social guarantees are interpreted as an important factor in the effective activity of a public-security institution [2]. Although his institutional object differs from the internal affairs bodies, the occupational logic is comparable: public-security personnel operate under conditions of discipline, risk, and special public responsibility, which makes material, legal, familial, and moral support integral to institutional sustainability. Gaziev's approach broadens the focus from isolated benefits toward the motivational and organizational significance of social protection, suggesting that security institutions cannot maintain professional stability through command mechanisms alone. Read together, Radjapova and Gaziev establish an analytically productive national position: social protection is both a right of the employee and a functional condition of public-security effectiveness. At the same time, both approaches remain predominantly state-centered. Their principal analytical actor is the public institution that establishes and distributes guarantees, while the possible contribution of civil society, local communities, families, professional and academic organizations, independent service providers, and public feedback systems receives comparatively limited conceptual development. The present study builds on their work by introducing a socio-philosophical layer that treats protection as a field of interaction between the state and society. This extension does not shift the legal burden of protection away from the state. On the contrary, it distinguishes

between primary responsibility and complementary participation: the state remains responsible for enforceable guarantees, whereas society can contribute trust, social recognition, expertise, rehabilitation services, research, family support, monitoring, dialogue, and community-based resources. Such a distinction makes it possible to preserve institutional accountability while moving beyond an exclusively paternalistic model. In this sense, Radjapova's emphasis on concrete guarantees and Gaziev's emphasis on protection as an effectiveness factor become complementary foundations for a cooperative model in which legal security, organizational justice, social solidarity, and public legitimacy reinforce one another.

Conclusion The socio-philosophical analysis undertaken in this article demonstrates that the social protection of employees of internal affairs bodies should be conceptualized as a multidimensional institution connecting the ethical obligations of the social state, the organizational conditions of professional service, and the cooperative capacities of society. The defining principle is that state-society cooperation must supplement rather than substitute the state's legal responsibility. Salary, pension, housing, insurance, compensation, medical guarantees, and other enforceable rights cannot be delegated to voluntary actors; however, the quality and accessibility of protection can be significantly strengthened when civil society, local communities, professional and academic institutions, families, and qualified service providers are incorporated into transparent and legally delimited forms of cooperation. Five interrelated mechanisms were identified. The normative-axiological mechanism grounds policy in dignity, justice, solidarity, and reciprocity. The institutional co-production mechanism creates channels for complementary participation while preserving state authority and professional boundaries. The organizational-justice mechanism recognizes that fair procedures inside internal affairs institutions are themselves a form of protection and may influence professional attitudes and behavior. The psychosocial-resilience mechanism addresses the physical, psychological, and familial consequences of high-risk service. The digital-accountability mechanism improves access and transparency while requiring strong safeguards for privacy, sensitive information, due process, and human review. Their integration yields a reciprocal protection-legitimacy cycle in which employee welfare, institutional fairness, professional resilience, public trust, and citizen cooperation become mutually reinforcing dimensions of sustainable public security. The article also clarifies an important philosophical distinction between intrinsic and instrumental justification. Employees of internal affairs bodies are entitled to protection because they are persons and rights-holders whose dignity cannot be reduced to institutional utility. At the same time, strong protection systems can have instrumental public value because healthy, fairly treated, professionally secure personnel are better positioned to exercise authority responsibly. This dual justification prevents two opposite errors: treating personnel merely as tools of public order, or treating social guarantees as isolated corporate privileges unrelated to accountability and service quality. For policy and institutional practice, the analysis supports several priorities: transparent and reviewable procedures for distributing social guarantees; confidential psychological and rehabilitation services; structured family-support programs; partnership with research and educational institutions for evidence-based assessment; carefully regulated cooperation with community and civil-society organizations; and digital access systems designed around both convenience and data protection. Future empirical research should test the proposed framework among internal affairs personnel, family members, service providers, and community stakeholders, measuring how organizational justice, perceived social protection, occupational stress, public trust, and cooperative participation interact over time. Such research would enable the conceptual mechanisms proposed here to be translated into context-sensitive indicators and evaluation tools. Ultimately, the social protection of internal affairs employees is most sustainable when it is understood not as an isolated departmental expenditure but as an expression of a society's commitment to just authority: the state protects the professional who bears public risk, society participates within lawful boundaries, and the institution reciprocates through fair, rights-respecting, and publicly legitimate service.

At the implementation level, the cooperative model should be institutionalized through mechanisms that are stable enough to generate trust yet flexible enough to respond to different categories of occupational vulnerability. One priority is the creation of periodic, anonymized needs assessments covering medical support, psychological well-being, housing and family pressures, professional adaptation, post-trauma rehabilitation, and access to legal information. Such assessments should not become instruments of surveillance over employees; their function should be to identify systemic vulnerabilities and improve institutional planning. A second priority is to create consultative formats in which representatives of relevant public bodies, academic specialists, medical and psychological professionals, and legally authorized civil-society actors can evaluate non-operational aspects of social protection. Their mandate should exclude access to classified information and operational decision-making, while allowing evidence-based recommendations concerning accessibility, fairness, rehabilitation, family assistance, and prevention of professional burnout. Third, the quality of social protection should be evaluated through process indicators as well as expenditure indicators. The mere existence of a budget line does not establish that an employee can obtain support promptly, confidentially, and without arbitrary obstacles. Indicators of waiting time, clarity of eligibility rules, appeal accessibility, confidentiality safeguards, user satisfaction, and continuity of care can reveal institutional weaknesses that aggregate financial statistics conceal. Fourth, partnerships with universities and research centers should be used to conduct ethically approved longitudinal studies capable of distinguishing operational stress from organizational stress and of identifying protective factors across different stages of service.

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