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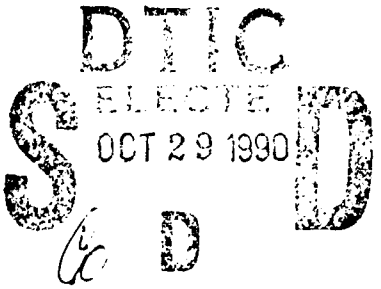

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN POLICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

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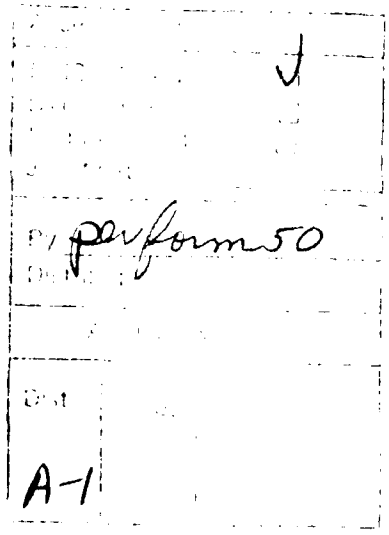
THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN POLICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

A Thesis

by

William Patrick Delaney



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Department of Criminal Justice

Abstract

of

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN POLICE ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

by

William Patrick Delaney

Statement of Problem

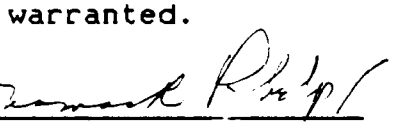
Contemporary police stress research concentrates on individual officer responses to occupational stressors, virtually ignoring leadership techniques designed to combat organizationally induced police stress. Although organizational stressors are the main source of police frustration -- eventually stress -- incumbent police bureaucracies fail to develop leadership skills in their first line supervisors, so vital in altering the organizational factors related to increased stress. Often thrust into leadership roles without significant or meaningful leadership training, first line leadership significantly molds the line officer's perception and emotional reaction to the organizational climate. Effective leadership minimizes the negative effects of organizational stressors, resulting in significantly lower stress levels in police officers.

Sources of Data

Exhaustive interdisciplinary documentary research was conducted, using relevant books, journals, government reports, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses in the fields of criminal justice, psychology, organizational behavior, business, and management. An examination of existing police leadership development programs was also conducted. Finally, the author's extensive military police experience added practical insight to this study.

Conclusions Reached

Police first line supervisors are the critical element in providing organizational climates that reduce line officer stress, as well as ensuring increased morale, motivation, and productivity in the department. However, these same supervisors are rarely trained in leadership philosophy or technique due to general training course unavailability and internal bureaucratic inertia. Further research into this subset of police leadership is definitely warranted.

Committee Chair's Signature of Approval 

Dedication

To Kristian

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the men and women of the Custody and Operations Branches, 7501st Munitions Support Squadron, United States Air Force, and the Special Security Squadron, 33rd Fighter Bomber Wing, German Air Force, Buchel Air Base, Germany, for their hard work that, unbeknownst to them, culminated in my selection for this Air Force Institute of Technology civilian institution graduate program. My heart will always be with them. Professors Tom Phelps and Miki Vohryzek continually challenged my mind; the results of that challenge lie in the pages ahead. However, the driving force during this past year of night school, papers, presentations, and research came from my wife, Lynn. She continues to believe in my dreams. I love her very much.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Stress kills. Stress is a part of life in every respect; in fact, we need stress to function as an integral part of society, yet it kills. Countless hours of research into the origins of stress yield diverse causes for personal and occupational stress. One of the most stressful occupations in the country, policing, presents a premier source for the study of occupational stress and its effects.[1] Chief Karl Goodin of the Cincinnati Police Department opened one of the first seminars on police stress by observing that "policing...is one of the most stressful jobs in the occupational picture today."[2]

Most people assume police work is stressful because of the danger involved. There is obviously some danger in policing, but the majority of stress experienced by police officers is through organizational frustration, with several elements in a police officer's life contributing to their overall daily stress level. Emotional stress is a large part of the problem, exacerbated by environmental and organizational stressors. Numerous psychologists and criminal justice professionals continually deal with this issue, yet it continues unabated, due to a lack of focus on

the role of leadership, as practiced by first line supervisors, in producing stress in police.

Much of the conflict in police organizations is a result of officer's perceptions of the current organizational climate, and their reaction to those stimuli. Researchers found organizational stressors, those caused by the organization itself, stood out as the main source of frustration, eventually stress, for police officers. For most, perception is reality and police administrators have a responsibility to minimize stress in the workplace by using sound leadership and management techniques. Eisenberg's research revealed

> supervisors, particularly sergeants, play a key role in the world of work of a police officer. Styles of supervision vary tremendously, some providing a haven for the nurturing of psychological stress, while others tend to prohibit its manifestation or at least to provide a vehicle available to the police officer for coping with stress.[3]

Obviously, line officer's perceptions are shaped by their supervisors behavior, necessarily containing the supervisor's personal biases, agendas, and values. The shaping of perceptions into action, reflected in personal motivation toward accomplishment of organizational goals, is an integral function of leadership. Unfortunately, the majority of police organizations do not recognize the importance of first line supervisory leadership, neglecting

to provide the leadership training so critical for success. Instead, departments allow experience to become the primary leadership learning methodology, supplemented by inconsistent and spasmodic management "training". Only police executives, normally promoted from within and possessing fully formed leadership styles, are provided sound leadership development training. Without greater understanding of pertinent police leadership techniques and theory, first line supervisors are significantly, albeit unwittingly, contributing to higher stress levels in their subordinates. Bennis calls this an iatrogenic problem, where managers give themselves and their subordinates heart attacks and other stress induced problems due to their personality and leadership styles.[4] Tragically, this is not a new development in police behavior. Fosdick, in his classic 1920 American Police Systems, stated "far more than any other factor, the irrational development of the American police organization is due to inadequate leadership".[5] It all begins with the first line supervisor.

Need for Study

Terry found at least 53 stressors associated with police work or the police organization, with 35 psychological effects commonly found in police officers debilitated by stress.[6] Scholarly literature abounds with studies on police stress, its implications, and various individual reduction methods. However, most research fails to explore the

influence of first line leadership on individual officer stress; indeed, the influence supervisors have on the efficiency and productivity of the police agency. As a result, police executives must become acutely aware that "an understanding of human behavior and motivation will lead to greater awareness of why people act as they do and more effective use of the organization's human resources"[7], a basic premise in reducing organizational stress. Leadership development, nurtured from the start of a career, will certainly ameliorate the effects of police organizational stress.

This study examines the various stressors present in police agencies and identifies the power of first line police leadership to reduce police organizational stress, plus advocates the development of widespread leadership training for police professionals performing line supervisory duties. If Gee is correct in his assertion that "...despite all the changes that have occurred in law enforcement in the past twenty years, as managers we still cling to traditional and outdated methods of management,"[8] this study's significance lies in the realization that poor supervisory leadership also significantly raises police officer stress levels, subsequently reducing morale and productivity. Therefore, this thesis is a positive contribution to the criminal

justice field, providing a stepping stone for future research and field applications.

Scope and Limitations of Study

Due to externally imposed time constraints, the study's scope is limited. Further research limitations were imposed by local police department collective bargaining agreements, disallowing reliable or consistent data collection. Although organizational stressors are prevalent in virtually all police agencies, this research is confined to the negative influences of stressful organizational climates, and those organizational stressors in police officers attributed to first line supervisors as identified by Kroes (see Table 1.1), and others, as recorded in the relevant scholarly literature. Multiple stressors encompassing other occupational stress categories are excluded from study, except to mention their presence and possible influence on individual stress. This topic limitation allows focusing in related leadership and management practices that impede stress reduction.

As the art of leadership continues to be among the most studied and least understood of human behaviors, this study will consider only those leadership theories advocated as effective stress reducing agents for police, plus existing leadership development training courses.

Table 1.1

Police Stressors Attributed to Organizational Factors As Identified by Kroes

ADMINISTRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Appropriateness of work assignment
Administration policies
Standards of personal conduct
Excessive paperwork
Undesirable assignment
Inadequate equipment replacement and repair policies
ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT OF PATROLMEN
Relationship between line and staff personnel
Lack of supervisor support during critical situations
Lack of participation by individuals in decisions that directly effect them
Fear of supervisory reprisal after critical situations
DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING ALONG WITH SUPERVISOR
Lack of rapport

Source: William H. Kroes, Bruce L. Margolis, and Joseph J. Hurrell, Jr., "Job Stress in Policemen," Journal of Police Science and Administration 2, no. 2 (1974): 147 - 150.

Definitions

For a more complete understanding of this thesis, the author's definitions of relevant terms are:

first line supervisor: the lowest police management level exerting formal authority over other police officers.

leadership: the influence of another that motivates action directed toward satisfaction of organizational goals.

line officers: police officers without supervisory duties, i.e., patrolmen.

management: the process of planning, organizing, communicating, directing, and controlling organizational resources.

organizational stress: stress caused by specific practices and procedures dictated by that organization.

stress: an intense state of anxiety that may arouse, alert, or activate the autonomic nervous system; usually inhibits normal psychological functioning and eventually produces medically definable symptoms.[9]

stressors: the causative agent that results in stress.[10]

Methodology

A descriptive thesis, the study uses classic deductive reasoning, where organizational stress is a function of police leadership development. The study's hypothesis maintains that a positive correlation exists between

leadership development for first line supervisors and reduction of organizational stress in line officers.

Information collection entailed exhaustive interdisciplinary documentary research. First, an in-depth literature review using books, journals, government reports, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses in the fields of criminal justice, psychology, organizational behavior, business, and management provided the bulk of data. Additionally, an examination of existing police leadership development programs, available throughout the nation, was conducted through the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. Informal open-ended interviews were also conducted with several professionals in various fields, designed to correlate specific published research findings with application in field environments as practiced in the state of California. Finally, this information was synthesized with the author's fourteen years of United States Air Force security police service, initially as an enlisted security specialist, and most recently as an air base Chief, Security Police. These experiences added practical insight to the information presented in the literature.

Organization of Remainder of Study

The remainder of the study begins in Chapter 2 with a review of pertinent research on stress and its effects on

police; police organizational stress and its causes; prominent dissenting opinions; and a summary. Supervisory leadership options known to reduce stress, the need for organizational change in police departments, and existing leadership development programs, plus a summary, are contained in Chapter 3. Lastly, a summary of the study, the author's conclusions and recommendations for future research comprises Chapter 4 and closes the thesis.

To conquer this problem, one must first understand its implications. What is stress?

Notes

[1] Gary M. Kaufmann and Terry A. Beehr, "Occupational Stressors, Individual Strains, and Social Supports among Police Officers," Human Relations 42, no. 2 (1989): 187.

[2] Harold E. Russell and Alan Beigel, Understanding Human Behavior for Effective Police Work, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 275.

[3] Terry Eisenberg, "Labor-Management Relations and Psychological Stress -- View from the Bottom," The Police Chief 42, no. 11 (1975): 54.

[4] Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, Leaders -- The Strategies for Taking Charge (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 56.

[5] Raymond B. Fosdick, American Police Systems (New York: The Century Co., 1920), 215.

[6] W. Clinton Terry III, "Police Stress: The Empirical Evidence," The Ambivalent Force: Perspectives on the Police, 3rd ed., eds. Abraham S. Blumberg and Elaine Niederhoffer (New York: Holt, Rienhart, and Winston, 1985), 357 - 359.

[7] Raymond T. Degenero, "Sources of Stress Within a Police Organization," The Police Chief 47, no. 2 (1980): 24.

[8] Thomas Gee, "Are You a Management Cop?," The Police Chief 57, no. 4 (1990): 152.

[9] Hilda F. Besner and Sandra J. Robinson, Understanding and Solving Your Police Marriage Problems (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1982), 21.

[10] Hans Selye, The Stress of Life, revised ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 55.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Stress and Its Effects on Police

Stress was first recognized during the Civil War as a detriment to effective military operations because of the resulting emotional difficulties. Further studies through the years, especially during times of conflict, produced the bulk of knowledge and research concerning the effects of stress, both physically and psychologically, in the police organization. Stress prepares our minds and bodies to respond to perceived danger by activation of an autonomic nervous "fight or flight" mechanism. Upon completion of the stressful situation, or its elimination, our bodies return to normal operation. Problems arise when our bodies remain unrelaxed, in the alarm stage, the first step in the manifestations of stress process developed in 1936 by Dr. Hans Selye. Dr. Selye, in his pioneering research into what is now known as the General Adaptation Syndrome (see Table 2.1), identified stress as the "nonspecific response of the body to any demand"[1]. This syndrome, physiological stress reactions, occur in three distinct phases:

1. Alarm Reaction: characterized by the bodily expression of a generalized call to arms of defensive forces in the organism.

Table 2.1

Stages of Stress Reactions

STAGES	SYMPTOMS	CAPABILITIES
Alarm	Individual alerted to impending difficulty or threat.	Vulnerable, but has great personal reserves available for use.
Resistance	Alarm symptoms replaced with greater control, though adjusting, will also show fatigue, anxiety, tension, and extreme vulnerability.	Ability to withstand effects of stress climbs to an all time high, able to perform sanely.
Exhaustion	If the individual does not adapt during resistance stage, the symptoms can increase to cause physical or emotional illness.	Energy to adjust is used up, with no reserves left to draw on, ability to perform diminishes and finally ceases.

Source: John G. Stratton, Police Passages (Manhattan Beach, CA: Glennon Publishing, 1984), 110.

2. Stage of Resistance: upon continuous exposure to the alarm reaction, a stage of adaptation or resistance follows, as no living organism can be maintained continuously in a state of alarm.

3. Stage of exhaustion: after prolonged exposure to the item causing the alarm reaction, the acquired stage of resistance is eventually lost. The body now presents premature aging due to wear and tear, physiologically resembling the alarm stage.[2]

In the average person, a constant stage of alarm is not a problem; if problems develop, steps can be taken to eliminate the source of stress. Police officers, however, cannot eliminate the source of most of their stress nor can their bodies automatically "turn-off". The very nature of police work prohibits normal functioning of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, causing prolonged alarm reactions and entry into the resistance stage, producing chronic stress.

Causes for stress inherent in police organizations are as varied as the instruction, direction, and leadership within the same structure. Attempts to isolate a single cause of police officer stress produced volumes of research, but were inconclusive in determining causality. Police work is a multi-faceted business, necessarily producing the diverse variables involved in police stress. "Stressors are

dependent on one's perceptions. If someone believes something is a stressor, then it is -- even if it isn't a stressor for anyone else."[3] Consequently, stress management is becoming a major consideration for modern police agencies, currently faced with alarming downward trends in employee health, emotional stability, and productivity attributed to occupational stress. The physical manifestations of stress are staggering, as research links stress to indigestion, diarrhea, dermatitis, asthma, colitis, ulcers, back trouble, migraine headaches, hypertension, strokes, and heart attacks.[4]

Eisenberg found stress causes higher than normal rates of coronary heart disease; gastro-intestinal malfunctions; dermatological problems; severe nervous conditions; neurosis; and a number of physical and mental disorders in police professionals, plus increased incidents involving marital discord and certain forms of police malpractice.[5] Additionally, "one study indicates that as high as 40 to 60 percent of the average doctor's patients are suffering from some form of pyschosomatic illness",[6] a phenomenon linked to stress. Police officers also seem to have a higher rate of divorce, alcoholism, and suicide than most other occupations. The extended costs of police stress are equally astounding -- high absenteeism, disability, and discipline rates; premature retirement compensation; performance and effectiveness trends

continuing downward. Hidden costs of stress must also be considered in deterioration of police - community relations, lower conviction rates for offenders, increased civil litigation against the department, plus the resultant supervisory "crisis management" actions required to rearrange shift schedules, case loads, budgetary factors, and concomitant stress on administrators. These costs of police stress "all direct resources away from effective crime prevention and law enforcement activities",[7] creating severe internal pressures on police leadership, already strapped doing "more with less".

To determine the accuracy of the assumption that police work is more psychologically stressful than other occupations, Fell, Richard, and Wallace compared policing with a wide range of 130 occupations in the professions, skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled job areas. Examining stress related mortality and morbidity data from prerecorded health records in Tennessee, they found police officers died prematurely (between the ages of 18 and 64) and were admitted to general hospitals for stress related injury at significantly higher rates than other occupations.[8] Stress is intrinsic to police work, yet researchers continue to find organizational stress, not the widely publicized traumatic stress, identified as the major source of police officer stress.

Origins of Police Organizational Stress

Dr. Martin Symonds published the first study of police officer stress in 1970 in the American Journal of Psychoanalysis based on Selye's work, describing psychological effects of stress in police officers.[9] However, the first empirical study of police officer stress was conducted by Dr. William Kroes in 1974 and his study is the foundation on which modern police stress awareness is built. Dr. Kroes interviewed 100 Cincinnati police officers using an obtrusive semi-structured interview technique (see Table 2.2), categorizing primary job stressors into equipment, courts, administration, and community relations areas.[10] His results clearly indicate organizational stressors, identified in the administration category, were the main sources of line officer concern.

Specifically, stressors included in the administration group were administration policies (work assignments, procedures, and personal conduct) and administrator support (relationship and rapport between officers and supervisors), as reported by 69 percent of the sample. Difficulties in getting along with supervisors was reported by 22 percent of police officers as a stressor, plus the fifth most prevalent complaint (56 percent) is changing shifts each 28 day cycle.[11] Kroes concludes officers are able to cope more easily with other police stressors if the officer is aware of

Table 2.2

"Job Stress in Policemen" Interview Questions

This semi-structured interview was given to 100 Cincinnati policemen (approximately 1% of the force), with the following demographics:

94% patrolmen; 4% senior patrolmen; 2% sergeants
96% white; 4% protected groups
All male; 28.4 years old; with 5.7 years service

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you consider to be bothersome about your job?

2. What do you think bothers other policemen doing the same job as you?

3. Do any of these items bother you?

Administration — Crisis situations

Changing shift routine — Isolation/boredom

Relations with supervisor

Please mention any other job item that you consider bothersome_____

4. Please discuss the last time you felt particularly uncomfortable on the job?

Source: William H. Kroes, Bruce L. Margolis, and Joseph J. Hurrell, Jr., "Job Stress in Policemen," Journal of Police Science and Administration 2, no. 2 (1974): 147 - 149.

supervisory support and understanding of their problems, even though he caveats the supervisory difficulty finding with an indication that everyone has periodic conflicts with their superiors. In fact, Kroes states line officers "feel let down by the administration. Instead of the administration taking some pressures off the officers, they often create new ones."[12] Unfortunately, this finding is prevalent throughout the literature.

Dr. Kroes expanded his 1974 research to an examination of police administrator stress levels. Their chief complaint was that subordinates were frequently detailed away by higher management echelons without the supervisor's prior knowledge nor consultation. This stressor overshadowed a general administrator feeling of a lack of support by their superiors and distrust of their actions by subordinates.[13] Clearly, administrators experience the same type of organizational stressors as line officers, albeit from a different perspective.

Dr. Kroes' research continued, with a 1988 study involving five true case histories of "burnt-out cops" drawn from his private practice, where Kroes resigns himself to the resistance of police organizational change designed to reduce stress in police work. Kroes stipulates the main career "killer" of cops is their own management and uncontrolled, poor police managements do nothing but exacerbate the

organizational stress problem. The general feeling of police administrators in dealing with organizational stressors range from uncaring attitudes, to open hostility against the officer during the course of his duties. Most of Kroes' anger however, is directed at the form of treatment that stress injured police officers receive from their superiors.[14]

> In the paramilitaristic society of policing, in combination with its autocratic bureaucracy, the value of the working employee is lost ... he becomes an object, a 'necessary evil' the superior has to deal with. He is ordered around and treated without regard for his capabilities or true worth to the organization.[15]

Kroes continues by stating that police departments are vindictive entities; stress cases seen by outside psychologists must also be diagnosed by the department psychologist who invariably adjudges a fit for duty determination, regardless of the problem. Therefore, the police officer must return to duty or risk employment termination. Most police supervisors view stress cases as "wimps", but the "costs of the broken cop have become too high. So now these officers become a management problem and the weight of the department is brought to bear on them."[16] Kroes concludes this emotional response to organizational rigidity by stipulating there will be no relief until management attitudes change. "Ultimately we ... are responsible for allowing such an outmoded management system

to survive. And until we demand change, police managements will continue to propagate in the same manner ...."[17]

Dr. Terry Eisenberg followed Kroes in 1975 with exploratory research based on his experiences as a psychologist and police officer, placing 33 implied sources of stress into six categories: intra-organizational practices and characteristics; inter-organizational practices and characteristics; criminal justice system practices and characteristics; public practices and characteristics; police work itself; and the police officer. The intra - organizational practices and characteristics category contains features within an organization which may provoke or encourage stress development of stress such as poor supervision, absence or lack of career development opportunities, inadequate reward system, offensive policies, excessive paperwork, and poor equipment.[18]

Moore and Donohue continued the Kroes theme in 1978, categorizing police stressors into capability stressors, functional stressors, and departmental stressors, quite similar to the categorizations of Kroes and Eisenberg. Dr. Stratton first published his stressor categories in 1978: stressors external to the organization; internal to the organization; police work itself; and those confronting the individual police officer. Burgin followed suit in 1978, stating stressors were controllable (poor supervisory

practices, inappropriate policies) or uncontrollable (situational stress, unrealistic expectations). These studies present little new methodological information (all were exploratory studies using sample interviews stratified by psychologist) nor conclusions, but offer various supporting views to the original Kroes findings. Overwhelmingly, researchers found organizational stressors stood out as the principal sources of frustration and eventual stress for police officers.

In 1974, Dr. Martin Reiser published the first strong advocation for organizational change as a way to reduce stress levels. "Some Organizational Stresses on Policemen" outlined the police organizational climate as a significant problem, recommending sweeping management changes.

> In the traditional police organization, authoritarian management approaches predominate, with relatively little attention or concern being given to individual problems or human factors. More enlightened police leadership is aware that management by participation is necessary....[19]

Russell and Beigel introduced an analogy of patrol dispatch priorities to police officer tension levels, asserting police officers have a "code 3 personality" that disallows relaxation at the conclusion of a shift.[20] This personality is also described as a Type A personality, so named by Friedman and Rosenman in 1974. With over 75 percent of American police officers believed to have a Type A

personality, Russell and Beigel's enhancement of Eisenberg's 1975 study begin to shape a particular police officer behavior and stressor pattern, specifically in the administration and/or intra-organizational practices and characteristics categories.

In a related study, Besner and Robinson used Eisenberg's six categories of police stressors to explain job related stress and its effects on spouses and families of police officers. Their main assertion is that psychological suppression of stress has an emotional effect on the officer, his family, and eventually his career. Ultimately, suppression evolves into other defensive mechanisms characterized by detachment from the officer's emotional lives.[21] Suppression of emotions certainly benefits individuals during crisis situations and there is a validated, systemic method of releasing suppressed emotions after critical incidents. However, line officers also suppress considerable frustration and anger directed toward their supervisors, their leadership style, and interpersonal skills. Poor supervision is a considerable stressor for police officers.

> In too many police agencies, an officer appointed to supervisory status receives no training for his new role. Even if training is offered, it is given sometime after he has already had to assume the role, make decisions, and direct his subordinates.[22]

The difference between success and failure in the police organization is leadership, or the lack thereof, at the lowest level.

Lawrence studied 104 Texas police officers in 1983, using a methodologically sound empirical research design to study the effects of personality traits on police officer stress levels. His subjects were administered The Sixteen Personality Factor Test and the Police Stress Inventory, with surprising results. His conclusions indicate the very personality traits that make a good police officer (assertiveness, self - motivation, decision making abilities, among others) are counter productive to good stress management, mostly due to internal agency environmental factors.[23] Wexler and Logan studied 25 women police officers in California, categorizing stressors into external, organizational, task-related, personal, and female-related areas. Although most stressors were presupposed into the female-related area, organizational stressors again stood out as the main irritant to police officers, with female-related items constituting a significant, though minority, response.[24]

Hillgren, Bond, and Jones interviewed 20 police chiefs and county sheriffs representing cities in seven Southeastern states, obtaining administrator's perceptions of the major stressors for their officers. Results indicate major

stressors originate from within the police organization (see Table 2.3), strengthening Kroes' 1974 organizational stressors predominance finding. Hillgren believes "the implications for the development of stress ... are critically dependent upon the degree to which chief administrators ... interject stress on their line personnel."[25] Leitner, Posner, and Lester studied 17 New Jersey police chiefs to determine their stress levels, job satisfaction, and current mood toward both variables in 1983. Their findings show police chiefs do not exhibit increased stress levels, unlike their subordinates, and chiefs compare favorably with others in their stress profile. Additionally, neither age, tenure, time as a police officer, nor department size were related to stress in the sample, signifying an individual's position in the department is directly related to their particular stress level.[26]

Cullen et al. surveyed 91 police officers in five Midwest suburban agencies, finding a significant impact of supervisory support on lessening stress experienced by their subordinates. As "... supervisors frequently have the authority to control the quality of a person's work experience..."[27], they naturally become the focus of organizational stress. In 1988, Lester studied 27 police officers in a small department and identified 15 sources of stress, using a design loosely modeled after the 1974 Kroes

Table 2.3

Major Stressors Identified by Police Administrators Affecting Line Personnel (N=20)

Stressor	Number	Description
Administration	18	Monday morning quarterback; second guessing officers' discretion.
Role Conflict	18	Perceived conflicting expectations.
Double standard	16	Standards perceived as different for officers than for everyone else.
Courts	15	Leniency of courts
Peer Group Pressure	14	Pressure to conform to peer group's way of doing things.
Social Exclusiveness	8	Outside friends perceive a 'we-they' attitude on part of officer.
Home Life	7	Limited time and energy to spend with family.
Public Opinion Versus Sworn Duty	5	Degree of aggressiveness or leniency officer should display.
Supervisors	3	Difference in what they say and what they do.

Source: James S. Hillgren, Rebekah Bond, and Sue Jones, "Primary Stressors in Police Administration and Law Enforcement," Journal of Police Science and Administration 4, no. 4 (1976): 448.

study.[28] Finally, Kaufmann and Beehr found in their 1989 study of 121 Midwestern police officers, social supports [defined as the "flow of emotional concern, instrumental aid, information, and/or appraisal between people"[29]] were inversely related to stress. These studies again point directly to organizational stressors as the principal element of police officer stress and imply leadership development, as a part of total organizational reform, is urgently required.

While interpersonal stress between first line supervisors and line officers is central to organizational stress, the organizational design of police departments is a main contributor found in the literature. When Sir Robert Peel founded the police force, he organized the police service along military lines. Consequently, military thought, rank, structure, and bureaucracy were instantly ingrained in tradition. However, as in the military, police organizations are resistant to change and slow to evolve. The very military structure Peel intended to assist the "bobbies" is still taught in today's police administration courses, still follows a distinct chain of command, and still produces stress. Gross found police administrators rely almost exclusively on the bureaucracy for all organizational needs within their departments, although this same bureaucracy is inflexible, blocks upward communication, and

is inundated with detailed, constantly changing rules and procedures.[30]

"In many respects, police organizations have typified the classical command and control organization that emphasizes top-level decision making..."[31], easing the tensions of police administrators created by conflicts between the courts and police; minimizing external political influences by creation of extensive written procedures; entrenching organizational structures favoring dense layers of supervision, unity of command, and job routinization protect the police bureaucracy from external scrutiny. Its not surprising police departments have extensive control mechanisms for their employees, due to the unique power of peace officers and the need for executives to hold officers accountable to ensure their survival as leaders of the police department.[32] Yet, this same structure and control creates considerable strain on individual officers, where they often feel overwhelmed and isolated.

> The officer is faced daily with situations in which he is called upon to make snap decisions, yet his authority and judgment may be later questioned by someone who was not there to witness what occurred. In these situations, it is not easy to argue with a supervisor[33],

so the officer squelches his emotions, an action, if repeated often, causes extreme stress.

James Q. Wilson also sees the problem as one of bureaucracy. In his view, police officers are normally given abstract instructions, sent out on the street, then criticized for their actions if they are not in line with departmental policy.

> We want him to deal 'effectively' with the problem at hand, but we also want him to do other things as well -- follow the boss' orders, be fair to the clients, help clients through the 'red tape', avoid wasting money, refrain from stealing, and so on. To the extent these objectives conflict, we expect the worker to 'use his judgment', but we rarely tell him what 'judgment' is or how to use it and we stand ready to criticize him after the fact if he uses it in ways we dislike.[34]

Peel's military model for police departments may very well be a devastating problem, causing very high stress levels in the force.

Stratton believes "administrators need to provide avenues of communication from the bottom to the top. Too often young officers feel frustrated because they feel they are not heard."[35] This, however, is contrary to the structural "top-down" hierarchy of police organizations. "Traditionally, police organizations are managed on a quasi-military structure, along authoritarian lines; and the individual often does not have the opportunity to satisfy individual psychological needs"[36]. Authoritarianism, predominant in rigid bureaucracies as a result of

organizational design, is the leadership style of choice in many police agencies and the underlying cause of a significant majority of officer disenchantment with their supervisors. Law enforcement is a compliance oriented profession. It must be. Unfortunately, police supervisors often take that same approach in their leadership, becoming an enforcer and alienating their workers.[37]

Supervisors do not understand how their behavior can lower employee job satisfaction and contribute to higher stress levels in their subordinates. McCafferty believes authoritarian leadership styles lead to clique formation breakdowns in personal values and/or morality, corruption, vigilantism, and development of stress induced problems.[38] This segment of police organizational stress, the effect of first line supervisory leadership, is often overlooked, yet is the primary element in the phenomenon. Fortunately, more and more police departments are beginning to focus on supervisors as the weak link, targeting them for leadership education on their role in stress management.

Dissenting Opinions

Due to the involvement of the human psyche, great caution must be used when interpreting stress research. Police stress, with a myriad of intervening variables, presents a more difficult problem. "Current work in the area

of police stress reveals the great conceptual and methodological complexities involved in establishing causal linkages among individual, organizational, and environmental effects."[39] Design problems are further compounded by the methodology of prominent police stress research -- direct observation in a clinical setting by psychologists treating police officers suffering from stress and their perceptions of the causes of that stress. Newman and Beehr contend stress studies and reduction strategies are in dire need of rigorous, empirical testing. Previous work is based on unverified scientific opinion, not fact, and is completely devoid of program evaluation.[40] Malloy and Mays believe the original 1974 Kroes study is invalid due to the absence of a control group and the traditional stress theory espoused by Kroes requires homogeneity assumptions not found in the general police popuiation. Kroes' failure to address deferential responses to stressors by police officers also appear to invalidate his findings. Although Malloy's evaluation revealed no unique law enforcement stressors, he does claim the feelings of uncontrollability and organizational structure appear to cause major stress reactions in police officers.[41]

Additionally, Lester surveyed 114 police officers concerning their attitude toward rotating shifts, with interesting results: 48 percent of the respondents enjoyed

shift work; 64 percent said police work was more interesting on shift; 44 percent did not agree rotating shifts reduced their enthusiasm for police work. Although the respondents clearly indicated shift work disrupted their family and social lives (82 and 85 percent respectively), they enjoyed shifts despite the problems. Lester's conclusions are in direct conflict with previous thought and propose the possibility that this organizational factor is a perceptual, rather than absolute, stressor for the police officer.[42]

Davidson and Veno disagree with the inverse relationship of stress and work productivity, citing small samples, lack of control groups, and use of self-reported data as threats to validity of previous research. Furthermore, they indicate the complexity of the stress issue which presents itself by inconsistent reporting of the effects of stress in the literature surrounding the subject.[43] The nature of stress research frequently can, and does, present serious design difficulties, clouding the subject under study. However, the salient issue remains organizational stressors, specifically poor leadership practices, which are particularly bothersome to police officers. These stressors can be reduced through first line supervisory leadership development.

Summary

There are observable and diagnosible physical and psychological symptoms of occupational stress, causing negative trends in employee health, emotional stability, and productivity. Police work is one of the most stressful professions in the nation, shortening life spans and creating health problems for police officers exposed to prolonged stress. Research studies show that a particular type of stress, organizational stress, is the main source of frustration and eventual stress for the police officer.

Kroes published the first empirical study of police stress in 1974, placing stressors into four separate categories: equipment, courts, administration, and community relations. Eisenberg's 1975 research categorized police stress by intra-organizational practices and characteristics; inter-organizational practices and characteristics; criminal justice system practices and characteristics; public practices and characteristics; police work itself; and the police officer. These studies paved the way for police stress research, with virtually every succeeding study expanding on their findings. Undoubtedly, research identifies organizational stressors, specifically poor leadership as practiced by police first line supervisors, as significant stress producing organizational behavior. The organizational design of police agencies, historically aligned with the military, are lessor but significant

contributing factors. Quasi-military police structures breed bureaucratic rigidity, stifle upward communication, and encourage authoritarianism, plus exacerbate disharmony between supervisors and their subordinates, leading to higher levels of stress.

Several academicians offer dissenting views on the research findings, citing design flaws in previous work. Methodological problems arise with lack of control groups, small samples, self-reported data, and an absence of empirical testing. These concerns however, do not mitigate the impact of poor supervision and leadership on line officers, nor invalidate previous findings. The effect of leadership on police organizational stress is often minimized by police executives, resulting in a destructive organizational stressor and the one least understood or pursued by police administrators. The role of the first line supervisor and the need for organizational change to achieve tolerable levels of stress are extremely important for the health and well-being of police and are discussed at length in Chapter 3.

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Chapter 3

Stress Reduction Through Leadership

Role of the First Line Supervisor

First line supervisors occupy a unique position within law enforcement, formally responsible for interpreting and implementing department policy and, while so doing, ensuring a safe, efficient, and productive line officer. Each segment of their job requires supervisors to effectively interact with subordinates, with results of this interaction directly related to the quality of services rendered by the officer, ultimate satisfaction of organizational goals, and levels of line officer stress. To the extent supervisors exercise authority, "followers determine whether someone possesses leadership qualities. Upper management cannot confer leadership on someone...."[1] This is the essence of police first line supervisory leadership.

Stratton argues the "major stressor for most line officers is their supervisor."[2] That is not an unusual finding, as most organizational behaviorists agree a major source of frustration in the work place is the worker - supervisor relationship. Police supervisors are extremely important to the police organization, where their decisions can greatly affect the success or failure of the agency. As supervisors represent management to the workers, it is what he or she says and does when confronted with daily problems

that characterize current administration policies and dominant leadership trends. This relationship also develops employee attitudes and the task of each first line supervisor is to develop a basic rapport between the objectives of the police agency and the welfare and needs of officers.[3] Unfortunately, little attention is paid to the leadership role of first line supervisors by police administrators and

> the supervisor who is incompetent, always goes by the book, who is overly demanding, who manipulates others for his own advantage, or who fails to back up his subordinates in delicate or critical situations can substantially contribute to the psychological stress of his subordinates.[4]

Effective supervision is not inherently easy -- it is a learned behavior, taking time, training, and a personality conducive to good interpersonal relations. Good leadership is the key to an effective organization -- an effective police department. Yet, "it is ironic that despite an immense amount of research, managers and researchers still know virtually nothing about the essence of leadership, about why some people follow and others lead. Leadership remains a mysterious chemistry."[5]

Commonly, first line supervisors are perceived as facilitators of conflicts, instead of diffusers; therefore the continued organizational healthiness of police agencies depends on recognizing that most conflicts are among employees and their supervisors.[6] Realizing this, organizational behaviorists and criminal justice management

specialists advocate several programmatic changes to police leadership styles and agency organizational climates aimed at reducing stress, as well as improving officer effectiveness. Americans demand professional excellence from police officers, not mediocrity achieved as a result of poor leadership. "Agencies that will be successful in the 21st century are beginning now to instill an organizational climate that will attract and retain competent officers",[7] indicating dissatisfaction with current organizational and leadership conditions.

Predictors of future behavior must turn to past performances as indicators of previous difficulty, as well as analysis of unsuccessful theory. Currently, police organizational climates are less than optimum -- Reiser's 1974 study found

> In the traditional police organization, authoritarian management approaches predominate, with relatively little attention or concern being given to individual problems or human factors. Typically, the 'jackass' fallacy is operative. That is based on the carrot and stick approach to management, which assumes that without either dangling a tasty reward in front of someone's nose or beating him with a stick, he will not move. More enlightened police leadership is aware that management by participation is necessary....[8]

Unfortunately, authoritarian techniques continue to predominate, regardless of its effects on police officers or organizational performance. A prime causal factor in the retention of authoritarianism, and its resultant

difficulties, is organizational inertia, being bound to traditional responses to increasingly difficult problems. Not only is this short sighted thinking, but a significant performance detractor. Leadership requires followers, and effective leaders retain and develop continued acceptance and confidence of group members.[9] This is impossible with authoritarianism. Police leadership is responsible for creating an organizational climate conducive to good police work, necessarily implying this strategy will also lower organizational stressors through increased job satisfaction and improved supervisor-subordinate relationships.

Heretofore, certain organizational practices internally driven by police leadership, negatively influenced stress levels in their officers. Steers believes six specific conditions contribute to higher stress in the workplace: 1) occupational differences (i.e., line officer versus records clerk); 2) role ambiguity; 3) role conflict; 4) role overload or underutilization; 5) responsibility for people; and, 6) lack of participation in decisions.[10] Hanna identified ten departmental practices perpetuating stress: ambiguous work assignments; work assignments with inconsistent responsibilities; suppression of work grievances; subjective performance evaluations; responsibility without authority; focusing on failure instead of success; excluding the officer from the decision making process; inconsistent employee

rewards; inappropriate promotion of certain personnel; and not providing the means or opportunity for job development.[11] Clearly, these practices constitute continued use of domineering, inflexible leadership by police departments, even in the face of constant calls for reform from all segments of the profession. The managerial philosophies and values present within a police organization have considerable influence on the performance and structure of the department -- "the chief's managerial style and that of his management team will determine the extent of these organizational practices and their adverse effect on employee status."[12]

However, "...traditional American management has adopted an insulting top-down approach to a worker's knowledge in his or her own job. Managers ... consistently denied workers the opportunity to make substantive decisions about how their jobs should be done."[13] This attitude is directly transmitted to line officers through their superiors, significantly damaging personal desire and self-confidence while perpetuating heightened stress through the officer's perception of the supervisor's leadership attitude. Policing, by nature, requires near total autonomous operation by its officers, complicating supervisory functions deeply entrenched in tradition. Contemporary policing strategies, such as strategic, community, and problem oriented policing, demand flexible, innovative organizational structures and

leadership styles. Changes to existing police organizational structures as a result of developing these strategies will "cut deeply into traditional organizational structures and command relationships,"[14] creating severe adjustment problems for police hierarchies employing rigid authoritarian leadership styles. This will drastically improve line officer perceptions of the organizational climate. Research studies consistently demonstrate positive relationships between compatible work environments and an individual's ability to handle higher levels of stress. Yet, organizational reform is taking a back seat to other, less painful stress reducing alternatives "even though there is considerable evidence from the organizational literature that more participatory styles of organization and leadership produce greater worker satisfaction."[15]

"First line supervisors are the most important and influential group in the police organization -- able to make or break any project or program."[16] As the chief's representative and the main implementer of administration policies, the first line supervisor's leadership style is crucial in setting both stress and performance levels in the department. Although "responsible for controlling, training, and leading the human resources of a police agency,"[17] supervisors are often undertrained in the application of sound, effective leadership techniques. Instead, they prefer

to rely on reactive leadership styles acquired from their own supervisors, with the resultant chronic stress inherent in use of this technique. Consequently, "police supervisors who have come up through this system and have not found a way to deal with these stressors tend to take a very authoritarian and rigid view..."[18] of their position in the police hierarchy. However, their choice of leadership style is essential to the health of the organization and will, if properly applied, contribute to stress reduction in their subordinates.

Fielder cites a number of leadership theories which hold that "individuals with a certain personality, philosophy of management, or attitude will generally be more effective"[19] leaders than others. Although these characteristics certainly assist leaders in their role, it is the interaction of the leader, their followers, and the situation that determines the efficacy of leadership. The Situational Leadership Model, developed by Hersey and Blanchard, maintains there is no best leadership style -- the style used by leaders depend upon the readiness of followers and the situation at hand. Specifically, situational leadership is based on the intercourse of guidance and direction given by the leader, socioemotional support provided by the leader, and readiness levels displayed by followers in relation to the event.[20] Synthesis of these variables ultimately

determines the success of a first line supervisor as a leader and results in lower stress levels in police.

Although management is traditionally favored over leadership in police organizations, there are certainly police agencies that exclusively employ successful leadership philosophies. "Leadership is essentially a people business in developing others to feel they are important, their work is important, their contribution is important, and the result of what they do is important."[21] By concentrating on these priorities, first line supervisors can implement organizational practices designed to decrease stress, while increasing productivity. Blanchard states only 15-25 percent of what affects performance comes from activators like goal setting (departmental function), while 75-85 percent comes from consequences like praisings and reprimands (supervisory function).[22] Supervisors are clearly the linking pins in police departments, responsible for the health and well-being of line officers as well as accomplishment of organizational goals.

All police officers react differently to emotional stimuli. The "effectiveness of employees is related to how supervisors approach and interact with them"[23] as are stress levels. Degenero believes much police stress is caused through denial of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth to officers through poor supervision,[24] obviously

counterproductive to good interpersonal relationships. Officers often feel restrained by overly restrictive department policies originally designed to protect the organization, vehemently enforced by a supervisor far removed from the scene. Emotional overreaction and authoritarian rigidity displayed by supervisors in these sensitive situations is the root cause of dysfunctional supervisor-subordinate relationships and the main element of organizational stress. "Almost everyone knows of a particular boss ... who can reduce an otherwise bright individual into near imbecility"[25] through interpersonal stress aroused by these tactics.

Munro believes "an effective leader must not only be aware of the particular situational variables which are relevant at the time of decision, but he must also accurately perceive and reflect the characteristics of his followers,"[26] necessitating a flexible, situational leadership approach. Supervisors rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to be present when an officer makes a professional judgment or exercises discretion; all officers do not react alike, nor possess identical personalities, value systems, or motivation; supervisors must realize these variables in their choice of leadership style and choose the style best suited to the situation and the particular officer involved. In this manner, officers will begin to satisfy their personal

needs, not at the expense of the supervisor, but beneficial to the productivity and professionalism of the police force.

Kuykendall and Unsinger measured the leadership styles, ranges of styles, and style adaptability of 155 police executives attending managerial training programs in Arizona and California between 1978 and 1980. Using Hersey and Blanchard's LEAD instrument (Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description), they found managers "tended to be most effective in using styles with a high task emphasis (telling and selling) and least effective in the styles requiring a low task orientation (participating and delegating)."[27] This finding reaffirms the use of authoritarian, hierarchical leadership, ignores the call for increased participation in decision making, but most importantly, identifies the absence of follower readiness and situational factors in police leadership. The consequences of this omission for line officers manifests itself in higher stress levels, lower productivity, and increased interpersonal conflict.

> Clearly, interpersonal stress, especially with the immediate supervisor, strongly affects the individual's ability to utilize his intellectual abilities and his knowledge. Creative thinking and problem solving require a relatively stress-free interpersonal environment.[28]

In addition to insisting first line supervisors implement situational leadership, police executives must, through

innovative management, provide an organizational environment conducive to reducing the toxicity of organizational stress.

Need for Organizational Change

Most organizational reformers share a common philosophy -- implement participative decision making, improve communications, and practice management by objective (MBO) for job enrichment (see Table 3.1). DuBrin's organizational stress reduction methods involve modifying the organizational design to permit smaller span of control for supervisors, improve the organizational climate to increase job satisfaction, and clarify responsibilities of individuals by supervisors in an effort to prevent stressful occurrences.[29] Terry suggests ten different motivators to improve the organizational climate, including job enrichment and rotation, participative decision making, flextime, and MBO. However, he is quick to point out the particular choice of motivator should always be guided by the situation.[30] Steers postulates "since managers usually have more control over the working environment than subordinates, it seems only natural that they have more opportunity to contribute to a reduction of work related stress"[31] as he introduces stress reduction management strategies of supervisor selection and placement, skills training, job enrichment and rotation, participative decision making, and open communication channels. Kouzes believes organizations can do three things to create

Table 3.1

Use of Motivational Programs by Police Agencies

1981 - 1984 (N = 200)

Program	Number Using	Percentage
Task forces/special problem solving teams	185	62
Educational incentives	160	53
Generalist officers	142	47
Management By Objective	141	47
Labor-Management committees	112	37
Formal job rotation programs	92	31
Miscellaneous formal programs to increase employee participation	87	29
Suggestion awards	77	26
Career development programs	76	25
Attendance incentives	74	25
Pay-for-performance plans	72	24
Safety awards	63	21
Neighborhood team policing	49	16
Quality circles	48	16
Exceptional service awards	22	7
Public safety officers	15	5
Other programs	36	12

Source: U.S., Department of Justice, Improving the Use of Management By Objectives in Police Departments, [by Harry P. Hatry and John M. Greiner](Washington: GPO, 1986), 6.

organizational climates tailored to develop psychological health, a precursor to stress tolerance:

1. To build commitment in employees, offer more rewards than punishment.

2. To build a sense of control over their job, choose tasks that are challenging but within their reach.

3. To build an attitude of challenge, encourage people to see change as full of possibilities.[32]

The trend in police organizational strategies include a growing movement toward participatory management techniques, but without a corresponding shift in leadership styles, resulting in overall disjointed managerial direction. Brown advocates use of MBO to continue accountability of police managers while achieving greater motivation, efficiency, flexibility, and job satisfaction.[33] However, maintaining firm control over middle supervisors will only exacerbate their continued use of the leadership techniques proven capable of achieving short term success, ergo authoritarianism. The only logical result is stress, compounded not only by suppressed emotions, but also confusion, as the leadership direction espoused by the chief is not the direction taken by the supervisor. Organizational reform and leadership development must occur simultaneously to achieve desired motivational and stress reducing effects.

These organizational initiatives are normally not within the purview of change for first line supervisors; none-the-less, police bureaucracies successfully resist these ideas in favor of traditional methods. Tragically, tradition generally excludes leadership or management training for first line supervisors, an exception that perpetuates high stress levels and mediocre productivity in the work force. This is the greatest malpractice ever known in police organizational development.

> Management often doesn't seem to really believe that what their people learn can make a significant and lasting difference in individual and organizational performance. It is important to overcome this false belief about training and instead become committed to making a difference with training.[34]

Frequently, first line supervisors are selected for their positions based on seniority, test results, or as a result of their affiliations within the organization. Line officer experience is valuable, but woefully inadequate as the sole training source for initial supervisory positions; formal training must always supplement experience. Although there are advocates for job placement of first line supervisors, most scholars agree leadership training is required to provide fundamental knowledge in participative management, situational leadership, and motivation theory. Learning is "absolutely indispensable under today's

conditions of rapid change and complexity. Very simply, those who do not learn do not long survive as leaders."[35]

Existing police leadership development training is sparse, with very few agencies willing or able to provide instruction to new or existing supervisors. A nationwide study conducted in 1976 by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) surveyed 2000 officers in 16 diverse agencies through an attitudinal questionnaire designed to measure police officer perceptions of police disciplinary practices, a function of first line supervision. Their findings showed that inadequate supervisory authority as well as insufficient training in administrative skills and responsibilities created role confusion during disciplinary situations, an indicator of inconsistent supervisory training. IACP recommended training all new supervisors on their responsibilities and to redesign supervisory training for veteran supervisors, reinforcing the first line supervisory roles of management and supervision.[36] The common supervisory techniques of intuition, negotiation, and coercion in a traditional police setting is wholly inadequate in manipulating those who are accustomed to manipulating others,[37] and leadership training will provide the flexibility necessary for success. However,

> detailed descriptions or analyses of such courses of study are conspicuously absent from the literature of policing. As a consequence, instead

> of building on an existing base of knowledge, police officials intent on providing effective job relevant supervisory and management training courses must frequently begin building their courses from scratch.[38]

Existing Leadership Development Programs

Naisbitt believes "new management styles flourished mostly in business literature. Very few made it to the office or shop floor. And even the new methods we tried were still based on the hierarchical structure."[39] The same idiom may be applied to police leadership development. However, this trend may be mitigated by the recent introduction of the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training Supervisory and Leadership Institute, directed at first line supervisors. This training, still in its infancy, cannot yet be considered for an impact evaluation; however, its intent is to enhance those leadership abilities of first line supervisors in California law enforcement. Using Argyis' Immaturity-Maturity motivation theory, the course consists of 192 hours over an eight month period, progressing from personal leadership evaluations to organizational relationships.[40] As "leadership is 'causative', meaning that leadership can invent and create institutions that can empower employees to satisfy their needs",[41] this course has the potential to become a national model for first line supervisory and leadership development.

The Rochester, New York police department exposes supervisors to a stress training class, designed to facilitate changes in supervisory and management practices identified as prominent stressors in the agency. Built on a 44 hour platform, consisting of 12 hours of stress awareness and 32 hours of organizational and management issues, this locally devised training focuses on stress reduction through examination of contributing organizational factors.[42] Counteracting these programs are the more prevalent forms of police leadership development. The Chicago Police Department requires newly promoted sergeants attend a "Pre-Service Training Course", with 140 hours split into two phases over a four week period, with a minority portion in the second phase devoted to police motivational characteristics and leadership concepts; the city of New York's first line supervisory leadership development consists of two hours of leadership training buried in their Basic Management Orientation Course, held for lieutenants.[43] Apparently, given the importance of first line supervision, leadership development is not deemed essential nor desirable training by most agencies, even though promotion to "each level requires certain skills not required of the previous level, and without training (which is sorely lacking for most supervisorial positions), it becomes a matter of giving it your best shot and hanging in there."[44] Another program provides corporate management

training to a cross-section of police administrators and police officers -- Operation Bootstrap.

Operation Bootstrap is a pilot program of IACP begun in 1985, offering current management training provided by over 70 Fortune 500 companies. Courses "range in length from 1 day to 1 week and cover subjects such as effective supervision, conflict resolution, group problem solving, and stress management."[45] Operation Bootstrap makes available classroom space in corporate executive training programs to police agencies on any management subject that can possibly be utilized in law enforcement. In 1989, over 1,200 police managers in 42 states attended corporate training through Operation Bootstrap,[46] but this is but a fraction of police supervisors in need of leadership development training. The benefits of leadership development training are obvious to its participants -- but the scope must be expanded to provide long reaching, synergistic effects for stress reduction.

Such training must emphasize the positive aspects of police leadership instead of the reactionary styles that serve as major causes of subordinate stress. Communicative skills, including the ability to be a good listener, are essential to good rapport with subordinates and also serve as an outstanding stress reduction technique. Leaders must provide a positive sense of direction, feedback, and recognition/reinforcement to their subordinates in order to

build the psychological hardiness used to cope with their occupational stress. Commitment to their work, control over things occurring at work, and a challenging atmosphere are the means to achieve stress reduction at minimal cost to the organization. First line supervisors can change their subordinate's attitudes, because "even with highly motivated, achievement oriented people, the type of leadership provided makes a definite difference in performance, in the levels of stress experienced, and in long term healthiness."[47] Finally, police leadership training must include elements of participative decision making and situational leadership, as most research into leadership's effect on police stress recommends implementation of these techniques as the primary thrust of change.

Summary

First line supervisors occupy an important leadership position in the police department, a function of managerial competence often ignored by higher administrative echelons. Leaders are empowered by their followers; the continued use of authoritarianism by supervisors creates friction during subordinate interaction, producing stress in line officers. Furthermore, traditional police organizational practices foster use of this leadership style even while progressive management initiatives dictate otherwise. A leadership style compatible with acceptable stress levels and productivity is

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model, where supervisors choose a particular leadership style based on follower readiness levels and the presenting situation.

However, the promise of situational leadership will never be realized without organizational reform. Research shows such management innovations as job enrichment, job rotation, participative decision making, and management by objectives will improve police organizational climates. Still, authoritarianism will minimize the effects of these initiatives unless organizational reform and leadership development occur simultaneously, achieving the desired motivational and stress reducing effects. Unfortunately, first line supervisors are not formally trained in progressive leadership, relying on experience as the sole source of their personal leadership development. It is a systemic problem, as comprehensive leadership development is simply not widely available.

Excellent training programs exist, most notably California's Supervisory and Leadership and the International Association of Chief of Police sponsored Operation Bootstrap, but possess limited scope. Expansion of leadership development training is mandatory, emphasizing quality over quantity, and focusing on communication skill acquisition, developing psychological hardiness, and elements of situational leadership and participative decision making.

When this occurs, police agencies will experience a dramatic decrease in officers incapacitated by organizational stress, accompanied by an equally dramatic increase in morale, motivation, and productivity on their force.

Notes

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Chapter 4

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Policing is one of the most stressful professions in the United States, creating diverse health and performance problems for its officers. Stress and its manifestations were developed by Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome and revolve around three elements: 1) alarm reaction; 2) stage of resistance; and the 3) stage of exhaustion, producing serious, detrimental consequences of police stress: increased worker's compensation claims and costs; premature disability; early retirement; reduced productivity; increased incidents of alcoholism, divorce, suicide, and internal affairs complaints; and poor labor-management relations.[1] Research efforts attempting to isolate a single cause of police officer stress were fruitless, but consistently identified organizational stress as the premier source of police frustration. Numerous psychologists and criminal justice professionals continually deal with this issue, yet it continues unabated.

The first police stress empirical study was conducted by Dr. William Kroes, classifying primary police stressors into equipment, courts, administration, and community relations categories. Specific stressors within administration were

policies (work assignments, procedures, and personal conduct) and support (relationship and rapport between officers and supervisors) as reported by 69 percent of the sample, with 22 percent reporting difficulties in getting along with supervisors as another primary stressor. Dr. Terry Eisenberg followed in 1975 by identifying over 30 occupational stressors, including poor supervision, absence or lack of career development, and offensive policies. Studies by Stratton, Moore and Donohue, Lester, Burgin, and others essentially found the same organizational stressors originally presented by Kroes. Dr. Reiser found the organizational climate in police work is a significant stressor and recommended sweeping leadership and management changes. Undoubtedly, the research identified organizational stressors, specifically poor leadership as practiced by first line supervisors, as significant stress producing organizational behavior.

While interpersonal stress between first line supervisors and line officers is central to organizational stress, the organizational design of police departments is also a main contributor. Quasi-military police structures breed bureaucratic rigidity, stifle upward communication, and encourage authoritarianism, plus exacerbate malcontent between supervisors and their workers, all leading to higher stress levels. A significant proportion of the difficulties

with pseudo-military organizations are the tendencies to force "officials to substitute leadership by rank for natural leadership,"[2] a trait endemic in first line supervisors.

Several academicians offer dissenting views on the research findings, citing design flaws in previous work. Methodological problems arise with lack of control groups, small samples, self-reported data, and an absence of empirical testing. However, these concerns do not mitigate the impact of poor supervision and leadership on line officers, nor invalidate previous findings. The effect of leadership on police organizational stress is often minimized by police executives, resulting in a destructive organizational stressor and the one least understood or pursued by police administrators.

First line supervisors occupy important managerial positions in the police department, functioning as the chief's prime policy implementer. "While managers appraise their subordinates, subordinates also appraise their managers"[3] and their continued use of authoritarianism creates friction during subordinate interaction, producing line officer stress. Furthermore, traditional police organizational practices foster use of this leadership style even while progressive management initiatives dictate otherwise. A leadership style compatible with acceptable stress levels and productivity is Hersey and Blanchard's

Situational Leadership Model, where supervisors choose a particular leadership style based on follower readiness levels and the presenting situation.

However, the promise of situational leadership will never be realized without organizational reform. Research shows such management innovations as job enrichment, job rotation, participative decision making, and management by objectives will improve marginally productive organizational climates. Still, authoritarianism will minimize the benefits of these initiatives unless organizational reform and leadership development occur simultaneously, achieving desired motivational and stress reducing effects. Unfortunately, much police supervisory training is haphazard, "based on educated guesses at the qualities of the good supervisor or manager ...."[4] It is a systemic problem, as comprehensive leadership development is simply not widely available.

"What's needed is not management education, but leadership education."[5] Programs exist, most notably California's Supervisory and Leadership Institute and the International Association of Chiefs of Police sponsored Operation Bootstrap, but possess limited scope. Expansion of leadership development training is mandatory, emphasizing quality over quantity, and focusing on communicative skill acquisition, developing psychological hardiness, and elements

of situational leadership and participative decision making. When this occurs, police agencies will experience a dramatic decrease in officers incapacitated by organizational stress, accompanied by an equally impressive increase in morale, motivation, and productivity in the force.

Conclusions

Police needlessly suffer additional occupational stress through mediocre first line supervisory leadership practices, an element of organizational stress. Authoritarianism, the leadership style of choice, is a learned behavior inbred during the initial professional years of current law enforcement supervisors, further entrenched by the autonomous nature of policing and traditional police organizational design and coupled with external pressures mandating strict police control and accountability. Further compounding the problem is an absence of first line supervisor leadership development, allowing for maintenance of the leadership status quo, denial of progressive leadership and management techniques, and fulfillment of the 'Pygmalion effect' in their subordinates. Continued exposure to authoritarianism alienates subordinates, creating severe interpersonal conflict and stress in the work force. "People under stress make mistakes. Law Enforcement officers under stress may make mistakes at extremely critical moments, because stress has pushed the officer into making bad judgments."[6] Mistakes

are avoidable; organizational stressors can be controlled by first line supervisory use of contemporary situational leadership techniques. The "effectiveness of a group or an organization depends on the interaction between the leader's personality and the situation."[7]

Auspiciously, law enforcement strategies are beginning to evolve. The aim of traditional crime fighting strategy is to create a disciplined, technically sophisticated, quasi-military anti-crime force. Crime control and crime solving are dominant objectives, accentuated by emphasis on accountability to law by elimination of police discretion through increased centralization, written policies and procedures, dense supervision, and separation of the police from local politics.[8] Reactivity is the biggest problem with this strategy, whereas innovative policing strategies such as strategic policing, problem solving policing, and community oriented policing use a proactive approach. This strategic evolution necessitates decentralization of authority, innovative management, and flexible leadership, all proven stress reducing methods. Police agencies are beginning to accept the need for change in their organizational and leadership behaviors in order to remain viable crime fighting entities for the future.

Due to the unique nature of police work, police supervision in reality is much more like coaching than

directing. Teaching, reviewing, training, considering alternatives and other techniques are required. First line supervisors should "empower officers with authority to use their skill, knowledge, and values to identify problems and work toward their solution."[9] To this end, Whisenand coined Supervision By Objective (SBO) to indicate the power of the supervisor in work measurements, performance appraisals, and subordinate self-control. SBO mandates the same basic philosophy as Management By Objective, including participatory decision making, yet it is aimed at individuals by the first line supervisor[10] instead of the entire organization by administrators. Klofas mentions several attempts, both successful and not, at restructuring roles to increase job satisfaction, including team building and participatory management practices. Evaluations of team policing, a specific participative model, "highlighted its potential but have also called attention to forces within the organization that are resistant to change."[11] Evidently, first line supervisors are constrained by environmental forces in their ability to change, severely hampering stress reduction efforts. Although police supervisors may be getting familiar with situational leadership and progressive management techniques, considerable resistance and skepticism remain in the department.

Bureaucratic rigidity is definitely a systemic problem. Bennis eloquently states the common notion that bureaucracies are wonderful places to hide responsibility and guilt at the same time asserting "the bigger any bureaucracy becomes, the more it is apt to yield to a kind of incestuous relationship with itself, with middle management devoting its time to justifying its existence to itself and losing touch with the outside world."[12] Professional self-preservation is a powerful motivator for all bureaucrats, including police administrators. Consequently, police supervisors will never consciously mitigate their prestige or power through adoption of flexible leadership and management techniques, preferring to retain traditional methods at the expense of productivity and employee health. Sewell addresses the need for organizational change, stating law enforcement bureaucracies are as resistant to change as the military, with police managements still not changing in spite of private sector, and some departmental, acceptance of stress reduction needs. He proposes a recognition of philosophies parallel to private sector corporations for accelerated reform. Decentralization of management authority and responsibility is the key to change, with facilitation of interpersonal communications, participatory management, and nontraditional approaches to promotion as main subareas. These strategies, according to Sewell, are essential in maintaining the team concept and a feeling of self-worth for police officers, thereby reducing

stress.[13] In 1978, John Costello found U.S. Air Force Security Police supervisors exhibited a strong desire for participative management styles in their units, but were reluctant and confused on the utility of such changes.[14] This clearly exhibits a resistance, an inertia, built into police management. Tully asserts

> Organizational structure, being naturally rigid, will not change rapidly. If the structure is left unattended, the organization gradually becomes less responsive, more bureaucratic, and less efficient ... one cure is to change the structure. However, this is far easier said than done ... the incumbent bureaucracy can be expected to resist the necessary change and in extreme circumstances, to sabotage the efforts. This is normal and expected behavior, but it can be countered by a number of means -- the best of which is to involve those employees affected in the planning process that leads to change.[15]

This is undoubtedly occurring now in police agencies that are beginning to embrace organizational restructuring. Its absolutely essential that police chiefs pursue organization redesign and strongly advocate situational leadership in their departments, as well as leadership training for first line supervisors.

Innovation, i.e. change, by definition will not be accepted without dogmatic insistence. "If everyone embraced the situation, it would be difficult to take it seriously as an innovation. Innovation causes resistance to stiffen, defense to set in, opposition to form."[16] The majority of police organizational resistance is not due to a lack of

understanding or commitment to reduce stress and raise productivity in the work environment, but a reaction to the organizational environment in which it operates. Klofas is clearly cognizant of this, stating the "lack of attention to the research of the external and political nature of police leadership makes many of the existing theories on leadership of little or no value."[17]

All police departments must serve two masters -- the people and the government. Civilian leadership is the government to police departments, establishing fiscal and operational boundaries for the department that may not be trespassed for fear of immediate retaliation upon the entire department and its members. Legal decisions, collective bargaining agreements, shrinking budgets, and larger missions severely impact police leadership decisions. In fact, most of the position power in first line supervisors is now limited by legal judgments, an environmental constraint over which administrators have little, if any control. First line supervisory position power is limited and relatively weak compared to similar private sector groups;[18] this alone solidifies bureaucratic boundaries and practices. Committed leaders, well grounded in situational leadership and participative decision making techniques acquired through combining experience and formal training, will be able to

navigate future criminal justice systems through this political maze.

The strategy for success in the 21st century is clear. "Its time to stop searching for the perfect criminal justice manager and to begin examining situational aspects of the work environment that constrain administrators in their leadership functions."[19] All police managers, including first line supervisors, must consider the environment in establishing their particular leadership style and management philosophy. These techniques however, must be procured not only from experience, but through specific training courses for first line supervisors. Mere possession of proven leadership theory will enable supervisors to apply this knowledge, building a synergistic effect over time. Police managements and their civilian hierarchies must realize officers comprise the most valuable resource in the department and must be effectively lead. Change is certainly possible within the existing environment, but it takes commitment to provocative leadership, not clinging to traditional, outdated methodologies.

Future police officers will be better educated, with a greater understanding of themselves, their environment, and their leaders. Progressive leadership is required <u>now</u> to reduce organizational stress in tomorrow's first line supervisors and break the existing treacherous and stressful

leadership cycle. Most importantly, police organizations will have a cost effective mechanism to reverse downward trends in their employee's health, emotional stability, and productivity through occupational stress. Police officer divorce, alcoholism, and suicide rates will be positively affected by the implementation of contemporary leadership practices, as will negative health norms symptomatic of occupational stress, thus providing a strong catalyst for police organizational reform.

In closing, Tom Peters said:

> The excellent company management's ... result is better relative performance, a higher level of contribution from the 'average' man. More significantly, both for society and for the companies, these institutions create environments in which people can blossom, develop self-esteem, and otherwise be excited participants in business and society as a whole. Meanwhile, the much larger group of nonexcellent performers seems to act almost perversely, at odds with every variable ... losing instead of winning is the norm, as are negative rather than positive reinforcement, guidance by the rule book rather than tapestries of myths, constraint and control rather than soaring meaning and a chance to sally forth, and a political rather than moral leadership.[20]

The future of American policing depends on adoption of a winning leadership strategy -- the alternatives are unacceptable.

Recommendations for Future Research

As with all social science research, future studies in this area require true experimental designs investigating the

relationship of leadership as a function of organizational stress. Undertaking an empirical study with experimental and control groups and subjecting findings to rigorous testing will scientifically validate this and previous research, while concurrently providing impact evaluations of chosen leadership training intervention programs. Specifically, an evaluation of California's Supervisory and Leadership Institute leadership development training on subordinate stress is the logical extension of the author's work presented herein and should be pursued. Additionally, study of the effects of various participative management innovations on organizational stress, in view of evolving policing strategy, will provide insight into the interrelationships of these extremely important variables.

Finally, comprehensive experimental studies involving psychologists, organizational behaviorists, and criminal justice practitioners are required to assimilate the differing approaches of these disciplines and produce empirical data conducive to interpreting the multitude of variables associated with the role of leadership in police organizational stress.

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