

Law Enforcement Leadership:
The Effects of Leadership Style on Law Enforcement Subordinates

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INTRODUCTION:

Law enforcement officers wear many hats. They often act as medical first responders, clerics, counselors, peacekeepers, negotiators and diplomats. Their job is to maintain law and order, however it is often thankless, unappreciated, scrutinized and criticized, not just by the general public, but by the leaders of their own agencies as well. In law enforcement agencies across the country, leadership has hit a brick wall and is in desperate need of repair.

This research project will examine two opposing premises regarding law enforcement leadership. The first is that law enforcement agencies that utilize a paramilitary, hierarchal, top-down leadership structure have a negative impact on employee morale, productivity and motivation. These detrimental influences from this type of leadership may, in turn, affect the stakeholders, or citizens of the community, due to disgruntled officers.

Leaders in this type of structure believe a top-down command-and-control approach is necessary not only to combat crime, but also to keep in check the officers they employ who are armed with weapons. These leaders are often very traditional in nature and tend to be highly resistant to change. They do things the way they have always been done and expect that their authority not be questioned. Many leaders in the field of law enforcement today are products of a leadership structure that was developed during the Vietnam War era. This structure is set up with a strict chain of command structure where decision-

making and control rests at the top. Officers at the lower levels are expected to stand by and receive orders.

What often gets ignored is that dealing with social problems of society such as abuse and violence that most people are not aware of, as well as the isolation many officers feel toward friends and family, and the sheer stress of putting their lives on the line everyday, is hard enough on an officer's attitude. Research literature suggests that having a leadership structure that does not encourage professional growth, does not appreciate accomplishments, and is not accepting of creative ideas for improvement or change can prove potentially to be even more detrimental to an officer's work ethic. An officer who feels the impact of this negativity most likely will not provide a good service to others.

The second premise is that law enforcement agencies can be more effective if they utilize a tight-loose structure of organizational leadership. Tight-loose organizations establish a general set of rules and parameters to which all employees must adhere. Employees are given significant discretion to exercise their best judgment within this framework. For example, there are certain aspects of an officer's job that must be tightly controlled, such as use of deadly force, emergency response tactics, arrest procedures, and pursuit driving. Thus, a set of defined boundaries has an important place within law enforcement. Also, during times of crisis a clear chain of command is extremely vital due to the nature of decisions made.

In sum, this project will investigate which of the two organizational leadership structures, top-down or tight-loose, is more appropriate in terms of improved morale and agency performance for law enforcement agencies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature includes various perspectives on the subject of leadership, organizational structure and cultural change. It will compare and contrast the relevant leadership models examined for this research project and will explore their effectiveness when implemented within realm of law enforcement.

Top Down Leadership in Law Enforcement

Law enforcement has traditionally been structured similar to the military with a hierarchal style of management. This leadership style originated from the early 19th Century where Frederick Taylor (Shafritz & Ott, 2001) pioneered the theory of “scientific management”. This theory suggests that there is “one best way” for a job to be done and it is management’s job to determine what that “one best way” is and how the workers should get it done.

In 1957, Douglas Murray McGregor (Shafritz & Ott, 2001) believed that it was management’s job to “harness human energy” by what he referred to as “Theory X”:

1. Management is responsible for organizing the elements of productive enterprise – money, materials, equipment, people – in the interest of economic ends.
2. With respect to people, this is a process of directing their efforts, motivating them, controlling their actions, modifying their behavior to fit the needs of the organization.
3. Without this active intervention by management, people would be passive – even resistant – to organizational needs. They must therefore be persuaded, rewarded, punished, controlled – their

activities must be directed. This is management's task. We often sum it up by saying that management consists of getting things done through other people. (McGregor, 1957)

Many leaders in law enforcement today began their careers not long after their service in the military following the Vietnam War era. They brought with them their military, hierarchal, chain-of-command leadership style. This structure places the leader at the top of the pyramid that directs down to his subordinates who must obey his orders. The basic belief is that "someone has to be in charge to make things happen, the followers are needed to do the work, and that very few people are natural leaders" (Ayers, 1994).

The traditional model of policing encompassed police administrators who "feel they had all the answers, and did not need the participation of line officers or interference of the general citizenry" (Morreale, n.d.) Morreale quoted H. Goldstein from his book, "Problem-Oriented Policing" by saying:

"The dominant form of policing today continues to view police officers as automatons. Despite an awareness that they exercise broad discretion, they are held to strict account in their daily work – for what they do and how they do it...especially in procedural matters, they are required to adhere to detailed regulations. In large police agencies, rank and file police officers are often treated impersonally and kept in the dark regarding policy matters. Officers quickly learn, under these conditions, that the rewards go to those who conform to expectations – that non-thinking compliance is valued" (Goldstein, 1990).

The leadership model for law enforcement has been traditionally based on a "command and control" leadership style. The majority of today's leaders were trained and mentored by managers who also possessed this influence and dominance style of leading.

Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2002) describe how command and control is derived from "establishing and maintaining power over and control of

people and organizational processes”. They list a number of typically unsaid assumptions that drive the use of command and control when it comes to change within an organization, including:

- Leaders know best.
- Leaders should know where they are going (goals, outcomes) and must predetermine the plan for how to get there (process).
- Controlling human behavior and action during implementation so there is minimal variance from the predetermined plan is a requirement of success.
- The environment/marketplace won't change enough to be a factor during implementation, and if it does, leaders can and must control its influence.
- If leaders encounter unplanned variables, they must quickly control the negative impacts on the change effort through problem solving and then return to the implementation of their current plan.
- Employees won't naturally contribute positively to the change effort, so leaders must 'help' them by commanding and controlling their behavior and involvement. Leaders must force peoples' cooperation.
- Needing to alter change plans connotes leadership failure and means that the change leaders did not plan thoroughly enough (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2002).

Military VS Law Enforcement

One question that has been raised is whether the organizational structure of law enforcement is truly modeled after the military. According to author Thomas Cowper, this is a misconception and in actuality, leaders in law enforcement who take on this belief are in error. In the article, “The Myth of the ‘Military Model’ of Leadership in Law Enforcement”, Cowper examines “the so-called military model in law enforcement and dispels the notion that police officers and their departments are patterned after the real military”. He takes a look at how damaging it can be when police department’s structure themselves after what they believe to be military guidelines for leadership and structure, but are in actuality “false assumptions”. He then educates on the reality of

leadership in the actual military and suggests ways that policing can benefit from the “correct understanding and application of valid military concepts and methodologies” (Cowper, 2000).

In the book “Corps Business: The 30 Management Principles of the U.S. Marines”, author David Freedman actually uses the straightforward management principles of the United States Marine Corps to influence leaders in the business world. He lists 30 Marine Corps Management Principles, among them #13: “Manage by end state and intent - tell people what needs to be accomplished and why, and leave the details to them”; #15: “Reward failure – Someone who never fails probably isn’t pushing the envelope”; #17: “Glorify the lower levels of the organization – the higher the manager, the harder he or she should work at making it clear that the rank and file are the heroes”; #18: “Demand to be questioned – subordinates should feel free to openly disagree with their managers, up until it comes time to carry out a final and legitimate decision; and #27: “Experiment obsessively – even the most successful organization will eventually stop winning if it doesn’t explore radically new approaches” (Freedman, 2000).

Tight/Loose Leadership in Law Enforcement

It is slowly being recognized that the hierarchal style of management in law enforcement agencies is not only dysfunctional, but obsolete as well. Ayers (1994) describes how law enforcement is facing the realities of the information age and must conform to compatible technology, as well as new philosophies of management.

The concept of a “tight-loose” leadership model in law enforcement is one that establishes a general set of rules and parameters to which all employees must adhere. Employees are given significant discretion to exercise their best judgment within this framework. For example, there are certain aspects of an officer’s job that must be tightly controlled, such as use of deadly force, emergency response tactics, arrest procedures, and pursuit driving. A paramilitary style of leadership has an important place within law enforcement. During times of crisis a chain of command is extremely vital due to the nature of decisions made. However, when it comes to day-to-day operation of the agency, this style of leadership may not be as effective as alternative ones.

Jay Gardner, in his article “Values: The impact on Organizational Effectiveness”, describes the need for leaders to be aware of the influence of values in the work environment and that values of civic leaders, peers, and subordinates, vary from topic to topic and day to day. Values are defined as “the standards of desirability by which one chooses between alternate behaviors”. They are formed by the association we have with our friends, our family, the church or school we attend, and various other influences in our lives. Often there are value conflicts and it is important for the leader to understand and exemplify the organization’s values and to communicate those values to subordinates as well as understand the values, needs, and expectations of the subordinates. (Gardner, n.d.).

It is important to understand the organizational culture of a police department when considering leadership models that are effective. Leadership plays a significant part in defining the culture of a law enforcement organization

(Harrison, 1998). “Without the foundation of a structure and environment that supports specific values, a departmental philosophy can be confusing and challenged by officers, while followed only when convenient” (Harrison, 1998). Leadership is the “glue” that binds every aspect of an organization together. One of the challenges for leaders today is understanding the culture that already exists, as well as being able to generate support for a shared vision within the organization.

Thomas Carswell, in the article called “The New Officer: The NeXt Generation”, describes how the next generation of law enforcement officers will be Generation X workers and this generation is very different from the Baby Boomer workers who are now retiring. GenXers have been generally characterized as slackers and lacking in loyalty to an organization. It is crucial for mentors, leaders, and supervisors to learn how to effectively deal with these types of employees so that they are motivated, experience job satisfaction, and choose to stay at their jobs for a long time (Carswell, 2002).

Carswell and Messerschmidt (2003), in “Knowing Your Employees: A Key to Better Supervision”, explain the importance of a first-line supervisor getting to know the line officers at a police department to enrich the workplace and improve his or her effectiveness as a supervisor. The authors utilize Allan Black’s four general classifications of personality from his book *Developing and Creating Workplace Communities*: meditative, intuitive, negotiative, and directive. Understanding these four categories and placing each line officer into their appropriate category will help supervisors better understand each officer (Carswell & Messerschmidt, 2003).

In the article, "Managing Office Politics", Dr. Lou Harris analyzes office politics from the perspective of the first line supervisor in a law enforcement agency. Harris describes how orders traditionally flow from the top down and information generally flows from the bottom up. A problem often occurs when employees "not in the loop" of receiving information generally will listen to what is being said from anyone, regardless if they know what they are talking about. This is when the rumor mill gets started that can cause morale to decline and can be harmful to interpersonal and professional relationships. Harris suggests that supervisors share information with their subordinates as much as it is possible. Meetings should include information that not only is on a "need-to-know" basis, but a "nice-to-know" basis as well. If supervisors hoard information simply to maintain power over their employees, that information may travel through the rumor mill and create an overall damaging effect on the organization (Harris, n.d.)

"Groupthink" is an article that describes the concept as a time when a unified group's need for agreement gets in the way of the group's consideration of alternative solutions. Harris explains that failure due to groupthink often happens due to: 1) illusion of invulnerability-where a group believes they cannot be outsmarted or overcome; 2) feeling of unanimity – where no one in a group comes up with any other suggestions; 3) pressure to conform – where people are often silent because they feel a decision has already been made; and 4) opposing ideas dismissed – where supervisors actually tell the group to carry out their assignments, even though they question the logic of a plan. The best solution to this dilemma is for managers to "create a cohesive team that is

compatible and clearly committed to the group's goals, but does not become a team that fails to consider alternative solutions" (Harris, n.d.)

The article, "Why Do Some Officers Stay While Others Leave?" by Harris observes the problem of why some law enforcement officers stay with a department until they retire while others quit voluntarily. It was first believed that extrinsic aspects such as working conditions and pay were the reasons for turnover. It was later found that other causes such as "achievement, recognition, advancement, and responsibility" were determined as potential reasons that officers quit before they retired. (Harris, n.d.)

One study by the State of Vermont Criminal Justice Center found that 152 officers who voluntarily quit their departments in 1989 did so for the following reasons: "dissatisfaction with general benefits, pay, retirement benefits, opportunity for advancement, challenging position, leadership style of the chief, administrative policies, and personnel policies" (Harris, n.d.).

Harris says that turnover will never disappear, but an informed administrator will be more likely to make better decisions that affect his work force.

There is some question about how much discretion should actually be given to law enforcement. The book, "Discretionary Justice" by Kenneth Culp Davis, is one that touches on the need for improving the value of justice for individuals by refining the use, or abuse, of discretion utilized by enforcers of the law. He states, "Our jurisprudence of the statutes and of judge-made laws is overdeveloped; our jurisprudence of administrative justice, of police justice,

of prosecutor justice – of discretionary justice – is underdeveloped. We need all of justice, not just the easy half of it” (Davis, 1969).

The standard answer to reducing injustice has always been “to build a system of rules and principles to guide decisions in individual cases” (Davis, 1969). Although this answer is an effective one, Davis suggests that something more is needed. We must be aware of the reality that outside courts is where most justice to individual parties occurs as opposed to inside the courts. It is crucial that we break through the displeasing areas of discretionary determinations by prosecutors and police, as well as administrators, where the majority of reform is needed. (Davis, 1969).

Organizational Change

Change is something that can be very difficult for any organization. In the article, “Individual Personality and Organizational Culture, or ‘Let’s Change This Place So I Feel More Comfortable’”, Gerald L. Barkdall explores empirical evidence on the hypothesis that organizational leaders try to change their organization’s culture to fit their own personality inclination. He defines culture as “the way we do things around here”. However, he further explains that this general definition fails to touch on more powerful underlying concepts:

- Cultures are collective beliefs that in turn shape behavior. They are a form of a shared paradigm.
- Cultures are based in part on emotion which are particularly conspicuous when change is threatened.
- Cultures are based on a foundation of historical continuity. The potential loss of continuity in part explains the resistance to change.
- Cultures are defined by, and subsequently define symbols.

- Although cultures resist change, they are constantly changing. This paradoxical condition limits the speed of change and consumes large quantities of energy.
- Cultures are more probabilistic than deterministic...a set of fuzzy imperatives (Barkdall, n.d.).

Leaders can change their organizations to fit their own preferences by: “1) replacing key, highly visible employees, 2) reorganizing, 3) initiating new, or eliminating existing forms of communication, 4) establishing new reward and recognition systems (including change in the behavior that is rewarded), and 5) changing management processes, including meeting frequencies, attendance, and agendas” (Barkdall, n.d.). In the end, the evidence proves that certain individuals in fact do attempt and often succeed in changing their organization’s culture.

Several of the articles and chapters reviewed offered important information to help define organizational culture and the ability to change. In the book, *Classics of Organizational Theory*, Schein describes culture and argues, “We must avoid the superficial models of culture and build on the deeper, more complex anthropological models.” In summary, he says that if leaders do not become conscious of the cultures they have created within their organizations, those cultures will manage them. He also states that cultural understanding is essential for leaders to lead. (Schein, 1993).

Trice and Beyer, in their chapter “Changing Organizational Cultures” from the book, *Classics of Organizational Theory*, give eight specific considerations in changing cultures, including “capitalizing on propitious moments, combining caution with optimism, understanding resistance to culture change, changing many elements but maintaining some continuity, recognizing the importance of

implementation, identifying the need to select, modify, and create appropriate cultural forms, and modifying socialization tactics” (Trice & Beyer, 2001).

In the book, *Leadership in Organizations*, author Gary Yukl explains that initiating change in an organization will more often be successful if the leader has a clear understanding of why change is resisted. He lists 9 reasons that people typically resist change, including: “1) Lack of trust, 2) belief that change is unnecessary, 3) belief that the change is not feasible, 4) economic threats, 5) relative high costs, 6) fear of personal failure, 7) loss of status and power, 8) threat to values and ideals, and 9) resentment of interference” (Yukl, 2002). People are naturally resistant to change because they want to protect their personal interests and determinations, not because they are ignorant or inflexible.

Change in Law Enforcement

Initiating change is difficult, especially in the deeply ingrained organizational culture that exists within law enforcement. Leaders who have traditionally managed with the old military style of top-down, hierarchal structure, have a difficult time adjusting to new theories and applications for leadership today.

Looking at organizational change in law enforcement, French and Stewart in their article “Organizational Development in a Law Enforcement Environment” describe how organizational change in law enforcement environments can be very challenging due to the fact that many still use the traditional bureaucratic design of leadership, with power centered at the top. They observe the journey of the Florida Department of Insurance, Treasury and Fire Marshal’s Division of

Fraud (DIF) and how it set out to implement change to create an organization that utilizes empowerment, teamwork, and participative management. A leadership practices assessment was conducted based on five leadership practices. It was concluded that while the implementation of organizational development is a slow process, it can make a huge impact on an organization. The authors say it is crucial for law enforcement organizations to have supportive leadership, motivation, and commitment to get to the development stage (French & Stewart, 2001).

In “Managing the Stress of Organizational Change (law enforcement agencies)”, Sewell describes how law enforcement agencies are in an era of continual change and they must regularly examine and improve their ways of operation to keep up with it. Everything from social and demographic changes in communities, to technological advancements with information systems, to DNA technology and automated fingerprint identification systems, to economic perspectives, has caused law enforcement agencies to increase their focus on communities and initiate a stronger grassroots effort at the neighborhood level (Sewell, 2002).

Another article dealing with change in law enforcement is one called “Perception and Change in Law Enforcement Leadership” by Thetford (2001). In it, the author explains that a changing environment demands that supervisors constantly evaluate their management style. With advances in technology and changes in the environment, it is crucial for supervisors to continually update their own skills, knowledge, and techniques. Thetford says that today’s criminal justice supervisor must be “gender blind, color blind, and aware of the heavy

volume of racism and sexism that exists in every organizational structure”.

Training is key so that the supervisor can deal with these conditions and ensure that the goals and mission of the organization are met (Thetford, 2001).

Methods for Change

There are several different methods for leaders to utilize when implementing change. One in particular is the method of Total Quality Management (TQM). Thomas Packard, in his chapter “TQM and Organizational Change and Development” from the book *Total Quality Management in the Social Services: Theory and Practice*, reviews principles of successful “planned change implementation” and offers suggestions for precise applications of TQM. He proposes several assumptions: “1) TQM is a viable and effective planned change method, when properly installed; 2) not all organizations are appropriate or ready for TQM; 3) preconditions (appropriateness, readiness) for successful TQM can sometimes be created; and 4) leadership commitment to a large-scale, long-term, cultural change is necessary.” (Packard, 1995)

Packard says “leadership is the key element in successful implementation of large scale change”. It is the leader that demonstrates the necessity for it and determines the vision, identifying the requirements for the basic goals, rationale and boundaries of TQM. “The leader needs to take a long-term perspective, and must be able to motivate others to stick with the process during early stages when resistance and obstacles may seem insurmountable.” (Packard, 1995)

There are basic steps in directing a transition to TQM, including “identifying tasks to be done, creating necessary management structures,

developing strategies for building commitment, designing mechanisms to communicate the change, and assigning resources.” (Packard 1995)

There are other cultural reform movements that have dictated future trends in organizational change. Learning Organizations, described by Peter Senge in his book *The Fifth Discipline* are organizations where “people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.” According to Senge, “change is teaming, and learning is change – for people and organizations”. (Senge, 1990)

Transformational leadership is another reform effort affecting change in organizations. The trend here is “de-leveling” an organization from a top-down authority structure toward one that is more employee-centered with self-managed teams. In their book *Improving Organizational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership*, Bass and Avolio show how transformational and transactional leadership can be applied effectively in diverse organizational processes. They address the full-range of leadership model and evaluate such aspects as development, individual, group, and organizational decision-making. They also provide strategies for change, improvement, reorganization, and transformation within an organization. The goal of the book is to help readers understand that transformation of individuals and organizations at multi-levels must be led, that there are appropriate methods for positively initiating change in an organization along with various points of the full-range model, that some times

are better than others to improve, and that decisions depend on what the organization is being faced with.

Some strategies for improvement can follow the “full-range model of leadership”, including:

- Improved selection, training, and development of personnel to meet the new organizational requirements for team building, maximize individual potential, and ensure equitable treatment and opportunities for all.
- The use of positive reinforcement to encourage the creation of employee-employee and employee-employer relationships that are long-lasting, satisfying and mutually beneficial.
- Linking the quality of work performance processes or product generated by the individual or team to recognition by the organization.
- Developing trust and empowering individuals to encourage them to challenge.
- Improve upward, downward, and lateral communication to ensure that individuals at all organizational levels understand their responsibilities and are aligned around a central purpose, mission, and vision.
- Building cooperative relationships with unions that foster the development of agreements and programs that are in the best mutual interests of the corporation and its workers. (Bass & Avolio, 1994)

Hacker and Roberts, in their book *Transformation Leadership: Creating Organizations of Meaning*, discuss the present ground-breaking transformation happening in the workplace and the need for exceptional leadership in order to create organizational transformation. They state, “Today, organizations exist in a rapidly changing global marketplace with increasingly complex customer requirements. As such, envisioning the need for transformational change is the primary directive of the leader and his or her top leadership team”. The authors express the importance for leaders to design “places of purpose”. They say this is “now a survival card for organizations as competent workers increasingly seek

out meaning in their work and rapid changes in the market necessitate transformational change” (Hacker & Roberts, 2004).

These new leadership methods seem to have one thing in common, the evolution of the “employee-centered” organization. The trend seems to be moving away from hierarchical, top-down management style, to one that recognizes the value of all employees within an organization. Even an organization like the United States Marine Corps, that has a very rigid, traditional chain of command, recognizes the need for training employees for advancement and fostering their ability to make decisions on their own. It is important for organizations to include their employees in creativity, team building, and esprit de corps so that there is a cohesive work environment. This will allow organizations to recruit and retain the best candidates for a strong future. It will also assist employees in dealing with change when it occurs because they will have a stronger sense of ownership and loyalty to the organization.

METHODOLOGY:

I performed hypothesis testing utilizing a nominal measurement of simple random sampling. The working hypotheses are: 1) that top-down, hierarchal leadership style in law enforcement agencies causes poor attitudes and low motivation among employees, and 2) that tight-loose leadership style in law enforcement agencies can be effective if utilized to control, but still provide, adequate discretion.

This sampling method was utilized to prevent bias and to give each member of the population an equal chance to participate. I randomly sampled 30 police officers from 3 different agencies, including a City Police Department, a County Sheriff's Department and a State Police Post, all of which are in Northern Michigan. Each officer was asked to fill out a 40-Question Leadership/Subordinate Questionnaire, which was developed utilizing parts of Bass's Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (2001) along with questions I created to fit the survey (see Table 1.1). The Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire was utilized due to its design for determining leadership styles. Bass created the MLQ to determine the degree to which leaders exhibit transformational and transactional leadership and the degree to which their followers were satisfied with their leaders and their effectiveness.

The 40-question survey was designed to determine the frequency of particular behaviors displayed by superior officers, as perceived by their subordinates. Participants that met the criteria and goals of the project were invited to participate. In addition to the questionnaire, face-to-face interviews were given to one or more supervisors within the law enforcement agencies

where the questionnaire was administered (see Table 1.2). Supervisors were selected using the same criteria and process as used for officers and they were asked to voluntarily participate. This information provided some insight into the mentality of leaders and how they rationalize their own leadership styles. I interviewed four command officers from various northern Michigan law enforcement agencies, all of which were either first or second in command at their respective departments.

Confidentiality was of utmost importance when administering the questionnaire and when interviewing subjects. The questionnaire was completely voluntary and did not ask for specific information such as name, social security number, or any identifying characteristics, other than general position within the department. Because of this confidentiality, participation in this project did not pose any risks to those who volunteered.

Table 1.1

1
Descriptive Statistics

Survey Questions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
make personal sacrifices	30	2	5	2.57	.728
talks to us	30	1	4	2.40	.894
does not consult with employees	30	2	5	3.60	.932
emphasizes value of questioning assumption	30	1	4	2.07	1.015
does not allow empty to give input	30	1	5	3.17	1.262
sets high standards	30	1	5	3.40	.894
treats me as an individual.	30	1	5	3.07	1.048
remains calm during crisis situations	30	2	5	3.73	.740
demands orders be obeyed w/o explanation	30	1	5	3.73	1.143
makes sure we receive rewards for acv goals	30	1	4	2.03	.964
suggests new ways of looking @ how we do our job	30	1	5	2.40	1.037
treats me as an individual w/ different needs, abilities and aspiratons	30	1	5	2.63	1.066
does not trust employees	30	1	5	2.67	1.124
motivates me to do more than I thought I could	30	1	4	2.07	.907
relies on threats and & punishment to influence	30	1	5	2.60	1.070
encourages me to express ideas and opinions	30	1	5	2.27	1.048
leads by authority	30	2	5	3.83	.950
displays a sense of power confidence	30	2	5	3.67	.844
heightens my motivation to succeed	30	1	4	1.97	.850
resists expressing his view on important issues	30	1	4	2.83	.791
uses coercive power	30	1	5	3.07	.868
is a firm believer in "if it ain't broke, don't fix it"	30	1	5	3.43	1.278
provides continuous encouragement	30	1	4	2.07	.907
seeks differing perspectives when solving problems	30	1	5	2.17	1.085

make a decision then announces them	30	1	5	3.67	.922
spends time teaching and coaching me	30	1	3	1.73	.691
listens attentively to my concerns	30	1	5	2.57	.971
fails to intervene until problems become serious	30	2	5	3.17	.791
fails to follow up requests for assistance	30	1	5	2.90	.995
expresses his satisfaction when i do a good job	30	1	5	2.60	1.070
you are satisfied w/ your job	30	1	5	3.47	1.042
the morale of the dept is high	30	1	5	2.63	1.217
your attitude toward your leader is positive	30	1	5	2.77	1.194
you are asked for your opinions from your leaders	30	1	5	2.03	1.033
your ideas are implemented	30	1	4	1.80	.961
you enjoy working for the department	30	1	5	3.37	1.129
you go above and beyond what is expected	30	1	5	3.47	1.008
you sign up for special assignments	30	2	5	3.33	.959
your attitude is just do your job and go home	30	1	5	2.97	.999
the leaders at your department cause you to feel anxiety	30	1	5	3.17	.913
Valid N (listwise)	30				

1

¹ Scale and application to hypothesis 1 sample doesn't distinguish between three agency types: state, county and city. Survey was distributed to 40 line officers, working with 30 respondents. The scale represents the following: 1=Frequently, if not always; 2=Fairly often; 3=Sometimes; 4=Once in a while; and 5=Not at all.

Table 1.2 Command Officers Questionnaire

1. How would you describe your leadership style?
2. Do you feel you make sacrifices at your department to benefit others?
3. Do you talk to your employees about your most important values and beliefs?
4. When you make decisions, do you consult with your employees first, or make decisions and then announce them?
5. Do you allow your employees to give their input? If so, do you ever implement ideas from employees?
6. Do you demand orders be obeyed without giving explanations?
7. Do you suggest new ways of looking at how your employees do their jobs?
8. Do you trust your employees?
9. Do you motivate your employees to do more than you thought they could do?
10. Are you a firm believer in, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"?
11. Do you provide continuous encouragement to your employees?
12. Do you spend time teaching and coaching your employees?
13. How would you describe the morale of your department?
14. How do you discipline your employees?
15. Do you feel you have room for improvement as a leader?
16. How do you motivate an employee that has a negative attitude?
17. How do you implement change?

RESEARCH FINDINGS & ANALYSIS:

Traditional, top-down, paramilitary leadership style is prevalent in law enforcement. The survey responses confirm that this leadership style is present within the organizations that the surveyed officers work in.

The following survey statistics reveal that leaders in law enforcement still possess the top-down leadership style: 40% of officers asked said that their leaders lead by authority fairly often while only 10% say this is the case once in a while; 53.3% say fairly often their leaders make decisions and then announce them while only 3.3% say this never happens; 36.7% say their leaders never ask for their opinions while only 3.3% say their leaders frequently ask for their opinions; 40% say their leaders provide continuous encouragement once in a while and 30% say their leaders never provide continuous encouragement; 30% of those surveyed say their leaders frequently demand that orders be obeyed without explanation while only 3.3% say this happens once in a while; and 46.7% say their leaders spend time teaching and coaching them only once in a while and 40% say their leaders never spend time teaching or coaching them.

Assuming that the above percentages are across the board, let's look at how this leadership structure affects employees. The following are some statistics that reveal the attitudes held by the sample group: 50% say their leaders heighten their motivation to succeed only once in a while, while 30% say their leaders never heighten their motivation to succeed; Likewise, 40% say once in a while their leaders motivate them to do more than they thought they could and 30% say their leaders never motivate them to do more than they thought

they could; 30% say the morale at their departments is high only once in a while where as only 6.7% say the morale is frequently high; 33.3% say sometimes their attitudes are to just do their jobs and go home while 30% say this is their attitude fairly often; 33% say they are sometimes satisfied with their jobs and 33.3% say they enjoy working for their departments only sometimes.

These statistics show that a fairly high percentage of the sample group is not motivated by their leaders, morale is not high very often, and their attitudes are fairly often to just do their jobs and go home.

In speaking with command officers regarding their leadership styles, all of them described themselves as adaptive, yet direct, and that their subordinates dictated their style; All of them felt they made sacrifices to benefit others in their departments, but also made sure they were not putting themselves in a compromising position; and all of them said they talk to their employees about their most important values and beliefs, citing such characteristic traits as integrity and personal responsibility.

When asked if they consult their employees first when making decisions or make decisions and then announce them to employees, all said it depended on the situation. In times of critical incident response, there is little room for consultation with employees. Decisions must be made and then orders given without question. However, with issues regarding scheduling, equipment purchases, and other less critical matters, all of the leaders said they do consult with their employees, but they make the final decisions. They all stated they do listen to input and ideas from their employees, and all have implemented ideas that their employees have given them at one time or another.

In regard to orders being given and obeyed without explanation, the majority of the leaders said that they usually provide sufficient details when giving orders. One command officer stated he did not give explanation when giving orders and just expected that his orders be obeyed without question.

When questioning the command officers on whether they trust their employees, there were mixed answers. One said he did not trust all of his employees, while another said he didn't trust his employees when he started, however the trust grew over time. Another stated that he does trust all of his employees. They all stated that they provide continuous positive reinforcement and encouragement to their employees and they all said they spend time teaching and coaching their subordinates.

On the topic of motivation, most of the command officers felt they made attempts to motivate their employees, however, there were some that were unreachable. One stated he would motivate his shift sergeants and expected them to motivate their patrol officers. When asked if they believe in the saying, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", one stated he did believe in that logic, while the rest said that they did not because change is always constant and they need to continuously improve and keep up with advancing technology.

When asked about overall morale at their departments, one said he felt it was improving, while the rest said they believed it to be high. Regarding discipline, all of the command officers stated they utilized traditional means for correcting behavior and reprimanding their employees. The overall opinion was that wrongdoings by employees should be handled according to policy, however, they all recognize that everyone is human and make mistakes.

Finally, when asked if they felt they had room for improvement as leaders, all of them stated yes. The overall feeling was that there is always room for improvement, otherwise you will stop growing and be less effective as leaders. If you fail to change, you risk becoming extinct.

Interpretation of Findings

In analyzing the findings of the first hypothesis, that paramilitary leadership style in law enforcement agencies causes poor attitudes and low motivation among employees, the findings from the survey conducted and the information gathered from the articles and chapters listed in the literature review show that there is a relationship between the two variables.

In considering the second hypothesis, that paramilitary leadership style can be effective if used with a tight/loose structure, the data extracted from the subordinate survey suggests that most feel their leaders do not utilize the tight/loose structure, and would most likely be happier and more productive in their jobs if their leaders did practice this particular leadership style. Most line officers understand that, in the case of critical incidents, there has to be a strict chain of command that must be followed without question. However, they would like to feel more appreciated for their intelligence and creativity when it comes to issues affecting their work environment.

In talking with the command officers, their responses to the interview questions suggest that they all feel they currently utilize the tight/loose style of leadership, and that their subordinates are generally motivated to produce in a paramilitary style leadership structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS & FINAL REMARKS:

Paramilitary style of leadership has an important place within law enforcement. During times of crisis a chain of command is extremely vital due to the nature of decisions made. However, when it comes to day-to-day operation of the agency, this style of leadership is ineffective because it stifles creativity, making officers feel they are not valued. This, in turn, has a negative impact on productivity and directly affects the services received by society. I feel that many leaders in the field of law enforcement today are products of a leadership structure that was developed during the war era. These styles are set up with a strict chain of command structure where decision-making and control is rest at the top. Officers at the lower levels are expected to stand by and receive orders.

Today there are numerous methods of leadership that can be applied to law enforcement that will have a positive impact on the organization and the community that they serve. Of the two leadership styles studied, I recommend the tight-loose style be utilized within the field of law enforcement. It is better suited for the unique organizational culture and work environment of law enforcement. The concept of tight-loose would encourage managers to gather input from their officers on a variety of day-to-day issues. As the study indicated, police officers, like most subordinates, want to contribute their ideas and be recognized for their accomplishments. If leaders would adapt the tight/loose style, it would improve morale and help increase productivity from officers.

Another benefit would come from allowing officers the discretion to make more decisions based on their training and experience in the field. Quite often in law enforcement, there are too many supervisors trying to make command

decisions which stifles creativity and frustrates officers. It is impossible for supervisors to truly anticipate every situation encountered by an officer in the field. Giving them the freedom and discretion to make certain decisions while on the job will make them feel like they are not being constantly scrutinized and under the thumb and direction of a supervisor.

A frustration that many officers feel with the top-down style of leadership is what is often called “micro-management”. I spoke to one officer who said, “They give us a gun, a car to drive occasionally at high rates of speed, and the ability to detain people and take away their liberties, however, they don’t trust us to utilize the internet for research”. Tight/loose management style is more fitting because it utilizes a more team-based approach; however, there is still a chain of command.

CONCLUSION

The need to change to a tight/loose leadership structure within law enforcement will not be an easy transition. Many departments are locked into the present way of doing things and it will take a natural attrition to occur for change to happen. It’s possible that change could occur quicker if a particular crisis situation were to arise that forced current supervisors to look inward and recognize that they need to change. This, however, is an unpredictable event that is highly unlikely. The best way for change to occur is through attrition and continuing education. If this happens, the field of law enforcement can experience an improved leadership structure that will benefit all stakeholders.

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