

LEARNING IN ACTION: TRAINING THE COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICER

By

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LEARNING IN ACTION: TRAINING THE
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Community-oriented policing (COPS) is a new philosophy and practice of policing that focuses on problem solving, community involvement, and crime prevention.

Academics, politicians, and practitioners alike have lauded COPS for its potential to enhance public safety and improve police-community relations. Though 70% of police departments claim to be practicing COPS, the way in which community-oriented policing translates into practice remains somewhat unclear. While a growing number of studies are examining various aspects of this policing philosophy, little scholarly attention has been devoted to the *training* of COPS officers. This study evaluated how COPS training is being conducted and whether recruits are learning different lessons as COPS has been incorporated into training. Specifically, it analyzed participant observation data from a police academy as well as official records of academy recruits who have gone through both traditional and COPS curricula. It also used field training narratives and forms to see

how academy training carries over in practice on the streets. The study adopted a social learning perspective to account for whether curriculum changes translated into differential learning. Police recruits who went through the COPS curriculum differed little in terms of academy performance compared to recruits who went through the former traditional curriculum. No particular “type” of recruit was more or less likely to fail, gain employment, or achieve higher academy scores. Although there is much that is different in the CMS curriculum, the lessons that are learned may not be that different. This is because the *normative climate* of the police training and socialization experience has changed little since the reformation in curricula. The normative climate includes formal and informal lessons about the paramilitary environment, officer safety, the “bad guy” and “us versus them” mentality, police presence and assertiveness, experiential knowledge and traditional police work, law on the books versus law in action, and diversity. These lessons have implications for the way that officers interact with their department and the citizenry, as well as implications for COPS. Results of this study will be a resource to police training centers attempting to build their own innovative COPS curricula. In the future, this study could be improved using larger samples from additional training environments to assess COPS training and its impact on policing practices.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Shooting. Defensive tactics. Mechanics of arrest. This is what comes to mind when most of us hear the term “police training.” And that is only for the past 50 years, because before that, most police officers did not receive any formal training at all (Walker 1999). The political era, which spanned from the 1840s through the early 1900s, was characterized by “watchman” style policing, and saw officers recruited informally and learning the ropes of policing on the job (Alpert and Dunham 1997; Kelling and Moore 1988a). Recruits were not formally screened and any “training” they received was left to seasoned police officers in the field. Corruption in that time period led to reform beginning in the early 1900s. Reform, or legalistic, policing introduced basic training of police officers (Alpert and Dunham 1997; Kelling and Moore 1988a). However, training varied widely by state, agency, and budget, and most recruits were still insufficiently prepared for police work (Alpert and Dunham 1997).

We have come a long way since then, and we are now well into the community policing era (Kelling and Moore 1988a). The new era highlights the importance of cultural diversity, communications, and problem-solving. Indeed, training is one of the key elements necessary for community policing to reach its full potential (King and Lab 2000; Senna and Siegel 2002; Zhao and Thurman 1995).

Police recruits learn complex lessons in the quest to become police officers. They likely begin thinking about the police role long before they apply for the job. Once they

apply, they must go through screening and background checks before being admitted to the academy. The academy presents many formal and informal lessons and definitions; some reinforced more than others by their superiors. Recruits spend considerable time in the classroom learning subjects such as diversity and community relations, and time learning physical skills, such as driving and shooting a firearm. Once they graduate from the academy, many of them go to a police department where they will complete 12 weeks of field training. During this time, they are exposed to several police mentors who help them transfer their academy knowledge to the street. Valuable lessons are learned during field training and the effect of field training officers is extremely salient. Throughout this lengthy process in the police culture, recruits are exposed to trainers, peers, and other officers—and their ideas about policing and life. Social learning theory helps us understand which definitions and lessons are likely to become most salient in the police training experience.

Community Policing (COPS)

“Community-oriented policing” (or COPS) is currently touted by academicians and practitioners as the answer to crime and disorder problems and police-community conflict (Rosenbaum and Lurigio 1994). The federal government has also been supportive, providing financial incentives to agencies who agree to participate in community policing activities. For example, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, a branch of the Department of Justice, provided money for over 100,000 new officers for COPS in the 1990s (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2000). To date, COPS has been a well-funded government program (Lab 2004).

The definition of COPS has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Agencies, practitioners, and researchers tend to define it differently; though most advanced

definitions contain similar principles, including problem solving, community involvement, and organizational decentralization (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2004). Quality of life and crime prevention are also emphasized (Community Policing Consortium 1999). Whereas traditional policing was reactive and incident-based, COPS is proactive and seeks to solve problems that generate repeat calls for service. Generally, the COPS philosophy posits that officers work with neighborhood residents to define problems from the bottom up and then work together to *solve* those problems; rather than respond to calls for service as separate incidents. In the new paradigm, officers are to work *with* the “good guys,” not just *against* the “bad guys.” Notably, the “good guys” may not be what officers have traditionally considered as such, but it is their primary responsibility to work within the networks of the respective communities to find solutions to community-defined problems (Goldstein 1979). Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) offer the following definition of community policing:

Community policing is a new philosophy of policing, based on the concept that police officers and private citizens working together in creative ways can help solve contemporary community problems related to crime, social and physical disorder, and neighborhood decay. The philosophy is predicated on the belief that achieving these goals requires that police departments develop new relationships with law-abiding people in the community, allowing them a greater voice in setting local police priorities and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in their neighborhoods. It shifts the focus of police work from handling random calls to solving community problems. (p. 5)

Community policing requires the active participation of everyone involved, such as local government, public and private agencies, community residents, and schools.

Anyone who has a concern for the welfare of a neighborhood must be involved in safeguarding that welfare (Community Policing Consortium 1999). Research shows that incivilities, such as vagrancy and graffiti, are the primary causes of fear (Community Policing Consortium 1999; Spelman 1993). Further, if people do not trust the police, that

will exacerbate their fear. People who feel afraid will retreat into their homes and fail to participate in the care and maintenance of their neighborhood. Empty, untended streets send the message to potential criminals that crime is welcome there (Community Policing Consortium 1999). Moreover, disorder and urban decay invite more serious criminal activity (Wilson and Kelling 1982).

Therefore, under COPS, the police are to work with residents to restore order so that residents can feel proud and safe and develop their own informal social control in their neighborhoods. Police do not have the resources to care for each and every community by themselves; COPS requires partnerships. This is done in various ways. Some examples include 1) putting police on permanent beats so that they get to know residents, 2) setting up mini-stations in neighborhoods, 3) instituting foot and bike patrols, 4) enlisting community organizations to clean up dilapidated buildings, pick up trash, and fix “broken windows,” and 5) making the area uninviting to criminals (Community Policing Consortium 1999; Wilson and Kelling 1982). COPS officers must learn to be advocates on behalf of the neighborhood for which they are responsible. They also learn to analyze crime statistics (or at least interpret and apply the findings) so to solve unique neighborhood problems in innovative ways.

If officers show they are willing to help, community members will be more likely to help officers prevent and solve crimes (by providing them with information about potential crime and criminals). Eventually, trust develops between citizens and the police and they can work together to prevent crime before it happens. Neighborhood residents will be more likely to be visible and tend to their neighborhood when they feel safe and secure. Ultimately, residents must get out of their homes and show potential criminals

that their behavior will be noticed and that it is unacceptable. Informal social control will naturally develop. COPS requires a sophisticated officer, but officers are unlikely to have the ability and knowledge to do COPS without appropriate training.

Police Training

Though community-oriented policing (COPS) has sparked research and debate, training of police officers within such a framework has yet to receive much attention (or resources). Police training reflecting a community-oriented approach is a relatively new phenomenon, although COPS itself has existed in theory and practice since the 1980s (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990). Historically, training of police officers has often been slow to keep up with policing practice (see Frost and Seng 1984).

The roles and responsibilities of police officers differ under COPS, and existing training programs insufficiently address the underlying causes of crime and disorder, coalition-building, and crime prevention (King and Lab 2000). Traditional training prepared officers for a narrow focus on law-enforcement duties, rather than the more generalist approach that community policing entails. Traditional training focused on physical activities, such as firearms training, physical training, defensive tactics, and driving. Traditional training also included some knowledge areas such as law, arrest procedures, traffic enforcement, and officer safety. Neglected were areas such as communications, diversity, problem solving, and police-community relations.

Finally, some states such as Florida, Illinois and Michigan, have begun to address the importance of training in COPS in an effort to making COPS a success (Dantzker et al. 1995; Trojanowicz and Belknap 1986). Further, they have begun to implement basic recruit training programs reflecting a COPS and/or problem solving orientation. Still, the few COPS training programs that do exist tend to be in the early stages and may be

struggling with implementation. Their impact has yet to be evaluated (Chappell, Lanza-Kaduce, and Johnston 2004; Dantzker et al. 1995; Trojanowicz and Belknap 1986).

Specific Aims/Statement of Research

My research seeks to address the gap in the literature by analyzing police recruit training under a COPS philosophy by comparing it to the former traditional training curriculum used in Florida. It evaluates how COPS training is being integrated into basic recruit training and into the initial field work and the extent to which it is producing differences in police officers in one police training center. The research incorporates a social learning perspective to account for whether curriculum changes will translate into a marked change in recruit academy performance as well as on-the-job policing performance. Specifically, the study will address the following questions in depth:

- How are police officers trained in COPS different from those trained under the traditional curriculum?
- In what ways are lessons learned in the COPS curriculum different from those under the traditional curriculum?
- To what extent is COPS supported in the informal culture in the academy and departmental environment?

What makes this study unique is the timing: As I began my research at a police academy, the traditional curriculum was undergoing a complete restructuring to reflect an innovative scenario-based, problem solving, community-oriented focus in what became known as the Curriculum Maintenance System (CMS) curriculum. My observations spanned both curricula and thus allow comparison of the two training approaches.

One aspect of training is the formal content of the curriculum, such as classroom training, skills training, and field training (Lundman 1980). The assumption is that changing these aspects will produce a different type of officer (hopefully a “better,” more

effective officer). Examining this assumption is the first goal of this study. By evaluating quantitative data measuring various aspects of recruit academy performance under the CMS and the traditional police training curriculum, my study will assess the extent to which changes in curricula have produced differences in police trainees and rookie officers. I will examine background and demographics, academy performance, including average examination scores, failure experiences, and job placement for police recruits who entered the basic recruit academy between 1998 and 2003.

Sociological theory suggests that although formal training is important to behavioral outcomes, the informal content of the academy experience is equally significant (Lundman 1980). Indeed, social learning theory suggests that behavioral outcomes are significantly influenced by attitudes/definitions, reinforcements/punishments, and role modeling that are typically exchanged during interaction with peers and superiors—both formally and informally (Akers 2000; Chappell and Piquero 2004). Such arguments indicate that even with significant changes in the formal curriculum, the transformation towards a COPS philosophy may not occur if the informal culture among officers remains static.

The second goal of this study is to describe how the formal training and informal culture among recruits and officers are changing and how these changes—or lack thereof—affect the implementation and nature of community-oriented policing in both recruit training and policing practices. I will do this with qualitative data that describe the informal culture and lessons, as well as the environment at the police academy through participant observation. I will examine the extent to which COPS lessons are reinforced informally in the academy and after recruits graduate from the academy and enter their

rookie career by examining the field training records maintained in one police agency who hires from the academy observed.

In addition to the comparative data, the research also includes post-graduation observational data on a subsample of CMS recruits. I follow a sub-sample of the graduates from the CMS curriculum into their *field training officer* (FTO) program at one local police agency which hires many of its officers from this academy. The purpose of field training is for the rookie officer to learn departmental policies, procedures, local laws, and to get “real life” experience after graduating from the academy. It is where the rookie has the opportunity to apply academy lessons to the field (Alpert and Dunham 1997). The qualitative analysis of field training files allows me to analyze the extent to which COPS lessons are reinforced in departmental training. Finally, other qualitative data, including informal interviews and participant observation at the local police agency, supplement the primary sources of qualitative data and assist in understanding the police culture.

Through the variety of data on both the traditional and the CMS curricula, I will analyze the similarities, differences, and relative impact of the new CMS curriculum used in one particular training academy that threads the COPS philosophy through their basic recruit curriculum in the State of Florida. I aim to assess whether police recruits learn community policing from the CMS curriculum in ways that are likely to carry over into the field.

Significance

Policy

Training of police officers is an adult socialization experience in a quasi-military environment. How they are trained, the impact of their training, and how they perform is

important to all of us. Officers will be unlikely to have the sophistication to do COPS well if they are not properly trained. The success of the new paradigm rests in part on training (King and Lab 2000).

This study is also a lesson in organizational change. The decision to institute CMS training was made at the state level. Organizations, particularly hierarchical centralized bureaucracies, are often resistant to change (Gaines et al. 2003; Hannan and Freeman 1984). There may be a degree of discrepancy between the implementation of the organizational philosophy of CMS and how that philosophy translates into practice. Implementation problems, organizational cultural barriers, and various forms of inflexibility can interfere with attempts to transform organizations (Gaines et al. 2003). We do not know the extent to which this organizational change will translate into practice at the academy level. The formal effects may be swamped by informal practices and culture.

Theory

Tenets of COPS are particularly interesting to the sociological researcher. The concept of “community” and “informal social control” are deeply rooted in sociological tradition and theory (Sampson and Groves 1989; Shaw and McKay 1969). Shaw and McKay (1969) argued that ecological and structural conditions of communities shape crime rates. Additionally, sociological research and theory have long recognized that informal social control is often more effective in controlling crime and delinquency than formal social control (e.g. the police) (Wilson and Kelling 1982). Neighborhoods that are decaying and in transition invite opportunities for criminal activity (Wilson and Kelling 1982). For example, dilapidated buildings offer a place for delinquents to commiserate and engage in criminal activity. In organized communities, this behavior is informally

controlled because neighborhood residents have social ties and collective efficacy (Sampson 1997). There is informal surveillance of neighborhood activities, direct intervention in suspicious behavior by neighbors, and social networking among residents. Contrarily, neighborhoods with weaker social ties and networks have less informal surveillance because their residents are more transient and less likely to know each other, so strangers to the neighborhood are less likely to be noticed. There is more relational distance and less informal social control. Thus, residents do not identify with their neighborhood or neighbors as much, nor do they care about its reputation and appearance.

Because sociological theory teaches us the importance of informal social control, we should expect that police officers will be more successful to the extent that they can work within the informal social control networks of their respective neighborhoods. Police recruits who have sophisticated training in COPS will need to appreciate neighborhood dynamics and community sociology in order to do their jobs well. The recent shift in policing toward a community focus (discussed in chapter 2) highlights the importance of working within the networks of neighborhoods in order to reduce crime and disorder. The new CMS curriculum explicitly incorporates units related to working with communities.

Much of the analysis will be guided by social learning theory. Akers (1998) posits that four variables function to instigate and strengthen attitudes toward social behavior: differential association, definitions, reinforcement and modeling. The balance of these influences determines whether one will be prone to engage in certain behaviors. The central variable in social learning theory is differential association. We learn based on our

exposure to others. The norms of the groups within which we operate, the models we observe, and reinforcements or punishments that we receive from others shape our attitudes and behaviors. These groups with which we identify the most and in which we operate most often have the largest impact on what we learn. Those to whom we feel closest (as opposed to those who are more distant) are most influential.

Akers argues that individuals develop definitions either favorable or unfavorable to behavior in interaction with their primary and secondary groups, such as family, peers, and occupational groups. These definitions are then reinforced or punished, positively or negatively, by rewards or punishments (either real or perceived). Chapter 4 discusses this theory and its application to police socialization and training in detail. This study applies Akers' social learning theory to a new context.

Limitations and Parameters of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the new CMS curriculum was in pilot form for most of the time that I was conducting my study. The training is constantly evolving and may have changed since my data were collected. My follow-up data are based on a limited sub-sample from only one agency and my follow up is relatively short term (e.g., only through the field training phase of employment). The study focuses on one site and therefore, the results must be interpreted with caution—they may not generalize to other recruits, to other training classes, or to other sites. In addition, as with many innovations, COPS may need time to “settle in.” In other words, new programs may become more effective over time because their implementers work through barriers and problems to make them work better. Finally, this study is not evaluation research per se, rather the access to data before and after the implementation of CMS makes it a comparative analysis.

This study proceeds by outlining the literature on community-oriented policing in part one of the literature review (chapter 2). The next chapter reviews the literature on police training, which is more limited. Chapter 4 extends social learning theory to provide a framework for understanding how police recruits learn to become police officers. Supporting literature is included in that chapter as well. Data and methodology are covered in chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 7 shows the results of the quantitative analysis. Chapter 8 deals with the qualitative data pertaining to participant observation. Chapter 9 presents a discussion and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2 COMMUNITY POLICING

Introduction

Policing is said to have evolved through three recognizable eras: the political era, the reform era, and the community era (Kelling and Moore 1988b). As it has progressed, each era has been said to exhibit dominant styles. Hence, the political era was characterized by “watchman” style policing, while the reform era was defined by its “legalistic” style, and the community era is defined by a “service” style.

“Watchman” style police were primarily concerned with order maintenance, peace keeping, and catering to those in political positions. In this era, officers often walked or biked small geographic areas and became well-acquainted with local residents and their problems. The political relationships, the lack of supervision, and the absence of policy and procedure led to widespread allegations of corruption, which prompted a series of reforms. Police agencies were bureaucratized to increase supervision of line personnel.

The result was the reform era. Legalistic police were aggressive law enforcers who, in the interest of equality, often neglected cultivating relationships with community residents. They focused on rapid response to calls for service, rather than solving problems. Eventually, perceptions of increasing crime rates, civil unrest, and police-community conflict led to the beginning of the current “community” era.

The community era, known by its “service” style of policing, focuses on problem solving and community partnerships (Kelling and Moore 1988a; Wilson 1968). The most popular form of service style policing is known as Community-Oriented Policing (COPS)

which builds on elements of problem-oriented policing, team policing, and community relations. The philosophy and practice of COPS is discussed next.

History

A detailed history of modern policing is beyond the scope of this study. As a general history, American policing grew from the British modern police force in the 1800s. By the 1880s, all major U.S. cities had municipal police organizations with full time employees (Lundman 1980). The first American police were concerned primarily with order maintenance, rather than crime control (Wilson 1968). They spent their time controlling the “dangerous classes,” and monitoring drunks and vagrants (Lundman 1980). Because of limited technology, officers generally worked autonomously, patrolling neighborhoods on foot without much supervision from headquarters. Police officers walked or biked local “beats,” often in the areas where they lived. They became well-acquainted with residents in their respective patrol areas (Kelling and Moore 1988b). Citizens knew their local police officer and relied on him for many things, including, but not limited to, crime control. The police of this time period were notoriously corrupt and brutal (Walker 1999). They routinely took payoffs to allow illegal gambling, prostitution, and drinking. Promotions were paid for, not earned (Walker 1977; 1999).

The reform era became dominant in the 20th century when society reacted strongly against the corruption by instituting a strict hierarchical bureaucratic style of policing (Kelling and Moore 1988a; Wilson 1968). By the 1950s, police professionalism was being sold as the way to remedy the corruption problems. O.W. Wilson argued that greater centralization of the police function with an emphasis on military discipline and obedience would increase efficiency. He argued for closer supervision of line personnel,

motorized patrol, and centralized headquarters (Uchida 1993). Allegations of mistreatment of specific groups, and special treatment of those in power led to unequal protection of citizens and reform was in order (Kelling and Moore 1988a).

The reform era exhibited a “legalistic” style of policing and is responsible for what is generally now known as traditional policing. Though some scholars and practitioners contend that we have moved beyond this era, it is likely that many departments still operate within traditional legalistic norms. The reforms resulted in police agencies that were hierarchical, bureaucratic structures with strict policies and procedures to limit officer discretion and enhance supervision. Technological advances placed officers in patrol cars with radio dispatch so that they could respond to calls for service quickly and efficiently. Officers’ beats were rotated to prevent them from developing relationships (and thus corruption) with individuals or businesses on their beat. Increased emphasis was placed on the scientific aspect of policing, such as forensics, as a response to technological advances such as computers. The main focus of the professional police agency was rapid response to calls for service in order to achieve the utmost efficiency and professionalism (Kelling and Moore 1988a).

One of the primary goals of the reform era was to limit discretion and autonomy of patrol officers so that officers did not become agents of politics. They were instructed to treat everyone equally and impersonally, and endless measures were taken to make sure that officers did not develop relationships with residents because this had been shown to lead to corruption in the past. Many say that the advent of the patrol car had negative consequences for policing as well. It was not only a physical barrier, but a psychological barrier between citizens and police officers. It prevented officers from building the type

of relationships that they had in the past (i.e., “watchman” era). For example, residents may not feel as comfortable speaking to an officer about their problems through the police car window as they would if the officer was on foot (Kelling and Moore 1988b).

Now that police were being routinely rotated through zones, residents were less likely to develop relationships with any particular police officer. The relationship of the police to communities suffered as officers were removed from foot patrols, and officers policed from a distance. Moreover, many residents, especially minorities, felt afraid of the police because they felt targeted by their strict enforcement. The lack of communication that had developed in the reform era arguably led to higher levels of perceived crime, increased fear of crime, and distrust of the police (Uchida 1993).

Crime rates, or at least the perception of crime, had increased, and research was showing that the professional model, with its emphasis on efficiency and rapid response to calls for service, appeared to be failing. Perhaps officers needed to work with residents to prevent problems before they occurred and help residents to feel safer in their neighborhoods. Research was showing that fear of crime and neighborhood incivilities were the primary causes of neighborhood resident’s dissatisfaction. A new paradigm would emerge.

The Community Era

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, general civil unrest, including the civil rights movement, as well as high-profile allegations of officers using excessive force and racial discrimination, led police agencies across the nation to begin a series of campaigns to improve police-community relationships (Hunter et al. 2000; Kelling and Moore 1988b). The public was beginning to question police behavior, and minorities were alleging that they were not receiving fair treatment by the police. Some of the early reforms were

simply known as “police-community relations,” while others, such as “team policing” in the early 1970s were more organized efforts to restructure police agencies. In team policing, officers were divided into small teams and assigned to permanent geographical areas (Swanson et al. 1998). Many of these early attempts were unsuccessful, but they laid the groundwork for subsequent efforts to reform the police.

In addition, many research studies were questioning the effectiveness of rapid response to calls for service, one of the main elements of legalistic policing. In fact, studies were showing that rapid response and preventative patrol did not seem to affect clearance rates or citizen’s perception of the police (Spelman and Brown 1981). Many calls for service did not need a rapid response, but instead could be dealt with by a civilian, a scheduled meeting, or a phone call (McEwen 1984). Other studies showed that resources were being wasted on detectives who were only marginally successful in solving crimes (Greenwood et al. 1977).

One of the first key studies questioning rapid response occurred in Kansas City in 1974. The Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment (Kelling et al. 1974) divided Kansas City districts into three areas. One area was patrolled reactively, one area had increased proactive patrol, and the third area was the control group. Interestingly, there was no change in citizen satisfaction with police response across the three study sites. The study seriously questioned the necessity of random patrol (Kansas City Police Department 1980).

In 1981, the Newark Foot Patrol Experiment conducted by the Police Foundation put officers on foot in neighborhoods in Newark, New Jersey. It seemed that the officer’s presence and knowledge of residents and outsiders helped to create a sense of order and

informal social control. The foot officers became acquainted with the neighborhood “drunks” and other vagrants and also recognized people who did not belong and those who may be a threat. The program did not significantly decrease crime, but it enhanced feelings of safety on behalf of residents (Pate et al. 1986). Similar conclusions regarding foot patrol were found in Flint, Michigan (Trojanowicz 1982).

In 1982, Wilson and Kelling published their groundbreaking article in *Atlantic Monthly* entitled “Broken Windows.” The article argued that a neighborhood with a broken window that is not repaired will eventually have all of its windows broken. In other words, urban decay promotes crime, and signs of disorder make a neighborhood vulnerable. Therefore, the first step in reducing crime is to remedy the disorder, reduce signs of incivility, and strengthen neighborhoods. Disorder makes residents fearful and they will become “hostages” in their own homes. There must be a partnership between the police and the community to restore order and pride to make sure that the neighborhood does not project signs of incivility so that informal social control can be established.

Problem-oriented policing (POP) was a movement from reactive, incident-driven policing to a more proactive approach (Goldstein 1979). The first POP implementation and evaluation was conducted in Newport News, Virginia and was funded by the National Institute of Justice in 1987 (Eck and Spelman 1987). Under POP, officers should target specific “hot spots” of repeat criminal activity (Sherman et al. 1989) and solve the underlying problems that generate serial calls for service and waste police resources. (Eck and Spelman 1987; Goldstein 1987). POP uses problem solving models like SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment). The Newport News study

found that problem-solving reduced the crime rate (specifically robberies, burglaries and thefts) substantially (Eck and Spelman 1987).

The above movements, studies and evaluations set the stage for community policing, which incorporates elements of team policing, problem solving, and watchman-style policing. It also incorporates advanced crime analysis and increased accountability to the community. Community policing is operationalized differently across the nation. Indeed, lack of standardization is one of the major limitations to evaluating its success.

Community Policing¹

By 1997, a majority of both police departments serving 100,000 or more people and sheriff's offices serving 250,000 or more residents had personnel assigned to COPS (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2000). Law enforcement agencies had, if nothing else, adopted the terminology of COPS. Initial evidence indicated that officers support COPS (Winfree, Barku, and Seibel 1996).

Respected commentators argue that COPS is built on a new philosophy of policing (see Cordner 2001; Greene and Mastrofski 1988; Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990; Walker 1999) that holds promise for improving law enforcement. Oliver (1998: 51) defines community policing as:

A systematic approach to policing with the paradigm of instilling and fostering a sense of community, within a geographical neighborhood, to improve the quality of life. It achieves this through the decentralization of the police and the implementation of a synthesis of three key components:

¹ This is an elaboration of an overview provided in Chappell, Allison and Lonn Lanza-Kaduce. (2004). Integrating Sociology with Community-Oriented Policing: Bridging the Gap Between Academics and Practice. *Journal of Applied Sociology/Sociological Practice* 21/6: 80-98.

- Redistribution of traditional police resources
- Interaction of police and all community members to reduce crime and the fear of crime through indigenous proactive programs
- Concerted effort to tackle the causes of crime problems rather than to put band-aids on the symptoms.

Although little consensus exists on the actual definition of community-oriented policing, several themes emerge that most definitions share: community involvement, problem-solving, and organizational decentralization (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2004; Oliver 1998: 32-43).

Langworthy and Travis (2003: 393) argue that COPS has important strategic and programmatic dimensions in addition to the philosophical reorientation. The strategic focuses on geography (defining areas and assigning officers to those areas), prevention (solving the problems that routinely lead to calls for service), and substance (reducing crime and fear of crime). The programmatic focuses on reorienting practices to solve problems (rather than respond to individual incidents) and includes such activities as foot patrols, neighborhood watches, neighborhood cleanups, involvement with youth in athletic leagues and after-school programs, target hardening and environmental design improvements, codes enforcement and nuisance abatement.

Cordner (2001) also emphasizes the strategic and programmatic but adds an organizational dimension. He insists that COPS involves different structures (decentralization, “flattening” of the layers of hierarchy, less specialization, teamwork, and hiring civilian employees), changes in management (including coaching, mentoring, empowerment of line officers, and selective discipline), and the collection and utilization of more information (including the use of performance appraisals, program evaluations, information systems, crime analysis, and geographic information systems).

On the other hand, Lab (2000) argues that COPS cannot be translated into practice and implemented well. Kennedy and Moore (2001) warn that evaluations of COPS must assess program and organizational success. Senna and Siegel (2002: 192-194) succinctly summarize and review challenges to the successful implementation of COPS: (1) defining community, (2) establishing the role of COPS officers, (3) changing the command structure of policing organizations and decentralizing decision-making, (4) reorienting police values toward the public service orientation required for community involvement, (5) revising training, and (6) reorienting recruitment.

COPS calls for aggressive decentralization, deformalization and “civilianization” (Maguire 1997) of police operations. This is accomplished in part through the establishment of substations, neighborhood stations and satellite offices. The idea is for the police to move from people-processing units to people-changing units (Mastrofski and Ritti 1995) in order to serve the community and find creative solutions to social problems with minimal interference from headquarters. Officers need to have the ability to search for solutions to problems and not merely respond to incidents according to narrowly written procedures. Their goals include enhancing quality of life for the residents of their beat and educating citizens on how they can avoid becoming victims of crime.

The emphasis of COPS is on long-term problem solving, rather than short-term solutions (e.g., incident based policing). There should be less emphasis on form, and more emphasis on results (Goldstein 1987). This involves asking for and accepting input and suggestions from the line personnel who work in the neighborhoods. In order for this to occur, there must be less rotation of officers between communities so that officers can

become integrated into specific neighborhoods or areas (Alpert and Dunham 1997). Finally, officers are encouraged to employ alternatives, such as mediation, to the criminal justice system (e.g., arrests) to deal with problems in the communities that they serve (Goldstein 1987; 1990).

Challenges

In order for community-oriented policing to be successful, administration and management must be on board--from recruitment, selection and training--to the expectations made of supervisors and the measures of officer productivity (Goldstein 1987). For example, if officers are still rewarded for making numerous arrests and heroic activity, this communicates to them that the departmental focus remains unchanged (see Alpert et al. 2001). Thus, there must be a complete reorientation of middle management (Goldstein 1987, Maguire 1997).

Some researchers have recognized that COPS is unlikely to work in areas that lack a sense of community (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2004). In other words, officers cannot be expected to “build” community cohesion where none exists (e.g. transition zones) (Shaw and McKay 1969). In neighborhoods suffering from the worst incivility, the highest levels of transience, and where residents have a complete lack of cohesion, it may be impossible to establish agreed upon objectives with which to improve the quality of life (see Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2004).

Goldstein (1987) notes that departments need to arrange for line personnel to have more influence in the development of COPS in their departments. This may help them to appreciate the increased independence and ability to make a marked difference in their communities. For example, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) (Greene 1997) dramatically changed internally before implementing the COPS philosophy externally in

communities. Administrators and management showed line personnel how COPS works by incorporating departmental input into a complete *internal* organizational change (decentralization, more decision-making power to line personnel) before embarking on launching COPS in the community. LAPD recognized that the department itself had a long way to go internally before they could handle such an extreme external change. For example, administrators and senior personnel surveyed line personnel on their needs, opinions, and feelings about the departmental culture. They also held focus groups and incorporated the findings into their organizational change. Basically, they learned through internal organizational change and training consistent with COPS: they learned by doing (see Greene 1997).

Success of Community Policing

The success of COPS has also been debated. Because definitions and implementation vary greatly, it is impossible to provide a clear answer. Evaluations over the years have found that elements of COPS, such as foot patrol, mini-stations, and problem solving, have been successful in reducing fear, bettering relationships between the police and the public, and even reducing crime. At the same time, other studies have failed to uncover such positive results. For example, MacDonald's (2002) recent evaluation of COPS focuses on limited outcomes. He reports that COPS is failing to create a significant reduction in crime rates and fear of crime. However, he only analyzed city-level variables, rather than neighborhood or community-level indicators. His quantitative analysis lacked the ability to understand qualitative differences in policing styles of traditional versus COPS officers. He also failed to take into account training, differing philosophies of COPS, and varying implementation strategies.

Because community policing is an abstract concept and its implementation varies substantially by location, it is difficult to measure differences between traditional officers and COPS officers. Some departments adopt the philosophy department-wide, but the extent to which it is a part of everyday operations is still questionable. Other departments report that they “do” community policing, but only assign a few specialized personnel to that particular role, while others split their force evenly between rapid response teams and problem solving officers (Skogan and Hartnett 1997). No matter what strategy is implemented, police departments still must deal with traditional crime problems, respond to calls, and make arrests, while deciding how to implement community policing and measure officers’ performance.

While several studies have found increased job satisfaction among officers practicing community policing (Kelling and Moore 1988b; Greene 1989; Yates and Pillai 1996), other studies have found conflict in departments implementing COPS strategies (Lurigio and Rosenbaum 1994), particularly when COPS is not adopted department-wide. Other outcomes have included more positive views of the community and local businesses, and more positive views of police on behalf of citizens (Trojanowicz and Banas 1995; Wycoff and Skogan 1994).

The COPS philosophy has existed for some 25 years and has generated debate among politicians, academics and practitioners. Unfortunately, it has taken agencies a long time to take the practice of COPS seriously enough to institute training programs that integrate COPS and problem solving into their curricula. The next chapter covers the history of police training and introduces some of the research and literature on new training approaches that integrate a community based approach.

CHAPTER 3 FORMAL POLICE TRAINING

Traditional Training

Recall that there have been three eras of policing: the political era, the reform era, and the community era (Kelling and Moore 1988a). Police in the political era were non-professional by current standards. Little or no training was required or provided to rookie officers. In most cases, rookies were given a badge, a baton, and a manual and told to learn the ropes from senior officers. Periodically, a department may have provided minimal training, but no requirements or standard training existed. Many cities did not offer any meaningful police training until the 1950s (Walker 1999). In the reform era, departments aimed to become “professional,” and this brought the introduction of formalized police training.

August Vollmer, a pioneering police leader and scholar, is credited with introducing education to policing (Alpert and Dunham 1997). In Berkeley, California, he recruited college graduates to law enforcement and publicized the importance of doing so. This led to increased emphases on systematic recruit training and education nationwide. The trend was slow to catch on, however. As recently as 1965, only approximately 15% of police departments provided or required training (Alpert and Dunham 1997; Kuykendall and Usinger 1975). In 1967, The President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice published its *Task Force Report on the Police*, which called for states to establish minimum selection, training, and education

standards for all law enforcement personnel. States now certify law enforcement officers who pass standardized examinations (Chappell et al. 2005).

Despite the obvious connection between police training and policing itself, changes to training practices have historically lagged behind changes in actual policing philosophies and practices (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2004). Even after certification became a requirement in 1967, training guidelines were vague at best, leaving individual agencies responsible for setting requirements and/or providing training. Smaller departments with tighter budgets were less likely to provide or require standard training, while some larger, urban departments, such as the Los Angeles Police Department, were under more public pressure to formally prepare their officers (Greenberg 1998).

Due to concerns about safety, traditional training focused primarily on the technical and mechanical aspects of acquiring skills, such as honing physical skills, marksmanship, driving skills, and defensive tactics (Alpert and Dunham 1997), while neglecting “softer” subjects like communication and problem solving (Birzer 1999). Many academies, or police training centers, continue to train this way today. Recruits spend 90% of their training time on firearms, driving, first aid, self-defense and other use-of-force tactics even though only 10% of their job duties will put them in positions where they need to use these skills (Germann 1969; Mayhall et al. 1995). Some jurisdictions base their basic recruit training on a Job Task Analysis (JTA). The reason for this is to ensure that training reflects the demands of the job. However, JTA reflects what has traditionally been done on the job and not necessarily what needs to be learned to do the job better or to prepare new officers for COPS (see Lord 1998; Sloan et al. 1992; Trojanowicz and Belknap 1986).

Recruit training is generally performed in designated facilities that are referred to in different ways (e.g., training academies, institutes of public safety, criminal justice training centers). Some large law enforcement agencies operate their own academies and pay for the training of their recruits (e.g., Los Angeles Police Department, New York Police Department). More often training centers are linked with institutions of higher education, especially those geared toward vocational training like community colleges. Law enforcement agencies will sometimes sponsor their recruits as they go through training at the local community college training center. Other prospective officers pay for their own training in hopes of being recruited after they complete training and become certified. Training data from the 430 largest U.S. municipal police departments in 1993 showed that wide variation in practice remained—some departments required no hours of training while others required over 2500 hours (Alpert and Dunham 1997; Department of Justice 1993).

The Transition to (COPS) Training

We are still in the transition from the reform era to the community era. Training, in particular, has been slow to adapt to community policing (or COPS). The transition is especially difficult given the conflicting values and practices between traditional (or reform) policing and current policing. For example, while traditional policing emphasizes strict enforcement of the law, COPS emphasizes building relationships between police and community/neighborhood residents in order to work together to prevent crime and solve problems (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 1990). The emphasis is on resolving recurring problems rather than intervening in single incidents. Other attempts to improve or reform the police have often relied upon new or improved training (Buerger 1998;

Fogelson 1977). Obviously, if community-oriented policing is to be successful, training is an essential component (King and Lab 2000).

The purpose of community policing training is to “provide officers with a level of understanding that will allow them to effectively employ problem solving and community engagement techniques in their daily work” (Peak and Glensor 1999).

Without proper training, officers will be less likely to understand the philosophy of COPS and/or how to translate the philosophy into effective practice (King and Lab 2000).

Kelling suggests that if service activities dominate police work, then training should focus more on conflict management, social relations and improving police-community relations (Kelling 1978). Dunham and Alpert (1989) argue that police training needs to be less like introductory classes in anatomy for medical students and more like internships.

One concern is that recruits and officers will not accept COPS because it is not “real police work.” Savannah has addressed this issue in an interesting way by adding more powerful firearms, more driving courses, and a solid focus on officer safety to combat that fear (McLaughlin and Donahue 1995).

Recruit Training for COPS

Because the recruit academy is such an important part of occupational socialization for police officers, it is necessary that training centers teach the philosophy of COPS during recruit training (Peak 1993). New officers should learn work skills as the basis for effective implementation of community policing. Few researchers have studied academy training and specifically looked at its coverage of problem solving and community policing, but the ones that have invariably reported a lack of sufficient coverage (Bradford and Pynes 1999; Marion 1998). Bradford and Pynes (1999) examined syllabi

and curricula from 22 police academies and concluded that less than 3% of basic training academy time is spent on cognitive and decision-making areas, such as scenarios, communications, reasoning and application. They found that more than 90% of the academy time was spent on task-oriented training associated with the reactive nature of traditional policing (e.g., defensive tactics, driving, mechanics of arrest).

Recent developments in policing call for more training and education in a wider range of knowledge. Those knowledge bases require more reliance on expertise that lies outside of law enforcement. Given the limited time for training, skills areas and knowledge bases compete for priority. Changes in policing either lead to shifts in training priorities or increases in training hours. For example, some curricula, in the aftermath of September 11, now incorporate lessons on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

The shift in policing toward community relations, problem solving, and COPS heightens the need for improved knowledge bases and additional skills but does not diminish the need for traditional skills (Bradford and Pynes 1999; Buerger et al. 1999). For example, recruits would be ill-served if training in officer safety were short changed. COPS training augments the curriculum by including topics on human diversity, special populations (such as the elderly, mentally ill), “assessing situations,” public speaking, ethics and integrity, proactive or “coactive” problem solving, crime prevention, stress management, domestic violence, and community building (see Palmiotto et al. 2000). The skills necessary for COPS will not become second-nature if comprehensive training in the theories and methods of community-oriented policing are not provided. This means that recruits must understand the meanings and values associated with community-

oriented policing (e.g., building trust within the neighborhood) as well as the skills needed to conduct community-oriented policing (e.g., SARA type problem-solving).

Delivery

Traditional training in subject areas like law and communications builds on the pedagogical approach used when teaching children. The pedagogy is teacher-centered and structured, and it relies heavily on a lecture format (often referred to by trainees as “talking heads”). This style emphasizes mastery, obedience and discipline, and supports the narrow focus on law enforcement that characterizes traditional policing. Police training that uses pedagogical approaches fosters an environment in which the focus becomes the chain of command, discipline, rules and procedures (Birzer and Tannehill 2001). One challenge facing training is to incorporate alternative learning models more suited for adults (Birzer 2003, Glenn et al. 2003).

“Training” connotes a teacher-centered pedagogical approach, but recruits who are learning to become police officers are adults and are likely to benefit from adult learning techniques. For example, andragogy is the process of teaching adults rather than children, and it is self-directed learning and promotes the teacher as the catalyst of education. It is the idea of interactive learning and focuses on the learner-centered approach (Knowles 1990). Dantzker et al. (1995) argue,

If the intent of community policing training is to produce fundamental changes in policing, then training materials and approaches must explicitly reflect and support those changes. Learning to think critically, to solve problems, or to share responsibility with citizens is not fostered by authoritarian and noninteractive training techniques. (p. 50)

Training for COPS can be more effective if it uses andragogy which integrates life experiences into training (Birzer 2003; Knowles 1980). The instructor takes on the role of “facilitator” and helps to develop critical thinking, judgment and creativity in the learner

(Birzer and Tannehill 2001). Andragogy is based on “empowerment” and teaches recruits to work through problems to solve them. This approach runs counter to the quasi-military top-down style that predominates in traditional policing. Further, COPS and POP need “self-starters” and this method of learning fosters that philosophy. “There is a stark difference between simply sitting through a lecture and actively participating in training” (Birzer and Tannehill 2001).

Challenges to COPS Training

Training for COPS faces a myriad of challenges (McLaughlin and Donahue 1995), but training has been shown to be necessary in the implementation of the COPS philosophy (Cheurprakobkit 2002; Zhao and Thurman 1995). Traditional training is rigid and strictly conforms to policies and procedures. Part of the reason for this is for standardization purposes. Police training centers are preparing recruits for state certification. COPS, with its emphasis on problem-solving, is less amenable to standardization, and therefore calls for a less rigid approach. Problem solving is, by nature, unstandardized, but trainers may be uncomfortable with a less rigid approach.

Training changes must filter from the top down and this means that all administrators, including politicians and city officials, must be informed and trained in the philosophy and tenets of COPS. COPS takes into account specifics of a community and therefore, curricula must teach the importance of identifying common community values and resources as well as recognizing different needs.

Academy instructors are often veteran officers—police insiders—who may have strong internalized definitions about traditional policing, and therefore may struggle to accept the ideals of COPS (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce 2004). Research has shown that the effectiveness of COPS training is largely dependent on the instructor; specifically his

or her endorsement of the COPS philosophy. In other words, it is important that instructors are “on board” with COPS themselves in order to be successful COPS trainers (Dantzker et al. 1995). Many trainers are often senior officers who have spent the majority of their policing years practicing traditional policing and may be more comfortable teaching what they know. If instructors do not buy into the COPS philosophy, recruits are unlikely to.

Veteran officers are frequently the instructors for skills training, but may also be “drafted” to cover academic subjects like diversity and communications, areas that may stretch their expertise (Scott 2000). “Subject matter experts” from law enforcement ranks are also frequently used for in-service training. Some training segments should be instructed by non-police personnel, such as attorneys, probation officers, and psychologists (Trautman 1986).

Community Policing and Police Training: The LAPD

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has moved toward new academy training, which was the focus of a recent RAND Corporation analysis (Glenn et al. 2003). I use that analysis to illustrate the wave of the future as training incorporates COPS into its courses and delivery.

LAPD’s new policing philosophy recognizes that training must reflect as closely as possible the actual working conditions for which recruits are being prepared (Fyfe 1996). Learning content is not enough; trainees must also be able to digest and interpret material and synthesize it with practical skills. Only this more sophisticated training will enable officers to adapt to the ever-changing demands of their jobs and to improvise in unpredictable situations in the field. Glenn et al. (2003) present four elements fundamental to successful training and consider how each is incorporated into the training

experience at LAPD: contextualized learning, integration of topics throughout curriculum, scenario building, and debriefing.

Contextualize the Learning

Contextualized learning is an adult learning principle that seeks to tie new information to existing knowledge bases and real life situations. Similar to andragogy, it integrates new information with existing knowledge. Based on the assumption that training should mimic reality, it better prepares recruits for the real life situations they will eventually encounter. Simulated real life incidents (scenarios) are useful because they may require the recruit to integrate many knowledge bases with an emergency tactical situation. In real life situations, police officers are often confronted with a multitude of issues in a single citizen contact. It is unlikely that officers will be able to perform a traffic stop, for example, without also having to use communication, law, and officer safety lessons. The approach frames new information in the context of what is already known. It recognizes that recruits need to be trained the same way that they will eventually do their jobs, and that a relationship exists between skills and knowledge. That relationship calls for a critical problem solving synthesis that changes from context to context and, therefore, runs counter to the standardization preferred in traditional training.

Integrate Key Topics Throughout the Curriculum

Integration of key topics, also known as “threading,” means that selected important themes will be discussed in relation to each substantive topic or module (i.e., woven throughout the curriculum). For example, communications lessons (or diversity training or officer safety) can be reinforced in arrest scenarios, in crowd control exercises, and in community relations material. Skills and knowledge must be integrated in the field, so training should not cover subject areas only in distinct, separate units. Integration helps

recruits learn to draw connections among multiple subject areas, which facilitates mastery over the curriculum and prepares recruits for problem solving challenges when they enter the field. Recruits will be in a better position to deal with unique contexts and help develop appropriate responses to a neighborhood's problems.

Build the Scenario

Scenarios allow the recruit to apply contextualized learning and topic integration by grounding instruction in the “known” while introducing the “new.” Scenarios help align a curriculum with the main tenets of adult learning: learning by doing, reflecting real life, and making the learning interactive and self-directed (Glenn et al. 2003). Scenarios inherently require the integration of topics. They transform abstract knowledge into understandable, practical and applicable skills. Scenarios give recruits the opportunity to practice applying what they have learned. Instructors and other police officers put together unique and surprising scenarios that encourage the recruits to “think on their feet” in unexpected situations to find workable, and perhaps even creative, solutions. Again, this may cause a problem for the standardization preferred in traditional training for certification purposes. However, problems are by nature unique, and will force the officer to come up with creative solutions. This is good for COPS but a challenge for police training centers who wish to have a high certification rate for their recruits.

Conduct a Thorough Debriefing (After the Scenario)

Consistent and structured debriefings are important to solidify learning. Because scenarios are unstandardized and involve open-ended interactions, instructors need to tie everything together in the end and review lessons. The debriefing also informs recruits about how they have performed and how they can improve. Recruits have an opportunity to discuss and reconsider their performance, and use their experience as a springboard for

further learning. This reflection is important for adult learning. It prepares recruits for the feedback loop that is an inherent part of problem solving models like SARA. SARA is an acronym which stands for scanning for problems, analyzing the factors that contribute to problems, responding in ways that can alleviate problems, and assessing the results (Eck and Spelman 1987).²

Community Policing in Florida

Dr. Cecil Greek (and his colleagues) of the Florida State University (FSU) School of Criminology in Tallahassee, Florida conducted an in depth study of community policing practices in Florida entitled, “The Future of Community Policing in Florida: Final Report.” This report was prepared in December 2000 for the Regional Community Policing Institute (RCPI) at St. Petersburg Junior College in St. Petersburg, Florida. The following section describes the state of community policing in Florida found by this report.

The purpose of the report was to find out the state of community policing in Florida and plans to permanently institute community policing in the future. In order to do this, all Florida police and Sheriff’s agencies were sent letters asking them to fill out a web survey. Questions were asked regarding training, partnerships with various agencies, budgets, use of information technology, and organizational changes. Of approximately 400 agencies asked to participate, only 73 responded, a 19% response rate. However, most of the large agencies completed the survey. In general, larger agencies were found to have made the greatest changes regarding community policing (Greek 2000).

² Other problem solving models also have a feedback loop. For example, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) use the CAPRA model and Florida Department of Law Enforcement’s new CMS curriculum uses SECURE© (which stands for Safety, Ethics, Community, Understanding, Response, and Evaluation) to blend crisis management, routine investigation, and long-term problem solving.

The most relevant finding was that 67% of the agencies responded that their primary recruit academy incorporated community policing into their curriculum, but most of them only spend 1 to 10 hours on it.

Field Training

Most police officers are required to do field training for approximately six months to one year after graduating from the academy (Alpert and Dunham 1997). This portion of training takes place with the agency in which the officer is hired. The purpose of field training is for the rookie officer to learn departmental policies and procedures and local laws and get real life experience before patrolling by him or herself. It is reminiscent of the concept of an apprenticeship (Haberfield 2002). Field training is usually done with a field training officer (FTO) who is a senior officer responsible for teaching the rookie the necessary rules of the job. One of the long standing concerns is that the FTO will tell the rookie to forget what s/he learned in the academy because it was irrelevant (Alpert and Dunham 1997). The formal goal of FTO is to *apply* what is learned in the academy (Haberfield 2002). FTO's should extend the academy experience, reinforcing the ideals that the rookie has learned in his/her police training, rather than negating it (Alpert and Dunham 1997).

The San Jose Field Training Officer (FTO) program is the most widely recognized program of its kind. It began in 1972 in response to an incident in San Jose, California in which a rookie officer was badly injured and a citizen was killed due to a lack of training on behalf of the rookie. The San Jose police department decided that rookies needed to have an “information bridge” mentoring stage to transfer their knowledge from academy to the field.

Additionally, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended that a minimum of four months of coached field training be included as a regular part of the recruit training process in 1973. They also recommended that FTO's receive 40 hours of specialized training in the training and evaluation of police recruits. FTO programs are supported by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. Therefore, if an agency wants to be accredited, they must conduct formal field training for recruits (McC Campbell 1986)

After graduating from the academy, recruits are assigned to the FTO program. The San Jose FTO program lasts 14 weeks and occurs in three-four week periods of training followed by a two week evaluation period. In the evaluation period, the FTO may dress in plain clothes and act solely as an observer (McC Campbell 1986). Training occurs on each of the three workday shifts (day, evening, night) and is concentrated in two districts. Recruits are assigned to different FTO's for each period in order to be exposed to different policing styles and to be sure that one's evaluations are not affected by personality conflicts (Cox 1996). Each FTO provides training consistent with a specific curriculum developed for the program and evaluates the respective trainees' abilities, skills, and knowledge. The San Jose model may be modified for use in particular agencies (Haberfield 2002).

Research about field training officer (FTO) programs in community policing is rather scarce. Most of what exists focuses on what we *should* be doing rather than what we are doing. What is concerning is that though academy training is making such major changes in Florida, FTO training is not keeping up. Most FTO programs are based on the San Jose model, which is now 30 years old (Scott 2000). McEwen (1997) found that

among 532 law enforcement agencies that use FTO's, only 23% require FTO's to have some knowledge of COPS and only 25% of them provide FTO's with specialized COPS training designed to help them train recruits in COPS and problem solving. Therefore, most academy graduates are going into FTO programs where COPS is not reinforced.

Mastrofski and Ritti (1995) warn that the effects of high quality training can dissipate once officers are exposed to the powerful effects of everyday work, the organization, and the occupational culture of more experienced and veteran officers. Therefore, recruits exposed to community policing and problem solving activities in the academy may find little value in those experiences if field training and their department afford them few opportunities to apply those skills, if it is not encouraged by supervisors, and it is irrelevant for advancement and promotion (Mastrofski and Ritti 1995). Van Maanen (1973) states, "Clearly, it is during the FTO phase of the recruit's career that he is most susceptible to attitude change."

Haarr's (2001) research highlights the importance of reinforcing of these concepts. She followed recruits through the Phoenix Regional Police Training Academy basic training program and then to their respective agencies where they proceeded through field training and a one-year probationary period. She followed 14 successive classes between December 1995 and October 1996 and surveyed their attitudes at four different time periods. At the first day of the academy, she pre-tested them to gather baseline attitudes toward traditional policing and COPS, problem solving, and public relations. They were tested again (Time 2) during the last three days of the academy, and again (Time 3) near the end of field training, and finally (Time 4) after one year of employment. Haarr drew several conclusions. First, she found that academy class emerged as a significant

predictor variable. This suggests that recruits who train together possibly develop a unique “class culture” that influences recruits’ attitudes. Class culture could be shaped by a class officer, student composition, or some other factors.

Attitudes were impacted by the COPS academy training, but during field training, organizational environmental factors became more important in shaping attitudes. For example, officers who worked for agencies that required officers to engage in COPS were more likely to endorse it. Overall, pre-academy (baseline) attitudes were the strongest predictor of attitudes at time four. Ultimately, even though attitudes became more favorable towards COPS, problem solving and public relations immediately after the academy, those attitudes dissipated after exposure to field training and the departmental culture (Haarr 2001).

Obviously, field trainers and departmental culture must “catch up” and support the COPS philosophy if training in COPS is going to have a lasting impact. Because field training occurs immediately after the academy, it is the best place to expose the recruit to COPS and problem solving in practice, thus linking training with practice (Haarr 2001). Fortunately, some police agencies do have trainees engage in some problem-solving activities as part of their field training experience. One of the more exciting developments in police training is a project to develop new field training guidelines and a model FTO program. Funded by the COPS office, The Reno (NV) Police Department and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) are planning to update the San Jose field training model to better reflect problem solving and community policing (see Scott 2000). The new training program is called the Police Training Officer (PTO) program and incorporates methods of adult education and Problem-Based Learning (PBL). It is the

first attempt to update field training in 30 years and serves to further institutionalize problem solving and community oriented policing (COPS website). Obviously, FTO's must be trained in COPS, and COPS needs to be a formalized part of the field training experience (Haarr 2001).

CHAPTER 4
LEARNING POLICE BEHAVIOR AND NORMS: FORMAL AND INFORMAL
CHANGES

Introduction

Van Maanen (1973) identified four stages in the process of socialization of police officers. The first one, *choice*, refers to the decisions of both the recruit and the agency which result in a potential officer's recruitment to a career in policing. The second stage, *introduction*, refers to academy training. During the *introduction* stage of police socialization, recruits are exposed to a mix of formal and informal instruction. Recruits receive instruction on formal content (including apt illustrations from the field); they are taught about departmental rules and regulations and other fundamentals (e.g., criminal and traffic codes, report-writing, weapons, first aid) (Lundman 1980). They also receive training in the roles, attitudes and beliefs about the occupation through "war stories" and experiences in the quasi-military environment that go beyond the formal class lessons and are often related outside of class or during time-out from formal instruction (Langworthy and Travis 2003; Van Maanen 1973). In other words, they learn informal content (Lundman 1980).

The third stage, *encounter*, refers to the period when the rookie police officer is initially assigned to working the street. This usually occurs in a field training program whereby rookies are paired with experienced police officers who reinforce and/or redefine what is considered to be appropriate behavior in the police agency (Langworthy and Travis 2003). *Metamorphosis* is the final stage in police socialization. This occurs

when officers adapt to the reality of policing and begin to view policing as a job (Van Maanen 1973).

Richard Bennett (1984) attended academy training in the early 1970s and identified three stages of socialization that occur before and during the academy that are similar to Van Maanen's. The first one, *anticipatory*, refers to the stage when applicants for an occupational role begin to anticipate the demands and expectations associated with their future role and begin to view themselves as role incumbents (Bennett 1984; Merton and Rossi 1968). Recruits obtain the information about the occupational role from reference groups, such as the media, or friends and relatives who are already police officers.

The second stage is *formal* socialization and this constitutes academy training where the recruit learns the roles, attitudes, and values through the reference group of experienced officers and trainers at the academy. This reference group serves four functions. Recruits learn: 1) a set of appropriate normative ways of behaving; including attitudes, values and behaviors needed to fit into the organization, 2) exposure to cognitive comparisons to evaluate their personal values, behaviors, and performance, 3) the group's capacity to support them in terms of feelings of belonging, acceptance and reward, and 4) the reference groups' ability to withhold acceptance from its members as a control mechanism (also see Conser 1980).

According to Bennett, the third stage a recruit goes through is *informal* socialization. This involves learning appropriate cognitions for successful functioning in daily police work, such as social isolation and perception of citizen hostility (Bennett 1984; Neiderhoffer 1967; Skolnick 1966). The reference group also plays a major role in informal socialization.

While the previous chapter focused primarily on the *formal content* of police training, this chapter will focus on the *informal content* (Lundman 1980) of the *introduction* and *encounter* stages of police socialization (Van Maanen 1973). Because the formal and informal lessons occur simultaneously, recognize that the separation is made only for research purposes. First, I will provide an overview of social learning theory to provide a framework for understanding police training and socialization in community policing, and the behavior of police trainees. Next, I will discuss the salience of the police subculture. Finally, I will discuss the literature relating to the socialization specific to police training and my study in particular. Social learning theory can provide an overarching framework to integrate the diverse features and components of informal training that much of the extant research lacks.

Social Learning Theory

Akers (1985; 2000) developed social learning theory as an extension of Sutherland's (1947) differential association theory to explain acts that violate social norms (Akers 1998). The basic assumption behind social learning theory is that *all behavior is learned and the same learning process produces all behavior*. Social learning theory is strongly influenced by symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes the exchange of meanings and symbols in social interaction (Akers 2000). It grows out of Sutherland's differential association theory which posits that conforming and deviant behavior are learned in interaction with others who expose us to conforming and nonconforming definitions. Akers elucidates the importance of differential association by introducing learning mechanisms (operant conditioning and imitation) into the mix. Akers posits that four components function to instigate and strengthen social behavior: differential

association, definitions, reinforcement and modeling. The balance of these influences determines how one will behave in various contexts.

Reflecting its roots in Sutherland, the overarching construct in social learning theory is differential association. Those with whom one differentially associates will influence one's behavior and attitudes. The sources of interaction include family members, friends and peers, and work or classmates. Those with whom one is more intimate are more influential than those with whom one is distant. Akers argues that individuals develop definitions either favorable or unfavorable to behavior in interaction with others. Definitions are then reinforced or punished by the consequences that follow their behavior. Importantly, others provide models of behavior to follow and are the sources of reinforcement and punishment.

Social learning theory has received considerable scholarly attention and empirical support (Akers 1985; Akers et al. 1979; Akers and LaGreca 1991; Akers and Lee 1996; Krohn et al. 1985; Warr and Stafford 1991). Its focus has tended to be on explaining crime and delinquency. However, because it endorses Sutherland's statement that all behavior is learned in the same way, the learning process can be used to understand conforming as well as non-conforming behavior. For example, it has been used to explain organizational behavior in Employee Assistance Programs (Capece and Akers 1995). Here, social learning theory will provide a framework for understanding what police learn in training.

In this study, social learning theory will be used to understand the acquisition and transformation of behavior and norms. Formal socialization is consciously trying to change attitudes, skills, and beliefs to reflect the new occupational standards consistent

with an organizational shift in philosophy. An organizational change has taken place (CMS curriculum and COPS), but whether the attitudes and behaviors associated with such a change have transformed is an open question. Social learning theory provides a framework for understanding what has (or has not) been learned in the academy under the new CMS curriculum.

Differential Association

Social learning theory proposes a process of interrelationships among the four constructs. Differential association is the overarching construct and provides the framework within which definitions are acquired and the learning mechanisms operate. It occurs first (Akers et al. 1979). Social groups with which one associates provide the environment where exposure to definitions, models to imitate, and reinforcement/punishment of behaviors occur.

Differential association refers to the influences of those with whom one associates. Direct association or interaction with others who engage in certain types of behavior or hold attitudes will present either positive or negative definitions toward a specific behavior (as well as definitions of these groups) (Akers 2000). Primary groups, such as family and peers, are said to have the most influence, but secondary groups, such as occupational groups, are influential as well. How much one will be influenced by another person's models of behavior and attitudes depends on the priority, frequency, duration, and intensity of the association (Akers 2000). For example, the more time that is spent with friends, the more influence they will have on a person's behavior. An intense socialization experience, such as the police academy, may make the occupational group take on the significance of a primary group.

Akers et al (1979)³ defines a norm climate (or norm quality) as the approving and/or disapproving attitudes toward behaviors held by others with whom one differentially associates or holds in high regard. Essentially, it is the recruit's perception of the general belief system of peers, superiors, and incumbents in the policing environment.

Herbert (1998) discusses a normative order, which he defines as “a set of generalized rules and common practices oriented around a common value.” He takes this from Parsons (1951) to capture the importance of internalized values for structuring individual behavior. The normative order is analogous to a normative climate. Other researchers have also found evidence of a normative order existing in policing.

The day the new recruit walks through the doors of the police academy he leaves society behind to enter a profession that does more than give him a job, it defines who he is. For all the years he remains, closed into the sphere of its rituals...he will be a cop (Ahern 1972: 3).

Definitions

Definitions are either vocal or sub-vocal behavior learned by modeling and operant conditioning. They play a special role in social learning because they serve as important cue or discriminative stimuli for reinforcing or punishing behavior. Acting as internal “discriminative stimuli,” definitions are cues and symbols about what is right, wrong, good or bad (Akers 2000). According to Akers et al. (1979), evaluative definitions are developed through interaction with others and modeling their behavior. The more a behavior is defined as good or justified, the more likely one is to engage in it.

Definitions can be general or specific. General definitions refer to broad ideas like general principles reflected in religion, while specific definitions refer to attitudes toward

³ Lanza-Kaduce and Capece (2003) argue that the “norm climate” resides at the structural level.

particular acts, such as problem solving. Neutralizing definitions refer to justifications, rationalizations, or excuses for specific behavior. An example of a neutralizing definition is thinking that killing is wrong, *except in self-defense*. The neutralizing definition serves to make an exception or an excuse for the behavior under a particular condition (Akers 2000).

Differential Reinforcement

Differential reinforcement refers to the balance of anticipated or actual reinforcements versus punishments that are a consequence of behavior. Therefore, current behavior depends on the past, present and anticipated future consequences (Akers 2000). Akers et al. (1979) argues that behavior is shaped by the consequences of such behavior in a process of operant conditioning. Operant conditioning pairs behaviors with cue or discriminative stimuli (including definitions); the pairing depends on the consequences that occur. Behavior is more likely to occur again in the presence of cues when it is followed by a reward or pleasant consequences, or *positive reinforcement*, or when something unpleasant (e.g., a headache) goes away after engaging in a behavior in the presence of cues, *negative reinforcement*. Behavior is weakened (i.e., less likely to occur again in the presence of cues) by unfavorable consequences, or *positive punishment*, and the removal of pleasant consequences, or *negative punishment*.

The probability that a certain behavior will continue depends on past and present real or anticipated reinforcements and punishments associated with the behavior. Although reinforcement can be physical, the theory posits that the principal behavioral effects are social, especially those come from interaction with others who are close to the behaving person. Specifically, behavioral effects are most likely to be influenced by those

with whom one is the most intimate (Akers 2000). Behavior results when reinforcement for one behavior outweighs reinforcement for alternative behavior.

Thus, if community policing is learned in the academy and reinforced in field training, it is more likely to be continued. If an officer spends her time organizing a neighborhood clean-up and she is later rewarded for such behavior, that officer is likely to continue to help clean-up neighborhoods. On the other hand, if the officer observes other officers reaping awards for making high profile arrests while her community clean-ups go unnoticed, the officer is likely to stop cleaning up neighborhoods and make more arrests. Social reinforcement and punishment is the key. If organizing trash pick-ups in neighborhoods are considered to be “jokes” among peers and are not valued in the peer culture, that behavior is being punished and is likely to cease.

Akers says that the selection and continuation of associations are functions of differential reinforcement. In other words, those who disagree with the norm climate would choose a new “peer group” under normal circumstances. However, in the special circumstance of the police, it would be more difficult to separate from peers, unless an officer left policing as a career altogether. Indeed, those who fail to accept and internalize the normative climate in policing are not likely to receive reinforcement from within the police ranks.

Imitation

Imitation refers to modeling behavior of others. It is most important when one initially encounters the social group. Definitions are learned, in part, through imitation. A newcomer to a social group learns accepted behaviors by watching and imitating superiors and others who are part of the group. Therefore, recruits learn definitions by modeling instructors at the academy. They learn attitudes and values about policing

through war stories and informal conversation. The same process occurs in field training. If officers are solving problems and involving the community in their projects, then new officers are likely to follow their lead and do the same. On the other hand, if officers only see reactive policing during their field training experience, they are less likely to see proactivity or COPS as an important part of their career as police officers.

Police training and socialization involves learning definitions about policing through differential association with peers and superiors. These definitions are modeled, reinforced and punished in the police subculture. Next, I will discuss the literature on the salient police subculture and how it fits with social learning theory.

Traditional Police Subculture

Newcomers to all organizations will identify with the work group to some degree. However, researchers argue that few organizations instill the same degree of occupational identification as do the police (Britz 1997; Van Maanen 1978). Skolnick (1966) reports that the strength of the organizational culture in a police department is so salient that regardless of personal differences, individuals adopt the beliefs and definitions of the department. Bordua and Reiss (1966) describe the police organizational culture as a “holy order” with an intense focus on chain of command, subordination and accountability combined with a limited opportunity for communication across the ranks.

The police are often described as a social group, differentiated from the general public, whose behavior is structured more so by informal norms than by formal rules (Herbert 1998). The police subculture transmits attitudes, values and beliefs from one generation to another in a learning process (Kappeler et al. 1998). The police develop “cognitive lenses” through which to view the world (Skolnick 1994). Van Maanen (1974) found that the ideology of the police subculture serves to “support and maintain codes,

agreements and habits existing in the work place...” The profound influence of the police subculture is recognized as having a substantial effect on officers’ ideologies, values, attitudes and behaviors (Alpert and Dunham 1997; Conser 1980; Crank 1998; Skolnick 1994). According to Herbert (1998), officers engage in certain behaviors to maintain good standing in a desirable occupational environment. It is suggested that officers learn behavior through the reinforcements obtained from the subcultural group (Aultman 1976).

Entering the traditional police subculture, or crossing the “thin blue line,” has numerous characteristics. Scholars contend that the screening, selection and training process produces a homogenous group of officers that share a “working personality” and extraordinary group solidarity (Alpert and Dunham 1997; Lundman 1980; Skolnick 1966/1994). Militaristic rules and discipline strengthen the cohesion and instill the belief that officers are isolated from the general public and only have other officers as friends (Neiderhoffer 1967; Skolnick 1966). Due to the isolation that police officers often feel, officers tend to spend more time with each other, especially for social purposes (Harris 1973). Therefore, it becomes more important for officers to feel accepted by this peer group for the development of a satisfactory self-concept (Conser 1980; Neiderhoffer 1967; Skolnick 1966).

Other characteristics of the police subculture include peer loyalty, secrecy, and shared cynicism toward the public. This is also known as the “us versus them” ideology (Kappeler et al. 1994; Sparrow et al. 1990; Westley 1970). Similarly, there is a shared perception of the dangerousness of police work and the related focus on officer safety that only can be understood by other police officers (Paoline et al. 2000; Van Maanen

1974). Police tend to be suspicious and authoritarian. They are also said to be conservative in ideology (see Lipset 1969; Lundman 1980; Skolnick 1966)

Many police scholars have touched on the importance and development of definitions and attitudes in the police context, including various types of norm departures, like deviant activity. For example, Sherman (1978) sees police corruption as the result of a “continuous definitional process involving various stages.” He contends that police corruption may be explained as the transmission of cultural values via the influence of reference groups. Conser (1980) suggests that corruption arises through a process of interaction during which the individual officer learns such behavior in accordance with the responses of reference groups.

Kappeler et al. (1998) argue that the subculture may facilitate deviant or questionable behavior by transmitting the beliefs, values, definitions and “manners of expression” to depart from acceptable behavior. The shared value system allows officers the opportunity to rationalize, excuse and justify their behavior. Alpert and Dunham (1997) suggest that because social isolation is a feature of the police subculture, officers are likely to withdraw into the subculture for support and approval. The result is that the police officer is “subjected to intense peer influence and control,” and this is likely to include less than ideal behavior. In other words, officers as a group redefine lessons and modify their behavior in ways that, though not necessarily deviant, are not up to good standards. Working under little supervision makes these departures from good practice possible.

One study found that receiving free meals, services or discounts was viewed by many police officers as a fringe benefit of the job and anticipated little risk of punishment

for these behaviors (Chappell and Piquero 2004). It is clear that the police subculture has the capacity to reinforce types of police behavior that may fall short of academy or departmental standards and good practices.

This is important because an academy and agency attempting to formally institute COPS is facing a significant barrier if the police subculture is not supportive. The research suggests that the culture is at least as salient—maybe more salient—than the formal rules put forth by the organization. Observers of community policing regularly recognize the police subculture as the single biggest impediment to the successful implementation of policing reforms (Greene et al. 1994; Herbert 1998; Sadd and Grinc 1994; Sparrow et al. 1990).

Some researchers (Paoline et al., 2000) have begun to question the applicability and salience of the police subculture in today's society. The reason for this is that much of the literature on the police subculture is dated and based on a time when police departments were made up of predominately white males and came from blue collar backgrounds with little college education (Britz 1997; Walker and Katz 2005). With pressure to hire more women and racial minorities in an effort to reflect the demographic make up of the communities they serve, some researchers are questioning whether the police subculture is still as strong as it once was. Robin Haarr (1997) argues, "the initial concept of a single, unified occupational culture is now being replaced by an alternative conceptualization of diversity, variation, and contrast within the police organization and occupation." Nevertheless, in her contemporary study of the police subculture, Britz (1997) found that the police subculture is still so salient that it overwhelms individual differences.

Academy Training and Learning COPS

The police academy is structured in a way so that recruits learn to trust only each other. They are confronted with constant criticism of their inadequacy and status as a recruit (not-yet sworn officer) but “teased” by the goal of becoming “one of them” by the instructors and other incumbents (Conti unpublished manuscript entitled, “Lower Than Whale Shit”). Group punishments and rewards ensure that the recruit cohort evolve into a highly cohesive group (Lundman 1980; Van Maanen 1975). For example, the enforcement of academy rules about attendance and appearance force recruits to learn to rely on each other and see their instructors as bosses and punishers rather than teachers and friends (Langworthy and Travis 2003). Similarly, loyalty, perceived dangerousness of the job and suspicion, cynicism, isolation, and a “we-them” orientation start to develop here (Lundman 1980; Skolnick 1994; Westley 1970).

Militaristic environments in general promote strong bonds between members by cutting them off from society (Encandela 1991). The academy in particular is intended to isolate recruits from their outside responsibilities (Conti unpublished manuscript entitled, “Lower Than Whale Shit”). This intensifies the differential association process and makes the occupational group more like a primary group.

Further, the militaristic academy structure is rigid and not conducive to learning COPS. The traditional quasi military environment sends the message to recruits that policing is only about fighting crime and making arrests. Police training, the creation of specialized divisions in police agencies, a focus on crime statistics, and traditional promotion criteria reinforce the strict law-enforcement orientation (Bittner 1975; Paoline et al. 2000). Thus, the police culture emphasizes law enforcement over a service orientation and the “aggressive street cop” is the cultural ideal (Paoline et al. 2000).

One of the most important elements to making the new philosophy work is convincing rank and file officers that COPS is the right thing for them. Holdaway (1984) conducted a study in Britain that showed the extent to which innovative efforts can be sabotaged if rank and file officers are not on board with the new philosophy. Rank and file officers have a tremendous capacity to squelch efforts to innovate if their traditional values of policing remain dominant (Goldstein 1987, Paoline et al 2000).

In the academy, the recruits learn that their peer group will support them and that they should support their fellow officers (Van Maanen 1973). Police scholars have often written about the importance of peer acceptance and approval regarding their own behavior and beliefs. Therefore, the general level of acceptance/approval toward COPS in a police department is a determinant of whether the philosophy will be put into practice. For example, a rookie police officer who recently graduated from a COPS police academy may be ready to work with the community and problem solve, but if s/he discusses those intentions with other officers and they express discontent for COPS, the rookie is less likely to incorporate COPS into his or her own policing practice. Therefore, if COPS is not the operating philosophy of the department, the COPS training is not likely to have a lasting effect.

Savitz (1971) looked at police recruits' attitudes toward formal conduct standards at three different time periods. He found that as recruits advanced from the police academy to working on the streets, the exposure to the police subculture increased, and their attitudes became more permissive regarding rules and standards. The officers began to favor less severe punishments for various forms of misconduct, such as accepting bribes and theft (Savitz 1971).

Later, Haarr looked at recruits' attitudes toward community policing at four time periods and found that pre-academy attitudes were the best predictor of attitudes at time four, even though attitudes changed immediately after the academy. Her explanation is that even though attitudes were influenced (favorably toward COPS) by academy culture and instructors, once rookies entered their respective agencies, their attitudes reverted back to the way they were before they entered the academy (Haarr 2001). This study suggests the importance of early on-the-job socialization experiences, including field training (see also Lundman 1980).

Social Learning Model of Police Socialization for COPS

Police recruits enter the training experience with preconceived notions about the policing role. They meet like-minded recruits with similar backgrounds and the same goals. In the academy, they are forced to spend all of their time together and work through their problems together in a highly stressful environment. Differential association occurs, and they make friends and this new cohort of police recruits becomes an important peer group. External stressors continue to push them closer as they go through coursework, physical training, and discipline and obedience. They are learning about a myriad of subjects—from legal issues to community policing to firearms training—in an intense formal environment. They are learning definitions about how to be a good police officer formally—in class—and informally through the police culture. Informally, they are learning how to balance the intense stress of surviving the academy and interpret the lessons they are learning. Trainers are their reference group: leaders and models to imitate, admire and look up to.

They are learning about problem solving, community policing and diversity through scenarios. But what is learned informally may not correspond with the formal

training instruction in COPS. We should expect a gap between formal and informal lessons (just like we can expect a gap between the law on the books that recruits learn and the law as it is practiced on the streets). Indeed, some lessons may be contradictory. For example, despite formal instruction in diversity, informal lessons may be sexist or racist (Marion 1998). While such contradictory informal messages are detrimental to traditional policing, they are devastating to COPS. Social learning theory prompts us to look at the balance to discern which lessons become salient.

Researchers have noted the importance of an entire police department endorsing COPS, as well as the importance of winning the “hearts and minds” of police officers in order to fully implement COPS (Lurigio and Skogan 1994). Essentially, it is the informal police culture that transmits the “true” overarching beliefs toward community policing and problem solving (Herbert 1998). Thus, behavior is determined by the normative climate of a social group (Herbert 1998). It is an open question the extent to which formal police training in COPS can influence individual officers’ perceptions and attitudes toward COPS. Given the strength of the police culture, it has the capacity for squelching the effort to making COPS a success.

CHAPTER 5 DATA

Introduction

This study is comprised of a set of interrelated data collection efforts designed to address several research purposes: 1) how are police recruits trained in CMS/COPS different from those trained under the traditional curriculum, 2) does a different type of recruit excel in CMS compared to the traditional curriculum, and 3) what lessons are learned at the police academy and how do they carry over to placement in a law enforcement agency? The research was performed at two sites: a police training academy and one of the law enforcement agencies that hires many of its rookie officers from this academy. In this chapter, I will discuss the research settings, samples, and types of data used to address each question.

Background of the CMS Curriculum

In 2002, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Standards and Training Commission completely redesigned its basic recruit curriculum and created a new training program reflecting a community-oriented, problem solving approach called the Curriculum Maintenance System (CMS). The CMS curriculum went into pilot form in May 2002 and final form on July 1, 2004. As of July 1, 2004, it became mandated by the state of Florida as the required training curriculum for all police recruits, but for the classes that I followed, it was closely monitored and constantly updated by Florida Department of Law Enforcement (via close circuit television and on-site evaluators).

Other feedback mechanisms were utilized as well, such as instructor and participant (recruit) surveys (see McLaughlin and Donahue 1995).

Changes to the curriculum include: (1) redesign of the basic recruit curriculum based upon problem solving models (such as SARA or Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment model), (2) incorporation of scenarios as the basis for all training, (3) Interactive CD-ROMs featuring a number of the problem solving scenarios, and (4) complete design, on paper, of a virtual community (Spanish Moss, FL) and surrounding environment (Dogwood County) for use within the scenario-based training. According to FDLE, the new curriculum is different from the traditional curriculum in the following ways:

- New instruction focuses on application of learning rather than memorization
- A problem solving model to be used throughout the academy
- Instruction is initiated through scenarios that are set in Spanish Moss, FL
- New curriculum includes lesson plans, support materials, and student workbook
- A new certification exam includes both application and knowledge questions

The new curriculum uses the SECURE model, which is similar to SARA, but adds and changes several elements. SECURE represents Safety, Ethics, Community, Understanding, Response, and Evaluation. SECURE combines a first response model to resolve short-term incidents and a long term model to solve long term recurring problems. CMS “threads” themes throughout the curriculum. In other words, instead of covering a single topic and completing it, it revisits certain important themes in each module. Examples of such themes are problem solving, community policing, and officer safety. The CMS curriculum is considered a living, breathing document, so instructors are constantly submitting their feedback to FDLE in order to update and improve the

curriculum. The police academy I studied was one of the first regional training facilities to adopt the CMS curriculum.

Research at the Police Academy

Setting

The police academy is a training center that provides recruit and in-service training for police officers, corrections personnel and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT). It includes a firing range, an agility course, physical training areas, a vehicle driving range, and several permanent buildings and temporary classrooms.

I began collecting data at the academy as a research assistant on a project that my advisor hoped would be funded. His working relationship with senior personnel at the academy enabled me to attend and observe training classes, and when I expressed interest in continuing the research, approval was easily granted. During my initial observations, the CMS curriculum was still being developed, hence the first classes studied were being trained under the traditional curriculum. My subsequent observations were of three classes using the CMS curriculum. Eventually, my participation at the police academy led to entrée into the second setting for data collection, the law enforcement agency.

Data

At the police academy, I conducted two types of investigations. First, I examined official data regarding academy admissions and screening, as well as performance measures, such as examination scores and employment. Second, I conducted participant observation of academy instruction during recruit training. The academy data were collected under two curricula: a traditional curriculum and the updated CMS curriculum which threaded COPS, problem solving and scenarios throughout all training units.

The Official Data

I obtained access to official data on a sample of 300 academy recruits, 155 of whom went through the traditional curriculum and 145 of whom went through the CMS curriculum. The sample includes all persons who were cleared to enter the Basic Recruit Curriculum (BRC) from 1998 through 2004. It includes classes 68, 69, 71-75 from the traditional curriculum and 76-79, 81-83 from the CMS curriculum.

The data include demographics (such as race, age, gender, marital status, education, and military experience), screening scores (such as writing, cognitive, and physical agility), background characteristics (including whether recruits had a criminal, traffic or drug record), and residency and work experience. The data also include academy performance (test scores, class rank, overall academy score, whether they failed or graduated the academy, disciplinary record, commendations and awards), and post-graduation employment status.

Participant Observation and Informal Interviewing

In addition to the quantitative data on each recruit, I also conducted participant observation of two of the traditional classes and three CMS classes at the police academy. I spent 100 hours observing courses on human diversity, interpersonal skills and communications, defensive tactics, investigations, traffic skills, high stress driving, high risk traffic stops, patrol activities, community policing, scenarios, report writing, death investigations, and law.

Most of my early observational research consisted of unstructured participant observation and informal discussions with police recruits and academy personnel. Talking with recruits and instructors during breaks occupied a large part of my time and contributed significantly to my understanding of the academy and its people. I chose

classes based on my interest and generally over-sampled classes related to interpersonal communications and diversity as they are key issues in COPS. I also spent considerable time observing driving and defensive tactics, but found that those courses contributed less to my understanding of how recruits/officers interact with the community because they are taught solely as skill-building exercises. In addition, observing the learning process was more difficult due to the nature of the activities. For example, in driving courses, only 1 or 2 recruits would drive at one time, and they were in cars on the range while the rest of “us” sat and watched. Direct observation was therefore impossible. Much of the defensive tactics training involved learning how to conduct “take-downs” and the mechanics of arrests, such as putting on hand-cuffs. Much of it was technical, rather than communicative and I found it to be less than helpful to my sociological understanding of police training. Other courses on skills training took recruits into different rooms, again making it impossible for me to actually see what was occurring. In those situations, other recruits and myself would simply relax and talk while training was occurring in another area (such as on the driving range). In contrast, during classroom instruction, I was one of many others in the room listening to the instructor and taking notes.

During my observations, my role was usually more of an observer, but occasionally I became involved as a participant. I was often invited to participate as a recruit, especially in physical-type exercises, such as physical training and defensive tactics, but usually my dress prevented that type of activity. Other times I was asked by the instructors to help in scenarios and I often participated in this capacity. I held an unusual status at the academy; I was neither an instructor nor recruit, but both recruits and instructors felt comfortable with me. They appreciated my participation in the scenarios

and that participation allowed me to fit in so my presence was “normal.” However, my participation did not occur after the change to the CMS curriculum as things became much more “by the book” and formal. Also, only a few instructors during the CMS pilot were certified to teach CMS and these were not the instructors who had previously invited me to be involved. I interacted with many of the recruits during my observations who are also in my official data sample.

Research Questions

These quantitative and qualitative data on academy recruits help to address the following general research questions: 1) To what extent are quantifiable differences in academy recruit performance predicted by the CMS curriculum? 2) Does a different “type” of recruit achieve higher scores in the CMS academy compared to the traditional? 3) Does the culture at the police academy support the COPS orientation? Essentially, one goal is to identify how differences in the two curricula materialize in terms of recruit performance and academy success (whether a recruit graduates, fails, finds employment, etc.). A second goal is to analyze the extent to which the culture and environment at the academy are supporting the COPS orientation.

Research at the Police Agency

Setting

“The Agency” is a medium sized municipal police department serving a city of approximately 100,000 people that is home to a major university. The Agency is made up of approximately 275 sworn officers and 90 non-sworn personnel. The Agency has an aviation unit, a K-9 unit, a forensics unit, a SWAT (special weapons and tactics) Team, a mounted patrol, and a motorcycle unit. The Agency practices District Policing, which is a form of Community-Oriented Policing (COPS) which places officers in permanent

geographical patrol areas for a year or longer so that they are able to build relationships with community residents. The Agency has been practicing some form of COPS since 1985.

Data

At the agency, I performed two types of data collection. First, I analyzed field training officer (FTO) files for a sub-sample of the CMS graduates (from the recruits in my official database) who became employed by this agency. Second, I informally interviewed police personnel and attended various activities (such as DataStat meetings- to be discussed later) at the agency to get an idea of the inner-workings of the agency and its endorsement of COPS.

Field Training Officer (FTO) Files

At the time of my research, the director of the police academy maintained considerable contacts with the Agency. It was initially his idea for me to obtain field training officer (FTO) files for the academy graduates in order to examine their performance as rookie police officers. He agreed to call the police agency and ask for their cooperation with my research. It happened that I already knew some of the ranking officers from organizing ride-alongs for my community policing course. I was eventually given access to the complete FTO files of all 40 of the CMS recruits from my original sample who gained employment by this particular agency upon graduation (of 145 CMS recruits).

The Agency follows a variation of the San Jose model (see chapter 3). Field training usually lasts 12 weeks unless the recruit is referred to remedial training, which could be up to three weeks (per remedial session). Trainees are evaluated by their FTO each day during their field training (in narrative format) on a form called a Daily

Evaluation Form (DEF). At the end of each stage of training, the FTO evaluates the overall progress of the trainee and recommends whether he or she should progress to the next FTO stage (Stage Evaluation). The evaluation consists of a series of scales and an area for narrative comments. The FTO files also contain all correspondence about the trainee's progress throughout the FTO program, including emails between the FTO's and supervisors. Each file is hundreds of pages long and contains substantial detail about the trainee's behavior and progress. I focused on the narratives (qualitative data only) for this study.

Participant Observation and Informal Interviewing

I spent approximately 25 hours at the police agency speaking with and meeting with ranking police officers to find out about community policing, training for community policing, departmental procedures, and collecting FTO files. In these conversations, I learned about the informal culture as well as the process of recruiting potential officers to the agency. I learned specifics about the recruits in my database, including insights into why some of them did not make it through field training, why they were fired or asked to resign, as well as information about who has remained with the agency and excelled. I have also learned about some of the challenges in the agency, such as the high turnover rate.

I attended approximately 12 DataStat meetings. DataStat resembles Compstat⁴ in that the department meets monthly to discuss notable activities in each of the three city districts, as well as community service activities, traffic division issues, and Personnel

⁴ Compstat originated in New York Transit Authority and delegates authority and accountability to command staff for geographical areas. Generally, command staff meet regularly to discuss crime and disorder problems as well as potential solutions.

vacancies and hires. The chief of the department, captains, most ranking officers and command staff, some patrol officers, and people from the community (such as me) attend. It is basically an overview and follow-up of criminal and community activities in the city. Uniform Crime Reports are also covered. If crime has increased in a particular area, or there has been a crime spree, potential solutions are discussed and a follow-up is planned. DataStat meetings are very formal; all guests are invited and formally introduced, there are no food or drinks allowed, no cell phones or beepers, etc. Presentations are very professional.

Research Questions

The purpose of the field training data is to examine the extent to which CMS, with its emphasis on community policing, is reflected in rookie training at one agency which endorses the COPS philosophy. Field training is the initial job assignment in which the COPS ideals can be reinforced as it presents the first opportunity to link COPS training with actual practice (Haarr 2001). I analyze whether the FTO program integrates COPS and problem solving activities into field training, whether these activities are part of field training evaluation, and whether they are used in advancing to the next stage and ultimately to solo status. The idea is that recruits are being trained in COPS at the academy, but I aim to see if these lessons are being reinforced in the department.

The purpose of the informal interviewing and the DataStat meeting attendance is to assess the normative climate toward COPS and informal values in one of the police agencies that hires a large number of graduates from the police academy. This police department explicitly endorses COPS, but these data give insight into the extent to which it is internally supported by the department. These observations and interviews offer

another glimpse into the departmental environment and the extent to which COPS is endorsed at the “brass” level in the department.

The informal interview data and DataStat meetings allow me to understand how the chief, captains, and ranking officers at the top of the hierarchy feel about COPS and training. The purpose of this is to determine how much of an impact the CMS curriculum will have on officers as they embark on their career as police officers in an agency that explicitly endorses COPS. Is the normative climate at the department supportive of COPS?

Summary

This study is based on a set of interrelated data collection efforts designed to analyze the impact of the CMS curriculum on police recruits and their early career performance once they gain employment in one agency that endorses COPS. With several types of data, I will gain insight into the extent to which CMS has an effect on recruit academy performance, field training performance and their policing careers.

CHAPTER 6 METHODS

Introduction

This chapter outlines the strategies for analyzing the sources of data in the study. The first part of the chapter will address the methodology used in the quantitative analysis and the second part of the chapter will address the methodology used in the qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data on 300 academy police recruits address two interrelated research goals. The first goal is to examine the impact of various background and demographic characteristics, including CMS training, on successful recruit performance. This part of the analysis develops models that incorporate variables identified in previous literature to significantly influence policing performance. The models also include a variable that distinguishes between recruits taught under the CMS curriculum and the traditional curriculum. The main hypothesis to be evaluated is whether CMS recruits perform “better” (as operationalized here) at the training academy compared to those trained under the traditional curriculum, holding constant other background variables.

The second goal addressed by the quantitative data is to assess whether specific background characteristics better predict academy performance among CMS recruits compared to traditional recruits. In other words, I aim to analyze whether a different “type” of recruit performs better in the CMS curriculum compared to the traditional curriculum.

Dependent Variables: Academy Performance

In this study, I use the term “academy performance” to refer to recruits’ success in the academy in terms of “average academy scores” (average score across all examinations), failure experiences, and whether recruits gained employment upon graduation. Three variables are used to measure recruits’ academy performance: average academy examination score, failure experience, and post-academy employment.

Average academy score for each recruit is measured with an ordinal variable thus OLS will be used⁵. The scale is as follows: 1 refers to an average score of 80% or less, 2 refers to a score of 80.01% to 84.9%, 3 to a score of 85% to 89.9%, 4 to a score of 90% to 94.9%, and 5 to a score of 95% through 100%. Twenty three recruits were missing on this variable and mean substitution was used⁶.

Failure experience is operationalized as a recruit who failed one module or unit, or a recruit who failed out of the academy. The original variable distinguished between those who failed any individual module during training and those who were dismissed from the academy, but due to the limited number of failures, I recoded it into a dichotomous variable. It is coded (0 ‘no’, 1 ‘yes’) and represents recruits who showed significant problems completing their academy class. Logistic regression is used for this model (McClendon 2002).

Recruits’ employment status is based on the current information available in the academy’s database when I collected the data (July 2004). It is possible (and probable) that graduates of the academy who were not employed immediately upon graduation

⁵ The score was computed into an ordinal variable due to several outliers. The technique, OLS, is robust (Akers et al. 1979).

⁶ The analysis was also run without those with missing values and the results were similar.

found employment later on and that is not accurately reflected in these data. Employment is a dichotomous variable coded '0' for unemployed and '1' for employed. Logistic regression is used to evaluate differences in employment likelihood between graduates of the CMS curriculum and the traditional curriculum.

Independent Variables

Previous literature suggests a number of personal characteristics that may affect policing performance. Though most of the studies do not specify academy or training performance specifically, some of them may be relevant to being a successful COPS officer.

There is no research on the relationship between age and police training. However, some police departments are raising their age requirements based on the intuitive notion that older applicants will be more mature, have more life experience and therefore make better officers (also see Lanza-Kaduce and Greenleaf 2000). Another reason for hiring older officers is that it gives the agency a longer work history to evaluate (Decker and Huckabee 2002). As recruits get older, they become more responsible and possibly better police officers. Skogan and Hartnett found that older officers are more supportive of community policing (Skogan and Hartnett 1997). Age is a continuous variable.

By 1997, racial and ethnic minorities made up about 22 percent of full-time sworn officers in local police departments (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2000). Some large cities now have police forces that represent the racial composition of their population. However, the National Academy of Sciences has concluded that "there is no credible evidence that officers of different racial or ethnic backgrounds perform differently during interactions with citizens simply because of race or ethnicity" (Skogan and Frydl 2004). African American officers are more likely to support innovation and change, such as

community policing (Skogan and Hartnett 1997). More ethnic diversity is needed to represent the community (King and Lab 2000). Part of community policing is having a police force that represents the community, thus racial minorities may be more likely to thrive in the COPS environment. Race is coded as '1' if nonwhite (black, Hispanic, Asian, or other) and '0' if white.

Neiderhoffer (1967) recognized that chauvinism was a major characteristic of the police culture in the 1960s. Women have historically been thought more suited for staying home with the children than for a dangerous job like policing. However, women may be more suitable for the tasks required of community police officers because they are more empathetic. COPS calls for the use of de-escalation techniques, communication skills and problem solving, which may be skills that women are better at than men. Women now make up approximately six percent of all sworn police officers. Gender is coded as '1' if male, and '0' if female.

There is little literature on the importance of marital status to policing. However, research on delinquency suggests that those who are married are less likely to be delinquent and more likely to be serious and focused (see Warr 1998). Thus, they may perform better in the academy and be better at COPS. Recruits are coded '1' if married or engaged to be married, and '0' if single, divorced, widowed or otherwise.

Military experience has been one of the favored characteristics for police recruits since Sir Robert Peele's police force (Alpert and Dunham 1997). It is thought that because policing is a paramilitary occupation, those who have military experience are better prepared to deal with the environment. However, given the goals and nature of community policing, the impact of military experience on police performance seems less

clear-cut. In fact, such experience may actually impede the development of the types of policing strategies that are at the heart of the community policing philosophy. Recruits are coded '1' if they are listed as "active duty" or "reserves" in the military, and '0' otherwise.

An increasing number of police officers have at least some college education (Senna and Seigel 2002), which is not surprising considering that higher education for police officers has been recommended by national commissions since 1931 (Hoover 1975). Sixteen percent of state police agencies require a two- year college degree and four percent require a four year degree. Nine percent of large municipal agencies have a degree requirement (Reaves and Goldberg 1999). Police recruits with a college degree are said to be better at verbal and written communication, make better discretionary decisions, and have greater empathy and tolerance (Carter and Sapp 1992). They are also said to exercise better judgment and be better problem solvers compared to those without college degrees (Worden 1990). These are skills important to community policing. Education is coded '1' if the recruit has an Associate's degree or more education, and '0' otherwise.

"Special position" refers to recruits who either held a ranking status within their recruit class (such as class lieutenant, etc.) or achieved an award for excellence or most improved (e.g., "high academic award" or "most improved fitness"). There is no literature pertaining to the link between achieving a rank in the academy class and policing performance. However, logically those who excel in their academy class (and lead the class) should perform better compared to those who do not hold these positions.

This variable is coded '1' if the recruit held a ranking status and/or won an award and '0' otherwise.

One goal of this study is to analyze whether a different type of recruit excels in the CMS curriculum compared to the traditional curriculum. CMS is based on problem solving, scenarios and community policing. Officers who graduated from the CMS curriculum are likely to benefit in their policing careers because the CMS curriculum reflects current policing practices and up to date material. See chapter two for a detailed review of community policing and its importance to policing in general. CMS is coded '1' if the recruit attended the CMS curriculum and '0' otherwise.

A Note on Interactions

There are theoretical reasons to explore why background characteristics may enhance or detract from success in the new CMS curriculum. Because some variables may operate differently under the two curricula, I conduct separate analyses for recruits in the traditional academy and recruits in the CMS academy in order to show whether background characteristics are significantly and/or differently related to performance in one group rather than the other⁷.

Qualitative Data

Police Academy

I spent approximately 100 hours at the police academy observing recruit classes, taking notes, and talking to recruits and instructors. I also met with academy officials on numerous occasions—sometimes at the academy in a formal meeting and other times for

⁷ An alternative method to performing interactions is to compute interaction terms. In the research process, I computed several interaction terms as well (e.g., CMS X education and CMS X race) and they were not significant in the model.

lunch in informal meetings with my advisor. I took notes on these experiences as well. I also spent time at the academy while I was inputting my quantitative data and going through the personal files of recruits. I spent numerous hours hearing stories about notable recruits (some of whom were in my sample) and interacting with people who worked in various capacities at the academy.

I typed my notes at home on my computer several times per week. Periodically, I would read through my notes and generate some thoughts about patterns that I was seeing. However, I did not *focus* on theorizing and developing specific themes until I had been working in the police culture in various capacities for several years and began to write my dissertation. I read through my field notes from the academy and generated many different emergent ideas. I grouped the ideas into themes and put them into a chart (with themes generated from other data sources). I continued to read and re-read my field notes until I developed sufficiently concise and abstract themes that encompassed my observations.

Police Agency

I read each of the field training officer (FTO) files in detail. I read some of them several times, as some files are more complex, lengthy and detailed than others. I took notes on them and typed the notes. I also made a chart of dominant themes that I then checked off as I read each file (see generally Bernard 1994).

I spent considerable time at the police department, talking to personnel and attending meetings (personal and DataStat). I always took notes immediately after the meetings that I attended.

After I generated all of my themes from my data sources, I made another chart listing all of the themes and filled in boxes indicating whether the theme was present in

each (or all) of the data sources. This helped me to realize whether themes were present across all data sources or only one, for example. Reading policing literature, having conversations with my committee members and re-reading my raw data helped me to combine themes to develop a typification of the normative climate of police training and socialization.

I use the qualitative data to describe what is differentially learned in police training. I set out to analyze the extent to which COPS was integrated into police training and socialization and whether the normative climate was supportive of COPS. The themes that I developed characterize what is learned in police training and socialization according to my observations.

CHAPTER 7 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis that analyzes predictors of recruit academy performance. First, I analyze how recruit characteristics affect academy performance among all recruits. Second, I look at predictors of academy performance among CMS and traditional recruits separately. In other words, I aim to determine whether a different “type” of recruit performs better in the CMS curriculum compared to the traditional curriculum. Results will provide insight as to whether different types of recruits perform differently under the two different curricula and how the CMS curriculum impacts the relationships between recruit characteristics and academy performance.

Descriptive Statistics

Full Sample

The full sample contains 300 recruits from both CMS and traditional curricula. The sample is comprised of 155 recruits from the traditional curriculum and 145 recruits from the CMS curriculum. Approximately 24% of the full sample is nonwhite. Twenty percent of the recruits are married or engaged. Seventy-nine percent are male, while only 8% have military experience. Twenty-eight percent have an Associate’s or higher degree. Recruits were an average of 26 years old in the academy (median 25, mode 24). Forty-eight percent of them attended the academy based on CMS (see Table 7-1 for Descriptive Statistics).

About 48% of academy recruits found employment upon graduation. About 18% of those who entered the academy failed to complete all of their classes without at least one failure (and/or they failed out completely; this includes those who failed one or more units or modules and came back in later classes to complete them). Twenty-nine percent of academy recruits in the sample either held a ranking position in their recruit class and/or received an achievement award for fitness, firearms, or academics (“special position”).

Split Samples

The full sample was split based on training mode (CMS versus traditional) in order to assess whether background characteristics predict academy performance under one curriculum better than the other. The background characteristics and demographics vary slightly in the two samples. A higher percentage of CMS recruits found employment upon graduation compared to traditional recruits (51% versus 46% respectively). CMS graduates were slightly more likely to be married than traditional recruits (21% versus 18% respectively). Traditional recruits were more likely to have military experience compared to CMS recruits (10% versus 7% respectively), and interestingly, traditional recruits were much more likely to have an Associate’s degree compared to CMS recruits (32% versus 23% respectively). Though there is pressure to increase educational requirements for police officers, there is a “cop crunch,” (Fridell et al. 2002) meaning that many departments are struggling to find qualified police applicants and therefore have had to lower their selection criteria. Finally, CMS recruits were more likely to hold a “special position” in their recruit class compared to traditional recruits (34% versus 25% respectively).

Multivariate Models

Does CMS Training Make a Difference?

The first goal of the analysis is to identify the impact of various demographic/background characteristics on measures of recruit performance. In particular, the analysis seeks to evaluate whether CMS recruits perform “better” at the academy compared to traditional recruits.

Table 7-2 shows results for the full sample of recruits. Looking first at predictors of average academy score, results indicate that nonwhite, more educated recruits, and those who hold a special position in their class all obtained higher academy performance scores compared to their counterparts. The strongest predictor among these is special position status. Significant predictors of failure experience include race and special position. Nonwhites are more likely to experience failure and those with a special position status are significantly less likely. Finally, race, age, military experience, special position, and academy score all significantly influence the last measure of performance: post graduation employment status. Nonwhite, older recruits without military experience and those with special position status are all more likely to become employed at graduation compared to younger, white recruits with military experience who did not hold a special position in their class.

In general, race was significant in all three models: nonwhites had lower academy scores, were more likely to fail, and more likely to gain employment upon graduation. In light of community policing, police agencies are being pressured to hire officers who reflect the racial makeup of the communities they serve, and this often means hiring more non-white officers. Therefore, it makes sense that although nonwhite recruits may not

perform as well (in this sample), they were more likely to find employment upon graduation from the academy.

Recruits who held a special position in their academy class fared better in terms of academy score, failure experiences, and post graduation employment. This makes intuitive sense, as recruits who held a special position showed initiative, lead the class, or showed a significant improvement, either academically or physically, during their academy experience.

Analyzing Performance among CMS Versus Traditional Recruits

The second goal of the analysis is to identify whether a different “type” of recruit performs better under the two different curricula. In particular, the analysis seeks to evaluate how the CMS curriculum impacts the relationships between recruit characteristics and academy performance.

Table 7-3 shows results for the CMS recruits. Table 7-4 shows results for the traditional recruits. They can be compared to see which variables predict success similarly for both types of curricula and which predict success in only one of them. Looking first at Table 7-3 and predictors of average academy score, whites, recruits with an Associate’s degree, and recruits who held a special position in their class all obtained higher academy performance scores compared to their counterparts. Significant predictors of failure experience include age and special position. Older recruits and recruits who held a special position were less likely to experience failure. Finally, gender, age, military experience, and academy score all influenced the likelihood of post-graduation employment at a police agency. In particular, older female recruits without military experience, who had higher academy scores, were more likely to find employment upon graduation.

Overall, older recruits fared better in terms of academy performance. They were less likely to experience failure and more likely to find employment upon graduation. Recruits who held a special position had higher average academy scores and were less likely to fail. Higher academy scores were associated with a higher likelihood of finding employment for CMS recruits. I now turn to the analysis for the traditional recruits.

Table 7-4 shows the results of the regression analysis for the traditional recruits. In terms of academy score, recruits who held a special position and those without military experience achieved higher scores. Recruits who were older and married and those who held a special position were less likely to experience failure compared to their younger, non-married counterparts who did not hold a special position in their academy class. In terms of employment, race, age, military experience, special position and academy score were significant. In particular, older, nonwhite recruits without military experience who held a special position and achieved higher academy scores had a higher likelihood of finding employment upon graduation compared to their counterparts.

Again, older recruits fared better in terms of academy performance. They were less likely to experience failure and more likely to find employment. Interestingly, recruits with military experience had lower average academy scores and were less likely to find employment in the sample of traditional recruits. Again, those who held a special position achieved higher academy scores, were less likely to experience failure, and were more likely to find employment upon graduation. Higher academy scores were associated with a higher likelihood of finding employment.

Age, military experience, and academy score had similar affects on academy performance across both curricula. Thus, no interactions were present. On the other hand,

there were a few inconsistencies across models. Racial minorities received lower average academy scores than whites, while higher educated recruits earned higher academy scores compared to those with less education. This could indicate that CMS is a more academic environment than the traditional curriculum. Could it be that well-educated racial minorities are earning opportunities in higher education and self-selecting out of policing? Females are more likely to become employed after graduation from the CMS curriculum compared to males. This could indicate that CMS is rewarding skills consistent with COPS.

In the traditional curriculum, racial minorities did not perform as well, but they were more likely to gain employment. Again, this could be due to pressure on police agencies to increase minority representation. Traditional married recruits were found to be less likely to fail compared to their single counterparts. This is consistent with the literature on delinquency that says that marriage is a social bond (see Hirschi 1969). Finally, special position was positively associated with finding employment in the traditional curriculum, but not in the CMS curriculum.

Summary and Conclusion

According to these analyses, CMS does not significantly and consistently predict academy performance. In other words, recruits going through the CMS curriculum did not perform significantly “better” compared to those in the traditional curriculum, holding other variables constant.

As with prior research, I found no consistent, clear cut patterns regarding predictors of performance in the full sample. Some background variables seem to matter for some measures of performances, while other measures impact other measures of performance. “Special position” emerged as a significant predictor among most of the models, which

makes intuitive sense, because recruits who hold a special position by definition must be motivated (recruits must “apply” to be chosen for a special position). Race emerged in some of the models as a significant predictor of performance. In general, nonwhites did not perform as well, but they had a higher likelihood of finding employment compared to whites. Age was associated with more successful academy performance and a higher likelihood of finding employment. Surprisingly, military experience was not consistently significant, and when it did emerge as a significant predictor, it was associated with a lower likelihood of gaining employment. A possible explanation for this is that I only looked at law enforcement employment, and ex-military personnel have a high employment rate in the area of corrections. Correctional officers also go through basic recruit training.

Education was associated with a higher average academy score in the full sample and the CMS sample, but not in the traditional curriculum. This could indicate that the CMS curriculum rewards more educated recruits compared to the traditional curriculum, which is in line with the COPS philosophy. A higher academy score was associated with finding employment upon graduation for both CMS and traditional recruits.

In the CMS curriculum, females were significantly more likely to find employment compared to males. This is an interesting finding in terms of COPS, as females may be more suited for the skills of a COPS officer than the duties of the traditional crime-fighting officer. In both traditional and CMS analyses, older recruits were less likely to fail and more likely to find employment.

Based on this analysis, CMS recruits are not more successful in the academy compared to traditional recruits. Perhaps some different qualities are emerging as

significant in policing, such as education and gender. Now I will turn to the qualitative analysis to describe the normative climate of police training and socialization.

Table 7-1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

	Full sample			CMS recruits			Trad recruits		
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range
Dep. variables	N=300			N=145			N=155		
Academy score (ordinal)	3.3	.90	1-5	3.3	.78	1-5	3.3	1.0	1-5
Failure (1=yes)	.18	.38	0-1	.19	.40	0-1	.17	.37	0-1
Employment (1=yes)	.48	.50	0-1	.51	.50	0-1	.46	.50	0-1
Indep. variables									
CMS (1=yes)	.48	.50	0-1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Race (1=nonwhite)	.24	.43	0-1	.23	.43	0-1	.25	.44	0-1
Marital status (1=married)	.20	.40	0-1	.21	.41	0-1	.18	.39	0-1
Gender (1=male)	.79	.40	0-1	.79	.41	0-1	.80	.40	0-1
Age (continuous)	26.4	5.28	19-46	26.3	5.1	19-45	26.5	5.4	19-46
Education (1=Assoc. degree)	.28	.45	0-1	.23	.42	0-1	.32	.47	0-1
Military (1=yes)	.08	.28	0-1	.07	.25	0-1	.10	.29	0-1
Special position (1=yes)	.29	.46	0-1	.34	.48	0-1	.25	.43	0-1

Table 7-2. Regression models predicting academy performance of academy recruits
N=300 Recruits

	Academy score	Beta	Failure		Employment	
	B (SE)		B (SE)	Exp(B)	B (SE)	Exp (B)
Race (1=nonwhite)	-.213 (.12)	- .101**	.615 (.34)	1.84**	.410 (.29)	1.51*
Marital status (1=married)	.211 (.14)	.093*	-.436 (.47)	.647	-.407 (.34)	.666
Gender (1=male)	.126 (.13)	.056	-.143 (.38)	.866	-.147 (.31)	.863
Age (continuous)	-.008 (.01)	-.046	.005 (.03)	1.005	.081 (.03)	1.085**
Education (1=Assoc. degree)	.263 (.11)	.131**	.250 (.35)	1.28	.158 (.28)	1.17
Military (1=yes)	.02 (.19)	.005	-.843 (.78)	.43	-1.16 (.50)	.313**
Special position (1=yes)	.521 (.11)	.262**	-1.38 (.47)	.251**	.414 (.28)	1.51*
CMS (1=yes)	.035 (.10)	-.019	.318 (.32)	1.35	.207 (.25)	1.23
Academy score (ordinal)					.47 (.15)	1.6**
<i>Intercept</i>	3.2 (.30)**		-1.53 (.99)	.218	-3.84 (.96)	.022**
R-Square	.118		.105		.143	

**p<. 05; *p<.10; p values computed for one-tailed significance tests.

Table 7-3. Regression models predicting academy performance of CMS recruits
N=145

	Academy score B (SE)	Beta	Failure B (SE)	Exp (B)	Employment B (SE)	Exp (B)
Race (1=nonwhite)	-.325 (.14)	-.176**	.630 (.50)	1.88	-.189 (.44)	.828
Marital status (1=married)	.08 (.16)	.041	.435 (.62)	1.55	-.403 (.48)	.688
Gender (1=male)	.172 (.15)	.091	-.12 (.54)	.887	-.617 (.46)	.540*
Age (continuous)	-.004 (.01)	-.024	-.077 (.06)	.925*	.087 (.04)	1.09**
Education (1=Assoc. degree)	.464 (.14)	.249**	.413 (.50)	1.51	.348 (.44)	1.42
Military (1=yes)	.11 (.24)	.036	-.585 (1.1)	.557	-1.11 (.77)	.330*
Special position (1=yes)	.511 (.13)	.311**	-1.35 (.60)	.258**	.411 (.41)	1.51
Academy score (ordinal)	--	--	--	--	.535 (.26)	1.71**
Intercept	3.03	.369**	.660 (1.6)	1.94	-3.52 (1.4)	.029**
R-Square	.221	--	.127	--	.162	--

Table 7-4. Regression models predicting academy performance of traditional recruits
N=155

	Academy score B (SE)	Beta	Failure B (SE)	Exp (B)	Employment B (SE)	Exp (B)
Race (1=nonwhite)	-.102 (.19)	-.044	.636 (.50)	1.89	.869 (.41)	2.38**
Marital status (1=married)	.344 (.23)	.134	-1.54 (.85)	.215**	-.477 (.51)	.621
Gender (1=male)	.001 (.21)	.001	-.24 (.57)	.787	.129 (.46)	1.14
Age (continuous)	-.001 (.02)	-.052	-.075 (.05)	1.08*	.071 (.04)	1.07**
Education (1=Assoc. degree)	.106 (.18)	.050	-.023 (.51)	.977	.067 (.38)	1.07
Military (1=yes)	-.031 (.28)	-.009*	-1.17 (1.2)	.310	-1.20 (.68)	.302*
Special position (1=yes)	.586 (.19)	.249**	-1.52 (.79)	.219**	.583 (.42)	1.79*
Academy score (ordinal)	--	--	--	--	.417 (.19)	1.52**
Intercept	3.34	.465**	-3.06 (1.3)	.047**	-3.73 (1.3)	.024**
R-Square	.083	--	.148	--	.162	--

**p<. 05; *p<.10; p values computed for one-tailed significance tests.

CHAPTER 8 INFORMAL LEARNING

Introduction

Adult socialization is unusually prominent in law enforcement. Training of new members requires socialization into the internal structure of policing as well as the cultural orientations of the occupation and the Agency. It introduces the police recruit to a set of rules and practices that define the meaning of police work. Socialization begins in the academy, is central to field training and the rookie year, and exists throughout one's career as a law enforcement officer.

Most discussions of police socialization and the introduction to the police culture make distinctions between formal and informal components (Bennett 1984; Lundman 1980; Van Maanen 1973; but see Herbert 1998). The first goal of this chapter is to advance a framework for understanding both formal and informal components of socialization. Formal and informal aspects of socialization exist (and sometimes differ), but they function together to establish an environment in which a set of behaviors and beliefs is differentially learned. Sometimes the formal and informal are directly consistent, but more often the informal reformulates or reinterprets formal rules to fit with conceptions of what it takes to do the job on the streets. Other times, the formal and informal lessons are completely inconsistent.

Akers' (2000) social learning theory anticipates this complexity. It is rooted in Sutherland's symbolic interactionist notion of differential exposure to definitions of the situation. The theory explicitly adopts two key learning mechanisms that anticipate

complexity. It recognizes that we are exposed to different models, and its primary learning construct is differential reinforcement/punishment, which stresses that learning is the result of the balance of reinforcement/punishment for one behavior over alternative behavior.

Akers' most recent effort (Akers 1998) integrates the social learning process with social structural features. Of particular relevance are his arguments that the locations that learners hold within social groups affect the definitions and models to which people are exposed and the reinforcement and punishment that they receive. One goal of this chapter is to evaluate the balance of definitions to which police recruits are exposed in order to understand the normative climate that characterizes the police training experience.

Social groups have cultural norms, learning environments and socialization which can affect one's exposure to learning (Akers and Sellers 2004). The various contexts promote or discourage learning. The normative climate resides at the structural cultural level (Lanza-Kaduce and Capece 2003) and is internalized by incumbents on a social psychological level (i.e., through learning). Norm climates cut across levels in that they can reflect small group structures (e.g., a class), mid-sized groups (e.g., an academy) or large groups (e.g., a profession). Indeed, Parsons (1951) discussed the importance of internalized values for structuring individual behavior. He said that social cohesion results when values are shared across a population. I will treat the normative climate as sets of rules and practices that define and guide the police training and socialization experience. The normative climate provides officers with ways of understanding, interpreting and justifying situations.

I use my own observations of police academy training and my review of field training files to discuss the normative climate of police training and socialization in the academy and field training. Several themes stand out. Some themes overlap and interrelate in theory and in practice, as this is how they emerged in my observations. At times, my observations fit with prior literature; therefore, I tie that in when relevant.

The normative climate in the police training that I studied is characterized by seven themes: 1) paramilitary environment, 2) officer safety, 3) the bad guy and the ‘us versus them’ mentality, 4) police presence and assertiveness, 5) experiential knowledge and traditional police work, 6) law on the books versus law in action, and 7) diversity. These themes have implications for the way that police officers interact with their department, the way they deal with citizens, and implications for COPS. For example, the paramilitary environment is structured so that officers practice top-down communication within the department. It also drives officers to expect deference from citizens. Further, COPS is said to be hampered by the limited formal autonomy of patrol officers that is characteristic of a paramilitary environment.

The overarching goal of this chapter is to analyze what is differentially learned in the police training process. Given the complex messages recruits are exposed to both formally and informally, I examine what is having the most substantial impact on police recruits’ learning and whether and how that relates to the learning of COPS. Recall that traditional policing emphasizes a paramilitary structure, incident-driven policing, top-down communication and arrests, while COPS emphasizes community involvement, decentralized command structure, and problem solving (Oliver 1998). In order to examine what is differentially learned in police training, I will treat the formal and

informal as sets of rules and practices that provide meaning to police work. Generally, academy recruits and field trainees must accept and internalize the seven themes of the normative climate in order to be accepted into police culture. Failure to accept and internalize the themes may be fatal to one's career.

One non-finding is important to report at the outset. Community policing did not emerge as a salient theme throughout the training experience, despite its formal threading into the CMS recruit curriculum. However, other themes in the normative climate do have implications for COPS and these implications will be discussed throughout the chapter.

Before proceeding with the rest of the chapter, I will address the importance of “war stories” in the police training experience, especially at the academy. Other scholars (see Alpert and Dunham 1997; Van Maanen 1973) have discussed the salience of war stories as well; however, I want to make a distinction between “instructional” stories and war stories that are told during breaks or “time out”, in a relaxed manner. Relating experience during instruction can be used to illustrate a lesson in policing and is part of the formal teaching curriculum. In this chapter, I will refer to them as instructional illustrations. I will differentiate them from informal war stories.

War stories are a significant part of the academy and capture the recruit audience better than the lecture material and formal illustrations. Instructors often drift into stories about time on the street (either last night or ten years ago) that exemplify the traditional crime fighting cop. War stories invariably involve foot chases, car chases or drug busts rather than connecting with the community. Because they are not apt illustrations of particular lessons, the context of war stories shifts—it becomes informal and relaxed—

both for the story teller and the listeners. When it is “war story” time, the recruits are allowed to laugh and enjoy themselves. Recruits model their behavior after their superiors who are telling the stories of traditional police work, and they see this as what they should be emulating. Marion (1998) found that the sworn officers in the class that she observed had a captive audience when they shared stories with those who had not yet been hired. Van Maanen (1973) comments:

Critically, when war stories are presented, discipline within the recruit class is relaxed. The rookies are allowed to share laughter and tension-relieving quips with the veteran officers. A general atmosphere of camaraderie is maintained. The near lascivious enjoyment accompanying these informal respites from academy routine serve to establish congeniality and solidarity with the experienced officers in what is normally a rather harsh and uncomfortable environment. Clearly, this is the material of which memories are made. (p. 298)

This type of activity (relaxed story telling) shows the recruit what is truly valued in police work and in the police culture. This would be the perfect opportunity to reinforce COPS lessons, but instead, this is when traditional lessons about crime fighting are reinforced. Sharing stories is one of the ways in which these attitudes are transmitted. Through stories and casual discussions, recruits begin to understand the nature of policing and how they are supposed to act (Peak 1993).

From a social learning perspective, war stories are easily learned. Compared with the formal lessons, war story lessons involve relaxation, laughing, drama, and more convivial interactions—all of which are reinforcing the story lessons. If war story lessons are different from those in the formal presentation, the war stories will be differentially reinforced because of the concomitant pleasant circumstances⁸. War stories are

⁸ Punishment is more often used formally than is reinforcement. The formal lessons are not associated with pleasant consequences. This is in contrast with the enjoyment associated with informal war stories. Therefore, social learning theory would say that the lessons from the war stories are the lessons being differentially learned by the recruits.

“sprinkled” throughout the chapter and show how certain lessons are reinforced by instructors and incumbents.

Paramilitary Environment

The police academy and field training environments are defined by a paramilitary orientation. There are several elements of this paramilitary environment, including the structure of the academy and its rules, the strict adherence to the chain of command and deference, a focus on morality and discipline, and the unquestioned acceptance of criticism from superiors. Other elements include a strong sense of loyalty and solidarity among the police recruits at the academy, intense pressure to perform under stressful conditions, and the reliance on fellow police officers for support, both personally and professionally. These messages have implications for the way that recruits and officers deal with the internal aspects of the policing environment (e.g., their department, personnel, etc.) as well as the way they deal with citizens and suspects (e.g., the expectation of deference). These lessons are defined and modeled formally by the academy instructors and FTO's (field training officers) and reinforced informally through war stories, social approval and disapproval, and informal conversation.

Generally, recruits who accept and internalize the paramilitary orientation are formally rewarded by having success in the academy, finding employment, and having the opportunity to excel as a police officer. They are socially rewarded by others in the police culture (e.g., they will be accepted in the police subculture). They will “fit in.” Those who do not accept and internalize the paramilitary orientation will have a difficult time finding success in policing in general, as it is a crucial component of the policing environment (Britz 1997; Conser 1980).

Learning Academy Rules: The Chain of Command, Deference, and Discipline

In the academy that I observed, recruits are trained to march in military form. The first thing they do each morning is march across campus before their first class begins. Recruits also adhere to dress codes. They wear a khaki uniform to academic classes and a uniform consisting of a gray shirt and black pants for physical-type training (defensive tactics, firearms, etc.). They must wear a hat when they are outside of a building and remove it while inside. They park their personal vehicles in designated parking spaces for recruits, and they can only go in designated areas of the academy building. They are not permitted to use elevators (they must use stairs), and they can only use restrooms designated for recruits. They must stand at attention when a civilian or ranking officer passes by, rise when an officer enters the classroom, and generally defer to their superiors. These rules define and reinforce the recruits' status as the lowest on the chain of command.

Recruits must practice "moral behavior." A term also used in screening applicants for the police academy, "moral behavior" is loosely defined as holding one's self to a higher standard than required by law. It means that one must not only abide by the law, but have a higher "personal" standard of behavior. Two of the ways it is operationalized in the academy is that recruits are not allowed to curse or smoke cigarettes. Morality separates the "good guys" from the "bad guys" and provides a basis for the police occupation. It also justifies police actions. The meaning of morality and good moral behavior is informally defined through war stories and modeled by superiors and incumbents at the police academy and in field training. Police officials admit that the term is problematic to define.

At the academy I observed, recruit classes are organized by a class coordinator. This person is usually a full-time employee of the academy (a ranking law enforcement officer), who is responsible for organizing the class, including setting the schedule and instructors, dealing with discipline problems, and making decisions regarding recruit requests. Occasionally, the class coordinator will teach a class if the scheduled instructor is absent. Often, the class coordinator will come in and “act tough” to the recruits. He or she is a disciplinarian—both in name and in practice. This usually involves teasing, insults and threats, but can involve physical exercise, extra assignments, and dismissal. The class coordinator essentially keeps the recruits “in line” for the rest of the instructors.

The class coordinator chooses several class officers to help lead and organize the class and deal with other issues, such as discipline. Though each class varies by size and other factors, there is often a class lieutenant and several sergeants. In order to be designated a class officer, the recruits must submit a written proposal to the class coordinator between orientation and the beginning of the academy. Conti (unpublished manuscript entitled “Lower Than Whaleshit”) found that class officers are often chosen based on military experience because they are familiar with obedience, discipline, and marching so they can model that for the rest of the class. Class officers are also chosen at this academy based on military experience and familiarity with chain of command and discipline.

Having a class ranking system helps the recruits learn to use the chain of command to address problems as a class before involving a superior. If a recruit breaks the chain of command by going to a superior without utilizing each appropriate channel (going to the immediate supervisor first, including the class commanding officer), the recruit is

disciplined (e.g., write a paper on the importance of the chain of command). The importance of adhering to the chain of command is modeled by the instructors and reinforced as recruits practice using the chain of command in their own class.

When recruits enter the academy, discipline is exerted from the top-down. In other words, if a recruit breaks the rules, he or she will be disciplined by the class coordinator. As the class matures and “learns the ropes,” the recruits take over responsibility for their own discipline. Later on, if a recruit breaks a rule (e.g., is tardy), he or she is disciplined by the ranking recruit (e.g., class lieutenant). Of course, if the allegation is serious (e.g., sexual harassment), it is moved through the chain of command to the academy command staff. As the class advances through the academy, recruits begin to take responsibility for each other’s actions. For example, the whole class will be punished when one or two recruits are tardy. This type of group punishment builds and reinforces group solidarity and loyalty. Recruits learn that if they make a mistake, the whole group may have to suffer the consequence. The group normative climate assumes additional salience because of this.

Much of the discipline in the academy is suffered due to recruits talking or sleeping in class. This type of “rule” violation is often dealt with by looks of social disapproval and threats of punishment. In such cases, either instructors or class command staff demand the punishment (whoever “catches” the violator). Other types of punishment include physical exercises such as running or doing pushups, or writing a short paper explaining the wrongdoing. Tardiness is treated more harshly than acting immature, talking, or sleeping in class. In one case that I observed, a class commander was demoted from his position because he was tardy.

Various forms of punishment are also used to teach in field training. If trainees make certain mistakes in field training, such as driving mistakes, the FTO will take over driving for the rest of the shift (or a few hours). This is noted formally in DEF's⁹ but also sends an informal message to the trainee that driving correctly is expected and mistakes will not be tolerated. Only on one occasion did an FTO note that a trainee explicitly failed to follow his or her rules. Formally noting the driving mistake is an example of positive punishment, while taking away the privilege of driving is an example of negative punishment.

There are usually one or two recruits who fail to "fit in" and who are constantly the butt of the class coordinator's barbed jokes and sarcasm. They are used as examples of what not to do. It seems that once a recruit has earned a negative reputation, it is difficult to change that reputation. For example, there was a recruit named "Tom." Tom did not excel in any areas of the academy, but he performed fairly well in academic areas. He was not particularly athletic, nor did he perform well with a firearm or in defensive tactics. More importantly, he was not well-liked. The recruits and officers made fun of him. If he was not paying attention during class, the instructor would always call on him, drawing others' attention to his lack of attention. If he asked a question in class, they would make him feel like it was a bad or "dumb" question. Other recruits followed suit and soon Tom had the reputation as the "screw up." He simply could not do anything right. Tom had a short stint with a local law enforcement agency, but was eventually terminated.

⁹ DEF stands for Daily Evaluation Form that is filled out by the FTO after each day's training. DEF's are in narrative form and describe the activities and training that occurred during that day's training. They make up a large portion of the FTO file on each trainee. Trainees read and sign DEF's before they are submitted to the command staff for review.

On the other hand, recruits who thrive in the militaristic environment will enjoy social approval by the instructors (and other incumbents) at the academy, which will lead to positive feelings and tangible success on behalf of the recruits. For example, there was a recruit named Brad (he was in the same class with Tom). Brad worked prior to and during the academy as a Field Technician (non-sworn position) for a law enforcement agency. He had more familiarity with the occupation than did most of the other recruits. He was friends with many law enforcement officers. He was already “one of them.” In fact, he knew some of the instructors at the academy from his department. Brad was athletic, already knew how to shoot and clean a firearm, was a class officer, and a good driver. He was promised a job at one of the local law enforcement agencies prior to enrolling in the academy. He often told stories about recent crimes that occurred because he sometimes had the opportunity to be on the scene due to his job. He was well-liked and the other recruits looked up to him. The instructors did not tease him; they used him for examples and practice scenarios because he had “experience.” Brad is still a law enforcement officer with the agency where he worked as a Field Technician.

Part of the paramilitary environment involves showing deference to one’s superiors. In the academy, recruits are expected to stand at attention when the class coordinator or another officer enters the room. Only if the instructor is a law enforcement officer do recruits rise when s/he enters. Indeed, it has been observed on many occasions that the recruits will rise immediately when they hear the door to their classroom open, as they are afraid that they will be punished if they fail to stand at attention. This is a behavioral response based on an anticipated fear of punishment. After recruits become more seasoned, they learn that some instructors are less concerned about that particular

rule, but they still must rise until they know the identity of the person who entered the room (the door is impossible to see from the main sitting area in the classroom). They are anticipating the possibility of punishment if they are “caught” not showing deference to a superior. If caught by the class coordinator, formal punishment is not likely to ensue, but threats and looks of social disapproval send a strong message that the behavior must be modified in the future.

Additionally, recruits must stand at attention, or “post” (see Conti 2001) whenever an officer or civilian walks by them in common areas at the academy. They will stand against the wall until the person passes or until they are told that it is “okay” for them to relax. As a civilian, recruits perform this routine for me. I always tell them “don’t worry about it,” but they usually just comment that they have to do it. Not surprisingly, recruits must refer to instructors and other superiors by their rank rather than their name. First names are rarely used at the academy, except between officers/instructors of the same rank. Deference is modeled by the instructors, as they show deference to their own superiors and they expect it from the recruits. Recruits and trainees are punished if they fail to show deference to their superiors.

Trainees¹⁰ must show deference to their FTO in field training, too. In particular, it is unacceptable for trainees to argue with or question their FTO. Generally, if a trainee ever questions the FTO, it is noted formally in the DEF, which is a form of formal punishment. For example, while an FTO was explaining to his trainee the details about what went wrong on a previous call, the trainee interrupted to ask if they were still meeting another officer for dinner. The FTO wrote, “I told him to drive back to the

¹⁰ When academy recruits graduate and enter an FTO program with a law enforcement agency, they become known as “trainees.”

station.” This is an example of negative punishment (taking away the dinner) and positive punishment (shaming and noting it in the DEF).

Deference to the chain of command is also reinforced informally. On one occasion, the class coordinator told a joke and there was an obvious “dirty” insinuation that all of the recruits caught. The recruits laughed. The class coordinator gave them “the look” and told them it was inappropriate to laugh. It is clear that there are times when laughter with the ranking officers is appropriate (e.g., war stories) and other times when it is not, and it is the senior officer (not the recruits) who defines when it is appropriate. “The look” sends a clear message to the recruits that the casual behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Most recruits will learn from this and adapt their future behavior accordingly so as not to suffer “the look” of social disapproval again. The fear is that they could be singled out and teased in front of the class. Social punishment is an important means of exerting control in the academy.

Trainees in field training are commended for showing deference. The DEF’s specifically make note of deference. Praise by someone in a position of authority (FTO) is important in the reinforcement of behavior because it causes feelings of accomplishment, not to mention, it indicates tangible success in the program. Social learning theory says that behavior that is reinforced is likely to be repeated.

When police recruits enter the academy, they are introduced to a paramilitary structure. It is defined for them by their superiors, who are the instructors that teach them how they will behave, how their time will be organized, and how they will dress and present themselves. It is also explained to them that they will be rewarded for conforming to the paramilitary norms (e.g., one of the necessary ingredients to passing the academy),

and that they will suffer consequences if they do not. Discipline can come in the form of exercise, extra assignments, social disapproval and/or shaming.

Recruits who practice chain of command and deference expect the citizenry to take to this orientation, too. For example, they expect citizens to respect their position of authority, rather than challenge it, and there should be consequences for those citizens who challenge police authority (just as there are consequences to recruits and officers who challenge superiors' authority). This will be joined again later when the theme of presence and assertiveness is discussed. Respecting authority and practicing deference and vertical communication is part of the normative climate in the police training and socialization that I observed, and this has implications for COPS. COPS emphasizes working *with* the community, practicing horizontal communication, and building partnerships. However, the training focus is solely on vertical, top-down communication, so how can we expect these officers to have learned the communication skills necessary for COPS?

Accepting Criticism

Criticism is handled differently in the academy from field training. When recruits fail to do well in an academy exercise, they often do not react well. Some recruits will blame themselves and become angry and walk away, while others will try to explain away what happened, such as, “well, what I was trying to do was...” I have also seen recruits blame each other when they are partnered with another recruit on a scenario or exercise. Finally, they will resort to blaming the instructor for “tricking them.” This is an excuse or neutralizing definition provided to explain why their performance was less than satisfactory. Academy recruits are allowed to vent. There is no punishment or negative

reinforcement from the staff for such behavior. Perhaps learning from mistakes is part of the learning process in the training academy where mistakes are not costly.

In field training, trainees are still learning, but they are “practicing” with real people in real situations, so the costs of mistakes are also real. Thus, accepting responsibility for one’s mistakes takes on a new meaning. The ability of a trainee to accept criticism is discussed in every FTO file. A read of the FTO files indicates that this is one of the most important qualities of the police trainee. In all but two (of 35) cases, the trainees welcomed criticism. In one of the two cases, the FTO wrote a letter to the FTO Lieutenant detailing the trainee’s inability to accept criticism and threatened to charge him with insubordination (formal punishment). The trainee eventually “went solo”¹¹ and is still with The Agency to my knowledge. In the other one of these two cases, the trainee “went solo” with The Agency and he was eventually asked to resign due to questionable “psychologicals.” There is formal punishment for failing to accept criticism well.

Field training is structured so that trainees answer real calls to service in the presence of a seasoned officer. After each call is completed, the FTO will “debrief”¹² the trainee about what he or she did well, what he or she did poorly, and what needs improvement. The nature of such conversations (and related narratives) varies greatly depending on the FTO. Some FTO’s tend to focus on the positives, while others focus on the negatives. How trainees respond to the feedback process may be more important than

¹¹ “Going solo” means the trainee graduated from the FTO program and became an officer with the department.

¹² Debriefing refers to the instructor taking the recruit aside after the event and telling him or her exactly what he or she did well and what needs improvement.

what they learn from the specific information. Trainees are expected to be amenable to criticism and use it constructively. When they do not, it is a major point of contention in their progress and noted in their DEF.

Though failure to readily accept criticism is not taken seriously at the academy, it becomes an important issue in field training. If a trainee argues with his or her FTO about a critique in field training, he or she is told that it is inappropriate. If the trainee continues to do it, the problem is reflected in the field training files and often discussed with a supervisor. Thus, the chain of command is reinforced. This is a form of punishment, as the FTO files are read by the FTO Lieutenant and are instrumental in determining whether the trainee graduates from the program. Being unwilling to accept criticism is defined as wrong and modeled as such by the FTO. It is positively reinforced if the recruit is amenable to criticism and punished if the recruit is argumentative because it is regularly noted in the DEF's.

Trainees are commended in their DEF's for not complaining. On busy shifts, some trainees were unable to find time for a meal and their FTO's commented on their trainees' lack of complaints. On one occasion, a trainee helped to search for a suspect in the woods and got bitten by insects all over his body, including his face, and the FTO was impressed that he did not complain at all. The positive reinforcement this trainee received was reflected formally (in the DEF) and informally from the other officers who were impressed that he worked so hard to help them find the suspect, despite getting bitten by insects.

An officer who learns norms of deference (e.g., accepting criticism from those in power and silently tolerates unpleasant situations) may react negatively to a citizen who

chooses to voice complaints to the officer. COPS posits that officers respond to problems defined by residents, but the officer must understand that some residents may not do this in a deferent or diplomatic manner. Law enforcement training lessons may not prepare officers for dealing with citizens in something other than an authority relationship.

Pressure to Perform under Stress

The academy is stressful because it forces recruits to be present and alert for long hours, five days a week, for almost six months, and under constant scrutiny. The physical training can be especially stressful for some recruits as well. Recruits must perform in other classes even if the physical training and long hours wear them down. Although this academy is not as strict as the military, instructors do tease and criticize the recruits. Instructors are generally skeptical of recruits and use downward communication with the recruits.

Family issues, transportation issues, and financial strains also put extra stress on some recruits. Many times the recruits have families that they must support and being in the academy means that they are without an income for six months. For some recruits, it may mean they have to share a vehicle with their spouse. Recruits must deal with the stress of regular examinations, homework, and other school-like stressors, in addition to more adult stressors, like the financial strains.

Though many recruits have help from their parents or financial support (e.g., loans) while attending the academy, several recruits I spoke to were forced to balance a multitude of stressors. For example, one recruit who had a wife and child was suffering financially because he had no income. They lived in a small town about an hour away from the academy. Every morning, he had to take his child to school, take his wife to work and be sure to arrive at the academy in time for marching. He was tardy a few times

and was disciplined. There are no excuses for violating the rules. After the academy, he had to pick his wife and child up from work and school, and find time to do homework and study for exams.

The academy instructors show little sympathy to those experiencing stress. Indeed, part of the stress seems intentional to teach recruits. The belief is that policing is a high stress occupation and recruits need to learn how to deal with it.

Field training varies in its level of stress depending on the field training officer. This is the time when the FTO expects the trainee to apply the lessons learned in the academy and the recruits begin realizing the gap between memorizing material (e.g., academy) and applying it in the field. Synthesizing and applying procedures, while effectively communicating on the radio and finding locations in the city quickly puts a lot of stress on the trainees, especially in situations that may be emergencies. As trainees advance through field training, they are to rely on other officers for help (pretend that the FTO is not there) rather than depend on the FTO to answer his or her questions. Many times, a stressed out trainee will resort to asking his or her FTO questions, such as how to find a specific location, and the FTO will tell the trainee to ask a supervisor or fellow officer on the radio. The FTO is there to evaluate the trainee's progress, not to assist the trainee. Further, when the trainee goes solo, he or she will have to know how to rely on other officers (and his or her supervisor) for assistance. The trainee will need to know how to be assertive, resourceful and confident.

In one case, a trainee was "running code" (lights and sirens) to a scene and she did not know which statute she would have to apply upon arrival, so she asked her FTO. Her FTO told her to refer to her manual or ask a supervisor, just as she would if she were a

solo officer. Situations such as these cause much stress for some trainees because the FTO knows the answer but refuses to help. In fact, some FTO's noted in DEF's that trainees complained that their performance suffered *due* to the stress that their FTO put on them (by refusing to help). The FTO's perspective is that police work will eventually put the trainees in life or death situations, so they must learn to function effectively under stress.

Though police work is said to be 10 percent crime fighting and 90 percent report writing and order maintenance (Mayhall et al. 1995), much of the training, especially field training, focuses on the 10 percent. That is because emergency situations can involve life and death circumstances and require the officer to function extremely effectively under stress. Even with an emphasis on COPS, the training that I observed still focuses on the "ten percent" and the importance of responding to emergency situations. The occupation is defined and modeled by instructors, FTO's and other incumbents, as a high risk job. The peer culture puts a lot of formal and informal emphasis on the ability to react effectively in stressful circumstances. Therefore, a large part of both academy and field training is dedicated to learning how to manage radio communications and geography (e.g., find the location) while being dispatched to a call. The following excerpt from an FTO file is an example of a trainee who handled some of these tasks well:

Officer X was dispatched to this location and found it with no problems. Officer X did a good job in his tactical parking by stopping our police car about 1-1/2 blocks south of the location since he was not familiar with this location. Officer X was then able to approach the residence more stealthily on foot.

If trainees cannot perform these essential police tasks, they are not able to move forward in the FTO program. Conversely, if they can react to a call, manage the radio,

find the location, arrive safely and park tactically, they are “ahead of the game” and will be positively reinforced by their FTO (it will be noted in their file—see above). FTO evaluations consistently commend recruits who can master these tasks. Furthermore, other officers in the department will hear about their progress and offer them informal positive reinforcement. It is often noted in the DEF’s that other officers were impressed with a trainee’s performance.

Conversely, when trainees cannot handle the stress of these situations, it is formally noted and steps must be taken to address it. The main step that is taken in such circumstances is putting the trainee in remedial training.¹³ It is a sign of not making progress in the FTO program. It is also a punishing social consequence from the FTO. If the trainee corrects the deficiencies in remedial training, he or she is able to go forward in the field training program. The following is an excerpt from an FTO file of a trainee who was struggling and ended up in remedial training.

PT [police trainee] conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle for running a stop sign. PT called in the wrong location for the stop. PT did not correct her location, even after I asked her if she knew where she was. PT is having difficulty listening to her radio; dispatch will have to call her several times before she answers. PT is also having difficulty understanding the information provided by dispatch and teletype (dispatch advised the PT that the tag on the vehicle was expired, she acknowledged; but when asked what dispatch said, she said she didn’t understand what was said). PT is slow to take control and appears to be unsure of herself.

Loyalty, Solidarity and Reliance on Fellow Officers

Paramilitary environments promote solidarity among their members (Encandela 1991). The structure of the academy forces the recruits to rely on each other and trust each other. It forces them to be loyal via the evolving disciplinary system. Recruits are

¹³ The FTO program based on the San Jose model is structured so that recruits focus on specific tasks and skills during certain weeks. Only after recruits have mastered those skills can they move forward. A recruit has to do remedial training if he or she fails to become proficient in a certain skill and must continue to review those skills until he or she has achieved proficiency.

told in the academy that their peers will stand behind them even if they make mistakes. This is important because it teaches recruits that loyalty to the profession and peers is most important and that they can (and are expected to) put their lives on the line for each other.

As classes advance through the academy, recruits quickly develop strong bonds with each other. The differential association process is nearly textbook. They spend an extraordinary amount of time together, not only during academy hours, but they spend time together outside of the academy as well. Studying together for exams is encouraged. Many of them will become roommates or carpool to the academy together. They are told by instructors only to discuss their problems as a group because if they talk about it with “outsiders,” they will be viewed unfavorably. Recruits are told that it is likely that their pre-police work friends will no longer like them after they become officers. This is encouraged, reinforced and taught as fact. Instructors rationalize this for the recruits by explaining that they will feel uncomfortable around their former friends because their friends may break the law and they (as officers) will be put in difficult situations. Or conversely, friends may feel uncomfortable around them as police officers. An instructor remarked, “when you become an officer, you become a minority of sorts—you become “blue”—and it is your fellow officers that are your friends, confidantes and supporters” (also see Conti unpublished manuscript entitled “Lower Than Whaleshit”). One instructor summed it up, “In a few years, all your friends will be cops.”

A “class culture” (Haarr 2001) develops and recruits sometimes refer to themselves as “family.” The specifics of the class culture can vary somewhat from class to class, but an overarching norm climate develops. Although some classes are more serious and more

organized than are others, they are all socialized in the same process and have similar experiences. Indeed, they are more similar than they are different. They begin to keep things that occur in the police academy from their families and “former” friends. A recruit quotes a common saying, “what happens in the academy stays in the academy.”

The solidarity and friendship networks that developed in the police academy show how recruits differentially associate with each other. Akers (2000) says that relationships that occur with the highest priority, intensity, frequency, and duration have the most influence on behavior and attitudes. Clearly, recruits develop associational patterns in the academy in which other recruits become more like family than an occupational group or other so-called secondary group. Recruits spend entire days together at the academy and choose to spend time together on the weekends studying and doing other leisure activities (e.g., playing pool, bowling, going to bars). Recruits’ relationships with each other become especially intense, frequent and important. Indeed, as an observer, I have never seen people in a work environment develop such strong ties. Police recruits become each other’s main sources of association, definitions, and reinforcement.

The norms of loyalty, solidarity and reliance are well documented in the policing literature (Conser 1980; Neiderhoffer 1967; Skolnick 1994). It is not only taught formally in the academy curriculum, but it is discussed informally and modeled through war stories as well. It is defined in the academy as the “right thing to do” and it is modeled and reinforced as the recruits enter the department and see officers spending time with each other as friends. The camaraderie among officers is obvious and it provides a model for the recruits to follow. For example, many officers hunt, fish, and exercise together.

Further, group marching, “posting,” uniform dressing, and group punishments reinforce group solidarity and cohesion. These rituals ensure that recruits identify with each other.

The paramilitary structure has implications for COPS. The paramilitary structure teaches recruits that they must function within the chain of command and hierarchy, while COPS emphasizes innovative problem solving. The two are at odds with one another. The paramilitary structure hampers the individual officer’s ability to generate unique solutions to community problems because officers do not have the formal authority to exercise discretion on such a scale. The focus on shared liability and taking responsibility for other officers puts the pressure on the recruit/officer to practice what is safe (and therefore avoid mistakes) rather than to be innovative and try something new. Police officers are positively recognized in their profession for their hard work (e.g., arrests), loyalty, and safety. Practice in vertical communication rather than horizontal communication teaches officers to apply authority relations to community residents too.

Officer Safety

Officer safety is a salient theme throughout all data sources. No matter what an officer does in his or her job, the goal is to “go home at night,” according to one academy instructor. Most of the formal training that officers receive in some way touches on officer safety, and it is a consideration in any interaction or call. In fact, it is the first consideration in the SECURE model of problem solving (safety), which is threaded¹⁴ throughout the entire CMS curriculum. In addition, there is a lot of emphasis on preserving officer’s lives (Herbert 1998). One example is crossfire. Officers have to

¹⁴ “Threading” means that the concept is integrated into every module in the academy. Officer safety, community policing, and problem solving are examples of concepts that are threaded in the CMS curriculum.

practice scenarios where multiple officers may be firing at the same time (so that they do not shoot each other or a bystander). Another example is that police officers are taught to think about officer safety when they approach a domestic violence situation, in part because the couple could have reconciled and decided they are united against the officer (e.g., the officer is now their enemy because the officer may want to arrest one of them).

Officers always must be careful when approaching a residence because they cannot see inside; therefore, there are specific guidelines for the safest place to stand before entering a residence. The same is true about approaching an automobile. Searching buildings is a major officer safety risk. Officers are never supposed to search buildings alone unless someone is dying inside because there are too many hiding places for “bad guys” (an issue to be discussed below). Personal contact is an officer safety risk because of concerns with disease (e.g., AIDS, Hepatitis). These are only some of the examples of the applications of officer safety in police work that are threaded through the CMS recruit curriculum.

In the academy, “high liability¹⁵” areas (e.g., driving, firearms, defensive tactics, and first responder) focus on officer safety and the safety of citizens. For example, driving “code” (with lights and sirens, often at high rates of speed) has the potential to put the officer(s) and others at risk, thus it must be practiced in the academy and in the field. A vehicle crash on the way to answer a call endangers the officer and citizens, and puts the department at risk. Similarly, defensive tactics training is based on legal standards—there are clear guidelines that outline what techniques and weapons officers

¹⁵ High liability areas are subjects that involve legal liability on behalf of the officer and department. They include driving, firearms, defensive tactics, and first responder. First responder refers to medical training (or first aid) for police officers.

are (and are not) legally allowed to use. Many of the defensive tactics skills that recruits learn formally focus on using the minimal amount of force necessary to subdue the suspect quickly so that the suspect does not harm the officer or another citizen. For example, the *use of force matrix* is a standard which allows police officers to use one level of force above that which is being used against the officer (field notes). The officer responds to the level of force that the “bad guy” is using. In the words of one instructor, “the bad guy sets the tone,” and the officer responds to it. Similarly, in the training that I observed, when officers use deadly force, they are only allowed to shoot to kill. In other words, officers are not allowed to shoot a suspect in a limb in order to incapacitate the suspect.

In field training, trainees are routinely corrected for breaching officer safety rules. They often look down when writing tickets (neglecting to watch their suspect), turn their “strong” side toward the suspect (gun side), fail to park “tactically” when approaching a scene (e.g., out of view of the location they are responding to), and fail to keep suspects under enough control (e.g., suspects must keep hands out of pockets, stand still, etc.). Additionally, they must constantly update the dispatcher of their location. In the event that there is a problem or officer safety threat, the dispatcher must be able to send other officers to the correct location to help. Many FTO’s note these kinds of lapses by trainees in their files. For example, the following trainee made an officer safety mistake:

A negative during this encounter was PT [Police Trainee] allowed the suspect to stand on her “gun-side” while issuing the NTA [Notice to Appear]. I explained to the PT to NEVER do that again. PT understands. [emphasis theirs]

Officer safety is heavily reinforced in field training because this is one of the areas where trainees tend to make mistakes. It is modeled by instructors at the academy who speak about it incessantly, as well as FTO’s who show the trainees how they expect

officers to act in specific situations. Trainees are positively reinforced when they practice good officer safety. It is not unusual for an FTO to remark each day that the trainee performed well in the area of officer safety (or needs improvement, etc.) Formal stage evaluations also contain a section on officer safety.

Officer safety is clearly defined as the most important consideration in law enforcement. It is the first thing that an officer is supposed to consider when arriving on a scene. When recruits make officer safety mistakes in academy training, the disappointment (and sometimes anger) on behalf of the instructors is striking. The disappointment and anger was obvious during my observations during the academy training and came through in the DEF's and other written correspondence (e.g., emails) in field training. Recruits learn the importance of breaching officer safety through this behavioral response on behalf of the instructors. In real life, mistakes can be fatal; not only for the officer, but for other officers. Officer safety mistakes can be a liability for the department as well.

The formal cost of breaching officer safety is either a note in the DEF, a stint in remedial training, or a letter or email to the FTO supervisor. Trainees are punished when they breach officer safety norms, formally and informally, depending on the extent of the violation. If an officer makes an officer safety mistake that puts another officer in danger, it is a major breach of the informal code. This relates to group solidarity and loyalty. Officers have an obligation, above all else, to protect each other. Therefore, if an officer fails to uphold this obligation, it is met with social disapproval from the peer culture.

On the other hand, an FTO commended his trainee in the following scenario. The trainee and FTO were looking for a suspect in a neighborhood. The trainee was driving, so the FTO got out on foot to search for the suspect while the trainee stayed in the car. After the FTO had been gone for a while, the trainee got out to look for the FTO. The FTO found the trainee climbing over a fence, actively searching for the FTO and/or suspect. The FTO commented that he was very impressed with the trainee's concern and proactive search for him.

Officer safety relates to other salient lessons for being a police officer. For example, officer safety relates to the paramilitary environment. The organization has a vested interest in officer safety; if officer safety rules are violated, the organization may suffer. There are organizational costs, such as the costs of recruitment and replacement of personnel if officers are hurt and miss work, or are lost (either fired or killed) due to a breach of officer safety, not to mention the extreme public relations costs.

Officer safety also has implications for the slippage between law on the books and law in action (a theme that is discussed more fully below). Officer safety is "code" and provides an excuse to invade civil liberties like pat down searches for weapons. Officer safety can be used to "cover" questionable use of force.

Using an assertive tone is a tactic used to get suspects to comply. The assertiveness (discussed in detail below) sends the message to the citizen that the police are within the law to request the search, which comes off more as a demand than a request, given their "positional authority" as a police officer who carries a gun.

Officer safety also has implications for COPS. The two emphases create tension. COPS is based on building trust while safety is based on suspicion. Officer safety is a

necessity in police work—police officers deal with criminals and people who want to hurt them, but the COPS officer is also supposed to work with law-abiding citizens to problem solve. The constant focus on officer safety sends the message to the citizen that the officer is not trusting (and therefore maybe not sincere or trustworthy). It does not make the citizen feel comfortable and trusting of the officer's intentions. The COPS officer has to strike a balance between being safe and building trust with citizens so that he or she can generate solutions to problems defined by citizens in communities.

Bad Guy and Us Versus Them

The concept of the “bad guy” is used throughout the training experience, especially in defensive tactics training and other skills training at the academy. It seems to be used to get recruits “excited” and put things into perspective about where their focus should be. It builds on the concept of officer safety—officers must keep themselves safe from the “bad guys.” The basic idea is that the bad guy will be trying to get you, so when you are dealing with him, you must keep your focus on him the entire time. Recruits are told that even when someone is shot, they should handcuff them because they could be “playing possum.” Instructors caution that most dangerous people are not predictable. Officers should always assume that there are more “bad guys” in the area. They should vary their patrol patterns so that “bad guys” don't anticipate their routine and wait for them; they should fear ambush.

A story was told by an instructor to the academy class about a suspect on PCP who broke out of handcuffs and beat down two officers. One of the officers shot him with a shotgun in the heart. The suspect then took the gun from the officer, left, and got in a cab and eventually died. Some of this seems somewhat unrealistic, but it helps to create a picture of a “less than human” “bad guy” who should be feared.

The picture of “bad guy” that is drawn goes beyond dangerous. Instructors at the academy are constantly giving examples as part of formal training of innocent looking “old ladies” or other unsuspecting females who initially appeared to be harmless but who later turned out to be dangerous. For example, one instructor told the class a story about an elderly lady driving a Cadillac who was stopped and found to be carrying numerous kilos of cocaine. The message is that nobody can be trusted. Further, recruits are told that bad guys will often get good lawyers to help get them out of trouble and that they will show up to court “in a 3 piece suit and you won’t recognize him.”

The notion of the “bad guy” becomes even clearer in the field training experience. In the academy, recruits are being told *stories* about the “bad guy,” but in field training, they are both learning from their FTO and learning from experience (they are coming into contact with real “bad guys”). In addition to the suspect being dangerous, he or she (but usually he) is also presented as lying and attempting to flee. Each FTO critiques the trainees’ ability to assess the suspect’s likelihood of fleeing.

Academy instructors define bad guys for the recruits and model their definitions through informal war stories and formal examples. FTO’s offer positive reinforcement when trainees accurately manage to keep a suspect under control. They are supposed to make sure suspects stand still, keep their hands out of their pockets, and stay a specific distance from the officer. FTO’s counsel trainees if they neglect to watch the suspect carefully enough because the suspect “could” have been a flight risk or a danger to the officer. FTO files indicate that “bad guys” do occasionally run from the officers, so this fear is not unfounded.

Underlying the “bad guy” definition is the “us versus them” mentality. Police not only feel that they are up against the “bad guy,” but they also must protect themselves from police critics. The general attitude is that anyone who criticizes the police is ignorant. This includes lawyers, “liberals”, and the media. Indeed, the secrecy of the police culture is functional and insulates them so that they can say that those who criticize police actions do not know the facts, so they could not possibly understand an officer’s actions.

The norm climate, or shared attitudinal framework, is that the police officers are separate and different from the rest of the civilian population. Therefore, their friendship networks change and their new friends will all be police officers, as that is with whom they differentially associate. Police officers are comrades; out to protect law-abiding citizens and survive the “bad guys” who are trying to hurt them, flee from them and lie to them. According to Marion (1998),

Whether intentional or not, the instructors at University Academy teach recruits an “us versus them” mentality. Many of the instructors (who are officers) relay the idea that if a person is not an officer, they simply cannot be trusted. They told many stories of people one might not expect to cause trouble but who did, such as a young female, who had a gun hidden in her bra and swore at the officer as she tried to get away. Or an elderly man who yelled at an officer as he attempted to wrestle him to the ground. The main point was that, for one’s own safety, an officer must always assume that any person with whom they are dealing is a potential danger. Suspicion is major element of many of the classes-to never go to any situation without preparing for potential danger and to be wary of everyone, including men, women, children, young, or old... (p. 13)

The local attorneys and the “read” of their feelings toward the police are sometimes discussed in the academy. Attorneys who have been critical of police decisions in the past are demonized. Names are used. Recruits are told to be careful if/when they come up against one of these attorneys in court. They are told that certain attorneys can turn things around and make the officer seem at fault. Langworthy and Travis also observe that

decisions by courts, prosecutors and defense attorneys are criticized by police. This enhances group solidarity and alienation as well as cynicism toward the public (Langworthy and Travis 2003). Importantly, I saw evidence of this pattern of criticism and closing ranks emerge already in the academy.

“Liberals” are also critics. The term is never defined, but if one did not know what a “liberal” was, one would certainly believe from what is stated in the academy that a liberal was some sort of foreign animal. Many times it seems to be used as a type of disclaimer before they say something that is not politically correct. Because of my affiliation with the University, I often felt that the “liberal” comments were directed toward me. “The *liberals* don’t like it when we...” is a common statement. “Liberals won’t accept that the worst of the worst are in jail—they want to believe that people are just off on the wrong track,” according to an instructor. When I introduced myself to one of the instructors at the academy, I told him that I was a sociologist (I later learned that criminal justice graduate student elicited a more favorable response). His first reaction to my sociological background was that it was healthy for the police to have critics. Indeed, sociologists are thought to be liberal, and therefore, I was an immediate critic.

Instructors also discuss the media, especially in relation to their response when an officer uses force or allegedly makes a mistake. Recruits are told that force is a professional option and that, if it must be used, the media’s reaction should not be considered. Officers should not be risking their lives for a “bad guy” because the media may be critical. The media (and anyone else who is critical) does not understand.

The bad guy and the ‘us versus them’ orientation is defined and modeled by the instructors, FTO’s and other incumbents. It is reinforced through war stories about

“famous” bad guys, even some who outsmarted the police (and thus the police have learned—and the recruits must learn—from those experiences). These messages come through both formally and informally.

The constant suspicion that ANY person that is pulled over for a mere traffic infraction may be about to flee runs counter to the development of trust between officer and citizen. How and with whom are the officers supposed to develop trust if they are constantly attempting to assess each and every person’s likelihood of escape? Certainly, every person stopped for a traffic violation should not be defined as a “bad guy.” The field encounters of a COPS officer getting to know his or her beat cannot be premised on suspicion if community relations are to be built. I observed little formal training on field exchanges designed to address COPS and virtually no informal lessons in this regard.

The bad guy concept and ‘us versus them’ orientation have implications for COPS. Community policing emphasizes building trust between the officer and the citizen. The police are so focused on the bad guy and officer safety that it hampers their ability to connect with law abiding citizens. I propose that the concepts (officer safety and the bad guy) are at odds with building community trust. COPS focuses on the importance of relying on stakeholders to define their own problems in communities. The ‘us versus them’ orientation marks some citizens as more or less important than others. For example, what makes “liberals” (and their problems) less important than anyone else’s?

Police Presence and Assertiveness

In the academy, many recruits are assertive and sure of themselves. They often make outlandish comments about breaking down doors (without a search warrant) and

wanting to make many arrests¹⁶. An example of such comments is, “can’t you just hit them anyway? Can’t you just kick the door in?” They exhibit extraordinary toughness, making comments such as, “Our weapon and our backup [other officers] are the same thing.” Notably, their motivation is not toward problem solving or working with the community.

Recruits are formally taught how to give verbal commands. To the civilian, the verbal commands are aggressively assertive. Recruits are to yell at suspects extremely loudly, “GET ON THE GROUND! SHOW ME YOUR HANDS!” It takes a while for most of the recruits to become comfortable with their voice at this level. On the other hand, some recruits show an alarming adrenaline rush when performing some of the physical activities such as handcuffing and other defensive tactics (e.g., pretending they are handcuffing a real “bad guy”). Though it is possible that instructors notice this questionable behavior, there is no obvious consequence for it at the academy.

CMS is a scenario-based curriculum. This means that recruits regularly work through problems as a class or in groups. However, toward the end of the academy, recruits are given the opportunity to engage in some real-life scenarios. These scenarios force the recruits to pull their training together and practice it as if they were on the street. Usually, the instructors “play” suspects or citizens who the recruits, or “officers,” must make contact with. These scenarios invariably evolve into physical struggles. This tests the recruits’ verbal skills, decision-making abilities, knowledge of statutes, and their defensive tactics skills. It seems that instructors intentionally escalate these encounters to reinforce the importance of safety, defensive tactics, and split-second decision-making.

¹⁶ There is an overwhelming motivation to arrest people, rather than help them. This could suggest self-selection in policing and may interfere with COPS.

However, if recruits were better trained in verbal de-escalation, perhaps the encounters would not invariably evolve into physical struggles. As an observer, it appears that one point of these scenarios is to humble the recruits (and remind them of their place at the bottom of the chain of command).

By the end of the academy, the recruits feel that they are proficient in most areas of law enforcement and they are ready to begin their career. However, very few recruits perform well in the end-of-academy scenarios. All of a sudden, they seem bewildered as they approach the (scenario) scene. They are unsure of the appropriate statute or law that is being violated. They are unsure how to handle the situation. The most shocking error (to me and to them) is the way they handle themselves physically. As the “suspects” begin to put up a physical struggle, most recruits seem to forget everything they have been trained. They fail to utilize the appropriate defensive tactics and therefore, revert to “street- or bar-fighting” techniques. This may include beating the suspect with their baton, hitting them in the head, jumping on their head, or punching them.

Most recruits know that they have made mistakes after the scenario. They are immediately debriefed by the staff. Interestingly, recruits are quick to offer explanations for their behavior. Many of them fail to understand that their behavior would be considered illegal if it occurred on the street. Certainly, some recruits cry, curse, or yell at the instructors. For example, one recruit who made a mistake in a scenario in which his partner was “shot and killed” was so disappointed that he screamed the “F word” loudly and left the room abruptly. This was an off-campus scenario that involved the help of extra law enforcement officers. The instructors/law enforcement officers were noticeably surprised by his reaction and seemed to think it was ridiculous because everyone makes

mistakes. But to my knowledge, the recruit received no formal punishment (of course, the debriefing occurred in private).

The bravado of academy evaporates on the street. In the FTO program, most of the trainees in my sample showed hesitance when getting out of the car, even at traffic stops. It is typical for the FTO to write, “PT [Police Trainee] needs to be more aggressive and forceful.” They need to have good “officer presence” and cannot “become intimidated.” Field training officers often note that trainees need to “step it up” and take control of a scene. It is very important for trainees to be assertive and have a “police presence” and not show cowardice. Police trainees need to be reminded that “we are the police,” and therefore have authority to take control of situations. They are told by their FTO’s that they need to be ready and get out quickly to take control, so that the suspect does not flee. They need to have an assertive stance and give strong verbal commands. If they fail to, it is noted in the DEF:

PT is slow to engage with people who may cause a threat or be confrontational. PT does not take charge of the situations and use his authority to control some of his contacts. I don’t know if this is a stalling tactic because PT is afraid or uncomfortable with the new situation and isn’t sure how to address it.

One trainee had the following experience. The trainee failed to enter a residence for the second time, so the FTO was forced to take the lead. The FTO wrote, “This is the second time PT was reluctant to enter this residence. I asked PT why he failed to enter and he replied, “I guess I’m just a little leery!” I inquired as to whether these were acts of cowardice. He assured me that he wasn’t afraid.”

Obviously, cowardice is not tolerated and officers are expected to be assertive. This is not to say that they should not be polite to citizens, but assertiveness (or lack thereof) is regularly noted in DEF’s. Even giving the impression of being shy is considered bad:

PT and I are going to be working the downtown bar areas this Friday and Saturday to expose PT to as much “in your face” contact as possible. PT’s weakest area remains the “timid perception.” PT appears to be willing and ready to engage, but gives off the impression she is shy or timid.

The interesting twist to this is the recruits’ overwhelming assertiveness and assumption about their perceived role while they are in the academy, followed by a complete turnaround when they are on the street for the first time. In the academy recruits tended to want to stretch their authority (e.g., “can’t we just kick the door in?”) and instructors had to outline the limits of police authority. On the other hand, trainees in field training seemed apprehensive when they got on the street. Suddenly, they were not so sure of themselves and FTO’s constantly had to tell almost every trainee be more assertive and to “step it up.”

A common occurrence in local policing is to pull over vehicles and bicycles for broken taillights. The main purpose of these stops is to ask the “suspect” for a consent search. The suspect has the right to say no, but this is not made clear. It is accepted and reinforced in training to use an assertive tone when asking a citizen for a search. Though it is only a request, it may send the message to the suspect that the search is not voluntary. It also sends the message that if the suspect complies, he or she may be less likely to “get in trouble.” Thus, assertiveness is instrumental in the sense that it may lead to an arrest and is therefore rewarded as good police work.

Police presence and assertiveness fits with the paramilitary environment. Militaristic environments produce people who are authoritative, assertive, and impersonal. They give and take orders in a hierarchical environment. Police presence and assertiveness also fits with officer safety and the emphasis on commanding situations in order to ensure safety from the bad guy.

The emphasis on assertiveness and “the police presence” may not translate into problem solving, community trust, and COPS. Citizens often look to the police in a time of need, so police officers need to be confident and knowledgeable. But, if communities are to take active roles in problem solving and informal social control, COPS officers need to be able to take a leadership role without overstepping their authority. The emphasis in training on dealing with escalation and split-second decision-making far outweighs the training emphasis on working with the community and problem solving. COPS officers will need to rely on interpersonal techniques, such as verbal judo, to resolve situations if possible. The strong air of assertiveness that is emphasized in training may make a citizen fearful and defensive.

Traditional Police Work and Experiential Knowledge

The new academy curriculum makes a good effort to emphasize the importance of building community ties and trust, but the instructors (who are officers) became police officers for the same reasons that the recruits are becoming police officers: to catch “bad guys.” It is often said by instructors at the academy that police work is 10% fun and 90% boredom. This gives the impression to the recruits that community relations and performing service related activities falls under the “boredom” category.

I commented to one recruit in defensive tactics training, “You look like you’re having fun,” while he was practicing “take downs” with a partner. He responded, “This is what it’s all about.” Obviously, even though recruits are spending many hours in the classroom learning about problem solving, defensive tactics is what excites them about police work. Instructors tell recruits that policing is “ten minutes of fun and 4 hours of writing reports.” You can only assume that the “ten minutes of fun” refers to something other than problem solving.

I volunteered as a victim during first responder when all except two recruits failed to show proficiency in the exercise. The two who were proficient had military experience where they had already learned the techniques. I overheard one recruit say, “I’m not gonna be a cop to deal with that stuff.” Others agreed. This example shows a recruit who provided a neutralizing definition for the reason why he failed to show proficiency in the exercise, but more importantly, it reveals the recruits’ shared definition of police work.

I went to lunch with several recruits and asked them why they wanted to become police officers. One of them said that he wanted to become a cop because he wanted to help people, while another one said, “I’m not going to lie; I want to be a cop so I can chase people!” Several other recruits at the table laughed and agreed. Indeed, the belief held by most of the recruits at the table was that police work was attractive to them due to the traditional attributes of the occupation.

One afternoon, a female recruit told a story about how she was sitting at a stoplight during her lunch break (from the academy) and she witnessed an interesting situation involving criminal activity. Specifically, two people were crossing the street and arguing because one stole the other’s “weed.” The recruit was surprised that the people continued to argue in her presence because she was clearly sitting in her car with her recruit uniform on (which resembles an official police uniform). The instructor encouraged her and told her that in only a few months, she would be able to “make a good arrest” in such a situation.

In some of the recruit classes, there are recruits known as “cross-overs.” These are recruits who only take particular classes (approximately 25% of the curriculum) because they have prior law enforcement or corrections experience. The perspectives of these

recruits often differ greatly from that of the “naïve” recruits because they have already been exposed to the types of people that will be encountered on the job and in the occupational subculture. These recruits hold an interesting position within the recruit academy—they are peers, and therefore differentially associate with the other recruits on an intimate level—but they also serve as models with inside information about the law enforcement occupation. They associate with the other recruits frequently and intimately, and because they are at the same rank as all recruits, they share the camaraderie with the other recruits, and their stories have more relevance than instructor’s stories. When the cross-overs speak about their experiences, their stories command attention from the other recruits who have no experience. They offer insight into how the “bad guys” really act when in custody and how they have to be handled. In other words, they tell their own “war stories” that provide definitions and reinforcement about the realities of working in law enforcement. Indeed, Conti (unpublished manuscript entitled “Lower Than Whaleshit”) found that recruits with military or prior law enforcement experience serve as “behavioral templates” for the rest of the class. This promotes “an increasingly intense level of conformity within the group.”

Field training at the agency studied is based on traditional police tactics as incorporated into the San Jose model (see Chapter 3). It teaches the police trainee to arrest, detain suspects, and become proficient with the commonly used policies and procedures used at The Agency. Specifically, the following issues were most often discussed in the FTO files: Radio and dispatch, accepting criticism, report writing, attitude, driving, geography and parking, officer safety, policies and procedure, assertiveness and investigation skills. Gaining experience performing traditional police

functions under the supervision of someone who has experience is the main goal of field training. Many issues covered in FTO (e.g., radio, geography and policies) all become easier with experience dealing with more calls.

Aggressive proactivity is an emphasis that emerges in field training data. It entails the officer proactively stopping citizens for minor traffic infractions and asking them for permission to be searched. In phase one of field training, FTO's will often model this behavior for their trainees. They will pull over bicyclists and vehicles to show the trainee what a "good stop" should look like. Trainees are encouraged to do this, and if they do not do this, it is noted on their DEF's. If a trainee stops a bicyclist for no tail light and fails to ask for a search, the FTO will tell the trainee that s/he should have requested the search and should do it next time. If the trainee properly requests the search, the behavior is positively reinforced by the FTO and noted in the DEF. One FTO comments, "You have to stop bicyclists in order to make those good busts."

Another FTO commends his trainee's behavior with this comment: "PT was proactive and wrote a parking ticket and a traffic citation. PT handled 100% of call." Aggressive proactivity seems to be The Agency's translation of COPS and problem solving. The officers seem to have redefined problem solving into a simplistic proactivity which includes little more than stopping bicyclists and other vehicles. Obviously, this type of proactive behavior is a long way from COPS or problem solving. Indeed, as discussed in chapter two, the abstractness of the COPS philosophy allows for wide variation in its implementation.

A key informant at the agency shows that experiential knowledge is important with the "top cops" as well. The informant pointed out that several of the captains in the

department had very few years “on the street” before they moved into administrative positions, and therefore, “they don’t know what it’s like out there.” Being privy to “what it’s really like out there” is a deeply embedded belief held in the police subculture and modeled by incumbents.

Trainees are taught to gather information from suspects and convince suspects that they will not be arrested. Citizens are given the impression that if they consent to a search, they will be rewarded for compliance. However, the truth is that the suspect has no obligation to consent to a search, and if the search uncovers contraband, the suspect is almost always taken to jail, or at least cited. What does this do for building community relations? The suspect will most likely be back out on the street and tell his/her friends and acquaintances about experiences with the police. The end result may be that police will not be trusted.

The salient police subculture trumps the curriculum on COPS. The informal emphasis on crime fighting is overwhelming to the emphasis on community building and problem solving taught haphazardly in the classroom. Even though officers have begun to learn the importance of building coalitions with community members, the ultimate goal of these relationships is to gain information about potential criminals and crimes to make even bigger busts. They see building trust as another way to gain information to make more arrests, rather than an end in itself, or to increase the quality of life of citizens.

Law on the Books Versus Law in Action

In my observations, recruits received considerable training in legal standards and ethics. In fact, the problem solving model advanced at the academy, SECURE, incorporates ethics as one of its key components. Officers must be sure to apply the correct statute to criminal and civil matters and have the ability to discern the ambiguity

that characterizes the law. Recruits also receive training in how to act in court, especially the importance of telling the truth on the stand. Additionally, “high liability” areas, such as firearms and driving, require recruits to qualify before certification. In other words, there are distinct procedural legal standards that recruits must satisfy before they are considered proficient in these areas.

One instructor, a self-proclaimed “straight and narrow cop,” says that police officers learn from who teaches them. He learned from another scrupulous officer who had a lasting impression on him. He tells the recruits that they should tell the truth even if they make a mistake because losing one case is a small sacrifice compared to losing your integrity. He proceeded to tell a story about something that happened when he was a rookie officer. He and another officer responded to a burglary at a convenience store. The other officer stole some candy from the store (stealing after a burglary is convenient because you can blame the loss on the “criminals”). He saw the officer steal the candy and turned him in to the supervisor. This act sent a message to his department that he was an honest officer. Clearly, this instructor models and reinforces, through his war stories, ethical and honest behavior for the recruits.

Though there is considerable emphasis in the academy on law and ethical standards, there is an underlying and contradictory theme that emerged in my observations. The informal code sends the message that the law is a force to be reckoned with that can get in the way. Deceit is a tactic learned in the training experience. This is not to say that officers are dishonest per se, but that it is an accepted practice to “bend” the truth in circumstances when the motive is to obtain information to make an arrest. In

some cases, officers feel they have a moral duty to bend the law if it means catching a “bad guy” (Herbert 1998).

I will offer several examples from the academy. Prostitution is a problem that is discussed in the media, in the department, and in the academy. On one occasion in the academy, an officer showed a video of a recent prostitution sting in which he (the officer) was posing as a “john” and picking up prostitutes. After the prostitute would agree to perform a service, the officer would signal to his fellow officers to pull them over and “bust” the prostitute. In the process of the bust, the officer was drinking a beer and always offered the respective prostitute a beer as well. The officer commented that he would often go through “a six pack” during a prostitution sting. The academy recruits were surprised, asking questions such as, “isn’t that drinking and driving?” “Isn’t that illegal?” Not only was the officer deceiving the prostitute (and modeling this as normative for the recruits) in order to get an arrest, but he was also breaking the law himself by drinking while driving. He said drinking was part of the way he deceived the prostitutes into believing that he was NOT a police officer. Another interesting twist to this story is how shocked the recruits were that their superior broke the law. I think this was a key moment in their understanding of the reality of police work and the police role. Getting “bad guys” off the street provides a justification for violating the law. Neutralizing definitions were part of the formal instruction.

It is illegal, and therefore formally unacceptable to use race in decision making, whether it is stopping someone for a traffic violation or arresting someone. However, the informal message regarding searches and seizures allows officers to use race as a pretense. It is an accepted practice to stop someone because they “look like” they have

drugs as long as they are breaking the law (e.g., broken taillight). It is also accepted to stop someone if they do not look like they belong in a certain neighborhood due to their race. Again, the moral obligation to take the “bad guy” off the street overrides the obligation to follow the letter of the law exactly. The formal emphasis on diversity (a theme that is discussed below) makes it clear that one is never to verbalize that race was a factor, however. An instructor told the recruits during class, “*Your* motivation doesn’t matter, as long as *they’re* breaking the law!” Though this statement is legal, the underlying message is that your motivation can be based on an illegal pretense (e.g., race).

Another example involves the use of force. One day in defensive tactics training, the recruits were in groups of two practicing handcuffing techniques. The instructor yelled, “Make ‘em squeal! Make ‘em say ow!”

Instructors are candid about the fact that officers will make mistakes when dealing with forceful suspects and occasionally hurt people. The lesson to be learned is that the officer must not admit a mistake and not admit to using “street fighting tactics.” An instructor claims, “You might break arms but as long as you do it correctly, or somewhat correctly, it’s okay.” Later, he says, “You’re gonna body slam somebody and his head will hit the ground...If you screw up, remember to call it a modified [takedown] and say it was legal.”

This is a clear example of a superior defining and modeling the way to deal with the law to the recruits. Officers and recruits are to have a strong confidence and presence so to provoke no uncertainty about their decisions. Given the curriculum teachings on the ethical responsibility to be honest, the question social learning theory would pose is: what

is the balance of definitions toward the way the law is handled? The curriculum teaches honesty but the informal lesson is that, in practice, the law can be “interpreted.”

Officer safety gives officers a justification for violating rights. For example, officers regularly do pat-down searches of citizens that they stop and talk to. They use this type of search under the guise of officer safety (to search for guns and knives, etc.), but if they find drugs, it usually leads to an arrest, according to FTO files. Similarly, on traffic stops, trainees are encouraged to “help” suspects find their license and registration by shining the flashlight over their shoulder (to look in their glove compartment) when possible. This is another excuse to look for drugs under the guise of officer safety. If the search turns up contraband, the suspect is almost always cited or taken to jail.

The use of presence and assertiveness to engage in “consent” searches was discussed previously. An instructor (not a law enforcement officer) told the recruits, “cops become good at manipulating people to believe they won’t get in trouble if they consent to the search.”

Law on the books versus law in action has obvious implications for COPS. Citizens need to trust COPS officers. What happens if they learn that an officer “bends” the law in order to make an arrest? Will citizens be willing to partner? Will they expect COPS officers to help the citizens take “short cuts” too? Ironically, COPS officers may have to be lax in some areas in order to concentrate on community defined patterns to build neighborhood residents’ trust. Pushing the envelope and searching neighborhood residents, even if legal, may not be the way to gain access to information needed to solve the problems in a community.

Diversity

There is a large block of the academy devoted to diversity training. Diversity training in the CMS curriculum was thorough and academic. The new curriculum showed a marked improvement over the traditional curriculum, especially in light of expanding the racial and ethnic groups that were discussed. For example, in the traditional curriculum, coverage mainly pertained to blacks and whites, whereas CMS included many types of cultural minorities (and the notion that wherever works one is going to have different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups). The information is high quality and is threaded throughout other modules via SECURE. Indeed, scenarios forced recruits to face issues of diversity while handling traditional police work (e.g., traffic stops).

The instructors openly discuss the challenges that women and minorities are likely to face in the police organization. For example, women are likely to be labeled as “bitches, sluts, or lesbians.” Racial minorities will be called racial slurs to their faces by citizens. Instructors encourage recruits to air their feelings about different racial and ethnic groups. For example, the class discussed their feelings about specific groups, such as Canadians, and the general consensus was that they thought Canadians were “rude.” The instructor tells them that it is fine for them to think that, but they cannot let their beliefs interfere with their actions.

The instructor was explaining to the class that different cultures perceive gestures differently. For example, other cultures perceive a weak or limp handshake as deferent, while Americans perceive it as insulting. A recruit yells out, “He might be a little fruity!” This behavior causes laughter (positive social reinforcement) and goes uncorrected. The lack of punishment sends the message to the recruits that these jokes are normative.

The diversity module was directly related to COPS. Its effectiveness is a direct function of the instructor and his/her ability to engage the recruits. For example, one instructor who is essentially in charge of the training program and highly committed to the CMS curriculum does an outstanding job with all of the material. Other instructors seem to “get bored” with topics such as communications or diversity and revert to ‘war stories’ about traditional police work. During a class on diversity, recruits asked one of the instructors to tell a story about his best car chase. In the middle of his story, the class coordinator walked in, and the instructor quickly changed the tune of his story and concluded it with, “the best car chases are the ones when nobody gets hurt.”

While the CMS curriculum does an outstanding job of addressing diversity and gender issues from an academic standpoint, the informal messages are not consistent. For example, several minutes after teaching a thorough section on cultural effectiveness, an instructor at the academy discusses how he will be mad if his wife does not have dinner on the table when he gets home. The same instructor talks about how “you should find a woman you hate and buy her a house and a car every few years...” (saying that’s essentially what marriage is anyway). Another instructor, who is highly committed to the success of this curriculum, also regularly talks about how he is careful not to make his wife angry because he may have to cook his own dinner in the evening.

Informally, different messages are being received from the formal ones about diversity. For example, one recruit told me that police officers in power know that racism is going on, but they accept it or look the other way. He said, “there seems to be this underlying theme that ‘racism is okay’ if you can cover your ass legally...” This was only one recruit’s opinion, however. Many of these messages reinforce traditional

policing. For example, one instructor stated, “the fun part of our job is catching criminals, but we also have to do things like help women change flat tires.” This is not only a definition but it is being modeled by ranking officers.

Policing has long been a profession of white males. Though times are changing, many ranking officers are still white males (Britz 1997). It is also a chivalrous organization, which was clear to me the day I began my research. Being an academic, the climate is quite different from what I am accustomed to (they open doors for me, walk me to the car with an umbrella when it is raining, etc.). My role as a woman at the academy made my experience much different from what it would have been for a man. For example, during breaks, male recruits would immediately talk to me and seemed to flirt with me. They were curious about my life and, specifically, my boyfriend. They often referred to me as their “little sister.” Given the “family” metaphor for being part of the group that recruits used, my acceptance as a “little sister” made my presence less reactive.

In the traditional curriculum, there was a female civilian who taught some of the legal units. She was pregnant for part of the time she was teaching, and she had a very feminine demeanor. She was strongly disliked by the recruits. They had no respect for her; they argued with her and thought she knew nothing about police work. The recruits made her teaching experience at the academy unbearable. Oftentimes, the recruits had to be punished for their behavior during her class. Recruits would often talk, snicker and generally be disrespectful during her lectures. Therefore, the class lieutenant would discipline the class (e.g., make them go for a run).

Several female instructors who were respected by the recruits were less feminine and tougher in demeanor. They had a strong “presence” and were very assertive. They had a traditional “masculinist” orientation and a take-charge attitude. One of these female instructors became pregnant during her tenure as an instructor at the academy as well. Recruits had the utmost respect for these female instructors. One class chose one of these female instructors as their graduation speaker (recruits are able to choose an instructor to speak at their academy graduation). Thus, recruits did not chastise all female instructors, but the female civilian became a target for the recruits.

It is difficult to discern the reason for the extreme dislike of the female civilian instructor. Because recruits felt comfortable with and respected other female instructors, it was not simply a gender issue. The recruits seemed to perceive her as having a lack of authority on police work. Her lack of “police presence” may have conveyed a weakness to the recruits. A perceived lack of knowledge combined with a perceived weakness (or lack of assertiveness) and femininity seemed to have caused the recruits to see her as a target and chastise her constantly. In Chicago, Dantzker et al. (1995) found that recruits and officers had a strong dislike for civilian trainers. My experience is that this issue is multiplied when the civilian trainer is a female.

The formal curriculum teachings on race and gender are often not taken seriously enough by the recruits or instructors. For example, during a break from a module on communications, several recruits and the instructor were discussing the previous (completed) module on diversity. A recruit commented, “we are now diversified!” The instructor empathized, commenting, “I know, we have to go through it during in-service training too.” The modeling and informal messages undercut the acceptance of diversity

that was the point of the formal training. Therefore, definitions toward appropriate race and gender roles are not likely to be differentially learned in this environment. Instead, they are overwhelmed by informal messages that say that diversity training is a necessary component of academy training.

Marion (1998) said that one of the major drawbacks to the recruit training she observed was the sexism and racism. This included boasts about sexual encounters, jokes about female recruits' inability to subdue suspects, and comments and gestures that went unnoticed or ignored by instructors. She also observed comments by instructors about nagging wives and girlfriends. Female recruits were not offended by these comments, and in fact, seemed more offended by the researcher's concern over this aspect of the training. It was just "part of the job," according to the recruits, and it should be expected and ignored. Further, she notes that recruits treated the courses on human diversity with relative unimportance and triviality.

Though the new curriculum has made great strides in its teachings in diversity, the informal messages have not kept pace. When instructors are "teaching" diversity one minute and telling jokes about belittling their wives during the next break, there is a major disconnect between the messages that are being sent to the recruits. This undercuts the COPS philosophy and its normative orientation. Until the informal messages are consistent with the curriculum teachings, the diversity lessons are unlikely to have a positive lasting effect.

In field training, it was often noted when trainees were good at communicating with people of "various backgrounds." However, diversity did not emerge as an explicit theme in the field training files, and in some ways, it was used to look for "bad guys."

During field training, FTO's want trainees to "stay busy," therefore, they direct their patrol to areas where there is criminal activity. This invariably sends them to a section of town with a diverse population. Though dealing with diversity issues was not explicitly discussed in the files, the types of crimes that trainees were handling exposed the fact that they were on one side of town rather than another. It is reasonable to assume some definitions linked to diversity were being modeled and reinforced through this fact alone—even though they were not formally written in the DEF's. In other words, if you want to "make busts," go to the east side of town and stop "diverse" people.

Diversity classes at the academy also deal with the mentally ill (somewhat). It is disturbing how ignorant/uninformed the recruits are about the mentally ill. Unfortunately CMS does little to improve recruits' understanding of this issue in our society. Instead, the curriculum focuses on how to deal with "them" rather than understanding mental illness as a societal problem, which would provide a good background before they learn practical subjects, such as Baker Acts¹⁷.

One day in diversity training, recruits asked the instructor, "What is the PC way to refer to the mentally retarded?" Another recruit provided an answer, "call 'em a squirrel!" Everyone laughed, including the instructor, which sends the message that this is normative and tolerated. As the discussion continued, a recruit commented, "you can just say he threatened you—no one will believe him!" The recruit had learned how instrumental deceit can be.

Unfortunately, this has major implications for policing, as police officers spend a substantial amount of time dealing with the mentally ill. Field training files indicate that

¹⁷ Baker Act is the involuntary civil commitment process in Florida.

officers constantly respond to “signal 20’s,” the code for mentally ill persons. Our criminal justice system is overwhelmed with people who have mental disorders. As soon as the recruits become trainees in field training, they deal with Baker Acts on a regular basis, but they do so with little understanding of the dynamics of the various illnesses.

Diversity is a major component of COPS, and therefore may be seen as “code” for some COPS principles. For example, respecting diversity allows everyone in the community a voice. It is also code for whether someone is seen as a “good guy” or a “bad guy” and whether a person is dangerous. Historically, racial minorities have been the objects of police deviance. Therefore, diversity is a key issue in training and policing today.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to advance a framework for understanding both formal and informal aspects of police socialization. In my observations of police training, I learned that the formal and informal cannot be separated. Instead, they work together to form a “normative climate” that characterizes police training and socialization. The normative climate is made up of seven themes that are defined, modeled and reinforced/punished through differential association with peers and superiors in the police training environment.

The second purpose was to describe the seven themes of police training and socialization that make up the normative climate: 1) paramilitary environment, 2) officer safety, 3) the bad guy and the ‘us versus them’ mentality, 4) police presence and assertiveness, 5) experiential knowledge and traditional police work, 6) law on the books versus law in action, and 7) diversity. I have discussed the implications that these themes

have for the way that police officers interact with their department, the way they deal with citizens, and implications for COPS.

The paramilitary structure is the most salient component of the normative climate. The implications for COPS cannot be overstated. Community policing posits that the paramilitary hierarchical structure must be flattened in order to grant line personnel more autonomy to make decisions. Roberg (1994) argues that the military environment and bureaucratic structure of police agencies is a key internal obstacle to implementing COPS. It not only has implications for the organization and hampers the individual officers' abilities to make decisions, it affects the type of person who is attracted to policing as a career. A person so willing to accept criticism, follow chain of command, and show deference may not be the best person for the job of a COPS officer. A COPS officer should be self-governing, outgoing and motivated; training is not likely to be effective if self-selection is hampering the pool of applicants.

Officer safety is another salient lesson in academy and field training. I recognize the importance of safety in policing, as policing is a dangerous occupation. However, the constant suspicion that goes along with officer safety hampers building partnerships and trust with citizens in community policing. Thus, the COPS officer is faced with a challenge when reconciling these two foci. Similarly, vigilance for the "bad guy" and the "us versus them" orientation are inconsistent with the values and philosophy of COPS. COPS officers must learn to focus on solving long-term community-defined problems, rather than making serial arrests of "bad guys."

The COPS officer must learn how to manage traditional assertiveness and "police presence" in situations when he or she is trying to partner with law-abiding citizens to

solve problems and relate with the community. A heavy-handed approach will intimidate some citizens and make others angry. The idea of COPS is to make residents feel comfortable and trusting of their community police officers, rather than fearful and overly deferential. The community needs to be the source of problem-solving—its members need to be able to assert themselves while officers become facilitators. Traditional police work is still an emphasis in police training and socialization. Police officers will continue to have to handle emergency situations and make arrests, but the majority of their time is spent maintaining order and solving problems. The culture needs to reflect the reality of police work rather than the myth that officers are arresting “bad guys” all of the time.

We can expect slippage between law on the books and that in action. The nature of that slippage is important, however. I saw some evidence that recruits are learning neutralizations for bending the law to obtain searches and cover up force. Some of these definitions and learned behavior will not be conducive to COPS. Community residents who find out about unscrupulous practices will be untrusting of police officers and unwilling to share information about their problems. They may even expect officers to bend the law in other circumstances to help them. It is a slippery slope, and one of the fears of having officers work so closely with community residents. Because of past corruption that occurred during the watchman era, there is reluctance to extend too much autonomy to COPS officers and there is a challenge for agencies regarding how to exert supervision.

Though major steps have been taken to improve the units on diversity in the CMS curriculum, the informal messages are likely what is being learned by the recruits. Until

the cultural messages about diversity are consistent with curriculum teachings, the messages will not be internalized and learned by police recruits. First, they need to be internalized by the police trainers themselves. “Off the cuff” comments and jokes about nagging wives and girlfriends may seem trivial but they undercut the goals of the CMS curriculum and send the message that there is a disjuncture between formal rules and what is informally allowed in policing. In order for COPS to work, diversity has to be understood and respected.

Learning to become a police officer does not seem to be affected by the CMS curriculum. This is because the normative aspect of policing is consistent with the traditional ideals of policing. Traditional policing, officer safety, police presence, and paramilitary structure are defined, modeled and reinforced as the most important aspects of police work, despite some formal instruction in community policing and diversity. There is little reinforcement or modeling of attitudes and behavior consistent with COPS.

Until the normative climate changes and becomes consistent with the philosophy and values of COPS, the rift between police and communities will continue. The CMS curriculum makes a good effort to prepare officers for COPS, but unfortunately, there are still many obstacles to overcome. This study offers some insight into what those obstacles are and some suggestions as to how to resolve them in the future.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The goal of this study was to analyze the extent to which learning is affected by a new police training curriculum instituted in one police training center. The new curriculum, CMS, sought to integrate problem-solving and community policing principles throughout all training modules. I relied on participant observation data from the academy classes themselves, official data measuring recruits' academy performance and relative success, as well as field training performance records in one police agency that hired many officers from the police academy. Supplemental data included informal interviews and attendance at meetings at the police agency in order to get an idea of the normative climate toward community policing in the agency.

Police recruits who went through the CMS curriculum differed little in terms of academy performance compared to recruits who went through the former traditional curriculum. No particular "type" of recruit was more or less likely to fail, gain employment, or achieve higher academy scores. Perhaps, this can be explained by the normative climate of the police training and socialization experience; a climate that has changed little since the reformation in curricula.

I developed a characterization of what is differentially learned in the police training and socialization experience. I describe seven themes that characterize the learning that occurs throughout the academy and field training experience that supersedes other learning that occurs in police training. Notably, community policing and problem solving

did not emerge as explicit themes in my observational research. However, the seven themes do have implications for community policing, as well as how officers are likely to deal with citizens in field contacts.

The bottom line is that community policing and problem solving are overwhelmed by the paramilitary environment and the emphasis on traditional police work and officer safety. The new curriculum makes a good effort to highlight the importance of diversity and problem solving, but it is trumped by instructors and other incumbents who were trained in and believe in the traditional ideals of police work. The curriculum teaches lessons on working with the community and applying the SECURE model of problem solving, but arrests are still valued more than problem solving in the occupational culture. These attitudes are learned by the recruits. Additionally, police recruits are still screened for traditional police work, rather than community policing. For example, military experience is still considered a valued attribute when applying to a police agency and in leadership positions during academy training. Military experience is not one of the skills needed to be a COPS officer. In fact, it may be inconsistent with the COPS philosophy. It is a challenge to the new training curriculum when recruitment and selection are not consistent with COPS. The entire philosophy must be changed in order for COPS to work.

Even if recruits graduate from the police academy having learned the philosophy and skills relevant to community policing and problem solving, their learning continues in a field training program. Field training is the time when police trainees are learning to apply academy lessons to the street, and therefore, it is the ideal time to reinforce the COPS lessons learned in the academy. I analyzed field training at an agency that hires

many of the officers from the academy that I studied. The agency also explicitly endorses COPS. However, I found that field training focused almost exclusively on traditional police work, arrests, and officer safety and failed to incorporate the COPS philosophy. My research revealed virtually no reinforcement of COPS or problem solving, thus any learning consistent with COPS in the academy was likely overwhelmed by the emphasis on traditional police work highlighted in field training. I argue that field training is the opportunity to teach COPS, and it is the missing link in the learning process. This is likely a common dilemma due to the fact that the San Jose model is still the standard FTO program used by most police agencies. As mentioned earlier, the San Jose model is thirty years old and does not incorporate COPS or problem solving. Researchers are working on a new field training program that integrates COPS and problem solving into its training program so this may be a key turning point for agencies that truly want to adopt COPS.

The well-documented “peer culture” is a significant obstacle to the institutionalization of COPS. It is communicated to the recruits through war stories and informal conversations. Because of the environment in which these informal lessons are communicated, the lessons associated with them may be more salient than the lessons learned from the basic lecture material. Therefore, changing the culture will be difficult, but some of the suggestions below may offer some possibilities for change.

Ways to Improve

Instructors

The majority of the instructors at the academy were veteran police officers, and all of the “instructional” personnel in field training are, by definition, police officers (FTO’s). They do not have any formal training in teaching methods, and this is

sometimes obvious. There are two problems with this. The first problem is that many of the current instructors are not always effective in communicating the material to the recruits. Instructors who are trained in teaching methods will be more effective at relaying the relevant information to the recruits. The second problem is that the instructors are very similar. Police recruits need to be exposed to instructors with varied backgrounds. Certainly, the curricula include topics that beg for the knowledge of professionals in their field (e.g., psychologists and/or social workers for units on special populations such as the mentally ill and elderly, English/writing teachers for report-writing).

The result of having police officers without special educational skills teaching nearly all of the classes is that the classes are often boring, unorganized, and lack variation (e.g., group work, projects, etc.). Instructional methods would help to “mix it up” and keep recruits interested in their own learning. Indeed, one of the goals of CMS is to incorporate andragogy, or adult learning into the training. Additionally, instructors who come from varied backgrounds would accentuate the “community” aspect of the curriculum, reinforce diversity, and help break through the dominant traditional police culture.

College-Educated Recruits

Although class composition at the academy varies many of the recruits are very rigid and closed-minded. They have difficulty understanding abstractions and complexities, like constitutional law. Many recruits do not understand the right to free speech, for example, and they think that certain rights should be taken away by the police if someone breaks the law. A college curriculum is likely to address the history and

importance of these issues so that recruits are less rigid. The communities in which they operate are likely to have divergent views about such matters.

College would also expose recruits to a diverse population. Many of them have never had the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds and are very closed-minded about people from different cultures. Common college practices, such as group work, problem solving, and dealing with diverse people would give recruits experience and practice working with a variety of people and using skills they will need for their job as a police officer.

As mentioned previously, many recruits lack understanding about mental illness. Because police officers have to deal with the mentally ill on a daily basis, I believe this is a critical shortcoming. Many of them have limited views of the mentally ill, and a college education may help them address this as well. For example, four-year degree programs offer courses in general psychology.

Updated Field Training

Regardless of the academy training in COPS, field training is doing little to reinforce COPS. The academy invests a considerable amount of time teaching problem solving (SECURE), which is never mentioned at the field training stage. The agency is a self-proclaimed COPS department, but provides no training in COPS. FTO's may or may not have had training in COPS (training was provided at a series of workshops several years ago), but there is no training in COPS for current officers. Thus, the field training program must be updated to reflect a COPS approach so that all officers receive sufficient COPS training and retraining. Officers are required to do a specific amount of in-service training per year in skills areas (e.g., they must become re-certified in defensive

tactics and with their weapon). They should do this for community relations and problem solving as well.

Horizontal Communication

The emphasis is on vertical communication at the academy, in field training and at the department, so there is no practice for communicating with the community. If COPS requires officers to partner with the community and help residents solve community-defined problems, recruits/officers need training and practice in horizontal communication skills. One of the main tenets of COPS is decentralization (Maguire 1997), but it is one of the last (and arguably most challenging) components that agencies adopt. The paramilitary structure is still very pronounced at the academy and department and this works against the institutionalization of COPS.

Adult Learning

The adult learning model that is supposed to be practiced at the academy reverts back to lecture, especially during topics that are not adopted as the belief system of the instructor. Many times the instructors will become animated and discussion-oriented in skills training and traditional topics, but when the topics are COPS and diversity, they often revert to lecture and become very boring. This is a form of punishment. The lessons learned through war stories about traditional crime-fighting are more salient because the environment is relaxed and informal. Again, instructors who are trained in instructional methods will likely be more comfortable incorporating adult-learning techniques in the classroom.

A Final Thought: Training Versus Education

Training and education are both important in the preparation of police officers. Although research is somewhat unclear on the direct effects of education on police

performance, I argue that it is a necessary component in the preparation of police officers. The two are complementary and prepare the recruit in different ways. Education is general and aids the recruit's cognitive and analytic development. Education is broad in scope and increases one's critical analysis, problem-solving, and community relations skills (Haberfield 2002). It also exposes one to diverse populations. Generally, it prepares the recruit for training.

Training, on the other hand, refers to instruction for a specific task. Also necessary for police recruits, it refers to skill and knowledge areas, such as firearms training, defensive tactics, equipment operation, and emergency tactics (see Haberfield 2002).

Some scholars call for an innovative approach that combines education and training, such as that which is done in Sweden (see Lord 1998). For example, Greenberg (1998) discusses a Model Precinct program that would combine intensive fieldwork experience, a college degree program and basic police school requirements into one program. Recruits would essentially work as interns for local agencies throughout college. Agencies would benefit by getting to know the recruits as interns, and interns could learn about the agencies and essentially perform service work while in training. Their course work would be shared between college professors and police trainers. When they graduate with their college degree, they would also be qualified to work in law enforcement.

Theoretical Lessons

There are several important theoretical lessons to be learned from this study. First, there was an overwhelming amount of punishment used by instructors and FTO's in the police training and socialization experience (also see Van Maanen 1973). There was little formal positive reinforcement. The positive reinforcement was largely informal. Perhaps

the skills and attitudes valued in COPS should be formally reinforced in order to help the COPS philosophy materialize.

On the other hand, I was able to illustrate the police training and socialization process with my participant observation data using social learning theory. I showed how definitions of policing were developed through modeling and reinforcement/punishment in association with superiors and peers at the academy and in field training. I highlighted the importance of informal lessons in the learning of behavior. I was able to study the entire social learning process and show how lessons are differentially learned in police training and socialization. Hopefully that will make this study useful, not only to those who study the police, but to others who aim to study occupational socialization in general.

Limitations and Future Research

In the quantitative analysis, I measured police recruit performance by analyzing average academy score, failure experiences, and employment upon graduation. Looking at academy scores does not indicate whether the CMS curriculum affects the way police officers do their jobs. The curriculum may not affect a recruit's performance in the academy or his or her likelihood of finding employment, but the more substantive question is whether it impacts the qualitative nature of his or her policing style. Thus, in future research, it would be ideal to compare recruits from two curricula in terms of their ability to communicate with residents and problem solve. One way to do this is through ride alongs with officers.

Some findings were surprising to me. One of them is that police actually learn neutralizing definitions and deceit as a tactic, and this learning begins in the academy. Recruits learn how to provide excuses for their behavior if they make a mistake, they

learn how to use the law in their favor in order to make an arrest, and they learn how to justify their behavior when it is for a moral cause (e.g., to catch a “bad guy”). They also learn how to use their assertiveness and “positional authority” to gain consent to perform searches that often lead to contraband that ultimately ends in the arrest of the “suspect”. Of course, none of this works well with the COPS philosophy.

On the other hand, I learned some very positive things. The people responsible for creating and putting the new curriculum into practice are trying very hard to train better police officers. Their efforts are commendable. Hopefully, as the new curriculum settles in, the instructors begin to adopt and internalize the philosophy of COPS, and the field training is updated to reflect a COPS orientation, COPS principles will become integrated into the daily work of every police officer. I have learned that it will take a group effort to make this work. Those who recruit and select the officers, train them in the academy and train and socialize them in their various agencies must all be on board.

In the future, I plan to follow-up on my original sample of recruits to find out whether they stayed in law enforcement and whether there are differences in their policing careers based on which curriculum they attended. I would also like to interview a sample of the recruits to find out, from their perspective, the extent to which the academy curriculum affected their police performance after having been on the job for several years.

I hope that the results of this study will be a resource to police training centers that are attempting to build their own innovative COPS curricula. In the future, the proposed study could be replicated to assess COPS training and its effectiveness on policing practices using larger samples from additional academies. In the end, the study will

provide valuable information on both a public policy and scholarly level. Specifically, it is one of the first analyses of COPS training, and it is an application of social learning theory in a new context.

APPENDIX
CURRICULA CONTENTS

Table A-1. Basic law enforcement curriculum: traditional

Course name	Hours
Medical First Responder	48
CJ Defensive Tactics	106
CJ Weapons	64
Legal I	46
Legal II	48
Communications	56
Interpersonal Skills I	66
Vehicle Operations	32
Legal III	32
Law Enforcement Patrol	64
Law Enforcement Traffic	46
Investigations	64
Total Hours	672

Table A-2. Basic law enforcement curriculum: CMS

Course name	Hours
Introduction	194
Vehicle Operations	48
First Aid for Criminal Justice Officers	40
Firearms	80
Defensive Tactics	80
Patrol	57
Investigations	53
Investigating Offenses	40
Traffic Stops	62
Traffic Crash Investigations	32
Court Process	14
Rescue	5
Bombs and Explosives	22
Crowd Control	13
Criminal Justice Special Topics	20
Total Hours	760

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