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Police Socialization: A
Longitudinal Examination
of Job Attitudes in an
Urban Police Department

John Van Maanen

This article documents changes in the attitudes of police recruits moving through the series of experiences associated with their early careers. The data were obtained from questionnaires which were administered longitudinally to newcomers in a big-city department and cross-checked by the researcher who was a participant-observer in the police training program. The analysis concentrated upon the motivation, commitment, and need satisfaction of patrol officers. The findings indicated that recruits entered the department highly motivated and committed to their newly-adopted organization. However, their motivational attitudes declined swiftly. Evidence is presented which suggests the less motivated patrol officers are perceived by their relevant supervisors as better policemen than their more motivated peers. Commitment attitudes also dropped over time, although expressed commitment remained relatively high compared to several other occupational samples. A positive association was present between superior evaluations of performance and commitment attitudes. Need satisfaction remained fairly constant across time and a positive relationship was detected between evaluations of performance and reported satisfaction. These findings denote the speedy and powerful character of the police socialization process resulting in a final perspective which stresses a "lay low, don't make waves" approach to urban policing. The findings also suggest the beginning of a general theory of organizational socialization.¹

INTRODUCTION

The job attitudes of recruit police officers in a large, urban police department are examined longitudinally within the framework of what theorists have termed organizational socialization (Caplow, 1964; Berlew and Hall, 1966; Wheeler, 1966; Schein, 1968, 1971; Manning, 1970; Porter, Van Maanen and Crampon, 1972)—that is, the process by which an organizational member learns the required behaviors and supportive attitudes necessary to participate as a member of an organization.

Although organizational socialization occurs throughout all career stages, this analysis is directed primarily to the consideration of the person's entry into the organization. During this "breaking-in" period, the organization may be thought to be most persuasive for the individual has few, if any, guidelines to direct his behavior (Van Maanen, 1975). A wide range of studies indicate that early organizational learning is a major determinant of one's later organizationally-relevant attitudes and behaviors (Herzberg *et al.*, 1957; Schein, 1965, 1971; Berlew and Hall, 1966; Denhart, 1968; Vroom and Deci, 1971).

This examination of the organizational socialization process focuses upon the attitudes of young men entering the police world. As others have noted, police organizations have been neglected by researchers interested in the relationships between individuals and their work (Neiderhoffer, 1967; President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967; Bayley and Mendelson, 1969; Rubenstein, 1973). Most data regarding the police socialization process either examine certain hypothesized dimensions of the police

1

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personality—for example, cynicism, dogmatism, authoritarianism, and so forth—or survey opinions aimed at describing police attitudes toward certain audiences external to police departments—for example, minority groups, juveniles, judges, reporters, and so forth. As a result, little more than cross-sectional snapshots of the police socialization process exist. There are, however, two notable exceptions: Rubenstein's (1973) brilliant ethnology of the Philadelphia Police Department and Westley's (1951) classic account of the policeman's lot in a midwestern department. Several excellent observational reports, most concerned with rather specific aspects of police behavior—Skolnick (1966) on vice activities; Reiss (1971) on police-citizen encounters; Bittner (1967) and Cicourel (1967) on police interaction with skid-row alcoholics and juveniles, respectively—are also available. Yet, these studies are devoted mainly to the description of the more salient sociological features of the occupation and are concerned only peripherally with the subject of this paper, the learning process associated with a police career.

This study probes into police recruits' perceptions of three aspects of their relationship with the organization—motivation, commitment, and need satisfaction. These attitude areas can be seen to be distinct analytically if not empirically. The theoretical perspective combines an expectancy approach to work motivation (Fishbein, 1963; Vroom, 1964; and Porter and Lawler, 1968) with conceptions of organizational commitment (Kanter, 1968; Patchen, 1970; and Porter and Smith, 1970) and need satisfaction (Maslow, 1954; Porter, 1962; and Hall and Nougaim, 1968).

A substantial amount of descriptive data was obtained by attitude mapping via questionnaires administered over time to department initiates. Also, a major portion of this study was devoted to the observation of novice patrolmen *in situ*. The researcher became a fully participating member of the Police Academy recruit class (Recruit Group IV, Table 1). Following the training phase of the socialization process, the role of modified participant-observer was adopted and some time (approximately six months) was spent as an armed backseat observer in patrol units comprised of a member of the recruit class and his partner. This experiential technique proved extremely valuable and provided the background upon which much of this analysis is based. Yet the merging of the survey and observation approaches to field research was difficult. The two styles pulled one in opposite directions: one method being specific and the other general. In this particular case, the juxtaposition of the two methods created pressure on one hand to scrap the original aims of the study and tackle larger issues and on the other hand to ignore the richness of context and concentrate solely on the quantifiable aspects. Although in retrospect, the two methods provide an excellent—but arduous—check on one another—with the empirical aspects of the study acting as a limit upon the inferential and the observational portion of the study providing the fabric into which the survey results must be woven.

Finally, to suggest behavioral implications connected to the attitude landscape, independent judgments were collected on the recruits' job behavior. The two main concerns are listed below in the form of two research questions.

Police Socialization

(1.) What are job-related attitudes of police recruits when they first encounter the department and in what manner do these attitudes change as the recruits pass through their formal academy training and their experiences "on the street"?

(2.) To what degree are the job-related attitudes of the police recruits associated with independent assessments of their behavior in the "field"?

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study took place in "Union City," a large urban municipality, between April 1970 and February 1973.² The Union City Police Department is considered typical of most big-city departments and employs well over 1,500 uniformed personnel. Like all paramilitary organizations, the Union City Police Department is highly centralized with bureaucratic authority vested in formalized positions stressing the importance of the command structure for controlling subordinate behavior. In general, the organizational context values technical efficiency and pressures the officers to produce.

The police officer selection process in Union City is similar to that of most other large police departments in the country. The applicant must pass progressively the civil service examination, background investigation, medical examination, physical strength and agility test, oral interview and a psychiatric examination. If the applicant is successful, he is hired into the Department on the basis of authorized openings. Normally, a recruit's first assignment is with the Training Division. Here, the novice first encounters the police milieu as presented to him at the Police Academy.

In Union City, the formal training program for recruits apparently does not serve an additional screening function. Although recruits are told that they must achieve a minimum standard of competence, virtually all recruits graduate from the Academy despite their performance. Of the four recruit groups sampled in this study, only three men failed to graduate with their respective classes.

SAMPLE

Four regularly scheduled recruit classes were selected for the longitudinal portion of this study. All recruits ($N = 136$) in each of the classes received questionnaire packets on the first administration.

Each recruit group represented a different stage in the formal socialization process. Originally, the study was designed to approximate a modified version of Solomon's (1949) four-fold group design, but certain unpredictable circumstances intervened to prevent this more rigorous design. For example: training facilities became overcrowded and one group was prevented from following its planned sequence; maintenance of good will between the researcher and the Department required that certain changes be made in the study design; training policies were altered after the research was begun; and so on. However, the operational difficulties were of minor importance since the major research problem, access, had already been solved.³

The formal recruit training process consisted of a rigorous 18-week program. First, the newcomers attended a 12-week Basic Training School characterized by harsh discipline, didactic

2

"Union City" is a pseudonym for a sprawling metropolitan area populated by more than one million persons. The police department is considered to be professional, approaching the legalistic category postulated by Wilson (1968). In a survey conducted in 1968, Union City's police resources (per capita expenditures) were ranked in the upper third among similar sized cities. Furthermore, the starting salary for police officers ranked in the top quartile nationally—entering officers could expect to make over \$11,000 during their first year on the force.

3

Over 20 urban police departments were approached before one of them agreed to this rather small scale and low profile study. In most cases, they refused without explanation.

instruction, and detailed regimentation. Police academies across the country appear to be far more similar to one another than dissimilar. Most departments attempt to follow the guidelines established by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967). The Union City department organized the material and daily routine of its academy—approximately 480 hours of training—according to a model training schedule developed and distributed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Correspondence with a number of police administrators indicated that the use of the IACP training plan is indeed quite common. For a microscopic descriptive treatment of a representative police academy, see Harris (1973). Following graduation from the Union City Police Academy, the recruits were introduced to the veritable complexities of policing by an experienced patrolman called the Field Training Officer (FTO). After completing this 6-week apprenticeship, most recruits were assigned permanent partners and considered to be real (albeit rookie) policemen.

Table 1

Basic Survey Design													
Date* (1st adm.)	Group	Months in Department											
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	 30
		1970											1973
		Administrative numbers											
June 10	I						1	2	3	4	5		—
June 10	II				1	2	3	4	5				—
June 10	III			1	2	3	4	5					—
June 20	IV	1	2	3	4	5							6

• The date of first administration. The remaining questionnaires for each group were administered on the same date of the 4 following months.

Table 1 presents the basic survey design according to administration number (1 through 6) and according to the length of Departmental experience for each of the recruit groups (0 months through 30 months). The sixth administration occurred during January and February 1973. This follow-up study checked the accuracy—via observations, interviews, and questionnaires—of the original analysis as well as to discover what changes, if any, had taken place in the officers after two and one-half years of experience in the police world. Questionnaires were distributed however only to patrolmen who had been Group IV academy classmates in 1970 (*N*=38) and were collected during a scheduled but relatively informal interview. Each set of questionnaires was accompanied by a letter from the researcher requesting each person's cooperation in the study but making it clear that their participation was voluntary, that the information supplied would be held strictly confidential, that no one in the Department would ever see anyone's individual responses, and that the Department would not pressure them to cooperate. As Table 2 indicates, the response rates were somewhat disappointing—notably from the group most advanced in the

Table 2

Response Rates							
Group	Number of subjects	Administrative number					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
		Response rates [•]					
I	41	73	60	56	33	31	—
II	16	100	94	69	75	63	—
III	39	93	80	100	88	76	
IV	40	100	85	83	78	62	95
Total number of subjects		136	134	133	133	131	
Total returned (in percent)		90	78	80	68	57	
[•] Response rate in percent.							

socialization process. The attrition was due almost entirely to individuals leaving the study but remaining with the organization. Due to the low response rates, data collected during the eighth and ninth month of police experience have been deleted from the analysis.

From the reported recruit characteristics, a coarse profile of the typical Union City recruit can be constructed. The Union City "green pea" is male, about 24 years old, white, married, in excellent health and was raised in or around Union City.⁴ There is a positive likelihood that he has attended college, although it is doubtful he has a degree. The recruit's family background is decidedly—and somewhat surprisingly—middle class. However, most of his work experience has been in occupations distinctly below the middle class level and required little in the way of supervisory duties. If he has performed leadership functions, it is probable that such experience resulted from his enlistment in one of the armed services. Without question, Union City recruits appear far more similar to police recruits from other departments than they are dissimilar—see Van Maanen (1972) for a more elaborate discussion. If anything, the Union City Police Department appears to be attracting slightly better young officers than other departments—from the perspective of the police professed professional ideal which stresses education and class background.

Finally, cross-sectional data were gathered from veteran officers with two but less than three years' experience. Questionnaire packets were mailed in December of 1970 to all officers graduating from the police academy in 1968 (N=58). Of these experienced patrolmen, 72 percent returned completed questionnaires. The demographic characteristics of this group did not differ in any important way from those in the recruit sample.

ATTITUDE MEASURES

The attitude questionnaires concentrated upon the police officers' perceptions and affective responses toward different features of their work situation. Each of the instruments focused upon one of three related, but conceptually different attitude areas. All measures were pretested in a small pilot study. Specifically, the respective questionnaire contained 88 items relevant to aspects of police officers' perceived organizational ecology.

4 All members of the various sample groups used in this were male.

Motivation

The measurement of motivation is based upon expectancy theory. This theory assumes the strength of the tendency for an individual to behave in a particular manner is a function of: the degree to which the person expects certain outcomes to result from the particular behavior (expectancy); times the attractiveness to him of the expected result (valence). A number of studies have indicated the general usefulness of expectancy theory for understanding individual behavior in organizational settings (Georgopoulos, Mahoney, and Jones, 1957; Vroom, 1964; Galbraith and Cummings, 1967, Porter and Lawler, 1968; Gurin and Gurin, 1970; and Mitchell and Biglan, 1971).

The specific work attitude data used to determine motivation were obtained by means of a 60-item questionnaire. The two-part questionnaire was developed by this researcher and modeled along the lines of an instrument constructed by Porter, Van Maanen and Crampon (1972).

Part I: Expectancy beliefs. This part of the questionnaire was designed to measure the person's belief concerning the probability of effort leading to the obtainment of various job-related outcomes and contained 35 items. Each item asked the respondent to indicate on a seven-point Likert-type scale—ranging from "very true" (6) to "not true at all true" (0)—whether "working especially hard" on a particular activity would lead to one of five outcomes. The outcomes were: (1) receiving favorable responses from the community, (2) receiving favorable responses from the Department, (3) receiving favorable responses from the supervisor, (4) receiving favorable responses from peers, and (5) receiving greater personal satisfaction

Seven activities were designated to represent the major areas of the total job-related activity space for patrol officers—field investigation, routine control, inspection, administrative, service, community relations and self-development activities. Each of these activities was defined fully in the questionnaire instructions, and, based on the results of the pilot study, meaningful to patrolmen.

Part II: Values of outcomes. This part of the Motivational Force Questionnaire contained 25 items dealing with the value the individuals placed on the particular job-related outcomes. The respondents were asked to rate each outcome on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Like very much" (+3) to "Dislike very much" (−3). Five of the outcomes were identical to those listed in Part I and were the only ones used in the computation of motivational force.

Motivational force. An overall measure of motivational force was determined by summing the belief strength times the outcome values across the 35 relevant pairs of items. The multiplicative motivational force score ranged from a −18 to a +18. Thus a higher belief times value score (MF) indicated greater motivational force. The summed force score was interpreted as the operational definition of motivation—the degree to which an individual wants to work especially hard to gain desired outcomes, that is, rewards.

Like most instruments used in organizational field studies, the underlying dimensionality of the motivation questionnaire is

Police Socialization

problematic. It is particularly troublesome in this case since the instrument was designed to tap a unique multidimensional psychological space differentiated by reward and activity categories as well as by time. In this context, traditional item-intercorrelation matrices have little meaning. However, the categories were developed after a careful reading of the police literature and extensive interviewing with knowledgeable working police officers. Furthermore, the motivation questionnaire has high face validity and based on feedback from study participants represents a reasonable approximation of the expansive task and outcome space associated with police work.

Organizational Commitment

The measurement of organizational commitment was accomplished through the use of a 15-item questionnaire developed by Porter and Smith (1970). This instrument focused on various components of overall commitment: that is, willingness to put forth extra effort to help the organization succeed, loyalty to the organization, concern about the fate of the organization, willingness to recommend the organization as a place to work, and so on. Each of the 15 items was phrased in terms of a statement to which the respondent was asked to rate his agreement on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" (7) to "strongly disagree" (1). The individual's level of organizational commitment was computed by averaging across the items answered on the questionnaire—the higher the score, presumably the higher his commitment. The average interitem reliability correlation was $+ .73$ (across six administration periods) indicating substantial internal consistency on the part of the respondents.

Need Satisfaction

Need satisfaction was measured by a 13-item questionnaire developed by Porter (1962) and based upon Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs. Each item contained a short statement describing a job characteristic (for example, security, opportunity to develop close friendships, feelings of worthwhile accomplishment, authority, and so forth), followed by questions concerning that particular characteristic.

The analysis of the data was based upon responses on two questions asked of each characteristic. The two questions asked the person to indicate on a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from "maximum" (7) to "minimum" (1):

- (1) How much (of the characteristic) do you *now* have in your job?
- (2) How much (of the characteristic) *should* you have in your job?

The difference between the response to the second question and the response to the first question was taken as a measurement of need dissatisfaction. Hence, the lower the difference score, the less dissatisfied the individual. On the other hand, if the differences between the "should be" and "is now" were high, the greater the person's dissatisfaction with the particular characteristic. The respondent's level of dissatisfaction was operationally defined as the mean difference score on either: (1) a cluster of characteristics representing one of the five Maslovian needs or (2) all need-related characteristics (total need dissatisfaction—13 items). A more detailed description of this much used instrument can be found in Porter and Lawler (1968) and more recently in Schneider and Alderfer (1973).

Job Behavior Measure

A primary concern of this research was with the multifaceted aspects of a police officer's performance on the "street," hence, global ratings, as opposed to some summary index based on a number of specific behaviors, were used. Aside from convenience considerations, the choice of global ratings appeared appropriate since police organizations typically devote few resources toward either the subjective or objective evaluation of its members.

Rating forms were distributed for the first time in December 1970 to the immediate supervisors, the sergeants, of all participants in the study. Thus, each sergeant had an opportunity to observe a particular recruit for at least two months—92 percent of these forms were returned. In February 1973, rating forms were again distributed. However, only sergeants of the officers in Group IV (see Table 1) received rating forms—100 percent of these forms were returned.

The forms asked each sergeant to rate his subordinate on: how well the officer was performing on the job; and how much effort the officer was putting forth on the job. The ratings were made on an eight-point Likert-type scale ranging from "outstanding" (8) to "does not meet minimum requirements" (1). As with the attitude questionnaires, care was taken to assure each sergeant that his responses would be kept strictly confidential.

The Pearsonian correlation between effort and performance ratings was high—+.87 ($N=118$) for the recruit sample and +.78 ($N=38$) for the follow-up. Since these correlations were so high, the remainder of this article will be concerned with the performance ratings and ignore correlations between attitudes and effort ratings which, for all substantive purposes, were the same.

For purposes of analysis, the recruits were divided into two approximately equal groupings based on superior's performance ratings. The resulting division reflected the slightly skewed distribution of sergeants' evaluation—with the high group comprised of those recruits rated at five or above (54 percent) and the low group comprised of those recruits rated at four or below (46 percent).

All participants were also ranked according to their final standing in their respective academy training classes. These rankings were obtained from the Training Division and represent a summary index of the individual's performance in his respective Basic Training class. These rankings are based on the recruit's overall classroom or academic performance (test results). The obtained rankings were converted to standard scores for the purpose of data analysis.

FINDINGS

Data Analysis

The significance of differences in group means on the attitude questionnaires across time were determined by use of a simple analysis of variance. This technique provided a relatively clear-cut test regarding the likelihood of the change in group means over time. Thus, if the F-ratio was significant at the .05 level, the implication was that the between-time variation was greater than could be expected on the basis of chance.

Police Socialization

To assess the degree of relationship among the numerous variables examined in this research, Pearsonian correlations were used and their significance tested by use of a t-statistic. However, in a study such as this where over time data provide the basis for analysis, the overall pattern of results rather than any one particular data point is most important. In other words, statistical significance must not be equated—or confused—with social significance. Therefore, the following sections are concerned primarily with the general trends plainly visible from the data.

Job Attitudes

The job attitudes of those recruits who quit the study were compared with those who remained in the study. The examination revealed very few significant differences between leavers and stayers. These differences furthermore were not consistent on any of the questionnaire measures across time periods, nor did they appear to have theoretical importance. Thus, no empirical basis separated the two groups. With respect to the available data, the job attitudes of those recruits who participated conscientiously in the study were indistinguishable from those recruits who did not, except of course when it came to returning questionnaires.⁵

In general, the correlations among the demographic characteristics and the job attitudes—motivation, commitment, and need satisfaction—indicated few significant associations. Those relationships which did appear significant occurred early in a recruit's career and were shortlived, playing an insignificant role in the subjects' attitude responses after the accumulation of several months of experience. For example, those with military experience tended to report more motivation, commitment and satisfaction at t_0 and t_1 , than those without such experience but these relationships had vanished almost entirely by t_2 . In fact, there were no significant correlations between attitude and demographic dimensions after t_3 . Unlike several previous studies which postulated a strong compatibility between certain background characteristics and subsequent adaptation within the police milieu (Rokeach, Miller, and Snyder, 1971; Wolfe, 1970; Rapaport, 1949), this study found no evidence to assert that the recruits' demography was in any way related to their eventual profile. Consequently, the police culture can be viewed as molding the attitudes—with numbing regularity—of virtually all who enter.

Motivational Force

The motivational force scores for the recruits and veteran officers are shown in Figure 1. As illustrated, over time, the newcomers' motivational attitudes declined significantly. Furthermore, the motivation reported at t_{30} was significantly lower than the level recorded at any other time period—although still positive relative to the construction of the index itself.

This overall decrease in motivation was primarily due to decreases in the expectancies. The attractiveness of all outcomes remained relatively constant for all the examined time periods. This would certainly seem to indicate a growing perception on the part of the recruits that "working especially hard" was linked to few, if any, of the system rewards.

5

Individuals were placed into either the "leaver" or "stayer" group on the basis of the number of administration periods in which they participated. A number of separate investigations were conducted which compared all possible combinations of groupings. For example, in one case the questionnaire responses of those who participated in one or two administrations were contrasted with those who participated in all five—that is, for time periods in which both "leavers" and "stayers" responded. In another case, the questionnaire responses of those who participated in one, two or three administrations were contrasted with the responses of those who participated in four or five administrations and so on.

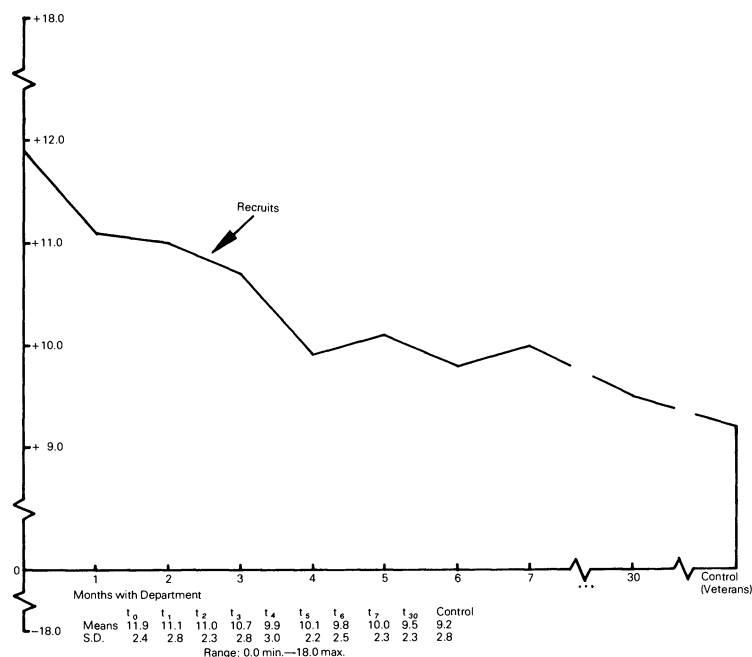


Figure 1. Motivational force

In terms of the reward categories—rewards which presumably may result from “working especially hard”—four of the five fell rather sharply from their level on the first day—beliefs regarding favorable reactions from the department, the supervisor, the community, and fellow officers. Only recruit motivation associated with greater personal satisfaction failed to decline significantly. Similarly, six of the seven activity categories showed significant declines in motivational levels. Only working especially hard on “field investigation activities” failed to drop appreciably.

The motivational force measure and the supervisors’ evaluation of performance showed a rather interesting and surprising pattern of association across time. Table 3 shows that the positive association between motivation and the evaluation of field performance which was evident during the recruits’ very early career stages (t_0 and t_1) vanished rapidly. In fact, by the sixth month, the relationship became inverted unmistakably, with those recruits having the least favorable—although possibly more realistic—attitudes being rated as better performers. The directionality of this association indicates that those police officers who cling to high expectations are least likely to be perceived as good performers in the field by their particular patrol sergeants.

The dramatic shift in attitude is readily apparent when the recruit sample is divided into the high and low rated groups. It appears that a work ethic involving high motivation does not characterize the “better” Union City patrolman, as judged by his patrol sergeant. (See Figure 2.)

The above trend is not observable when Academy rankings of performance are correlated with the motivation attitudes. Along this dimension, none of the correlations across time even approaches statistical significance; nor was there any directionality apparent.

Police Socialization

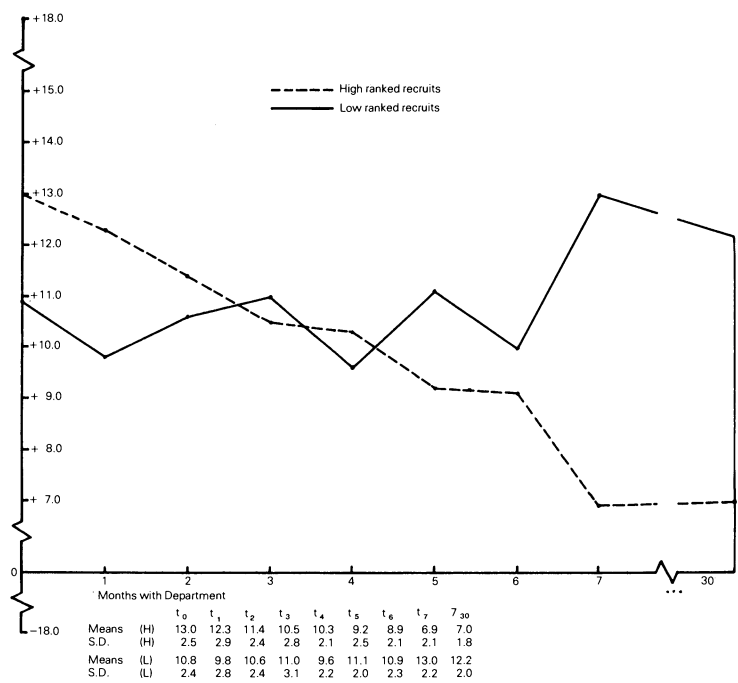


Figure 2. Motivational force comparison (across time)

Organizational Commitment

Figure 3 shows the significant decrease in the organizational commitment reported by the recruits across time. This decrease is relatively steady except for a small, nonsignificant increase to t_5 . Yet, even with this declining trend, the absolute level of commitment remains relatively high vis-à-vis the seven-point index itself.

Some perspective on the absolute level of the reported commitment is provided by several other studies conducted with

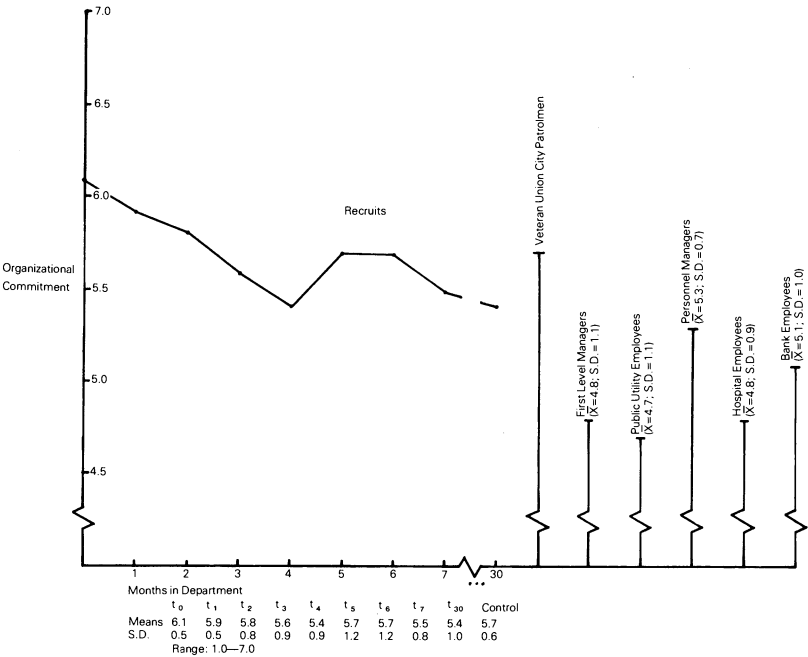


Figure 3. Organizational commitment

Table 3

Relationships among Job-Behavior Measures and Job Attitudes as a Function of Time in the Organization

Correlations between Job Attitudes and Sergeants Evaluation of Job Performance in the Field

	Months in the department								Veterans	
	t ₀	t ₁	t ₂	t ₃	t ₄	t ₅	t ₆	t ₇	t ₃₀	Control
Motiva- tional force	.36**	.21	.17	-.06	.04	-.09	-.22*	-.41**	-.34**	-.10
Commit- ment	.05	.24	.23**	.30*	.30**	.32**	.27**	.21	.26*	.33**
Dissat- isfaction	-.02	-.19	.13	-.19*	-.25**	-.41**	-.33**	.56**	-.31**	-.23
N=	35	30	62	72	70	68	60	32	36	42

Correlations between Job Attitudes and Academy Rankings of Recruits' Performance

	t ₀	t ₁	t ₂	t ₃	t ₄	t ₅	t ₆	t ₇	t ₃₀	Control
Motiva- tional force	.01	-.11	.03	.07	.02	-.12	.01	.01	-.05	-.17
Commit- ment	-.24	-.21	-.21	-.07	-.09	-.07	-.10	.10	.03	-.12
Dissat- isfaction	-.01	-.08	.29**	.07	.31**	-.19*	.07	-.14	-.07	.19
N=	40	34	69	78	78	74	65	34	36	42

- Pearsonian correlation coefficient significant at .10 level.
- Pearsonian correlation coefficient significant at the .05 level.

the same instrument (Dubin and Porter, 1972; Porter and Smith, 1970; Boulian and Porter, 1971). Results of these investigations reveal that the Union City recruits and veteran patrol officers responded with mean commitment scores significantly higher than five other occupational samples (first level managers (N=43); public utility employees (N=600); personnel managers (N=130); hospital employees (N=142); and bank employees (N=131)—see Figure 3). While the inappropriateness of these norm groups is recognized, the comparison does suggest certain occupational characteristics noted in previous police-related research—for example, strong departmental loyalty, in-group solidarity, cohesiveness—may have an attitudinal analog in the form of the commitment variable examined here.

Organizational commitment scores and patrol sergeants' evaluations of job performance in the field showed a strong positive relationship. As Table 3 points out, this relationship is relatively consistent and enduring. This association is depicted graphically in Figure 4 according to the mean scores over time of the high and low rated officers.

The relationship between Academy performance and organizational commitment did not reach significance at any of the particular time periods. However, the directionality between the two variables seems to suggest that, if anything, those recruits who do well academically are more likely to report lower commitment to the organization than those recruits who are doing less well.

Interestingly, the correlation between the individual's Academy rank and his sergeant's evaluation of field performance was +.02 (Spearman Rank Difference Coefficient). The lack of

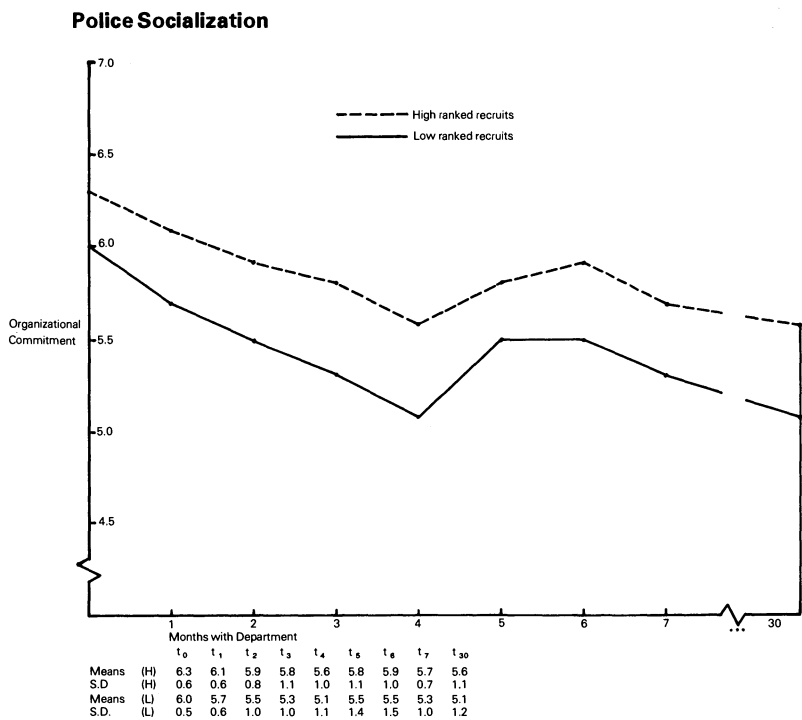


Figure 4. Organizational commitment comparison (across time)

significant association between “street” performance and Academy rankings indicates the criteria on which the Training Division evaluates and rates police recruits do not correspond to the criteria used by the field sergeants.

Some light is shed on this engrossing lack of correlation by investigating the recruit demographic characteristics. The relationship between academy rank and educational level, in particular, is quite high ($r=.57$) as is academy rank and prior police experience ($r=.42$, biserial correlation). Such correlations should not be surprising in view of the construction of the academy index—based entirely upon the results of periodic examinations stressing the recall of lectures about federal, state, and local laws, traffic regulations, first aid, police procedures, and so on. Thus, those recruits with more education apparently had less difficulty absorbing and feeding back information than those with less education. Similarly, those officers with previous police experience had less difficulty in the classroom than those without such experience. However, these two demographic variables were not related significantly to the field evaluations at any point in the study.

Need Satisfaction

The expressed level of satisfaction associated with all five needs remained relatively constant across time. Upon examining the composition of this measure however a somewhat paradoxical situation was found. On the one hand, the level at which the recruits reported their needs fulfilled increased dramatically and significantly following their academy training. At the same time, the recruits also increased significantly their desired level of need fulfillment. As a result, the need satisfaction index remained relatively stable.

When the needs were examined individually, the self-actualization and social cluster were viewed generally as the

most satisfied. Most dissatisfaction was indicated with the fulfillment of the officer's esteem, autonomy and security needs. In fact, security needs from t₄ on, were the least satisfied—significantly less than the degree to which the recruits' social or self-actualization needs were presumably satisfied.

A persistent association between need dissatisfaction and field evaluations is apparent in Table 3. This relationship is negative and indicates the higher-rated subjects were more satisfied than their lower-rated counterparts. The examination of the individual parts of the dissatisfaction index revealed that none of the five needs when analyzed separately were related significantly to the ratings—although most were negative. It was only when all needs were combined that the association was significant.

Dissatisfaction expressed by both recruits and experienced officers was related generally in a positive manner to the Academy rankings—although the correlations fluctuated widely. Again, needs taken separately showed no association with the Academy rankings.

Interrelations among Attitudes

While the attitude measures used in this study can be shown to be associated with one another, they were by no means synonymous—that is, the intercorrelations among instruments ranged from .02 to .58 for the various administration periods. Some correlations among instruments was expected on purely a theoretical basis. For example, one would predict that those subjects who express more motivation would also report less need dissatisfaction (see Porter and Lawler, 1968). Yet, the attitude intercorrelations were relatively low—intercorrelations for officers more advanced in the socialization sequence were somewhat higher but by no means perfect. Consequently, there was enough variation among questionnaire responses to indicate that the variables were conceptually and, to some extent, empirically distinct.

DISCUSSION

Certain consistent themes appear throughout the combined results of the statistical and participant-observational analyses. Progress along the socialization continuum in the police world can be seen as the gradual development of an "in the same boat" collective consciousness stressing a "don't make waves" occupational philosophy. This process by which initiates acquire the motives, sentiments, and behavioral patterns of the occupational culture can be characterized as a four-stage socialization process: (1) entry; (2) introduction; (3) encounter; and (4) metamorphosis. While only analytically distinct, these phases serve as useful markers describing the socialization path of police recruits.⁶

Entry

Although the available literature suggests that the police occupation is viewed by those who enter as simply one job among many and considered roughly along the same dimensions as any job choice—for example, security, salary, interesting work, and so forth (Sterling, 1972; President's Commission on Law

6

This schematic device—a staged socialization model—glosses over much of the detailed and principled ambivalence a police recruit feels while undergoing passage. Furthermore, it suggests a sort of unilinear development of a career while overlooking the back and forth kinds of passages a recruit experiences—first viewing himself as a civilian, then as a professional, then as a unique person, and so forth. Davis (1968) suggests that socialization metaphorically represents a mirror one passes through to look at oneself from the other side. An insightful remark: but it is not a single passage through a mirror, but many. The characteristics of police socialization presented in this section are therefore a drastic condensation of a much more complex process and highlight only the more salient and irreversible elements involved in the outsider-to-insider passage. For a more detailed version of this process, see Van Maanen, 1973; 1974.

Police Socialization

Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967; Neiderhoffer, 1967)—several qualifications of that position can be made which provide a greater understanding of the choice and entry process. First, the salary and security aspects have probably been overrated as inducement for persons choosing police careers. For instance, 46 percent of the recruit samples ($N=125$) reported making more money per year before joining the department. Also the middle class bias of the Union City sample indicated that the popular conception which regards the choice of policing as a distinctly lower and working class phenomenon—as a sort of upward mobility assumption concerning the selection of police careers—does not hold across departments. In fact, the socioeconomic profile of Union City recruits is quite representative of the geographical area served—as described in the 1970 census. This would suggest that environmental qualifications must be made when discussing the calculus of police recruitment and selection.

Second, the protracted screening factor associated with police work is a most critical aspect of the socialization process. The nature of the long, arduous selection procedure (often taking up to a year or more)—representing the organizational or structural side of what Merton (1957) calls anticipatory socialization—assures that those who join the occupation will have strong positive attitudes concerning their new job. And the attitudes at day-one (t_0) support this.

Finally, as in most organizations, the police department presents its most favorable side to individuals who have yet to take the oath of office. A potential recruit is made to feel by virtue of the special attention paid him that he is important and valued by the organization. Furthermore, most recruitment occurs via generational and friendship networks involving on-line police officers and potential recruits—almost 80 percent of the recruits ($N=121$) reported that they had a good friend or close relative working for the Union City Police Department before they joined. Hence, the individual receives personalized encouragement and support which helps sustain interest during the formidable screening process. Such social linkages most likely attract and bind the would-be recruit to the occupational culture long before he actually enters.

Introduction

For police recruits, their first real contact with the occupational environment occurs at the police academy. The newcomer—surrounded by 30 to 40 contemporaries—is introduced to the often arbitrary discipline of the organization. A man soon learned that to be one minute late to class, to utter a careless word in formation, to relax in his seat or to be caught walking when one should be running may result in a "gig" or demerit costing him an extra day of work or the time it may take to write a long essay on, say, "the importance of keeping a neat appearance." Only the recruit's classmates aid in the struggle to avoid sanction from a punitively-oriented training staff and provide the recruit with the only rewards available. Yet, these rewards are contingent upon his internalization of the "no rat" rule which protects fellow-recruits and himself from departmental discipline.

The early stages of the person's police career are marked by some rather vivid attitude changes (t_1 through t_3). First,

motivational attitudes drop considerably never to rise again. Only personal rewards remained associated with working hard. This seems to indicate a growing realization on the part of the recruits that a hard work ethic was not linked to most of the system rewards. Second, organizational commitment also fell sharply; yet, remained relatively high vis-à-vis several other occupations. Third, the recruits were somewhat dissatisfied—relative to later phases of the socialization process—with their experiences at the police Academy. The degrading nature of the recruits' role during the Academy's stress training serves to detach the newcomer from his old attitudes, resulting in a scaling down of high but unrealistic attitudes about the department. Hence, the Academy impresses upon the recruit that he must now identify with the new group—his fellow patrolmen. Furthermore, he learns that when the department notices his behavior, it is usually to administer a punishment, not a reward. The solution to this collective predicament is to "stay low and avoid trouble."

Encounter

Following the classroom training period, a novice is introduced to the complexities of the "street" through his FTO. It is during this period of apprenticeship that the reality shock encompassing full recognition of being a police officer is likely to occur. Here he learns what attitudes and behaviors are appropriate and expected of a patrolman within the social setting. This traditional feature of police work—patrolmen training patrolmen—insures continuity from class to class of police officers regardless of the content of the Academy instruction. In large measure, the flow of influence from one generation to another accounts for the remarkable stability of the pattern of police behavior.

Importantly, those recruits who were least motivated to work hard tended to be ranked as better patrolmen. Clearly, while some zealotry may be tolerated early in one's career—maybe even expected—such attitudes must soon be altered if the recruit is to "make it" within the police milieu. Furthermore, the rookie discovers few connections between his efforts and the system rewards. In fact, he soon learns that the best solution to the labyrinth of hierarchy, the red tape and paperwork, the myriad of rules and regulations and the dirty work which characterize the occupation is to adopt the group norm stressing "staying out of trouble." And the best way to stay out of trouble is to minimize the set of activities he pursues. Those officers who persist in approaching their job from what police like to call a "gung-ho" perspective are distrusted and eyed cautiously by field supervisors. They may in fact be rated by their sergeants as less able policemen than their more prudent colleagues.

Inversely, sergeants tended to perceive those recruits who expressed more commitment to the department to be the better performing officers. This association was particularly apparent during and following the recruit's initial "street" experience (t_3 through t_5). This finding appears of major import since high commitment usually implies a relatively unquestioning belief and acceptance of the organizational system. The literature has speculated that loyalty and dedication—as behavioral correlates of a so-called "conformance to authority

Police Socialization

syndrome"—are the principal characteristics an initiate police officer must demonstrate if he is to be accepted within the system (Skolnick, 1966; Neiderhoffer, 1967; Ahern, 1972). Thus, this psychological dimension is empirically verified in this study and shown to have important consequences vis-à-vis one's organizational career.

As expected, the recruits did report slightly more need satisfaction once they began to actually act as policemen. This is not surprising in view of the limited opportunities to satisfy certain needs in the Academy. In general, the job satisfaction literature indicates that as one is accepted into the work group, satisfaction increases. However, the newcomers were still relatively deprived. Although the recruits reported more fulfillment, they concomitantly expressed a desire for higher levels of fulfillment. This may well be an indication of the "street learning" experience when the recruits are first exposed to actual police work.

Metamorphosis

In this stage, recruits come to hold the characteristic attitudes regarding the back stage aspects of their careers—what Becker *et al.* (1961) labelled the final perspective. By the sixth month of police experience, the job-related attitudes of the recruits begin to approximate those of their more experienced colleagues. By becoming similar in attitude and behavior to his peers, the recruit avoids censure by the department, his supervisor, and, most importantly, his fellow patrolmen.

After only a short time on the job, the only activity in which patrolmen perceive any substantial likelihood of receiving valued rewards is through their "field investigation" activities—defined as "those activities which may result in an arrest." As others (Webster, 1970; Reiss, 1971) have pointed out, it is precisely these activities which account for the smallest amount of the patrolman's time. Service and administrative activities—which account for the largest amount of working time—were viewed in this final perspective as the areas in which effort was least likely to lead to favorable rewards.

A peculiar interdependent combination of several factors seems to account for this motivational pattern: (1) punishment centered and particularistic supervision concerned primarily with "mistakes" made by patrolmen; (2) institutionalized rewards having little to do with the everyday world of policing; (3) perceived public hostility of the police; (4) subcultural ethos emphasizing the "keep-a-low-profile" dictum; (5) an internalized and narrow perception of "real" police work consisting of only preventing crime and apprehending criminals; and (6) conflicting role demands placed on patrolmen in which successful or good performance is viewed differentially by the various audiences which witness police work.

Expressed organizational commitment, while declining somewhat steadily, still remains relatively high and is presumably an object of concern for both one's supervisor and his colleagues in the patrol division. Perhaps by committing one's self to the department, a recruit demonstrates his willingness to share the risks of police work, his attachment and concern for the welfare of his fellow officers, and his appreciation and involvement for the expressed goals of the organization. In a sense, the level of expressed commitment may indicate the presence of a perva-

sive moral order within the Union City Police Department which, in Weberian terms, serves to legitimize the bureaucratic structure as well as the police task itself. And as Figure 4 illustrates those who fail to strongly support this order are unlikely to be viewed as effective policemen.

Apparently, the police occupation offers one an excellent opportunity to satisfy social and self-actualizing needs—policing embodies intense social bonds and provides primarily personal satisfactions, involving subjective feelings of performing an important and worthwhile task. The fact that esteem needs are considerably unfulfilled would indicate that the patrol officers do not perceive others as recognizing the worth of their occupation.

On the surface, the dissatisfaction reported by the patrolmen with the degree to which their autonomy needs are fulfilled appears to contradict much of the literature which portrays the patrol task as requiring an inordinate amount of discretion in the field. However, most patrolmen feel "handcuffed" or constrained by a variety of audiences, including their own department. The independence the recruit feels would characterize the job soon becomes perceptually limited in too many ways.

The low degree to which the security needs are satisfied represents an interesting exception of Maslow's (1954) theory. To policemen, security needs represent a curious combination of both physiological and psychological factors. While the physiological aspects are well satisfied in terms of pay and job security, the psychological aspects—involving the danger characteristic intrinsic to the occupation—can never be guaranteed completely. Furthermore, the danger factor of the work setting is an important variable relating to the individual's evaluation of the challenge and importance associated with his role. While this does not question the general usefulness of Maslow's theory, the ordering of the needs may depend more upon situationally specific job features than upon underlying predispositions common to all individuals.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the thrust of this account of urban policing can most readily be appreciated via the inverse relationship discovered between sergeant's evaluation of field performance and the patrol's reported motivation. This finding seems to best capture the on-going reality and behavior norms involved in the occupation. Three interrelated aspects of police work provide a useful framework for viewing this disconcerting but quite illustrative relationship.

First, patrol work resembles a team-like activity. Officers in a squad—consisting of a sergeant and 15 to 25 patrolmen based territorially within the city geometry—back each other up on potentially dangerous calls, cover for one another on various assignments and generally share the work load of their particular district. Hence, those officers who actively seek out tasks to perform create more work—and perhaps more risk—for other squad members—an uninviting situation for experienced patrolmen.

Second, there are few institutionalized rewards involved in police work but many potential punishments. A whole canopy of

Police Socialization

departmental regulations exists to restrict a patrolman's discretion. Violations of these restrictions, if detected, can cost one his job or possibly his freedom. Since the rules and regulations are so numerous, no one can hope to obey all the canons of professional conduct. Thus those officers who engage in more activity than other members of a squad increase the visibility—and vulnerability—of the squad as a whole.

Finally, something akin to the "ratebuster" phenomenon seems to be at work in the Union City Police Department. Those patrolmen whose attitudes and actions conflict with a squad's projected definition of "normal" work threaten the intimate cooperation necessary among members of the team and create more uncertainty in an already uncertain environment.⁷

Overall, the model adjustment of novice patrolmen of the occupational culture is best epitomized by the "lay low, hang loose and don't expect too much" advice frequently heard within the Union City Police Department. Consequently, the following tip provided by a veteran Union City officer represents a very astute analysis of how to insure continuance in the police world. He suggested:

There's only two things you gotta know around here. First, forget everything you've learned in the academy because the street's where you'll learn to be a cop; and second, being first around here don't mean shit. Take it easy, that's our motto.

Postscript: Toward a Theory of the Middle-Range⁸

This account of recruit socialization emphasizes various situational and process features of the studied environment—but made no attempt to broaden the perspective beyond that of police organizations. Yet, a transsituational framework can be constructed by reference to certain analytic properties common to most socialization settings. No effort is made here however to include all properties of such settings. Rather only those elements which seem to have a general importance across organizations and were important in this study are included.

Five interrelated but conceptually distinct characteristics can be expected to influence the outcomes of socialization attempts. First, the formality of the setting—that is, the degree to which the setting is segregated from the on-going work context—suggests the extent to which the organization is concerned with a novice's absorption of the appropriate demeanor and status associated with the target role. Hence, in very formal settings, the recruit's role is differentiated strictly from other organizational roles and the socialization focus is almost always upon the newcomer's internalization of a sort of organizational perspective. Paradoxically, the greater the separation of the newcomer from the work-a-day reality of the organization, the less the newcomer will be able to carry over or generalize any abilities or skills learned in the socialization setting. Therefore formal settings concentrate—implicitly, if not explicitly—more upon attitude than act. For example, police recruits commonly denounced their academy experiences as irrelevant, abstract, and dull. Yet, at the same time, they also expressed an attraction for components of the valued subcultural ethos such as autonomy, pragmatism, and personal independence.

Second, the degree to which new members are processed individually or collectively plays a related but somewhat different role influencing the results of the socialization process. As

7

"Normal" as it is used here represents the taken-for-granted features of the work environment such as the rhythm, pace and everyday typifications used by organizational members in going about their tasks. For an excellent and organizationally relevant treatment of the sociological dimension of "normal," see Sudnow, 1965.

8

The Mertonian term of middle-range is used here to emphasize the fact that no theory of socialization will be complete unless the conditions which give rise to the use of various socialization techniques are understood. In the studied case of the urban police, the socialization methods that were utilized can be related, for example, to the: danger and uncertainty in the work environment (need for colleague support); frustration engendered on never knowing the worth of one's work (need for a narrow but consensual definition of police work in light of conflicting societal expectations and absence of performance criteria); and the territorial autonomy allowance inherent in the task (need for strong bonds linking the individual to the organization).

Becker *et al.* (1961) argued, collective settings nearly always provide the newcomer with understandings of the occupation that are shared by one's cohort group. Thus homogeneous results are promoted in collective settings through peer pressures brought to bear on the individual to conform to group standards. However, as with Union City police recruits, the correspondence between group standards and managerial objectives is always problematic—that is, the group is more likely to ignore or redefine the demands of the organization than the individual.

Third, the serial or disjunctive character of socialization settings also plays a significant part in the transition process. The serial mode in which experienced members groom newcomers about to assume similar roles in the organization is perhaps the best guarantee that the organization will not change over long periods of time. In the police world, this feature is virtually taken-for-granted and accounts in large measure for the remarkable intergenerational similarity of patrolmen views (see, Sterling, 1972; Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1969; and the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967). Innovation will be unlikely; stability will be maintained—sometimes in the face of a turbulent and changing environment.

Fourth, the length in which the newcomer must continue as a formally designated recruit is another powerful socialization mechanism. This temporal characteristic is associated—like the formality of the setting—with the amount of culture, tradition and everyday assumptions which must be absorbed by a newcomer before full participation in the organization will be granted. Furthermore, lengthy socialization often implies, as is apparent in the Union City Police Department, the existence of a trial or test period in which a newcomer is rigorously assessed as to his motivation, trustworthiness, ability, and loyalty. Therefore, the longer one is in the novice's shoes, the more demanding, degrading, and perhaps frustrating the process is likely to be. The endurance of such an ordeal promotes a strong fellowship among those who have traversed the same path to membership and, to a degree, isolates members from organizational outsiders.

Finally, the presence, distance and visibility of a "coach" (or coaches) to assist the newcomer through some or all of the socialization stages has an undoubtedly potent effect. For example, a one-on-one relationship such as the police apprenticeship situation leads generally to an intense, value oriented socialization program in which the outcome is dependent upon the affective bonds typifying the dyad. Thus the newcomer must be more concerned with satisfying the expectations of the coach than with satisfying the expectations of the organization—although such expectations are often congruent.

These setting properties provide a rough guide for evaluating the direction and impact of the organizational socialization process. Regardless whether the setting is designed consciously or unconsciously, the outcomes of the process depend upon the degree to which each feature is present or absent during the transition period. However, this is simply a beginning toward a general theory, for the properties described here are hardly exhaustive. But, if we are to ever fully understand the

Police Socialization

work perspectives of members of diverse organizations, the elemental structure of initial boundary passages must be classified in terms meaningful and comparative across settings.

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