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EFFECTIVE TEAM MANAGEMENT

State of the Art

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Sgt. Eric J. Schubert
Team Policing Planning Group
Office of Operations

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EXAMINING THE STATE OF THE ART

Since the early inception of the police service, police administrators have actively attempted to find more efficient and effective policing systems. Beginning with the first professional police principles in the early eighteen hundreds by England's Sir Robert Peel, the police service has been in a continuing transition to gain increased acceptance as a professional organization while developing an atmosphere conducive to strengthening the police and community partnership. This continuing experimentation and the streamlining of varying methods and systems, has resulted in positive impetus being provided to law enforcement operations.

The majority of recent change in the police organization was evidenced in the late 1960's, when civil disorders again focused upon the need for a closer working relationships between the community and the police. Major incidents of student violence and the upsurge of militant groups throughout the nation reintensified the need for the police administrator to critically analyze effectiveness areas between the community and the police. The current economic crisis, coupled with rising crime rates in many of our metropolitan cities has again reintensified the police administrator's

focus upon providing policing services with more "bang for the buck". In an era when many administrators are faced with continuing criticism of police anonymity, methods of providing more personalized service are again being tested. In addition to continuing requests for increased service by the community, the police administrator is also being challenged with increased application of the behavioral sciences in a traditional para-military organization

The adoption of an current experimentation with team policing by many agencies is evidence that traditional methods of providing police service are not working effectively. The team policing concept has been lauded by many as an organizational framework which maximizes the human resources of the police organization and the community to form a cohesive partnership between the two in stemming the tide of crime. Concepts such as Management by Objectives and Participative Management and other applications of the behavioral sciences are becoming more readily acceptable and desirable management techniques in the team policing environment. The application of these managerial styles in the police profession reinforce the values placed upon the dynamics of human relationships and thus form the basis for effective team management.

DEALING WITH RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Team policing provides a distinct advantage in that each team can be structured to best serve the specific requirements of the public residing within their district. Neighborhood problems therefore become more important and are easier to identify with, than those of a large, sprawling metropolis. The officer in charge of the team will find himself in an environment much different than his previous assignment. Rather than being responsible for an eight-hour watch assignment, the team leader now assumes responsibility for the team on a twenty-four hour basis. The ability of the team leader to "manage" thus becomes a central focus for the efficient and effective operation of the team. His ability to communicate, coordinate and control will be tested, as well as the methods by which he can lift morale and productivity.

A central area of concern to the new team manager is also the ability by which he can effect change from a traditionally structured police organization to a more flexible and "open" organizational environment provided by team policing. Traditional practices and solutions within an organization often maintain a hold that is difficult to shed. The

temptation is always there; to apply old solutions to new problems. Oftentimes, the key to the problem is to understand the true nature of resistance. The team leader must recognize what police personnel resist is usually not technical change, but social change. The social aspect of the change refers to the way those affected by it think it will alter their established relationships. For example, in some team policing organizations where total generalization of all activities is being advocated; the detective often finds himself in an organizational environment totally different than that of his previous assignment as a recognized specialist. This represents a significant change for the detective, who often perceives this new role as an infringement of his personal status and professional ability. His accompanying anxiety and fear may be evidenced by increased resistance to the team concept. The effective team leader must first analyze this phenomenon and apply appropriate counselling and training. Most importantly, when resistance appears, it is time to listen carefully to determine what the cause of the problem might be. When the team leader acts to facilitate understanding there will be more of a sense of common purpose and improved performance.

LETTING PEOPLE PARTICIPATE

An effective team leader uses a problem solving approach to situations, knowing there are frictions and disagreements which can often be eliminated if they are brought out and resolved in an atmosphere of experimentation, flexibility, and adaptability to change. Successful group productivity by team personnel depends upon the opportunity of team members to exchange ideas freely and clearly, and to become involved in the decision-making process of the group. In order to get creative group thinking, the effective leader should realize that each team member must contribute in establishing objectives and goals of the team. Team personnel should be actively encouraged to participate in developing meaningful work programs which are structured to a workable plan for guiding team efforts in achieving each common objective and goal. The team leader should not impose his will on a group, because his basic goal is to develop the potentiality of a group to work together as an effective team.

In practice, there are varying degrees of influence by subordinates on decisions. Participation in solving a specific problem may fall anywhere between two extremes: Complete delegation of the problem to a subordinate or complete centralization of decision-making, whereby the team leader merely announces his conclusion and tries to get subordinates to carry out the plan. The degree of participation

depends upon initiative; the greater the initiative, the higher the degree of participation. An expected advantage of group participation is that more creative decisions will emerge if the participants discuss the problem together. Their diverse knowledge and their differences in decision-making talents are brought into direct contact. Such creativity from group participation will occur, only if a permissive atmosphere is developed in which all members of the group freely express their thoughts without being concerned about making an impression on their colleagues or their boss. It should be stressed here that participative management is not "free-reign" or "laissez-faire" management. The team leader is the recognized group leader, who maintains final accountability of the activities of his team. Participative management must also be limited to those types of situations which would best be served by team participation.

The supervisory style of the "participation" oriented team leader should be characterized by the following:

1. A balanced concern for the needs of the team and its personnel: Group participation involves the joint effort of a subordinate and his supervisor arriving at a decision, in such a way that the parties to the

decision(s) can sense that others are considering their ideas, can hear others react, and can have their own ideas stimulated by others.

2. Confidence in, and respect for others.
3. Taking time out, even during busy schedules, to listen and attempt to see the merit of ideas which conflict with his own.
4. Problem-solving by sharing information with his people and involving them in solving problems and setting goals. By consulting with a group, instead of with one man at a time, the team leader stimulates group cohesion. Friendships and mutual understandings tend to develop in such a group. The group will more quickly adopt team standards and attitudes, and will put social pressures on all its members to conform.

In selected situations, participative management may be too costly in terms of manpower or comes too late for strategic effectiveness. For example, in a tactical situation requiring an immediate decision, participative management would result in unnecessary delays. Listed below are some other areas where participative management might

not be desirable:

1. Decisions with limited time constraints (emergency tactics).
2. Situations where firm policy or procedure has already been established.
3. Administrative matters requiring managerial decisions, i.e., investigation and adjudication of personnel complaints, etc.

It must be recognized that some team personnel will not readily accept and work within a participatory climate. Although these individuals will generally be few in number, the team leaders' management styles should also be responsive to these types of personnel by using other supervisory techniques.

TEAMWORK AT ALL LEVELS

Effective team management should not be restricted to the line team but requires teamwork within all management levels of the organization. Line officers working in a team environment are usually quick to comment that upper management often supports team policing, but fail to recognize the need for teamwork at their own levels. Such perceptions

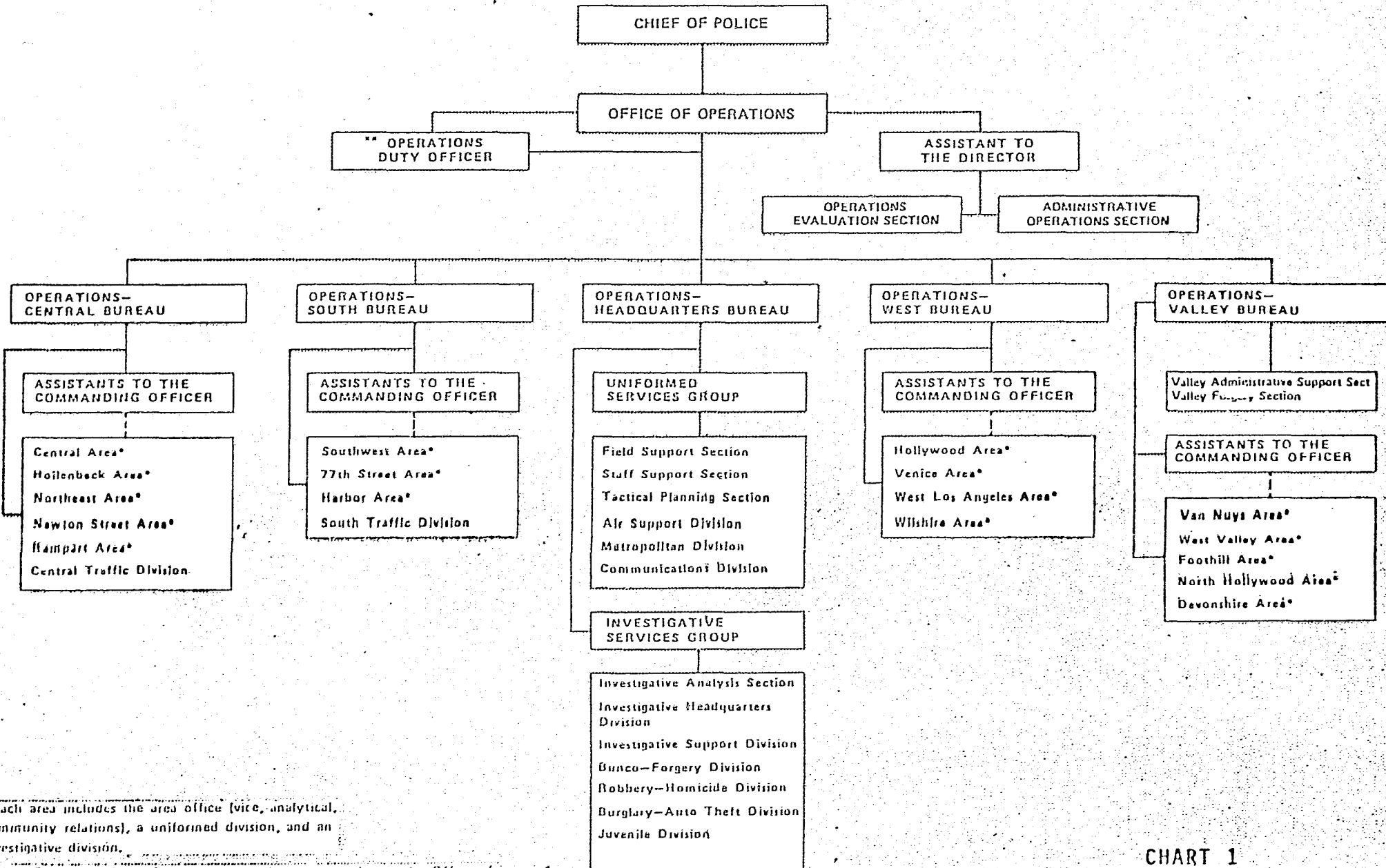
are often illustrated by traditional organization charts which depict a pyramid shaped hierarchy; thus further creating organization gaps between line personnel and management. In an effort to depict the team leaders role within the organization, the Office of Operations of the Los Angeles Police Department has recently departed from the traditional organization chart concept in an attempt to depict the entire organization as being comprised of a series of teams which incorporate both management and line personnel as a series of interlocking teams. Chart 1 depicts the traditional organization chart of the Los Angeles Police Department, Office of Operations, an organization entity which comprises approximately eighty-four percent of the total Department strength and provides all patrol and the majority of investigative line services within the City. Chart 2 reveals this same organization, emphasizing a total teamwork approach. This new and innovative approach by Assistant Chief Daryl F. Gates, Director of the Office of Operations, is a visual presentation of the Department's participative management and teamwork philosophy. In depicting the linking pin network, emphasis was placed on decreasing the perceived man-to-man hierarchy and reemphasizing a series of working groups focusing toward common objectives and goals. Likert discussed this principle of organization by stating:

"...an organization will function best when its personnel function not solely as individuals, but as members of highly effective work groups with high performance goals."

CONCLUSION

The application of the behavioral sciences play an important role in developing a true team relationship. As the "chief of police" of his team, the team leader must focus upon maximizing the abilities of his subordinates and direct all available resources towards specific objectives and goals. Developing these talents and abilities requires that the team leader expand his traditional role with increased emphasis on the application of the behavioral sciences. Effective team management thus focuses upon the team leader to provide new and innovative approaches in a traditionalist organization; a change which should serve to strengthen and increase the level of professionalism in law enforcement.

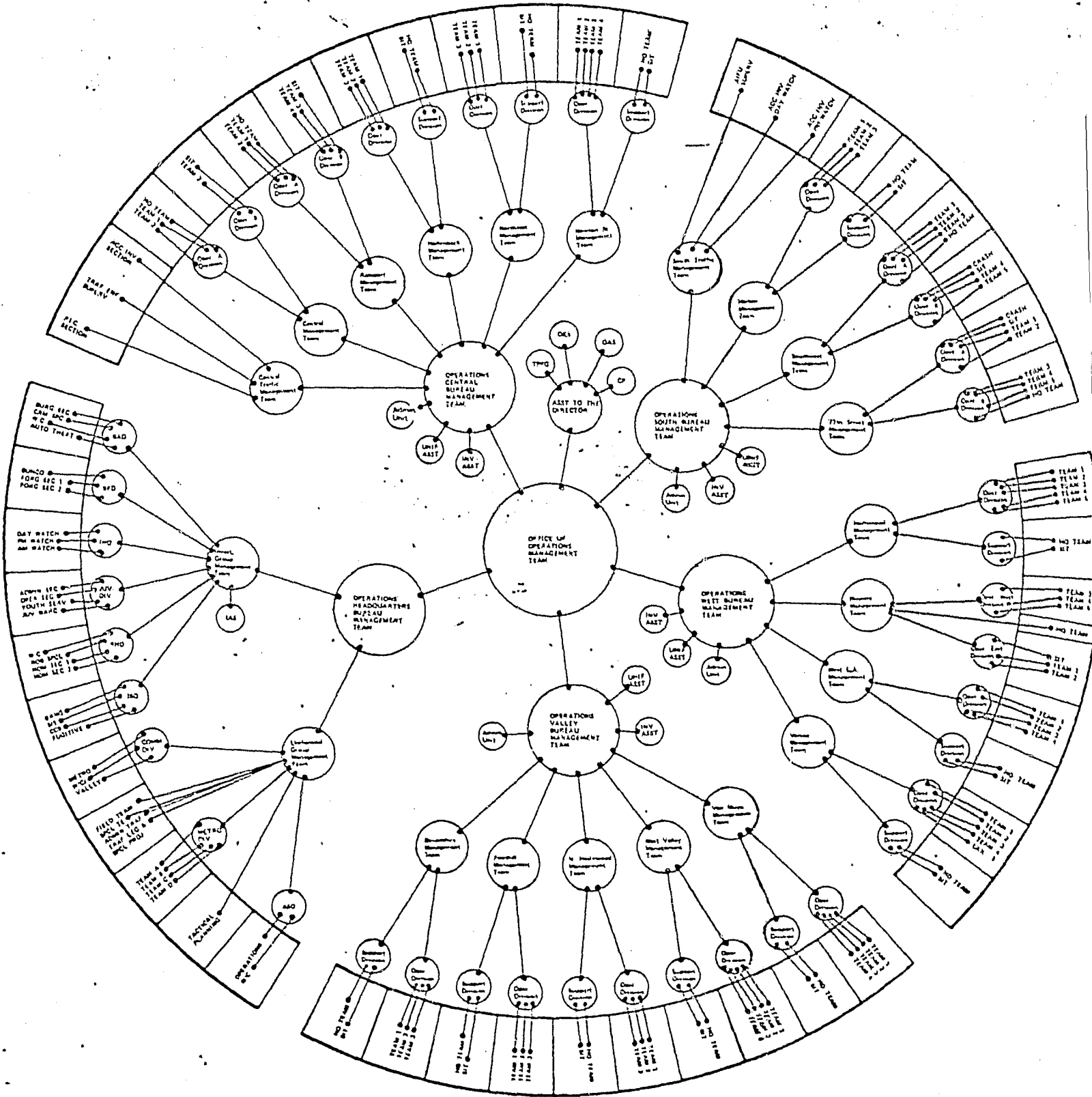
Organization of the OFFICE OF OPERATIONS



*Each area includes the area office (vice, analytical, community relations), a uniformed division, and an investigative division.

** The Operations Duty Officers exercise line command over the Office of Operations during their tours of duty (1700 - 0900).

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT TEAM



END

7. 11. 1950