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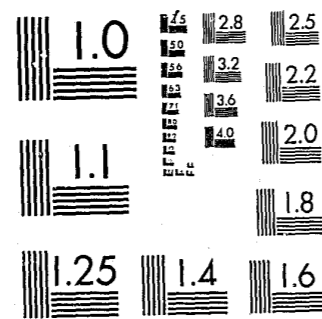
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job stress and the police officer

JOB STRESS AND THE POLICE OFFICER:
IDENTIFYING STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

PROCEEDINGS OF SYMPOSIUM

CINCINNATI, OHIO

MAY 8-9, 1975

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DIVISION OF BIOMEDICAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

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Self-Esteem and Stress in Police Work*

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Research has fairly well established that people with high self-esteem are relatively immune to some of the stresses which plague other people, or are better able to cope with the stress (Stotland and Canon, 1972). High self-esteem people are less bothered by any insults or derogations directed at them by others. They tend to like others more, but they are less likely to conform to others' opinions simply to gain acceptance. They are more likely to persist at a difficult task in the face of frustration. They are more likely to function in a coordinated fashion when in difficulties. They are less prone to anxiety. They are more likely to learn about their environment in ways which help them avoid stress. They are less likely to avoid thinking about problems. They are more likely to seek out novelty and to approach the strange and the unusual. When they are frustrated, they are more likely to direct their aggression at the source of their aggression, rather than at alternative targets.

One major implication of the data indicating the relationship of high self-esteem to all of the desirable attributes described above is that an individual's overall general level of self-esteem has a strong influence on how well he copes with particular frustrations and threats. High overall self-esteem leads to better ability to cope constructively with frustrations and threats, while a lower level leads to less ability. The person with lower self-esteem not only has to attempt to solve the frustrating problem with which he is faced, but must also prevent any further loss of self-esteem. The latter task sometimes gets to be more important than the problem-oriented one, and the low self-esteem person defends himself by hostility, withdrawal, excessive assertiveness in the use of power, insults to others, etc. As the threat increases his anxiety, his thinking may become more rigidified and his solution of the problems at hand become less effective. On the other hand, the high self-esteem person is less diverted by a need to protect his self-esteem and can work more directly on the problem at hand. He approaches it with more confidence because his past experience has shown him that he can and does solve problems sufficiently effectively. He can act directly on the problems, and has little need to withdraw from them.

The list of desirable qualities in high self-esteem set forth above could no doubt be extended. But it is obvious that many of these qualities are those which are sought and admired in police officers: a stable, inwardly secure person who goes about his business in a calm way but coping properly and effectively with the incredibly difficult problems of police work. A police officer should be minimally disturbed by any hostility he encounters from the public, from people who require his services, or from arrestees. He should be able to persist in solving problems, even when the going is rough. He should not become nervous, anxious rather than realistically fear-ful. He should be able to direct his efforts toward his goals, rather than toward coping with his anxiety and avoiding difficulties. He should show good street sense by seeking out the novel and the strange, rather than avoid-ing them. He should use violence only when needed to help to solve problems, not to protect his self-esteem and status vis-a-vis the public or his arrestees.

*Editors note: Potentially offensive expressions have been retained in this article in the interest of presenting an accurate report of actual police situations.

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One way to develop a department consisting of high self-esteem officers is to select officers on that basis. Fortunately, much of the data on the characteristics of police recruits implies that they are in fact at least average in their self-esteem. The low self-esteem people either don't apply - since they avoid threatening situations - or they are screened out. However, self-esteem is not a fixed quality in a person. No matter how secure a person is, there are going to be times when he feels blue, when he questions himself, when things happen that shake him up. A person's self-esteem may hover lower some days or higher on others. In fact, with extreme changes in life situations, a person's self-esteem can take remarkable nosedives or it may soar. Moving into new jobs, or new job situations, or changes in old job situations, a change in a marital situation, etc., can all have an influence in self-esteem.

The self-esteem of police officers may be more subject to special strains than that of other professionals. Police departments have had to back off from their commitment to such goals as the prevention of crime, since some believe that there is little they can do to prevent it. Since the prevention of crime is traditionally one of the ostensible goals of police departments, giving up this goal can do little to enhance self-esteem. The current rise in the apparent rate of crime and the current low clearance rate for some of the most common crimes also do not enhance the officer's picture of himself as a crime fighter. The officer believes that some of his work is fruitless because of the courts propensity to release arrestees and also because of the high rate of parole and probation. These do little for the self-esteem of the police officer. The hostility directed at police officers by parts of the public and the defensive stands taken by the police do not help self-esteem either. The fact that his work is so subject to judicial and quasi-judicial review is a constant threat to the officer. The publicity given to instances of corruption does not enhance an officer's pride in being a police officer. This list can obviously be expanded.

Our problem then becomes one of how to maintain or even increase the self-esteem of police officers so that they will be well able or better able to cope with the frustrations, insults, threats, inner and outer conflicts, ambiguities and uncertainties that are part of the work of a police officer. The central theme of this paper is that there are ways of organizing and running police departments so that the self-esteem of its members is maintained or increased. Some of the ways of possibly so doing will be described in the rest of this paper.

Before we state these descriptions, we should note that increased emphasis on the professionalism of the role of police officers can contribute greatly to the self-esteem of police officers. Despite the variety of definitions of the term and despite some of the contradictory interpretations of the meaning of the term, it remains not only durable but well-defended. Partly the use and defense of the term stems from a desire to enhance the images of police officers not only for the public, but also in their own eyes. It is indeed flattering, as well as highly appropriate, to compare the work of a police officer to that of a lawyer, doctor, engineer, dentist, etc. Thus, regardless of the definition of professionalism that is used, the movement towards establishing some of the earmarks of professionalism, such as higher educational standards, higher pay, more internally established standards of conduct, etc.

can have nothing but good effects on the self-esteem of police officers in the long run. In the short run, of course, the movement will no doubt threaten the self-esteem of some of the police officers who do not measure up to the new standards of professionalism, such as higher education. Nevertheless, the use of the term, in police circles and elsewhere, whatever it happens to be taken to mean, is in itself most salutary and valid.

Sense of Competence Regarding Anti-crime Efforts

What are the ways in which a department can be run to enhance the self-esteem of police officers and thereby increase their ability to function well under frustrating, difficult and threatening conditions? One of the most basic sources of an individual's high self-esteem is a history of success in a variety of endeavors, that is, a set of experiences which raises the person's sense of competence, his overall idea of how able he is to act to achieve his goals. In western society, and in American society particularly, an individual's self-esteem is dependent to a great degree upon his sense of competence. In some societies, self-esteem may be relatively more dependent on social status, on family background, etc. However, in America, we are a competence oriented society, even a "machismo"-oriented one. A competent person is generally happier with himself. Police officers not only share this overall American value, but probably do so to a greater degree than other people. They tend to have a high regard for a person's ability to take charge, to deal with problems actively and effectively; the contemplative way of life does not generally hold many attractions for them nor do routine, unchallenging ways of life. This relatively high regard for effective action probably results both from self-selection of people who go into police work and from the nature of the job itself.

What then can be done to support and enhance the perception that police officers have of their own effectiveness? The following are some possibilites.

1. *Increase the number and variety of criminals which the police can move against.* Police officers typically begin their careers by assuming and hoping that they will spend a good deal, if not most, of their time in the pursuit of felons and misdemeanants. He quickly encounters the demands on him to respond to service-oriented and order-keeping oriented complaints from citizens: to provide information for citizens, to take care of "social work" problems, to deal with minor disputes, with family beefs, with what some officers call "bullshit calls" (Rubinstein, 1973). There is no question that these service and order-keeping functions of police officers are not only very important and uniquely the responsibility of the police; we shall treat the relationship of these functions to the sense of competence of police officers below. Nevertheless, it could only increase the self-esteem of the patrolman if he would increase the 15% of his time he typically spends dealing with criminal activity, especially if he can increase this percentage by dealing with crimes which are clearly crimes with victims. An increase of the 15% by more efforts to control victimless crimes such as prostitution, gambling, public drunkenness, etc. would not enhance the self-esteem since the criminality of these activities is subject to so much public controversy. Furthermore, the laws relating to these activities are now undergoing change, so that yesterday's crimes may be today's "licensed" behavior, or today's medical problems.

The suggestion here is that police officers, especially patrolmen, be given a much greater role in dealing with what Herbert Edelhertz* calls sophisticated crime: fencing, organized crime, economic (white collar) crime, etc. Often, one thinks that fighting such crime is the responsibility exclusively of detectives, government regulatory agencies, prosecutors, or strike forces. Nevertheless there are many ways in which patrolmen can help to fight such types of crime. For example, in the economic crime area, patrolmen, especially those who know many people in their communities, often simply pick up information in the normal course of relating to citizens. People may gripe to police officers about an auto-repair fraud, or a bait-and-switch operation, or a maliciously destructive tenant, or a high handed landlord, or a short-weighing butcher shop, or a home repair fraud. Patrolmen may also observe some economic crimes directly: home repair trucks of questionable honesty parked in front of an elderly couple's home; a close-out sale that goes on forever; an advertised car that does not appear on a dealer's lot; a large volume of deliveries to a firm which has little obvious need for it; etc. In the organized crime area, the patrolman may notice the comings and goings of certain types of people in certain stores or neighborhoods in which they are out-of-place; he may pick up information about loansharks; etc. He may suspect a fencing operation or a bankruptcy fraud because of unusual movements of goods in and out of stores or warehouses, etc.

Historically, police officers have not been oriented toward catching sophisticated criminals, but toward street criminals. If they can be shown how they can work effectively in sophisticated crime, there is little doubt that they would prefer that activity to their service and peace keeping activities. Much of this would be done by the pooling of small bits of information, since patterns of information rather than bits are most relevant in the sophisticated crime area. The new trend toward team policing will facilitate the discovery of such patterns, since teams sometimes have an officer functioning as an information co-ordinator. Closer collaboration between detectives and patrolmen could also accomplish this purpose.

2. Patrolmen as generalists. Implied in the potential role of the patrolman in fighting sophisticated crime is the idea that patrolmen be given a greater variety of responsibilities in the criminal area. The greater the variety of such activities, the greater can be the patrol officer's sense of competence in fighting crime. Thus, more of the responsibilities for investigation of burglaries, robberies, etc. would be given to the patrolmen, after appropriate training. The 15% can be expanded in this way too. Obviously, such a shift of work might be perceived as encroaching on the perogatives of the detective bureaus, but the latter already frequently complain about being over-worked. The increased responsibilities of the patrolmen can only enhance his self-esteem directly, since they also imply the respect and confidence of his official superiors.

3. Follow-through on cases. Often a police officer's involvement in a case may end with his turning a case over to detectives or with a court appearance in the minority of cases that actually go to trial. It does little to enhance a person's sense of competence to lose tract of the outcome systematically be informed of the progress of the case. He might even be

asked to prepare reports to the prosecutor's office which could influence the plea bargaining process. If we assume that plea bargining will be with us for the foreseeable future, then giving the patrolman some influence on the process might not only increase his sense of competence but also decrease his hostility to the rest of the criminal justice system. Similarly, officers might be involved with the sentencing process by submitting reports to the judge. Still another way of increasing an officer's sense of competence is to involve him in the use of the criminal information he acquires and processes, as suggested above. This involvement would in some cases consist simply of feedback in the use that was made of information, or the involvement could consist of requests for further information.

Obviously, involvement of the patrolmen in the follow through of his cases or his information may simply aggrevate the present problem of police bitterness toward the plea bargaining and sentencing practices of the criminal justice system. However, the seriousness of this problem might be mitigated in some jurisdictions if there is movement in the rest of the system closer to the position held by police in that jurisdiction.

4. Victimization Studies of "Front" Crimes. More than most other professions, the police do not have valid measures of their effectiveness. As in the case with other professions that lack a solid basis for judgement of effectiveness, less valid measures are used. Police officers often are singularly suspicious about the use of such measures to evaluate performance. They well know it is not too difficult to increase rates of issuing citations, or of making arrests, if the "heat is on." They know how much such criterion of effectiveness can be manipulated. They know that official crime rates do not reflect the actual rates.

It could potentially greatly enhance the sense of competence of a police officer if he could measure himself against a valid criterion in which he had some confidence. One such criterion could be based on the victimization studies centering on crimes which are front crimes, i.e. crimes which the police theoretically could have prevented and for which they have a fair chance of catching the culprit, i.e. robberies, front-entrance burglaries, etc., in contrast to assaults inside homes, back-entrance burglaries, etc. If such victimization studies were done routinely and that data broken down by patrol sector, or by team policing neighborhood, then the officers in that sector or in that team could gain some idea of how well they are doing. They would have some idea of the extent and nature of under-reporting of crime, and might be able to mount some highly specific programs to increase reporting and to reduce the incidence of crime. Again competence would be enhanced.

Sense of Competence Regarding Non-criminal Activities

Regardless of any increased efforts in the criminal area, as suggested above, the bulk of a patrolman's time would still be devoted to the citizens' calls for non-felony oriented types of service. The police are the public agency par excellence of responding to many of the emergencies of everyday life because of their availability at all times and because of their authority and increasingly, because of their unique competence. Thus, for the police

to enhance their sense of competence and self-esteem, they need to perceive that they are competent to cope with these non-criminal calls as well as with the criminal ones. Even if the police do not now view these activities as central to their role, they may still gain in self-satisfaction if they see that they have done some good. It may be that part of the reason for the relative downgrading of these activities is the very knowledge that police are sometimes ill-trained or not trained for them.

1. _Increased Pre- and In- Service Training in Non-Criminal Incidents._ The training should be focused in those areas with which the police feel relatively ill equipped to cope. Family beefs have been one of the most difficult and dangerous calls for a police officer to respond to. Yet since Bard's pioneering work, many police officers have learned that it is possible for them to cope with family beefs with minimal danger to themselves and with maximal benefit to the family. There can be little doubt that their sense of competence has increased as a result. Toch, Grant and Galvin (1975), report the enthusiasm of the Oakland Police Department's specialists in family disputes.

The same type of training can no doubt be developed for other trouble-some areas such as landlord-tenant disputes, some tavern brawls, etc.

2. _Feedback in the outcomes of non-criminal incidents._ Just as in the case of criminal incidents, an officer's sense of competence and his self-esteem would both be enhanced if he knew what the outcome of his intervention was. He might find out that his intervention lead to a reduction of the amount of assault in a given family - thereby possibly preventing a murder - a crime that police generally believe they cannot prevent. He might find out that a fight between landlord and tenant was now reduced to a civil level, both legally and in manners. He might find that the old lady he took to the hospital recovered from her injury. He might find out that two neighbors are beginning to settle their differences through negotiations or through civil proceedings, rather than through assaults or worse. It is interesting to note that in Oakland, after hearing one presentation from the civilian experts, the police themselves organized the family dispute squad so that it functioned independently of the civilians. Furthermore, in so doing, they emphasized follow-through by the officers themselves much more than did the original program in New York or the Schwartz (Schwartz in Snibbe and Snibbe, 1973) model in California. The police in Oakland made the arrangements for social agency contacts themselves and re-visited some of the homes later to find out how things were doing. Marx (1973) has indicated a number of indices that might be developed for evaluating the effectiveness of a department, squad, team, etc. Use of these indices could lead to a rise in the self-esteem of the members of these groups, if the indices were positive. If they were not, the police unit could devise ways to increase its effectiveness, since it would then have a way of finding out how effective it was. Of course, there are areas of non-criminal service in which the police can have little direct influence on the long range outcome - a fatal accident, etc. etc. Feedback about these would have no direct benefit to the police.

Information as a Basis of Increasing the Sense of Competence

The lack of information, uncertainty, ambiguity about some aspect of a situation with which a person is concerned decreases his sense that he can cope with it. This appears to be true even if the ambiguity concerns some part of the situation with which the person does not have to lead directly. A person may feel more confident of his ability to fix a flat in his own neighborhood rather than in a strange one. Of course, too much information can cause problems, too. (But too little may be the problem of the police officer more frequently.) In fact, information is often used as a source of power and influence in police work. There are a number of ways in which police officers can be provided with more information directly or indirectly relevant to the particular incidents with which they deal. The suggestions made above about the development of information by means of which police officers can evaluate their own success can also be understood as ways simply to provide the police officer with information, in addition to a (function) as a basis of evaluation. Knowing about the actual rates of certain types of crime, or the rates of assaults in families after police intervention not only helps the police evaluate their performance, but also to have information about their sector. There are however, additional ways in which information can be made available to the police officer.

1. _Replay of citizens telephone calls to officers assigned to respond._ When an officer is given an assignment by his department, the information he receives is generally minimal - where to go, and what sort of call it is. The officer can guess about the details of what he may encounter; sometimes these guesses are educated by his general knowledge of the area, but some-times they are not, especially if he takes a call out of his sector. Yet more information about what is going on is available in the recording of the citizen's telephone call summoning aid - information that is not typically put to any particular use.

It would be technically feasible to set up a system as follows: After an officer in a car is given directions by the dispatcher, and after the car is on the way, the officer could request to hear the telephone call from the citizen replayed to him as he is driving to the scene. In the few minutes it takes him to get to his goal, he could learn of the emotional state of the citizen, get some more precise idea of how "hot" the situation is, learn something of the number and type of people involved, even the physical setting of the scene. He might even recognize the people and place as one of those with which he has dealt before. The information he is re-ceiving as he heads toward the scene could somewhat reduce his anxiety simply because he has information, regardless of whether it is directly usable. In addition, the officer could be planning his action as he drives, so that he can move in on the situation faster when he arrives. Granted that some times an officer might get a false impression from the telephone call- but, with experience, an officer will learn to "see through" the calls, as any officer with good street sense does with any information he receives. In any case, his sense of competence about his ability to handle the call will be increased. It is important to note that the suggestion here is that the play-back be done only on request of the officer, i.e. if he feels that he needs to know more. Secondly, the dispatcher would not be tied up in the play-back, which could be sent over an auxiliary radio channel so that the main channel is not tied up. (One officer in discussing this idea suggested that he would like to be able to continue the telephone call with the citizen as he is driving to the scene. He would be coping with the

situation even before he got there, gaining information and perhaps giving the citizen some directives.)

This play back procedure would also have the tendency to draw the police and the community closer together, since the officer on approaching the complaining citizen would be able to establish communication more quickly with the citizen because of his knowledge of what went on before. His faster, more appropriate action would also lead to more requests on the part of the citizen. As we suggest below, closer, mutually respectful ties with the community can enhance a police officer's self-esteem and his sense of competence.

2. _Information service for police officers_. As a police officer works his sector, he gets to know it better and better if he is assigned to it for any length of time. Nevertheless, there may be types of information which he would like to have which are not available to him either through his direct knowledge of the area or through his requests for information on citizens he stops on the street. He might want to know who owns an abandoned service station; what sort of merchandise a given store is licensed to sell; when the tenants in a given house might be forced to vacate it; how the demographic composition of his area is changing, or is expected to change; what school dismissal times are, if they are on an irregular schedule; changes in mail delivery routes; changes in factory shift changes; the crime rates for crimes he cannot prevent; etc. Much of this information is available through other branches of government; housing agencies, school superintendents, city planning officers, etc. A bureau within the police department could provide such information on request. The Kansas City Police Department has established such an information bureau to respond to requests from whole units within the police department, such as divisions. However, the system could be extended to the patrolman. With increasing sophistication of information retrieval systems, the cost may be relatively small, and the gain in the sense of competence of the patrol officer would be great. In fact, if requests come in for the same types of information repeatedly, then the department might routinely supply it. Furthermore, the patrol officers self-esteem would be enhanced simply by the recognition he could receive from his department because it is making all this information available to him.

Training for Competence in Stress Situations

Probably the best way of reducing the amount of stress in problem situations is to practice coping with such situations in as realistic a setting as possible, but with the possibility of getting feedback on the effectiveness of the actions taken. All of the theoretical information about what to do can have little meaning unless an individual attempts to carry out the actions. Then unforeseen problems, issues, aspects of the situation, etc. can be confronted and recognized, and corrections, if needed, can be made at the next turn at practice. The individual can try out difficult possible courses of action in safe settings to see how they will work. He can learn the criteria for deciding which of several possible lines of action he could take. He can learn to make these judgements faster and make his actions more effective. Probably most important is the fact that if an individual learns that he can cope with such situations, he will be more confident when he actually approaches

such situations and thereby reduce his anxiety. He will then be less prone to be rigid and narrow in his thinking and fixed in his actions. Practice doesn't necessarily make perfect, but practice with appropriate feedback might do so.

1. _Simulation training in police academies_. One of the problems with police academies is that partly because the information presented to the recruits is so theoretical or artificial, much of it is rejected in favor of ideas and suggestions given by senior patrol officers on the street. This problem can be solved in part by introducing as much realism into the academy as possible, by having the recruits practice in situations of as much realism as possible, with feedback and critiques from their instructors as well as their peers. Recently there has been an increase in the use of such methods, many of them depending on video tape presentations of the situations: Illinois State Patrol and Traffic Stops; Los Angeles Police Department Shooting Simulation; the use of the city of Independence, Missouri as a laboratory, etc. The more difficult and stressful these situations can be made, the less difficult and stressful the real ones will be later, provided that the recruits are given a chance to cope with the situations by repetition after correction.

2. _In-service peer feedback_. Toch, et al (1975) have devised a system by which panels of police officers have a chance to review the actions of some of their peers who have a record of violence in their relationships with citizens. The subject officers then meet with the committee which discusses their behavior when dealing with citizens. The committee members point out that there were perhaps other ways of dealing with citizens than the ways that provoke the citizens to violence or provoke the officer to violence himself. In these meetings, the discussion is kept as non-threatening as possible and as non-evaluative as possible. The subject officer have full opportunity to present their points of view, and in a number of cases, they did so very articulately. The results of these meetings were an overall reduction of the number of arrests for resisting arrest and the number of charges of assaulting an officer.

The important point about Toch's work is that police officers were monitoring their own actions, one patrolman discussing another's action. The subject officers could get implied and direct evaluations of their own actions without the threat which is both implicit and explicit when the officer is evaluated by his supervisor. This threat could be further reduced by having the subject officer determine which of his activities will be known to the peer group and discussed by them. In fact, he might have the peer group discuss some action of which he is proud.

In order to raise the sense of competence and actual competence of officers, we suggest that each squad of officers meet regularly for one or two hours of in-service self-training a month, possibly without the presence of their sergeant.

Each meeting would be devoted to the police activities of one of the members of the squad, i.e. the subject officer, all the members taking turns at being the subject officer so that no one member will feel that a finger is being pointed at him. The meetings would be held in some setting in which being made by the subject officers. He would then go through a

similation of the actual incident of his choice, so as to reduce threat to him. His brother officers would play the role of citizen, or back up officers, if any. (Partners in two man cars would do the simulation together.) After the enactment, the police actions will be critiqued first by the subject officer himself so as to minimize the threat to him. He can direct attention to either the positive or negative aspects of his actions as he choses. The other squad members can then chime in with their critiques, positive or negative.

It would be expected that, in the long run, such in-service peer self-training meetings would increase both the squad member's actual competence and their sense of competence and self-esteem for the following reasons. First, the subject officers could receive praise from their fellow officers if they did something well, and therefore experience a rise in self-esteem and continue to engage in praiseworthy activities. Secondly, the subject officers would receive criticism from his peers, under relatively non-threatening conditions, so that he might eliminate some of his less desirable actions. Thirdly, he would be receiving this praise or criticism from the most psychologically influencial group possible, his own peers. Fourthly, he could learn new alternative ways of handling situations, so that he might have greater resources available for coping with difficult situations. Fifthly, the observing members of the squad can learn vicariously and directly from one another. Sixthly, the officers can measure their progress by repeated presentations of their incidents to the group, perhaps scheduling more frequent meetings so as to get periodic feedback.

In the early parts of this paper, we suggested many ways in which police officers could set up new goals for themselves and measure their progress toward these goals. Obviously, in making these suggestions, we run the risk of failure. Thus, it is important that ways of increasing the actual competence and the sense of competence of officers be developed as the new goals are articulated and ways of measuring progress toward these goals are developed. The squad self-training meetings may then be an essential part of this overall process.

Enhancing the Status of the Patrolman in the Police Department

An individual's self-esteem is based not only on his sense of competence. It is also a function of his comparison of himself to other people, his view of how high he is in the relevant totem pole. The rank and file patrolman is obviously at the bottom of the ladder within his own department a position which is not likely to enhance self-esteem. It is ironic that the prime inter-face between the public and the police is with the police officer in the lowest position in an ostensibly quasi-military organization, hardly a structure which could lead inevitably to interactions satisfactory from either side's point of view. It is possible that it is the patrol officer's position in the hierarchy which leads him sometimes to try too hard to enhance his self-esteem by being a take-charge officer in street incidents. In any case, the lower status does not especially help the officer's self-esteem. Without unduly changing the structure of police departments, there are a number of ways in which the status of the patrol can be enhanced. Many of the suggestions made above give greater responsibility to the patrolman -- he can ask for information, judge other officers, fight sophisticated

crime, get feedback on the outcomes of his actions, have an influence on plea bargaining and recruiting. These greater responsibilities imply higher status, more professionalism, more recognition of him as an important person whose judgements and decisions are significant. Thus, all of the suggestions made above to increase responsibility would also tend to increase the self-esteem of the officers. There are, however, some additional ways in which his status can be enhanced.

1. Minimization of the number of status differentiations in police departments. The greater the number of different ranks in a hierarchy, the greater the social distance between the top and bottom. Thus, in a department with a chief, deputy chief, assistant chiefs, inspectors, majors, captains, lieutenants, sergeants and patrolmen, it is a long way from bottom to top. On the other hand, a department consisting of a chief, captain, lieutenant and patrolmen, the status of the person at the bottom is probably perceived as greater than in the rank-happy departments. Thus, it would be well while to determine how many different ranks are minimally needed for the functioning of the department and move toward the number as quickly as possible. Such a compression of the rank structure would, of course, have to recognize the need for recognition of achievement or quality. This problem could be handled by having several different levels within a grade: patrolman I, II, III, etc. or having a grade of master-patrolman (or grand master patrolman). Although this does indirectly increase the number of status differences, the additional levels do not imply any functional or power differences in the department, nor would they imply as much distance as in the case in which the differences have different names.

2. Non-military ranks. The use of military terms for the ranks in police departments brings with it the aura of intrinsic status differences--differences in the very quality of the human beings involved--that have traditionally been part of the military organizations. There is no inherent reason for the use of these military terms, especially since strict military dicipline is not enforced in police departments. The same degree of authority as is presently the case could be maintained even if the designations of the police hierachy could be changed to director, assistant director, etc.; or superintendent; or some other variation of these terms. The use of these alternative terms would not only reduce the powerful implications of the military terms but would also focus more on the job done, i.e. directing or superintending, rather than on the person or persons chief or captain. After all, the patrolman does patrol. The use of the non-military terms would tend to focus more attention on their functions in the organization and less on their differences in status.

Developing Mutual Respect with the Community

One of the major problems for police officers, especially in the ghetto areas, is the hostility shown police by citizen onlookers, especially while an arrest is being made. The support given the arrestee, the verbal attacks on the police officer, etc. not only simply present a possible physical threat to the officer, but also present a threat to his self-esteem. None of us is completely indifferent to the slings and arrows of insults - even if we defend ourselves agains their onslaught. Thus, at best, the verbal attacks on police have little effect on their self-esteem; at worst, these attacks can upset the

police officer and make him feel inferior. The problem then is how to reduce this threat to self-esteem.

One way in which the effect of the verbal attack can be mitigated is allowing the officer to receive some positive communication from parts of the community in which he is functioning. The reservoir of positive feeling might be supported by some of the suggestions made above: the increased training and competence in non-crime oriented aspects of police work; the more co-ordinated effort to fight sophisticated crime, especially economic crime like consumer frauds; increased ability to cope with police preventable street crime; etc. Not only might these efforts generate more positive attitudes toward the police, but the higher level of self-esteem among police officers which these efforts would develop would tend to make the officers more relaxed and flexible in relating to the public. Nevertheless, there are some ways in which the police might increase their exposure to the elements of the community which do feel positively toward them. Any insults would be less influential on them.

1. <u>Cooperative activities between the police and the community</u>. There are many areas in which the members of a community and the police can engage in joint enterprises to fight crime. The recent increase in anti-burglary programs is an example. Instead of having civilian do the home inspections, the marking of possessions, the checking of locks, the police could do this, or work closely with homeowners in doing so. In some areas, police involvement would be a necessity since people do not trust their neighbors to help them in these efforts; one of the neighbors may be the neighborhood burglar. If the police become directly involved in these efforts they can both build positive attitudes toward themselves and they are exposed to them.

There are other areas in which joint projects could be undertaken. Parents in a well trafficked area might want to have speed bumps put in; the police and the parents might go together to the city engineer to have them put in. Some abandoned buildings in an area might be an eyesore for the residents as well as a haven for addicts; the police and the local community might jointly approach the housing authorities to arrange for their demolition. Parents of school children might be interested in a parents' patrol in and around a school; and might want to have easy access to the officer in that sector.

2. <u>Surveys of community attitudes toward the police</u>. It is very ironic that opinion surveys tend to show that the police are generally well regarded by the American populus, while police officers generally feel isolated from and rejected by the communities they serve. Obviously, the feeling of isolation is natural product of the necessarily adversarial relationships that the police have with parts of the public, and of the suspicious attitudes toward others that is one part of good police work. Nevertheless, it might have an ego-enhancing effect on police officers to become more cognizant of the of good will there is toward them in the parts of the community which they do not ordinarily contact in their day to day work, except, perhaps, as victims of crime or as requests for non-crime oriented services. Thus, if public opinion surveys are done on attitudes toward the police in a given jurisdiction, then it might be very salutory for the police to be fully informed of the results - and perhaps be reminded of them from time to time. A secondary benefit of such communications might be a more positive police attitude toward the community as a whole, if not toward their street adversaries.

3. <u>Elimination of the off-duty arrest powers of the police</u>. One of the main reasons for the social isolation of police and their wives is the social awkwardness engendered by the police being "on-duty" even when they are off duty. The fear of citizens relaxing at parties in the presence of police officers is the sense that the police are always "watching," and the sense that the police officers have that other are watching them as "cops," not as people. This barrier might be reduced to some extent by giving the off-duty police officer the same powers to arrest that any other citizens have. This reduction in power would not in itself necessarily reduce the social distance, but it might be a small step, especially as it becomes better known. Furthermore, it might make an officer off-duty have more of a rest and recreation experience than is presently the case. Obviously, such rest would tend to reduce the total amount of stress in a police officer's life.

Conclusion

There no doubt are many other ways in which the self-esteem of police officers can be enhanced or raised. The list above reflects some preliminary ideas. No doubt the reader will think of others, some of them better than our list. The important thing is the effect - any enhancement of an officer's self-esteem will make him both a better reactor to the stress of police work and a better officer.

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