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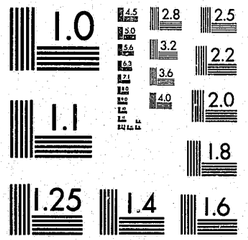

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In the early morning hours, Detroit, Mich., police officers respond to the radio call, "Shooting in progress, officer involved. . . ." (Photo courtesy Officer Alan Halstead)

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William H. Webster, Director

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68375
Organization

Effects of Organizational Design on Communication Between Patrol and Investigative Functions
(Conclusion)

By LT. COL. JOSEPH J. STAFT
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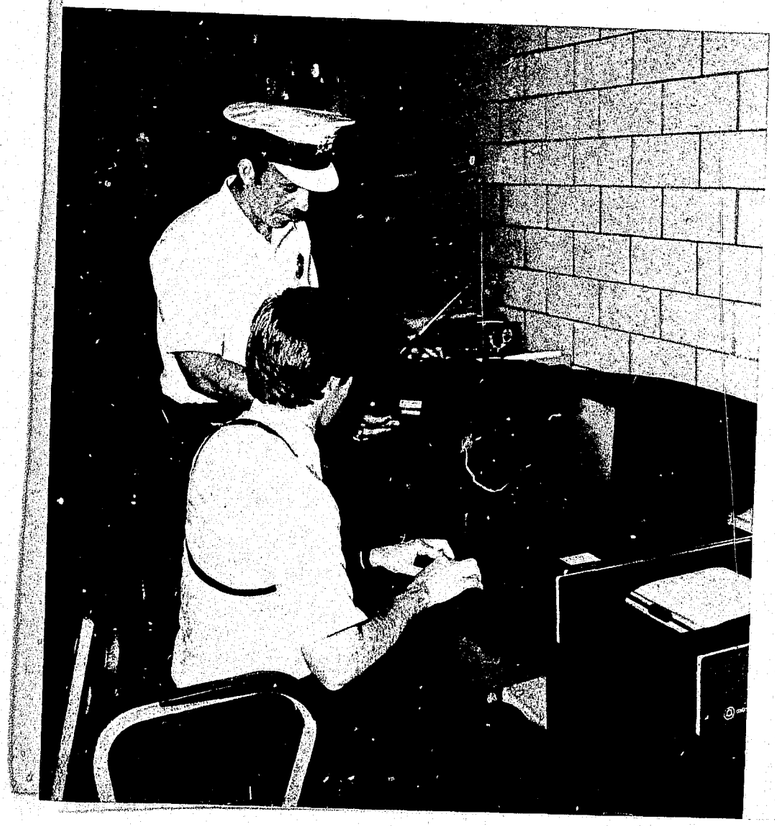


An investigator and uniformed officer feed information into a computer.

Part I of this article focused on the various organizational structures of police departments which can affect the level of cooperation between patrol and investigative personnel. As stated, each design has inherent advantages and disadvantages. The conclusion of this article will consider approaches which can be taken to induce and foster cooperative efforts between members of a department.

The Human Relations Approach

Human relations-oriented theoreticians minimize the importance of rational, formal organization and emphasize social relationships among workers as factors conducive to efficiency. Perhaps the founding fathers of the human relations approach to organization and management were Professors Fritz Roethlisberger and William Dickson of the Harvard School of Business. In their much-publicized Hawthorne study,[20] they found relationships between workers, ideals, personalities, beliefs, habits, and tradition to be

greater influences on productivity than physical working conditions.[21] They also found that the small work group exerts a great deal of pressure on the individual employee to conform to the group standards of production levels. This was found to be true, even if the individual's nonconforming behavior or increased productivity would result in financial benefits for the entire group. If these findings can reasonably be transferred to address the problem of patrol-investigative cooperation, it would seem that the willingness of a police officer to work toward organizational goals, including willingness to share information, would be more dependent on his values, attitudes, and relationships with other members of the department than on the nature of the formal organizational structure. It would appear reasonable to suspect that if group attitudes or norms within a patrol unit opposed cooperation with the investigative units, great pressure would be exerted on an individual patrol officer desiring to assist an investigator by volunteering helpful information. Conversely, if established relationships between the patrol and investigative groups were harmonious and cooperative, the individual officer would be supported and encouraged by his fellow workers to assist the detectives' investigative effort. Again, cooperation is a two-way street, and the same reasoning applies to investigators supplying information to their uniformed counterparts. The human relations school would argue that the influence of the group is stronger than organizational rewards encouraging exchange of information. Thus, in an effort to improve patrol-investigative communications, the administrator should consider ways to alter group norms and attitudes, depend on informal as well as formal leadership to encourage cooperation, and not rely exclusively on formal organizational channels to process information.

Modern Approach

The modern or revisionist school of organization attempts to synthesize the classical and human relations schools. Revisionists recognize that various types of social groups interact and may or may not cooperate or share the same values. They examine interrelationships of the organization and its environment, the structure of informal groups, and question the value of material rewards in improving employee morale and performance.[22] In general, they recognize that organizational theory must take into account such factors as purpose, goal, status, power differentials, and hierarchy.[23]

"Mutual exchange of criminal information benefits both investigative and patrol units. . . ."

Within the parameters described, modern theorists differ somewhat in their approach to organizational design. The works of Professors Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch [24] of the Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration and Dr. Jay W. Galbraith [25] of the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management have provided the basis for the purpose of relating modern organizational techniques to the central concern of improving communications between police patrol and investigative personnel.

The Lawrence and Lorsch theory of organizational design is known as the Differentiation-Integration (D&I) model.[26] They acknowledge the need for division of labor among a variety of bases, but associate trade-off costs and benefits with each form of specialization. Each subunit develops characteristics which are consistent with its mission.

The concept of differentiation can perhaps be clarified by comparing operational characteristics of a patrol unit with those of an undercover intelligence unit. In the patrol unit there must be a heavy emphasis on military discipline to permit rapid and effective response to emergency situations. Dispositions of recurring situations are standardized by formal rules and procedures, and freedom of movement is restricted because the patrol officer is usually responsible for enforcement activities within strictly defined beat boundaries. The emergency nature of patrol service requires a relatively short-time orientation toward its problems. In contrast, the intelligence unit must adopt relatively informal methods of operation, avoid the standardized appearance and behavior styles which would compromise their undercover missions, be free to travel or react spontaneously to follow the course of investigations, and assemble information and build cases over a long period of time. The mission of the patrol force dictates high visibility; the opposite is true of the intelligence unit. The differences, of course, are more numerous than those just described, but the comparison serves as an example of differentation required by the nature of the tasks each group performs.

The problem of achieving integration between differentiated units becomes crucial. Each group evolves its own task-related characteristics and different points of view which complicate the coordination process. This often generates serious intergroup problems symptomized by destructive competition, secretiveness, and hostility. The integration process must cope with these issues to achieve unity of effort.[27]

There is a strong inverse relationship between differentiation and integration. When units (because of their particular tasks) are highly differentiated, it is more difficult to achieve integration than when the individuals have similar ways of thinking and behaving.[28] This accounts for the relative ease with which adjacent patrol districts may coordinate activities, as opposed to the difficulty encountered in trying to achieve close cooperation between uniformed patrol and plainclothes investigative units.

Lieutenant Colonel Staft

Col. Myron J. Leistler
Chief of Police

The D&I model then focuses on the degree of differentiation required among units responsible for varying tasks and the degree of integration needed. In considering the integration issue, the police manager must determine which units need to work together and how tight the requirement for interdependence is. If, as in the case of patrol and investigative functions, there is a requirement for close cooperation, emphasis must be placed on the problem of achieving high integration.

The normal means of integrating activities of subunits within a police organization is through the hierarchial structure. As subunits become more differentiated, however, the formal hierarchy is no longer sufficient to provide necessary coordination, process the required amount of information, or achieve unity of effort. Additional integrative devices must then be built into the system.

Galbraith describes a wide range of integrative devices which are used by various organizations. Included are formal rules, programs and procedures, hierarchy, creation of lateral relations through direct contact or by creating liaison roles, task forces, and teams.[29] A final method of aiding the integration process is through use of lateral transfers. While Galbraith does not relate these integrative devices to police operations, their applicability is clearly apparent.

The simplest way of coordinating interdependent subtasks is to specify the necessary behaviors in advance of their execution in the form of rules or programs.[30] Police departments coordinate information and activities required for successful investigations by creating formal rules stated in a procedure manual. A typical procedure would indicate which unit is responsible for the preliminary and follow-up investigations, what information must be included on the offense report, how many copies of the report are to be made, how they are routed, etc. These rules are adequate to direct much of the information flow required for routine investigations. However, to rely solely on the use of rules and procedures as a method of providing the required information exchange between patrol and investigative officers presumes that it will be known in advance what information is needed by each. In all but the simplest investigations, this is not the case.

The next method for processing information between units is through a formal hierarchy. The manager of each unit is the point through which all information flows into or out of the unit. He decides which information should be transmitted up or down the chain of command. Besides being able to control the information exchanged, he knows who is feeding information into the system and can bestow appropriate rewards. Hierarchial communications must travel up the organization to a common manager, then back down to the intended receiver. Hierarchy is used in addition to, not instead of, rules and procedures. Repetitive situations are covered by rules, exceptions by hierarchy.[31]

The weakness of this system is that the information channels quickly become overloaded. Delays result, and information is received too late to be useful. The originating officer may receive no feedback on the value of his input and consequently fails to volunteer information in the future.

To prevent overloading of hierarchial channels, lateral information channels must be developed. The simplest form of lateral relations is direct contact between two people who share a problem,[32] that is, simply permitting direct contact and dialog between officers assigned to patrol and those assigned to investigations. Yet, simply saying that direct communication is permitted does not assure that it will happen. Organizational impediments discussed earlier inhibit meaningful exchange, e.g., officers assigned

to different time periods and physical locations, long-standing hostilities between organizational units, etc. These barriers must be removed, or at least reduced, if useful exchange of information is to increase. Additionally, an officer possessing relevant information simply may not realize that it could aid in another's investigation, or the officer needing certain information may not know which, if any, fellow officers might be able to provide it. All too often, when investigative and patrol units are separated, investigators fail to solicit information actively and patrol officers fail to volunteer it. Thus, no communication takes place. Mutual exchange of criminal information benefits both investigative and patrol units in completing their missions, but if the organization does not allow for direct exchange between members of individual units, little communication is likely to occur.

Liaison roles may be created to handle important interunit contacts.[33] Each patrol unit might have one representative who meets daily or weekly with members of the investigative unit, or an officer assigned to the detective bureau might appear at patrol officers' briefings once a week to discuss mutual problems or transmit and receive information of common interest. Psychologist Rensis Likert suggests creation of a "linking pin" role to facilitate integration among interrelated units.[34] The incumbent of such a role would be a member of both the investigative and patrol units and would promote common purposes and attitudes and provide a point for exchange of information.

British police forces have created a kind of liaison role in the form of a "collator." The position of collator was introduced in England with the advent of unit beat policing in 1967. The function of the collator is to collect, assess, store, and disseminate local criminal intelligence. He is to gather information previously possessed only by individual officers and make this knowledge available to all members of the department. The primary focus is on assembly of intraunit criminal information, but he also provides a valuable service in making this information available to investigative and other patrol units. The British collator is a sworn officer, but at least one American police department has assigned civilian personnel to the role.[35] The collator serves to exchange information with centralized investigative personnel, outside law enforcement agencies, and among locally assigned patrol officers.

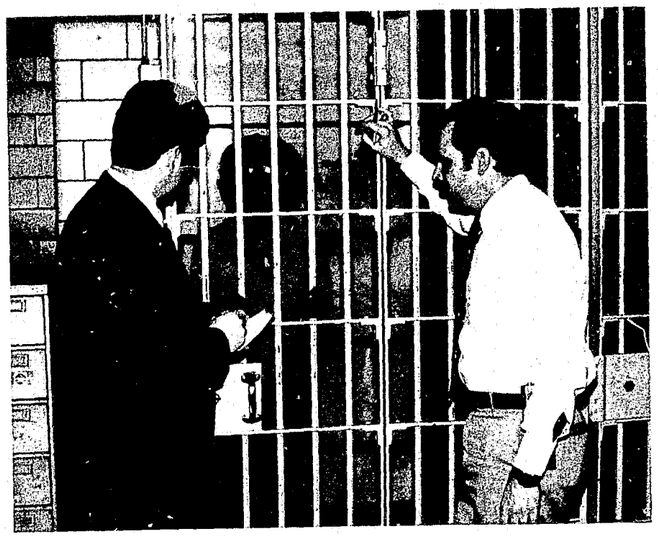
To gain even greater capability for exchanging information between patrolmen and investigators, they can be assigned to the same organizational unit. This can be done on a temporary basis by creating task forces, or more permanent teams can be formed. The task force or team under the direction of a single superior can be responsible for both the patrol and investigative function.

"The normal means of integrating activities of subunits . . . is through the hierarchial structure."

Task forces are usually created to attack specific problems. They may have full-time or part-time members and are temporary groups, existing only as long as the problem remains. When a solution to the problem is reached, or the problem no longer exists, each participant returns to his normal assignment.[36] Task forces, comprised of both patrol and investigative personnel, may be created to address such problems as a sudden increase in residential burglaries in a particular area, a regional gang problem, or an annual increase of armed robberies during the Christmas holiday season. The important point is that the task force functions as one unit with a specific, common purpose. Briefings should include both the uniformed and plainclothes officers, and all members should meet at a central location to provide the opportunity to exchange information. Relationships developed between individual patrol and investigative officers can remain useful long after the task force is terminated.

A detective and patrol officer exchange information regarding a case.

A more permanent means of establishing strong personal and operational relationships between patrol and investigative personnel is the adoption of a team policing model. The term "team policing" has come to have many meanings. For this purpose, it means combining the patrol and investigative functions within one geographically based organizational



Cooperation between patrol and investigative forces is an integral part of departmental operations.

unit. An essential element of the team policing programs in effect in seven cities studied by the Police Foundation [37] was maximum interaction among team members, including close internal communication among all officers assigned to area-based teams. The Police Foundation reported that interaction was evident among team members in all of the cities studied, but considerable varying degrees existed. Critical factors which influenced the exchange of information were regularly scheduled team conferences, the nature of the physical building facilities shared by team members, and the behavior of team leaders. When the team leader encouraged sharing of information and was able to instill a sense of teamsmanship, the members communicated more frequently and informally. [38] The most comprehensive study of the effectiveness of team police techniques attempted to date was initiated by the Cincinnati, Ohio, Police Division in March 1973. Initial observations of team operations were encouraging, particularly as related to interaction among team members cooperating in criminal investigations. After 6 years' experience and evaluation of this investigative structure, it has become apparent that additional mechanisms are required to facilitate exchange of criminal information between investigators assigned to different teams.

As with all forms of organization, there are certain costs attached to self-contained teams. [39] Due to the wide scope of functional responsibilities assigned to the team, a reduction in levels of specialized skills may result. Functional specialists assigned to generalist teams have less opportunity to interact with other specialists of the discipline, thus less opportunity to exchange current information related to their function. Expensive equipment, practical for a functionally centralized unit, is not available to a generalist team. Opportunity for a career path within one functional area is reduced.

A certain amount of duplication of effort is likely to occur when responsibilities are divided among teams. If a department opts for area-based, self-contained teams, it would seem prudent to maintain a small, centralized core of personnel to collate information pertinent to interteam crime patterns, trends, and activities.

The final form of organizational structure designed to force integration to be discussed here is matrix organization. This form of organization requires that dual reporting relationships be established. For instance, an investigative unit might be assigned to an area-based precinct station. Under a matrix system, the supervisor of that unit would report to, receive direction from, and be evaluated by both the precinct commander *and* the investigative bureau commander. The supervisor is therefore required to coordinate his activities and information with both the investigative bureau and the patrol precinct. Variations of the matrix might establish this dual reporting role higher, e.g., at the precinct commander level, or lower, e.g., at the individual investigator level.

Seen through the eyes of a police administrator who has been seasoned by the classical principles of organization formulated by Gulick, Urwick, Mooney, et al., the dual reporting structure appears to be a blatant violation of the "sacred" principle of unity of command. Upon reflection, however, the matrix is not too different from the staff or functional supervisory relationships used by many police agencies. Secondary reporting relationships are merely strengthened and formalized. This form of organization has been proven effective in many private sector organizations, especially in the aerospace industry, where there is a need for tight integration among interdependent subunits to accomplish tasks.

Use of Lateral Transfers

Galbraith reports on the use of lateral transfers as an integration device. [40] His comments present significant implications for police managers seeking ways to improve patrol-investigative communications. Lateral transfer, or job rotation, has been used for some time by both private and public sector agencies as part of management development programs. Findings of studies conducted at M.I.T. have shown the effect of lateral transfers on interdepartmental (relationships between sub-

"There is a strong inverse relationship between differentiation and integration."

units within the same organization) communications. While the studies focused on managers of organizations, they suggest that similar techniques might be equally effective for improving communications among first-line operational personnel. The findings of one study clearly indicate that managers having interdepartmental experience communicate laterally to a larger number of colleague managers than managers not having interdepartmental experience. [41] Similar findings were reported for a Japanese R&D organization. [42] In the second study, it was discovered that the effects of the transfer diminish with time. People transferred 10 years ago behave the same way as individuals who have had no experience.

A second finding is that individuals with interdepartmental experience use more informal means to communicate when engaging in lateral contact. They will use a telephone call, face-to-face contact, or an informal meeting. Those not having the experience are more likely to use a memo. Therefore, the transfer increases probability of problem-solving dialog rather than less effective one-way communication. Finally, the studies indicated that relationships established by managers with interdepartmental experience tend to be reciprocal, that is, they receive as many contacts as they initiate. Reciprocal relationships are the most satisfying and are likely to be the most productive for the organization.

Lateral transfers improve communications by reducing impersonality. It is much easier for an individual to call someone he knows to solicit or volunteer information than to address a memo to an impersonal organizational unit. That is why the effect of transfer diminishes over time. Promotions, transfers, and turnovers cause loss of personal contact.

Galbraith concludes that lateral transfers result in more lateral contacts and more effective contacts. In addition, the organization gets something for nothing if it already uses lateral transfers. The only thing needed is to transfer personnel often enough to offset the diminishing time effect. If lateral transfers are not used currently, they should be evaluated against the costs of lost specialization and lost productivity due to learning time.

Frequent rotation between patrol and investigative units has not been the general custom in most police departments. Uniformed officers often welcome a transfer to the detective bureau, but the reverse is seldom true. In many departments, civil service regulations protect the detective's tenure in the investigative unit. Even if not prescribed by formal rules, long-standing practices and custom usually militate against transferring personnel out of the detective unit, except those transfers caused by promotion or imposed as a disciplinary measure.

One-way transfers or "creaming" of the most experienced and able officers out of the patrol unit consequently leave a greater proportion of inexperienced or less competent officers in the patrol branch, reinforcing the perceived image of the patrol force as the "dumping ground" for the incompetent or a place to work only until one can arrange a transfer out. This phenomenon hardly gives credibility to the oft-repeated phrase that the patrol force is the "backbone of the police department."

As long as the detective enjoys higher prestige and pay than his uniformed counterpart, this situation is not likely to change. Although certain task characteristics require that the detective be given greater flexibility in his work, nothing appears inherent in his job that would justify higher pay for an investigator than for a patrol officer. In fact, according to Wilson, the detective works in a less hostile, more certain environment than his uniformed coworker.[43] When assigned to an investigative unit, the officer has a better idea of what is expected of him and enjoys greater public support than when he is assigned to the uncertain patrol task of "keeping the peace." This would seem to indicate that financial incentives are not necessary to induce officers to accept investigative assignments and in fact serve to widen the "prestige gap" between the two roles.

The pay differential issue is raised here to illustrate the effect it has in discouraging routine lateral transfers. *Municipal Police Administration* endorses rotation of vice-control personnel to maintain undercover effectiveness and transfers out of the detective bureau to prevent it from becoming a "sinecure for the incompetent." The text suggests that intradepartmental transfers should not necessarily be a reflection of a police officer's inability to do investigative work.[44] In the same volume, however, it is recommended that when the officer is returned to uniform assignment, he lose the "incentive" pay he enjoyed while assigned to investigations.[45] The loss of pay hardly seems congruent with the idea that the officer was performing his work effectively and is not being penalized by the transfer.

If use of lateral transfers is to be an effective means of improving cooperation and communications between the patrol and investigative forces of a police department, status and pay differentials must be reduced or eliminated, and officers must not be stigmatized by a transfer from an investigative to a patrol assignment.

Summary

The problem of inducing cooperation between the patrol and investigative forces is long standing and is present in varying degrees in all police agencies. Interrelated factors contributing to the situation are organizational problems of structure, competition, and assignment of responsibility; social problems of role and status differentiation and subcultural values; and maintenance of adequate information systems.

Organizational structure affects the level of cooperation among members of an organization. The organizational approach most commonly observed in police departments is the classical design. Tasks are divided among subunits in the organization and coordination is achieved through a formal hierarchy. Each base of specialization (purpose, process, clientele, area, and time) has inherent advantages and disadvantages to be considered when designing a structure which will permit adequate communication to occur between interdependent subunits. Human relations theorists minimize the importance of formal structure and concentrate on individual and group norms as means for inducing cooperation. Modern practitioners of organization design attempt to synthesize the classical and human relations approaches.

The patrol and investigative functions develop differential characteristics due to the nature of their tasks. As organizational subunits become more differentiated, integration becomes more difficult to achieve. High integration is necessary if high interdependency exists between units.

Integrative devices include use of rules, procedures, and programs; hierarchy; lateral relations, including direct contact; liaison rules; task forces; teams and matrix structure; and lateral transfers.

There is no one best way for a police department to organize which will insure effective communication between patrol and investigative elements. All forms of organization are not equally effective, however, and each police executive must consider the trade-off costs and benefits attached to the described organizational techniques when searching for the optimal design for his own agency. **FBI**

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