

2-24-2023

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Paramilitary Model and Civilian Employee's Impression of Law Enforcement

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CJU 590 Capstone

Friday, February 24, 2023

Abstract

Law enforcement agencies have long been facing a leadership crisis. Much of law enforcement organizational structure and leadership have been focused solely on police officers. Law enforcement leaders forget these traditional models and rigid structure also affect civilian personnel. The chain of command serves to streamline communication, not to facilitate unchecked behavior. However, many law enforcement leaders continue to rely on the chain of command for everything from mentoring, to coaching, to evaluation. Civilians may feel they are treated unequally and suffer from an unbalanced psychological injury. Some may consider it blasphemous to change the traditional organizational structure of law enforcement agencies. This paper will explore the administrative issues with the paramilitary model, ethical implications, hiring civilian commanders into civilian operated units to correct the problem and identify the challenges this change may impose.

***Keywords** administrative principles, paramilitary model, chain of command, human services, civilian personnel, management, ethics, morality, decision-making, civilian commanders, judicial policy, change*

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Introduction

Civilian employees fill a growing number of roles in law enforcement agencies from crime analysts, forensic technicians, intelligence analysts, records, and property/evidence management. Institutionally, law enforcement has been a place where sworn officers may be treated as members of the organization while civilians may be treated as employees (Adams and Mastracci, 2019). Therefore, civilians may feel they do not belong or may be treated as unequal when compared to police officers.

Law enforcement agencies operate on a paramilitary model with a rigid chain of command, which is a ladder of authority. The higher a person goes in rank the more authority he/she has. In some criminal justice organizations, civilians may be considered first-line employees who have limited authority or influence. There is little research on civilians and the internal challenges with law enforcement administration and leadership; therefore, this research was conducted to shed light on the experiences of civilian employees in law enforcement.

This topic is professionally important because some believe the standards and rigid hierarchy of the paramilitary model is antiquated. Civilian positions will always exist within law enforcement agencies; therefore, administrators and leaders must have a forward-thinking approach to cultivate a healthy work environment. Sound principles with both humanitarian and democratic theories should also be included to establish a universal approach to handling all employees.

In the first part of this paper, a preliminary discussion of personnel issues within a civilian operated unit will be used to evaluate the administrative issues with the chain of command. Thus, further emphasizing the role of leadership to improve communication and be relationship-driven instead of viewing decision-making through a power or ranking perspective.

Leadership is not a one size fits all because different teams require different information and guidance to function. Leaders must adapt to this changing landscape and challenge the traditional models of law enforcement.

Change is rapid in law enforcement agencies. Any time there is new leadership, there is hope for good to come; however, disappointment may still follow. When one examines the traditional leadership model, teams' function primarily based on top-down pecking order. Despite the pressing challenges from the public, most agencies failed to modernize its policies and management practices resulting in inconsistent actions, employee complaints, job dissatisfaction, and high attrition rates.

The second part of this paper will review the ethical lens view and administration's role in promoting ethics. Humans make moral or ethical judgments all the time but, there are certain values professionals who work within the criminal justice system must hold. These include privacy, freedom, public order, justice, duty, and loyalty; however, conflict stems from role and work culture differences (Stojkovic, et al., 2015 p. 30).

Areas of concern for law enforcement personnel are negligence, racial discrimination, overtime fraud, cover-ups, gossip, and low work ethic (Pollock, 2019, p. 7). Ethical standards are intended to guide public service organizations; however, professionalism among actors at all levels of the organization depends on their ability to administer policy effectively in a morally and ethically responsible manner (Pollock, 2019, p. 7).

There are basic principles of right and wrong. "Most people make a decision-based in their own self-serving best interest but want to appear moral in the eyes of others. Ethical behavior is impacted by altering the context in which people make decisions and act, negatively

or positively” (J. Cich, CJ-L Capstone, 2023, p. 1). No one is perfect. Every individual has committed immoral or unethical acts we know were wrong at some point in their life.

For example, communication is the root of all interaction. Administrators and leaders take the lead in managing communication in the agency. To communicate effectively, leaders need to be perceived as having integrity and send consistent information with a clear message. They must be committed to creating, promoting, and protecting ethical boundaries for conversation and information sharing in their agencies. However, the temptation to use communication to manipulate perceptions is a constant threat to ethical discourse (Pollock, 2019, p.122).

Ethical systems help individuals understand or analyze morality. Administrators and leaders play a crucial role in instilling trust and responsibility through behavior and conduct. Thus, designing “frameworks to include transparency and accountability mechanisms” (J. Cich, CJ-L Capstone, 2023). A key step in creating an ethical means is a commitment to honesty and clarity. When faced with an ethical dilemma, one must use ethical systems to frame their decision or come to a resolution.

It is important to note decision-making is far from perfect. The limits on information and time constraints can contribute to imperfect decision-making. Often, decisions are framed by conflicting internal and external constituents manifested by organizational politics. Bad decisions and mistakes will be a part of the process. Pollock (2019) stated the organization itself can affect ethical decision making of individuals (p. 109).

The final part of the paper will explore judicial policy making and the introduction of civilian commanders for law enforcement organizations to rethink the traditional hierarchy of authority models. Criminal justice organizations have rich traditions of established routines.

Implementing fundamental change will encounter a great deal of resistance rather than attempt to create circumstantial or procedural change. Labor relations and unions (police and clerical) often have a significant impact on policy decisions and have eroded the power and discretion of police administration to make changes. Environmental forces such as the culture, legal, political, economic and demographic can also hinder an organization's attempts at innovation (Stojkovic, et al, 2015).

There is currently a strain in law enforcement agencies and trust is at a low. Civilian employees may feel administrators do not understand or do not care about the challenges they face on the job. Civilians may feel as though they are being treated unequally with little control over the environment, support team, and decision-making. At the same time, administrators may think employees don't understand the challenges of running a complex organization, including the financial and management challenges to ensure long term sustainability.

The disconnect exacerbates burnout including lack of control, perceived absence of fairness, and conflicting values. Building trust and transparency between civilians and administrators have the potential to mitigate burnout. This can result in improved working relationships, healthier workplaces, increased personal and organizational resilience, and improved civilian work experiences.

Reality may be that the proper balance between civilian employees and police administration is difficult to achieve but history has taught us balance requires different leaders at different times. Civilians may be viewed as ill-prepared for leadership roles in law enforcement, but they were hired as a necessary aspect of professionalization. They inhabit the same environment and carry the organizational weight. Through their own experiences, they

understand what is needed to create the right work environment, set goals, and evaluate each other's contributions.

According to Adams and Mastracci (2020), there is no modern "policing" without civilian employees; therefore, it should not be insurmountable to hire a civilian commander to lead civilian operated units. Civilian commanders will be able to create a more sympathetic and productive work environment for non-sworn employees. The concern is a chief of police cannot simply decree change by issuing a memo or a direct order through the chain of command (Stojkovic, et al, 2015, p. 433). The effort to create change would require overcoming its natural resistance to assuming a new or modified mission, creating, and implementing new goals and procedures, and ultimately altering the arrangement of its activities (Katz and Kahn, 1978 as cited in Stojkovic, et al, 2015, p. 433).

Paramilitary Model and Civilian Employee's Impression of Law Enforcement Leadership During a Crisis

There has been and there is currently a leadership crisis in the law enforcement industry. With the baby boomer generation entering retirement, law enforcement leadership positions are becoming available frequently, and often filled by officers who lack formal training in management and leadership. Some would say the law enforcement field has failed to keep pace with the evolving industry, and many have failed to adequately prepare the next generation.

Traditional criminal justice programs and police academies do not teach leadership skills, and rather focus on reducing and solving crime (Chappell, 2010). The lack of formal leadership training has left departments with ill-equipped leaders, who find it difficult to develop and manage a team. For example, police commanders who have been frontline supervisors for most of their career are placed into support services and administrative units. Unfortunately, they lack human services and interpersonal skills and do not have the ability to embody leadership qualities to run clerical units. There are numerous examples of leaders today who do not lead, they manage, and as the saying goes "people don't leave bad jobs, they leave bad bosses" (Buckingham, 1999).

Not only is law enforcement leadership training lacking, but a number of law enforcement agencies still operate in a traditional model of employee supervision. This model stresses centralized authority, clear-cut rules and regulations, well-developed policies and procedures, and discernable lines of authority through a chain of command (Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 227). Typically, "communications flow upward and downward through the chain of command (blame, of course, always flows downward)". Critics believe communicating through the chain of command can be inefficient and ineffective (Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 43).

Today's generation of up-and-coming leaders have grown up in a modern world, viewing hierarchies as antiquated and an impediment to growth. While police officers are used to the chain of command, this model seems to impede swift decision-making within layers upon layers of management, often resulting in slow or misinterpreted communication and causing misunderstandings between staff and leaders. Whereas in other city departments, a staff person could go to the person who knows the answer they are seeking, instead of the question being posed to a supervisor, who passes it on to their supervisor, who passes it on to a manager, who goes to a commander, who in turn asks another commander, who may have to go down the chain of command to obtain the answer.

This process can take weeks, when one phone call from a civilian to a sergeant would have resolved the issue in mere minutes. Police departments are very much a business as any corporate entity. Even though police services may differ, the principles of management are similar, and the business practices used to achieve success are the same (Middleton-Hope, John, 2006). On the other hand, if law enforcement agencies had a wider span of control and frontline employees reported to one person to resolve the issue, it would place a heavier workload on that supervisor or manager. Thus, lowering their productivity.

The supervisor or manager would have the capacity to delegate employees to make decisions but not all individuals are good at decision-making. An employee could make the wrong decision and as a result, it would require more managerial intervention causing additional stress to the supervisor or manager. Additionally, communication may arrive faster, but the quality may be poor and not every individual interprets information in the same way.

Stojkovic (2015) noted "critics argued the traditional model produces authoritarian supervisors, precludes organizational innovation, stymies information flow, and reduces the

motivational levels of officers (p. 229). Thus, problems arise when frontline employees interested in initiating change are confronted with administrative obstacles. For example, there are numerous occasions where individuals such as officers, attempt to persuade administrators to implement new ideas directed toward improved services for clients and citizens, but little attention from administration is focused on the involvement of low-level personnel in change.

Such problems can be traced to the paramilitary style pervading police organizations (Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 229). According to Monica Lozer, Federal Investigator of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, some of the workplace issues in police departments can be attributed to personality conflicts between frontline supervisors and managers. Therefore, many Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) complaints arise due to the employee's perception of unfair treatment in the workplace (Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 225).

Lozer (as cited in Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 225) determined the following are ways poor supervision and undirected evaluation can lead to employee complaints of unlawful treatment in the workplace.

- 1) **Lack of clearly communicated rules, policies, and procedures.** Failing to clearly communicate rules, policies, and procedures leads to confusion about what the expectations are.
- 2) **Inconsistent application of policies and procedures.** Inconsistencies in the application of policies and procedures can lead to unlawful treatment of employees. Supervisors and managers need to apply policies and procedures the same way to all employees across the board.
- 3) **Failure to address problems and concerns.** Supervisors and/or managers need to take immediate corrective action when problems arise. For example, when an employee is

underperforming, management needs to immediately address the employee so there are no surprises down the road. When managers fail to address the problem, it is a recipe for additional problems in the future.

- 4) **Untimely professional feedback and disingenuous evaluation.** Failing to provide negative feedback and evaluation when warranted causes problems when management is not upfront and honest with an employee regarding their performance.
- 5) **Inadequate supporting evidence and lack of documentation.** Ineffective supervisors and managers fail to adequately document performance issues. Without proper trail of incidents, the employer is at a disadvantage.
- 6) **Inadequate training and lack of employee development.** Training needs to be viewed as an investment. Managing is people work and not all supervisors or managers know how to handle difficult situations and the proper steps to take. Employers need to provide effective training at all levels for front-line staff, supervisors, managers, and human resources staff.
- 7) **Management sets the tone in the workplace.** Incompetent supervisors and managers need to be held accountable. Supervisors should be treated no differently than their subordinates with respect to disciplinary measures and professional development (Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 225).

Though civilian employees and police officers cannot be directly compared, it is important to compare the two cohorts in the same organization for personnel evaluation and supervision. When there is failure by upper management to hold an officer or civilian accountable for discreditable practices or corrupt behaviors, it sends a widespread message to all staff that these

behaviors are acceptable. Thus, the problem employees develop an attitude of entitlement to put self above public service and the department.

Police leaders focus too much on changing policies which can be far too weighty for frontline officers and low-level personnel. This lowers morale and motivation, leaving employees with a negative perception, and increases misconduct and corruption. In a study of mental health disorders in civilian employees, Lentz, et al (2020), highlighted that civilian job satisfaction is related to management and organizational factors more than it is the individual employee.

Administrators should do everything in their power to ensure all employees are treated equitably. More specifically, Lentz, et al (2020) stated working in a bureaucratic structure of law enforcement may not only be foreign to a civilian but stressful as well. Civilians may not feel like they belong due to the paramilitary structure and will feel as if they are treated lesser than when compared to police officers.

Furthermore, feeling like one belongs is a fundamental human need and the perception of social support can decrease feelings of burnout and increase resilience. On the contrary, “a low sense of belonging is strongly associated with higher levels of depression” (Lentz, et al, 2020, p. 5). Thus, organizational issues may be an essential factor in the high rates of job dissatisfaction and mental health concerns in civilian employees (Lentz, et al, 2020).

Lentz, et al (2020), concluded it must be the “responsibility of police organizations to encourage inclusivity of all employees to increase a sense of belonging and cohesion within the workplace” (p. 5). Leadership demands an understanding of differences between the human service approach to employee supervision and the traditional model of employee supervision. The primary concern of the traditional model is control of the employee, whereas the human

service model attempts to integrate employee goals into organizational goals (Stojkovic, et al, 2015).

No single method works in all situations and agency environments. Instead, key issues and concepts can assist law enforcement administrators with methods for evaluating employee performance. Stojkovic, et al (2015), noted administrators will have difficulty implementing a human service model of employee supervision within criminal justice organizations. They struggle to give up power, and decentralize their organizations, and empower employees. Administrators “fall back on what they can do well and that usually means hierarchy and other traditional practices” (p. 233). The effectiveness of a supervision style or model depends on the types of organizational goals pursued by the organization.

To effectuate necessary change, there are four relationships a criminal justice administrator, such as the police chief, must try to maintain to be effective, and these relationships need to be continuously nurtured. They are the relationship with the department’s employees and respective unions, the community, city council, and the body to whom they report. Leadership success is relationship driven (Fischer, 2021); therefore, it is a must to sustain relationships with other key corporate department heads that regularly interact with the police because it allows the city council to be better prepared when the community wants answers (Middleton-Hope, 2006).

Without a political process nothing would get done within criminal justice organizations. In fact, politics is part of the police chief’s process of implementation. Not all political behavior is inappropriate or bad. His or her primary role is to minimize negative politics and not get misled into arguments or recriminations, instead they should take an organizational perspective and not a selfish one (Stojkovic, et al, 2015).

There will be disagreements between various departments of the city and outside agencies, especially when politics play a role in decision-making (Stojkovic, et al, 2015).

“Leadership means having the courage to reconsider one’s current paradigm, and the humility and self-confidence to effect change despite personal misgivings” (Middleton-Hope, 2006, p. 22). This does not diminish the capacity of a leader, nor will it score points with politicians. It is simply a way to express flexibility and the willingness to change (Middleton-Hope, 2006).

If mistrust exists between leadership and staff, and cynicism is bad for morale and business due to its paramilitary structure, which is often criticized for lacking the ability to motivate staff and suppressing motivation by over-management or practicing excessive authoritarian supervision. Middle managers are responsible for opening the line of communication with civilian personnel and sworn officers, to try to ascertain what the department is doing well and what needs improvement. Generally, “people and organizations need each other. When the fit between staff and the organization is poor, both suffer” (Stojkovic et al., 2015, p. 45).

Finding trust is learning to fight, lessening the fear, and being vulnerable (Fischer, 2021). If administrators can proactively work on building a culture of trust, it will improve relationships and promote credibility and resilience (Fischer, 2021). Thus, help leaders further understand each team member and be able to provide them with the support they need to feel empowered and in control of their own destinies within their respective unit.

The key to success is to forever evolve. Learning is key for growth. Change management is an embedded leadership requirement that plays into everything that we do, every day, and how we go about getting things done, regardless of hierarchy or rank. Change management requires

the circular vision to see around, beneath and beyond the obvious to anticipate the unexpected before circumstances force your hand.

It is common to blame poor performance on ineffective management or leadership and it is short sighted to suggest all problems in criminal justice can be attributed to faulty leadership (Stojkovic, et al, 2015). There are aspects of work criminal justice administrators have little or no control over and sometimes employees expect too much from managers in leadership. For example, some decisions are not the middle-managers job to make. Middle managers often act as the messenger to do what administration wants and face pushback from employees.

Leadership has little to do with the problem when unstable political environment can make multiple demands on the police chief which causes a constraint in decision-making. Even though managing is people work, leaders cannot appease all groups all the time. The process of leadership may be complex and misinterpreted by law enforcement personnel. Despite this, effective and adaptable leadership can be taught. The best way to learn is to practice. The problem with most organizations is they promote or hire people into management with no plan to develop the necessary skills to be a leader. At best, these individuals get some rudimentary leadership training, but most new managers are left alone to figure it out.

Instead of practicing leadership, some leaders spend their days in meetings and sending emails. Some do not care to learn how to become an effective leader and fail to build relationships with their team(s), establish clear goals and motivate employees. The quality of leadership matters when it comes to achieving the goals of criminal justice organizations.

The California Department of Corrections developed a Leadership Institute in collaboration with the California State University designed to prepare future leaders within the department to move beyond their formal structures, policies and procedures, and ways of doing

business (Stojkovic, et al, 2015). As a result, the participants experiences determined criminal justice leaders must possess the following attributes:

1. Traits indicative of a proactive approach to leadership such as good communication skills, an honest and trustworthy approach to dealing with staff, positive attitude, and firm knowledge of the organization.
2. Awareness of building professional relationships with employees.
3. Encourage cooperative decision-making through shared ideas and power. Allow freedom for employees to grow and experiment with new methods to accomplish tasks.
4. Be committed to the organization's mission and vision. Direct employees and their behaviors toward the purpose of the organization and solicit support.
5. Be creative and have a diverse set of strategies to overcome the challenges of changes that are problematic to the organization.

(Stojkovic, et al, 2015)

If supervisors and managers continue to accept the traditional practice of power, they will not have the ability to deal with problems. Civilians sometimes face ethical dilemmas involving relationships among agency staff and management due to administrators' oversight of subordinates or employees' efforts to deliver services. Ensuring transparency and honesty is equally important to ethical communication.

Consequently, "every management decision and action have ethical implications" (Stojkovic, 2015, p. 439). The smallest of communication can have a big impact on workplace ethical culture. Administrators have the duty to ensure ethical values are aligned across the organization and pay close attention to employees' need for training and education. Moreover,

administrators should be familiar with practical strategies designed to prevent ethical complaints and lawsuits.

Paramilitary Model and Civilian Employee's Impression of Law Enforcement

Ethics of the Chain of Command

Respect for the chain of command is essential for the smooth growth, prosperity, and effective management of law enforcement agencies. Within a para-militaristic organization, the chain of command is crucial for effective management. Usually, the chain of command operates as follows: workers report to their team leader, team leaders report to their managers, managers report to the Commander, the Commander goes to the Deputy Chief, and the Deputy Chief to the Chief of Police.

Ethically, if a problem arises, each tier of management should have the opportunity to handle it however they see fit. If the problem cannot be resolved, it is forwarded up the chain of command. In other words, issues are most effectively dealt with at the lowest possible level, elevating only if the immediate supervisor cannot provide a satisfactory resolution. Once a resolution is reached, it makes its way back down the same chain to be implemented. This system is simple in theory, but sometimes proves difficult in practice due to decision-making filters. If the agency suffers from poor organizational culture, this can exacerbate the channels of communication.

The important thing to remember is the farther at the bottom of the hierarchy an employee's position is, the less authority one may have. Those at the top of the hierarchy possess more control over organizational developments and are in the position to make important decisions. They also carry more accountability and responsibility for the agency or department's success and all the individuals who fall under them in the chain of command. Despite the formal code of authority, good leadership skills can be practiced at any level in the workplace.

A frontline employee's direct supervisor and manager probably have a better understanding of their department's operations and how best to solve the issue. A chain of command is supposed to help eliminate confusion or having to decide which manager to listen to when proceeding on a task or project. In civilian operated units, employees often receive conflicting directions and instructions from various members of management.

It is natural for employees to have questions throughout the day or need guidance on their work. It's also important they have work goals and someone who is there to support them. Having a chain of command is supposed to provide stability so employees can experience these things. According to Marc Lampe, a professor of business ethics at the University of San Diego, people look up to the chain of command for cues on how they should approach their jobs. It comes with the territory that all managers should be mindful of how they conduct themselves because it is going to be reflected in how others act (Kinsman, 2005).

As a supervisor, one is responsible for guiding employees with principles of confidentiality, honesty, and transparency in business dealings and conduct toward others. Ethical conduct boosts morale and promotes teamwork. When employees can trust one another and management, they can work together more harmoniously and effectively. According to Reed (2015), "proponents of situational leadership suggest the best leadership style is the one that meets the needs of subordinates and the demands of a particular situation. It is the responsibility of leaders to vary their approach based on what subordinates need and what a situation demands at a given point in time. There is a time to be loud and a time to be soft-spoken, a time to demand and a time to encourage or nurture (p.7)".

Administrators and management teams must be equipped to recognize when inappropriate communication is occurring between the ranks and must be empowered to prevent

such issues. Effectively communicating expectations to managers will ensure employees attempting to deviate from this system are sent to the correct administrator. Although administrators make it clear to employees, they do not have the ability to report issues to whomever they feel, whenever they choose – the possible impact of these toxic leadership could make it hard for employees to follow the chain of command.

Unfortunately, self-aggrandizing behavior has an amplifying effect in toxic leadership, and those with an inflated sense of self-worth have a propensity to engage in problematic interpersonal behavior. Narcissists are frequently found in positions of power and responsibility because they tend to self-nominate for challenging leadership positions (Reed, 2005). Reed (2005) further describes this saying, “they are not the best at leading others, but they seek the limelight the leadership roles provide, eclipsing those who might be more capable but are also humbler and more selfless. Narcissists want and need the power that comes with leadership positions to implement their grandiose visions of the future (p. 71).”

This can lead to distrust among frontline employees and management and create an atmosphere of uncertainty and chaos. As a result, it affects the morale of both civilian and sworn employees resulting in high turnover (Trullinger, 2016). Employees will begin to question the department’s ethics and the individual’s personal values. How can leaders of management expect their employees to live up to the department’s values if middle management is not held accountable? When administration disregards unethical behavior, it erodes the integrity of the values.

Azish Filabi, CEO of Ethical Systems, says, “when managing for ethics, leaders need to be aware of who they are promoting in the company and whether they have taken that individual’s ethical behavior into consideration” (Conick, 2017, p.58). Leadership is not about

being in charge and making good decisions; rather it involves motivating, developing, and inspiring others (Reed, 2005). Furthermore, one's morals and value systems are well established by the time they enter the workforce.

A dishonest, egoistic employee will be more likely to choose unethical behavior when the opportunity exists than another employee who values honesty and lives by strong moral code (Pollock, 2022). While research shows moral decision-making seems to take place in the emotion centers of the brain and frontal lobe areas, an area responsible for rational thinking and conscience; our ethical decision-making can be influenced by external factors such as reward structures, training, and leadership. These factors play a role in encouraging ethical behavior or facilitating unethical behavior (Pollock, 2022).

Professionalism and ethics in the workplace still need to be a priority, even though the ethical standards for a civilian employee may be different than a sworn officer. These two groups have different jobs and different ethical issues. Civilians perform police work that do not require specialized training so professionalism will look different. For example, a clerical worker in an office setting will be committed to customer service and work productively to meet the business goals of the organization. Police officers are enforcers of the laws created by legislators, which give them a great deal of discretionary power. Therefore, they must be held to a higher standard than their counterparts (Stojkovic, et al, 2015).

Reed (2015) writes, "Good leaders understand that leadership is a team sport that requires a "we" and not a "me" mentality" (p. 70). If administration can mitigate toxic leadership, civilian employees will learn to respect the chain of command protocol, and issues can be handled smoothly and efficiently. Thus, communications can be relayed in a timely manner, enhancing the management strategy and overall business of the unit.

While leadership practices can raise and lower morale, it is not the sole contributing factor to job dissatisfaction. Morale is a personal issue as it involves every individual's personal trait and characteristic. An individual's attitude sculpts how their day will be and whether they will positively interact with their teammates. It is always easy to blame management and leadership practices for low morale but it's important to note, law enforcement is the public face for the criminal justice system. Any changes to the laws or inefficiencies in the justice system will result in a negative image for police, thereby lowering job satisfaction (Cruickshank, 2013).

The mission of law enforcement is crime fighting and public service (Pollock, 2022) where the paramilitary model is designed to address life-critical missions (Cruickshank, 2013). Civilian operated units would benefit from detecting toxicity early on and correct those who are practicing influence-behaviors that are inconsistent with the values of the police department. The first step to creating an ethical environment and instilling ethical principles in civilian operated units is to promote two general styles of leadership – one for sworn employees (officers) and another for non-sworn employees.

According to Cruickshank (2013), law enforcement adopted the paramilitary model because policing was originally designed to address the public's need for safety. This is more closely related to military practices allowing command-and-control during emergencies. In dynamic situation where quick decision making is necessary, leaders need to have immediate adherence to orders; therefore, there wouldn't be time to employ a different style of leadership. The paramilitary model has served as the mission of law enforcement well over the years (Cruickshank, 2013).

Law enforcement is changing rapidly and expanding. The militaristic style of leadership and resulting practices are efficient and effective for meeting the public need for safety, while the

human service model and resulting practices are equally efficient for meeting the public need for service (Cruickshank, 2013). In traditional policing, command staff tend to pass on a culture of toughness and masculinity which directly supports an informal socialization process and impedes on their own agency's formal socialization process (Stojkovic, 2015). As a result, this would impose civil behavior and a public service mission on their officers and civilian employees. Thus, a democratic leadership style may be more appropriate for sworn employees.

Law enforcement operates under an autocratic system where sworn staff sometimes form a code of silence to protect themselves from punitive sanctions by administration. Stojkovic (2015) argues that management's philosophy of command staff must move to a more civil and democratic style to eliminate the need for work groups to develop informal mechanisms to shield and protect themselves from management (p. 281).

Unlike the traditional model of employee supervision, a less centralized system should be introduced in civilian operated units to emphasize a human service model. The rank-and-file system sometimes creates tension between civilian employees and administrators when there are less than flattering assumptions about employees, and there is no appreciation of the diversity of their roles and the job performed. The traditional model does not recognize the importance of diversity and organizational goals which define the human service model of employee supervision (Stojkovic, 2015).

Research shows that effective supervision occurs within criminal justice organizations when supervisors exhibit technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills (Stojkovic, 2015). While there are many leadership theories and much of it has been noted in criminal justice organizations, leadership research is highly prescriptive. Despite the limitations of leadership research, law enforcement agencies must consider creating a climate within an organization to

facilitate change in its culture and simultaneously affect traditional agency practices and habits to allow changes in the values (Stojkovic, 2015).

Therefore, a human service leadership approach may be more appropriate for civilian operated units. Since civilians perform roles such as clerks, communications staff, managers, and other professionals who perform duties to aid the core functions of police service - accountability, equity, fiscal integrity, and efficiency are necessary to accomplish the business-based tasks within the prescribed level of resources. Cruickshank (2013) suggests restricting the paramilitary model does not have to involve a change in personnel, it can be accomplished by simply improving workflow and trimming the fat (such as roadblocks and workplace inefficiencies).

Some civilian operated units are open twenty-four hours; therefore, one manager should not be expected to oversee a twenty-four-hour operation with multiple facets. Having an additional manager would alleviate the backlog of work the current manager is attempting to complete. Retail stores have multiple managers with a variety of skills to help run the business, therefore it isn't out of the realm of public sector business. The responsibilities and uncontrolled toxicity are overwhelming and leads to burnout for everyone.

Hiring an additional manager to supervise all shifts and split up managerial duties makes organizational sense because there will be less conflict for one person to manage and the responsibilities will be a joint leadership. Management and administration should not hire just anyone but promote or hire two leaders with complementary skills who are strong and competent to reduce the risks and leverage their individual strengths to build a team-oriented culture.

One idea to note from Conick about hiring practices, most agencies think they know how to judge the good character of a potential employee during the interview process, despite

research showing their judgment on good character is the same as an ordinary person's judgment (Conick, 2017). Some believe ethics can be measured between the time a prospective employee applies for a position and when they are offered the job.

Unfortunately, it is impossible for criminal justice leaders to hire for ethics especially for office settings such as civilian operated units because leaders cannot tell what kind of ethical person an individual is going to be. Prospective employees want a good job and good pay; therefore, they list good job experiences and people who will give them a positive reference, which can seemingly be biased. According to Azish Filabi, it is important for hiring managers to talk about the agency's values when hiring employees (Conick, 2017). Even so, ethical standards of an individual cannot be revealed during the interview process because many applicants rehearse for a job interview.

To support the idea of hiring multiple managers on different shifts, administration may want to consider removing the roles of frontline supervisors over first-line support staff. Some frontline supervisors are open to learning and embracing the role, while others like to manipulate, undermine, and place their personal interests above the welfare of the unit. This sometimes create a clash of personalities to dominate and make decisions. Changing the role of the supervisors can be challenging. Management, Human Resources, and administration should consult with clerical union and labor relations for best practices and ensure a smooth transition.

Thus, administration will need to train management to facilitate and coach/mentor civilians into their new roles and fit into an empowered environment. This transition will also eliminate the barriers of the chain of command between first-line employees and frontline supervisors. The goal is to have all staff go to the manager on their shift for fast decision-making, communication, and information flow.

Lastly, performance appraisals are an important aspect to properly evaluating, coaching, and mentoring subordinates. Without adequate feedback, ethics is not reflected and evidence of poor performance and goals for improvement do not exist (Conick, 2017). Some city and county departments have a history of inconsistency in conducting performance reviews. Sometimes employees receive them, sometimes they do not. This inconsistency can impact employee performance and problems can grow and thrive.

Law enforcement agencies are public-service oriented. It is crucial law enforcement leaders properly train employees and take a more productive approach to unlearn some things about paramilitary models (Reed, 2005). Emotional intelligence is necessary to move paramilitary formations to something more desirable by all and farther from the toxic (Reed, 2005).

Military and paramilitary personnel systems are top-down and leader centric (Reed, 2005). To ensure ethical expectations and conduct in others, Conick (2017) suggests formal leaders should consider the following:

“Ethical leaders are role models, and followers learn how to behave by observing them. When unethical acts occur in the social environment, employees who have an ethical leader are more likely to report the wrongdoing to management because ethical leaders create a psychologically safe environment and are trusted to handle reports fairly and with care (p.58).”

Furthermore, modeling ethical leadership from the top is important because it creates an environment in which first-line ethical leaders can flourish. Ethical leadership at the supervisory level has a huge impact on attitudes and behavior of others. Mid-level managers should be encouraged to regularly communicate about ethics to employees in their work unit, ensure ethics

are adequately reflected in employee evaluations, and be alert to exemplary ethical behavior in the work unit (Conick, 2017).

Any change is going to cause some degree of pain and conflict on employees and stakeholders and require a rearrangement of some functions (Stojkovic, 2015). A final consideration for organizational leaders to address its perceived performance gap, disparities, and structural aspects is to hire civilian commanders into law enforcement. New paradigms are needed, and it is going to require administrators to set aside the assumptions that dominate the agency to redesign the structure (Stojkovic, 2015).

Paramilitary Model and Civilian Employee's Impression of Law Enforcement

Civilian Commander

Civilian employees in law enforcement have been increasing since the 1960s, performing first-line job assignments and rarely used in supervisory or management positions (Trullinger, 2016). Contemporary police agencies should include talented civilians at all levels of the organization, especially upper management. Administrators do not acknowledge the growing diversity of work groups created by demands put on their organizations, causing lack of motivation and high turnover within civilian operated units (Trullinger, 2016).

Since the majority of police administrators are officers who worked their way through ranks of an agency and have little experience with civilian work groups or their responsibilities, many aspects of human resource management are being ignored. As a result, the unsupportive organizational culture impacts civilian employees. One policy change to correct the problem would be to bring civilian division commanders into law enforcement organizations to infuse the agency with fresh thinking.

Civilian commanders bring new ideas into this oft-closed group and implement modern human resource management practices to combat these problems and recruit, hire, and retain employees (Coletti, 1996). Developing intentional job design to structure and align jobs with organizational goals would also be meaningful for civilian employees who have often been at the bottom of organizational hierarchies and suffer from limited communication and networking (McCarty & Skogan, 2013).

The stakeholders in favor of this change may be the public, civilian employees, political and community leaders. Civilian and sworn staff share many experiences which contribute to occupational stress, but their unique work groups emphasize the need for distinctive

administrative practices. Currently there is a realization for reform but there are several significant constraints which make it cumbersome and inhibit effective management and leadership.

Generally, fellow officers may view this as a change to the status quo, a negative impact to the organization, and a less conservative approach (Glass, 2013). Law enforcement is a creature of habit, with strong traditions and organizational culture. Officers who oppose to these proposed changes might worry hiring civilian commanders will affect promotional opportunities for sworn personnel. For example, the state of California has placed civilian commanders in management positions traditionally held by sworn personnel and reported this does, indeed, affect the career ladder for sworn officers (Colleti, 1996).

In addition to officers perceiving this situation as a threat to their career, some may feel a civilian leader has never held and is not qualified to hold a position to judge the job performance of their work. Professional staff would define this as an oversight to the management of sworn personnel (Glass, 2013). The concept of hiring strategic leaders to command or executive positions is common. For example, hospitals employ hospital administrators who are not qualified to be doctors.

Doctors treat patients and make clinical decision-making. Hospital administrators handle policies and regulations, finances, business, and support services. Therefore, civilianizing the executive staff of law enforcement agencies is not insurmountable. Research shows civilians who serve in command positions often lead the administrative services section of a police agency. For example, Glass (2013) notes that LAPD's Homeland Security Division hired a TV news reporter as a civilian manager. He managed LAPD's Bomb, Intelligence, and Major Crimes Unit (Martin, 2009 as cited in Glass, 2013, p. 9).

Another factor to consider is to revise or repeal Minn. §626.89 subd. 17 to effectuate this change. According to Pollock (2022), civilian review/complaint boards have been in existence since the mid-1960s (p. 212). The civilian-and-review based model is less expensive because they rely on citizen volunteers; however, civilians may lack resources, expertise, and independence (Pollock, 2022). The statute currently uses civilians outside of the department to discipline officers while this proposal uses civilians within the department.

Most civilian review boards have only the power to recommend discipline; therefore, even if civilian review agencies find an officer responsible for misconduct, the case is referred to the police department for discipline (Pollock, 2022). For example, Pollock (2022) found that in Minneapolis, from October 2012 through March 2015, 962 complaints with a total of 919 separate allegations were submitted – 392 were dismissed, 216 were submitted to supervisors for coaching, 33 were submitted for mediation and another 202 were given to investigators for a preliminary investigation (p. 213).

As a result, only 36 allegations were found to have merit and only one officer was disciplined based on a community member's complaint. Dissatisfaction from this decision led to suggestions of having the Minneapolis Police Conduct Review board be disbanded. This could be viewed as a procedural justice problem since this framework has been advanced as a way of improving relations between police and public relations (Alderdeen and Skogan, 2014). In contrast, revising or repealing this statute could create an employee-focused procedural justice initiative to transform how the agency engages with civilian commanders.

A civilian commander within the agency can bring unique strengths to disciplinary process and actions of officers. The public might also afford them a certain credibility due to

their civilian background and experience. A civilian commander may be viewed as fair and more neutral than the police chief or a sworn commander (Coletti, 1996).

Officers who perceive their role as crime fighters will influence certain decisions to their use of force, definition of duty, and use of deception and coercion. Thus, a civilian commander may see their role as a public servant which implies a more restrictive view of the use of force and police power. Officers may feel a civilian commander may not understand the extent of the crime fighter role to give a fair and just review of their performance and recommend disciplinary actions (Pollock, 2022). If officers perceive the disciplinary system as harsh or unfair, this may lead to negative police behaviors.

In contrast, due to civilians feeling as though they do not belong working in a bureaucratic structure of law enforcement, civilians may also perceive they receive separate and unequal treatment. Diversity thrives when employees are subject to the same terms and conditions of employment; however, the complex dynamics of law enforcement agencies may be challenging for civilians to feel inclusive. The traditional model has created inconsistencies in employee supervision and evaluation which has cause employees to perceive there is unfair treatment in the workplace.

The organizational culture shapes the effects of differential treatment. Even if there is a clear code of conduct, it does not do much if these policies create perceptions of uncertainty, making civilians question their value within the department (Pollock, 2022). Attempting to understand the organization's culture and its socialization process in a large or complex organization is a difficult task (Stojkovic, 2015).

According to Stojkovic (2015), in 2010, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) had 99,922 complaints filed nationwide (p. 225). Even though unfair

treatment and favoritism of employees is not necessarily unlawful, it is problematic for morale and can lead to a lack of respect toward management among front-line staff and subordinates (Stojkovic, 2015). Microaggressions are common in the workplace which have led to employees perceiving illegal discrimination in the workplace and take subsequent legal actions against their employer (Stojkovic, 2015).

Legal claims arise only when the unfair treatment violates a specific law, an employment contract, or when it is so severe it becomes actionable as a common law civil harm. Minor unfairness such as unequal enforcement of rules, unequal assignments, or unfair standards are often not severe enough to give rise to legal remedies (Gross, 2013). For example, in *Vance v. Ball State University, et al*, 570 U.S. 421 (2014), petitioner Maeta Vance, African American woman, sued her employer, Ball State University (BSU) alleging a fellow employee, Sandra Davis, created a racially hostile work environment in violation of Title VII.

This case was remanded by the United States Supreme Court since the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) definition of a supervisor is ambiguous, the components of the standard authority of a "supervisor" have no clear meaning. Thus, the employer's liability under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for workplace harassment committed by supervisors is much stronger than it is for harassment inflicted by co-workers (*Vance v. Ball, et al*, 2014). Justice Ginsburg argued the majority's opinion ignores the working conditions of the modern workforce and a more workable definition of a supervisor would be offered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): anyone with the authority to direct an employee's daily activities (*Vance v. Ball, et al*, 2014).

Further, a supervisor who can effect change in an employee's working conditions has similar power over the victim. The EEOC's definition reflects the agency's informed experience

of the modern workplace and the importance of the specific facts of an employee's duties and relationship to other workers who can enable harassment. It adopts an inflexible standard that is not responsive to these concerns (Vance v. Ball, et al, 2014).

The Supreme Court Justices acknowledged that applying these standards would present daunting problems for the lower federal courts and for juries. They also understood any individual in a workplace can create a hostile work environment, including managers, co-workers, contractors, etc.; therefore, the court made it clear its ruling does not affect an employer's ongoing obligation to provide a workplace free from discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult (Vance v. Ball, et al, 2014).

Employers will still be liable for unlawful harassment under the negligence standard of the precedent, *Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth*, 524 U. S. 742 (1998), and *Faragher v. Boca Raton*, 524 U. S. 775 (1998) (as cited in Vance v. Ball, et al, 2014). Employers should continue to provide ongoing anti-harassment training to their workforce and additionally, training to managers, even if some of those managers may no longer be considered "supervisors" for purposes of assessing liability for harassment. Employers will want to ensure all managers prevent and correct any harassing behavior (Vance v. Ball, et al, 2014).

Conversely, if civilians were in a supervisory role, this will help the agency put into practice a commitment to community, teamwork, and excellence. Johnson (2018) suggests civilian leaders can focus more on strategic decision-making to address the concerns of the community and implement recommended reforms and programs to improve services reducing the fear of crime. Having the power over administration and discipline will give them the tools they need to deal with problems in the ranks in a systemic way.

Civilians may be more acceptable of having a civilian commander hired from the outside to act as a bridge between law enforcement administration and civilian employees. This may help to increase trust and confidence for civilians in the workplace and improve collaboration between first-line staff and supervisors. If civilians perceive there is fair and equal treatment, they may be more willing to participate and innovate.

Modifying organizational culture can be difficult, especially in hierarchical, paramilitary organizations such as law enforcement; however, a positive organizational culture emphasizing equity and support may be able to combat the negative effects associated with traditional law enforcement agencies (Glass, 2013). Positive work experiences can lead to increases in perceived support, which limits burnout, reduces turnout, and increases motivation.

The quality of all aspects of policing is dependent on the quality of its personnel, specifically its leadership. To move forward, there must be fundamental changes in policing based on existing work to ensure the profession evolves. If administration does not confront these problems and make the necessary tough decisions to change, the agency will end with a culture focused on pride in the past and protection of old procedures (Lim, 2008).

The legal implications of the proposed change may involve the hiring standards of civil service rules, labor relations, and unions. Government hiring rules are complex and often burdensome because in the end it is potentially a permanent selection for law enforcement organizations (Paquette, 2020). Strict hiring standards may be developed and uniformly applied to all civilian applicants to avoid political intervention.

Criminal justice agencies must adhere to the principles of accountability, efficiency, fiscal integrity, and equity (Stojkovic, 2015). Unfortunately, these principles are imposed through various legislative actions and laws. They develop expectations on how public entities

are to perform their functions. Thus, laws may be difficult to work with and protections afforded to public employees make it overly burdensome to effectively manage, discipline, remove, or lead. Law enforcement must respond to changes mandated through legislatures and the courts. Civil service rules reflect the inconsistencies of the legislative process and law enforcement administrators must deal with them daily (Stojkovic, 2015).

To truly focus on the health and wellbeing of employees, the culture of law enforcement must be transformed. There is a need to break the cycle of isolation created by the current culture. All employees should be able to seek help, receive encouragement, and address ongoing problems without worrying about the negative consequences or alienation. When employees feel supported and respected, they are more likely to volunteer for assignments and comply with rules and regulations.

Clear and transparent personnel policies related to selection, discipline, and rewards will counteract feelings of inequity or unfairness (Trullinger, 2016). Administration will need to take steps to gain the acceptance or buy-in of civilian commanders in police culture (Paquette, 2020). It is important to emphasize the hiring of civilians into management will not devalue the contributions of sworn officers; rather it simply provides a way for the agency to take advantage of expertise available within the community (Coletti, 1996). Civilian commanders may result in a few less jobs for sworn personnel, but it allows for future advancement for civilians as there are currently none. Thus, reinforcing the inequality for civilians.

When considering civilianizing commander positions, the approach creates a new structure and hierarchy. The new organizational structure may consist of the senior policing experts or sworn positions at the management levels with a civilian department head and similar command staff for management positions (Glass, 2013). The division of labor and responsibility

may remain in the same; however, professional staff would have defined oversight and management of sworn personnel. Success would be predicated upon the department's mission and vision; thus, a culture willing to relinquish managerial oversight of these positions to a non-sworn supervisory chain of command (Glass, 2013).

Some leaders claim an open-door policy when it is not. The door is either physically closed, or an employee seeking a sit-down does not feel welcome to insert themselves into their schedule. The proposed changes will require building strong relationships with frontline employee, senior staff, local union representatives, council members, and the mayor (Glass, 2013). This is certainly a higher level of engagement and will require great work to ensure expectations and accountability behaviors of everyone.

The aspect of this policy change is to earn the faith and trust of staffing at all levels. Having a very powerful connection between police executive management team and all the stakeholders will ensure there is an atmosphere of being a true team; thus, enabling staff to feel comfortable bringing out their leadership qualities to the forefront. This requires current police leaders to step up to the challenge of leading change.

Conclusion

It has long been known traditional ways of doing business will constantly be questioned, as goals and environments change and outpace technology and resources available to criminal justice organizations. Mismanagement, and failure to accurately and timely identify people problems is a form of toxic leadership. This problem can be better managed with attention to dynamics contributing to its prevalence (Reed, 2005).

Civilian employees are public servants like officers and have a duty to the citizenry they serve. They should aspire to a higher standard of behavior and must possess the moral and ethical sense to prevent the power inherent to their positions from being used for tyranny (Pollock, 2022). More importantly, every professional must understand they are morally and ethically responsible for their own decisions and actions.

To recruit the leaders of tomorrow, police departments need to create environments to attract and create structures conducive to innovation, collaboration, and inclusion. Many principles of personnel management are applied consciously or unconsciously in the day-to-day administration of police services, but there are signs these principles are not sufficient to create an attractive service, to draw recruits and retain them.

Police work is not just a succession of high adventures. It is essentially a job turned into a career, and the problem which besets us all today is to keep the spirit alive in a world of changing values. The principles discussed in this paper can assist in organizations aiming for and creating a healthy work atmosphere to which we belong, in promoting loyalty and discouraging cynicism.

The rules and assumptions of an organization are typically ingrained in the formal and informal structures, routines, and culture, and they often go unchallenged” (Stojkovic, et al,

2015, p 467). Making ethics a priority is essential to setting standards and holding people accountable (Conick, 2017). The organizational culture can generate and reinforce ethical employee behavior by emphasizing values, identifying “heroes,” and reinforcing behavior patterns that follow ethical guidelines (Pollock, 2022).

Change involves a shift in mindset to recognize it is not just those in leadership positions who matter. There are many entry points to affect change in organizations including personnel and management information systems, climate, culture, incentives, metrics, mission statements, and strategic plans (Reed, 2005). This will depend on the agency’s administrators’ alertness to the need for change and innovation. They must be ready to set aside traditional management styles and have the ability to create a climate to foster communication and criticism from the ranks (Stojkovic, et al, 2015).

Good leaders recharge the organization, sparking higher levels of commitment, creativity, and enthusiasm. Managers who are change agents must free themselves and their personnel from firmly rooted organizational values that contain major obstacles to change (Stojkovic, et al, 2015). However, it is not enough to focus solely on the positive aspects of good leadership traits and competency. Agencies need to collect data, discuss and learn from examples of toxic leadership.

Rigid para-militaristic organizational hierarchies and lines of communication have proved ineffective and unsupportive for most civilian employees. Civilian responsibilities have grown, and they now share many experiences with officers, but arguably any employee immersed into the cynical, unsupportive, and demanding environment associated with law enforcement is open to psychological injury. To combat these circumstances, administrators

should consider hiring civilian commanders to employ modern effective human resource practices (Paquette, 2020).

The future challenges for law enforcement agencies are immense. Civilian commanders are effective because they possess interpersonal qualities, traits, and skills – not because they have arrest powers (Coletti, 1996). Effective managers have good decision-making skills, can judge alternatives, and realize the ramifications of each decision. They look at long-term consequences and implications, rather than handle short-term crises (Paquette, 2020).

It is imperative for law enforcement agencies to address employee motivation and turnover before problems become unmanageable or levels of service are affected (Trullinger, 2016). The organization's overarching culture will need to evolve to support the change, which stems from leadership support and communication (McCarty & Skogan, 2013). Managing and measuring progress will alert the organization of the change occurring and that this process is being supported at the highest levels. This will create the buy-in required to cultural and behavioral change for civilian commanders to become the norm (Glass, 2013).

The ongoing challenges of criminal justice organizations are immense compounded by community expectations and difficulties created by the para-militaristic management styles. Criminal justice leaders have a higher duty to set the tone for an office free from illegal or unethical behavior. To improve the climate for all criminal justice employees, leaders need to upgrade the quality of personnel, establish quality based supervisory techniques, and emphasize ethical training.

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