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# Cop Confidential: Police Supervision and Sub-Culture

John G. Serier II

*University of St. Thomas, Minnesota*

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COP CONFIDENTIAL: POLICE SUPERVISION AND SUB-CULTURE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

By

John G. Serier II

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

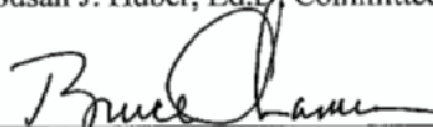
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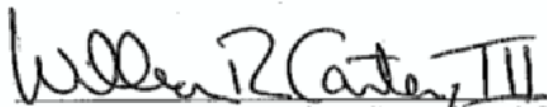
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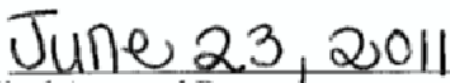
We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee

  
Susan J. Huber, Ed.D, Committee Chair

  
Bruce H. Kramer, Ph.D, Committee Member

  
William Carter III, Ed.D, Committee Member

  
Final Approval Date

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### **Dedication**

To my wife Kathryn who makes all things possible.

To my children Laura and Alexander who remind me I am still learning.

To the men and women of law enforcement who, without hesitation, “mount up and ride to the sound of the guns” every day.

## COP CONFIDENTIAL: POLICE SUPERVISION AND SUB-CULTURE

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## ABSTRACT

**Law enforcement first-line supervision** is the key **management** element in the daily functioning of American **police** organizations. This qualitative study examines supervision from the viewpoint of the patrol sergeant supervisor. In this study, supervisors discussed their beliefs on the **care of officers, organizational development, politics, community, administration,** and their **supervisor peer** group. Using an **inductive** model of **data collection,** this **thick-description ethnographic study** exposed a **Multiple Constituency Model** consisting of people and interests requiring the time, favor, and expertise of the first-line supervisor.

Supervisors discussed dilemmas of **decision-making, police agency structure, leadership** strategies, and **peer supervisor** and subordinate relationships. The relationships within the Multiple Constituency Model each required negotiations and resolutions with supervisors. Strain in some of the relationships is seen through **sub-cultural** issues in **policing** and through the idealized thoughts of supervisors. By understanding these dynamics, law enforcement administrators may be able work with supervisors for better organizational outcomes.

## CHAPTER ONE

### WHAT'S TO COME

#### *Understanding the World of the Police Sergeant*

Whisenand and Ferguson wrote, “We are suggesting that a more effective leadership posture for modern law enforcement is to be equally concerned with the personal needs of the employee as well as those of the organization” (1973, p. 218). Early in my own career as a police officer in a municipal agency, I noticed the personal needs of officers subordinated to the needs of the organization and of some supervisors. Suspicion by officers, supervisors, and administrators towards one another stunted the effectiveness of the individual and the organization as a result. This phenomenon caused turmoil in me over the years of working as an officer, supervisor, and administrator. Currently, I serve at as an Inspector in a metropolitan sheriff’s office where the behaviors I had witnessed early in my career are still present in the profession, nearly two decades later.

As a law enforcement trainer, I have been involved in the training of community policing, firearms, and supervision. In each of these areas, I continued to hear concerns, at all levels, about organizational dysfunction and the struggle of many law enforcement line-officers, supervisors, and managers who attempt to reconcile the needs of the organization and employees. It has been my experience as a police officer, supervisor, and management trainer that the question of “How do you take care of employees while meeting the other pressures of law enforcement?” raised many years ago is still the struggle of many law enforcement line-officers and supervisors who attempt to reconcile the needs of the organization and employees. It has been my



experience that many line-officers do not believe that supervisors or managers in their organizations “care” about them as individuals. Conflicts arise as line officers push back against the requests and orders of their supervisors because line-officers’ perceived lack of caring about them by their supervisors.

The negative internal perceptions of people at all levels of law enforcement agencies creates a caustic environment within law enforcement which breaks down agency effectiveness to deal with the problems of crime, disorder, and service for which citizens have commissioned them. Without the health of these organizations, communities are at-risk of not receiving the police service they deserve. Higher functioning police organizations can focus their talent on better results and provide increased service to communities in a time of dwindling public resources; making my quest for understanding elements of how police organizations function and offering solutions for better performance a relevant and worthy effort.

For over a decade, I have been involved in the training of officers from many different types of law enforcement agencies. In this time, I have listened to students in class frequently talk about the supervisors for whom they work; and often they say that *good* supervisors “take care of them.” Consequently, I have examined the literature for research on how law enforcement supervisors approach being a good supervisor and have found the body of work less than satisfying to my level of interest in the subject. The lack of depth in the information from the point of view of the law enforcement supervisor about the meaning and challenges of their roles has continually piqued my interest. It has also troubled me that the group which law enforcement agencies rely upon to supervise the line-officer workforce in American policing has such a lack of

understanding about the lived experiences of its supervisors. Additionally, when I have told people inside and outside of law enforcement about the intent of my study, I have often heard a statement similar to, “When you’re finished, can you come to my work and figure out what’s going on with our supervisors?” I have found this statement, and similar ones, to lend further relevance to the topic. It is the purpose of this study to gain understanding of the lived experience and decision-making of police first-line supervisors from their personal stories, narratives, and philosophy through qualitative interviews.

In this dissertation, I will describe the lived experience from the perspective of front-line law enforcement supervisors from two law enforcement agencies in a metropolitan area: one located in an inner-city and the other a large suburb. The qualitative approach I used was to ask questions (found in Appendix A) of first-line supervisors in these agencies and explore how they understand supervision from their experienced point of view. From my data, a tension model, made up of different constituent groups emerged; each of which challenged the supervisors and competed for their limited resources.

### ***Study’s Approach to Understanding Police Supervision***

I took two approaches for this study: One as a practitioner who has and continues to experience the lived world of a police supervisor; the other as an ethnographer capturing the truth of police supervision as the supervisors understood it. However, as in all ethnography, I cannot separate myself from my lived experience and it colors how I perceived the story and how I analyzed it. However, as an insider to the world of police supervision and as an academic, my lens is in some ways clearer than most

because I understand the dynamics of police culture, recognize the clues in language, and story-narrative the supervisors told me. My position also has given me the unique opportunity to explore an issue that is close to the heart of all people in American culture; to gain a further understanding and de-mystify our police, who are the only persons to possess the power to incarcerate and to use lethal force in our society.

The supervisors, whom I interviewed, discussed their lived-experience, how they deliberated decisions, provided reasons for their actions, what they could have done differently, and what impact decisions have on how their organizations operate. As a result, I believed the data links to dynamics related to how their police departments function.

### ***A Note on Police Culture and Leaving the Flock***

Police sub-culture is unique to each organization (Crank & Calero, 2000). However, American police departments have common traits that connect them in shared experiences as organizations and as individuals who are *cops*. Police departments share the traits of seeing themselves as paramilitary organizations, as outsiders to mainstream society, and having to be hyper-vigilant (Gilmartin, 2002) to the environment in which they work. They share times of extreme boredom, working when others are taking holidays off with family, and sharing life and death experiences; creating a glue which binds them together as an emotional sub-culture.

It is important to understand this as a contextual reference point when examining the experiences and decision-making of the supervisors in this study. Police culture is what binds supervisors to the people and organizations for whom they work; it also defines the

experience of being promoted and being partially severed from one part of police culture and being bound to another of its sub-groups.

In my interviews with the first-line supervisors, a shared experience all of the supervisors had was “leaving the flock.” For the formative years of their career, supervisors work as co-workers with line-officers; being promoted to a first-line supervisor position is the beginning of the separation from those with whom they have worked with for so long.

Becoming a police officer accepted by peers is a process that is difficult and prized by officers when it happens (Manning, 1989). The right of passage to becoming a supervisor means an officer leaves his or her peer group and seeks the need for acceptance of line-officers. It also means gaining the acceptance of your new peers at the first-line supervisor level and your new bosses – the upper level management of the law enforcement organization. This is a dance with choreography on several levels. The findings and analysis in this dissertation are concerned with the level of this choreography/decision-making as a supervisor.

## CHAPTER TWO

### POLICE SUPERVISION – WHERE IT’S BEEN AND WHERE IT’S AT

#### *Police Supervision in Context*

Police departments in America have had an impact upon the communities they serve (Goldstein, 1990). It is impossible to separate the way in which individual agencies are constructed and how police culture affects the intra-organizational dynamics. A key member of any law enforcement agency culture is the first-line supervisor. The first line supervisor operates as a bridge between upper management of an agency and the line-officers. First-line supervisors serve as a nexus of information gathering and distribution in the organization and serve as a “legitimate” (Crank & Langworthy, 1992) point of contact for the community. As a result, the role of a first-line supervisor is in part determined independently, but also by the demands from the varying groups which expect a certain type of supervisor *presented* to them.

#### *Police Leadership, Management, and Bureaucracy*

Crank and Caldero (2000) stated policing in America has changed significantly since the beginning of the professional era of policing which can be benchmarked by the emerging influence of August Vollmer and other reformers starting in the 1920’s. According to Miller and Hess (2005, pp. 10-13), early reformers focused on removing the corruption from policing of the *political era*. Police reformers worked as colleagues with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to spread the *gospel of professionalism* (Crank & Caldero, 2000). Crank and Caldero state that early reformers framed their arguments around the belief that policing was more than an occupation, it was a moral commitment. As a result, reformers worked to change the hiring, training, and education

standards of American policing with the belief that the ethics of officers could be changed (Crank & Caldero, 2000).

Reformers in police leadership believed policing could be committed to combating crime, but value neutral on social issues (Carte & Carte, 1975) (Crank & Caldero, 2000) (Vollmer, 1936). Vollmer (1936) said that police officers faced a western society which was changing rapidly with the demands of technology, rising crime rates, and a professional public service sector (government) in which American policing found itself weak and ill-prepared. Vollmer built an argument for officers needing to have increasing professionalism and “the wisdom of Solomon” (p. 222); along with needing to deal with the service and crime control needs with “intelligence, tact, and sympathy” (p. 222). Vollmer also wrote that police needed effective interoperability of police functions within law enforcement, in the larger scope of government, in the community and that the “organizational chain is not longer than its weakest link” (p. 227). Vollmer asserted that through increased emphasis on recruiting more intelligent officers and ensuring they were of the highest moral quality, the police would be better prepared at the line officer and leadership level to address the increasing complexity of policing.

Crank and Caldero (2000) stated that Vollmer’s beliefs about police professionalism had wide acceptance over time. Within the literature of police professionalization, Wilson and McLaren (1963) wrote about the application of scientific management in policing through command and control management techniques and ascribed to a form of the “Great Man” theory of leadership (Carlyle, 1966) when they wrote “superior leaders are almost always intelligent men, emotionally stable, and physically strong with contagious enthusiasm and forceful personalities” (Wilson &

McLaren, 1963, p.110) and have attributes which inspire loyalty, win confidence, and maintain the enthusiastic interest of subordinates (Wilson & McLaren, 1963).

Wilson and McLaren additionally listed qualities that inspire subordinates' confidence in a leader and stated that people will do what a great leader asks of them. The listing of these traits is as follows:

1. Belief in own competence
2. Knowledge and skill
3. Ability to make prompt decisions
4. Have all facts before taking action
5. Soundness of judgment
6. Will accept responsibility
7. Has poise in face of criticism
8. Will investigate and take corrective action
9. Free of prejudices
10. Has personal integrity – especially with regard to corruption.
11. No tolerance for corruption
12. Will work hard
13. Physical and emotional strength (Wilson & McLaren, 1963, pp. 110-111)

Wilson and McLaren posited that when leaders demonstrate these “good” leadership traits, people will like and accept them as their leader. These traits reflect *trait theory* (Terry, 2001). The writing of their book *Police Administration* (1963) is also co-terminus with the period when trait theory leadership was a dominant leadership view (Terry, p. 24, 001).

Wilson and McLaren discussed the division of police labor and the management of police personnel in a way consistent with the model of scientific management of Taylorism (Taylor, 1911) (Kivisto, 2004). As a result, Wilson and McLaren (1963) advocated management systems which focused on management process which purposefully placed a division between supervisors and officers (Wilson & McLaren, 1963) (Crank & Caldero, 2000).

Germann (1962) was an advocate of scientific management in policing, but did not advocate the “Great Man” and trait theory of Wilson and McLaren (1963). Germann said that innovative police managers needed to create a competitive culture of innovation.

### ***Law Enforcement and Bureaucracy***

Germann (1962) said the new generation of police executives needed to take on and overcome the self-sustaining bureaucratic structures that lack desire to innovate. Germann’s analysis is resonant with the work of Weber (1946) and Merton (1957) where organizational reward is not for innovation, but for adherence to rules. Germann said that arriving at new ideas would not be difficult, but the implementation of new ideas is the most difficult part of being a police leader. Germann also asserted that when innovative police managers create a competitive culture of innovation, current and future managers would develop and implement new ideas towards the goal of effective and edifying American law enforcement.

Germann (1962) reinforced the scientific management position towards police management by paralleling and elevating the importance of police management by stating police agencies “...must be even more effective and honorable than the normal industrial enterprise” (Germann, 1962, p. 3). Germann posited that due to the complexity of the policing environment, success depended on policing’s efficiency and legality (p. 3). He described policing as having a unique corporate structure which promotes people only from the internal organization, which departed from other types of corporate entities. He saw this unique type of credibility as being a law enforcement only phenomenon.

The works of Vollmer, Germann, and Wilson and McLaren all point to a scientific model of management which Swanson, Territo, & Taylor (2005) said is the



system upon which most police departments are still organized. This is a very controlled system of direct reporting and functionalism which breaks organizations into detail and process oriented work which works toward efficiency and effectiveness, but increases the potential for intra-organizational conflict between differing specialized groups (Swanson, Territo, & Taylor, 2005, p. 232).

### ***Policing, Bureaucracy, and the Military Myth***

Police agencies, starting in the 1920's, have designed themselves as paramilitary organizations. The reasons for this stem from the corruption of the political era of policing which began to fade in the 1920's as calls for reform began to take root in new models of police organization (Carter, 1995). Police adoption of the top-down command and control model was very important in reducing systemic corruption in law enforcement. However, this model ill serves the policing environment today (Cowper, 2000) and does not reflect in actuality how police agencies are organized (Wilson, 1989).

Cowper (2000) asserts that the military model, in its current brand in police organizations, is a carry over from idealized and historical beliefs about the military as well as the Vietnam era administrator who applies the lessons from a military model they experienced in their early lives that no longer is present in the United States military of today. Therefore, the model that is emulated in top-down authoritarian models of police departments, which are concerned with rank, uniforms, and regulations, is outmoded in today's military. "A careful and open-minded examination of current military theory and practice will reveal an approach to organization and leadership that is radically different from what..." (Cowper, 2000, p. 231) advocates and critics of the military model in law enforcement currently believe.

The real military model in use today can benefit policing greatly. Prevention of micromanagement and over-supervision is key to current military doctrine. It pushes down the authority to junior officers and non-commissioned officers. This concept was pioneered by the German Army prior to World War II using the concept of *auftragstatik* or “mission-oriented command system” where senior commanders tell subordinates the precise goals to be accomplished, but not telling them how to accomplish it (Allen & Unwin, 1988). Those aspects were left to the junior officers and non-commissioned officers to determine in the field with a more intimate understanding of the problems in front of them. Doctrine supported this approach by focusing on the importance of initiative, willpower, and responsibility (Wilson, 1998).

The highly controlled administrative environment, an officer “crime-fighter” mentality, and independent and uncoordinated working environment of American police agencies creates an unfocused and non-cooperative system. In such a working model, officers and agencies do not reap the benefit of “...the very thing that makes organizations effective – the cooperative effort of multiple agents acting in concert that produces a more effective result than the sum of the individual agents acting alone: synergy (Cowper, 2000, p. 238).” Thus, the para-military approach is a “poor” mimicking of the modern approach to the military operational and leadership models.

Modern policing more accurately acts as a bureaucracy. The origins of bureaucracy emerged during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and informed the industrial revolution to come. Frederick the Great possessed an army full of criminals, the scabrous, and corrupt. To create a reliable army, the Prussian leader standardized functions which could be efficiently replicated. He also created a system that strove toward negative motivation

– where troops were more afraid of their commanders than they were of the enemy. Many of his organizational improvements to the Prussian army were adopted by the emerging mass production industries of Europe during the industrial revolution to manage production and increase efficiency; this bureaucratic approach was also endorsed by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (Muller, 1993) (Morgan, 1997).

The bureaucratic machinery begun in the 1700's was continually refined throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and is still pervasive to this day in government and private industry (Marx, 1964)(Morgan, 1997). It continues to function as a mechanism for organizing people toward a common set of end goals set up by a command and control structure with direction emanating from the top of the organization. Frederick the Great was seen as a great military leader whose contributions inspired emulation by the military of the United States (D'Este, 1995)(Luvass, 1966). During the beginning of the reform era of American policing, the military model, as understood in the 1920's, became the mode of operations for creating more efficient, accountable, and non-corrupt police agencies (Carter, 1995). August Vollmer's work in this area as a police chief and police reformer gained nation-wide recognition and his views on the para-militarization of law enforcement allowed a bureaucratic model of organization to become the standard for reform-era police structure.

The bureaucratic organization of policing cloaked as a para-military structure is important to understand as an organizing factor of police culture. The top-down nature of police organizations, with vague agency goals, makes it hard to convey to staff what they are supposed to do. And due to a number of goals they are tasked with from community and political entities, competing cultures occur within the agency and the power of each

of these cultures lacks power to accomplish their goals due to the legal and political constraints placed upon them (Wilson, 1989, pp. 95-96) (Halperin, Clapp, & Kanter, 2006). Guyot wrote that police departments also have similarities to other types of formal organizations where temporary collaborations, hierarchies, cliques, and formal subdivisions occur (1991). As a result, the idea of police organizations being para-military organizations, with para meaning “closely related to” (Webster’s, 1983) has shifted to more a quasi-military form with quasi meaning “having some resemblance” (1983). One reason being that the American military has changed its approach to a less classical understanding of the 18<sup>th</sup> century model of military organization, and secondly due to the morphing of American law enforcement away from this classical approach to a more modern professionalized bureaucratic model.

Police culture also desires law enforcement to be recognized as a profession; however, given Wilson’s definition of a professional as one who receives at least part of their professional recognition from groups outside their actual workplace, law enforcement is stymied from becoming a profession due to a bureaucratic mold they are cast into by external political and legal forces which create limits to their actions they would not choose on their own (Wilson, 1989, p. 121); thus creating a system which is driven by constraints, not tasks which the same community and political groups want them to achieve.

### ***Police Management and the Individual***

Whisenand and Ferguson (1973) approached the concept of police management differently than Vollmer, Wilson and McLaren, and Germann in that Whisenand and Ferguson advocated agency organization around a scientific management model – with an acknowledgement of the individual officer and their needs. Whisenand and Ferguson

identified policing's scientific management approach by pointing out that law enforcement's goals are still solely focused on organizational goals which now need to be equally concerned with the personal needs of employees and members of the public.

Whisenand and Ferguson asserted that the most valuable resource within a department is its people; when people have their individual needs met, then job satisfaction and productivity increase. They cited Schien and Maslow who stated that "...organizational life has removed meaning from work" (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973, p. 218), and then go on to say that the same thing is happening in policing, "as they become compartmentalized into highly specialized units," (p. 218) which creates a void in man's inherent need to use their capabilities and skills in a mature fashion. Whisenand and Ferguson go on to say that six strategies can be employed for the concern of the individual officer:

1. Improved interpersonal competence of managers.
2. Changing values so that human factors and feelings are seen as legitimate.
3. Reduce workgroup tensions by increasing understanding within it.
4. Develop better team management and its functionality.
5. Move away from bureaucratic methods of conflict resolution.
6. Develop organic systems (p. 19).

Police organizations have followed a bureaucratic model that has been disconnected, impersonal, and not attentive to interpersonal relations inside or outside of the police organization (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973, pp.229-230); which has created organizations relying heavily on rules and regulations and technical competence (pp. 229-230). Bennis wrote:

Bureaucratic values tend to stress the rational, task aspects  
of the work and to ignore the basic human factors which

relate to the task and which, if ignored, tend to reduce task competence. Managers brought up under this system of values are badly cast to play the intricate human roles now required of them. Their ineptitude and anxieties lead to systems of discord and defense which interfere with the problem-solving capacity of the organization (Bennis, 1966, p. 116).

Both Taylor's theory of scientific management (1911) and Weber's theories on organizational structure (1989) have affected the organization of modern law enforcement, how productivity is measured, and how individual behavior is rewarded (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973, pp. 153-156). Taylor addressed the relationship between management and workers and how to create efficiency in the workplace when he wrote,

It would seem to be so self-evident that maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for the employee, ought to be the two leading objects of management, that even to state this fact should be unnecessary (Taylor, 1911, p. 3).

Taylor wrote that his interest was in getting management and workers to share equally in the work of an organization, both doing that which was most aligned with their talents and role. Taylor said his methodology put management on a higher level of self-actualization in the *good* workplace and that without consistent policies and controls, the average worker will deliberately work,

....slowly so as to avoid doing a full day's work..." and  
"...is almost universal in industrial establishments, and  
prevails in the building trades; and the writer asserts  
without fear of contradiction that this constitutes the  
greatest evil with which the working – people of both  
England and America are now afflicted. (Taylor, 1911, p 4)

Weber contributed the development of the forming of the modern police organization through his advocacy of bureaucracy as the stabilizing influence of private and public/political organizations (in Gerth & Mills, 1946). Weber wrote that the rules and regulations that bureaucracies created were the undergirding of otherwise unstable organizational structures. Weber further said that the division of labor, specialization and hierarchical management all provided the backbone to consistency and performance in societies' complex organizational functions.

The reduction of modern office management to rules is deeply embedded in its very nature. The theory of modern public administration, for instance, assumes that the authority to order certain matters by decree – which has been legally granted to public authorities – does not entitle the bureau to regulate the matter by commands given for each case, but only to regulate the matter abstractly. This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor, which is absolutely dominant in patrimonialism, at

least in so far as such relationships are not fixed by sacred tradition (in Gerth & Mills, 1946).

American policing was able to convert the principles these philosophers espoused into the structure of police organizations that needed tighter control, better performance, and more accountability in order to combat the political privilege, corruption, and lack of confidence that the political era of policing had created in American policing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Goldstein, 1990).

According to Whisenand and Ferguson, the works of Gulick (1949) and Urwick (1943) on formal organizational structure has been adopted by police managers for the division of labor to maximize results. These highly formalized structures have created a conflict between organizational templates and the line-officer police generalist whose role necessitates creativity, flexibility, problem-solving, and the use of discretion (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973) (Swanson, et al., 2005) (Jetmore, 1997) (Goldstein, 1990) (Haberfeld, 2006). This conflict does not end with the police generalist, but extends to the supervisory staff of police organizations that have to negotiate between the formal administrative structures (Haberfeld, 2006) and the concerns and expectations of line-officers (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973) (Crank & Caldero, 2000). Most officers see supervisors as enforcers of administrative rules and are suspicious of their intentions (Reuss-Ianni, 1983) and role in controlling the behaviors of subordinates (Goldstein, 1990, p. 157).

In re-framing the role of the police supervisor in relation to the problem-solving work of line-officers, adjustments have to be made to how supervision is approached (Goldstein, 1990, p. 158). Supervisors need to learn the skills of facilitation and coaching,



running interference, shielding subordinates from peer pressure, removing them from unnecessary tasks, and advocating and supporting line-officers under their supervision during organizational changes (p. 158) and being loyal to officers in their commitments to them even to the supervisor's personal inconvenience and risk (Kleinig, 1998, p. 6). These described behaviors of emerging leaders, which break away from the traditional management (Swanson, et al., 2005) of policing, increase the variables in the leadership role for supervisors and increase their burden in the supervisory role (Goldstein, 1990). Broadening the roles of officers, allowing them more discretion, creativity, and risk-taking in problem-solving provides officers with a pathway to self-fulfillment through job enlargement as said by McGregor (in Heil, Bennis, & Stephens, 2000). There is an ethical milieu that is introduced by increasing line-officer discretion, allowing more freedom and independence in work decisions, and changing the dynamic to include officers in key decision-making processes of the organization. As these supervisory attitudinal changes have entered police organizational culture, it has altered the exchange between supervisors and line-officers (Swanson, et al., 2005). As a result, there are ethical considerations for how supervisory actions and decisions are made that need to be considered in the interaction between supervisors and officers.

Goldstein proposed that in moving away from scientific management, supervisors increase flexibility with officers' schedules, freeing them from undesirable tasks, shielding them from peer pressure, running interference or removing organizational and structural roadblocks from the path of line-officers in the course of their work (Goldstein, 1990, p. 157-158). As one of the major sources of psychological stress in policing is from organizational practices and characteristics (Swanson, et. al., 2005) (Gilmartin, 2002), it

is incumbent upon the policing profession to understand how supervisors view their own ethics in the workplace as they are placed in-between the world of police administration and that of the line-officer (Crank & Caldero, 2000).

### *The Culture of Policing*

Policing, not unlike other types of work environments, contains a subculture which exists inside a *we versus they* paradigm (Crank & Caldero, 2000). The police officers' paradigm is forged in a crucible of potential job related dangers, the reliance on partner officers, the belief that the public does not understand them, and that administration will not back them. This forges a strong subculture in which officers are brought into an environment which governs behaviors, attitudes, and future thinking in a way seen in few other types of work (Goldstein, 1990)(Gilmartin, 2002); and this acculturating process unites law enforcement officers through vertical cliques (Crank, 1997), even in the midst of the divisions of the rank structure (Bordua & Reiss, 1966).

Policing is almost exclusively a closed system of promotion done within an agency. This distinctive system, where a person comes up through the ranks, is different compared to most other industries where that is not the accepted practice (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973). The divisions in the management/employee relationship are greater in law enforcement organizations where there is a more professional emphasis and the organizational culture may be further entrenched and locally contextualized (Bordua & Reiss, 1966).

Within the police subculture, the formal management/employee working environment expectations are set by managers. In traditional departments, "...managers, supported by voluminous, detailed rules, tend to exercise tight, paramilitary, top down

control...” (Goldstein, 2000, p. 79). This type of organizational structure in law enforcement assists it in seeking a level of legitimation within society (Crank, pp. 265-266, 1998). In Weberian terms, the order, as an action, is a legitimating force that signs the *principle of command*. This legitimation is complete when there is obedience in carrying out given orders (Bordua & Reiss, pp.69-70, 1966) (Weber in Parsons, 1947).

The para-military system we find in policing is not automatically carried out. There can be a break down in this legitimating force of command when line-officers believe that “they are required to adhere to...regulations that are thoughtless. And they will not aspire to act as mature, responsible adults if their superiors treat them as immature children” (Goldstein, p, 79, 2000). Officers become recalcitrant to routine orders or organizational change when their trust is lost because of thoughtless rule-making.

Another way in which trust can be lost is from the demands of external groups which law enforcement officers believe will use them for political gain, but not actively support the workings of a program the police are asked to execute. Further, mistrust with the external political interests in police operations occurs when officers perceive that external interests want to have more control over the operational aspects of policing (Goldstein, 2000, p. 71).

A significant challenge to formal public institutional leadership is understanding “...the importance of carefully defining the core tasks of the organization...” (Wilson, 1989, p. 174) and to morally motivate subordinates to accomplish them. Methods for incentivizing work is limited in public organizations and Wilson breaks them down into four distinctive types of entities; production-oriented agencies where there is a goal

amount of work to be measured; procedural organizations where the process for doing something, instead of the outcome, measures success; craft-organizations where there is a high level of freedom and discretion by subordinates; and coping organizations where work cannot readily be seen or measured by managers.

There are formal leadership concerns with how to gauge accomplishments and buoy morale in each of these public work-organization types. In production, meeting production goals offers no monetary incentive and it may be hindered by political pressure to not reach the stated goals of the agency, making politics a corrosive force to the workforce. For procedural organizations, scrutiny of work-process by leadership can chafe morale of subordinates who know how to achieve core tasks by methods not in use by superiors. In craft-based groups, there is a high level of discretion that may be prone to abuse by members, but management can also avoid this pitfall through getting the commitment of these skilled workers buying-in to common goals. Coping organizations deal with complex problems with outcomes that are difficult to measure. In these environments, complaints become the driving force for what gets noticed by managers. When work is being accomplished, very little positive is said by the public and what is produced is difficult to assess.

### ***On Organizational Separation and Bullshit***

Goldstein stated, “In rank and file officers, there exists an enormous supply of talent that, under quality leadership, could rapidly transform American policing” (Goldstein, 2000, p. 79). However, an all too frequent occurrence in American policing is the byproduct of *bullshit* due to the collision of Weberian (Weber in Parsons, 1947) bureaucracy, motivated officers, and conflict with management (Crank, pp. 267-268).

This mixture of interactions is pervasive in police culture. Thus, *bullshit* "...emerges as the inevitable by-product of efforts to control system processes in the absence of verifiable or meaningful measures of organizational outcomes" (Crank, 2000, p. 264). *Bullshit* is an outcome of a quasi-military organization's efforts to control the behavior of its personnel in a bureaucratic environment (Crank, 1998, p. 265). The idea of organizational *bullshit* becomes metastasized in officers when they see police organizations often punish officers for policy violations in the context of an unstable, non-predictable environment. Punishment meted out in these conditions due to managerial conflict with regard to how officers should accomplish their work and increases the level of *bullshit* when there is no specific re-direction as to how an officer should have done the task for which they were disciplined (p. 265).

The theme of *bullshit* in police subculture relates to separations or sub-sets that are found within the culture. Reuss-Ianni (1983) discussed the two worlds of police culture as the management-cop culture and the street-cop culture. Manning (1989) said there were several layers of police culture in an organization which included an executive culture, middle-management culture, and a line-officer level culture. Each of these cultures has distinct characteristics, but also overlaps within an organization. Paoline (2001) found seven distinguishable groups that form in police subcultures which are most related to the time of day and the geographic area in which they work; and that first-line supervisors (i.e. sergeants) of these subculture workgroups are attitudinally aligned with their subordinates due to the same factors. While there are different strata of police culture, there are similarities across police agencies due to the recruitment process, like-

problems they face, and the types of groups police agencies are engaged with in the course of performing their duties (Crank & Caldero, 2000, p.145).

### ***Police Agencies and Institutional Theory***

The groups that police agencies engage with are the key element to looking at law enforcement agencies from an *institutional theory* perspective (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) (Crank & Langworthy, 1992). In this theory, the linchpin for a given institution is the legitimacy conferred upon them from other relevant *actors* or *sovereigns*. Legitimacy is conferred upon the seeking institution by the other relevant or sovereign institutions by their opinion that the seeking institution is doing the types of activities it should be doing (Crank & Langworthy, 1992).

The multiple constituencies that law enforcement seeks to please is often done to maintain or increase the amount of resources that the police are able to obtain. This dynamic creates a situation where the police accede to multiple agenda or missions, some of which are in conflict with one another; creating a cynicism in some sectors of police culture that *real police work* is not being done. Added to these external pressures is the conception that law enforcement officers often feel that the community acts ambivalently or is at times fearful of their presence. Though at times they feel appreciated when they arrive to deal with difficult situations, they also feel "...embattled, resented, and misunderstood" (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986, p. 224).

Police organizations are often insular, self-protecting, do not like political interference, and are suspicious of people outside their organization (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986, p. 221). These pressures for bending to the will of other institutions for legitimacy and the conflicting messages that officers believe they are being sent by the communities

they serve feed the siege mentality of the police subculture. This internal solidarity creates barriers for effective command and control over the tasks of subordinates in the organization. Effectiveness in command is particularly important in reform or modernization. If police command ignores this part of police culture, it can create whole organization opposition (Bordua & Reiss, 1966, p. 73). “A tenacious adherence to older norms and values may be especially true of the internal organization of police departments. ‘Old guards’ can retain much influence and police executives often seek to keep their support” (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986, p. 222).

To keep central control, police managers have gravitated to a bureaucratic model where obedience to orders given is easier to achieve (Bordua & Reiss, 1966). The *principle of command* is critical to the legitimation of law enforcement to external groups. While central bureaucracy is needed for legitimation, it also is in conflict with increased professionalization of policing. The professional “...model of control respects a more or less decentralized decision-making system where the central bureaucracy, at best, sets general policy and principles...” (Bordua & Reiss, 1966, p. 72). Centralized authority structures often found in police organizations are appropriate for the reactive strategies of police agencies, but institutional legitimation today for police agencies does not just come from the reactionary role of response-based patrol of the professional era of policing (Goldstein, 1990) (Crank & Caldero, 2000). There is an expectation from the community, other government agencies, and academia that police agencies will be involved in the proactive parts of community policing, intelligence gathering, and social services (Hoover, 1995) (Reuland, Sol-Brito, & Carroll, 2001). For these forward feeling

legitimizing responsibilities, a professionalized and hierarchical organization is more appropriate (Bordua & Reiss, 1966, p. 72).

The police are involved in very complex social problems and part of their current institutional legitimacy is based on their ability to contribute to the problem-solving needed (Goldstein, 2000); however, police agencies have a habit of oversimplifying these complex problems and their response to them, such as enforcement oriented patrol which is a basic response to difficult issues – but is validated by the public because that is what they expect the police to do (p. 73). Given the complex tasks that are asked of the police, it is important that the design and arrangement of police organizations is done in such a way to deal with these problems. This, in itself, is a task as equally complex as the social problems officers are asked to deal with on a daily basis (p. 72).

The enforcement of the criminal law is inherent in the police role....Significantly, police officers are referred to as “law enforcement officers”...And the commitment to enforcement encourages the police to act in ways designed to inflate the public impression of their capacity to enforce the law in the hope that their image alone will reduce crime and disorder. (Goldstein, 2000, p. 76)

The developed identity of police organizations places senior management in a difficult position of current institutional values within and outside the organization and the need to move the organization to the performance targets that reinforce the image of the organization; whether or not those performance targets are viewed as intuitively legitimate by the members of the organization (Crank & Langworthy, 1992).



### *The Senior Management of Law Enforcement*

Management includes dealing with difficult personalities (Campbell et al., 2007), building relationships with superiors, and reconciling the differing management and leadership styles as they interact with one another inside an organization. This is certainly true also for law enforcement managers as they are reconciling the internal and external constituencies which need to be dealt with for their own legitimation as managers and that of the organization as a credible institution.

Literature on law enforcement emphasizes its quasi-military structure which is rigid and hierarchical and does not allow for a flexible creative work environment (Bordua & Reiss, 1966) (Goldstein, 1990); however, the technical structure of police agencies differs in part from the spatial reality of policing. Due to the disbursed locations and physical lack of direct supervision, there is opportunity for a great deal of individual decision making by line-officers (Bordua & Reiss, 1966). It is difficult for top managers to gauge the quality of work done and whether work has been executed as it was intended to be done by managers and supervisors (Wilson & McLaren, 1963). And the working environment is challenging for line officers who, in order to live up to internal and external expectations, may take shortcuts and go to the edges of what their authority allows them to do. A potential consequence of this is the abuse of the authority conferred on line-officers by their organizations (Goldstein, 2000, p. 74). The tradition bound quasi-military structure, combined with the disbursed nature of where and when officers are making decisions and exercise discretion, managers and supervisors are "...supported by voluminous, detailed rules ..." (p. 79) and have a propensity for close, top-down forms of controlling line personnel.

An additional area of tension that exists in law enforcement management is with regard to the development of civil service; created as a way to insulate law enforcement and other governmental institutions from political influences (Goldstein, 1990) (Crank & Caldero, 2000). Civil service can create a rather legalistic barrier around "...occupational and organizational cultures in a way that makes the exercise of command from the top even more difficult than it would otherwise be" (Bordua & Reiss, 1966, p. 73).

These environmental factors have helped to form law enforcement management structures into very controlled systems of direct reporting and functionalism which breaks departments into detail and process oriented work working toward efficiency and effectiveness. However, this methodology can increase the potential for intra-organizational conflict between the differing specialized groups within the organization (Swanson, Territo, & Taylor, 2005, p. 232).

Law enforcement managers commonly accept the management approaches that lie outside of the traditional theories police agencies first adopted in the first third of the twentieth century; however, Hoover & Mader (1990) found that senior police managers do not attempt implementation of modern managerial strategies because they do not believe their staff administrators will accept them. Therefore, senior administrators continue to manage using traditional practices and programs.

Keeping traditional models perpetuates police organizations which follow a bureaucratic model that is disconnected, impersonal, and not attentive to interpersonal relations inside or outside of the organization (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973, pp. 229-230) and perpetuates organizational structures which rely heavily on rules, regulations, and technical competence (pp. 229-230).

Bureaucratic values tend to stress the rational, task aspects of the work and to ignore the basic human factors which relate to the task and which, if ignored, tend to reduce task competence. Managers brought up under this system of values are badly cast to play the intricate human roles now required of them. Their ineptitude and anxieties lead to systems of discord and defense which interfere with the problem-solving capacity of the organization. (Bennis, 1966, p. 116)

### *First-Line Supervisors and Subordinates*

Reuss-Ianni (1983) delineated that there are two cultures in policing: the cop culture and the management culture. The cop culture of a department consists of the line officers who are supervised by the first layer of the management culture – the first-line supervisor. Subordinates typically have a level of suspicion generated by the organizational and personal interactions with supervisors.

The legalistic part of the law enforcement organizational culture, from union contracts to policy and procedure, defines roles and separations in this supervisor/subordinate relationship. According to Whisenand and Ferguson (1973), the works of Gulick (1949) and Urwick (1943) on formal organizational structure have been adopted by police managers for the division of labor to maximize results. These highly formalized structures have created a conflict between organizational templates and the line-officer police generalist whose role necessitates creativity, flexibility, problem-solving, and the use of discretion (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973) (Swanson, et al., 2005)

(Jetmore, 1997) (Goldstein, 1990) (Alpert, 1997) (Haberfeld, 2006). Most officers see their supervisors as enforcers of administrative rules and are suspicious of their intentions (Reuss-Ianni, 1983) and the role of controlling the behaviors of subordinates (Goldstein, 1990, p. 157).

Police are haunted by accountability. They are in an occupation where situations in which they intervene are unpredictable, and ...Cops know that they will make many mistakes for which they would be publicly rebuked by any of a number of groups – the press, civic organizations, departmental brass, the mayor. Each of these is an influential actor in the cop's world...They are the principle actors in a cop's institutional environment. (Crank, 1998, p. 222)

As a result of the affects of these constituencies, officers believe that no *good deed will go unpunished* and they create an insular environment where everyone, including their own supervisors and managers are seen as outsiders (Crank, 1998). Line-officers at the beginning of their enculturation in academy training take on the characteristics of invisibility (Bahn, 1984) to avoid attracting attention to their actions and decisions and to not do more than they are ordered to do. This phenomenon extends well into the activities that officers get involved in once they are working in the patrol function (Van Maanen, 1974).

The phenomenon of invisibility manifests itself in the social organization of line-officers in maintaining secrets from the supervisors and management of the organization

and the public (Manning, 1977). Secrecy becomes an integral part of the way line-officers conduct business (Van Maanen, 1977); and "...with regard to the administrative oversight and with the public, a variety of intended and unintended aspects of their occupational setting..." (Crank, 1998, p. 225) teach officers to be secretive about their behaviors and insulate officers from their administration, the public, and from one another. This, combined with line-officer beliefs that their communities are ambivalent or fearful of their presence (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986, p. 224), creates an environment where there is an emotional and social barrier that exists between line-officers and supervisors. Looking at general leadership literature, it can be understood how Campbell, et al. (2007) found that developing subordinates, resolving conflicts, and providing feedback were stressful leadership demands. It is also easy to understand that when the paradigm of management is oriented toward a tall hierarchy, that the continual re-application of traditional law enforcement methods of supervision exacerbates the schism between line-officers and supervisors (Bordua & Reiss, 1966, p. 73) (King, 2003).

### *The First-Line Supervisor and the Community*

Community is a word that would in one sense connote a monolithic entity or constituency. The make-up of communities, however, varies in their demographic and political contours and is neither monolithic in its opinions about police or what it requires from them (Felkins, 2002).

The police supervisor is a point of contact with citizens on several levels (Haberfeld, 2006). They will be on-scene at some calls for service, briefing the public on high profile incidents through media outlets, and also as part of the intake of complaints about line-officer behavior. Telecommunications has revolutionized the connection

between the police supervisor and the public (Bordua & Reiss, 1966, p. 70).

Telecommunications allows members of the community access to police supervisors to mobilize police services and to voice their concerns to supervision about the behavior of line-officers. Before wide-spread use of telecommunication, the “beat officer” in face-to-face interaction was the main conduit for community communication with the police (Goldstein, 2000). Goldstein posited that,

...those who implemented the professional model often went too far to achieve its objectives. In the effort to make the police apolitical, the police were sometimes cut off from all accountability to the public. In the desire to achieve effective controls over their personnel, administrators often destroyed important contacts with members of the community, stifled initiative, and created a negative, distrustful working environment. (1990, p. 10)

Felkins (2002) stated that bureaucratic structures were “...designed to help create a fair and impersonal system with efficiency and accountability” (p. 31). However, Felkins also stated that these same goals of bureaucracy can create an environment where it is more difficult to achieve cooperation and “...discourage the emotional bonds of community”(p. 31). “Community is not built on legal agreements...” but is “...based on mutual respect and shared commitment to a common good” (p. 108).

The ability for law enforcement supervisors to develop relationships with community, in the community policing era, is strained by the suspicion that their subordinates have about politicians and the community (Crank, 1998). Additionally, the

previous generation of reformation in police agencies has left the agencies with a police management culture which is still "...preoccupied with management, internal processes, and efficiency to the exclusion of appropriate concern for effectiveness in dealing with substantive problems" (Goldstein, 1990, p. 14).

Bridging this gap between the wants and needs of community, the mistrust of subordinates, and the internal focus of police managers; the situation is exacerbated due to an environment, in most American municipalities, where there is a lack of well-defined communities with which law enforcement can interface to solve problems (Swanson, Territo, & Taylor, 2005, p. 75). Pluralism, and economically and socially depressed inner cities increases the need, but makes the task more difficult in creating community connection.

### ***First-Line Supervisors and Their Peers***

Law enforcement first-line supervisors work in a peer group that is seen as part of management by line-officers. Goldstein says that it is "...disheartening to talk with police officers on the street and officers of lower supervisory rank who cite their *superior officer* as their major problem, rather than the complexity of the job" (Goldstein, 2000, p. 79).

The literature about supervisors as peer groups and their interaction is almost non-existent. Often in the literature, writings about the actions of supervisors are prescriptive about what supervisors *should* do (Wilson & McLaren, 1968; Swanson et al., 2005; Goldstein, 1990).

In their cohort study of police supervisors, Vicchio, Wall, and Greenberg (2001) found that sergeants who were viewed as exemplary by their subordinates tested in a more positive skew compared to a control group using genograms, motivation

questionnaires, and moral reasoning surveys. Vicchio, et al. additionally found that the exemplar sergeants showed more sensitivity and were open to change more frequently than the control group supervisors. The exemplar sergeants also rated their self-assessments more closely to the subordinates who assessed them than did the control group of sergeants. Morgan (1993) found that supervisors rate themselves higher in ethical behavior than others rate them; the lowest rating coming from a supervisor's subordinates. In *The Stress of Leadership*, Campbell, et al. (2007) found that stresses for leaders come from interpersonal conflicts, political maneuvering, and dishonesty; as well as "Competition and a lack of teamwork..." (2007, p. 9).

### ***The First-Line Supervisor and "Self as Cop"***

Law enforcement first-line supervisors enter the police culture as line-staff and then become part of a different sub-set of the culture when they become supervisors. This makes law enforcement also unique as it is one of the few professions where a person must "come up through the ranks" in order to become a first-line supervisor or manager (Crank & Caldero, 2000) (Souryal, 1998). As a result, one of the problem areas for those moving into supervision is separation from the rank and file officers with whom they have worked their entire career. The enculturation process has bonded them to a peer group, that upon promotion, expects them to remove themselves from by management, and yet drawn toward subordinates by the relationships they have worked to establish for so long.

Due to the culture, and to seek legitimacy as a member of management, supervisors see themselves having to display that they are a "...cop's cop: in order to prevent a layer of objections to their leadership" (Bordua & Reiss, 1966). This



phenomenon is similar to some forms of military culture and leadership (Shaara, 1998) (Wert, 1994). It is also in this role of the police supervisor that legitimacy is challenged in the jocular nature of police interaction. How the first-line supervisor navigates this social interaction impacts their ability to be effective as a supervisor (1966).

### *Moral Claims and Leadership Models*

Burns states that higher moral leadership is in transformational leadership (1978) where the focus is on elevating the moral development of the leader and the follower to develop values, which emphasize equality, liberty, and justice. Burns contrasts this style to transactional leadership which he asserts is lacking moral focus because of the lack of the moral lens in the leader-follower relationship. Giampetro-Meyer, Brown, Browne, and Kubasek (1998) were concerned with the “craft ethics” of transactional leadership because the ethical lens of those leaders in the workplace transaction reflect what others think is ethical in the workplace, not reflecting upon what they believe is right as a leader. Kanungo (2001) said that transformational leadership, which reflects a Kantian ethic (Close & Meier, 1995), and transactional leadership, which reflects the teleological ethic of Mill (Close & Meier, 1995), both have intrinsic moral value. Sometimes, the transformational leader “knowingly causes harm to him/her self, a strategic move that convinces others of the leader’s unbending commitment” (261). For the transactional leader, they provide an environment of mutual altruism where, in the end, as long as more benefit confers to the subordinate than the leader, then the act is ethical.

The pragmatic models of leadership stand in relation and in contrast to the transactional model. Pragmatism includes the idea of self-interest of the transactional model of leadership; however, pragmatism is not a dyadic exchange. Pragmatism extends

its concern to two ideas which are in tension with one another, the liberation and value of the individual and the “promotion of the common good on the other” (Fesmire, p. 101, 2003). Pragmatic forms of leadership stand in contrast to transactional leadership and transformational leadership due to the contextualization of the situations in which leadership is occurring and because of its consideration of impacts on the individual and the macro social environment; “Individualism is not prima facie bad, sociality is not beyond reproach... each ‘serves to release and mature the other’” (p. 101).

The stewardship model of leadership (Haberfeld, 2006) is personified by servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) which takes the themes of transformational leadership and pragmatism’s concern for social good and advocates that the servant-leader empathizes with and never rejects those whom they are leading (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 20). Servant-leaders need to be a “historian, contemporary analyst, and prophet” (p. 25) who practice these skills every day of their lives. The servant-leader also must have an inner-serenity that leads them “toward people-building with leadership that has a firmly established context of *people first*” (p. 40). Caldwell, Bischoff, and Karri (2002) characterize the stewardship model as one where the leader is a “facilitating idealist” (p. 156) and stated:

The steward is motivated by deep intrinsic values based upon a moral theory that a prima facie priority of interests is owned to those who have a stake in the organization’s success. The underlying mechanism is that the steward is driven by an underlying social contract. (Caldwell, et. al, p. 156, 2002)

Stewardship leaders are concerned with the growth in the ability of others (Greenleaf, 1970). McGregor (1960) resonated this same theme in his Theory Y when he wrote about the managerial expectations of subordinates, “Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed” (p. 47). Drucker (1998) advocated the investment of time from managers “to mentor them (subordinates) and listen to them; challenge them and encourage them” (Drucker, 1998, p.59), because it is critical to their performance.

These stewardship properties of leadership are closely aligned with the care-based ethics as delineated by Kidder (1995). Kidder framed this ethical principle around the Care-Based principle of “doing unto others as you would have them do unto you” (p. 25). While Close and Meier (1995) place Golden Rule ethics under deontological ethics, Kidder separates it out as its own ethical paradigm.

Morgan (1997) states that leadership that links to a care-based morality “...create cultures where hierarchy gives way to ‘webs of inclusion’...characterized by trust, support, encouragement, and mutual respect” (p. 136). The ethics of community and the communal role of groups and individuals is best discerned in the care-based moral paradigm. An ancient form of this ethos is in the Christian phrase “So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them...” (Matthew 7:12, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 1977). While this maxim pre-dates Christianity (Kidder, 1995), it is most readily identified in Western culture as a Christian morality. Indeed, many cultures have used this ethos to guide societal behavior. It is the basis for a care-based understanding of how we should live in community; and became one of the tenants that made the Jesus Movement so popular in the first century Roman world (Rubenstein, 1999).

In modern ethical thought, revival of care-based thinking occurred in the rise of feminist ethics. The work of Gilligan (1982) became a catalyst around which many other care-based ethicists organized their work. The ethic of care has historically been assigned as the “female ethos” and has been historically viewed as an inferior method of ethical thinking, which has been acculturated in Western thought through socialization and institutional bias (Gilligan, 1982). When the construction of a moral problem occurs, values assignments occur due to the way someone determines right or wrong choices (Gilligan, 1982). Dominant moral thinking has assigned the ideas of rights and rules as the most morally developed way of thinking about how to conceptualize the right choices made in solving problems ethically (Gilligan, 1982). In the dominantly male way of solving ethical problems, formal logic formulae are applied which skews decision-making towards ideas of equality and reciprocity. Female ethical problem solving gravitates towards an understanding of care and responsibility in relationships (Gilligan, 1982), (Card, 1990).

Gilligan wrote that an underlying logic that is concerned with relationships affects the way women will use the moral language of *ought*, *better*, or *right* (1982) (Card, 1990). These and other words then become part of an understanding of ethics which is concerned with the interconnection of others and self. As a result, *what is right* is concerned with reciprocity of *relationships* and guards against the ideas of *exploitation* and *hurt* that may be included in the vetting out of what is *right* in the formal logic approach of an ethic of justice (1982).

Interdependence is part of the calculation in decision-making in the ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982). This theme holds a premium on constructiveness which has an aversion

to the infliction of damage to a relationship due to its negative affect on the interdependent nature of human relationships. “Women, therefore, are ideally situated to observe the potential in human connection both for care and for oppression” (Gilligan, 1982, p. 168). While Gilligan asserts that assigning the ethic of care is not specifically about women, her research had a female focus. Noddings (1984) does not believe in excluding males from the ethic of care. Rather, Noddings and Gilligan both saw social, political, cultural constructs which acculturate women toward an ethic of care versus males who are ethically familiarized and expected to have a justice and equality orientation. Falkenberg’s (2003) discussion of the ethic of care assigned no male or female value to this ethos. However, to this day, we still have a distinction and marginalization in mainstream thought about the care-based thinking due to its partial assignment as a female ethos.

### ***A Backward Looking Glance and Moving Forward***

This chapter has described the origins of modern bureaucracy - a system in which American policing is situated, discussed the formation of police management philosophy, and a brief typology of leadership models. These elements reflect not only American policing, but also the broader culture in which they came to prominence. For all the uniqueness police culture tries to claim, it absorbs much from larger societal movements.

In the next chapters, I will explain the research question I set out to answer and the methodology I used to satisfy my inquiry. The question I set out to answer turned out to be only a fraction of what I ultimately answered about the dynamics of police supervision. It also rendered me an understanding of the perceptions police supervisors have of their lived experience.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HOW I DID RESEARCH**

The study of American police is an examination of a cultural group (Crank & Caldero, 2000) within society. The focus of my study was to understand how first-line police supervisors tend to the needs of their subordinates and balance that with the other demands of law enforcement work in their departments. This approach gave me the impetus for a study of the perceptions of first line supervisors in police sub-culture.

For many years, I have heard people describe “good supervisors” as people who “take care of their people.” This widely used phrase in law enforcement culture became an early piece of my research design. I determined through a number of test interviews that questions posed on the theme of “taking care of officers” created conversation with interview subjects about their experiences as officers and supervisors. Additionally, the test interviews helped me determine the questions for the open-ended interviews. The first question, “Can you tell me what you believe ‘taking care of your officers’ means to you in your work as a first-line supervisor?” was an effective way to engage interviewees in conversation. This led to questions that dealt with everything from the attitudes of upper management, managing problem employees, to equipment deficiencies, and dealing with community politics. These questions, and the responses I received from members of the sub-culture of supervisors, created a thick-description design of ethnographic research (Geertz, 1973).

Bogdan and Biklen state that ethnography’s goal is to “...share in the meanings that the cultural participants take for granted and then to depict the new understanding for readers and outsiders (2003, p. 28).” Thus, my research is a thick description of sub-

cultural data about police first-line supervisors' thoughts, philosophy, and intentions about interacting with other parts of police culture, which informs how they understand and make meaning of their everyday lives in supervision.

For my formal research study, I chose two municipal law enforcement agencies in a metropolitan area that I refer to as Midplains. Study participants were first-line supervisors holding the rank of sergeant in their agency and all had been supervisors for at least one year.

I interviewed two males and one female sergeant in one agency; and two female and two male sergeants in the other agency. I originally planned to have thirty percent of the interviews with female supervisors due to the low percentage of female supervisors represented in law enforcement; however, I achieved an actual percentage of forty-three percent females in my study.

The information I was looking to collect from first-line supervisors is deep within police sub-culture. Therefore, I needed to use a qualitative approach in order to get access to the persons who could provide the data I wanted to collect. I used Mertens' description of qualitative methods to help define my approach. Mertens stated that the "...methods include complexity, contextual, exploration, discovery, and inductive logic..." (1998, p. 160) to make an inductive approach effective. By using these qualities in developing the question and general direction of the study, it helps to prevent the introduction of preexisting expectations. Also, Mertens' description of methodology was good for choosing research questions revealing constructions held by people in the context of their everyday lives (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), possessed more flexibility in gathering, and gleaning more in-depth information about the subject. This approach allowed me to ask

questions that could morph to meet the changing circumstances of the interviews and my growing knowledge of the data I was collecting. My intent was to ask my initial questions and see how the interviewees applied the questions to the context and meaning they saw in their own work lives; and based on the data, move questioning and conversation in different directions if the data the supervisors provided led me somewhere new and unexpected.

In approaching supervisors to participate in the study, my initial interviews were with people with whom I had a previous acquaintance and then subsequent interviews I acquired by a snowball sample. I met each of the persons I interviewed at a place of their choosing. In each case, it was in a conference room or an office in their place of work.

I recorded each interview with the permission of the interviewee, personally transcribed them, changed the names of the interviewees, other persons and places they mentioned, and the names of their law enforcement agency. All participants signed a waiver indicating they understood the dangers of disclosure. Additionally during transcription, I altered the content of some situations described to me during interviews, in order to prevent the identification of the interviewee or any other person or agency involved. A sample of questions I asked during the interviews is found in Appendix A. The only people with access to these audio recordings are Dr. Susan Huber, chair of this dissertation, and me. I asked additional questions of interviewees during the course of an interview when certain disclosures illuminated information which required new and different questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 151). Additionally, new lines of questioning at times emerged in interviews based on the data collected in previous interviews (p. 151) (Merriam, 1998, pp. 151-152). I had a prior introduction to five of the



seven interviewees; other people referred the other two interviewees to me, and I had not previously known them. All interviewees signed a waiver approved by the University of Saint Thomas Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B).

The design of my study included collecting data from two agencies, one a suburban agency and the other a core, inner city agency; both part of the Midplains Metropolitan area. My reasoning for this was two-fold; I have worked in both types of agencies as a law enforcement officer, thus giving me insight into both agencies as a researcher, and my study may be useful to first-line supervisors and upper level managers in the many agencies serving in large U.S. metropolitan areas. I was able to gain access to these law enforcement agencies due to personal relationships I had with people who worked within these departments and due to the inherent trust police officers have for one another as members of the same vocational group.

My two study cities had the following basic composition; one suburb of over 60,000 in population with over 70 officers, which will be referred to in the study as the South Falls Police Department; and one inner city with a population of over 280,000 people and over 600 police officers which will be referred to as the North Woods Police Department. The names have no particular meaning to the cities involved.

I interviewed seven supervisors for the study. All interviews included in this study were from people who were first-line supervisors at the time of my interview with them. All had the rank classification of sergeant and assigned to the supervision of patrol officers. The supervisors I interviewed from the South Falls Police Department included one white male, two white females, and one black male. From the North Woods Police Department, I interviewed one white male, one white female, and one black male. While

this study does not spend any time delineating the responses of black versus white sergeants or men versus women, in the interest of disclosure and diversity, this combination of interviewees was intentional. The precise combinations were not intentional; however, I generally was seeking to find men and women supervisors to interview and have some racial diversity within my grouping of interviewees. Note that I recognize the significance of race and gender in social research (Gilligan, 1982) and that additional rich data may be present as a result. However, the scope of this study did not intend to gauge these potential differences. I have noted in my recommendations for future research the need for examining race and gender differences in supervision.

Due to my level of involvement in law enforcement training and supervision, my entrée into the world of police supervisors was rather easy to accomplish. I say this as a point of disclosure about access to the population I studied. In the case of the South Falls Police Department, I had differing levels of previous acquaintance with my interview subjects and therefore was able to contact them all without referral in order to gain access for interviews with them. I used the following pseudonyms for them: Sergeant (Sgt.) Jane Frey, Sgt. John Garrity, Sgt. Edward Charles, and Sgt. Hannah Barnes.

From the North Woods Police Department, I was able to secure an interview in one case from previous acquaintance with the supervisor and I obtained the two additional interviews from a referral from another person I knew from the North Woods Police Department. The pseudonyms used for the North Woods Police Department sergeants are: Sgt. Jim Wright, Sgt. David Hawkins, and Sgt. Jessica Minter. None of the names have any particular meaning or relationship other than they are names that are neither distracting nor difficult to remember to most who may read this document.

I conducted all of my interviews at locations within the workplace environment of the supervisors interviewed. I tape-recorded and transcribed all interviews for coding and analysis.

### *Interviewees-Description of the Sergeants*

The following is a listing of the sergeants I interviewed and a brief description of each person. I have left out many details about them in order to protect their identity.

#### *The Sergeants of South Falls Police Department*

##### **Sergeant Jane Frey:**

An over twenty year peace officer who has been a sergeant for approximately ten years; she is a white female in her late forties.

##### **Sergeant Hannah Barnes:**

A peace officer with over fifteen years of experience; she is a white female and has been a sergeant for two to three years and is about forty years old.

##### **Sergeant Edward Charles:**

A peace officer with over fifteen years of experience and about five years as a sergeant; he is a black male and is in his late thirties.

##### **Sergeant John Garrity:**

A peace officer with about ten years of experience; he is a white male and is the youngest of the interviewees – in his middle thirties.

#### *North Woods Police Department*

##### **Sergeant David Hawkins:**

A peace officer with about fifteen years of experience; he is a white male and about forty years old. He has been a sergeant for about three years.

**Sergeant Jessica Minter:**

A white female peace officer with over twenty years of experience; she has worked in many areas of the agency and has been a sergeant for over fifteen years.

**Sergeant Jason Hargrove:**

Over twenty-five years as a peace officer and has worked in many special investigative units. He is a black male and has been a sergeant for about fifteen years.

***The Development of the Question***

Over the course of my twenty years in policing, many things have changed due to technology. However, there have always been two constants: police patrol is where the majority of officers work and first-line supervisors are typically the only management present in the work life of a line-officer. From my experience as a patrol officer, instructor, and supervisor; police supervisors have frequently been the target of criticism, conversation, humor, work dissatisfaction, and, less often, empowering role models. As a result, it has become part of my own quest for leadership development and the development of others to understand from the perspective of many in personal, professional, and academic contexts, to answer the question - *what makes someone a good police supervisor?*

During the years that I have been searching for the answer to this question, I have often heard officers, first-line supervisors, and upper managers say that good first-line supervisors “take care of their people.” However, in trying to understand the meaning of this phrase, it seemed that the phrase did not illuminate the answer to my original question, “What makes for a good police supervisor?” What I discerned in my literature review of this topic, was that there were many differing ideas of what made for a good

police supervisor. Some believed that the application of scientific management was necessary (Germann, 1962), supervisors should be more sensitive and open to change than most people to be exemplary (Vicchio, Wall, and Greenberg, 2001), and Vollmer wrote that the Wisdom of Solomon was needed (1936).

In the course of my career, I have looked at the question from the perspective of a young officer, then later as a senior officer, then as a first-line supervisor, and now as an executive officer to a top manager in a police agency. What I also began to glean from the literature is that there are many additional ways to examine what makes a good supervisor, depending on the interests, position, and needs of the person who is asking the question.

One of the voices conspicuously absent from the literature about what makes someone a good police supervisor was that of first-line police supervisors themselves. Their absences from the discussion led me to ask them the questions in pilot interviews preparing for data collection for my dissertation. Therefore, I began to ask the basic question of first-line police supervisors: “How do you look at the idea of caring for the officers that work for you as a sergeant?”

### *The Development of the Interviews*

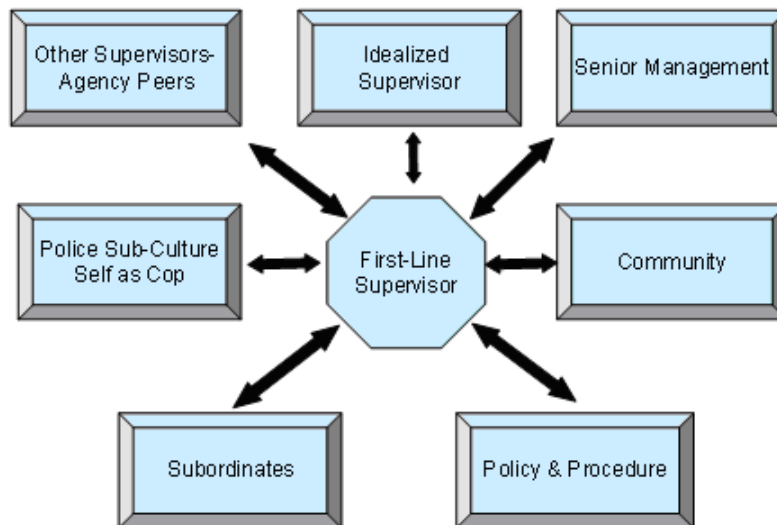
As a person who has served as a line-officer in three police agencies and a supervisor in one agency, as well as having had the privilege to work in the training of many line-officers, first-line supervisors, and upper level managers, I have continually heard a phrase used about first-line supervisors: “Good sergeants take care of their people.” Over the course of my career, this phrase has always struck me as an interesting phrase and translated to me as an ethic of care. In my original pilot interviews for this

study the two basic questions I asked were “Have you heard the phrase ‘good supervisors takes care of their people?’” In every case, the supervisors said that they were familiar with the phrase. The second question I asked was, “How do you approach ‘taking care’ of your officers in your role as a first-line supervisor?”

The types of responses I received included a great deal of discussion about how they looked at the care of officers, organizational politics, dealing with citizens, how they felt about administrators, and their perceptions of supervisory peers.

I went back to the literature and began to explore in more depth the literature of police culture and realized I needed to ask a third question. What began to emerge was a model of supervision that dealt with multiple constituencies or groups that the supervisor has to deal with, and largely, satisfy on a daily basis. But, in order to make sure I was correct in what my pilot interview data was revealing, I crafted a third question for my interviews that stated, “If you think of a supervisor as being in the middle, do you see yourself as having to deal with different groups on either side each day?” I then coded my data according to theme categories and the open coding method as delineated by Strauss (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I then broke down my coding further into sub-thematic categories and continued to analyze the themes that emerged.

The emerging data from my questions led to a conceptual model that I have placed here in **Figure 1**, which I have titled the **Multiple Constituency Model**.



**Figure 1**

My analysis will describe in detail each of these constituencies navigated by the first-line supervisor. I will approach each as a dyadic relationship with the first-line supervisor.

While the analysis will show that the relationships here are more complex than dyadic relationships, this approach will allow me to break down, for the purpose of analysis, the multitude of issues that the first-line police supervisor has to deal with in their work role.

It will also then set the stage for a discussion later in the analysis of how all of these constituencies are commingled in the work of the first line supervisor; thus moving beyond dyadic relationships to a more complex system of constituency management.

The sergeants are part of a complex sub-culture which has many participants and as Gary Allan Fine once wrote, “Interaction, while important to individual workers, has an effect on the system as well (1996, p. 222). This study examines a key set of individuals’

perceptions and intentions about their interactions, which has a critical affect on the system of American policing.

### *Hermeneutical Reinforcements*

After I had written the analysis and findings of chapters in a draft of this dissertation, I provided some ethics training to supervisors at a law enforcement agency. During that class, I presented the diagram of the Multiple Constituencies Model of Figure 1. I received a positive reaction to this concept. Indeed, the supervisors heartily agreed that they have daily experiences with the Multiple Constituency Model and saw themselves using a thought process similar to it, but never had seen anything like what I was showing them. The feedback I got from these supervisors was that my visual depiction helped them understand what they were experiencing; and they wished they had known about the concept earlier in their careers.

This feedback became a hermeneutical reinforcement of my interpretive understanding of the data. “As one comes back to an experience and interprets it, prior interpretations and understandings shape what is now seen and interpreted” (Denzin, 1989, p. 64).



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### WHAT WAS IN THERE

##### *Foundations for Findings*

In this findings section, the sections headings will have parenthetical sub-headings that will indicate which of the constituencies shown in Figure 1 are associated with that section's data. These constituency sub-headings also align to the analysis in chapter 5.

There are some terms or phrases that I will discuss in this section that will be used throughout this chapter and in the analysis chapter to follow. I am going to use these colloquialisms in order to make the data have less distance from the supervisors I interviewed to the reader of these chapters. The phrases used are as follows:

**On the street:** This defines being out in a patrol function as either an officer or a supervisor.

**Line officer:** This is a person of the officer rank, and for the purposes of this document, assigned to patrol. This is the entry-level rank in a municipal police agency and reports to someone with the rank of sergeant.

##### *The Response*

(Self as Cop, Idealized Supervisor, Subordinates Constituencies)

I began each interview I did with the supervisors by asking, "How do you care for the officers who work for you?" In each case, supervisors shared stories about their past supervisors or stories out of their own experiences in supervision. The supervisors had a more relaxed appearance whenever they talked about their experiences as officers with

their past supervisors. These stories of their past supervisors were usually positive and linked to how they thought of themselves as supervisors today.

After telling stories about their past, their demeanor would change when speaking of their present role as a supervisor. The supervisors would stiffen in their chairs or would re-align themselves in their sitting positions; it was apparent that the stress of the supervisory role presented itself in both psychological and physical ways. When telling stories about their own experiences as supervisors, another phenomenon occurred; something I will refer to as *the soliloquy*. Every one of the supervisors related to me at least once, most of them more than once, a story that involved them talking to me in a first person voice as if I were a subordinate to whom they were speaking. During these soliloquies, the supervisors would stiffen up further in their chairs, and begin to speak in a more anxious tone with me, begin to lecture me about what I did wrong, how I could have hurt myself or someone else, what needed to happen differently next time, and that everything was alright now.

I think the big things are the morale thing. If I see someone holding court in the squad room...or bitchin' about something, I'll call him in and say, "Hey, what's going on? What's so bad that you can't..." and a lot of that stuff you can't stop. It's part of the beast. But if you, if you can get him steered back to... "let's get back on board, you may not like it, but let's get back on board..." I'll try it  
(Interview with Jane Frey June 18, 2007).

This repeated experience of the interviewees transforming themselves into supervisors with me as the subordinate gave me greater appreciation of the level of stress and emotion the supervisors feel about their work.

All of the supervisors “grew-up” within the department in which they supervise. Therefore, before they became supervisors, people within the organization knew them intimately through their work habits, temperament, and social settings as a line-officer. Each of the supervisors experienced changes in their work lives, beyond just the level of responsibility, with their promotion to sergeant; this included the nature of the relationships they have with the people they work for and those who work for them.

The supervisors talked at length about striving to be good listeners, demonstrating leadership, providing answers to problems, effectively dealing with police administrators, and the challenges of supervising subordinates. The concept of trust was also a significant point of discussion for them. Supervisors stressed the importance of going to the calls for service of officers who work for them. They identified three reasons for doing so: 1) to monitor performance, 2) to be present to assist with problems, 3) to engage in patrol work which they enjoy.

Without exception, the supervisors spoke of a lack of trust from subordinates where a supervisor is present on calls for service; and at times, openly challenging the supervisors about it.

I think there's just an us versus them, “that's my supervisor, if I let him know too much...” you know ....” am I vulnerable to – is it going to affect my employee status? Is it a sign of weakness?”

There's venting that goes on too, I understand that...you know. It

should be kept within reason, but this barrier gets put up. Where your city might be different because – I don't really know your structure - but for us, we're the sergeants, we're the first line supervisors; but at the same time, but to most people who work nights – we're administration, because they don't see administration, so...because they don't see administration so....if administration is getting involving in anything that's happening at work – it's really coming through us – because we're the only avenue it can come through to the street. So, I think that makes it harder for us (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007).

The supervisors shook their heads when quoting their subordinates about being present on calls for service; the stress and disappointment of these events showed on their faces and in their voices.

### *Caring's Cruel Edge*

(Subordinate, Sub-Culture Constituencies)

“So if I don't care – who's gonna?” “...if they don't feel that I care about them...they're not going to be effective on the street” (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007). Garrity's sentiment demonstrates the high level of care the supervisors have for the officers working for them. This was revealed to me by their emotional connection to what they discussed. “...so taking care of them would mean more checking in with them. If I see that something doesn't seem quite right with them...I can tell when that officer is having problems...you can see it on their face” (Interview with Jane Frey June 18, 2007). Often times, the supervisors told me they were the only people who had the

ability to “take care” of the employees within their agencies; yet they were criticized at times by subordinates, superiors, peers, and community members for the acts of caring towards employees who worked for them. When I asked Jason Hargrove how often he felt caught in the middle of this milieu, he said, “Every day.” (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008)

How the supervisors “took care” of their subordinates had many forms. Jessica Minter said that her ideas about care were certainly formed early in her career. “Even when I was a patrol officer and watching my supervisor, ‘man, we really got lucky on this one you know...’ and he’s like, ‘...we’ll take care of it for you...’” (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008). She has carried this technique into her practice as a supervisor; “Where as the negative stuff gets hauled back to the office saying, ‘you know, you could have done that a little bit different, here’s a suggestion for you...’” (2008).

For the supervisors, the definition of care was intertwined with their thoughts on supervisory correction of subordinate behavior, discipline, motivation, how they viewed themselves, upper-level administration, and equipment; “...it’s not about only having coffee or drinking beers with the guys, it’s about providing them with the information they need to be successful.” (Interview with Edward Charles April 26, 2007)

### ***Caring and Bitching Upward***

(Sub-Culture, Subordinates, Idealized Supervisor Constituencies)

In para-military organizations, as police think of themselves, it is a maxim that you “bitch upward, never downward.” Each supervisor believed an important aspect of their role was to listen to and address the complaints of their subordinates and not to complain in return. The contexts of “bitching upward” were different. Some contexts

involved officers walking into a supervisor's office to let them know about personal problems or difficult co-workers; other times it was meeting individually with officers at the scene of a police call. Sergeant John Garrity's strategy for allowing a channel for bitching upward was, "My whole thing is...door's open, please come in and talk to me...a lot of cops won't do that – so seek them out..." (May 21, 2007)

Jane Frey provided an exemplar of this when she spoke about morale.

When I have to deliver bad news, or news that I know they're not gonna want to hear...I like to let them know what's coming, kind of let them have a little bit of buy-in, or at least let them think they have a buy-in, you know: Here's the thing, we don't necessarily like it either, but this is what's going to happen, let's try to think of some ways to make it as seamless as possible, this change, as seamless as possible... (Interview with Jane Frey, June 18, 2007)

The supervisors found the way messages are delivered to subordinates to be very important. "...sometimes that means keeping your thoughts to yourself, especially if they're negative ones...and I think that is also what creates...ill feelings towards that person who made that decision, especially if that officer agrees with that negative feedback that the sergeant is giving..." (April 26, 2007)

"Bitching downward" does exist, but none of the supervisors advocated it. Many of the supervisors conveyed stories about subordinates probing them in different ways about issues the officers thought were "bullshit" in Crank's use of the word (Crank, 1997). In these cases, the supervisors use sarcasm to not violate the "bitching downward"

rule, but let officers know if they think certain things are “bullshit” too. Jason Hargrove described one of these situations when he had to tell a whole roll call of officers that days-off were canceled because of a big operation. “See the way I’m smiling here? (gives big fake smile to me when telling the story) Do you think I like it? No. Good, I’m glad you got that...” (April 25, 2008) Hargrove then told me, “You know...they’re having four days off canceled and the guys’ weekends are down the toilet” (April 25, 2008). In many stories, the supervisors demonstrated their need to show connection with officers about upper-level administrative decisions they had to enforce, which they did not agree with or thought was outright “bullshit.” If they did not convey this in at least some indirect way to subordinates, the supervisors indicated they would lose credibility with officers as a “sell-out” or “company-man.”

Jessica Minter demonstrated that an element of selling the elements of unpopular ideas with subordinates occurs in supervision.

“And as a supervisor, we try not to project that to the troops either in roll call by saying, ‘Oh my God, but DOWNTOWN SAID...’ were not about that, you know.” “Like I said, it’s all in the presentation I think. You can sell a sack of shit to people; they’re not always going to enjoy it, but if you’ve got the reasons behind it...I think they understand it” (April 26, 2008).

### ***Working on the Street***

(Self as Cop, Subordinates, Policy Constituencies)

Supervisors consistently spoke about working on the street. “On the street” is a term that law enforcement officers use to describe working as an officer in a patrol car and

engaging in proactive and reactive policing. Supervisors described situations that involved them working on the street as a supervisor. Without exception, each supervisor complained about the level of office work they had to do and how that interfered with their ability to get out on the street with officers. All of them said they enjoyed patrol work and liked to be out of the office. As Sergeant Barnes said, "...believe it or not, I still like doing this job so therefore I'm gonna show up at your calls because I wanna have fun too" (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007).

Embedded in Barnes' statement is one of the other reasons they wanted to be out on the street. They want to witness the work of officers whom they evaluate and they also want to demonstrate their ability to do "street work" to their subordinates and how to lead by example. "The biggest thing for me is lead by example. I don't ask these guys to do anything...I haven't done or haven't put myself through..." and knowing "...what they are going through out there"(Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008)?

The supervisors also told me about the tension they experience when out on the street; the feeling of being unwanted at the scene of a call by their subordinates. "We're here to supervise you. People sometimes get upset over that or you show up on calls and they get all rigid...If I don't see how you're working, how am I supposed to evaluate you" (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007)?

While the supervisors enjoy police work, they also understand they are often unwanted by patrol officers at the scenes of arrests, accidents, report calls, or traffic stops. The supervisors all said that some officers like having them around more than others, but their subordinates all feel like they are being watched and evaluated when a supervisor arrives on-scene. Some supervisors said officers have confronted them



about not wanting them coming to the scenes of their calls; telling the supervisors to stay away. "...it's a situation where this person doesn't like supervision...he has basically told them to F-off, he's told them to pound sand, he's been disrespectful...everything you can imagine..." (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008). This elevated the supervisors' suspicions about these officers and further strained relationships by the increased monitoring of the behavior of these officers. The tension supervisors felt in this area was palpable and a negative part of their supervisory role.

The negative aspects of monitoring subordinates became the gateway discussion about having parental feelings as a supervisor. When talking about officers who complain, David Hawkins said, "I think some people (officers)...start taking things for granted. You know what I mean? And they've experienced that...now what? It seems like...I start to look at this as a parent too almost, 'cause you see that in kids too" (Interview with David Hawkins, March 12, 2008).

Of all the experiences the supervisors described, this was one of the least desirable ones they had; that of coming to work and feeling as though they need to be the parent or babysitter for the officers who work for them.

But I told these guys, I'm not your friend. I'm here to be your supervisor. So it's kind of like being a Dad in a way. And it's like...I've already got two kids at home and I come to work and I've got fifteen more, you know. So, why do I need that? So I'm here again, and I'm still Dad. (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008)

Supervisors made multiple references to oversight of officer actions as being important to them in the role of supervisor. They expressed two reasons for this oversight role; one was preventing officers from making decisions which could have a large negative impact on their career and concern over their liability exposure as a supervisor. In every one of my interviews, the car chase was an illustration used by the supervisors about both of these concerns.

### ***Responsibility and Its Abdication***

(Other Supervisors Constituency)

A car chase, which involves a violating driver of a vehicle not stopping for the police, who is chased by one or more police vehicles, is a dangerous and socially controversial law enforcement activity (Alpert, 1997). Jason Hargrove described his emotions about a chase as,

OK, it's still coming. Of course we're over here praying that somehow it goes in another direction... It's still going north – oh geez... and I'm like – oh no – terminate the damn thing. And there were a lot of guys from the other district who were angry. I don't care if you're angry, I says, 'if this thing ends up in the recreation area and you end up killing somebody... I don't think so. We'll find it some other time. But umm... you call it off... You can't leave these guys hanging out there like that. And yeah, you take offense to it, but that's your job. (April 25, 2008)

Chases often end with the violator crashing their car, squad cars crashing, collateral damaged property or vehicles, or people being injured or killed. The job of determining the validity of continuing a car chase belongs to the first-line supervisor in police patrol and the supervisors all told stories about vehicle chases. Their stories talked about making sure officers did not get tunnel vision during chases, being concerned for citizen safety, and adherence to policy and procedure to reduce the liability issues involved in the chase. The tensions involved in this for supervisors and line officers was well illustrated by John Garrity when he talked about two younger officers who got into a chase and a person in the car died when it crashed. Garrity said some officers were “...making jokes about it taking a long time to get the final review out.” They said, “‘they’re out to get ya.’ Well, you know, it’s a bunch of crap. It’s like...they’ve gotta dot the i’s and cross the t’s” (May 21, 2007).

In my discussions about car chases with the supervisors, they said on many occasions they saw abdication of supervisory responsibility. Some supervisors I interviewed had to intervene to make sure there was some oversight to the vehicle chase. In one instance, the supervisor heard over the radio that a car was being chased into his supervisory area. He said that the supervisor from the other area was not doing anything about the fact that the chased car was heading toward an area heavily populated with pedestrians. The sergeant, Jason Hargrove, got on the police radio and canceled the chase. In telling the story, I could see and hear his dismay at the lack of responsibility taken by the other supervisor. “But like I said, it’s your responsibility to take on, so, if you didn’t want it, you shouldn’t have taken the stripes” (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008).

*Peers in the Agency*

(Other Supervisors, Subordinates Constituencies)

In my interviews with the sergeants from South Falls and North Woods Police Departments, all the supervisors made multiple references to other supervisors. Some of these references were about problems involving line officers, people they worked well with, and other anecdotal stories; however, more negative comments were made about other supervisors they work with than any other type of comment in the interviews. Some comments were vague; "...we have folks out here doing this job (job of sergeant) and they don't know what they're doing" (Interview with Jason Hargrove, 2008, p. 6). Other comments were anger filled and used the names of their supervisory peers in very unflattering ways. In fact, every supervisor I interviewed had more negative comments about peers than positive comments about their actions. "One thing that's always pissed me off. We have investments in these guys; they're our officers; they're our employees for twenty-plus years. Are you gonna kick the snot out of them all the time? Or you gonna help them better themselves" (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007)?

The negativity regarding the supervisory peer group came from five main areas: 1) how supervisors treated subordinates, 2) speaking negatively to subordinates about upper-level administration and supervisory peers, 3) not enforcing policy and procedure, 4) not knowing what their subordinates are doing during the workday, and 5) active avoidance of decision making about incidents occurring on the street over which they had supervisory authority.

The issue of avoidance by supervisors was significant to some of the supervisors. The concern was that some peers were not engaging in what was occurring with their

officers on the street. “How do you know if you’re sitting here in the office watching TV?...The worst thing they could ever do...was to put TV sets in these supervisor offices because they don’t get off their ass and do anything” (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008).

Edward Charles of South Falls P.D., complained about peers who talked negatively about other supervisors and upper-level managers when speaking to line officers. The general consensus among the supervisors was that when a supervisor speaks negatively about decisions made by other sergeants or administration (in other words – when they “bitch down”), it causes line-officers to ignore or refuse to carry out the directives of supervisors spoken against by another supervisor. “Hey, we can’t do it because it appears that we don’t have our shit together...Then it’s not going to work with those guys out there doing the job” (Interview with Edward Charles, April 26, 2007).

The low opinion of other supervisors touched upon earlier in this section is very real in my law enforcement experience, is hurtful to entire organizations, and exists for several reasons. One reason relates to a lack of providing a clear and shared understanding by supervisory peers about their organizational role and approach to supervision by upper management. I have regularly witnessed, in agencies I have worked for and in training other agencies, no consistency from management about how supervisors should treat the common issues of problem personnel and field operations. This leads to what one of my friend’s calls “supervision by guessing.” As a result, there is no consistency between supervisors about how to solve problems. Then, the solutions that are less popular with line-staff become a wedge between the supervisors who have formulated solutions on their own.

Another element is the high opinion supervisors’ hold of themselves in relation to their peers in supervision. The work of Morgan (1993) reinforces my experience in this area.

Ultimately, the high level of self-worth supervisors assign themselves is not held in-check due to a lack of self-awareness and the lack of interaction with their managers. If managers had been providing direction to subordinate supervisors about their work, supervisors would likely have a better barometer of their own performance in relation to their fellow supervisors.

A last area of peer friction I will cover is the competition for better sergeant jobs or future promotion. In Western culture, we often believe that competition always makes for better performance. However, in an environment where there are no bonuses, little movement to internal jobs with better duties, or promotion to the next level of management for more money, the competition between supervisors is sometimes very divisive. Undercutting other supervisors, ingratiating one-self with managers at the expense of other supervisors, and holding close the scarce-resources of a static government budget for the benefit of your own initiatives creates a work environment with hostilities and resentment. It does not help in creating a healthy environment for cooperative efforts and the building of high-functioning teams.

### ***Relationships with Senior Management***

#### **(Senior Management Constituency)**

In their interviews, the supervisors told me the actions of senior management made them regularly feel disconnected from them. They felt disconnected through top-down directives, upper-level administrative mandates about how sergeant should deploy officers in patrol operations, and policy changes “handed down” without discussion with supervisors. “You want more out of day shift and we have less bodies...” and “the front office says, ‘you’re not going to get any more bodies’” (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008). Lack of personnel, increasing quantitative demands from senior managers, continuous demand for existing services, and lack of acknowledgement about

reduced personnel strength by senior managers created a collective feeling that senior managers did not understand the challenges present for first-line supervisors.

Considering the many strains with senior management, the supervisors' felt most frustrated by senior managers exerting control over the work priorities for patrol that are normally under the sergeants' span of control. The supervisors regularly found themselves cut out of decision-making by administrators about priorities for patrol, which led them to believe administrators discarded their expertise and knowledge about what was occurring on the street. "But before we even have a chance to put roll call in and set up squad assignments, we get something from the commander...wait a minute, how come we can't make that determination" (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008)?

The supervisors identified two additional areas of administrative disconnect: one associated with the physical location of administrators and the other associated with the supervisory evaluation process of subordinates. North Woods P.D. sergeants identified a disconnect between "downtown" administration, which is the central administrative authority of North Woods P.D., and the district level administration for area of North Woods. The sergeants said they understood that there are dynamics at work between district and downtown administration that call for different decisions than they would like, but that officers who work for them only saw the conflicts as rules being handed down by their district commander. As Jessica Minter said when talking about ideas turned down by central administration, "...because downtown rejects it...as a supervisor, we try not to project that to the troops either in roll call..." (April 16, 2008). The sergeants try to show a unified front of administration; not blaming their central headquarters staff due to the already low opinion officers have of them. Blaming

headquarters would only create more cynicism. “You have to understand that the troops don’t always have a lot of respect for the people who work down there either...It’s another lead by example thing” (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008).

At South Falls P.D., the disconnect had more to do with the time of day top administrators were present at work and their location within the building. “...But to most people who work nights – we’re the administration so...if administration is getting involved in anything that’s happening at work (pointing up to the ceiling, pointing to the upper level of the building where the administrators are located) – it’s really coming through us...” (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007).

Concerning to supervisors in both agencies was the seeming lack of understanding by senior managers about decisions they made with regard to discipline and evaluation of performance. Supervisors in both agencies articulated that when they submitted discipline reports or reports on significant incidents to upper level administrators, there was an assessment occurring without the supervisors’ consultation as the authoring supervisor. The administrator makes a judgment about how to proceed, which is then handed back down to the first-line supervisor to execute without any consultation.

“...when you do have to discipline somebody, and you go through all the hoops, and that’s been one of my major pet peeves. Because if you’re going to discipline somebody, you have to do it in a fair manner...this is not a place to come to screw around...you’re expected to do your job...And you document circumstance, you send it through



the proper channels, you give it to the captain or lieutenant, and they look at it, then the next thing you know, the person who's the subject of the discipline ends up getting a better job – unsupervised – than before they left.”

(Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008)

Hannah Barnes said she did not like the e-mail questions she received when incidents were “arm chair quarterbacked” by administrators after officers completed tasks to her satisfaction as the on-duty supervisor. “And I hate it when I get my e-mail and it says, ‘Why wasn’t this done on this call, this done, this done, and that done’” (June 14, 2007).

These communication disconnects were corrosive to the supervisory/administrative relationships in both organizations. While all the reasons for this sense of disconnect were not known to the supervisors, Jessica Minter summarized it in part as, “I think...up above, the lieutenants, the district commander, they get overwhelmed too. They've got so much crap going on all day — meetings and what not” (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008). This statement captures the sentiments of many of the supervisors. The level of taxation on command staff time is such that they have a lack of presence with the supervisors. The command staff is distracted from issues and interactions important to their subordinates and this creates frustration among the supervisors.

My law enforcement experience has rested on both sides of the equation on this topic; first as a supervisor and now as an administrator. The disconnect felt by supervisors is a very real problem that I have experienced firsthand, in either receiving an administrative mandate, but never receiving guidance; or being told that the work I had

accomplished had to be re-done because it did not meet what the administrator wanted, even though no previous engagement on the problem (e.g.; performance evaluations, operations plans, proactive enforcement goals) had been offered.

Another factor which I have witnessed that creates a lack of cohesion between supervisor and law enforcement manager is the phenomenon of presence. What I will refer to here as the “power of presence.” When managers are consistently tied up in meetings, attending functions, and otherwise not present within their command, the supervisors who work for them lack the physical presence of their leadership which is essential for all the questions that may come up, consistent messaging or information about what is occurring in the rest of the agency, and the intangible factor of the physical presence of a manager which shows they care enough about the enterprise to be present within it.

In the past, I have fallen to the temptation of believing that the numbers of meetings I attend outside of my command demonstrates the importance of my position. However, this is a false god which does not assist in my role of leading people within my command. The less I am available to meet the needs of supervisors, the less they have physical proof that I care about what they are doing and how they are doing it. This is clearly the wrong message to send.

The tension that exists when a manager does not seem to understand the reasons why a subordinate supervisor makes decisions on personnel and later overrules the supervisor’s decision is usually a direct result from a lack of interaction on personnel issues by the manager with their supervisors. Typically this is a function of the lack of physical time spent within their command. I have been on the receiving end of this as a

sergeant and have become very angry about the lack of interaction by upper command with me on personnel improvement plans for officers or difficult employee behavior problems. In each case, it has been because of the physical absence of the manager on a consistent basis from the command, which demonstrates a physical and mental abdication of their responsibilities as managers.

As a manager, I have had to be very careful to guard my time away from my commands. I have fallen prey to being away from those whom I lead, and it has created large blind spots in what I know about the internal dynamics of my command. I have ascribed to the maxim for myself and my supervisors of “Manage your time, or it will manage you.” This idea introduces a new level of intentionality of where I spend my time. While there are those days where you spend most of your time with people outside of your span of supervision, it is important to schedule time to just be present in you command, and to schedule intentional time with those who report to you, so you can assist in them in understanding your direction for the future, help them with process improvements, listen to their concerns, and demonstrate that you care about what they are doing.

### ***The Role of Policy***

(Policy & Procedure Constituency)

In American law, some citizen actions require law enforcement reactions (e.g., mandatory arrest for a violation of an order for protection). In many cases, the law allows law enforcement officers to use their discretionary judgment (e.g., to give someone a speeding ticket, warn them, or not even stop them). In my interviews with the supervisors, I found a wide range of views in both departments about the importance of

policy. One reason this is remarkable is senior administrators rely on first-line supervisors to educate officers on new policy, review existing policy with line-staff, enforce policy in the daily work of an agency, and sometimes write policy.

Policy is always on the minds of the supervisors. In every interview, it became a significant discussion.

Well, I see policy, as number one - a guide line, you know, some policies can be. It depends upon if it's a violation or something like that. Ummm, certain things are protocol... They understand what the important things are. And you're there to reinforce that... because these guys know what the major ones (policies) are they can't screw up. Number one, you don't lose a criminal case because of it, because that's most of your job. You know, set yourself up for some sort of discipline by not following a department policy. (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008)

Most supervisors also have a level of anxiety about the volume of policy, the number of policy changes over-time, and the fact that policies are a source of conflict between themselves and line-officers – and – themselves and senior administration. Policy constantly drives how the supervisors perceive the actions of their officers. “As long as you stay within policy and procedure, state statute, and city code, we're good” (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007).

An overwhelming part of the job for supervisors is dealing with the volume of policy. “Yeah, you know how we write policies in law enforcement? It’s always over scrutinizing everything anyway to make sure you get all your t’s crossed and i’s dotted” (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008). “I think what really hurts is policies that change constantly” (April 16, 2008). Because supervisors are expected to know all the policy and are responsible for themselves and officer compliance to policy, they feel “damned if you do and damned if you don’t” (April 16, 2008). As a result, the supervisors revealed in the interviews there is a hierarchy of policy and procedure.

The supervisors all focus on the “important” policies and make sure everyone is aware of them and pay special attention to those that relate to incidents that occur “on the street.” The common belief among the supervisors is that these incidents are the ones that will get officers and sergeants in trouble for not following policy. “...some of those things you can’t really get around...And I think the cops get that...They understand what the important things are. And you’re there to reinforce that...” (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008). Therefore, the supervisors said officers find it acceptable for supervisors to remind them at crime scenes or critical incidents about those policies that will most likely get them “jammed up” if they do not follow them correctly. “And I feel that’s my role. Because I have the ability to provide them with resources, if need be, to provide them with training if need be and the guidance that it takes” (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007). These policies include crime scene management, use-of-force incidents, and the perennial favorite topic of policy and liability, high speed chases.

There is a noticeable flashpoint that occurs between supervisors and line-officers concerning policy when supervisors hold officers accountable for policies and conduct

that officers disagree with or think are “chickenshit” (Gilmartin, 2002). “And when does it start to break down? It’s when people start to get lazy. I don’t appreciate that... Then we’re gonna have an issue” (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007).

Additionally, the supervisors had a consistently negative tone when they discussed having to discipline officers for violating policy, having to do a supervisory override of decisions officers had made, or being involved in contentious discussions about new rules with their subordinates. “I felt terrible because of this performance evaluation I gave this officer, I guess the only thing I said the guy did right was tie his shoes and put on his uniform... And it was a real knock down – drag out performance evaluation” (Interview with Edward Charles, April 26, 2007). Policy is not a pleasant subject to them.

Noticeably absent from the supervisors was any discussion of mentoring or leadership from upper administration regarding the struggles they have with their subordinates about policy and conduct issues. “There’s a conflict because some of the people don’t always agree with what the policy is and the procedures are, and it’s your role as a supervisor to enforce those policies and procedures” (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008).

I have witnessed numerous iterations of policy and procedure manuals in the different law enforcement agencies in which I have served. These documents transcend decades and generations of the organizational members and it becomes difficult to know the genesis of many of the rules. Typically, there are rules that everyone in a generation may know by the name of the person who did something egregious and in their honor it is the “Johnson Policy” or the “Jones Rule.”

For many years, I was a rule follower as a line-officer. During these years, it was important to know the “pet rules” of each supervisor so I did not violate the policies a particular supervisor believed to be important. Given this dynamic, it was important when you wanted to do

something and you thought the policy was either “stupid” or nebulous, for you to go “supervisor shopping” for the answer you wanted to get. This lack of cohesiveness is very problematic for police organizations. I have seen this phenomenon create wedges between supervisors as well as whole wings of a department. It is imperative that law enforcement agencies create an atmosphere where there is continual critique of policy and its implementation by administrative leaders and supervisors. When I have seen individual supervisors pick and choose what to enforce or to ignore, the divisiveness is caustic to the spirit of the members of the organization because of the arbitrary nature of the enforcement of the rules, thus articulating a Kantian unethical approach to supervision.

Writing rules is intoxicating. Once I was in a position to write policy, I initially felt as though I must know best because I was the one writing the rules and felt a greater sense of control. Through a series of rebukes and the inability to control outcomes; I realized I was just adding more layers to the iterations of policy that had come before me and was creating my own “Johnson Policies.” What I was failing to do was to make cohesive policies which made sense to administrators, subject matter experts, congruency with the law, and was thoughtful of the end user, the line-officer. When I lacked thoughtfulness in developing ideas inside a policy with administrators, supervisors, and line-staff, I was never going to get the consent of the governed—the employees using the manual; thus creating further policy burden and sense of unfairness to the people having to adhere to my policies.

In recent years, I have developed entire methodologies of policy training for agencies and in the past year completed an entire re-writing of an agency’s policy manual. While I can say with some certainty that employees do not enjoy writing policy, they appreciate being engaged as the front-line users of policy and subject matter experts to be a part of a well-thought out policy and procedure manual as contributors and users of the manual. Elements that are most welcome are those which places realistic limits on behavior of staff, hold administrators accountable for certain outcomes, provide procedures on how to implement policy, and allow for professional discretion

wherever possible that signals to the line-staff that trust exists between officers and administrators.

### *Community and the Supervisor*

#### (Community Constituency)

Issues of community, presented as monolithic in this title, are anything but monolithic in reality. Community is the blanket label often given by law enforcement to people living in a municipality. What is most notable about the idea of community in this study is that it was not a focus of the supervisors in their discussions with me. Focus was on how internal issues affect productivity and proactive work of officers. Discussion of community was a backdrop that came up in the conversation for only one of four reasons: 1) as a political intrusion, 2) as a source of complaints dealt with by supervisors, 3) because of people sometimes affected by officer actions, and 4) as a reason for policing.

Fielding complaints from citizens was an area of universal concern with supervisors. For some it was a primary fear, for others it was simply a nuisance that was constantly present in their work lives. "...we have a lot of angry people here, when we talk about the citizen piece...And when you tell people we only have seven (officers), well they put that in their mind...when you give them the dimensions of the precinct...they think about it...(Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008). With regard to political intrusion, Jessica Minter said, "So talk about being pulled in twenty different ways by the politicians, being in your community meeting...being with them and you end up saying, 'no, I was on that call, our officers were there, our officers did do this...'" (April 16, 2008).



The supervisors demonstrated both frustration and stress as they spoke about dealing with the community constituency. Their responses gave me insight into the high level of negativity the supervisors perceived when dealing with the community. One comment on how the police sub-culture affects the orientation of municipal law enforcement towards service to the community was striking. “I think people...become disenchanted with it...I think they lose that idealism that they first came in with...I think they just adjust and they start taking things for granted” (Interview with David Hawkins, March 12, 2008).

### *Summary of Findings*

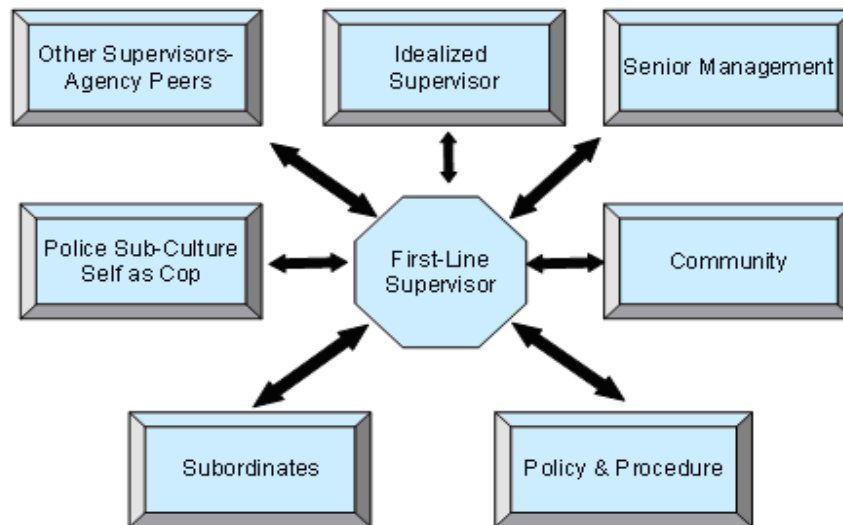
The management of competing demands was the overarching theme that emerged from my findings in the data. Demands for supervisors start within law enforcement culture, having to leave behind the world in which they “grew up” as members of the line-staff of their agencies. This changes the relationships with co-workers due to the new perceptions of them as part of management by their old peer group, the expectations of their new supervisory peer group, and their personal beliefs about supervision.

As representatives of department management, the supervisors accumulate a great deal of stress in their dual role of feeling like a parent or babysitter of subordinates and a problem solver; at the same time, they fill the role of subordinate themselves with upper level administrators whom they believe undervalue their opinions and abilities. The supervisors also find themselves negotiating with competing community interests and feelings of disappointment for the poor performance and duplicity of their supervisory peers. Adding to all of these pressures is the preoccupying responsibility of the large volume of policy and procedure that supervisors need to ensure is being complied with by

line officers. This places supervisors in the undesirable role of having to restrict the decision-making of officers and leads to the establishment of a hierarchy of policies being enforced; choosing only those which officers must follow so they will not get into significant trouble, and disregarding policy that has minimal consequences when ignored.

The dynamics in which supervisors engage becomes a balancing act of managing competing interests. Those interests, at times, inform the supervisors through their own lived experience on how to care for subordinates. It also prevents the kind of care they would prefer to offer due to the expectations of supervisory peers and upper administrators, and differs due to community expectations, policy, and liability issues supervisors must navigate daily.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**THROUGH THE ANALYTICAL LENS**



**Figure 1**

The multiple constituency model of **figure 1** is a summation of one section of the data analysis I have done. My findings led to this model through the statements of the supervisors. Their words revealed constant rivaling interests for their attention from subordinates, peers, administrators, community, and their self-definition as police officers and supervisors.

In each section, I will be analyzing the data in relationship to existing scholarship on policing and my own special knowledge of the field and establishing new understandings about police supervision because of my research. The thought processes of the supervisors and descriptions of their actions demonstrate a strong influence of police sub-culture in their approach to supervision. Therefore, I will analyze the law

enforcement supervisors in this study, in relationship to these differing constituent groups, which vie for their positive feedback in furtherance of their constituent interests; and I will delineate how their thoughts and described actions connect to police sub-culture and supervisory decision-making.

### *Self as Cop*

(Police Sub-Culture Constituency)

In the introduction to this dissertation, I discussed the cultural growing-up that officers experience in American law enforcement. The sharing of life and death experiences, extreme boredom, and working holidays and weekends together all bind officers to one another in a sub-culture that believes itself to be outside mainstream society.

Once promoted, officers must “leave the flock” of officers they have been bound to for years of their lives. This separation is an expectation from all parts of police culture: line-officers, peer supervisors, and police administrators. Thus begins the ostracization from the police culture they have known, and challenges them to become something else; part of management.

First-line supervisors define part of their approach to supervision on how they saw themselves as line-officers, how they wanted to be treated, how supervisors they liked treated them, and thus project these elements into the relationship and expectations they have for their subordinates. This becomes the Self as Cop element of police supervision; where supervisors interpret elements of their own experience as a “cop,” and then project these attributes onto how they supervise.

The stories the supervisors related to me about their experiences as officers helps to define this self-constituency of Self as Cop. The cop identity is the glue that bonds sergeants to their subordinates in the shared experience of working the street. Self as Cop identity also makes it difficult for supervisors at times to discipline officers or confront poor officer behavior. This was evident in the frustrations that the supervisors discussed about peers who did not confront poor behavior in officers, tried to be friends and not supervisors to line-officers, and other supervisors who talked negatively about administration to officers.

Manning's (1989) description of the prized role of peer-acceptance is part of this phenomenon. It makes the confrontation of former peers, who are now subordinates, especially difficult as it is a rejection of the solidarity supervisors spent so many years building with co-workers. The use of formative experiences in the development of an individual supervisor's approach to supervision is a compelling piece of data that needs the attention of all those who attempt to understand law enforcement leadership phenomena.

In the cases of the supervisors, each "grew up" in the organization they serve, being promoted in a closed system (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973), and have constant reminders of their own experiences and, at times, long relationships they have had with their current subordinates. Of the two agencies, the North Woods Police supervisors had less direct relational pressure from subordinates who worked for them due to the size of the organization. In North Woods, it is easy to move supervisors to a different section of the agency and few or none of the officers working for a sergeant will have had a significant prior working relationship with them. In the suburban environment, South

Falls, with less than 100 officers, there is very little opportunity to remove new sergeants from line-staff with whom they are familiar.

### *Subordinates*

#### (Subordinates Constituency)

The subordinate constituency is one that is ever-present for the first-line supervisor. Supervisors have multiple roles in their relationship with subordinates. They act as teacher, advisor, care-giver, and disciplinarian towards subordinates; thus making this a complex relationship with many interactions on different levels. My data showed that there were some significant differences in overall approach to supervision between the two departments. At the North Woods Police Department, the parental mindset of the supervisors led to an approach to supervision with the following daily admonishments:

- 1) Be careful
- 2) Don't "horse around" during your shift
- 3) I will help solve problems you get into. (pp. 64-65, 72 of dissertation)

At the South Falls Police Department, the supervisors elevated their approach to subordinates through a contextualization to enhance the performance of each officer by examining their strengths and weaknesses individually. To summarize the approach of the South Falls sergeants, the following are tenants that they applied to their supervision:

- 1) They believe people are the most important asset in the agency.
- 2) They believe personal issues of officers affect their workplace performance.

- 3) They seek out professional relationship with officers to make themselves as sergeants more accessible.
- 4) They want subordinates to know they care about them personally.
- 5) They want officers to ask questions of them to improve the knowledge base of their work. (pp. 59-74 of dissertation)

The data showed more of an institutional presence of these values at South Falls P.D., while at North Woods, it was a more custodial approach to supervision. By the admission of the supervisors, it is not universal within their supervisory ranks. The majority of the South Falls supervisors are in-line with this philosophical approach to subordinates. Sergeant Edward Charles said it best: "...it's not about only having coffee or drinking beers with the guys; it's about providing them with the information they need to be successful" (2008, p. 3).

Having worked in agencies the size of South Falls and North Woods, I can confirm the veracity of this finding with my personal experience and have confirmed this with colleagues in other agencies as well. The larger the agency, the more likely the supervisor is working with a larger span of control. A sergeant may have anywhere from 8-20 officers to supervise during a work shift, where in a smaller suburban agency, one sergeant will be responsible for only 2-8 officers. The difference in span of control places different concerns on the supervisors. The greater the span of control, the more "running herd" a supervisor will do to tamp down problems and meet the administrative pressure not to get complaints, which is a negative measurement used as a performance metric in Coping Organizations such as police agencies, as described by Wilson (1989).

It is entirely possible that the difference in the organizations also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy about expectations; people rising to the occasion presented to them. In the case of the South Falls officers, perhaps they are treated differently due to the philosophical approach of the sergeants to build the individual, thus the approach to supervision in-part leads to a different type of relationship with officers. In the case of North Woods, it may be as Goldstein stated that the officers "...will not aspire to act as mature, responsible adults if their superiors treat them as immature children" (2000, p. 74).

### ***The Idealized Supervisor***

(Idealized Supervisor Constituency)

The idealized supervisor is the idealized projection of what a supervisor should be in the mind's eye of the supervisors I interviewed. Their formulation of the idealized supervisor comes from their own past relationships with supervisors when they were line-officers, their own experiences as supervisors, and the formal and informal training they have received in supervision and leadership. I have distilled my findings into three themes of the idealized supervisor: action, attitude, and accountability.

### ***Of Attitude, Actions, and Accountability***

(Idealized Supervisor Constituency)

#### ***Attitude***

"Hey, door's open, please come and talk to me. ...so seek them out" (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007). Being present and engaged are attitudes that each of the supervisors believe is exceedingly important; knowing officer complaints, concerns, and making sure negative attitudes of subordinates do not spread to other line-officers. As



Jane Frey said, "...keeping the morale up. When I have to deliver bad news, or news that I know they're not gonna want to hear..." (Interview with Jane Frey, June 18, 2007). With their subordinates, the supervisors see their role as a buffer between what they think is negatively affecting officers' attitudes about citizens or police administration, due to statements or requirements these groups may request or impose.

...I like to let them know what's coming, kind of let them have a little bit of buy-in, or at least let them think they have a buy-in, you know, here's the thing, we don't necessarily like it either, but this is what's going to happen, let's try to think of some ways to make it as seamless as possible, this change, as seamless as possible...

(Interview with Jane Frey, June 18, 2007)

When Edward Charles described giving some bad news to officers about an administrative decision, he said, "...sometimes that means keeping your thoughts to yourself, especially if they're negative ones...and I think that is also what creates...ill feelings towards that person who made that decision, especially if that officer agrees with that negative feedback that the sergeant is giving..." (April 26, 2007). In both of these cases, the supervisors worked against allowing officers' attitudes to become negative in circumstances that could easily allow that to happen.

This attitudinal line-walking done by sergeants in both these departments was well captured by Jessica Minter. "And as a supervisor, we try not to project that to the troops either in roll call by saying, 'Oh my God, but DOWNTOWN SAID...' we're not about that, you know" (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16,

2008). Jessica Minter also identified sales skills as necessary for supervisors to possess when optimism is lacking among officers; that possessing supervisory sales skills undergirded by honesty improves moral. "Like I said, it's all in the presentation I think. You can sell a sack of shit to people; they're not always going to enjoy it, but if you've got the reasons behind it...I think they understand it" (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 26, 2008). Therefore, attitude demonstrates the supervisors confronting the truth of the situation, not blaming administrative decision-making, and also self-identifying with the negative feelings officers are having about bad news.

### *Action*

Early in my career, I heard policing described as a job that is "ninety-five percent boredom, five percent terror." And within this rather accurate encapsulation of what officers experience in their daily work lives, the supervisors felt it was important to demonstrate their skills in field operations in order to gain the respect of the officers who worked for them. As stated by one of the supervisors, "The biggest thing for me is lead by example...what are they (the officers) going through out there" (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 26, 2008)? This describes the theme of **action** that, for the supervisors, means to be involved in what is happening on the street with officers. It is the piece of the connection with officers signaling you are still one of them, that you have not become so disconnected you no longer understand what it means to be a line-officer and are worthy of being their leader. This phenomenon is reminiscent of the American Civil War where many good junior and senior officers died early in the war to gain the

trust of soldiers. Officers needed to stand when others crouched, or to be in front in while everyone else was behind them (Shaara, 1998) (Wert, 1996).

While officers are not being killed wholesale as Civil War soldiers were, there is the belief among the supervisors that they need to share in the danger line-officers face in order to gain their trust and respect

Although supervisors believe demonstrating action is necessary to gain respect, it also creates tension in the work place. All the supervisors indicated there is resistance from their subordinates when they show up at the scene of a police call.

The following are the reasons the supervisors said they went to calls for service of officers they supervise even though they were aware of the tension it creates:

- 1) They like "doing" police work. Going to calls is an essential part of being a police officer from the first day of the field training process for new officers (Character Model Field Training Officer Manual, Serier, 2003). As Sergeant Barnes explained it, "...believe it or not, I still like doing this job so therefore I'm gonna show up at your calls because I wanna have fun too" (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007).
- 2) Supervisors feel that in order to be fair to officers in performance evaluations, they need to see what the officers are doing at their calls.
- 3) The sergeants also all indicated that part of their job is showing up at calls as an information resource about policy for officers at the scene of incidents.

However, when discussing this subject, all of the supervisors told stories about

having to deal with the objection from officers of being present at their calls. I then heard the supervisors make soliloquy statements as if they were talking to their subordinates justifying their presence; demonstrating the struggle they have with their subordinates on this issue. "...if I don't see how you're working, how am I supposed to evaluate you" (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007)? All of the supervisors identified with this part of supervision as being important, yet all of them pointed to struggling with subordinates about their presence at their calls; who believe "no good deed will go unpunished" (Crank, 1998).

An extension of the alienation between the cop culture and the management culture is found in the work of Reuss-Ianni (1983) who distinguished between the cop culture of line-officers and the management culture's first layer as found in the first-line supervisor; and that typically there is a level of suspicion that is generated by the organizational and personal interactions with their supervisors. From my interviews, it appears officers resent when the supervisors are present at officers' calls for the purpose of evaluation and oversight on decision-making. "There's conflict because some of the people don't always agree with what the policy is and the procedures are, and it's your role as a supervisor to enforce those policies and procedures" (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008).

### *Accountability*

The last part of this section of my findings is about **accountability**. There are three parts the supervisors discussed that I believe are important to discern. Of the three, the first is acting as a buffer for the interest of the officers who sergeants know may make decisions out of anger, reflex, or from what one supervisor called "tunnel vision." Having

these things in mind, these supervisors all voiced their concern over making sure officers did not get "jammed up," which is a common phrase used in American policing for getting into trouble with administration. All of the supervisors were concerned about being present at times when officers may make poor decisions that could get them in trouble with policy violations or with the community as witnesses to an incident. Jessica Minter said that she uses these opportunities to have private conversations with officers to direct them differently in the future. "Where as the negative stuff gets hauled back to the office saying, 'you know, you could have done that a little bit different, here's a suggestion for you...'" (Interview with Jessica Minter, April 16, 2008). She later said that she learned lessons from her supervisors years earlier, "Even when I was a patrol officer and watching my supervisor, 'man, we really got lucky on this one you know...!' and he's like, '...we'll take care of it for you...'" (April 16, 2008). These were examples of private admonitions that occur.

In the area of accountability, every supervisor I interviewed used the example of having to supervise high-speed chases of suspect vehicles as an example of when they have to intervene in the decision-making of officers.

I says, 'If this thing ends up in the recreational area and you end up killing somebody, someone pushing a stroller for a stolen car. I don't think so.' We'll find it some other time. But umm...you call it off...You can't leave these guys hanging out there like that. And yeah, you take offense to it, but that's your job. (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008)

A second type of accountability the supervisors discussed was positional responsibility; and each supervisor described experiences with subordinates where subordinates challenged their supervisory authority. At other times, they made self-defining statements about their personal accountability to the position of first-line supervisor. "But like I said, it's your responsibility to take on, so, if you didn't want it, you shouldn't have taken the stripes" (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008). Hargrove is speaking directly to the mantle of leadership that sergeants acquire when they "take the stripes;" responsibility for what goes on in the work place. In all the interviews, responsibility consistently gravitated to negative stories about being a supervisor, thus defining the position of first-line supervisor with negative events. The responsibility the supervisors discussed in detail was mostly around two things: performance problems of police officers working for them and dealing with complaints from the public; sometimes the two were interwoven.

Performance issues were the perennial problem that the supervisors discussed. The lack of judgment by new officers and the lack of performance by some older officers was a constant source of fodder in the supervisors' stories. Jason Hargrove gives an excellent example of the accountability he places on himself when dealing with employee performance issues.

And then you have the part when you have to discipline somebody, and you go through all the hoops, and that's been one of my major pet peeves. Because if you're going to discipline somebody, you have to do it in a fair manner...this is not the place to come to screw around ...

you're expected to do your job. (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008)

Sergeant Hargrove attributes a number of things in his statement to his level of accountability, the first being fairness in discipline. For Hargrove, it is not an option to be arbitrary, but is essential in his mind to make sure that discipline is fair and just within his span of control to ensure that there is not an excessive amount of "screwing around" by subordinates. Also, in his statement, he demonstrates a level of personal accountability to his department as an institution by not tolerating poor behavior by officers and setting the expectation that officers must "do their job."

As an extension of the expectations of self as a supervisor; there is a belief that there are parts of job that entail skill sets necessary to successful supervision. "And I feel that's my role. Because I have the ability to provide them with resources, if need be, to provide them with training if need be and the guidance that it takes" (Interview with Hannah Barnes, June 14, 2007). Here, Hannah Barnes is discussing accountability to the organization by wanting to create better pathways for dialog and learning about department policy with officers. She is describing her method for getting the information across that is important for officers to know. The role of teacher presents itself as part of good supervision. The role of teacher was also present in most of the other supervisors in the study; however, this role also showed where the two departments parted ways. The South Falls P.D. sergeants all discussed the importance of the various aspects of supervision that the North Woods P.D. supervisors did; however, they had a more expansive definition of the sergeant as a mentor and counselor of officers. What was surprising as I was working with the data, was not the presence of this

mentoring/counseling by the sergeants of suburban South Falls, but the complete lack of any mention of this type of approach to supervision at North Woods P.D. "...so taking care of them would mean more mean checking in with them, if I see that something doesn't seem quite right with them... I can tell when that officer is having problems...you can see it on their face" (Interview with Jane Frey, June 18, 2007).

This approach goes to the heart of what I found in the data with South Falls P.D. The role of the first line supervisors I interviewed reached into an area of emotional interaction that is interested in the whole person. Supervisors need to notice when officers look depressed and ask the questions to see how they may be able to help them. This is not to say that I believe this is a universal approach used at South Falls P.D.; Hannah Barnes had some choice words for sergeants who do not work to equip their subordinates. "Are you gonna kick the snot out of them all the time? Or you gonna help them better themselves" (June 14, 2007)? Here, Hannah Barnes is adding additional context in her approach to the officers who work for her and overall in her approach to supervision. Contextualizing the needs and abilities of officers is a tool I found all of the South Falls P.D. sergeants using to help equip officers who were new to the job, needed to improve skill sets, or adapt to new skill sets (i.e., laptop computers in squads, new policies). It appears that the sergeants at South Falls contextualized the needs of each of their subordinates in order to better equip them to do their work. It appeared that the sergeants also tried to establish relationships and understand their employees in order to be approachable for them to solve problems. "...if they don't feel that I care about them...they're not going to be effective on the street" (Interview with John Garrity, May 21, 2007).



The North Woods P.D. sergeants did not express the ideas about individual attention that the South Falls sergeants did. Sergeants from North Woods P.D. approached their subordinates with a more parental approach; sometimes referring to the relationship as having parent to child attributes. “I start to look at this as a parent too almost, ‘cause you see that in kids too” (Interview with David Hawkins, March 12, 2008). “But I told these guys, I’m not your friend. I’m here to be your supervisor. So it’s kind of like being a Dad in a way” (Interview with Jason Hargrove, April 25, 2008). The North Woods sergeants seemed focused on catching up with problems officers created in the field and counseling them on those particular issues, rather than taking a longer “career building” view of performance.

Each of these personally defining themes are constantly being apportioned by the supervisor and acted upon in their work lives at levels they believe are appropriate to remain credible to their self-perception as a supervisor. The three themes comprise skill sets the supervisors believe are important to possess, and while they may at times come into conflict with one another, a supervisor has to determine which of these skill sets needs to be projected in a given situation. This is a contextual decision the supervisor must make.

For example, engaging in the action of a high-speed chase; where demonstrating their ability to be a “cop” may be the wrong course of action in a moment when they need to be analyzing the accountability of the agency and the officers involved. The supervisors indeed spoke to this during their stories about high-speed chases and evaluating the actions of line-officers. While they did not speak directly to ethical behavior in decision-making, their discussions were full of examinations of decision-

making and the application of policy; giving their supervision a moral quality. Often, they questioned what was occurring and wanted to make sure the “right thing” was done according to policy or what they personally believed was right.

I have found these particular pieces of data very important and personally difficult as well. The moral quality of supervision does not always concur with policy that is in place. Often times, policy is put in place because of poorly done police work; and policy then tries to cover and prevent a particular set of circumstances from occurring again; a set of circumstances which generated complaints and created work for supervisors and administrators. When creating policy occurs this way, which happens often, the discretion available for supervisors to make “moral” decisions is reduced due to the constraining forces of policy. As such, not only do we see supervisors having to choose what actions to take for themselves and their subordinates, but there is a tension between action the “cop” in them wants to take due to the accountability they have, but also the restraining factors policy places on them when they believe the morally accountable thing to do is different than what policy allows.

In both agencies, I had supervisors who spoke to the avoidance of confrontation by their peers with subordinates, which created problems for them, because once identified, they now felt obligated to deal with personnel problems that should already have been resolved by another supervisor not held accountable for their lack of corrective action with subordinates. Supervisors who do not engage in active supervision negatively affect officers because no subordinate is receiving mentoring, direction, or evaluation. An additional burden is placed onto engaged supervisors; officers seek them out to get their needs met. The supervisors said they work to correct issues left by neglectful supervisors.

Unfortunately, an added cost in frustration and stress occurs individually and organizationally when this institutional habit continues. These feelings are compounded by the belief that the system in which they work is unfair and inequitable because the correcting supervisor receives no recognition or incentives for the additional work they felt compelled to take on from neglectful supervisors.

Additionally, the supervisors believed that caustic environments exist in their agencies because of other sergeants with poor attitudes talking negatively about upper-administration to line-officers. I found this state of affairs in supervision to be very disturbing. The strained nature of the relationships created a level of mistrust on the part of the supervisors and there was no mention of constructive team building or an *esprit de corps* among the supervisors in either department.

I have been a live witness and participant to the conflict between supervisors. It is a public - versus - private conflict dealing with supervisors taking-on agency of either administration or the officer flock. Some supervisors are in allegiance with the administration and want to hold to a “company line” on departmental problems and how they will be resolved. Other supervisors who want to gain popularity or curry some sort of favor with the line-officers, whose flock they left when promoted, and speak against administration and policy when delivering administrative messages; thus creating tension between themselves and other supervisors and fomenting discontent among line-officers. The acidic environment that ensues creates a lack of trust I have seen many times as a line-officer, supervisor, and manager. Typically, supervisors talking against the administration, which they are part of, and stoking the anger of officers moves the people in the agency to a point where there is a lack of confidence in any decision made at the

administrative level, no matter how pro-officer the decision is in actuality. Once line-officers in the organization develop these types of beliefs, effectiveness in the traditional forms of bureaucratic management further decreases with a commensurate increase in sub-cultural distrust (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986).

### ***Supervisory Relationships with Administration***

(Senior Management Constituency)

Line-officers view the first-line supervisors as part of the total management structure of an agency. However, as was delineated in the previous section, there is division between sergeants about how they will represent administration to officers and there are tensions underlying the supervision/administration relationship that the supervisors conveyed to me. I have classified them into two types of supervision/administration conflicts.

#### ***Autocratic Habit***

At times, habit trumps all. Law enforcement agencies consider themselves paramilitary organizations (Swanson, et al., 2005) (Goldstein, 2000) (Cowper, 2000) and by organizing in this way, law enforcement organizations have created habits that sometimes override any thoughts of democracy or dialogue. Frustration builds when supervisors are unable to make routine decisions (e.g., directed patrol activities, speed surveys, robbery details) and believe that administrators take over their job. The lack of a conversation with administration about the take over of these routine decisions creates tension between supervisors and administrators. The lack of a “*why?*” explanation by administrators for the use of positional power over the supervisor makes sergeants feel as though they have no control to conduct work related activities for which they are held

accountable. Thus, when administrators override the first-line supervisor without communication, mandating what to do in field operations, staff transfers, and interfering in the performance evaluation process, sustains tension between supervisors and administration.

### ***A Voice in Decision-Making***

A second tension with administrators is the decision making process around policy and planning. The sergeants all wanted to be part of hashing out “big picture” issues and having input in problem solving because they were so much closer to the problems the administrators were discussing. A level of wooden-headed (Tuchmann, 1984) decision making was the concern of the sergeants because their bosses are so far removed from the problems for which they were creating solutions.

Modern policing is a very complex set of interrelated tasks (Goldstein, 2000). However, the hierarchical top-down centralized para-military organizations of police agencies are simplistic antiquated models of a past time ill-equipped for the roles they are expected or volunteer to accomplish for the communities they serve (Cowper, 2000) (Goldstein, 2000). Tension builds in the supervision/administration relationship due to the supervisors’ experience that places them closer to a real understanding of the consequences of administrative decisions than their upper-echelon bosses maintain. Yet, supervisors perceive themselves not heard in many circumstances, and then face the repercussions of administrative decisions that do not have solid grounding of those working on the street.

***Policy: You Can't Live With It & You Can't Police Without It***

(Policy & Procedure Constituency)

Policy and procedure is a common thread that runs through all American law enforcement agencies. It is a source for training new officers on how to act correctly on the street, places limits on conduct, and explains boundaries of officer discretion. However, policy is not all-inclusive; and, changing environments sometimes make policy manuals look as though they have “feet of clay.”

I discovered that supervisors use a hierarchy when enforcing policy with line officers. Because of the large volume of policy, which the supervisors bemoaned, supervisors know that trying to enforce all policy would place them in an untenable situation with their subordinates since most policy is about restrictions, not leeway.

Therefore, the supervisors had an informal method of working with their officers on policy compliance. They had established a hierarchy of policy ranging from those policies that were important to case law or kept officers from getting disciplined to those policies that were construed as guidelines and not that important. Supervisors brokered a point of stasis, most of the time, in their relationship with officers over policy. However, “hot calls” like high-speed chases, and all the emotions that run high with it, still bring conflict to the relationship with supervisors. Officers want the principle of “catching bad guys” or action to trump the sergeants’ constant concern about accountability and liability in the types of situations where officers, criminals, and civilians have a higher probability of being injured or killed. Those policies that supervisors either did not enforce or overlooked did not possess the same potential consequences as policies they enforced. If

a policy did not affect the integrity of a case or was not injurious to anyone, it was seen as a guideline that was not enforced.

What supervisors are doing when establishing a hierarchy of importance in policy and procedure, is a social calculus of potential conflict with officers as well as the liability concerns for themselves, the officers, and the agency to determine the most-right course of action for all parties involved. The tension exists between a central authority management culture which is trying to exert a level of bureaucratic control through a principle of command which is an important demonstration of legitimacy to outside institutions about police professionalism (Bordua & Reiss, 1966). And a highly decentralized craft or guild-like (Wilson, 1989), insular, self-protecting, and suspicious line-officer police culture (Skolnick & Bailey, 1986) with a sergeant attempting to bridge the divide between the two groups. Each group is a constituency to the supervisor and each hold different keys to and have different measures of a supervisor's success (Haberfeld, 2006) (Whisenand & Ferguson, 1973) (Crank & Caldero, 2000).

With the multiple groups of sub-cultural entities in police departments (Paoline, 2001), subordinates afraid that no good deed will go unpunished (Crank, 1998), feeling a lack of support from the upper administration, and the fears surrounding liability (Goldstein, 2000) provide for an anxious state of affairs in which supervisors need to sort out the negotiations and importance of policy. Just as there is a myth about policing's full-enforcement of the law, there is also a myth inside and outside police agencies about full enforcement of the rules. I have been engaged in perpetuating this myth, which puts supervisors in a precarious situation, where they are always concerned with matters of policy and which aspects should be enforced. They are charged by administration with

full enforcement, not audited about policy adherence unless something goes wrong, and having upper echelon staff possessing the plausible deniability about the realities of policy compliance and enforcement due to the job description and orders they give to first-line supervisors. All these dynamics make policy and procedure in police agencies similar to holding a wolf by the ears, *you don't like holding on to it, but you don't dare let it go.*

### ***Multiple Constituency Management***

In beginning my research by asking the question, “How do you approach ‘taking care’ of your officers in your role as a first-line supervisor?” I captured data, which provided findings about the experiences of the supervisors, showing they are continually navigating the interests of the multiple constituencies of self and others. As displayed in **figure 1**, these constituencies all place demands on the resources of supervisors, asking for their knowledge, time, and expertise. At times, some of these constituencies also reject the resources the supervisors possess when offered.

The self-constituencies of Self as Cop and the Idealized Supervisor define how supervisors approach thinking, responding, and relating. These constituencies create an approach to supervision and dictate many of their actions in the work environment. Action, attitude, and accountability are guiding principles formulated by each supervisor. The supervisors attempt to strike a balance as to when each principle is appropriate in the ever-changing context of the supervisory environment.

All of the supervisors said they had a dominant affiliation with management and most complained about the lack of management allegiance of some peers. However, all of the supervisors also possessed concern for their subordinates and a desire to improve



the work environment of officers who work for them. There is a range of care these sergeants displayed about their subordinates, from moderate interest to heavily engaged, and the inference is possible that subordinates, peers, or administrators within their departments would categorize their care for subordinates differently than the supervisors do themselves. As Morgan's (1993) research showed, supervisors have a better self-image of their performance than others do of them.

The external constituencies interacting with supervisors make the challenge to supervision greater. Each group has different needs and expectations of supervisors. The expectations of each group pushes up against the internal constituencies of the supervisor, thus forcing them to weigh personal wants and needs with the desires of others. This process of negotiation occurs in almost every situation in which supervisors engage. The supervisors believe that subordinates think sergeants should commit to a set of decisions aligned with the Self as Cop and Action self-definitions, which is often at odds with the Accountability and Attitude self-definitions of supervisors. Additionally, there are expectations from Peer Supervisors, Management, and the Community constituencies that require attention, if not obedience, to liability, policy, and community impact. These dynamics create an environment of tension in expectations for supervisors, which they need to resolve multiple times each day.

The supervisors displayed an ability to weigh these competing elements. While they did not openly discuss morality in their interviews with me, each story they told about their experiences with supervisory decision-making had a moral underpinning about what a supervisor "ought" to do in a given situation. In each story, they were trying to find the best course of action for group functionality, leadership, service, and

preventing harm to officers or the public. Their decision-making inherently had a moral quality in the search for positive outcomes; thus making them ethical dilemmas (Kidder, 1995).

Dorothy Guyot's (1991) likening of police agencies to other types of formal organizations where there are hierarchies, cliques, formal subdivisions, and temporary collaborations is relevant here. In the case of the supervisors, they find all of these social organizing principles of people at work. I found the supervisors having to try to preserve and strengthen these relationships, bring resolution, and maintain a future working status with each constituency; and attempting to meet the needs and desires of each group that may be in conflict with one another around them. Crank's (1997) approach of the vertical cliques applies here as well. The supervisors are working as part of a team that at a minimum works throughout the year through many significant emotional events and often times socializes together outside of work.

Another of Crank's themes (2000), "Bullshit" or "Cynicism," as described by Gilmartin (2002), is pervasive in policing and no exception in police supervision. The idea of police "bullshit", machinations of policy, and the problems created by the behavior of administrators and subordinates taints every aspect of the life world of police supervision. Cultural cynicism that dates back to the beginning of their careers incubates the cynicism of supervisors, and the pressures present in the Multiple Constituency model, exacerbate the cynicism. Each group within the model acts as a sovereign to the supervisor, thus creating pressure on supervisors to meet the needs of each constituency as part of the individual and institutional quest for continued legitimacy (Crank & Langworthy, 1992).

In analyzing the data from South Falls and North Woods, there are many experiences that police supervisors have in common. One data item I found particularly illustrative and needing understanding by police leaders is the poor relationships supervisors have with their peers and the tensions in their relationships with upper administration. In the findings sections **Peers in the Agency** and **Supervisory Relationships with Administration**, these dynamics indicate a lack of cohesiveness among the formal leadership of both departments.

The distrust, contempt, and disagreements among supervisors and administrators are prima facie evidence that the service provided to their communities suffer as a result. While evidence exists that there is some cooperation amongst the formal leadership, the level of performance has much room for improvement. These organizations would benefit greatly from a common approach to problem solving to bring them closer together by providing a common language and philosophy for decision-making. Currently, varying levels of corrosive relationships are present in these agencies making the performance of daily operations much lower than their potential and diminishing opportunities for significant innovation.

Supervisors do not readily recognize the significant affect of the cultural greenhouse of their formative years as a police officer has on them once they ascend into the supervisory ranks. Their use of story to define how they see supervision and elements of their career are abundant. However, the supervisors were blind to elements of their organizational history, sub-culture, and institutional behaviors that affect their current context in supervision. Without understanding where they have been individually or collectively, it is difficult for them to see where they are heading. Here, innovation is

crushed in sub-cultural behaviors which hold it back and do not allow for new approaches to be embraced due to constituencies such as **Self as Cop** with its sub-cultural deference to self-imposed limits established by past-practice, union rules, protection of officers, and a lack of connection with the community.

As I identified in the findings section – **Community and the Supervisor**, there was a lack of positive discussion about the community. Given that every act of the police is supposed to benefit the community in a positive way, having a contemptible relationship with the community in any current context skews the process for identifying problems and competing goods. When a dominant law enforcement belief is that the public is part of the problem, and avoiding the community is one of the competing goods, this creates a blind spot which precludes more effective problem-solving than is otherwise possible (Goldstein, 1990).

Blind spots occur in forms ranging from small issues of poor customer service, lack of good report writing, to larger issues such as lack of intelligence information sharing, poor accountability standards for performance, and an inherent belief that getting the outcome desired is the same as doing what is ethical. As a result, small troubling issues become pervasive in police sub-culture, and large issues happen more often like the corruption and murder of the Los Angeles Police Department's C.R.A.S.H. Unit in the early 1990's (Reese, 2003) or the public distrust and internal indifference of the Minnesota Gang Strike Force (AP, 2010) uncovered in 2009.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **BEING CONCLUSIVE**

Culture drives behaviors in American Policing. It is the greenhouse growing the activities and behaviors that inculcate, acculturate, and dominate the working lives of law enforcement officers. Out of this greenhouse, new supervisors uproot from their co-workers; and their new peer group of supervisors and department administrators expect them to take root in a position of supervision over line-staff, establish internal lines of communication, enforce policy and procedure, and respond to the needs of the community. These groups vie for supervisors' time and resources and form the Multiple Constituencies Model. While there were a few differences in the data I collected with respect to some of the interaction with subordinates, the similarities in police culture between South Falls and North Woods are striking.

Inextricably woven with the care of subordinates are the wants and needs of the other constituencies. Acculturation, lived experience as supervisors, and organizational influences all help to inform how each police supervisor sees how to best meet the needs of all the constituencies; and the requests and needs of each group limits the level of care subordinates receive.

The Multiple Constituency Model represents the reality of the tensions present in the lives of law enforcement supervisors. Each of these constituencies vies for the time, resources, and decision-making abilities of supervisors. The model also represents the eco-social system of police supervision; this is the world they live in. The hermeneutical reinforcement I have received with regard to this conclusion has been that every

supervisory training or individual supervisor I have shown this model to has said they believe it to represent their experience.

It is significant to the development of supervisors and those selecting, preparing, and leading supervisors to understand these dynamics. The first line of supervision is the most visible form of police management reinforcing organizational values and policy. For all practical purposes, the message first line supervision carries is the message of the organization. Therefore, the dynamics first line supervisors' face must be understood far better than they are today. No longer can administrators simply state what their first-line supervisors "ought" to do; they have to understand what their supervisors' perceptions are in order to communicate effectively with them, working with supervisors to make the message and actions they carry to the rest of the organization congruent with the priorities of upper management. Conversely, a better understanding of the pressures and dynamics felt by supervisors can assist in the upward flow of information to administration from their first-line supervisors. Knowing the Multiple Constituency Model dynamics allows administrators to ask better questions, as well as providing them with a new way of looking at the landscape of their organizations.

Bringing an organization together by building common understanding of organizational culture, history, and current context is a difficult and time-consuming task. The work demands a common alignment and philosophy grounded in the realities of an organization's dynamics and work. However, as my data has demonstrated, there are serious fractures in the level of trust within police management; affecting the confidence in leadership by officers and reduced effectiveness in working with the

community. This requires the leadership to put themselves in the vulnerable position of scrutiny for their actions.

In its current state, it is my professional and academic assessment that most police organizations are not adequately equipped to embark on those elements I have mentioned that are necessary to bring organizations together. Cross-purposes, sub-cultural undertows, desires for individual promotion, people who thrive on chaos, and other undesirable traits possess people in police organizations make them poor candidates for the very leadership positions they often fill.

The Multiple Constituency Model allows for a common understanding of the phenomena affecting police supervisors by their subordinates, but most importantly, by administrators and the supervisors themselves. It provides for a point of reflection on their work and many points of discussion about their informal sub-cultural and formal structural (e.g.; policy, law, organizational position) experiences as police supervisors. By equipping all levels of law enforcement management with an analysis of organizational habits, decision-making boundaries, relevant policy, and police sub-culture, a more genuine discussion can occur about making the best management choices to “take care” of subordinates, supervisory peers, administrators, community, and themselves.

### ***Future Research***

As I indicated early in this study, there is very little qualitative research regarding law enforcement supervision or examining the broader topics in law enforcement. This entire area is ripe for qualitative study. The amount of hidden data in law enforcement agencies is staggering. When more of it is harvested by academics, there is an

opportunity to have a better understanding of the most tangible and powerful extension of domestic power possessed by governments.

Any one of the eight constituencies identified in this study is poised for further research. Additionally, much learning needs to occur about the dynamics between supervisors and any one of the constituencies. From the aspect of organizational development, the relationships between supervisors and subordinates and supervisors and upper administrators needs a great deal of further study in order to unlock how they can each function more effectively working as part of whole organizations. From the lens of race and gender, differences in supervisory styles and decision-making need further exploration to understand how constituencies change further due to these factors.

A dimension that needs to be studied at length is how each of these constituencies (to include first-line supervisors) recombine their collective expectations to make law enforcement agencies become institutions; and how do they reflect societal expectations. The institutional power of policing is substantial and affects and is affected by social action, legislative bodies, and more non-descript citizenry. I leave this work with a quote from William James. "We have to live today by what truth we can get today and be ready tomorrow to call it falsehood."



## Epilogue

The process of my graduate education, from the beginning of a master's degree through the completion of my doctorate, has accompanied my ascension through the ranks of two police organizations from patrol officer to a top-level administrator. The two phenomena cannot be divorced from one another. Each complimented and challenged the other.

The process of education itself became a challenge with rotating and night schedules for some of those years, as well as all the transfers and promotion which brought increasing workloads from the department as well as the ever burgeoning amount of class work as I coursed through graduate school. The third source of work became the realizations that I came to during this growth process.

It has been my experience in this dual process, that once I knew what to look for in organizational phenomena and how to spot leadership gaps, that it became impossible for me to ignore certain issues and my growing ability to deal with problems begat me more responsibility in leadership. One thing I have learned is that when you practice good leadership, people expect more good leadership from you. It is a pressure and an honor to have this expectation from others. It is truly the "mantle of leadership" placed upon you.

My experience is best described as a kind of Hegelian sublimation; thesis, anti-thesis, followed by new synthesis; a sublimation about leadership to be more exact. The past decade has allowed me to develop a set of critical thinking skills which I have used time and again to examine the current paradigm about my role and leadership affect. As I have continually absorbed more theory, case studies, and data points, I have wrestled

with paradigms within which I have operated; challenging them with the infusion of new ideas, I have broken the old chrysalis into a new iteration of my leadership methodology.

This is a humbling process for someone ascending in leadership to understand that more information about leadership and organizations makes our paradigms temporary and our success fragile. For me, this realization has led me to a more servant leader/care ethic approach to my leadership. Even though I had always been of this general ethos, partnerships and servanthood has become all the more important to me as I ascended above the sergeant rank of those I studied in this dissertation. The Multiple Constituency Model demonstrates the need for servanthood from above to assist first-line supervisors and line-staff to meet their needs and the needs of those they serve – our communities. With this servant/care ethic and an understanding of the Multiple Constituency Model, I believe that the support needed for supervisors to have the adequate emotional energy and resources to deal with the problems and tensions they face in their daily lives as supervisors becomes possible and rewarding.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A***Proposed Test Questions for Research*

In police supervision, have you ever heard a saying like, "Take care of your people?" What does that saying mean to you?

Do you think taking care of your people is important?

Is there any friction between policy and procedure and "taking care" of the people who work for you?

How have you seen policy and procedure come into conflict with you efforts to "take care" of the people you supervise?

How do you define care with regard to the people you supervise?

How does policy and procedures in your department affect how you supervise? Do you think policy and procedure is important?

Why do you think care is important in supervision?

How do you carry out "taking care" of the people you supervise?

Is there a greater need for training of supervisors in dealing with policy infractions in sliding scale which includes the application of policy and progressive discipline?

No provision in policy about supervisory disregard of policy violations; to include application elements of progressive discipline?

Can you explain to me the process of *progressive discipline* in your agency?

With progressive discipline in mind, do you ever make policy violations that take place go away? What would make you do that?

Do good deeds in the past on the part of officers color how you will treat your subordinates? Do your relationships with people affect how you may invoke progressive discipline?

Does policy and procedure include everything that could happen?

How have you seen other people define "taking care of people" in their actions as a police supervisor?

**APPENDIX B****CONSENT FORM  
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS****To Protect and To Care: A Study in the Meaning of Supervisory Care  
in American Policing  
IRB #B08-066-3**

I am conducting a study about how first line police supervisors understand and look at care of their employees. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a first-line police supervisor in an agency in the targeted geographic area. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Jack Serier, M.A. and supervised by Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer – Susan Huber, Ed.D.

**Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the how first-line police supervisors understand and carry out care for their subordinate employees. The potential benefit to participants and their peer group in policing is to examine the insights of their peers on this subject and to determine potential strategies with regard to this issue in law enforcement supervision.

**Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- 1) Participate in an audio recorded interview lasting no longer than 60 minutes. I will ask questions related to the issue of how you perceive caring for your subordinate employees in the workplace. This is a one-time interview.
- 2) The interview will be done in a private location of your choice.

**Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

The study has several risks. Major identified risks are as follows:

- Personal information you disclose about yourself could be discovered by a reader of this study.
- Your identity could be discovered by a reader of this study.
- Your comments could be discovered by a reader of this study.
- Your agency's identity could be discovered by a reader of this study.
- The real situations and people you describe in your comments could be determined by readers of this study.

The following are being used as precautions concerning your confidentiality as a participant in this study:

- Your real name will be changed
- Your law enforcement organization's name will be changed.
- Identities of others you mention during the interview will be changed.
- Locations you describe during the interview will be altered.
- Situations you describe will be altered to protect your identification and of others involved.
- The records of this study will be kept private.
- Details that could identify you to a reader of this study will be changed in during the transcription of what you said during the interview.

**Compensation:**

You will receive no payment for participation in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

The following will be done to protect your identity and the identity of others:

- Your real name will be changed
- Your law enforcement organization's name will be changed
- Identities of others you mention during the interview will be changed
- Locations you describe during the interview will be altered
- Situations you describe will be altered to protect your identification and of others involved

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I publish, altered names, locations, and situations will be used. Research records will be kept in a locked file; chair of this dissertation Susan Huber, Ed.D and I are the only persons who will have access to the records. Audio recordings of this study will be retained by me and will be accessible only to chair of this dissertation – Susan Huber, Ed.D.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Please note the following with regard to your participation in this study:

- Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.
- Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of St. Thomas.
- You may skip answering any question at any time.
- If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

- Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not be used and the data destroyed.
- You will not be able to withdraw your participation in this study 30 days after the interview is completed.
- If you decide to not participate or to withdraw from participation, your professional or personal relationship with me will not be affected in any way.

**Contacts and Questions**

My name is Jack Serier. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 651-246-5534. You may also contact the chair of the dissertation, Susan Huber, Ed.D., at 651-962-4550. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns.

**You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.**

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study. [include any additional permission here (eg., audio taping).]

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Study Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent or Guardian  
(If applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Researcher**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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