

Leadership and Management in Police Organizations

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Power and Compliance

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Police departments are frequently called upon to provide crowd control and management during large group events, demonstrations, or disturbances. Some of these events are planned in advance by groups, giving law enforcement agencies an opportunity to develop appropriate management strategies.¹ For example, the Seattle Police Department was aware of the possibility of widespread demonstrations during the 1999 World Trade Organization meetings in the city and, in the months immediately leading up to the event, received intelligence about possible criminal activity and other

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disruptions.² Awareness of events is no guarantee of effective control, as the department acknowledged being caught off guard by the scale of the protests. Other events emerge more spontaneously, such as a street fight that grows in size or a sudden demonstration that turns into a destructive or violent riot.

Police personnel are guided by a large number of legal and organizational policies dictating how they can force compliance during large crowd events without further exacerbating the situation.³ According to the Seattle Police Department's report on the WTO protests, "The use of physical barricades and razor wire to secure the ministerial conference in Geneva [an earlier WTO meeting] was viewed as inflammatory, leading to the assumption that Seattle's more open and facilitative approach to demonstrations would lessen the chances of violence and property destruction."⁴ However, when demonstrations get out of control, police may be compelled to use different approaches to ensure compliance and, ultimately, public safety. For example, the International Association of Chiefs of Police model policy on crowd control suggests attempting to geographically contain disturbances or secure voluntary dispersal of the crowd by engaging key protest leaders.⁵ Only when the crowd fails to comply with a lawful request should police tactics escalate to include strategies such as a strong physical presence, chemical dispersal agents, or mass arrests.⁶ Hundreds of protestors and journalists were arrested during demonstrations at the Republican National Conventions in New York City in 2004 and Minneapolis-St. Paul in 2008.⁷ The attempts to suppress the disturbances generated controversy in both cities, however, with civil lawsuits and settlements resulting from questionable police practices.

One of the most enduring challenges in the study and administration of police organizations is ensuring officer compliance with supervisory directives, organizational rules, and legal mandates. The problem is nothing new. Scholar Samuel Walker traced this issue back to the formation of the first police forces in the mid-nineteenth century and the use of general patrol strategies:

[T]hey were to be *proactive* rather than merely *reactive*. The crime prevention strategy, implemented by continuous and regular patrol over assigned beats, has remained the basic assignment of the police. This innovation, however introduced a set of problems that have remained the essence of the police administration problem ever since. Once patrolmen were assigned to patrol, the problem of supervision became paramount. How to make sure that they were in fact working? And, if they were working, how to guarantee that their actions were consistent with official public policy?⁸

The fact that most police work is performed in low-visibility contexts free from direct supervisory oversight and decision-making scrutiny complicates this matter event further.⁹ At the same time, police personnel are often tasked with obtaining compliance from distraught, anxious, hostile, or otherwise uncooperative victims, witnesses, and offenders, as evident in the examples that opened the chapter. In both situations, individuals may wield power to confront resistance. This chapter introduces the

concept of individual power as it applies in organizational settings, distinguishing it from the related concepts of leadership, authority, and influence. It concludes with a discussion of the limits of power within police organization and attempts to use technology to enhance it.

Defining Power

Police officers sometimes resist attempts to control their behavior.¹⁰ For some, the resistance stems from an opposition to change or a belief that certain behaviors are equally, if not more, appropriate. A suspect determined to avoid punishment, for example, may resist an officer's attempt to make an arrest. For others, noncompliance reflects "a need for independence, for power, for self-esteem, [or] to present a strong image to other observers."¹¹ For instance, Lundman found that police officers objected to department attempts to control work activity through the use of quotas.¹² They refrained from writing many citations in the early part of each month but paid for it later, working harder to catch up on any shortfall. Officers might resist control efforts due to concerns about how they would be perceived by third parties or the person making the demands (e.g., weakness).

Power is a tool for controlling behavior and obtaining compliance, especially in the face of resistance. In police organizations, power is critical, serving as both a means to coordinate the actions of individuals within departments (structure) and secure obedience from typically uncooperative clients (offenders). In fact, most definitions of power highlight the very possibility of resistance. Consider three examples:

Power over other persons . . . is exercised when potential power wielders, motivated to achieve certain goals of their own, marshal in their power base resources . . . that enable them to influence the behavior of respondents by activating motives of respondents relevant to those resources and to those goals. This is done in order to realize the purposes of the power wielders, whether or not these are also the goals of the respondents.¹³

A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.¹⁴

Power is simply the individual capacity to gain your own aims in interrelationship with others, even in the face of their opposition.¹⁵

These definitions illustrate several important themes for the study of power. Power is inherently a social and situational phenomenon.¹⁶ Citing the power held by one person (the power holder) is a fruitless exercise without recognizing the other party in the social relationship. Power exists only insofar as it is recognized by the target or recipient of this power. Even though officers are bestowed with a capacity to use coercive force, if necessary, to resolve situations, the power is minimized if not acknowledged by others. A person's power is also bounded by the situation.¹⁷ A sergeant's authority to demand compliance from an officer is more likely confined to occupational rather than personal matters. Moreover, the resources used to ensure compliance vary across

contexts. An officer may be more readily able to secure cooperation by threatening arrest in situations where there is clear violation of the law but struggle to use the same types of threats when evidence is weak or nonexistent.

Power is considered an instrumental capacity, allowing “control over specific people, things, or events.”¹⁸ Each of the three definitions highlights the ability to get something done or achieve goals, even with opposition. As a consequence, judgments about the effectiveness of a person’s power are usually based on outcomes—did the power recipient submit to the power holder’s demands?¹⁹ Of course, this assumes that the compliance was not the result of happenstance or some other nonpower factor.²⁰ Compliance can occur both in the short and long term.²¹ A police sergeant effectively exercises power, for example, when she or he compels an officer to enable a body-worn camera upon exiting the patrol vehicle in spite of the officer’s resistance to the perceived intrusion. Similarly, an officer’s arrest of a drunk driver is surely enough to remove a potentially dangerous driver from the road. Power, to the extent it results in behavioral change, results in short-term conformity. The effectiveness of power can also be examined by assessing its ability to ensure long-term compliance. Does the officer routinely activate the camera in subsequent encounters with the public, even absent specific and immediate directives from the supervisor? According to Tyler, “Such long-term compliance is more strongly voluntary in character, since legal authorities are seldom able to maintain the physical presence that makes the risk of being sanctioned for wrongdoing immediate and salient” (see The Effectiveness of Power section).²²

Power also has reciprocal characteristics.²³ Opposition or resistance is indicative of power attempts moving in opposite directions, suggesting both parties in a relationship have at least some amount of power. Peter Moskos illustrated this reciprocal power when he described his experiences with the Baltimore Police Department.²⁴ Supervisors instructed officers to make one arrest (later two) during each four-week period. Violators were required to complete a specific form—one that would become part of their personnel record—documenting failure to adhere to performance standards. Management was trying to force compliance with the directives. Some officers, due to low morale and anger, stopped making arrests altogether, an action that would adversely affect evaluations of supervisors. Stated differently, officers were pushing back against the requirements, albeit with only minimal effects.

Notice that the three definitions of power only mention vaguely address the motives of the power holder. For some, acquiring power is valuable because it allows for the domination of others, the imposition of one’s will. McClelland referred to this as a **personal power concern**, using power for personal or selfish reasons such as individual rewards or status.²⁵ Although some people believe police work draws individuals motivated by the power to control others, research suggests otherwise.²⁶ Instead, individuals seem to be motivated, in part, by a **socialized power concern** or a desire to use power to help society. McClelland described socialized power as “central to organizational effectiveness.”²⁷ It is also worth mentioning that power sometimes works collaboratively with multiple parties sharing their capacities for mutual benefit (see Your Turn at the end of the chapter).²⁸

Power and Related Constructs

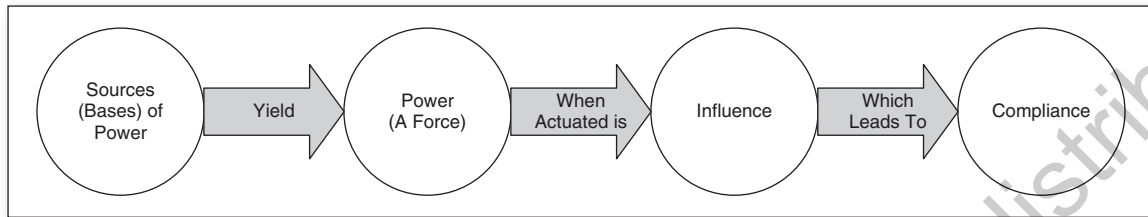
Power and Authority

The terms *power* and **authority** are frequently used interchangeably. In this way, there is little distinction in the phrases *the sergeant has authority over her officers* and *the sergeant has power over her officers*. In spite of the casual use of both terms, there is a significant distinguishing feature. Individuals willingly comply with the commands of authority figures, accepting the fact that the person has the right to make demands of others.²⁹ In modern organizations, much of this authority is derived from position with the hierarchically structured department.³⁰ Subordinates have a duty to comply with the requests of superiors and tend to do so as long as the commands fall within their “zone of indifference.”³¹ In practice, this means that most people unquestionably and reflexively accept certain orders—those within the zone of indifference—but are more likely to question or resist those that generate unnecessary work or represent an unacceptably broad reach for the individual making the command.³² Others within the organization lack legitimate (position) authority due to their location within departments. Civilian personnel, for example, tend to serve in support roles (e.g., crime analysts, records clerk, evidence technicians) that place them in subordinate positions within the hierarchy. Their lack of formal authority should not be mistaken for a lack of power. They may develop their own power bases, such as delaying or withholding information relevant to sworn employees.

Authority is also evident during police contacts with citizens. Many people comply with police directives to pull over, stop, or answer questions, not out of fear of punishment, but out of a recognition of the police as legitimate authorities. Citizens defer to police attempts to ensure compliance. A growing body of research shows that perceptions of police legitimacy can be enhanced through police behaviors that reflect overall fairness, respect, and trustworthy motives.³³ This procedural justice, discussed in more detail in Chapter 12, increases the public’s compliance with the police and acceptance of their decisions, even if they are unfavorable (e.g., a speeding ticket, arrest).

Power and Influence

The terms *power* and *influence* are typically used in conjunction with one another. Power tends to be viewed as a capacity, something to be mobilized or exercised.³⁴ This is quite different from actual influence. A police officer conceivably has a great amount of power to fulfill peacekeeping responsibilities, drawing upon the threat of the criminal law to resolve interpersonal disputes. This potential or capacity is different from what Bass described as “a willingness to exercise it” or Mintzberg termed the “will and skill.”³⁵ The officers must decide to intervene and make the power operational, thereby converting it to actual influence (see Figure 7.1). The specific tactics used to secure compliance depend upon the task (e.g., assigning work, changing behaviors).³⁶ Yukl, Guinan, and Sottolano proposed a list of nine common influence tactics (see Table 7.1).³⁷ They are inextricably tied to power sources. For example, rational persuasion

Figure 7.1 Relationship between power, influence, and compliance

SOURCE: Henry L. Tosi, John R. Rizzo, and Stephen J. Carroll, *Managing Organizational Behavior* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1986).

only works to the extent that the power holder has access to relevant information. An officer might be able to convince a supervisor to change course, armed with the specific details of a crime gathered from a scene. Similarly, pressure tactics hint that a power holder has the ability to hand out punishments. Legitimate, pressure, and coalition tactics have been described as *forcing influence behavior*, so labeled because the power holder attempts to compel compliance by making noncompliance an unattractive option.³⁸ These strategies tend to involve specific actions like invoking rank, issuing treats, or collectively pressuring obedience. The other six options (nonforcing) are supposed to allow the power recipient more choice in the compliance decision.

Power and Leadership

Leaders exercise power and authority in order to move group members toward the achievement of goals. Indeed, the amount of power inherent within a position in an organization was identified as a critical contingency in Fiedler's theory of leadership.³⁹ The distinction between power and leadership may appear murky, with most definitions of the latter explicitly mentioning influence (actuated power in Figure 7.1).⁴⁰ This similarity aside, writers have generally made sharper distinctions between the two concepts.⁴¹ Jago, for example, restricted leadership to "noncoercive influence."⁴² Unfortunately, omitting coercion ignores the fact that a leader's role sometimes requires the development of a shared purpose among followers that is otherwise initially absent, even if it means drawing upon coercive or other power bases.

Janda argued that followers comply with leaders due to their perception that the leaders have a legitimate right to make demands, what was referred to earlier as authority.⁴³ For instance, a tactical team leader has the rightful authority to provide direction, and team members have a dutiful obligation to comply within the context of the group's activities. Beyond the group, however, the team leader would have to draw upon other forms of power in order to change behaviors. It makes sense to consider various forms of influence and to consider the dynamics of the social transaction to determine whether leadership is effective or ineffective.

A more common and viable distinction is to see leadership as a subset of power; leadership occurs when the power holder and power recipient share common goals,

Table 7.1 Definitions of Influence Tactics

| |
|--|
| <p><i>Rational persuasion</i></p> <p>You use logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade the person that a proposal or request is practical and likely to result in the attainment of task objectives.</p> |
| <p><i>Consultation</i></p> <p>You seek the person's participation in planning a strategy, activity, or change for which you desire his or her support and assistance, or you are willing to modify a request or proposal to deal with the person's concerns and suggestions.</p> |
| <p><i>Inspirational appeals</i></p> <p>You make a request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to the person's values, ideals, and aspirations, or by increasing the person's confidence that he or she would be able to carry out the request successfully.</p> |
| <p><i>Personal appeals</i></p> <p>You appeal to the person's feelings of loyalty and friendship toward you when you ask him or her to do something.</p> |
| <p><i>Ingratiation</i></p> <p>You seek to get the person in a good mood or to think favorably of you before making a request or proposal (e.g., compliment the person, act very friendly).</p> |
| <p><i>Exchange</i></p> <p>You offer an exchange of favors, indicate willingness to reciprocate a favor at a later time, or promise the person a share of the benefits to help you accomplish a task.</p> |
| <p><i>Legitimate request/Legitimizing tactics</i></p> <p>You seek to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority to make it or by verifying it is consistent with organizational policies, rules, practices, or traditions.</p> |
| <p><i>Pressure</i></p> <p>You use demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders to influence the person to do what you want.</p> |
| <p><i>Coalition tactics</i></p> <p>You seek the aid of others to persuade the target to do something, or use the support of others as a reason for the target person to agree to your request.</p> |

SOURCE: Gary Yukl, Patricia J. Guinan, and Debra Soitolano, "Influence Tactics Used for Different Objectives With Subordinates, Peers, and Superiors," *Group & Organization Management* 20, no. 3 (1995): 272–96.

something not true of all power relationships.⁴⁴ Goals are not always compatible, however, requiring individuals to wield power in order secure compliance. In 2011, the Miami, Florida, city manager dismissed the city's police chief for insubordination after he failed to delay demotions of several senior officials and reduce overtime costs.⁴⁵ The city manager exercised power after disagreements over the direction of the department. It is the very possibility of goal incompatibility—getting people to do things they would not otherwise do—that is the essence of power. As goals are shared, the influence becomes more akin to leadership.

Bases of Power

What gives an individual power over another? According to Bertram Raven, “Social power can be conceived as the resources one person has available so that he or she can influence another person to do what that person would not have done otherwise.”⁴⁶ In a famous typology offered in 1959, French and Raven identified five of the most salient bases of power—reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert—while simultaneously acknowledging “there are undoubtedly many possible bases of power which may be distinguished.”⁴⁷ Indeed, additional bases of power have been added to the typology in subsequent decades (information power, one of the most commonly researched, is addressed). Researchers have grouped the bases of power into those derived from one's position in the organization—**position power**—or those independent of position and related to the individual—**personal power**.⁴⁸ In most cases, an individual's ability to reward, punish, invoke rank, or access information is largely dependent upon his or her position in the organizational hierarchy. In contrast, expert and referent power bases reside in the power holder. Sample items used to measure the bases of power are included in Table 7.2.

Reward Power

Individuals acquire **reward power** through their ability to, or perceived ability to, distribute intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to others in the organization.⁴⁹ If we draw upon the language of the expectancy theory of motivation (see Chapter 5), power wielders provide outcomes that have positive valences for the power recipient or remove outcomes that have negative outcomes.⁵⁰ The availability of rewards is often tied to a person's position within the organization; some people have the ability to offer pay increases, promotions, desirable job assignments, or some other benefit (see Table 7.2). Within police organizations, formal reward power is often curtailed by civil service guidelines and union regulations that specify procedures on matters such as job selection and across-the-board pay increases.⁵¹ In other words, position does not necessarily increase the number of incentives available. In a 1970s study of multiple police units within a single department, Tiffitt found that sergeants had little reward power over patrol officers since “the few available rewards for patrolmen (assignment

Table 7.2 Sample Survey Items Used to Measure French and Raven's Bases of Power

| Base of Power | Reason for Compliance |
|---------------|---|
| Reward | My supervisor could help me receive special benefits (position) |
| | My supervisor's actions could help me get a promotion (position) |
| | A good evaluation from my supervisor could lead to an increase in pay (position) |
| | My supervisor made me feel more valued when I did as requested (personal) |
| Coercive | My supervisor could give me undesirable job assignments (position) |
| | My supervisor could make things unpleasant for me (position) |
| | My supervisor could make it more difficult for me to get a promotion (position) |
| | I didn't want my supervisor to dislike me (personal) |
| Legitimate | After all, he/she was my supervisor (position) |
| | It was his/her job to tell me how to do work (position) |
| | My supervisor had the right to request that I do my work in a particular way (position) |
| | For past considerations I had received, I felt obliged to comply (position) |
| Referent | I respected my supervisor and thought highly of him/her and did not wish to disagree (personal) |
| | I saw my supervisor as someone I could identify with (personal) |
| | We were both part of the same work group and should have seen eye-to-eye on things (personal) |
| | I looked up to my supervisor and generally modeled my work accordingly (personal) |
| Expert | My supervisor probably knew the best way to do the job (personal) |
| | My supervisor probably knew more about the job than I did (personal) |
| | I trusted my supervisor to give me the best direction on this (personal) |
| | My supervisor probably had more technical knowledge about this than I did (personal) |
| Information | Once it was pointed out, I could see why the change was necessary (personal/position) |
| | My supervisor had carefully explained the basis for the request (personal/position) |
| | My supervisor gave me good reasons for changing how I did the job (personal/position) |
| | I could then understand why the recommended change was for the better (personal/position) |

Adapted from Bertram H. Raven, Joseph Schwarzwald, and Meni Koslowsky, "Conceptualizing and Measuring a Power/interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 28, no. 4 (1998): 307–32.

of beat, shift, partner) were distributed by supervisors in organizational positions above sergeant.⁵² In contrast, the tactical (SWAT) team sergeant determined work teams and assignments, providing an increased measure of reward power.

As shown in Table 7.2, rewards also come in the form of praise, approval, or respect (intrinsic motivators). Perhaps this is seen most clearly in the relationship between use of force and officer acceptance. After interviewing two dozen female police officers in a midwestern state, Rabe-Hemp determined that one route by which females gained acceptance from departmental peers was by demonstrating willingness to use force. Study participants were asked when they knew they were accepted. Two accounts are included here:

Captain: My first fight, yeah. Before that, no one would really speak to me. . . . Once they saw I was going to jump in and help somebody and actually win the fight, then it was, you know, oh we will slap you on the back but we are going to keep an eye on you, but you are okay as far as we are concerned.

Patrol: Probably the most acceptance was when I was almost killed in a hotel room. I had to use my gun on a 17 year old. I think, you hate to say it that way, but I think officers felt, she can do the job. She did prove that she made it out of this hotel room alive and protected herself. So, I think you can get accepted in a way like that.⁵³

For many female officers, then, peer acceptance resulted from demonstrating toughness on the street.

Coercive Power

Coercive power is based on the power recipient's perception that sanctions will result from noncompliance.⁵⁴ Perceptions are more critical than the power holder's actual ability to punish or deliver some penalty. Coercion is widely regarded as a position power base since an individual's location within an organization provides access to various coercive means. Tifft suggested that one of the most salient punishments at the disposal of investigations and tactical sergeants is reassignment. The threatened removal from the unit may be enough to ensure compliance. In a seminal work on policing, scholar Egon Bittner described the capacity to use coercive force as a central feature of a police officer's job. He argued, "The policeman, and the policeman alone, is equipped, entitled, and required to deal with every exigency in which force may have been used, to meet it."⁵⁵ Officers do not use coercive force in every situation, but the coercive power base inherent within their position allows them to secure compliance when legitimate requests fail.

Coercive power is not only derived from position but may also develop as a form of personal power. According to Raven, "Rejection or disapproval from someone whom we really like can serve as a basis for powerful coercive power."⁵⁶ The power relies upon punishments inextricably linked to the person, not the person's job assignment. Research, for example, shows that the police subculture serves as a barrier to

help-seeking behaviors among officers needing counseling for mental health issues, including exposure to trauma.⁵⁷ Officers reported conforming to subcultural demands to be “tough individuals,” recognizing that seeking help could change perceptions and lead to labels such as “unstable.”⁵⁸ In another study, Jennifer Hunt described a situation in which an officer froze in a potential deadly force encounter, leading peers to question the officer’s competence.⁵⁹ Hunt argues that “reprimand, gossip, and avoidance constitute the primary means by which police try to change or control the behavior of coworkers perceived as unreliable or cowardly.”⁶⁰ In both studies, peer influence was based on relational punishments, not formally prescribed organizational sanctions.

Legitimate Power

By including **legitimate power** in their typology, French and Raven considered compliance based on authority. It is based on the power recipient’s belief that the power holder has a right, generally based on an organizationally bestowed position or rank, to extract compliance from others.⁶¹ Tifft, for example, described how patrol sergeants were commonly present at major crime scenes, and officers came to expect and accept their attempts at control.⁶² After all, officers had a generally duty to comply with the supervisor even if they attempted to avoid control in other types of encounters.

More recently, researchers expanded the conceptual definition of legitimate power to include reciprocity or exchange. Since the power holder has provided some type of benefit, the power recipient has a duty to reciprocate or restore balance to the exchange.⁶³ The distinction between reciprocity and reward power is slight. With reward power, the power holder offers something of value *only after* the power recipient complies. With reciprocity, the power holder already offered something of value, so the power recipient has a duty to *comply in response*. Michael Brown illustrated this relationship between field supervisors (sergeants) and patrol officers by noting that sergeants possessed legitimate power by virtue of their rank and expert power given their experience. Yet sergeants were unable or reluctant to over-enforce rules against officers due to the power possessed by street-level employees. Sergeants needed information from officers about what was happening on the street. Moreover, officers could embarrass sergeants in front of department administrators or ignore the sergeant’s request for assistance. The solution was a “pattern of mutual accommodation in which field supervisors reassert the semblance of discipline and behave as bureaucrats at the station house, while confronting patrolman as colleagues on the street.”⁶⁴ Officers benefitted from the exchange, avoiding excessive rule enforcement in return for not making trouble for the sergeant.

Referent Power

Referent power is based on one party’s identification with the other, “the desire of followers to identify with their leaders and to be accepted by them.”⁶⁵ The power

recipient admires, respects, or seeks to associate with the power holder. Referent power comes from the characteristics of the individual (e.g., personality, approachability), not the position occupied. In the department Tifft studied, patrol sergeant referent power was weak due to the nature of their jobs. He argued,

The patrol sergeant . . . had few opportunities to get to know the patrolmen because of the spatial distribution of patrolmen and the fact that sergeants rotated shifts (hours worked) every month and often rotated supervisory beats, while patrolmen generally worked the same hours and beats. Supervisor-subordinate relations were consequently highly impermanent.⁶⁶

In contrast, the tactical sergeant's role as supervisor during training exercises and callouts allowed him to earn the respect of team members.

Expert Power

Individuals acquire **expert power** due to their extensive knowledge in a specific area. Power recipients often defer to an expert's advice, particularly in situations where their own knowledge base is lacking. French and Raven offered a simple example of a lost traveler's willing acceptance of directions from stranger.⁶⁷ The unknown individual is presumed to be an expert because of his or her perceived residence in the town. Patients often readily comply with a doctor's medical advice and customers with an auto technician's recommendation, even if compliance means a costly or painful medical procedure or expensive auto repair. In both cases, individuals are heeding the advice of experts.

Expert power is a form of personal power attributed to the individual rather than the position. Police department personnel frequently "set the stage" in order to establish their expert power base.⁶⁸ For example, before testifying in court about a particular investigation, officers or crime lab analysts will likely establish their qualifications—years with the department, years in investigation, academic degrees, and other credentials. Lack of knowledge weakens a person's power base and the ability to influence others. In a 2000 research article, Mastrofski and colleagues studied the frequency at which police officers in two cities fulfilled citizen requests to control others and the predictors of compliance.⁶⁹ They focused on encounters in which a total of 396 citizens asked 172 officers to advise, warn, separate (make leave), or arrest others. Overall, officers fulfilled or partially fulfilled a citizen's request in nearly three-quarters (70%) of all cases. Citizens were less successful, however, if they asked the officer to arrest someone else, largely due to the legal requirements associated with this form of social control. Citizens may ask for arrest but be unfamiliar with probable cause standards. According to the authors, "officers serve more to modulate than amplify the public's will, at least when enacting the most extreme form of control we have considered."⁷⁰ Without clear knowledge of legal requirements, a resident's ability to compel officer action is likely to be constrained.

Information Power

One additional base of power emerged soon after the publication of the original five—**information power**.⁷¹ In spite of its prominence in the power literature, scholars never unified around a single definition of the concept. According to Mechanic, information power is possessed by individuals who control information flows within an organization or who have access to information sought by others.⁷² Consider a case involving a police informant who is an “accomplice witness,” an offender who both participated in the crime but has information about others involved.⁷³ Police and prosecutors possess some amount of coercive power, able to threaten the suspect with sanctions unless information is shared. However, the informant retains some power through the control of information desired by criminal justice officials. Informants can use what they know as leverage to secure some benefits—immunity, a lighter penalty, or financial reward. Information can also be viewed as a facilitator for persuasion, allowing a power holder to convince others to change their behaviors.⁷⁴ A crime analyst, for example, might provide midlevel managers within a police department with hot-spot maps detailing microareas with above-average calls for service. The information may be enough to produce modifications to officer resource deployments.

In a 1993 reflection on the bases of power, Raven noted that he was originally unable to convince French about the importance of information power, declaring his own information power weak in the process.⁷⁵ He argued that, unlike expert power, information power relied less on characteristics of the power holder. It was the information itself that was critical, not the qualifications of the person with the information. This suggests that information power is a form of position power.⁷⁶ Indeed, it is a person’s position in an organization—as a crime analyst, administrative assistant, or participant in a criminal conspiracy—that enables access in the first place. If we move beyond the gatekeeper role and consider the persuasiveness, information power is also a form of personal power.⁷⁷ After all, the convincingness of an argument is based not only on the availability of facts or other evidence but also on the credibility of the power holder attempting to change behavior. Returning to the study discussed earlier, police officers were less likely to fulfill citizen requests to control others when the requestor’s credibility was in question, such as when they were intoxicated, mentally ill, or suspected of a crime themselves.⁷⁸ These factors mattered even after controlling for the amount of evidence against the target of the request. Although a victim or witness presumably has more information about a crime than a newly arriving officer, their power is diminished if the information is deemed questionable.

The Effectiveness of Power

Discretion is a widely accepted aspect of the police occupation. Officers deal with unique human problems that are difficult to reduce to programmed rules, they work in

environments where demand for services often outstrips resources, they are subjected to ambiguous or conflicting objectives (e.g., aggressive enforcement vs. community support), and they confront a public that often opposes full enforcement of the criminal law.⁷⁹ To be sure, the law and department regulations constrain officer behavior; restrictions on police use of deadly force serve as an example of how discretion can be curtailed.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, officers still retain considerable freedom in how they carry out their duties. As the sections that follow show, supervisors are limited in their ability to exact compliance and control discretion.

Lack of Surveillance

Supervisory control over street-level bureaucrats is further weakened by the very limits of coercive and reward power bases. Compliance rests on the threat of penalty or the promise of incentives, but those punishments and rewards are only delivered if managers can verify adherence to policies or directives. In other words, coercive and reward power bases require **surveillance**—some type of direct or indirect managerial oversight—in order to be effective.⁸¹ Police officers, like workers in other human service fields, tend to operate autonomously, or with what Prottas referred to as “low compliance observability.”⁸² Supervisors are simply not present while most tasks are completed, precluding attempts to confirm or disconfirm compliance. Consider adherence to standard operating procedures. The Cincinnati Police Department’s canine policy states, “Once a suspect is located, the [patrol canine] handler shall restrain the canine and summon sufficient personnel and equipment to make the apprehension. Force, including a canine, is never to be used against a subject who is submitting to arrest.”⁸³ Absent an on-scene supervisor, departments struggle to exercise full power over street-level workers. This is not to suggest that officers will knowingly and willfully violate rules or ignore orders. They are likely to fully or partially comply. The point is to illustrate the limits of power due to the supervisor’s span of control and the geographic dispersion of subordinates.

Surveillance is critical only if compliance is based on coercive or reward power bases. Supervisory power premised on legitimacy, expertise, identification (referent), or information are arguably effective with or without verification of obedience.⁸⁴ For example, an officer might comply with a supervisor’s directive to visit business owners in a particular area due to the sergeant’s position. The officer obliges out of a sense of duty rather than a belief that the sergeant’s surveillance will result in reward for compliance or punishment for noncompliance. Similarly, an officer accused of misconduct may initially refuse to answer an internal-affairs investigator’s questions based on telephone advice received from his union representative. The power holder’s (union representative) expertise, including advice about the possible ramifications of speaking without a representative present, led to the officer’s decision, not concerns about rewards or punishments administered by the union representative herself. In general, personal power bases (and legitimate power) tend to be surveillance independent and,

to the extent that they can be developed, very suitable for work contexts where observability is difficult.

Supervisors sometimes try to strengthen indirect oversight or surveillance by requiring officers to complete paperwork, thereby allowing for a type of postincident review. Returning to the earlier example, all canine deployments in Cincinnati must be documented, regardless of whether they resulted in bites to any person. The documentation would presumably address officer compliance with the mandate to avoid force absent suspect resistance. The problem is that the types of guidelines intended to influence officer behavior are contingent upon factors related to the officer, location, or situation, all things determined by the officer.⁸⁵ The Cincinnati rules are framed in an *if/then* form—if the suspect submits to an arrest, *then* force is impermissible. Although the guidelines seem straightforward, who determines the *if* part of the statement? Department guidelines and supervisory directives might establish the contingent relationship, but the officer determines the presence of the contingency (in this case, submitting to arrest or resisting arrest). The absence of oversight prevents supervisors from verifying the officer's decision-making. In San Francisco, a 2003 policy required officers to “investigate and write an incident report for any crime that involves domestic violence.”⁸⁶ The policy applied to all incidents, regardless of their resolution (e.g., arrest). An officer seeking to avoid documenting an incident could redefine a call as something other than domestic violence, obviously a difficult task if the incident results in an arrest and other paperwork. Nevertheless, this provides another illustration of how officers control the decisions on which desired behaviors are based.

Scholar Michael Brown once wrote that supervisors must “confront the dilemma of acting as both colleagues and supervisors.”⁸⁷ They cannot directly monitor behavior without encountering resistance or affecting morale, but they need to ensure some degree of control or discipline over subordinates. As a result, they tend to focus on enforcing rules related to grooming and other minor issues rather than ones related to the exercise of discretion. Sergeants must be careful not to over-enforce these rules, however, or risk retaliation (e.g., embarrassment, withholding information) from subordinates.

Technology and Power

As the first modern police departments emerged in London in 1829 and in major US cities shortly thereafter, it became abundantly clear that successfully monitoring officer behavior on their beats would be difficult. Commissioners in London initially tried to overcome the observability issue by requiring officers to walk a designated patrol route, thereby allowing supervisors to periodically verify that the officer was performing his duties.⁸⁸ In the United States, some departments constructed beats comprising only linear street blocks where sergeants could clearly see if an officer was present or absent.⁸⁹ The problem, of course, was that predictable routes facilitating supervision were also predictable for potential offenders interested

in avoiding detection. An alternative approach simply required officer meetings with supervisors during shifts, minimally ensuring the officers were on duty at those moments.⁹⁰ For example, many police forces in England adopted a **fixed point system**, a supervision scheme whereby the department designated multiple meeting spots (fixed points) across a walkable patrol beat.⁹¹ Supervisors determined the precise starting spot and rotation at the start of a shift; a “two right” command indicated that the officer was to proceed first to the second checkpoint and then move clockwise (right) through all of the other points.⁹² These preshift determinations purportedly eliminated the possibility that offenders would learn patrol patterns.⁹³ Many English departments retained this strategy into the early 1960s.⁹⁴ According to Rubinstein, “The only way a roundsman [supervisor] had of discovering what his men were doing was to follow them around and make inquiries among the people who lived and worked on the beats.”⁹⁵ Power was still limited due to intermittent oversight; officers in both the United States and London were “essentially unsupervised” at all other times.⁹⁶ This led to the frequent shirking of responsibilities. Early London police, for example, faced considerable turnover, primarily due to the dismissal of officers for drunkenness.⁹⁷ In the United States, officers avoided work during bad weather or simply to frequent bars.⁹⁸



Photo 7.1 The remnants of old call boxes are still scattered around many large cities today. This image from Washington, DC, shows a fire call box (left) and a police call box (right).

SOURCE: Elvert Barnes, <https://flic.kr/p/sdC8y>.

At various times over the past 100 years, police leaders and reformers heralded advances in technology as solutions to the related problems of supervision and compliance. If administrative power was constrained by a lack of physical presence and an inability to review officer behavior, then presumably any change that enhances monitoring should concomitantly increase power. The introduction of the telegraph-equipped call box in Boston in the 1850s and telephone-equipped call boxes roughly three decades later in Chicago were supposed to revolutionize not only public access to the police but internal control of police personnel (see Photo 7.1).⁹⁹ Departments required officers to periodically check in with their supervisors, sometimes as often as every hour.¹⁰⁰ Although the boxes were later equipped with telephones, the technology was usually insufficient to allow headquarters to contact officers on the beat unless the officer was standing nearby. More disconcerting was the fact that officers subverted these new attempts to ensure compliance. Rubinstein, in his historical review of urban police, described several of these tactics.¹⁰¹ A group of officers could designate one of their own to walk across *all* beats, checking in from *all* call boxes, effectively freeing the others from administrative control. At other times,

officers would simply interrupt the entire call box circuit by leaving one box's phone disconnected. The point is that early technologies failed to deliver on their promises of substantially increasing supervisory power.

Police departments continued to incorporate new technologies, including two-way radios and the patrol car, in the first decades of the twentieth century.¹⁰² The benefits of these technologies extended well beyond command and control; they improved citizen access to the police, enhanced officer safety, expanded areas of patrol, and provided a range of other benefits. Supervisors did, however, acquire the capacity to remain in direct contact with subordinates, something missing from call boxes. Bordua and Reiss observed that a "centralized radio communication system, where telephone complaints are received and commands given, makes it possible for top management to have independent knowledge of complaints and of who is assigned to them before either subordinate commanders or the patrol team does."¹⁰³ Opportunities for work avoidance nevertheless persisted. Officers, recognizing that monitoring was indirect and occurring from a distance, could still declare themselves "out of service" for extended periods. Moreover, supervisors still struggled to monitor most behavior and decision-making at the incident or call level. Much of the emphasis seemed to be directed at ensuring that work was performed rather than on the type of work or quality of behavior.

By the 1970s, police departments began experimenting with **automatic vehicle location systems** (AVL) that provided real-time location information to dispatchers and others.¹⁰⁴ AVL systems relied upon different technologies, including stationary sensors detecting passing patrol cars or radio systems triangulating a vehicle's location.¹⁰⁵ More modern systems incorporate global positioning satellite (GPS) information, providing even more accurate and cost-effective tracking data. In St. Louis County (Missouri), an officer's location is relayed back to dispatchers and supervisors on their in-car computers every six seconds.¹⁰⁶ In a 2011 survey conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum, 69 percent of the responding law enforcement agencies (mostly large, with an average size of 949 officers) used GPS to track police vehicles.¹⁰⁷ Regardless of the specific technology used, AVL/GPS systems permit dispatchers to more efficiently deploy resources, help locate officers in need of assistance, and enable supervisors to monitor police pursuits. For the purposes of the current discussion, the systems also serve as an "electronic sergeant," allowing supervisors to track officer movements and locations without having to wait for a radio response.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, supervisors now have a better sense of officer behavior, at least where work is being performed. They can personally encourage or program in-car computers to remind officers to patrol hot spots of crime if they are not receiving enough attention.¹⁰⁹ GPS tracking has met resistance from officers.¹¹⁰ In 2013, some members of the Boston Police Department expressed skepticism or concern about the organization's plan to equip patrol cars with GPS receivers. Much of the apprehension related to the potential for administrative control and discipline. One officer, cited in the *Boston Globe*, provided an example of how officer movements could be misinterpreted:

No one likes it. . . . If I take my cruiser and I meet [reluctant witnesses] to talk, eventually they can follow me and say why were you in a back dark street for 45 minutes? It's going to open up a can of worms that can't be closed.¹¹¹

Departments partially address these concerns by developing policies related to data access and discipline.¹¹² The former chief of the St. Louis County Police Department cited the value of time and experience in overcoming resistance, stating, "We've had [the technology] so long now that it's part of [the officer's] job."¹¹³

The technologies discussed so far clearly have extended the reach of police supervisors but are still rudimentary control devices since they provide only rough indications of actual officer behavior. Location information, for example, points to officer movements, and data can be crosschecked against written records. Supervisors are still limited in their attempts to directly monitor officer actions. The advent of cost-effective and reasonably sized video recording equipment—either mounted on an automobile or an officer's body—perhaps offers the most comprehensive record of officer actions aside from actually being at the scene (see Chapter 12). In 2013, 68 percent of local police departments used in-car cameras, a substantial increase from the 61 percent in 2007, 55 percent in 2003, and 37 percent in 2000.¹¹⁴ Roughly one-third of departments equipped some of their personnel with body-worn cameras in 2013 (no comparison data are available since this was the first time the national survey asked questions about body-worn cameras).¹¹⁵ The widespread availability of video footage might encourage compliance as officers recognize that their actions, once invisible, are now subject to increasing scrutiny.¹¹⁶ As with other new technologies, officers tended to be suspicious about cameras. Interestingly, however, evidence suggests that the perceived benefits of cameras (e.g., deflecting criticisms and citizen complaints) outweighed concerns about excessive supervision.¹¹⁷

It remains to be seen whether cameras will ultimately strengthen supervisory power in the long term. Depending upon department policies and equipment type, officers still might have to manually enable recording devices, and technological glitches may create problems. Moreover, the cameras only record officer behaviors when they decide to act but are much more limited in their ability to capture instances when officers fail to act (e.g., ignore violations). The vast amounts of data gathered will also hinder close supervision. Sergeants, for example, simply cannot monitor every officer's actions as recorded by in-car and body cameras. More likely, supervisors will spot monitor officers or investigate and advise officers after the fact, such as after a citizen complaint. This alone may be enough to increase officer compliance with department rules and supervisor demands. They may, however, continue to resist attempts to restrict their discretion and autonomy through surveillance, even in the face of efforts to strengthen overall police accountability for those decisions.¹¹⁸ Former Abilene, Kansas, Operations Commander Michael Kyle speculates about the future of body-worn cameras based on his experiences in an agency that implemented dash cams (see Policing Insights section).

POLICING INSIGHTS ON . . . VIDEO RECORDING TECHNOLOGY**Michael Kyle**

Former Operations Commander

Abilene (KS) Police Department

Americans prize their freedom and constitutional rights above all else, a reality that can be clearly seen in the civil unrest following questionable law enforcement officer-involved shootings and other use-of-force incidents in 2014. By no means is this the first time that law enforcement has faced a crisis of legitimacy in the United States that sparked public outcry for accountability and reform. The 1991 beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles Police Department officers was another such example, which, following riots and public demands for police reform, initiated the trend of adoption of video technology by law enforcement agencies across the country.

While law enforcement use of video technology preceded the Rodney King incident, it had been limited to in-car "dash cams," used for the collection of evidence primarily in driving-while-intoxicated cases. With the rapid development of consumer video technology that allowed the Rodney King incident to be captured on videotape by a citizen (which did not contain the entire incident), law enforcement executives realized the importance of capturing an "official record" that contains incidents in their entirety in order to both monitor officer behavior and limit liability. The video recording devices used for this purpose continued to be in-car varieties until the more recent development of the body camera. However, many issues concerning the implementation and use of the technology for law enforcement applications are common to both types of devices.

Over the span of my law enforcement career, I experienced the implementation of in-car video systems as a patrol officer, supervised officers with the use of collected video as a tool, and conducted a field trial of body cameras and crafted related policy as a command staff member. Through this range of experience with video technology in the law enforcement context, I have recognized that what the devices realistically provide is quite different than the public's expectations. There are some significant limitations and issues associated with the use of video recording devices in the field.

The main issue with in-car camera systems has to do with the fact that the device is focused in a fixed position through the windshield. Thus, it captures only what occurs directly in front of the patrol vehicle. A common occurrence in my experience using in-car camera systems, both to record my enforcement contacts as a patrol officer and to review the actions of subordinate officers in a supervisory role, is for the enforcement interaction to move out of the view of the camera. Although audio may still be captured for some distance away from the patrol vehicle (officers are equipped with a wireless microphone worn on their person that collects the audio), it is not nearly as helpful to determine exactly what is occurring without the video as well. Recognizing this extreme limitation of the in-car systems, the body camera was developed. While the body camera

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goes everywhere the officer goes and records everything the officer sees and hears, these devices are not without their limitations either. During our field test of these devices, I recognized that the placement of the device on the officer's body made a significant difference in what was captured on the video. Devices mounted on the chest or lapel of the officer's uniform tend to be focused on the subject's chest and torso, and when they are in close proximity, that is all one can see. Similarly, the view of the chest-mounted devices is often blocked when an officer raises and extends his or her arms to aim a weapon. While these limitations are corrected by the use of a head-mounted camera (often mounted on the frames of safety glasses or sunglasses), the video captured can best be described as "tunnel vision" and certainly not a bird's eye view that is commonly assumed. Regardless of the device employed, internal investigators often still have a lot of work to do.

The aforementioned limitations are all realities when the devices are functioning properly; however, as they are mechanical devices requiring operation by human beings, there are a host of additional issues that I've identified through experience. Probably the most frequent problem is that an incident is not recorded because the device was not activated or experienced some sort of mechanical failure, which could include running out of recording capacity. In the first case, while naturally one must be skeptical regarding whether the officer intentionally failed to activate the device, it must also be recognized that in extremely unexpected emergent situations, officers may not remember or be capable of activating their video/audio recording device. No mechanical device operates flawlessly all the time. Power problems such as blown fuses and the occasional need of a reboot are examples of these types of problems that sometimes arise. Another problem that is not uncommon with body-worn cameras is for the devices to fall off or be knocked off while the officer is running or engaging a resisting subject.

Video evidence is increasingly being considered a critical factor in the public's evaluation of the legitimacy of police use-of-force incidents. While the implementation of body-worn cameras will undoubtedly prove to be helpful in the investigations of such incidents and improve transparency, they are not a panacea for the legitimacy problem. As demonstrated, both in-car and body cameras have appreciable limitations that likely make the video that they provide somewhat disappointing compared to popular assumptions. In addition, agencies face a host of new issues arising from this new technology, such as privacy issues and what videos may and may not be released, personnel to process requests and edit videos for release, and the significant time and expense to manage and store these video files.

The Limits of Position Power, Rewards, and Punishments

Overall, research indicates that perceived personal power is more effective at securing compliance and improving employee attitudes than position power.¹¹⁹ For example, hotel workers reported greater levels of job stress and pressure as well as a lack of support when their immediate supervisors possessed reward, coercive, and

legitimate power.¹²⁰ In contrast, referent and expert power bases improved worker outcomes. In another study, business students were more likely to express compliance with their work supervisors when the perceived reference power base was strong; workers appeared to be unaffected by a manager's ability to discipline noncompliance (coercive power).¹²¹ Among 400 managers and subordinates in three companies (chemical, financial, and manufacturing) surveyed by Yukl and Falbe, coercive and reward power bases were considered relatively limited sources of influence compared to legitimate, expert, and persuasive (information power).¹²²

The surveillance problem discussed earlier provides one explanation for the relative ineffectiveness of position power bases. A second explanation relates to a power recipient's need to retain some degree of control over her or his work.¹²³ Tensions arise because power wielders who secure compliance via threats, promises of reward (excluding personal praise), or the invocation of authority (legitimate power)—all described as harsh power bases—tend to believe they control others.¹²⁴ Recall from Chapter 5 the importance of autonomy in McClelland's achievement theory and Hackman and Oldham's job design model. Many people are motivated by the desire to achieve on their own accord, with limited guidance from others. If a police officer simply follows a sergeant's demand to write more traffic tickets or face punishment, the officer's performance is no longer the product of self-determination. Personal power bases are different. According to Rahim and Buntzman, "Personal bases . . . might be effective because they allow subordinates to maintain their self-perceptions with such rationalizations as 'I did it as a favor' or 'wasn't forced to comply, his or her idea was simply good.'"¹²⁵

Coercive and reward power are problematic for a third reason—they potentially foster resistance through the development of a "counterforce."¹²⁶ Tosi argued that power wielders might resist, attempting to minimize the power holder's influence or enhance their own. Terrill confirmed this fact in his study of 3,544 police-suspect encounters in Indianapolis, Indiana, and St. Petersburg, Florida. In roughly half of all the contacts, officers began the encounter without using force—not even verbal force such as threats or commands.¹²⁷ In virtually all of these encounters (94.9%), the suspect never offered any resistance. Resistance was more common (10%–15% of encounters) when officers started with verbal force or restraints (e.g., pat down, handcuffs). Although officers rarely began encounters with more significant displays of force (e.g., striking suspect or pain compliance), suspects resisted one-third of the time. According to the study's author, "initial force generally resulted in more force at some later point—calling into question the utility of a 'take charge' approach to maintaining control within the police-suspect encounter."¹²⁸ Such resistance sometimes characterizes intraorganizational relationships as well. For example, 17 members of the New Haven (Connecticut) Police Department staged a mass sickout—or the **blue flu** when it involves police personnel—in 2011 to protest the layoffs of 16 other officers.¹²⁹ In 2014, 550 officers from the Memphis (Tennessee) Police Department similarly called in sick during a given week, seemingly in response to a substantial increase in health insurance costs.¹³⁰ The exercise of personal power, free of promises and threats, is more likely to generate compliance without these same deleterious effects.

Finally, the general ineffectiveness of coercive and, to a lesser extent, reward tactics may be due to perceptions of organizational justice (see Chapter 5).¹³¹ Recall that individuals measure the outcomes they receive against others and desire fair decision-making processes and respectful interpersonal treatment. According to Mossholder and colleagues,

[Coercive power] is characterized by behaviors that are directed at forcing compliance from subordinates through threat, confrontation, and punitive behaviors that are outside of normal role expectations. . . . Supervisors who have demonstrated the capacity to behave in these ways will likely be perceived by subordinates as acting with personal bias, dishonesty, and arbitrariness; all of which are the antithesis of procedural justice.¹³²

A reward power base is different given that it is inherently more positive than coercive power. Praise and support may actually improve perceptions of justice.¹³³ Attitudes might suffer, however, if the rewards promised are contingent upon an officer's behavior but are never, inconsistently, or arbitrarily applied. The use of other bases of power are more likely to enhance organizational justice. Compliance is likely to the extent that the power wielders rightfully make demands (legitimate power), provide a persuasive explanation (information power), engender respect through their treatment of others (referent power), and appear knowledgeable (expert power).¹³⁴ The connection between organizational justice or, when narrowly examined, procedural justice and compliance is well-established in the research literature. For example, Haas, Van Craen, Skogan, and Fleitas examined compliance among a large sample of Argentinian police officers surveyed in 2013.¹³⁵ The researchers measured noncompliance by asking officers to express agreement with three statements: "I often feel inclined to openly question my supervisors' directives," "I feel like it's not always necessary to follow the policies of the department," and "I often feel inclined to openly question my department's policies."¹³⁶ Procedural justice included statements about the supervisor related to consistent decision-making, respectful treatment, interest in others, and explaining decisions. The results suggested that not only did procedurally just treatment lead to officer compliance, but it increased their overall support for rules related to use of force. Just behavior also proves useful outside of the organization in street-level encounters with citizens. Dai, Frank, and Sun studied a sample of police-citizen encounters in Cincinnati during a year-long period from 1997 and 1998, focusing exclusively on instances in which officers demanded some type of compliance from citizens.¹³⁷ They found that disrespectful officer treatment (e.g., unnecessary shouting, insults) increased the likelihood that the citizen would exhibit disrespectful behavior in response. In other words, officer actions shaped subsequent conduct, a finding very much consistent with Terrill's work on use of force and suspect resistance discussed earlier. Researchers also found that noncompliance—not fulfilling a request or at least indicating a willingness to fulfill a request—increased when officers neglected to give citizens a voice, a key procedural justice element.¹³⁸ According to the study's authors, "the likelihood of encountering a noncompliant citizen was reduced by 60% when officers took citizens' opinion into account."¹³⁹

Overall, the research suggests restraint in the use of heavy-handed and potentially unfair (real or perceived) tactics by supervisors or officers on the street. Instead, police personnel should work on developing more effective personal power bases or developing legitimate authority without necessarily “pulling rank.”

YOUR TURN . . .

Over the past 30 years, various police departments experimented with alternatives to the traditional top-down governing models, shifting from *power over* models to *power with* models.¹⁴⁰ According to Mary Parker Follett, empowerment—as in sharing *power with*—works not by eliminating power relationships, but by constructing a system of “circular” or mutual influence.¹⁴¹ A police sergeant who empowers a subordinate to determine her or his own work schedule must willingly or begrudgingly accept those decisions to the extent that they relate to the department’s problem-solving mission. The shared decision-making emerges by bestowing new powers on the officer, not by taking them away from the sergeant.¹⁴² Both parties are capable of influencing each other, resulting in a shared power relationship. Empowerment helps to strengthen the motivational needs, particularly intrinsic needs, of individuals who otherwise might feel powerless in a work relationship (see Chapter 5).¹⁴³

In the late 1980s, the Madison (Wisconsin) Police Department adopted a quality policing strategy that involved, among other reforms, an avoidance of “top down, power-oriented decision making whenever possible.”¹⁴⁴ The police chief, with the help of representative planning and coordinating committees, established an experimental district in Madison.¹⁴⁵ The department allowed district officers considerable flexibility in structuring their work and determining how police resources were going to be deployed in the community. Empowerment through participatory management produced a positive effect on a variety of work-related attitudes, including job satisfaction.

In 2003, the Broken Arrow (Oklahoma) Police Department created a formal Leadership Team comprised of individuals representing a “cross-section” of the various constituencies within the organization, including representatives from management, the police union, and the agency’s different structural divisions.¹⁴⁶ The chief empowered the team to serve a policy-making role within the department. In its first two years,

the team created new policy on how the agency recruits, hires, evaluates, disciplines, rewards, and promotes its people, and how it uses force, drives its cars, trains its officers, and protects their well-being. The team took on nearly every issue that typically causes problems for police agencies. Additionally, the team improved process, streamlined procedures, and aided in problem resolution.¹⁴⁷

The team adopted an egalitarian approach in which all members had an equal voice, irrespective of rank. The department’s chief retained some powers. For instance, even though he was bound by the decisions made by the Leadership Team, he retained control of the department by virtue of his legitimate power. Moreover, he shaped the team’s agenda, determining the topics for it to consider. He also ensured compliance with relevant labor laws, organizational budgets, and legal restrictions.¹⁴⁸

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The department, along with researchers from the University of Oklahoma–Tulsa observed a variety of work-related behaviors both before and after the implementation of the Leadership Team (2002–2005) and found positive results. Employees reported improved transparency within the organization, more opportunities to provide input, and greater recognition for meritorious work.¹⁴⁹ Researchers also saw significant improvements in attitudes toward management:

In 2002 officers were very likely to ascribe egotistical motivations to the actions of management, particularly as rank increased, an inverse correlation. In 2005 this trend was erased and replaced with positive assessments of the department's upper ranks, equal to or even superior to that of first line supervisors. This may be an indication that employees see participative leadership as an expression of trust between upper management and line officers.¹⁵⁰

Evidence pointed to increases in productivity as well—more arrests, traffic citations, field interviews, and case clearances.¹⁵¹

1. In both Madison and Broken Arrow, important committees or teams were established that contained a diverse range of employees within the agencies. Given the size of the departments relative to the committee sizes, are some key constituent groups necessarily omitted? How are the committees organized to prevent groups from fighting for their own interests?
2. In Broken Arrow, any member of the department can offer topics for the Leadership Team to consider, but the chief serves as a gatekeeper, determining which issues are actually heard by the committee. Why is this gatekeeper role necessary? Should all potential topics be considered by the team without initial screening by the agency's chief executive? Explain.
3. Does the presence of supervisory personnel hang over more democratic, egalitarian organizational units where power is shared? In other words, is it possible for participants to ignore legitimate bases of power?

Key Terms

authority
automatic vehicle location
systems (AVL)
blue flu
coercive power
expert power

fixed point system
information power
legitimate power
personal power
personal power concern
position power

power
referent power
reward power
socialized power concern
surveillance

Discussion Questions

1. Police officers tend to resist attempts to control their behavior and discretionary decision-making on the job. Is this tendency unique to police officers, or is this a general pattern in other workplaces? Does resistance to external controls reflect an absence of professionalism or an attempt by officers to demonstrate their professional autonomy?
2. As suggested in this chapter, technological attempts at officer control have routinely been thwarted throughout history. Do you believe that the widespread use of body-worn cameras will more effectively extend the reach of police supervisors and enhance the accountability of officers to their departments?
3. According to a 2008 survey, an estimated 8.4 percent of all US drivers experienced a police traffic stop.¹⁵² Overall, the vast majority of drivers stopped (84.5%) believed that the police did so for a legitimate reason. However, perceptions varied based on the reason for the stop. For example, while 90 percent of drivers stopped for speeding felt that the stop was for a legitimate reason, only about three-quarters of drivers stopped for a stop sign or red light violations, illegal turn, or roadside sobriety checkpoint thought that the stop was legitimate. Why do you suppose perceptions varied? Why was the authority of the police called into question for some stops and not others?

Web Resources

Broken Arrow Police Department Leadership Team video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB76F7u-JMk>

Timeline of the protests at the 2008 Republican National Convention: http://www.pbs.org/pov/betterthisworld/photo_gallery_timeline-protests-2008-rnc.php#.VjzVpfinnuUk

Pine Bluff (Arkansas) Police Department policy on insubordination: http://www.pbpd.org/Policies/Chapter-XII/POL-1251%20_Insubordination_.pdf