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A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE THEORETICAL
CONSIDERATION OF POLICE AGGRESSION

by

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A professional paper submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

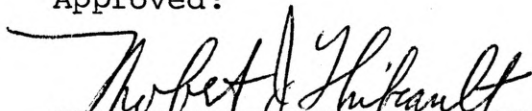
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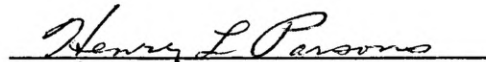
with concentration in

Counseling

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Bozeman, Montana

December, 1973

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher wishes to thank Dr. Richard Horswill and Dr. Gus Hossack for their concern and encouragement.

A special thanks to the researchers wife and her unwavering patience and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

Pertinent literature relating to aggressive behavior was reviewed. The purpose was to bring into awareness some of the reasons for aggressive behavior by the police.

Aggressive behavior may be displayed either verbally or physically. Verbal aggression may be more damaging than physical aggression.

Due to the fact a police officer is highly visible to the community, his actions are more closely observed than those of the citizens of the community.

The nature of his job, police officer, places him in such a position to be more aggressive. . . Thus this aggression may be misinterpreted by citizens causing rejection and hostility toward the police.

Under certain conditions a police officer will become more aggressive particularly so if the situation is a stressful one or frustrating conditions.

It is apparent the uniform and the weapons worn by the officer takes on a special significance both symbolic and real. An affront toward the uniform is not only an affront toward the individual officer but also to the department he represents and the law.

Some individuals given the responsibility that goes with the job of being a police officer take for granted there is an implied consent for aggressive behavior. Others may witness aggressive behavior and adopt this type of behavior as a model.

The researcher recommends there should be an extensive study done in the area of police aggression. The results of such a study and research should be brought to the attention of the administrators and an intensive training program launched to correct the aggressive behavior of the police.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recently, concern has been expressed over the rising number of police officers who have been victims of assault. Latest Federal Bureau of Investigation statistics indicate that one out of ten police officers will be a victim of an assault.¹ On the other hand, there is concern that many police officers have precipitated their own assaults by their aggressive action against citizens.² Albert Reiss, for example, found that a large number of officers were involved in criminal activity; the most frequent of which were assaults.³ In addition, William Westley found that police officers utilize aggressive behavior to ensure the basis of their authority.⁴

¹John Edgar Hoover, Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

²David J. Black and Albert J. Reiss, "Patterns of Behavior and Citizen Transactions," President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, Field Surveys III, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1967.

³Albert J. Reiss, "Our Criminal Police," Unpublished Research Paper, 1970.

⁴William A. Westley, Violence and the Police, A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970.

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence indicates that the Chicago Police utilized violence and aggressive behavior during the 1968 Democratic National Convention.⁵ Skolnick points out that police officers use aggressive behavior as an educational tool.⁶ Thus, a citizen who challenges the authority of the officer may find himself the victim of an assault.

Hence, it would appear that police officers utilize aggressive behavior. Whether or not this leads to assaults upon the officer we will leave for other investigations. This paper will be concerned with the development of police aggression. The author will explore role theory to determine whether or not it adequately explains aggressive behavior. In addition, the concept of modeling behavior will be discussed in conjunction with reference group theory to explain police brutality.

At the outset, the reader should realize that we are not particularly concerned with police collective behavior,

⁵Daniel J. Walker, Rights in Conflict, Bantom Book, New York, 1969.

⁶Jerome H. Skolnick, The Politics of Protest, Ballantine Books, Inc., New York, 1969.

or police mobs, but rather with the day-to-day aggressive behavior of individual officers or groups of officers.

Consideration of the Problem

It is interesting to note that, although police officers are highly visible to the community, this does not seem to deter to any great degree the use of aggressive behavior. Whether this results from an inability of the police bureaucracy to adequately deal with reported indiscretions, or whether the individual officer realizes that aggressive behavior will be rewarded by his peer group, thus insulating him from bureaucratic sanctions, it is difficult to measure. The fact remains that police officers will utilize verbal harrassment and physical force to some degree, despite the fact that he is highly visible both to the victim and potential witnesses.

Thus, various questions may be asked: Do police officers commit aggressive acts because of the particular role they play? If so, what role elements are present which may lead the officer to perform aggressive acts? Are police officers likely to commit aggressive acts when they are alone or with fellow officers? If they do commit aggressive acts in front of fellow officers, what behavioral cues are

present which leads the officer to commit such acts? Are fellow officers models by which the aggressive officer legitimizes his own behavior? Does the victim of the act have any significant role in the officer's actions? If so, what cues does he give to the officer which may lead to aggressive action? Do police officers have aggressive attitudes and, if so, from where does he derive this attitude? If an officer has an aggressive attitude, what connecting links, if any, are present between individual attitude and overt behavior?

If these questions can be answered, at least from a theoretical perspective, what benefit does it have for the practical police administrator? The most obvious answer is in terms of manpower. Once an officer has engaged in verbal aggression, it can escalate, and many times does, into physical combat. Thus, there is a chance that individual officers would be injured, requiring medical treatment and lost work time. Not so obvious, however, is the effect on police-community rapport. Any unjustified aggressive act by an individual police officer has ramifications beyond the mere officer-victim encounter. Stereotyped images of the police officer are reinforced, thus increasing the difficulty of productive police-community relations. Given the nature

of police groups, aggressive action between a police officer and a citizen will increase the hostility of the police toward the community and decrease the possibility of effective police-citizen relations. In addition, there may be organizational factors reinforcing aggressive behavior by the officers. Thus, the chief administrator, if he is aware of these, may take steps to reduce or neutralize these factors.

Aggression Defined

Before launching into a discussion of the concepts of aggression, some effort should be made to define the term "aggression." Whether or not a given activity is considered aggressive depends on a variety of factors, many of which reside in the definer. For example, the same behavior can be labeled aggressive or otherwise depending upon whether it is intentional or accidental. Furthermore, the same act may be regarded differently depending upon the performer's age, sex, and socioeconomic level. Thus, the same act may be defined by one observer as aggressive, and by another as nonaggressive.⁷

⁷Albert Bandura, "Social Learning Theory of Aggression," in J. F. Knutson, Control of Aggression: Implications from Basic Research, Adline Publishing Co., Chicago, 1971.

Some authors have defined aggression as that behavior that has injurious consequences.⁸ This definition is inadequate for our purposes, since the term "injurious" envisions physical harm. If the word "injurious" were given a broader meaning, the same problem would arise. For example, a citizen who receives a verbal insult from a police officer may not feel injured, yet another citizen receiving the same insult may feel injured. Whether or not a particular individual feels insulted may be a function of his socio-economic level.⁹

Summary

Given the problems with the above definition, aggression will be defined for the purposes of this study as that behavior which has intentional injurious consequences as measured by middle class values. Some may object to this particular definition on the grounds that it fails to take into consideration the socio-economic class of the victim. However, it must be pointed out that we are interested in police aggression. The police are the enforcement tool of

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

the middle class.¹⁰ The police themselves aspire to middle class values,¹¹ thus it appears to this author that their behavior must be judged according to middle class values. Given this definition, the word "injury" will include physical as well as verbal harm.

¹⁰William A. Westley, Violence and the Police, A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970.

¹¹Jerome Skolnick, Justice Without Trial, Law Enforcement in Democratic Society, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1966.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS OF AGGRESSION

Introduction

Various authors have attempted to explain the nature of aggressive behavior. Freud and his followers adopted a death-instinct theory that keeps regenerating itself in the form of aggressive behavior.¹² The instinct theory assumes that man, by his nature, is aggressive. Lorenz theorized that there is an aggressive urge which builds up in the individual in absence of a releaser stimuli.¹³ This urge function is an innate instigator of aggressive action. The instinct theory has lost much of its appeal since it assumes that man will be aggressive no matter what improvements are made in living conditions. Furthermore, it appears inconsistent to say that behavior is a result of a complex set of variables, but limit aggressive behavior to instinct.

¹²Sigman Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Norton, Inc., New York, 1933.

¹³K. Lorenz, On Aggression, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966.

Theory of Aggression

The frustration theory of aggression assumes that frustration produces an aggressive desire which motivates aggressive behavior.¹⁴ Although this theory has received wide support, it does not hold up well under empirical scrutiny. Studies have indicated that frustration can lead to various behavioral outlets.¹⁵ Thus, the theory does not answer the obvious question of why one individual would become aggressive under a certain condition, whereas another would not. Hence, under the frustrating conditions, some individuals become aggressive, others withdraw, while still others will seek help for coping with stressful situations.

Hans Toch, in his book Violent Man, develops a typology of the aggressive individual.¹⁶ He divides his classifications into two groups. The first group is characterized ". . . as encompassing essentially self-preserving

¹⁴S. Feshback, "Aggression," in P. H. Mussen (ed), Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology, Vol. II, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1970.

¹⁵Albert Bandura, Principles of Behavior Modification, Holt, Rinehard and Winston, New York, 1969.

¹⁶Hans Toch, Violent Man, An Inquiry into the Psychology of Violence, Adline Publishing Company, Chicago, 1969.

strategies, with violence used to bolster and enhance the person's ego in the eyes of himself and of others."¹⁷

Within the first group, he classifies various types of violent prone individuals including:

1. Reputation Defending
2. Norm Enforcing
3. Self-Image Compensating
 - a. Self-Image Defending
 - b. Self-Image Promoting
4. Self-Defending
5. Pressure Removing

According to Toch, the Reputation Defenders are ". . . persons who are allocated by public acclaim a role that encompasses the exercise of aggressive violence."¹⁸ The Norm Enforcer, on the other hand, uses violence ". . . on behalf of norms that the violent person sees as universal rules of conduct."¹⁹ The Self-Image Compensator includes two subtypes. The first, Self-Image Defender, is an individual who uses aggressive behavior against individuals he feels have cast aspersions on his self-image. The Self-Image Promotor demonstrates his worth through the use of

¹⁷Ibid, p. 135.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 135.

¹⁹Ibid, p. 135.

aggressive behavior. The fourth type, Self-Defenders, perceive other individuals as a source of physical danger which requires aggressive action. The last type within group one, Pressure Removers, are similar to the frustration theory in that this individual has a propensity to explode in situations with which he is unable to cope.

Within the second group, he categorizes individuals

. . . who see themselves (and their own needs) as being the only fact of social relevance. Other people are viewed as objects rather than as persons whose needs must be taken into account (or must be countered or anticipated).²⁰

Within this group are four types:

1. Bullying
2. Exploitation
3. Self-Indulging
4. Catharting

According to Toch, the Bully gains pleasure from the exercise of violence and terror against other individuals.

The Exploitative type, however, attempts to:

. . . manipulate others into becoming unwilling tools for one's pleasure and convenience, with violence used when other people react against this effort.²¹

²⁰Ibid, p. 136.

²¹Ibid, p. 136.

The third type, Self-Indulging, has a ". . . tendency to operate under the assumption that other people exist to satisfy one's needs--with violence as the penalty of noncompliance."²² The last category, Catharting, has a ". . . tendency to use violence to discharge accumulated internal pressure, or in response to recurrent feelings or moods."²³

Although Professor Toch spends a great deal of time and effort in an attempt to explain these various types, he fails to adequately explain why these particular types behave violently in one situation and yet not behave similarly in other situations. Furthermore, he fails to take into account the complex variables which may be present in a given situation which leads to an aggressive response. In addition, like all typeologies, it is over-simplified.

Professor Albert Bandura has advanced a new theory to explain aggressive behavior. Professor Bandura states:

In social learning theory, rather than frustration creating aggression, it is assumed that aggressive experiences produce emotional arousal that can elicit

²²Ibid, p. 136.

²³Ibid, p. 136.

a variety of behaviors, depending on the type of reactions that the person has learned for coping with stressful conditions.²⁴

Unlike the frustration theory, any source of emotional arousal can enhance aggressive behavior under conditions where individuals are prone to behave aggressively.

Two questions can be asked. First, how do certain individuals learn to behave aggressively and under what conditions will they do so? Professor Bandura indicates that there are numerous ways in which individuals may learn aggressive behavior. First, by observing other individuals behaving in an aggressive manner, the individuals forms an ideal of how he is to behave. Bandura perceives that the modeling effect is a past condition, rather than a present due to behavior. Thus, he states: "Past modeling influences can achieve some degree of permanence if they are represented in memory in symbolic form."²⁵

Secondly, the individual may learn aggressive behavior from family members. Although Bandura points out that the past aggressive model is the permanent source of aggressive behavior, the model can be reinforced by the family.

²⁴Albert Bandura, "Social Learning Theory of Aggression," in J. F. Knutson, Control of Aggression: Implications from Basic Research, Adline Publishing Co., Chicago, 1971, p. 5.

²⁵Ibid, p. 14.

Thirdly, the subculture in which the person resides or has repeated contact provides an important source of aggressive behavior. In some subcultures, aggression is a highly valued attitude. "In these aggressive subcultures, one gains status primarily through fighting prowess. Consequently, good aggressors are the prestigious models upon whom members pattern their behavior."²⁶ This notion may have an important bearing on police aggression. Although the concept of role and its significance on aggressive behavior will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, suffice that the police subculture may, in fact, reward those officers who display aggressive attitudes and behavior, at least within limits.²⁷

Fourth, Bandura points out that there are symbolic models through which the individual may learn to utilize aggressive behavior. The symbolic model, according to Bandura, is the mass media with its preoccupation with

²⁶ Ibid, p. 17.

²⁷ William Westley, Violence and the Police, A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970.

violence, tending to present a model of aggressive behavior.²⁸ Thus, the mass media becomes noticeable in the shaping and spreading of collective aggression.

Fifth, aggressive behavior can be learned through the rewarding and punishing consequences of trial and error performance. Thus, the individual who performs an aggressive act and is rewarded for such action will have learned that violent behavior can be useful. On the other hand, those who are punished for such behavior have learned that such actions do not bring a favorable response. One researcher found that passive children can be shaped into aggressors through a process of victimization and successful counter-aggression.²⁹ On the other hand, those children who were not maltreated, or whose counter-aggression proved unsuccessful, remained passive in their behavior. Thus, a police officer who may be initially passive learns that, in certain situations, aggressive behavior must be utilized.

²⁸Albert Bandura, Social Learning Theory of Aggression, in J. F. Knutson, Control of Aggression: Implications from Basic Research, Adline Publishing Co., Chicago, 1971.

²⁹G. R. Patterson, R. A. Littman, and W. Bricker, Assertive Behavior in Children: A Step Toward a Theory of Aggression, Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, No. V, 1967.

If such behavior is successful, the officer may again behave in an aggressive fashion.

Summary

The foregoing discussion has attempted to present a brief look at the various theories for the origins of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. A second question can be asked: Under what conditions will an individual utilize aggressive behavior? Although one may have learned aggressive behavior, if we accept Bandura's theory, it does not necessarily follow that he will utilize that behavior. Thus, we must explore the linkages which exist between learning the attitude and overt behavior.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE AND ITS EFFECT UPON AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Introduction

Historically, the role of the police in the United States has been one of stemming violence and mob action.³⁰ With the formation of the New York City Police in 1845, the primary function of the police became one of engaging in combat with various gangs in the New York area.³¹ Interestingly, the early police were recruited because of their physical size and strength, a trend which has been recently reversed, at least in some cities.

The mobilization of the police to utilize collective violence to subdue riots can be conceptualized as a passivication program. The police represent the only state apparatus, outside the military, equipped to bring "law and order" to various segments of society. Thus, the historic function of the American police was primarily to extend the formal legal norms into areas of the community where no such norms existed. The police involvement in extending the

³⁰Selden D. Bacon, The Early Development of American Municipal Police, Unpublished PH.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1939.

³¹Ibid.

power of the State continued well after the turn of the century.³²

Once the legal normative standards have been imposed and accepted by the community, it becomes the police function to insure that deviations from the legal norms were discouraged and prevented.³³ Thus, it became the role of the police to apprehend law violators and deter others from committing offenses.

The Role of the Police

The police have accepted other duties more by accident than by design. Service calls take up the majority of the individual patrol officer's time.³⁴ Studies indicate that less than ten percent of a patrolman's time is spent on the law enforcement function.³⁵ Thus, the police have accepted another role, that is to provide services which other organizations are unwilling or unable to perform.

³²Bruce Smith, Police Systems in the United States, Harper and Row, N.Y., 1960.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Albert Reiss, The Police and the Public, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1971.

³⁵Ibid.

It would appear that new duties will be thrust upon the police as other service agencies become more isolated from their clientele. Hence, the police will become more and more a peace-keeping agency rather than a law enforcement organization.

To fully understand the effect of the police role on the officer's behavior, we must first begin by explaining the socialization process of a police recruit. As the recruit comes into the department, formal organizational processes are at work to ensure that he learns and accepts formal departmental rules and regulations.

The first formal symbol of the officer's new occupation is the uniform. The recruit wears it with a sense of awe and excitement. Neiderhoffer points out that:

the simplest task becomes cause for anxiety. He must learn even such fundamental activities as breathing and walking all over again. The routine of dressing proves to be a complicated puzzle, with daily inspections to reinforce his anxiety. Buttons, snaps, belts, and fasteners require special techniques. Securing the shield appropriately by a huge safety pin demands dexterity of touch.³⁶

³⁶ Arthur Neiderhoffer, Behind the Shield: The Police in Urban Society, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York, 1969, p. 44.

The formal organization places a great deal of emphasis on appearance of the officer and cleanliness of the uniform. Preiss and Ehrlich state:

From an administrative viewpoint, the uniform represents the department; thus, unacceptable behavior by the wearer is regarded as failure to "live up to the uniform." Hence, departments place a strong emphasis on appearance as exemplified by the condition of the uniform and the manner in which it is worn.³⁷

Hence, departments place a strong emphasis on appearance as exemplified by the condition of the uniform and the manner in which it is worn. Therefore, the uniform becomes, in essence, a symbol of the organization, and its relationship with its clientele may depend on how the officer wears and behaves in uniform. Thus, it appears that the uniform takes on special significance both symbolic and real. An affront toward the uniform is not only an affront toward the individual officer, but also to the organization and the law.³⁸

In addition to the uniform, a new recruit is issued a weapon, including revolver and nightstick. Again,

³⁷ Jack Preiss and Howard Ehrlich, An Examination of Role Theory, The Case of the State Police, University of Nebraska, 1966.

³⁸ Arthur Neiderhoffer, Behind the Shield: The Police in Urban Society, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York, 1969.

In addition to the uniform, a new recruit is issued a weapon, including revolver and nightstick. Again, Neiderhoffer points out that:

these weapons fascinate the new owner. Their symbolic significance is obvious even to those who usually scoff at Freudian interpretations and may explain the time and concentration the rookie lavishes on the nightstick.³⁹

Thus, the new recruit is equipped with both the symbolic and real instruments of violence. To the department, the uniform and weapon represent symbols of authority, dispersions toward which are to be enforced at all times.

As the formal socialization process continues, the recruit learns the formal rules and regulations of the department. He is told not to utilize force except when absolutely necessary; and learns the legal consequences of such action. He finds that the department does not approve the competitive urge of many citizens to support the officer that he take off his badge and gun and fight like a man.⁴⁰

When the recruit leaves the initial training situation, he meets a different set of expectations. He is normally assigned to an older officer who begins to

³⁹ Ibid, p. 44.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

socialize the rookie into the informal group norms. The recruit soon realizes that much of what he has learned in the training situation becomes irrelevant on the street.

The new officer quickly realizes that the uniform is not only an asset, but a liability. He is easily visible both to the organization and to the public. He perceives that the public does not respect him nor have confidence in his ability. Thus, the officer tends to look toward his occupational group for identification and support. Skolnick believes that police have an exceptional group cohesiveness. He states:

all occupational groups share a measure of inclusiveness and identification. . . it is true that the police have a common employer and wear a uniform at work, but so do doctors, milkmen, and bus drivers. Yet it is doubtful that these workers have so close-knit an occupation or so similar an outlook on the world as do the police. Set apart from the conventional world, the policeman experiences an exceptionally strong tendency to find his social identity within his occupational milieu.⁴¹

As the officer takes to the street, he encounters various situations which require action on his part which he is not trained to handle. William Westley points out that:

⁴¹Jerome H. Skolnick, Justice Without Trial, Law Enforcement in Democratic Society, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1966, p. 52.

Family quarrels, irrate storekeepers, impudent teenagers, taunting drunks, ingratiating storekeepers, all pose situations for which the police school offers little help. The rookie forced with these situations, and a host of others, finds himself in a perplexing situation. His pre-police experience offers little in the way of instruction for him, the role is unique . . . he knows that he is supposed to act, but action is blocked for lack of a habitual (emphasis added) pattern of action.⁴²

Thus, the new officer must watch his older colleagues for his own behavioral definitions.

Some would argue that all the officer needs to know is the law, since the law provides guidance in most police situations. The statement is an oversimplification for two reasons. First, the law does not provide guidance for the officers in most of the situations cited by Westley. The law, by necessity, is broad and somewhat vague. Thus the officer is placed in a position of having to interpret the legality of certain actions with which he may not be familiar. Secondly, and most importantly, Wilson points out that the police view themselves as "handling situations" rather than enforcing the law.⁴³ As Wilson states:

⁴²William A. Westley, Violence and the Police, A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970, p. 158.

⁴³James Q. Wilson, Varieties of Police Behavior, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968.

To handle his beat and the situations and disputes that develop on it, the patrolman must assert his authority. To him, this means asserting his personal authority.

Wilson goes on to state:

The felt need to "handle the situation," rather than "enforce the law" and to assert authority or "take charge" leads the officer to get involved, but "getting involved" is the antithesis of the ideal--that is, being impersonal and "correct." Patrolmen often equate being "impersonal" with being ineffective, for to be impersonal is to assume that embodying legal authority is sufficient and, in their experience, it rarely is. To get involved means to display one's personal qualities, and these qualities differ greatly among individual patrolmen. In many communities, police officers are of working-class backgrounds (i.e. from lower and lower-middle income families in blue-collar occupations); this means they bring to the job some of the focal concerns of working-class men--a preoccupation with maintaining selfrespect, proving one's masculinity, "not taking any crap," and not being "taken in." Having to rely on personal qualities rather than on formal routines (in sociological terms, approved role behaviors) means that officer's behavior will depend crucially on how much deference he is shown, on how manageable the situation seems to be, and on what the participants in it seem to "deserve."⁴⁴

Wilson feels that officers react according to their own experiences and background rather than from the role they are playing. The role may provide the opportunity for carrying out the behavior, but does not to a measurable degree dictate the types of behavior which will be utilized.

⁴⁴Ibid, p. 33.

As the informal socialization process continues, the recruit becomes aware that the formal departmental rules are not obeyed by his colleagues, nor do they provide concrete guidance in "handling situations." He learns to accept informal norms and values which may be at odds with the formal organizational requirements. Some of the informal norms have been identified by various researchers.

The concept of secrecy within police service was developed by William Westley.⁴⁵ He concluded that police will not report fellow officers for discretionary abuse. Thus, it becomes difficult to persuade officers to testify against fellow officers. The informal norm requires that officers "keep their mouths shut." Other studies, however, have found that patrol officers would report fellow officers for various indiscretions, such as graft, excessive force, incompetency, or drunk on duty.⁴⁶ The problem with this particular study is the fact that the questionnaire seemed to be measuring attitude rather than actual behavior.

⁴⁵William A. Westley, Violence and the Police, A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970.

⁴⁶Steve Andes, and Robert A. Harvie, "Reference Group Theory and Its Application to Police Attitude and Behavior," Unpublished research paper, 1972.

The fact that an officer states that he would report a fellow officer to supervisory personnel does not mean that he would actually behave in this manner.

As indicated, Skolnick theorized that police officers had an abnormally high degree of interpersonal loyalty.⁴⁷ Other studies have confirmed Skolnick's hypothesis. Savitz found that the majority of officers felt a high degree of loyalty with fellow officers.⁴⁸ He concluded:

With a capricious, uncooperative, and unreliable citizenry; with a bureaucratic structure which does not always properly protect its own; there arises the possibility that latent structures develop which place the highest premium on loyalty among fellow officers.⁴⁹

How, then, do these attitudes and values implicit in a police officer's role affect aggressive behavior? Leaving aside for a moment the fact that new officers must learn how to handle situations from older colleagues, it is hypothesized that the informal values will reinforce aggressive behavior rather than be its initial causative factor. This

⁴⁷Jerome H. Skolnick, Justice Without Trial, Law Enforcement in Democratic Society, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1966.

⁴⁸Leonard Savitz, "The Dimensions of Police Loyalty," American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. V, 1970.

⁴⁹Ibid, p. 699.

is not to say that the reinforcement effect is unimportant. As Bandura points out, whether an individual continues utilizing aggressive behavior may depend upon whether the behavior is punished or sanctioned.⁵⁰

How do informal norms and the role of the police reinforce aggressive behavior? As indicated, police officers generally distrust the public; they look upon some citizens as "animals" and are able to identify those individuals they feel must be disciplined.⁵¹ Thus, by distrusting the public and defining certain individuals in degrading terms, they are able to rationalize aggressive acts toward those individuals. The fact that they perceive themselves as "handling situations" rather than enforcing the law in a legal sense is an effective mechanism against the problems of moral conscience. The organizational emphasis upon handling situations effectively reinforces the deviation from legal norms.

Thus, any individuals who defile the flag or use derogatory remarks toward the officers will be stereotyped

⁵⁰Albert Bandura, "Social Learning Theory of Aggression," in J. F. Knutson, Control of Aggression: Implications from Basic Research, Adline Publishing Co., 1971.

⁵¹James Q. Wilson, Varieties of Police Behavior, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968.

as "animals" and, if aggressively handled, the officer can then easily rationalize his behavior.

Once the officer is able to rationalize the behavior, the informal group norms as well as official departmental policy will reinforce the behavior. If the norm of secrecy and loyalty is present within the informal structure, it is doubtful whether the aggressive officer would be reported by his colleagues. Even if the citizen should report the officer's activities, it would be difficult to persuade other officers to testify against the offending officer. The officer realizes that the norms will protect him with little possibility of punishment if he should behave in an aggressive manner. Furthermore, since it could be assumed that the norms would be widely shared by fellow officers, the offending officer's behavior would be condoned and possibly praised by his peers.

Formal departmental discipline procedures are often cumbersome and slow. Where the aggressive act is not excessive, the formal organization may actually condone some aggressive action where such behavior effectively "handled the situation."

One footnote should be added to the above discussion. Obviously to engage in aggressive behavior, situational

opportunities and the physical means of carrying out the behavior must be present. A police officer in his day-to-day activities is faced with a variety of situations in which he could utilize aggressive behavior. In addition, although the police uniform represents authority, there are situations where the uniform is not sufficient to maintain the authority image. Thus, the officer is equipped, by the formal organization, with the necessary instruments to ensure that his authority is never successfully challenged.

Summary

In summary, therefore, it appears that the police role provides the officer with the rationalization for use of aggressive behavior. Further, the informal norms, and to some extent the formal departmental procedures, reinforce his aggressive acts. Lastly, the officer's role provides the opportunity and the means to behave in an aggressive manner. However, the officer's role is not in and of itself an adequate explanation of why a particular officer will act aggressively in certain situations. Nor does it explain the phenomenon of collective police violence. The next section will attempt to explain the reasons why officers may act in an aggressive manner, attempting to link attitudes with behavior.

CHAPTER IV

MODELING AND REFERENCE GROUP BEHAVIOR

Introduction

Much of human behavior is under the influence of modeling stimuli. Research indicates that people will not respond to emergency situations unless someone else responds.⁵² Thus, it becomes understandable why individuals stand by while criminal deeds are committed against other individuals. In addition, studies have concluded that an individual is more likely to donate to a charity if he observes other people donating.⁵³ Hence, when a person drops a dime into the Salvation Army pot, others who observe this behavior are also likely to donate. One effective method, therefore, to get people to aggress is to have others do it.

Results of studies have generally shown that both children and adults behave more punitively if they have seen

⁵²L. Bickman, "The Effect of Another Bystander's Ability to Help on Bystander Intervention in an Emergency," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Vol. VII, 1971, p. 367.

⁵³J. H. Bryan and M. A. Test, "Models and Helping, Naturalistic Studies in Aiding Behavior," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. XI, 1967, p. 400; also see H. Nelson, R. Blake, and J. Mouton, "Petition Signing as Adjustment to Situational and Personal Factors," Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. XLVIII, p. 3.

others act aggressively than if they have not been exposed to aggressive models. For example, studies with children have found that they will react aggressively if provided with aggressive models, but will not behave aggressively if the models are removed.⁵⁴ Research with adults has also indicated the influence of aggressive models on behavior. More importantly, studies have indicated that the influence of the model on the observer may depend upon the observer's personality and experiences.⁵⁵ Thus, Epstein found that not only did modeling influence aggressive behavior, but the degree of influence was dependent upon whether the observer had an authoritarian personality. Epstein states:

A primary finding on this study is that the insultation of anti-Negro aggression is a function of an interaction between the subject's level of authoritarianism and the model's racial characteristics.⁵⁶

⁵⁴R. H. Walters and Llewellyn E. Thomas, "Enhancement of Punitiveness by Visual and Audiovisual Displays," Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. XVII, 1963, p. 244.

⁵⁵R. Epstein, "Aggression Toward Outgroups as a Function of Authoritarianism and Imitation of Aggressive Models," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. III, 1966, p. 574.

⁵⁶*Ibid*, p. 577.

As we have pointed out, police officers attempt to defend their authority. Neiderhoffer points out that they may, in fact, have an authoritarian personality developed through their role.⁵⁷ Thus, if we are to accept this research, it would appear that police officers would be easily influenced by an aggressive cue.

Berkowitz theorized that the eliciting power of the modeling stimuli is enhanced when the modeled aggression is socially justified.⁵⁸ The role of the police, as we have attempted to point out, may approve certain aggressive behavior. Thus, if the modeled aggression is socially justified within the police subgroup, it becomes easier for the officer to model his behavior after the cue. If the aggressive behavior is sanctioned or rewarded by the officer's subgroup, in effect he has learned a new mode of behaving in certain situations.

However, the instigational process is not the only method by which the officer may learn aggressive behavior.

⁵⁷ Arthur Neiderhoffer, Behind the Shield: The Police in Urban Society, Doubleday and Company, 1969.

⁵⁸ L. Berkowitz, Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1962.

Bandura has integrated the modeling concept into his social learning theory. He states: "Social learning theory distinguishes four processes through which aggressive modeling stimuli may serve as external inducements for aggressive behavior."⁵⁹ In addition to the instigational process, a disinhibitory process is involved. Thus, when approval or an indifferent reaction to aggressive behavior is observed, it conveys the impression that aggression is acceptable, and possibly even excepted in certain situations. In addition, the observation of the model may also enhance the behavioral stimulus. As Bandura points out:

The behavior of models directs observers' attention to the particular objects used by the performer. This stimulus enhancing effect may prompt observers to use the same instruments to a greater extent, though not necessarily in an imitative way.⁶⁰

Further, the observation of an aggressive model may produce emotional arousal. Thus, according to Bandura the modeling influence functions as an instigator, disinhibitor, stimulus enhancer, and emotional arouser.⁶¹

⁵⁹Albert Bandura, "Social Learning Theory of Aggression," in J. F. Knutson, Control of Aggression: Implications from Basic Research, Adline Publishing Co., Chicago, 1971, p. 24.

⁶⁰Ibid, p. 25.

⁶¹Ibid.

The question now can be asked, Who acts as the modeling influence for the police officer? Obviously, citizen behavior may cue the officer into aggressive action. Reiss distinguished between proactive and reactive policing.⁶² Reiss states:

Citizens usually bring matters to police attention by telephoning, signaling a patrol car or officer on foot, or appearing in person at a police station. The police department deals with such requests as a reactive organization.⁶³

Insofar as proactive policing is concerned, Reiss states:

The police also acquire information by intervening in the lives of citizens on their own initiative. In this capacity, they serve as a proactive organization, pursuing matters through investigative activities, preventive patrol, and direct intervention in the lives of citizens (including the techniques of stopping, frisking, searching, and questioning).⁶⁴

Reiss discovered that the majority of officers were injured or involved in aggressive action during proactive service.

He further points out that:

The citizen's role in the encounter clearly sets conditions for officer behavior. Generally those who mobilize the police--the complainants--support the police in the encounter, while citizens who are regarded as suspects or offenders by either the complainant or the police are adversaries.⁶⁵

⁶²Albert Reiss, The Police and the Public, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1971.

⁶³Ibid, p. 64.

⁶⁴Ibid, p. 64.

⁶⁵Ibid, p. 145.

Like other authors, Reiss concludes that a citizen's failure to show deference toward the officer is a challenge to his authority, and thus he will take efforts to assert it.

It is the author's opinion that citizen behavior which leads the police to aggressive action is not as clear as Dr. Reiss presumes. It seems logical that not all police officers will act aggressively, even in response to aggressive cues from citizens. Thus, it is not altogether clear that citizen behavior triggers police aggression. This is not to discount the cues officers receive from citizens, but it is this author's opinion that a more comprehensive theory is needed to explain police brutality.

Reference Group Behavior

The concept of reference group means ". . . that there are persons with reference to whom one's behavior, overt and covert, is modified."⁶⁶ Merton points out that reference group may have two mean:

. . . the first is the "normative type" which sets and maintains standards for the individual and the second is the "comparison type" which provides a frame of comparison relative to which the individual evaluates himself and others.⁶⁷

⁶⁶James B. McKee, Introduction to Sociology, Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969, p. 106.

⁶⁷Ibid, p. 283.

The normative type is a series of values assimilated by the individual; the comparison type is a context for measurement by which the individual evaluates his own position in relationship to others. The individual need not assimilate the values of the comparison group. It should be pointed out that this is merely a method of conceptualizing reference group theory, since one group may be both "normative" and "comparative" for the individual.⁶⁸

Other researchers have included other hierarchical groups within the reference group concept. Cain suggests a typology for reference groups including:⁶⁹

Identification Groups
 Normative Reference Groups
 Audience Groups

 Interactive Groups
 Comparative Groups

The author states that those groups below the line are essentially neutral in their effect upon the individual actor. However, regarding the first three, the author states:

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Maureen E. Cain, "Some Suggested Developments for Role and Reference Group Analysis," British Journal of Sociology, Vol. XXIV, June 1968, p. 161.

Taking. . . the hierarchies within each type of reference group first, in any given actual situation this hierarchy ordering is determined not solely by the centrality/peripherality of the identification group initially responsible for the ordering of the hierarchy. Other variables influence the relative potency of groups in particular situations are for example the visibility of potential behaviors, the legitimacy attributed to the identification groups' expectations with reference to this particular area of behavior for the identification group itself.⁷⁰

Other factors are also involved, including degree of cohesion within the groups.

Kemper suggests that there are three important types of reference groups: normative, comparison, and audience.⁷¹ The normative group is defined as the role the individual is to assume. The author states: "These are the groups, collectives, or persons that provide the actor with a guide to action by explicitly setting norms and exposing values."⁷² The comparison are ". . . groups, collectives, or persons that provide the actor with a frame of reference which serves to facilitate judgments about any of several problematic issues."⁷³ The author subdivides the comparison

⁷⁰Ibid, p. 197.

⁷¹Theodore D. Kemper, "Reference Group, Socialization, and Achievement," American Sociological Review, Vol. XXXIII, February 1968, p. 31.

⁷²Ibid, p. 32.

⁷³Ibid, p. 32.

group into four subgroups:

1. Equity group--that is used as a frame of reference to judge whether or not one's situation or fate is fair or equitable.
2. Legitimater group--this group is employed when a question arises as to the actor's legitimacy of his behavior.
3. Role model--this is normally an individual, which can be fictitious or hisotrical, by whom the actor can observe and learn from the referents role performance.
4. Accommodator group--this group provides the individual with a cue for a complementary response, or parallel response. Behavior is accommodated or adjusted to the perceived behavior of the other.

Audience groups are defined:

These are groups which demand neither normative nor value-validating behavior of the actor for whom they serve as referents. . . the actor attributes certain values to an audience group and attempts to behave in accordance with those values.⁷⁴

⁷⁴Ibid, p. 34.

The distinction between identification and normative groups is tenuous at best. Thus, to facilitate conceptualization of the problem, the terms will be used interchangeably.

Reference group theory has been used to explain both attitude and behavior. Sherif states:

. . . informally organized groups, with their bounded demarcation, role pattern defining, mutual expectations, and internally binding code cherished by members, become the source of the sense of belongingness, of amounting to something, the sense of mutual obligation and support. Henceforth, the approval or disapproval, blame or praise, the bounds of propriety, and importance of the group in the scheme of the individual's life at the given time. In conceptual terms, the attitudes the individual upholds and cherishes, the rules that he considers binding for regulating his behavior, are those defined by such reference groups.⁷⁵

Again reference group theory:

. . . holds that, insofar as subordinate or prospective group members are motivated to affiliate themselves with a group, they will tend to assimilate the sentiments and conform with the values of the authoritative and prestigious stratum in that group. The function of conformity is acceptance by the group, just as progressive acceptance by the group reinforces the tendency toward conformity. And the values of these "significant others" constitute the mirrors in which individuals see their self-image and reach self-appraisals⁷⁶

⁷⁵Musafter Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, Reference Groups, Harper and Row, New York, 1964, p. 54.

⁷⁶Ibid, p. 254.

Thus reference group theory may be one concept to explain the connecting link between attitude and behavior.

Other researchers have studied the influence of reference group theory on attitude and behavior. Tamotus conceptualized reference group theory as a study of shared perception, thus he states: The concept of reference group summarizes differential association and loyalties and thus facilitates the study of selective perception."⁷⁷ He concludes that shared perception arises through participation in common channels of communication and an ease of access to a multiplicity of channels. Newcomb found a relationship between racial attitudes and reference groups.⁷⁸ He concluded that racial attitudes change if reference groups are changed.

From a behavioral perspective, researchers have found correlations between reference group identification and behavior. Fendrick found that both behavior and

⁷⁷Shibutani Tamotus, "Reference Group as Perspectives," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LX, May 1955, p. 562.

⁷⁸Theodore M. Newcomb, Social Psychology, Henry Holg and Company, Inc., New York, 1950.

attitude toward different races were dependent upon the respondent's reference group.⁷⁹ In an interesting study of military rule in a new African State, Price found that military rulers who had been educated and trained in Britain had difficulty relating to the political symbols of their own society.⁸⁰ Thus, Price concludes that reference group theory can be utilized to explain why certain new states do not have the high degree of nationalism which would normally be expected.

One of the most difficult problems in the study of reference group theory is to explain why individuals choose one particular group over another. Eisenstadt attempted to explain this concept and concluded that individuals choose a particular reference group for two reasons.⁸¹ First, most of the choices of reference group seem to be made in terms of status aspirations of the individual and his evaluation

⁷⁹James M. Fendrick, "Perceived Reference Group Support: Racial Attitudes and Overt Behavior," American Sociological Review, Vol. XXXIII, Dec. 1970, p. 960.

⁸⁰Robert Price, "A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States, Reference Group Theory and the Ghanaian Case," World Politics, Vol. XXII, April 1971, p. 399.

⁸¹S. M. Eisenstadt, "Reference Group Behavior and Social Integration: An Explorative Study," American Sociological Review, Vol. XIV, April 1954, p. 175.

of the status--conferral possibilities of different groups within the institutional structure of society. Secondly, the data. . . seems to show that within society there are special institutional organizations and arrangements through which reference to the basic values of the society is developed and maintained.⁸² The author readily admits that the latter point does not adequately explain why a particular individual will choose one organization or group as a referent over another and concludes that further research is needed in this area.

The police officer may accept as his referent his peer group. He may accept the Chief of Police, or formal departmental norms as his identification group. Although this paper will not try to explain the reasons for the particular choice, certain variables are present which may influence the choice. The size of the organization, both in terms of manpower and in special considerations may influence the choice. Thus, the larger the organization, the wider dispersion of its people the more likely the individual to accept the peer group as his referent. Furthermore, the charismatic character of the Chief of Police

⁸²Ibid, p. 183.

may influence the choice. In addition, the political environment in which the organization functions may determine the focus of identification.

How can reference group theory be utilized to explain aggressive behavior by police officers? We have already indicated that police officers, like other occupational groups, become socialized into their work context. Socialization is a two-edged sword; he must assimilate both the organizational expectations and his peer group values. The organization, however, provides little concrete guidance in the day-to-day "handling of situations." Thus, the officer must learn from his older colleagues. The peer group or individual can become the "significant other" through which the officer measures his own behavior.

This is not to say, however, that the peer group will be the officer's reference group on all occasions. Bordua has pointed out that the Chief of Police may become, in essence, a hero to his subordinates:

Given strict accountability plus insecurity of tenure, we can expect a kind of obsession with command a seemingly irrational emphasis on the twinned symbols of the visibility of the commander and the obedience of the force. . . . This amounts to saying that, as civil superiors increase, the formal accountability of the police chief without

changing the tenure features of the role, the increasing bureaucratization of the police. . . leads to the development of an organization animated by a principle of the commanding person. This "personalized subordination" to the hero chief can become an operating, if not a formal, principle of organization.⁸³

It would appear that for a police officer, three possibilities exist within the concept of reference group. First, he may accept an out-group as his "significant other" and the peer group or Chief of Police as a comparison group. This is unlikely, if we accept Skolnick's assertion that police officers have a high degree of occupational solidarity. Secondly, the officer may accept his own occupational group as his normative referent. Theoretically, this seems more persuasive, given the unique occupational group. Thirdly, the officer may choose the Chief of Police as his referent. Behaviorally, there should be distinctions between the three groups. Thus, Merton states:

Reference groups are, in principle, almost innumerable; any of the groups of which one is a member, and those are comparatively few, as well as groups of which one is not a member, and these are, of course, legion, can become points of reference for shaping one's attitudes, evaluations and behavior.⁸⁴

⁸³David J. Bordua, The Police: Six Sociological Essays, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1967, p. 52.

⁸⁴Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1957, p. 233.

This becomes more complex if we accept the notion that individuals may shift their reference groups. Sherif in his study of adolescent reference groups and delinquent behavior, states:

The shift in the significance of agemate reference groups in adolescence is accompanied by spending more time with peers, engaging in more activities with them, and turning more and more toward their evaluations of one's own qualities and behavior. Pleasure and satisfaction of engaging in desired activities apart from adults, a sense of being someone with a clear-cut place in some scheme of things, interactions in activities reflecting the scheme, contribute to the adolescent's willing participation with others and his willing regulation of his own behavior within the groups shared expectations for member behavior and other norms of the groups.⁸⁵

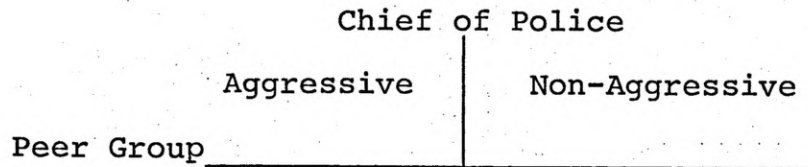
Thus, the problem becomes one of determining the officer's referent and study the effects of that referent on the particular officer's behavior.

Modeling Group Behavior

Leaving aside for the moment the concept that some officers may not be high reference group identifiers within

⁸⁵Muzafter Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, Reference Groups, Harper and Row, New York, 1964, p. 183.

their occupational milieu, one can conceptualize the problem of locus of identification within the following diagram:



If the officer actor accepts the Chief of Police as his normative referent, it becomes obvious that the values of the Chief may fall along a continuum between aggressive and non-aggressiveness. Thus, if the officer perceives the Chief of Police as accepting a non-aggressive norm, the individual officer will mirror this belief in his behavior. It should be pointed out that norms and values of the Chief of Police often become the official or informal policy of the department. Hence, it becomes relatively easy for the officer to accept the Chief of Police as his "significant other." A Chief of Police who believes in aggressive action may mirror this attitude in his public statements and internal organizational policy. Given the nature of the communication system within the department, the officer would have little difficulty internalizing the values and beliefs of the Chief of Police.

The officer, however, may accept his peer group as his normative frame of reference, or as an identification group. Through role socialization, the officer learns that certain behavior is expected by the group. Thus, if the expectations include the use of aggressive behavior, the individual officer will mirror this expectation. On the other hand, the group may subscribe to a non-violent norm, which again the officer may mirror.

The officers accepting, the Chief of Police as their behavioral referent, and seeing the Chief with a police baton moving against certain demonstrators could cue the officers to react in an aggressive manner. Furthermore, as their referent, the Chief may accept aggressive behavior as a legitimate means to stop disturbances. Accepting this as their norm, individual officers would react in an aggressive manner. It should be pointed out that the Chief need not be the referent for all behavior, but rather in this particular situation, the officers utilize the Chief as their identification individual.

The Chief of Police may have provided the behavioral cue, but the officers accepted their peer group as referents. The group values reward the use of violence in these situations; thus seeing the behavioral cue and

having assimilated the aggressive value, it became obvious that the officer would react to the demonstrators in a violent manner.

What about those officers which do not accept the peer group or Chief of Police as their identification reference group? Although no empirical research could be found supporting this hypothesis, it would appear that these individuals would accept the official departmental values and norms. Thus, when ordered not to use aggressive behavior, they would be more likely to "keep in line." If, however, they accepted the department as a comparison reference group, it would be hypothesized that they would react aggressively if the other patrolmen on the department presented a rewarding cue. Thus, seeing other patrolmen act aggressively, and realizing that no sanctions would be imposed, they could act in the same manner without fear of sanction.

Thus, one can explain aggressive behavior as an interaction between the behavioral cues which the officer receives and the locus of his identification within reference group theory. One can conceptualize the problem in the following quadrant:

		Chief of Police	
Peer Group	Behavioral Cue	Aggressive	Non-Aggressive
	No Behavioral Cue	Aggressive	Non-Aggressive

Can this concept be utilized to explain aggressive behavior in other than riot or collective behavior circumstances? It appears that it can. A review of the literature concerning police violence found that approximately eighty-two percent of the case histories of violence occurred when two or more officers were present at the scene.⁸⁶ Although the authors of these texts were not particularly concerned with the number of officers present, it appears that violent behavior occurs most frequently when two officers are present. Furthermore, conversation with police officers suggests that verbal abuse and aggressive behavior occurs when two or more

⁸⁶William A. Westley, Violence and the Police, Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970; Rodney Stark, Police Riots, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California, 1972; Albert Reiss, The Police and the Public, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1971.

officers are together. Thus, from a non-empirical examination, police officers are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior when they are in groups than when alone.

From what has been said concerning reference group modeling behavior, it would appear that the hypothesis is generally correct. A police officer who is in the process of being socialized within the organizational context may begin to accept his peers as an identification group. He assimilates their values and expectations. He models his behavior after the peer group expectations. Thus, the officer begins to mirror his behavior from the expectations of his referent. In other words, he becomes ego-involved. The values of his identification group may include the use of aggressive behavior in certain ill-defined situations. Thus, confronted with a particular situation, the officer adapts to the behavioral expectations of his identification group, which may include the use of aggression. Since it appears that normally two or more officers are present, we can assume that the officers involved are within the same reference group.

The fact that two officers are present is of the utmost importance. Simmins' research concluded that self-evaluation and behavior will fluctuate in response to the

comparative reference group that is momentarily salient.⁸⁷ Thus, if the two officers are within the same identification group, and accept the aggressive norm, aggression is a more likely response in particular situations. Obviously, the ramifications of Simmons' research is that to change behavior in a particular circumstance, we change the referent. Thus, the hypothesis could be presented that aggressive behavior may depend more upon the presence or absence of a referent than the cue received from the citizen.

However, a problem arises because we do not know in what situations the officer will act aggressively within the presence of a referent. To explain the situational variable, we can return to the concept of modeling behavior. On one hand, the citizen may provide the behavioral cue which elicits the aggressive response. The cue, however, need not be overt behavior such as name calling, but rather can be the racial characteristics, or location, of the individual. Thus, an officer may use verbal abuse simply because he observes an individual with different racial

⁸⁷Robert A. Simmons, "The Experimentally-Increased Salience of Extreme Comparative Reference Groups," Sociology and Social Research, Vol. LIII, July 1969, p. 490.

racial characteristics. This, however, must be tempered with the notion that, whether or not he utilizes aggressive behavior depends upon the expectations of his identification group, and the momentary saliency of that group.

Reference group theory also provides another explanation for the utilization of aggressive behavior. Using Bandura's social learning theory of aggression, it becomes possible for the individual officer to learn the aggressive behavior from his identification group.⁸⁸ Once having engaged in the behavior, the officer soon learns whether his referent will reward or sanction the actions. If his identification group sanctions the behavior, the officer learns that, at least in a particular situation, aggressive behavior will not be condoned. However, if the officer's identification group rewards the behavior either overtly or covertly, then he has learned that such behavior is accepted and expected by his reference group.

Learning the behavior need not, however, be by the trial and error method. As indicated, officers must learn

⁸⁸Albert Bandura, "Social Learning Theory of Aggression," in J. F. Knutson, Control of Aggression: Implications from Basic Research, Adline Publishing Company, Chicago, 1971

much of their role behavior from older colleagues; thus he may learn aggressive behavior through observation of his referent. As Bandura points out: "Most of the behavior that people display is learned observationally, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of examples."⁸⁹ Although exposure to aggressive models does not ensure observational learning, it seems that if the officer was observing his momentary salient referent, chances increase that he will learn the activity. Furthermore, a young officer aspiring to become a member of his anticipatory identification group, will readily accept the learned behavior, especially if it has been rewarded. Thus, Kemper's role model analysis may explain the learning function of the actors reference group.⁹⁰

The young officer may accept the chief police executive as his referent. In this situation, the values and norms of the Chief of Police, as personified in policy and statements, will be assimilated by the officer. Thus, the departmental expectations will govern the officer's

⁸⁹Ibid, p. 14.

⁹⁰Theodore D. Kemper, "Reference Group, Socialization, and Achievement," American Sociological Review, Vol. XXXIII, Feb. 1968, p. 31.

behavior. Assuming that the policy professes a non-aggressive norm, a problem arises in that the officer may be assigned to an individual who accepts a different referent, with dissimilar norms and expectations. In this situation, aggressive behavior may become dysfunctional for either officer. The officer who identifies with the departmental expectations would, if could be hypothesized, report various indiscretions to higher authority. However, he does this at the peril of becoming ostracized by other groups within the department. Thus, both officers will neutralize their behavior for fear of formal or informal disciplinary sanctions. Although this may seem somewhat abstract, the author is aware of numerous instances in which one officer did not trust another. Westley points out that this may be common within police organizations.⁹¹

Another possibility exists; that is, the peer group referent may not accept aggressive behavior as a norms, whereas the official departmental policy rewards such behavior. The likelihood of this occurring is rare, given the socialization process into the formal organization.

⁹¹William A. Westley, Violence and the Police: A Sociological Study of Law, Custom, and Morality, the MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970.

The only alternatives available for the officers with ego-involvement in the peer group referent is to resign or attempt political change within the department.

Still another possibility is both the peer group and Chief of Police accept the aggressive norm. In this situation, the presence or absence of a particular referent would make little difference. The utilization of aggressive behavior would be accepted by the organization as a whole, and individual officers would not be sanctioned for their behavior.

Summary

Conceptually, I have attempted to present the problem of reference group behavior and aggressive action from four perspectives. First, the peer group and the formal organization may accept the notion of aggressive behavior; therefore, it would make no difference whether the individual officer's locus of identification was centered. Secondly, the peer group and the formal organization may accept a non-aggressive norm, and thus the locus of identification becomes unimportant insofar as aggressive behavior is concerned. Thirdly, the peer group may accept aggressive behavior; whereas the formal

organization norm does not. Fourth, the formal organization may accept the norm of aggressive behavior, and the peer group does not. The locus of identification for the individual becomes, then, of the utmost importance.

Obviously, to conceptualize the problem in this manner raises the problem of saliency. As I have indicated, the behavior of the officer may depend upon the presence or absence of a particular referent. Thus, by changing the referent in a particular situation, the behavior of the officer may change.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This paper has attempted to present police aggression in the framework of reference group theory. A review of the various theories of aggression was undertaken, along with a review of the theory of modeling behavior and reference group. The hypothesis generated by the paper is simply that aggressive behavior is determined more by presence of a referent individual rather than by the behavioral cues which the individual officer receives from citizens.

Conclusion

The available research in the area of police aggression is practically non-existent. Obviously, no research could be found to substantiate or refute the hypothesis, and thus research is needed in this area.

Based on the available information, the following conclusion may be stated:

1. Some of the results of aggressive behavior are rejection, hostility, apathy, anxiety and pathological behavior.

2. Aggressive behavior is primarily a show of an emotional act.
3. Aggressive behavior can be verbal as well as physical.
4. A recipient of aggression causes a person to be judgmental and non accepting of the aggressor.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made as a result of the review of literature presented in this study:

1. Extensive research in the area of police aggression needs to be done to promote a better understanding of the dynamics of aggressive behavior. The research which has been done needs more elaboration, empirical investigation and updating.
2. More emphasis placed on training with a heavy emphasis on the dynamics of human behavior and emotions. In this way the dynamics of human behavior and emotions would be brought into awareness.
3. There should be a periodic retraining of all personnel so as to update any new techniques.

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