

CHAPTER 5

THE SELECTION/TRAINING RELATIONSHIP

Society expects police officer candidates to be carefully selected from the best possible applicants to have high ethical values and to be well trained. They expect them to be on call at all times and to respond to any problem perceived or otherwise. In keeping with this, the researcher has carefully outlined a distinct relationship between the police selection process and police entry training that is possibly quite critical in obtaining street level success in community policing. Of the two processes mentioned in this study, the selection process appears to be the most important.

If you do not begin with the best possible selection, how can you be successful with the training and ultimately the community police outcome? Referring again to the respected International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) we must focus intently on their astute comment:

Ever since 1967, when the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice issued its landmark report entitled 'Task Force Report: The Police,' it has been formally acknowledged that the law enforcement task is as great or greater than that of any other profession, and that the performance of this task requires more than physical prowess and common sense. Law enforcement officers engage in the difficult, important

and complex business of helping to regulate human behavior, and their intellectual armament and ethical standards must be no less than their physical prowess. The Commission said in 1967, 'the quality of police service will not significantly improve until higher educational requirements are established for its personnel' and that statement is equally true today.

As the Commission pointed out, while all departments are in need of upgraded recruiting efforts, higher minimum standards, better selection procedures and more training, the needs are more pronounced for the smaller police departments, many of whom without mandates at the state level would provide little or no training, use ineffectual selection and screening techniques, and have no organized recruiting programs, resulting in substantial variation in the quality of police service, not only in different areas of the nation, but within the same state. (International Association of Directors, 1998, <http://www.iadlest.org/modelmin.htm>)

5.1 COMMUNITY POLICING GENERATES THE NEED

The radical philosophical change caused by community-oriented policing had, in the past, centered on training as the most significant police challenge. This was and will remain a major issue, although not generally significant in this study. Training of any police department, even though agencies have come a long way from the earlier untrained days of law enforcement, should remain a constant focus of research.

In this study, however, a link between the selection of personnel and the training process did become somewhat conspicuous. It became apparent that the key and most important factor will ultimately be found in the qualities of persons who are selected to be trained. This very obvious first stage of department entry may represent the greatest challenge.

5.2 RESOLVING THE PROBLEM

Some agencies have avoided making the hard decision to insist on education as a prerequisite to police employment or may even have stepped back from the requirement if they had previously mandated it. There are many reasons why agencies may not want to uphold college education as a standard. Cost issues of course, are one reason, as well as attempting to balance minority hiring with immediate need that may have been made more difficult by rules or police mandating education.

For some administrators or city managers, college education as a requirement may have created more problems than it was worth, at least in the immediate sense. We may not know how it will affect community policing until the next cohort of leaders surfaces from the ranks of undereducated officers; or officer's morale declines as more educated officers from more progressive police departments are hired to fill positions in his or her department. Either way the citizen may not receive the best level of service from their police.

A potential problem is that decisions that govern these conclusions may rest with political persons or perhaps upper-level officers with a negative predisposition toward education. No matter what the intention, such individuals may decide to choose the path of least

resistance. Doing away with the education requirement may make it easier to answer certain hiring issues, satisfy a bias, or even placate a police sub-culture but, it is not in the best interest of the public.

This researcher does not wish to negate the past contributions that many officers have made regardless of their education levels. The simple truth is, a changing police job description and the demand for more intellectually based skills will easily support the need for increased education. Considering this, the training community will have to provide officers to agencies that maintain several different missions and have differing philosophies on personnel issues. Certainly this research has illustrated that the quality of the persons sent to be trained, will impact the quality of officers that are returned.

Therefore, it becomes reasonably apparent that we have an emerging dichotomy: training effectiveness may be negatively impacted by agency hiring practices that remain outside of the control of training establishments. City managers outside of the authority of police chiefs may control the police entry positions to be filled, or those upper police administrators with a particular bias may likewise continue to have an impact on the future of police leadership by controlling current hiring practices.

Another portion of the dilemma is found in the demand of constituents; citizens expect training excellence and police expertise; they also demand service. In addition, citizens anticipate that police will be well educated and possess some college experience. Line police officers, with college education, seem to advocate more education while suggesting

that current entry-level training does not support community policing. Conversely, lesser educated officers, those who are closer to minimum levels of education are commonly inclined to support the current entry level training as adequate for community policing.

Science and research has become more important for adjustment of training programs that prepare entry level officers. These programs must be in touch with the needs of society and be constantly researched and upgraded in the face of change.

In 1996, a conference held at the College of Police and Security Studies, in Slovenia addressed a variety of policing issues that were impacting police operations in Europe. These proceedings were later published and provide a wealth of information. One of the many recognized contributors, T. B. Frost, LL.B., summed up an accurate view of a part of the citizen-police relationship as a training issue and then cited the necessity for assessment, he notes:

Policing is a very complex activity in today's liberal, democratic society. It requires great sensitivity, intellect, strength of character, courage, but perhaps above all a very real desire to serve our communities in the interest of all. The over riding rationale for police is that they should improve the quality of life for our citizens, acting fairly, firmly where necessary, but equally having a clear sense of discretion to recognise when informal enforcement by advice or caution is more appropriate than arrest or prosecution. Always we must act with compassion and in compliance with the highest possible ethical standards.

Training is of paramount importance in this complex process. It is not an end in itself. Training must only be a means by which the quality of policing offered to our public is of the highest standard. If training does not actually impact upon how police and the public interact then we must question whether the training is relevant. Training must focus upon what police do, and how they can do it better. In this context, of course, it needs to take account of what our public expects and of the problems facing policing. (Frost, T. B., 1996, <http://www.ncjrs.org/policing/cas575.htm>)

5.3 CHANGING THE MODEL

Police and training establishments in the United States need balance in their selection, education and training processes. Using the experimental high school model developed for this research as a jumping off point and developing additional options based on European models is entirely conceivable. Many police systems outside of the United States have faced similar or even larger problems and have enjoyed some success in their innovative forms of resolution. Several models were discussed during a conference in Slovenia in 1996, some of the information outlined at the conference may assist in building a new model for training in the United States.

During the 1996 International Conference "Policing in Central and Eastern Europe: Comparing Firsthand Knowledge with Experience from the West," many important issues were addressed. The conference importance was expanded when contributions and

proceedings were later published and made available for American researchers through the efforts of the National Institute of Justice/National Criminal Justice Reference Service Program. The conference committee chair was, Dr. Milan Pagon from the College of Police and Security Studies, Slovenia, and the Organizing Committee was chaired by Dr. Andrej Anzic from the same College. Doctor Pagon (1996) and others write at considerable length on education and training as conjoined issues, Dr. Pagon notes:

The present study used such criteria to analyze the existing systems of police education and training in the surveyed countries .Among 17 countries included in our analysis, there are 10 where high school level of police education can be obtained. In five countries, the students have an obligation to become employees of the Police as they enter the school.

In some countries, the programs are more or less general in nature, with no or very few law and police related subjects, while in the others law, criminalistics, and police related subjects constitute a large part of their curricula. These programs take between one and four years to complete. In all except one country the high-school diploma is externally valid. Both male and female students are eligible to study at the police high schools in six countries, while in four countries enrollment is available to male students only. After graduating from the police high school, the graduates in some countries can start working as police officers immediately, fully performing the police work, in some of the countries graduates receive on-the-job training before they start to perform the police work independently, while in

the others the graduates have to enroll in some form of police training before they start working as police officers.

Associate level of police education is attainable in five countries. To enroll in the associate level police education, the candidates from these five countries have to be the employees of the Police. The programs differ among countries, although there is less variance than in the case of high school level programs. In three of the countries, education obtained at this level is externally valid, in one of them this question is currently being regulated, while in one of them the associate level of police education is valid only inside the Police. After finishing their studies, the graduates in three countries can immediately start performing the police work, while in two countries the graduates first receive on-the-job training. In three countries the associate level of police education by itself guarantees a certain rank in the police hierarchy.

Higher professional police education is performed in 12 out of 17 surveyed countries. To enroll in the school that offers higher professional police education, the students in eight countries have to be employed by the Police. In all 12 countries, the higher professional police education degree obtained from these schools is externally valid. In terms of the content, the higher professional police education programs can be broadly divided into three groups: (1) those dominated by law; (2) those emphasizing police related

subjects, law, criminalistics, and criminology, while at the same time lacking or even omitting police administration and management subjects; and (3) those with a balanced mixture of all subjects.

After finishing their studies, the graduates in seven countries start working as police officers immediately, with no additional training. In four countries, the graduates first receive on-the-job training, while in one country this depends on the graduates' previous work experience. The degree from these schools guarantees a certain rank in police hierarchy in seven countries. Nine countries perform bachelor's level police education. Additionally, in one country the candidates who graduate from the police college can pass the state examinations to obtain a bachelor's degree. Except in three countries, the candidates enrolling in the bachelor's level police education have to be employed by the Police. Although all the curricula contain a mixture of various disciplines, some programs emphasize criminalistics and criminology, some law, one program emphasizes police administration and management, while one program emphasizes more general subjects. Except in one country, all the degrees are externally valid. The degree from the schools that offer bachelor's level police education guarantees a certain rank in five countries. Additional training depends on previous police experience, in most cases the graduate receives on-the-job training.

Master's level police education is attainable in five of the surveyed countries, and doctoral level police in four. In three countries, the postgraduate studies are organized by the institutions operated by the Police. In one country, the postgraduate study is organized at the educational institution which is not associated with the Police but offers the police postgraduate program. In one country, the postgraduate study is performed by the police institution in cooperation with the university. In three countries, the candidates who enroll in the postgraduate studies have to be employed by the Police. The master's and doctoral degrees are externally valid in all of the above mentioned countries. They do not guarantee a certain rank in the police hierarchy in any of these countries.

Duration of basic police training varies from four months to four years. While the majority of countries does not accept candidates with less than a high school degree, there are six countries that admit candidates without a completed high school degree.

(Pagon, M., et al., 1996, <http://www.ncjrs.org/policing/eur551.htm>)

Without the ability to advocate magnet education at the high school level or demand college education at the entry level, the dilemma remains. On the other hand, a boost to improved training through candidate quality coupled with innovative pedagogy remains an option. The reasons have been discussed at length in this document quotation from an early study by Smith and Ostrom (1975) that appears to be valid even today. Their position of why

education becomes important is clear in their closing comment on training:

The proponents of increased education and training regard the reform to be important not only because they are expected to increase the skills available to the officer but also both education and training are thought to have a important impact on the orientation of policemen toward their work. One complaint about short recruit training programs is that there is time only to teach about departmental rules and regulations but not about the rule of law. (Smith and Ostrom, 1975, p. 23)

Dr. David L. Carter (1997) in a publication entitled “Human Resource Issues for Community Policing,” for the University of Michigan, National Center for Community Policing, accurately addresses training as an issue in community policing with a view toward relevance, mission and fitting the community. Dr. Carter states:

Unlike some policing tasks like criminal investigation or traffic enforcement, community policing tasks may vary greatly among jurisdictions. As a result, training needs are also varied. Topics which may be relevant to training include:

Communication skills

Logic and deductive reasoning

Applying creative ideas and using discretion

Information about community resources, bureaucratic structures, and making referrals

Special knowledge training (e.g., building and health and safety codes)

Community organization and motivation

Negotiation skills

Especially good training methods for community policing include exercises in identifying and solving problems and role playing specific situations. Supervisors and managers may need training in effective coaching and leadership of line officers.

Policy Implications:

Training curricula should be designed to fit the particular mission of the police agency and the characteristics of the community. Training is important for line officers as well as supervisors and administrators. (Carter, D. L., 1997, <http://www.cj.msu.edu/~people/cp/humres.html>)

5.4 CITIZEN SUPPORT

We can also learn from the past, good interpersonal skills and open communication with their constituents will serve to cultivate the support of the citizen and add strength to the police operation. The police must recruit persons with the knowledge, skills and ability to allow them to manage close contact with people that do not always mirror the officer in cultural or appearance. Officers must be educated in a manner that can help remove the fear of difference and change the way they deal with individuals.

In illustrating the relationship of selection and training of personnel, the last point to be made in this section of the study moves us toward the community and the citizen, and will be outlined by Dr. George L. Kelling (1999) in a publication for the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, Dr. Kelling making reference to policing's roots, writes:

One of the lessons learned over the past three decades, a lesson incorporated into community policing, is that in a democratic society effective policing can be achieved only with community support and involvement. Sir Robert Peel understood this when he sent bobbies into the toughest areas of 19th century London with a mandate to persuade people to behave. Police demeanor was such that officers gained the sympathy and support of the population. We still have much to learn from this, especially since policing teeters near the edge of militarism in so many locations as part of the 'war' on drugs and drug dealers.

(Kelling, G. L., 1999, p. 77, <http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/nij/178259.txt>)

5.5 CONCLUSION

In concluding this chapter's findings, we must consider the growing observations of interest that have been advanced by both scientists and practitioners alike on selection of candidate officers and the basic training of new officers. Then, given the added gravity of International Terrorism, trainers must now place another variable into the mix. Finally, the decision may be made, that community-policing could become critical for success in dealing with this new threat as well as for other societal issues.

Agreement on training and selection of police personnel are important necessities that must be more expeditiously processed and above all kept balanced within a constitutional framework. Time is no longer on the side of police procrastinators who have remained on the sidelines adding nothing and awaiting only what will support narrow self-interest or be politically popular.

Certainly, the American experience has, since the advent of 9-11-01, been drawn closer to that of the European's, as the United States has felt the injury of an exported terrorist attack. Some of what the Europeans have learned through their experience may offer new resources for selection and training of police in the United States.

The issue of magnet schools or programs viewed with some success during this research may become important in any new model appropriate for community policing in the United States. Moving to the next level, we might seriously consider testing some European models for officer selection, education and training. Some of their approaches, mixed with our own, could become a rich source of information that might serve to shorten the learning curve.

There is a need for a specialized education for police officers, one that is a workable experiential education that binds with the training necessary for police officers in a changed and changing society. Community policing as a philosophy demands closer citizen contact and this more interpersonal contact alone will add complexity to the position. The social makeup of the officer's patrol area multiplies the officer's personal responsibility, making

demands on the community-police officer that are far removed from those placed on more traditional officers who operate in the reactive form. Then add responsibility of additional specialized equipment and knowledge, such as defibrillators, oxygen support, automatic weapons, terrorism, forensics, constitutional issues and a host of other items, the need for education or even specialized education and training becomes even more evident.

Furthermore, citizens expect it as accurately indicated with a standardized alpha of .6072 with their percentage reaching 88.9 including “probably yes,” of selections shown in the following table illustrating the citizens' response to question 6 (5.1).

Table 5.1 Do you feel that police officers should be required to have at least two years of college prior to being employed?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	371	74.6	74.6	74.6
Probably Yes	71	14.3	14.3	88.9
No Opinion	37	7.4	7.4	96.4
Probably Not	9	1.8	1.8	98.2
No	9	1.8	1.8	100.0
Total	497	100.0	100.0	

Administrators and trainers alike should adopt an operative word borrowed from one of the

basic tenants of community-policing. "Proactive," the word brings with it a vision of an aggressive approach to change, even in the face of political, sub-cultural or philosophical differences; should the greater good require that it be accomplished.