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Heather R. Cotter



Editor's Note

By Heather R. Cotter, IPSA Executive Director/CEO, Founder and Editor-in-Chief



Thank you for your interest in the **Fifth Edition** of the *IPSA Journal*. This scholarly resource is available to all public safety professionals. The IPSA was fortunate to have several public safety authors and peer reviewers contribute to this executive-level, peer-reviewed publication. The *IPSA Journal* is an opportunity to publish manuscripts about leadership issues and best practices applicable to all facets of public safety.

The *IPSA Journal* is for the public safety community so they can gain timely access to pertinent information that impacts decision-making, policy, administration, and operations. Our readers represent the entire public safety community: law enforcement, fire service, EMS, 911 telecommunications, public works (water, sanitation, and transportation), public health, hospitals, security, private sector, and emergency management. In this Fifth Edition, readers will see the following peer-reviewed manuscripts:

1. ***The Push of Disasters and Pull of Pandemics: Law Enforcement Officers' Perspectives on Crime and Policing During Disasters and the COVID-19 Pandemic*** by Daniel Augusto, EdD, Northcentral University; Elizabeth Davenport Pollock, PhD, Northcentral University; and Steven Flick, MS
2. ***Illuminating Firefighter Awareness Within a Dangerous Lived Experience: A Single Case Study*** by Eric J. Russell, Utah Valley College; Rodger E. Broomé, Utah Valley College; and Jamie L. Russell, Utah Valley College

3. *The Nature of Disciplinary Processes in Police Organizations: The Disciplinary Continuum* by Brad J. Castle, Marion Technical College; Eric J. Russell, Utah Valley College; and Rodger E. Broomé, Utah Valley College
4. *Interest Based Bargaining: A Review of Ohio Fire, Police and Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreements* by Gregory L. Walterhouse, Bowling Green State University

Each paper was researched by the authors, includes a literature review, offers key discussion points and they were all peer-reviewed. The IPSA has a systematic process in place for approval, rejection and resubmissions of manuscripts. The IPSA enlists peer reviewers made up of public safety practitioners and academicians with experience in scholarly writing to review all manuscripts.

It is the IPSA's vision to continually accept manuscripts and to release future editions of the *IPSA Journal*. We seek high-quality manuscripts from all public safety professionals, academia, researchers, and scholars. I encourage you to [download and review the IPSA Manuscript Guidelines, use the IPSA Journal Template](#) and submit a manuscript to us for publication consideration. There is so much knowledge to share within and between each public safety discipline.

Stay safe,

Heather R. Cotter

Heather R. Cotter



IPSA Journal

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The Push of Disasters and Pull of Pandemics: Law Enforcement Officers' Perspectives on Crime
and Policing During Disasters and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Daniel Augusto, EdD
Northcentral University
11335 N. Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, CA, 92037
Email: daugusto@ncu.edu

Elizabeth Davenport Pollock, PhD
Northcentral University
11335 N. Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, CA, 92037

Steven Flick, MS

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Daniel Augusto
Northcentral University

Elizabeth Davenport Pollock
Northcentral University

Steven Flick

Abstract

This study used qualitative surveys and a focus group of law enforcement officers (LEO)s in two high disaster areas, Texas, and Florida (n = 56), to explore LEOs experiences related to disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic. Eight themes emerged from the data analysis and the study resulted in three grounded theoretical models supporting the written grounded theory. Themes emerged related to crime and law enforcement during the pandemic, crime and law enforcement during disaster, and Routine Activities (RA) theory. RA theory emerged as the primary theoretical lens that LEOs applied to their observations on crime. Disasters create a type of outward pulling effect where LEOs are more exposed to the public through their response activities. Conversely, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a type of inward pulling effect and challenge LEOs abilities to conduct law enforcement while maintaining social distancing. The study also revealed that, overall, disasters and pandemics are complex, with multiple changes occurring simultaneously. Respondents indicated that looting or burglary, and fraud increase during disasters while the pandemic caused sheltering-in-place, which facilitated increases to domestic violence, as well as a reduction in other crimes due to reduced public activity. Respondents also indicated that the pandemic has altered some police procedures and introduced unfamiliar stressors for LEOs. Police executives might use these findings to inform their decisions relative to agency continuity planning and subsequent training for LEOs. Such formal planning and training are particularly important for agencies that have limited disaster policing experience.

Key Words: Disaster Crime, Pandemic Crime, COVID-19, Routine Activities Theory, Continuity

Introduction

Disasters and pandemics create unique challenges for law enforcement agencies and law enforcement officers (LEOs). Understanding how to operate within the environment created by each type of hazard is paramount for agencies, particularly given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the seemingly constant stream of weather-related disasters striking the U.S. Certainly, many law enforcement agencies will apply their own analysis to crime data related to disasters and pandemics, but thorough qualitative analysis of LEOs perceptions seems unlikely at the agency level due to the necessary time investment and financial investment. Additionally, little academic research exists to uncover and analyze qualitative data on LEO perspectives on disaster operations versus pandemic operations. Continuity planning and related training could help to overcome the lack of experience for departments that have little or no disaster or pandemic experience. Law enforcement agency continuity programs hoping to rely on evidence-based procedures would benefit from supplementing their crime data analysis efforts with enhanced understanding of LEOs perspectives that are crucial to understanding the differences in crime and policing during disasters and pandemics.

Our paper assists in filling these gaps in the practice and the literature. This qualitative grounded theory study is intended as a starting point to better understand the insider perspective of LEOs with disaster and pandemic experience. Our ultimate aim is to provide a grounded theoretical model that uses LEO experiences and perspectives to further the body of work on disaster crime and pandemics and inform management decisions, future research, and policy. Some of our most noteworthy findings from this research are that (1) LEOs consistently used Routine Activities (RA) theory as their lens in their responses, (2) disasters can pull officers

outward toward increased public interaction, and (3) the COVID-19 pandemic's social distancing practices pull officers inward and away from the public.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'pandemic' refers to a global disease outbreak (CDC, 2018). The term 'disaster' generally refers to major events involving multiple casualties, such as earthquakes, major terrorism events, hurricanes, snowstorms, etc. (FEMA, n.d.).

Pandemics and disasters are treated as distinct and separate hazards in this paper. We define 'continuity' as efforts to ensure that an agency can continue to perform its essential functions during critical incidents, disasters, pandemics, and other emergencies (FEMA, n.d.). We refer to those incidents generally as 'continuity events.'

Literature Review

Disaster criminology could be described as the study of society's reactions to disaster, particularly related to crime, and it is intended in part to help mitigate the negative impacts of disaster on society (Frailing, Harper, & Serpas, 2015; Prelog, 2016; Frailing & Harper, 2017). Some crime rates have been found to increase during disasters (Leitner & Helbich, 2011; Frailing et al., 2015; Prelog, 2016; Zahnow et al., 2017; Weil et al., 2019). Other researchers found that some crimes tend to decrease during disasters (Herber, 2014; Zahran et al., 2009). Other research also found that crime seems to change location during disasters (Leitner & Helbich, 2011; Zahnow et al., 2017; Breetzke & Andresen, 2018; Breetzke et al., 2018; Spencer, 2017). Prelog (2016) found that increased disaster consequences are related to increased crime rates. The prominence of looting has also been a subject of ongoing academic debate, and the current state of the research reflects that looting is a reality during disasters (Brown, 2012), and that the crime is likely more prevalent in areas that are highly disadvantaged (Frailing & Harper, 2017). Taken together, the research seems to indicate that some crimes increase during disaster

while other crimes decrease (Spencer, 2017), and that disasters have an impact on spatial patterns of crime (Zahnow, et al., 2017). These findings imply that disaster crime is a highly nuanced area of study and that future research should explore what factors impact whether crime increases, decreases, or changes locations during disaster.

However, the study of pandemic crime is much more limited. Little research exists related to crime during pandemics, and our research serves as part of a foundational perspective. Ashby (2020) conducted what appears to be among the first quantitative research efforts related to crime and the pandemic and found that the pandemic has not been associated with significant increases to crime rates in the U.S. on a broader level, but decreases were identified in residential burglaries and motor vehicle theft in some areas. Non-academic sources have also added some information, reporting that interpersonal violence has increased during the pandemic (Tolan, 2020; Taub, 2020). In any case, further empirical research will shed light on any changes to crime as the pandemic continues to unfold. In addition, although the news media has reported that police practices are changing due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Elinson & Chapman, 2020), to the authors' knowledge this article is the first peer-reviewed academic research to explore LEOs perspectives on policing and crime during the pandemic or provide any comparison of pandemic policing to disaster policing.

Although a growing body of work explores the available data related to disaster crime patterns and crime during the pandemic, little if any research applies the lens of what is likely the most viable source of context: LEOs who observe and respond to disaster crime and conduct enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The foundation of any understanding of disaster crime or pandemic crime should be built upon an understanding of the experiences of LEOs who observe the phenomena daily, and can provide the context to inform future studies.

Theoretical Framework

RA theory was used as the primary framework to inform the study because of its past use in explaining disaster crime (Prelog, 2016; Frailing & Harper, 2017). Briefly, RA theory posits that motivated offenders commit crimes based upon location of a suitable target and absence of a capable guardian (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Some researchers have argued that disasters might alter one or more of the three occurrences said to be necessary under RA theory, for a crime to occur: (1) attractive target, (2) motivated offender, and (3) the absence of a capable guardian (Prelog, 2016; Frailing & Harper, 2017). Although the tenets of RA theory were not specifically used to shape the goals of the study, we were attentive to the potential, based on past research, that disaster alters one or more RA theory components. The next section is a summary of the research method and data analysis process, which are necessarily intertwined as a result of the grounded theory process.

Research Method

Qualitative research is suitable for gathering rich, detailed information that typically cannot be accessed by quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). This study used qualitative surveys (n = 56) and a focus group to develop a grounded theory related to the impact of disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic on crime. The findings presented herein are a portion of the results of a larger study related to LEOs experiences in disaster. The central or overarching research questions for this study are intentionally broad as is typical of qualitative research (Maxwell, 2005; Creswell, 2009).

- Research Question 1 - How does crime change surrounding disasters, if at all?
- Research Question 2 – How has crime changed surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, if at all?

As is often the case with grounded theory, the findings from the research questions are intended to provide a new perspective on a topic and fill a gap in the current literature (Creswell, 2007). Grounded theory is also used to reveal a process on which little is known (Charmaz, 2010), and it can incorporate the use of rich data while incorporating a systematic and structured process. In this case, grounded theory aids in the development of some visual models to answer the research questions above.

The use of online qualitative surveys allowed for the best mixture of detailed responses while prioritizing ease and convenience for interviewees that would result in the highest possible number of detailed responses. We found that using an online survey with open-ended questions was the best way to limit the time commitment from LEOs while meeting COVID-19 pandemic social distancing requirements. The use of a qualitative survey tool also allowed for the collection of more information than a quantitative survey tool would provide, all at a time when respondents would have fresh memories of recent disasters and the current pandemic. Qualitative surveys are unique since, unlike quantitative surveys that capture frequencies of responses, qualitative surveys collect the diversity or breadth of responses relative to a topic (Jansen, 2010). Qualitative surveys have been utilized in general social science research (Jansen, 2010) and more recently in public safety research (Moore et al., 2019). The survey tool was developed using a viability review process with feedback from two uninvolved LEOs and the three-person research team. The viability review process was similar to a pilot test to determine if the survey questions were useful, were clearly communicated, and provided opportunities for respondents to fully articulate their experiences relative to the research questions.

Data were gathered from 56 state, federal, and local LEOs primarily around Houston, Texas and Florida, selected due to their experience with disaster law enforcement and the

COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were included in the study if they were an active LEO working in a law enforcement role during a disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic in Florida or Texas. Respondents were made up of line-level LEOs and supervisors with patrol and investigative experience at the local, state, and federal levels, including the military. All of the respondents had pandemic experience as well as disaster law enforcement experience in earthquakes, weather-related disasters, terrorism, or several other types of disasters and major crisis events. Respondents were provided a summary of the aims of the study and provided informed consent.

Sampling

The data collection began with purposeful sampling, which involves an intentional selection of the most relevant subjects, based upon the parameters of the study (Chun et al., 2019). As the surveys progressed, the researchers began coding data and using theoretical sampling to identify subsequent respondents. These two sampling methods are standard in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007), and are often not expected to be generalized directly to the entirety of the broader population. They do, however, serve as a sturdy foundation for future study and reasonable evidence for inclusion into the current state of understanding.

LEOs were primarily sought from the Houston, Texas area and Florida because of the increased likelihood of their experience with recent disasters such as hurricanes Ike, Harvey, Imelda, Barry, and Dorian, and their experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. The 26-question anonymous survey was administered during April, May, and June 2020. The questions allowed for open-ended responses and explored respondents' perspectives and experiences related to disaster crime and their experiences in law enforcement during disasters. Respondents were also asked how their experiences with disaster crime compare to their experiences with crime during

the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey data were exported to Microsoft Excel and NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software for analysis and coding. The coding process began soon after the first survey responses were received.

Theoretical sampling then began, and additional surveys were sent to more LEOs who could enhance the diversity of responses. Respondents were asked to provide the survey link to additional LEO acquaintances with disaster and pandemic law enforcement experience. Respondents' experience level ranged from more than 20-years of law enforcement to less than five-years of law enforcement. All respondents also had disaster law enforcement experience and pandemic law enforcement experience. However, since qualitative surveys are designed to identify the diversity of potential responses instead of frequency of responses (Jansen, 2010), this paper does not emphasize how the responses are grouped by experience level, age, or demographics of respondents.

The theoretical sampling was also used to identify categories from the data until the categories fully reflected the responses (Charmaz, 2010). Survey questions were intentionally broad to allow for diverse interpretations. The questions focused on LEO challenges, discretion, resources needed, changes to crime, and general experiences during disasters and the current pandemic. RA theory components were intentionally avoided in the survey questions to avoid influencing responses. However, this study is limited primarily to findings related to crime during disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the volume of results from the larger study, detailed findings on LEO challenges, discretion, resources needed, and general experiences during disaster are reserved for what we hope will be another article. The surveys and coding process allowed researchers to identify concepts embedded in the responses (Glaser, 2001).

Data Analysis and Coding Process

Glesne (2016) described open coding as a process wherein the researcher allows codes to be revealed by the data. Grounded theory includes repeated comparison and conceptualization through the evaluation of the text, and generation of coding categories (Glaser, 1998). We used open coding initially in order to allow for unforeseen codes to emerge. We then used theoretical coding, where the researcher uses previously established codes (Creswell, 2014) once initial codes were created. More than 200 major and minor codes were identified from the 65 pages of qualitative data collected.

During open coding, as surveys were completed, constant comparisons of new and existing data were used to identify codes. Identification of themes occurred through specific types of coding within multiple coding cycles. Categories were created from numerous codes that are similar to one another (Glaser, 2001). Subcategories were also aligned under the larger categories (otherwise known as parent-child codes). Second cycle coding continued to refine and reorganize categories and subcategories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), and comparison of categories and associated subcategories through axial coding was also completed during this cycle. Next, categories were merged into new concepts, which yielded additional categories. Researcher memos also aided in data conceptualization, category development, and identifying connections between categories. Thematic networks were identified wherein themes appear to relate to one another (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The final sorting of memos connected the identified categories and was the final stage in creating the thematic networks that provide the framework for the completed grounded theory.

Surveys were discontinued upon saturation, which is when continued data gathering reveals no additional properties of a category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, a focus group

was formed using a website developed by the researchers, which allowed users to provide anonymous online feedback relative to the models. The focus group provided opportunities for feedback on the models and assisted us in refining the theory and associated visual models.

Validity

Maxwell (2005) described two primary threats to validity in qualitative research: researcher bias and reactivity. Researcher bias involves subjectivity on the part of the researchers. Bias is likely present, but the purposeful use of a diverse research team with practical law enforcement experience, resiliency experience, and academic experience was designed to reduce any negative implications. Paterson (1994) described reactivity as the unavoidable effect of the researcher on the group or person being studied. Implications of researcher bias were minimized by creating open-ended and objective questions free from any tone or expected responses. Reactivity was also minimized through anonymity and the asynchronous data collection process. We also deliberately included researchers with varied backgrounds to apply outsider perspective and objectivity to the entire process. Credibility is the confidence one can have in the truth of the findings (Bowen, 2005). We searched for discrepant evidence or negative cases and sought investigator triangulation and theory triangulation (Carter et al., 2014) to maximize credibility. The use of a focus group to review and comment on visual models also added credibility to the models created. Overall, this grounded theory research used deliberate sampling methods, systematic coding and data analysis, and measures to increase validity and credibility in order to gather important data at a time when respondents are most likely to remember important experiences.

Results

Readers with quantitative research experience are asked to remember that, when reviewing qualitative findings, a qualitative approach seeks to describe a process, instead of measuring the process, which is common in quantitative approaches (Patton, 2015). Generating numbers or percentages is not the purpose of qualitative inquiry. The aim of qualitative analysis is not to determine how many respondents said something, but rather, the focus is to generate substantive insight into the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2015).

Likewise, unlike quantitative surveys that seek to measure the frequency of a response, qualitative survey tools are intended to identify the breadth or diversity of potential responses and provide a rich picture of a phenomenon (Jansen, 2010). As a result, the findings listed below will not focus on specific percentages of respondents who reflected a particular viewpoint, since doing so would provide little added insight, given the sampling strategy chosen. Qualitative researchers also avoid reporting that “all respondents” or “no respondents” responded in a certain way as that would potentially break the confidentiality pledge due to the sampling design. Additionally, focusing on frequency of response would have extremely limited utility since the responses are not intended to be generalized to the entire population, unlike quantitative research. Instead, we focus on providing the most salient comments that were reflective of the data, and provide the richest possible insight into the phenomenon, which quantitative research cannot provide.

Overall, qualitative analysis of the surveys revealed eight themes relative to LEOs’ experiences regarding crime during disasters and pandemics. LEOs also reported changes unique to the COVID-19 pandemic. The themes identified below emerged from the qualitative analysis. Each of the themes below was endorsed by all members of the focus group.

Disaster Theme #1: Certain Types of Crimes Increase as the Disaster Progresses.

Most respondents indicated that certain types of crime increase as the disaster progresses. Respondents consistently indicated that looting and property crime were common before and during disasters:

- *Looting and theft increase (LEO 8).*
- *A great example is looting during hurricanes or other disasters (LEO 11).*
- *During times of natural disasters, like hurricanes, residents abandon their homes so looting becomes a problem (LEO 6).*

Of the respondents, several investigators also observed increased opportunities for disaster fraud because of the increase in government funding for disaster relief. FEMA funding and USDA disaster food stamp benefits create more opportunities to collect benefits through fraudulent means. When asked what comes to mind with disaster crime, several investigators responded indicating that disaster-related fraud increases:

- *Fraud against disaster subsidy programs, price gouging, and looting (LEO 1).*
- *False statements to obtain state or federal funds to which they are not entitled (LEO 9).*
- *Fraud. Individuals exploiting minimal oversight of government relief funds (LEO 13).*

Investigators also identified increased opportunities for scams against disaster victims who are overwhelmed and traumatized by the disaster.

- *Many seek to gain from others' losses during disasters. I also think about price gouging (LEO 2).*

Some LEOs identified that a shelter in place order was associated with an increase in domestic violence and abuse.

- *There will also be an increase in domestic violence crimes as many people will stay indoors until the disaster passes (LEO 8).*

Disaster Theme #2: Opportunist Criminals Take Advantage of Increased Opportunities for Crime.

LEOs shared that they believed the increase in property crime and looting is generally thought to be a result of the police being focused on other protective measures such as helping people evacuate from high-risk homes and businesses, as evidenced by LEO 40:

- *During the disaster the predator/prey frequency is dialed up. With LEO concentrating on order and the saving lives. People take note and realize law enforcement is less focused on crime fighting and more focused on disaster response (LEO 40).*

Another view expressed by many was exemplified by LEO 4:

- *However, during a disaster, law enforcement tends to be less visible, businesses are closed, and people are mostly indoors, this is an opportunity for criminals to strike. A similar situation immediately after the disaster (LEO 4).*

Some LEOs attributed increases in crime to opportunist criminals who take advantage of increased openings to commit crime with no consequences, such as:

- *When local police are pulled to a disaster scene, criminals will realize this and use the opportunity to loot or commit property crimes (LEO 10).*
- *Many seek to gain from others' losses during disasters (LEO 4).*

Disaster Theme #3: Desperation Makes Otherwise Law-Abiding People Resort to Crime During Disasters.

Other respondents indicated that disaster victims progress to a state of desperation that makes an otherwise law-abiding person commit crime to feed his or her family.

- *People affected by serious disasters may commit crimes they normally would never think of in their day-to-day life (LEO 19).*
- *Now, I realize in some of the worst disasters some people are just reacting in a survival mentality. They are at the end of their rope, while others are trying to take full advantage of others misfortune (LEO 16).*

Pandemic Theme #1: The COVID-19 Pandemic Creates Unique Operational Changes for LEOs.

LEO duties during the pandemic are the opposite of disasters. During the pandemic, LEOs limit their responses and exposure to the public. However, during disasters, LEOs are constantly responding to incidents and exposing themselves to the public, with little to no fear of spreading disease.

- *This experience is different since it is considered a long-term shelter in place response. I'm used to being out and rescuing people and helping them recover. I don't feel I can really contribute to others since I am not a medical professional (LEO 2).*
- *Other disasters involved a lot of community involvement and interaction. This pandemic is the total opposite as far as community policing (LEO 56).*

Many LEOs also reported that their duties and tactics changed to conform with the need for social distancing.

- *Very different. Never expected a virus to be spreading like this one. Forced to take different approach (LEO 7).*
- *Much different approach to policing. Getting used to wearing masks. Also, inviting people to come outside (LEO 51).*
- *Suddenly we have to be careful about spreading the virus. More gloves and masks are used by officers. I would not normally wear a mask and gloves simply to speak with a sick person, but now I do to minimize the chances of carrying the virus to my next call, who may be a 75-year-old. I also don't generally interact with people over minor offenses during the pandemic. That reduces my reports, etc (LEO 5).*
- *We have changed what type of calls for service we will handle. We have taken more reports over the phone or online. We have to wear additional protective gear. We shifted resources to cover our Patrol Division (LEO 42).*
- *We take deliberate and proactive steps to reduce our interaction with people. That means less community policing and less police projects and initiatives (LEO 12).*

Pandemic Theme # 2: The COVID-19 Pandemic Creates Unique Stressors for LEOs.

Although disasters create unique LEO stress that will hopefully be reported in a future article, the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with its own stressors that are different from traditional LEO work and different from disaster response. The inability to see the threat, the potential for family impact, and the unknown duration of the pandemic were all listed as unique pandemic stressors.

- *Officers want to see the enemies; however, with the pandemic you are fighting an invisible enemy (LEO 55).*
- *Other disasters that I have worked had an end date (LEO 17).*
- *A hurricane comes ashore and last a certain amount of time. We have no idea how long this will occur (LEO 31).*
- *More fear because of the seriousness. Unknown end in sight. Lack of symptoms and fear of exposing friends and family members (LEO 19).*
- *No proactive enforcement all reactive, constant fear of catching the virus and taking it home to our family (LEO 30).*
- *This is the first disaster that could have catastrophic effects of contracted by myself, family or coworkers (LEO 25).*

Pandemic Theme #3: The COVID-19 Pandemic Changes Crime.

Many LEOs also reported crime changes due to factors stemming from the pandemic. Stay-home orders were said to cause some crimes and calls for service to decrease.

- *Drug overdoses seem to be down though (LEO 50).*
- *Our calls for services are drastically down, car accidents are down because traffic is light, burglaries of businesses are up due to businesses being closed (LEO 6).*
- *Using the COVID-19 pandemic as a reference, crime was normal, but that is because restrictions were virtually enacted overnight with no warning. Since the restrictions have been in place our calls for services are drastically down (LEO 46).*
- *Crime has been low during COVID-19, I believe that our communities are dealing with the virus in a decent manner (LEO 19).*

- *Things seem to be quieter because less people are out (LEO 47).*

Other crimes, such as domestic violence, were said to increase.

- *With COVID-19, people are forced to be home, many are having financial issues and this has caused domestic calls to skyrocket (LEO 1).*
- *Domestics have increased. The longer this has gone we are seeing more fights outside as well (LEO 50).*
- *Disturbances are also up as people are living in close quarters with no break from one another (LEO 6).*
- *Also, seems like more physical and sexual assault crimes due to home isolation and kids being out of schools and staying indoors (LEO 22).*

General Theme #1: RA Theory was Consistently Used by Respondents to Explain Crime.

The coders found that the LEOs overwhelmingly exhibited an RA theory lens during disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic alike. Readers can see a consistent application of the role of motivated offenders (LEOs 47, 22, 6, 1, 19, 16, 4, 10, 9, 2, 8, 40), suitable targets (LEOs 47, 22, 6, 1, 4, 10, 9, 2, 8, 40), and lack of capable guardianship (LEOs 47, 6, 4, 10, 13, 6, 40). We observed this same trend throughout the rest of the data, but related quotes will not be added for brevity, since examples are present above. This observed theme is particularly telling since an RA theory lens emerged despite the survey questions being designed to avoid emphasizing any one criminological theory.

General Theme #2: Disasters Pull LEOs Out into the Public and the COVID-19 Pandemic Pulls LEOs Inward Away from the Public to Reduce Disease Transmission.

LEOs articulated that disasters force them to have increased contact and exposure to the public through life saving activities and constant calls for service (LEOs 4, 8, 6, 11, 40, 56). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the opposite trend. Respondents indicated that less proactive enforcement and less face-to-face interaction with the public was resulting from

the pandemic for several reasons, mostly related to social distancing and sheltering-in-place (LEOs 12, 19, 47, 7, 51, 5, 42, 56). One respondent indicated that:

- *Other disasters involved a lot of community involvement and interaction. This pandemic is the total opposite as far as community policing (LEO 56).*

Discussion

Our discussion section and models below reflect differences in LEOs experiences related to crime during disasters versus the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the more novel findings from this study relate to LEOs' indications of an outward pulling effect from disasters versus the inward pulling effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. One might assert that these differing influences justify substantial differences in an agency's concept of operations during disasters versus pandemics. One could also argue that the disparity should prompt differing approaches to staffing, tactics, equipment, training, and expected stressors.

We also found that LEOs experienced an increase in calls to burglaries during disasters and an increase in investigative activities after disaster, particularly related to disaster fraud. During the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents also experienced increased calls for domestic disturbances and a decrease in calls for many other types of crimes. Respondents also explained changes to both crime during disasters and crime during the COVID-19 pandemic using observations that aligned with the key components of RA theory.

Changes to Crime During Disasters

Respondents reported that property crimes and domestic disputes increase before a disaster, followed by an increase in burglary and looting during the disaster, and fraud increases after disasters. Figure 1 compiles the three themes identified related to disaster crime. The figure depicts LEOs perceived changes to crime during disaster and the context surrounding those

changes that LEOs reported. The figure transitions from the pre-disaster timeframe through to the post-disaster recovery period. These findings generally align with Frailing et al. (2015), Frailing & Harper (2015), and Prelog (2016), who found that disasters are associated with increased crime rates in some instances. Spencer (2017) also found that crime increased in the Florida counties that were directly hit by hurricanes. Her findings could be reflected here as well since some of the respondents were from Florida. Additionally, the common theme among the respondents relative to the presence of looting align with Harper and Frailing's (2012) arguments that looting is common after natural disasters.

Of the respondents, many of the investigators indicated that disaster fraud increases as the disaster progresses, which aligns with Aguirre and Lane's (2019) findings. Parkinson (2019) also found that domestic violence increased in Australia, following major brushfires. These findings might add some additional detail since LEOs indicated domestic disturbances increase during situations where people shelter-in-place.

RA theory was a prominent theme throughout the responses. LEOs consistently offered the absence of police and unprotected buildings, as reasons for increases to the motivation of would-be offenders during disasters. Another notable nexus to RA theory became evident when respondents discussed an increase in desperation. Some LEOs indicated that career criminals and non-criminals alike would feel a growing sense of desperation due to limited resources from disasters. That desperation was thought to increase the motivation to commit crime, thus opening additional opportunities for motivated offenders, albeit for understandable reasons. The prominence of RA theory tenets in these findings could reflect RA theory's importance in explaining crime changes surrounding disaster. Table 1 shows the factors mentioned by respondents grouped into the major tenets of RA theory.

This research would seem to reinforce the presence and interactions of the tenets of RA theory relative to disaster crime. Table 1 details the apparent interactions that occur throughout the disaster process. An important consideration is that this research is based upon the perceptions of LEOs, so the RA theory's relevance to disaster may be at least partially a product of an RA theory lens from respondents. However, the respondents' application of an RA theory lens aligns with some of the recent literature on disaster crime (Prelog, 2016, Curtis & Mills, 2011). Another important factor is that respondents were not asked about RA theory, nor did they generally indicate any knowledge of RA theory or the three tenets of the theory. Instead, RA theory emerged as a theme after respondents described changes to capable guardianship, motivated offenders, and suitable targets.

Changes to Crime During Pandemics

LEOs' descriptions of crime during the pandemic also reflected the application of RA theory in that the changes were attributed to shifts in the number of motivated offenders and suitable targets. LEOs attributed reductions in crime during the COVID-19 pandemic to the reduced number of people in public. This could represent a decrease in motivated offenders and a decrease in suitable targets. Additionally, respondents indicated that increases in domestic violence were believed to be a result of stress combined with extended periods of close proximity to one's family from the stay-home orders. During both disaster and pandemic, the stay-home orders were thought to create an increase in suitable targets and motivated offenders in close quarters.

At a minimum, the above items indicate that LEOs may often use a RA theory lens in their perspectives. Regardless of the theory used to explain the changes, other research has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has thus far resulted in some distinct preliminary changes to

crime rates in the U.S. with reductions in residential burglaries and motor vehicle theft in some areas (Ashby, 2020). The reduction in burglaries during pandemic is notable compared to the increase in burglaries during natural disasters, which are thought to represent looting (Frailing & Harper, 2007; LeBeau, 2002).

Along with changes to crime, LEOs indicated that the pandemic is altering their procedures. Overall, a key difference expressed between the LEO role in pandemics versus disaster response is the nature of the response activities. The pandemic resulted in several procedural changes that reflect adherence to social distancing. LEOs also expressed relatively few examples of increased workload, schedule changes, or changes to their key duties during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in stark contrast to LEOs role as first responders during disasters. These differences alone would seem to justify the delineation of pandemics as a unique threat, distinct from disasters, with unique challenges for which to prepare. Figure 2 depicts the changes to LEO duties and tactics during the pandemic, as communicated by respondents.

LEOs also identified several stressors that are unique to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the stressors related to the inability to plan for the threat by visualizing it or knowing when it will end. These stressors might reflect the LEO need to identify threats and threat parameters to mitigate possible impacts. LEOs also expressed fear of spreading the disease to family. Figure 3 depicts the LEO stressors that are unique to the current pandemic.

Limitations

Although the 56 respondents provided more than enough data to reach saturation, the use of 56 qualitative surveys could be viewed as a limitation of this study. However, the use of an online qualitative survey also allowed access to respondents who would have otherwise not had

time to participate. The surveys allowed for access to many respondents at a time when their experiences are fresh in their minds. Our purposeful sampling method could also limit generalization of the findings. Another limitation is that this study is limited to the perceptions of LEOs. LEOs are not likely to have the context provided by yearly crime rates, nor did any respondents claim to have that knowledge. We leveraged the benefit of timing to permit the best recollection among respondents. However, that timing is paired with another limitation since surveys took place during the initial few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, and factors may change over time, particularly if the pandemic lasts for years.

Recommendations

Considerations for Law Enforcement Executives Specific to Disasters

The themes revealed above can help inform agency leaders in their strategic decision making. Disaster themes are particularly relevant for executives in agencies that have limited disaster experience. Agencies with disaster policing experience likely have adjusted and prepared based on their own lessons learned from disasters. However, agencies with little or no real-world experience will need to rely upon research to make data-driven decisions in their preparedness planning. Gaining further understanding of how crime changes during disasters would allow agencies to prepare continuity programs to maintain mission effectiveness. Such continuity programs help agencies prepare to forecast potential changes to crime as it unfolds throughout the disaster process.

Themes indicating that empty structures allow for crime and perceptions of LEO pre-occupation with other responses or presence elsewhere might resonate with the more crime-prevention-minded agency leaders. Given personnel shortages during disasters, law enforcement leadership might consider the importance of prior planning and coordination to ensure that a law

enforcement presence and visibility are provided during disaster, particularly in areas with a high concentration of facilities lacking guardianship. Certainly, law enforcement leadership will balance their priorities with the challenges they face and the resources at their disposal. However, one could imagine that a security mindset could easily fall to the wayside among all the other response and life-saving tasks that materialize for LEOs during disasters. Advanced preparations to deliberately create a police presence during disaster, or even the perception of law enforcement presence based on new information gained during the disaster might help departments reduce later calls for service. This could potentially be facilitated through pre-existing agreements among jurisdictions. LEOs from unaffected jurisdictions could be deployed to provide a basic police presence in areas that are likely to see increased crime. Such areas might be high in vacant structures, or otherwise at an increased risk of motivated offenders and suitable targets, that also lack capable guardianship. These suggestions may seem like common knowledge to LEO executives with disaster experience, but may be novel suggestions to LEO executives with limited disaster exposure.

Considerations for Law Enforcement Executives Specific to Pandemics

Certainly, agencies across the world no longer need any lessons on the importance of preparing for a pandemic. However, executives might benefit from applying the LEO stressors and challenges unique to pandemics that have been identified in this study. Continuity plans can formalize any altered procedures to reduce the potential spread of illness within the organization. Incorporating these findings into agency continuity plans is likely the best way to operationalize the lessons learned from this study for future pandemics. This is particularly relevant since agency attrition reduces agency institutional memory and experience over time. Agencies might also benefit from exploring ways to alleviate LEO stressors specific to pandemics through pre-

developed training on personal protective actions during pandemic. Specifically, agency continuity plans might emphasize training on how LEOs can create practices to reduce the transmission of illness to the family since that was a consistently mentioned stressor for LEOs. Agency continuity plans might thus incorporate training resources for LEOs and families to reduce the likelihood that LEOs will spread the illness to family members when they arrive home from work.

Agencies might also reduce internal transmission of illness by developing or enhancing remote training capabilities for LEOs to minimize potential spread through exposure to coworkers. One example of that exposure might be LEOs exposures to one another during mandatory LEO training. Agencies might explore the utility of creating remote training and distance education capabilities for employees to reduce exposure to one another. Additionally, law enforcement agencies might benefit from creating and testing remote work capabilities for LEOs to minimize potential exposure to one another. In many cases, these pandemic-specific continuity concerns do not apply to other continuity events, which could justify specific treatment within organizational continuity planning measures.

Considerations for Law Enforcement Executives During Disasters and Pandemics

Overall, General Theme #2, reflecting the pull felt by LEOs outward during disasters and inward during the COVID-19 pandemic, can be used by law enforcement executives in their general approach to developing a continuity plan. A well-developed continuity plan would address departmental operations during disasters and pandemics. The overarching goals of agency continuity plans relative to disaster might aim to facilitate the agency's ability to support LEOs out in the public for extended time periods. Conversely, the pandemic-related continuity planning goals should aim to pull LEOs inward to minimize the spread of disease. In either

situation, law enforcement agencies will need to be able to maintain mission effectiveness while remaining flexible to an altered concept of operations stemming from a continuity event.

Providing training on those continuity procedures can also likely alleviate some LEO stress by preparing LEOs for operational differences to expect during pandemics versus other types of continuity events, like disasters.

Agencies might also benefit from increased training and adjusted manpower decisions when stay-home orders are imminent. Such training could provide a refresher on LEO tactics and procedures for the impending increase in domestic incidents. Further, agencies might benefit from creating lines of communication to provide them with advance notice of the potential for impending stay-home orders. Development of an advanced notification mechanism to forewarn police departments of impending stay-home orders could trigger the agency's previously developed advanced preparations and training relative to responding to domestic disturbances.

Formalized training on agency continuity procedures can prepare LEOs for operational differences specific to pandemics and specific to disasters, and even specific to disasters that occur during ongoing pandemics. This continuity planning and training will become more important as time passes and the institutional memory of the COVID-19 pandemic and previous disasters are lost. Agencies with limited continuity program development experience might consider seeking FEMA Continuity of Operations (COOP) training. The Department of Homeland Security (2020) also provides information and resources for first responders operating during the current pandemic.

In a less tangible way, executives might also benefit from the knowledge that RA theory is applied seemingly unknowingly by LEOs. The consistent application of an RA lens by LEOs might reflect the utility of the theory to inform training and preparations for everyday law

enforcement work. Many other theories have limited utility in the day-to-day job of law enforcement, but the findings above might indicate that RA theory is well aligned with the job of LEOs, particularly at the individual decision-making level of the LEO. At a minimum, additional research should explore the utility of other theories in explaining disaster crime and pandemic crime.

Recommendations for Further Research

Respondents indicated that they experienced more calls related to domestic violence during stay-home orders during both disasters and pandemics. As a result, we recommend that interpersonal violence should be studied in relation to both phenomena. The relationship between interpersonal violence rates and stay-home orders should also be studied independently of the surrounding circumstances of disaster or pandemic. Further research might also explore the role of rumors and social media during pandemics since disaster myths and misconceptions have been found to hinder responses to previous disasters (Nogami, 2018).

We also found that LEOs believe that domestic violence increases due to the shelter-in-place occurring during both disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. This might warrant some further research into the relationship between sheltering-in-place and interpersonal violence rates. Pandemic crime is also worthy of further attention from different perspectives if only because the initial body of work indicates that crime changes differently during disasters versus pandemics.

Future research should also compare specific crime rates during the pandemic to specific crime rates during other disasters in the same areas. Differences within the same communities might add evidence to help determine whether RA theory better explains crime changes than other theories, since many of the changes within the same community would likely be RA theory

factors, and not the relatively stable socio-economic factors that some criminological theories use to explain some types of crime.

Conclusion

This study shows that the respondent LEOs believe that disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic present unique changes to crime. Disasters are complex, with multiple changes occurring simultaneously, and they create an outward pulling effect where LEOs are more exposed to the public through their response activities. The COVID-19 pandemic, while also complex, creates an inward pulling effect, and challenges LEOs abilities to conduct law enforcement while maintaining social distancing. Thus, understanding of each operational environment should be multifaceted with a general understanding that disasters pull LEOs outward to support the community while pandemics pull LEOs inward and physically away from community members. One can imagine drastically increased challenges when a disaster strikes during a pandemic and agencies are forced to balance between the inward pull of the pandemic and the outward pull of the disaster. Agency continuity plans might thus aim to prepare for that type of multi-faceted event.

This study also aligns with a growing body of disaster crime literature indicating that some crimes, such as burglary and fraud, can increase surrounding disasters, depending upon certain factors. The study of crime during disaster is unfolding into a complex web of variations depending upon the variables at play. Indications that crime simply increases or decreases during disaster are oversimplified. Indeed, the phenomenon of disaster crime is complex and multi-faceted.

The study of crime during pandemics, although in its infancy, is already also developing into a distinct area of study that should not be lumped together with disasters. This study seems

to align with the limited body of pandemic crime literature, showing decreases to some types of crimes during pandemic (Ashby, 2020). However, LEOs also indicated that family violence increases during sheltering-in-place stemming from disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEOs explanations of changes to crime patterns during disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic often reflected RA theory factors. From a theoretical lens, this research does seem to reinforce past researchers' use of RA theory to explain disaster crime, at least at the level of the individual committing the crime. Additionally, although further research is warranted, this research also indicates that RA theory factors might also explain changes to crime during the current pandemic.

Law enforcement executives can use these findings to inform their decisions relative to agency continuity planning and subsequent training for LEOs. Such formal planning and training are particularly important for agencies that have limited disaster and pandemic policing experience. Academics might also benefit from the findings that RA theory emerged as the primary theoretical lens that LEOs applied to their observations on crime.

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Tables and Figures

Figure 1

LEOs' reported perceptions of changes to crime throughout disaster

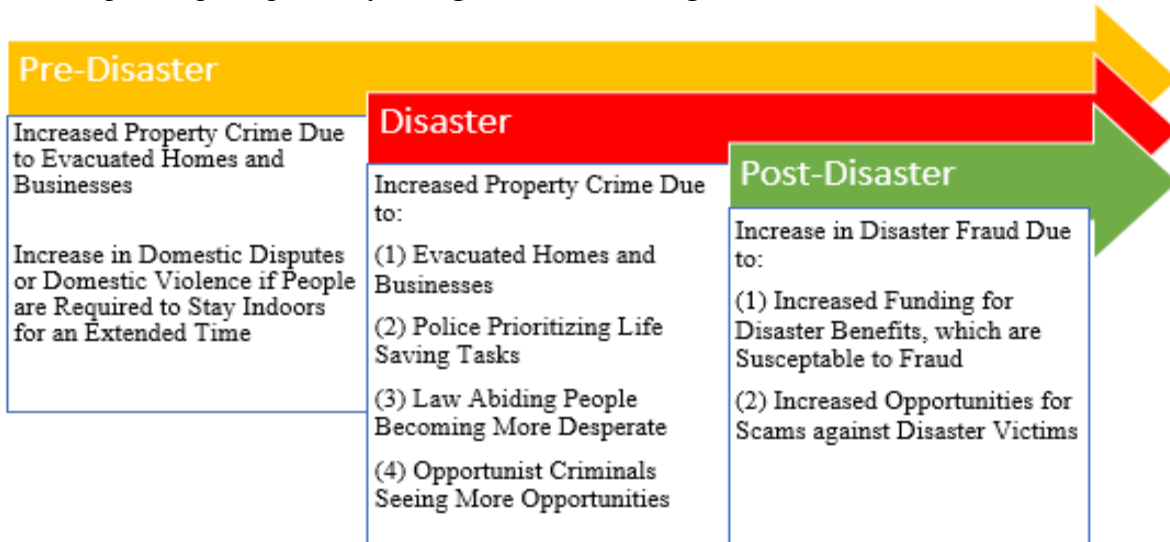


Table 1

LEOs' application of RA theory to the disaster environment

Absence of Capable Guardian	Presence of Motivated Offender	Presence of Suitable Target
<p>Perception of less police presence and little if any proactive anti-crime or deterrence activities occurring due to police focus on life saving activities and increased calls for service</p> <p>Disaster relief funding such as disaster food stamps and FEMA funds provided with limited vetting or restrictions</p>	<p>Disaster victims and experienced criminals become more desperate for resources as the disaster progresses</p> <p>Experienced criminals and desperate disaster victims become more motivated when they observe evacuated properties and unprotected resources</p> <p>Experienced fraudsters become more motivated upon seeing available disaster funds and easily scammed disaster victims</p>	<p>Homes and businesses left vacant from evacuations</p> <p>Homes and businesses increase in attractiveness as targets because damage leaves them accessible</p> <p>Sharp increases in disaster assistance funding and programs create more opportunities for fraud</p> <p>Disaster victims who are desperate and overwhelmed become suitable targets for scammers</p>

Figure 2

Changes to LEO duties and tactics stemming from the pandemic

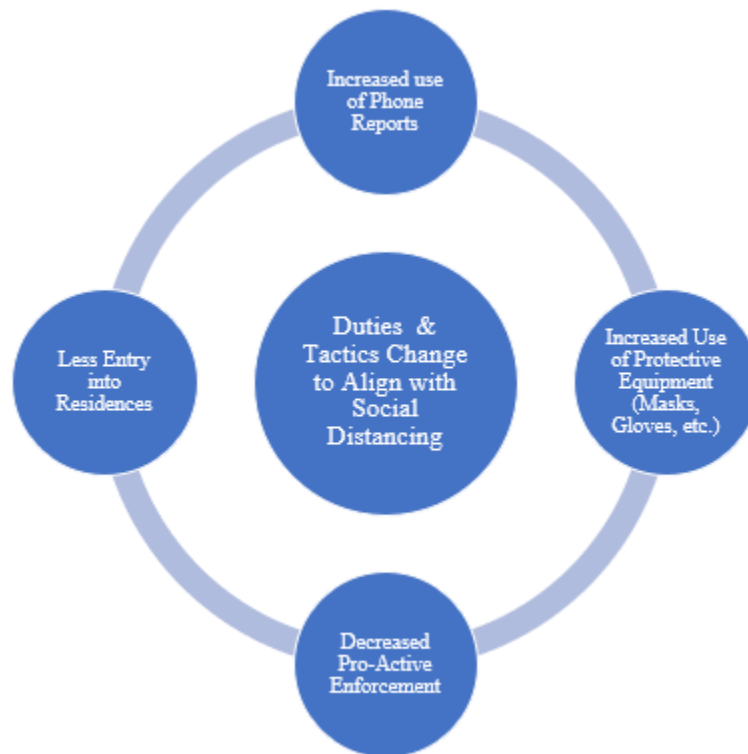


Figure 3

Changes to LEO stressors unique to pandemic



Author Biographies

Daniel Augusto, EdD, MS, MBA, CFE, CPP, is a retired law enforcement officer with 22 years of experience in law enforcement, homeland security, and emergency preparedness. Dr. Augusto earned his EdD from Northeastern University in Boston, MA, where he researched ethics and security. He also earned his MS in Emergency Management from Jacksonville State University. He is currently a Part-Time Assistant Professor in the Criminal Justice program at Northcentral University.

Elizabeth Pollock, PhD, MA, LMFT is a Marriage and Family Therapist by trade. She has 15 years of combined experience in evaluation of family programs and as a Marriage and Family Therapist. She earned her PhD from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD, and she researches resilience in high-stress occupations. Dr. Pollock is currently a Part-Time Assistant Professor in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Northcentral University.

Steve Flick, MS, has more than 20 years of experience in law enforcement patrol and investigations. He earned his MS from Wilmington University in Delaware, and he is currently completing a Doctor of Criminal Justice program at the California University of Pennsylvania.



Illuminating Firefighter Awareness Within a Dangerous Lived Experience: A Single Case Study

Eric J. Russell, Rodger E. Broomé, & Jamie L. Russell

Utah Valley University

c/o Department of Emergency Services 3131 Mike Jense Parkway FS119 Provo, UT 84601

Phone: 801-309-6566

Email: eric.russell@uvu.edu

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Eric J. Russell, Rodger E. Broomé, & Jamie L. Russell
Utah Valley University

Abstract

This qualitative single case study set forth to explore what could be gleaned from a low frequency/high impact incident involving a firefighting crew that collectively experienced and survived a structural collapse while performing interior operations at a commercial structure fire. The single case study involved a ladder crew consisting of $n = 3$ professional uniformed and sworn firefighters that survived a structural collapse. Using inductive reasoning, the researchers discovered emergent themes from the results involving self-awareness, awareness of others, and situational awareness. The findings of this research seem to be the first time all three aspects of awareness has been discovered in research involving the lived experience of firefighters. The implication of this study is that it seems to spotlight the need for fire and emergency services to construct firefighter development opportunities that strengthen individual awareness in a low frequency/high impact incident.

Key Words: Firefighter, Awareness, Low Frequency/High Impact, Single Case Study

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore what could be learned from a low frequency/high impact lived experience of a firefighting crew that collectively experienced and survived a structural building collapse while fighting an interior fire within a commercial building. The central question that guided this study asked, what could be gleaned from the experience of firefighters who survived a building collapse that could strengthen future firefighter survival. This case involves a crew of a single ladder company operating as a firefighting team inside a burning commercial structure.

For decades, the number of firefighters killed in the line-of-duty exceeded 100 persons per year, yet in 2019, a total of 48 firefighter deaths were reported, a record low for the profession (NFPA, 2020). Seemingly, the reduction of line-of-duty deaths can be contributed to the advancement of firefighter training and education stemming from a growing body of relevant empirical works focused on improving safety within the profession. In spite of these improvements, the profession is still dangerous with 13 firefighters being killed in fire ground operations in 2019 to include structural collapses and being trapped/lost in a building or dwelling (NFPA, 2020).

The participants (n=3) that took part in this study were professional uniformed and sworn firefighters that survived a building collapse as a crew through self-rescue techniques. In 2019, the researchers conducted a phenomenological study on this same incident to glean an understanding of what it was like to collectively experience and survive a building collapse as a crew (Broomé and Russell, 2019). The data collected for that study was analyzed and thematically coded to address the lived experience. During that study's data analysis and coding process, the researchers took note of a separate pattern different from the lived experience that

seemed to relate to multiple aspects of awareness. With the specific incident studied being one of low frequency/high impact that involved just three individuals, the researchers decided to reengage and reanalyze the data through the lens of a single case study design (Yin, 2018). Following a strict case study protocol, the researchers present the incident in the results section as a timeline using the words of the participants. Finally, using inductive reasoning, the researchers present revealed themes that emerged from the case narratives relating to the three aspects of awareness.

Literature Review

As noted earlier, patterns of awareness emerged from the thematic coding of an earlier published phenomenological study the researchers conducted that focused on the lived experience of the study's participant that survived a structural collapse (Broomé and Russell, 2019). The data analysis and thematic coding of that previous study spotlighted a pattern of awareness, a finding separate from the lived experience. Thus, it seemed there was a need to conduct a separate analysis of the data using a single case study design in order to discover whether that emergent pattern of awareness was simply superficial or something deeper and meaningful. Because a pattern of awareness emerged from the coding process, the researchers spent time in literature pertaining to awareness and continued to revisit the data collected for this study. The literature review is put forth to delineate upon the dimensions of awareness. The empirical works discussed in this literature review merge with the analyzed data to formulate the discussion section of this study. It needs noting that each dimension is discussed through a fire and emergency services lens.

The characteristic of awareness has been defined and delineated upon for decades (Gallagher and Costal, 2012). Awareness has been empirically studied and theoretically argued

as being a successful trait found in accomplished individuals leading to greater problem-solving abilities (Halpern, 2013; Suri and Prasad, 2011). For this literature review, the researchers will concentrate on awareness as it relates to the fire and emergency services responder. As it is in other disciplines, literature has identified awareness as a characteristic found in fire and emergency services professionals (Russell, 2014; Russell, 2016; Suri and Prasad, 2011). This review separates and discusses three specific aspects of awareness: self-awareness, awareness of others, and situational awareness.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is at the core of the firefighter's ability to successfully operate in chaotic environments (Gasaway, 2013; Russell, Broomé, and Prince, 2015). The responder's self-awareness begins with an internal understanding of one's own abilities and weaknesses (Schön, 1983). This internal understanding, coupled with previous knowledge stemming from experiences, converges to form the firefighter's self-awareness (Russell and Fisher, 2014).

Understanding one's own ability to be self-aware comes from the individual's willingness to be reflective and vulnerable about who they are (Brown, 2015; Schön, 1983). Furthermore, it's about the individual coming to terms with both what they are capable of and what their limitations are when put to the test in stressful situations that exist when operating within the chaos associated with an emergency scene (Russell, 2016). Though this reflection is considered healthy for the posttraumatic growth of responders, it does open responders up to psychological vulnerabilities (Brown, 2015; Russell, 2016). These vulnerabilities surface when reflecting upon situations of great loss and tragedy as well as incidents involving close calls (Russell, 2016; Russell and Fisher, 2014). Paton (2008) points out, however, that how the responder conceptualizes, learns, and understands their vulnerability is key to posttraumatic

growth versus posttraumatic stress problems arising. Even when the lesson learned is negative, the responder's new perspective improves that to which they can be aware of in the future. Therefore, learning to properly reflect on one self-awareness and experiences is key for both preventing and navigating unhealthy thoughts and emotions (Russell, 2016).

The firefighter's self-awareness allows them to see areas in which they need to work on and experience can provide a realistic self-assessment of it. Thus, the reflection upon self gives the responder the opportunity to strengthen their awareness so that the next time they face a chaotic or tragic situation they are able to hone in the abilities that allows one to healthily navigate such situations (Russell, 2016; Russell and Fisher, 2014). Fire and emergency services organizations need to recognize and work toward strengthening the responder's self-awareness and their ability to reflect and grow from that important secondary experience (Schön, 1983; Suri, and Prasad, 2011). By studying successful firefighter survival from the perspective of the survivors, other firefighters may glean some insights about realistic expectations of themselves in overwhelming situations.

Awareness of Others

Fire and emergency services operate as teams. Each member of the team comes together in their own way to form the community of responders (Russell, 2016). The firefighter's awareness of others is nothing more than a natural progression from their desire to serve in their role as a fire and emergency services professional (Russell, 2014; Russell et al., 2015). Meaning, the professional firefighter adheres to a group mindset because the very profession operates as a group (Russell, 2016). Moreover, emergency work typically involves the coordination of efforts with others under extreme psychophysical pressure to renormalize events (Broomé, 2011, 2013,

2014). The interdependence is often experienced as automatic and taken-for-granted by trained emergency professionals.

This awareness of others is also found in the command-and-control education and training that firefighters go through in order to lead individuals operating at an emergency scene. The fire and emergency services professional finds identity in belonging to this community of responders (Russell et al, 2015; Russell, 2016). Additionally, this community becomes an extension of the firefighter's own family unit. Their awareness of others operating on an emergency scene is strengthened by the idea that their fellow responders are more like quasi-family members and not simply colleagues or coworkers (Russell, 2016). The firefighter's awareness of others is a characteristic stemming from their desire to belong to this community (Butts, Petrescu-Prahova, and Cross, 2007).

The firefighter's awareness of others forces their ability to understand what their peers need and what they are doing at any given moment on the emergency scene. Additionally, this awareness of the abilities and skills of others comforts the firefighter and brings them inner-peace because they trust that their teammates will know what to do (Russell, 2014). Moreover, in the face of danger and threats to one's mortality, the strong identification with one's "tribe" reduces fear and strengthens confidence in the group (Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski, 2015). As Kirschman (2004) points out, the opposite can be true when fire service leaders are perceived as practicing cronyism and fostering negative competition among the personnel. Importantly, the emergency services can strengthen the positive awareness of others by fostering and supporting the community of emergency responders (Russell, 2016). Though the profession functions in a paramilitary style manner, professional firefighters live in that quasi-family unit where they develop a deep devotion and moral love for one another (Russell, 2016).

Situational Awareness

Reichenbach (2009) defined situational awareness as an “understanding of objects, events, people, system states, interactions, environmental conditions, and other situation-specific factors affecting human performance in complex and dynamic tasks.” The firefighter’s situational awareness allows them to navigate the chaos of the emergency scene, giving them the ability to make decisions in function under pressure (Jefferson and Harrald, 2007). The firefighter’s situational awareness goes to the heart of their survival (Gasaway, 2013; Reichenbach, 2009).

For example, the firefighter’s situational awareness is keenly astute and mentally focused on safe and effective operations (Gasaway, 2013). While on scene, they are in a constant state of assessing and reassessing the situation. The firefighter’s situational awareness is open to the subtle changes that occur during operations that can lead to tragedies such as a structural collapse, a fire-flashover, and other life or death situations that seemingly present themselves on emergency scenes (Reichenbach, 2009). Additionally, the firefighter’s situational awareness allows them to know when to pull back because the situation deteriorated to a point where the risk to the crew becomes greater than the reward (Gasaway, 2014). Because of the nature of fire and emergency services work, the firefighter will have a heightened sense of awareness even when off-duty. The fire and emergency services acknowledge that this is part of being a professional responder and has the possibility to get out of hand (Russell, 2016). Firefighters must be taught how to healthily navigate their situational awareness so that during their downtime and being off-duty, they do not find themselves in a constant state of being on point.

Methodology

The setting of this qualitative research study took place at State University located in the Western United States. The researchers employed a single case study design to conduct the study (Kennedy, 1979; Seawright and Gerring, 2008; Yin, 2018). The strength of case study design is its strength for looking at unique situations in a way that that can reveal theoretical propositions (Yin, 2018) The target population for this study was identified as professional firefighters working in a suburban community in the Western United States that collectively survived a structural collapse as a crew. The non-probability purposive sample examined in this study consisted of $n = 3$ uniformed and sworn professional firefighters. The participants were part of a 3-person ladder company who together survived a building collapse while fighting an interior fire within a commercial structure. This study builds upon a previously published phenomenological study that looked at the participants lived experience associated with collectively surviving a building collapse as a crew (Broomé and Russell, 2019)

The non-probability sampling used in this study was a type of purposive sampling known as expert sampling (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002). The justification for using the non-probability purposive-expert sampling strategy is that it allowed for theoretical discovery involving data collection and analysis from a pre-selected specific group of experts (Patton, 2002). The researchers acknowledge that the sample size in this study is small; however, the situation itself is unique, one of low frequency/high impact (Yin, 2018). In addition, the researchers recognize that normally a qualitative study would rely on data saturation to determine the study's sample size; however, because of the uniqueness of the case, saturation was neither possible nor the goal (Mason, 2010).

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of three separate open-ended audio-recorded interviews with the study's participants. Prior to conducting the research, the researchers obtained permission from their university's Institutional Review Board to proceed with this research study. To protect the study participants, the researchers removed any personal identifiers from the transcribed interviews and destroyed the audio recordings once the transcriptions were complete.

Data Analysis

To ensure trustworthiness, the researchers triangulated data sources from the multiple participants, had another researcher preform an analysis for comparison, and present the data as in-depth rich thematic descriptions in the results section (Yin, 2018). The researchers followed a specific, systematic case study approach to analyze the data, establishing a secure database for data collection and storage to ensure data reliability (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2018).

To analyze the data the researchers developed case descriptions utilizing a systematic, hierarchical approach (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). The data analysis began with the researchers organizing and preparing the transcripts for analysis, removing any personal identifiers from the transcripts of each of the participant to protect their anonymity, and then reading the transcribed scripts to become familiar with the data. Each participant was assigned a "P" and then a corresponding number.

In the results section, the researchers developed narrative case descriptions in timeline increments of the event using the words of the participants (Kennedy, 1979; Yin, 2018). Then, the researchers analyzed the narrative case descriptions using a hand-coding process that involved color-coding the data (Basit, 2003). The hand-coding process allowed researchers to spend a lot of time reading and rereading the data, color-coding different attributes and writing

notes and ideas down (Basit, 2003; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Using inductive reasoning, propositions were generated from the findings and are both presented and delineated upon in the discussion (Coyne, 1984; Kennedy, 1979; Yin, 2018).

Results

The results section of this work presents the narrative case descriptions in timeline increments. The timeline consists of (1) pre-incident and arrival on scene, (2) entry and interior company operations, (3) structural collapse and MAYDAY, and (4) search for egress and exiting. The emergent case descriptions come from the words of the participants as they recalled the collapse incident.

Pre-Incident and Arrival on Scene

P1 discussed an experience inspecting the very building the incident occurred in months before, “we happened to get this building as a business inspection and I remember sitting there and scoping the place out as we looked through it” (P1). P2 also mentioned this fortunate coincidence by saying, “P1 had done a business inspection on this business within the last month, and he knew where I was at” (P2).

Discussing the crew make up, P3 stated, “I remember P2 was my engineer and P1 was the firefighter” (P3). P3 then refers to P1 and P2, “You know those two guys are like my best friends” (P3). P3 goes on saying, “I’d been a captain for quite a while at that time and, you know, we had responded on a lot of fires” (P3).

P1 reflected on when the crew was first dispatched to the incident saying, “it was the middle of the night, we were the second on-scene after engine 2. On the Ladder that day there was just the three of us” (P1). P2 also discussed arriving on the scene, “we were first Ladder assignment; it wasn’t our first-due-in area. It was station 2’s first-due-in area” (P2). P3 also

brought up arriving on scene and the radio traffic they were receiving, “we had multiple callers stating smoke showing from the roof” (P3). P3 though when first arriving, “we can get a handle on this thing quick. We can put this thing out, you know” (P3). P3 discussed what he was thinking on arrival, “straightforward attic fire, well, that’s where we went wrong” (P3). P3 also noted that this building had special meaning saying, “I didn’t want to be the one to lose this structure” (P3).

P1 described the scene, “when we pulled up on the building, there was billowing black smoke coming from the eaves” (P1). Upon arrival and looking for a way in, P1 noted “P2 and P3 left me at the main entrance which was locked at the time.” P1 then decided, “I went and grabbed a K-12 saw and stood at that main entrance with the K-12 waiting for the word to go ahead and force entry on the door” (P1). P1 noted that, “P3 determined that forcing the main entry door wouldn’t make it any worse and gave me the go-ahead to force entry on that door” (P1).

Entry and Interior Company Operations

When entering the structure P3 discussed his radio traffic with the on-scene commander saying, “I told command that we need more people in here and more hose-lines. When we first started, I said, we need ventilation. We need to get that ceiling opened up now” (P3). P2 notes as the scene progresses, “they’ve brought in another hose team. I’m not sure who it was, and they’re mostly in the back area and they’re not encountering fire in there. They’re pulling ceiling down and they’re not fighting fire in that area” (P2). P3 continues to describe entering and beginning operations, “so we made entry with engine 2’s firefighter and P1 forced the door, we went inside – no smoke” (P3). P3 goes on to say, “we advanced the hoseline through the back of the building through the rear area, and then continued on and it was pretty clear inside still” (P3).

As the officer inside, P3 noted “and I would move back and forth between crews; between my crew and other crews, pulling ceiling and fighting fire” (P3).

Reflecting back on that radio traffic and his requests, P3 said, “so we’d asked [radioed] for it like 10 to 15 minutes prior to the collapse” (P3). Thinking back on this P3 acknowledged, “and that means we’d been in there for a long time” (P3). While reflecting on the operation P1 also recalled, “we continued to pull ceiling for easily 15 minutes, I’m thinking it seemed a lot longer than that, that’s when the roof collapsed on us” (P1). P3 opened up about how he feels about the aspect of the incident, “so you know, I obviously, to this day, feel guilty about keeping my crew and myself and other crews inside that building too long” (P3). P3 goes on to say, “I should have recognized some of the fire conditions as a captain, I should have known that we were in there too long and gotten us out of there sooner” (P3).

Upon entering the structure P1 said, “there, wasn’t a whole lot of smoke in the building area” (P1). However, P1 noted that, “from the exterior of the building the smoke was so thick on the outside, and the environment inside was different from what it was outside” (P1). P2 also noted the differences in conditions saying, “so you couldn’t really tell how much involved the building really was or anything. You could smell smoke; it was a wood smelling smoke, but there was no smoke in the building. You could see all the way down the hall” (P2).

When finding the fire P2 said, “and you could see a door shut and an orange glow on the bottom of the door. It was plain as day, it seemed pretty straight forward, room and contents fire, breached into the attic space” (P2). P1 also noted this saying, “we found the fire in that back-office area, and we noticed it had spread to the attic area” (P1). P3 also acknowledged seeing the office down the hall, “as soon as we walked in, I looked inside and made it out to be an office, you could see a glow underneath the office door” (P3).

Upon entering the office, P3 noted, “and everywhere that we pulled ceiling, there was more fire. But being the type of firefighter, that I am – aggressive, I thought we can get this thing” (P3). P3 then acknowledged, “looking back on it now and thinking about it, you know it was pretty obvious that it probably started in the attic” (P3). P2 also discussed this saying, “we found out later that the fire has actually initiated in the attic. And so, the whole attic space had been involved long enough to breach the ceiling of the office and burn down into the office” (P2). P2 discusses the point the crew gets separated, “we start spreading out to try to see how far this fire has extended past where we’re fighting” (P2).

Structural Collapse and MAYDAY

When the collapse occurred, P1 said, “something hit me in the back of the head. It knocked me to the ground, all I remember is seeing the back of P2 laying in front of me, and I don’t remember seeing P3, it was hard to see at this point” (P1). P2 also stated, “that’s when the roof came down and it knocked us to the ground, we then came to our senses reverting to, you know, fight or flight, you’re in panic mode” (P2). Then P3 recalled what happened next, “at that exact moment, the next thing I knew is, a loud crash and then being on my hands and knees and not knowing what in the hell happened” (P3). In that moment P3 thought to himself, “what the hell literally hit me, it’s now pitch black and I’m trying to stand up and bumping my head on something” (P3). P3 described his actions, “I was reaching around on the floor blindly trying to find my helmet and thinking, what the hell just happened” (P3). P2 went on to describe what it was like to be in the situation, “things are almost in slow motion, at this point, for me” (P2). P2 then noted a problem he had saying, “when the collapse came down, all my tools, everything I had, was gone, and my helmet was pushed forward over my head and I couldn’t find my radio” (P2). P2 goes on to say, “and in my mind, those guys were trapped. In my mind, everybody else

was trapped because I was alive, I could move and I was alive” (P2). At that point, P3 thought to himself, “we’ve got to get the hell out of here” (P3). P3 then says, “I remember both P1 and P2, like vividly, turning over their PASS devices” (P3).

P1 then went on to discuss a problem he had to deal with, “I had realized that the collapse had actually broken the valve on my air tank” (P1). P1 noted, “my bottle was free-flowing, I could hear it hissing out the back that’s when my low-air alarms starts going off” (P1). As the scene played out, P2 said, “at this point, our low-air alarms are going off and we’re still stuck in this fire. I mean, I was concerned, I just knew we had to get out before this air ran out” (P2). P1 goes on to elaborate on his self-contained breathing apparatus, “every time I got on that Ladder, if my bottle wasn’t at least 4,100 to 4,200 psi, I took that thing off and topped it off. And I would do the same thing with P2’s and P3’s bottles” (P1). P1 noted that this occurred at the “beginning of every shift” (P1).

When the collapse occurred P1 and P2 were separated from P3 by a partial wall, in that moment P3 called for a MAYDAY, “I said, I’m going to call MAYDAY because I don’t know where everybody else is. So, I got on the air and went through the MAYDAY procedures” (P3). P1 noted how he relied on the actions of P3 in this moment, “our next option was to try and call MAYDAY, well, P3 had already called “MAYDAY,” at this point” (P1). P2 also discusses this situation saying he could hear P3 calling out MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! Building collapse! The roof’s collapsed on us” (P2). P3 then reflected on the surreal moment, “you know, after the MAYDAY, it just didn’t seem real. I remember just looking up into the sky and seeing stars and thinking, holy crap the ceiling really did collapse on us” (P3).

Upon regaining their senses, P1 said, “after we came to, got our helmets realigned, P2 and I started heading towards what we thought was that front entry or that front exit that I had

forced open” (P1). P1 noted that, “we kind of worked ourselves in that direction, it was hard to see at this point” (P1). Describing the situation, P1 stated, “the roof came right down into the middle of us; almost separating us into two groups.” (P1). When this happened, P1 stated that it was, “hard to see at this point, a lot of smoke, a lot of debris on the ground – chairs overturned, benches, tables” (P1).

P3 also described the few moments into the collapse, “You know, just crazy noise, chaos all of a sudden, and I remember finding my helmet, grabbing it and putting it on my head” (P3). P3 described the situation, “obviously couldn’t see a thing, it was dark with smoke and fire in the building now on the ground. So, we lost all of our hand tools, didn’t have any means of breaking out, if we needed to” (P3). P3 noted, “we fell into that void, once it kind of knocked us down; knocked us to the ground and messed us up” (P3).

Search for Egress and Exiting

Unaware that P1 and P2 were on the other side of a collapse wall, P3 said, “I just assumed that they would, instead of going through the fire, go out the same way I went out because that was our protected area” (P3). However, at this point P2 notes, “in my mind we couldn’t get back. There was no way to get back out the way we came in. In my mind, the way we came in was completely blocked” (P2). In the confusion, P2 thinks, “P3 is coming with us, on the way out” (P2). P2 notes, “So I’m trying to get on the radio, and at this point, P1 leaves; he goes off” (P2). P2 says, “then P1 comes back and he says we can’t get out this way” (P2).

When P1 then started to reflect back on the collapse he said, “so I remember turning around and seeing this glass door, this glass exit blocked by a vending machine” (P1). In that situation, he recalled, “I realized that I was sitting against that stupid door that blocked in the breezeway” (P1). He elaborated, “I sat there for a few minutes, well, and it seemed like a few

minutes. But it was probably just a couple of seconds.” (P1). P1 then realized, “our egress was blocked somehow and we couldn’t get a window broken” (P1). P1 said, “I knew that from where the roof fell down, it’s kind of blocked our egress through that back area” (P1). P1 goes on to say, “P2 and I started heading towards what we thought was that front entry or that front exit that I had forced open, all that we saw was the outline of a door; a closed glass door. And we knew that was the exit. We were hell-bent on getting out of that door” (P1). Reflecting on this fact, P2 went on to say, “he knew right where I was and so really P1 saved me out of that situation” (P2). P2 reveals what he was thinking, “in my mind, I could still fight my way out” (P2).

Looking for a way out, P1 said, “so at that point, we started picking up any junk that we could and started beating on the windows inside the building trying to get something to break” (P1). P2 also discussed the conditions and the first actions once the roof collapsed saying, “but there was stuff hanging like, core wire and two-by-fours and truss members so we can’t really make our way out” (P2). P2 goes on to say, “so I get this two-by-four, like a five-foot piece of two-by-four, and I start banging on it to try and break this door” (P2).

When discovering a way out P1 noted, “So I went back in, came back around the corner, grabbed P2, told him where the exit was, and the two of us got out” (P1). P1 reflects more on this situation stating, “because when I went back in and got P2 and the two of us came out at the same time, that’s when my mask just sucked to my face. I was [choked up] I was gone” (P1).

P2 discusses what happens next, “and so I get out of the building and then I turn back because P3 is not there” (P2). P2 continues, “and I felt so guilty. I was like, I don’t have any air. I can’t do anything. I can’t help these guys. And I just kept saying, they’re right behind me” (P2)! Once outside, P2 notes “and then, that’s when I see P3 running around, he’s running around the building, he actually had gone back in the way we came in” (P3).

P3 describes the situation further, “I remember running around the front and by the time I got around to the front, I saw P2 and P1 out there” (P3). P3 continues, “I remember P2 coming up and he was just pissed. Yelling at me and he was just so mad at me. He was like, “Where did you go? Where did you go? Where did you go?” I’m like, “I thought that you guys were behind me. I thought that you were behind me. What happened to you guys?” (P3).

Discussion

Through a data analysis of the narrative case descriptions emerged individual themes relating to awareness, specifically (1) self-awareness, (2) awareness of others and (3) situational awareness. Each of these themes seem to appear on their own in different conceptual and theoretical works pertaining to firefighters (Gasaway, 2013; Russell, 2016). However, with that being said, these theoretical findings seem to be the first time all three aspects of awareness has been empirically discovered in research involving firefighters.

The Self-Awareness theme involves all of the reflective and subjective assets and experiences that the firefighters brought to the incident, as well as that which they personally took away. P1 brought knowledge of a recent building inspection that turned out being vital to his survival. Moreover, he valued the task of checking and making sure the SCBA cylinders for he and his crew were fully charged, an act that became an aspect of self-rescue that served he and P2 in their successful escape. P2’s impression of the interior fire conditions was reminiscent of prior training simulations that implicitly informed his evaluation of the danger. The company officer, P3, was aware of the potential to “lose the building” and did not want to have losing this significant community gathering place on his record as a loss. Interestingly, the social meaning of the building was salient in P3’s mind and motivational to fight the fire aggressively. Therefore, the social aspect was a part of P3’s Situational Awareness, Awareness of Others, and

Self-Awareness as a company officer. Russell et al. (2015) pointed out that the occupational identity of a firefighter is reliant upon his or her membership of the group, but we could also say that it is essential that the group engage in emergency situations in order to form a genuine bond.

The Awareness of Others theme is essential in firefighting because of the “buddy-system” required for safety and operational efficacy. It seems implicit in the data that the confidence with which the crew was working was based on the trust they had with one another that was constituted through their training and work history as a unit (Russell, 2016). The unity of the crew is deepened by the existential confrontation they shared in facing death.

The sense of unity appears to have magnified each participant’s sense of his firefighter identity in relation to the role they played on the crew and for one another. Whether one feels that have successfully fulfilled his or her firefighting mission is directly related to this in-crew role and the degree of efficacy with which the role was played by each of them. It seems that the successful escape from death and willingness of make furtive action toward rescuing one another has deepened their relationship. One can see in the Awareness of Others theme that the cohesion in this extreme situation, perhaps we could call it a “peak experience,” might be a demonstration of how firefighters become like a second family for one another (Kirschman, 2004). P3 mentions that this crew has been on numerous building fires in the past and their bond was already formed prior to this brush with death.

The Situational Awareness theme in this study’s results was an interesting find. This is the one area of awareness has been extensively delineated upon within emergency services literature (Gasaway, 2013; Jefferson and Harrald, 2007; Reichenbach, 2009). The theme was something the participants experienced across time and space in the incident. First, the heavy black smoke coming from the attic eaves is a classical sign of a very developed fire in the attic.

Yet, once on the inside, the firefighters experience of the fire threat shifted to a different fire spread scenario, having found the apparent origin in the office. Inside the building, light smoke and clear visibility moderated the participants' perspective regarding how advanced the fire had developed. Moreover, once the small fire column was found in the office the interpretation generated a mental fire propagation scenario from which this crew operated. Fire typically burns upward, but in some cases "drop down" occurs where a fuel package is ignited high up, but drops to the floor and then burns upward (DeHaan and Icove, 2011)

Self-Awareness, Awareness of Others, and Situational Awareness are complex and embodied lived-experiences that must be understood as a whole and unfolding event, rather than atomized into factors or elements that led to their survival. While some things went different than anticipated, it was all of the other things that went well that made these firefighters' survival possible and achieved.

Limitations

The limitation of this study is the aspect that this was a singular incident. All three participants were part of a firefighting work-unit that experienced a collapse while still together. However, we also point out that such an incident is high-impact/low-frequency. High-impact in the sense that the participants' lives were directly threatened and could very well have been lost. In many cases of building collapse on fire crews, the firefighters do not survive and are not available for interview. Thus, this was a low-frequency incident that afforded the opportunity to conduct an important scientific analysis that could inform fire service leaders. In qualitative inquiry, the aim is not to provide statistical significance through large samplings of the experience, but an in-depth and meaningful explanation of a focused study.

Another limitation involves the participants being uniformed and sworn professional firefighters that served together over time as members of a Ladder Company. Being members of a single company that had responded to many emergency scenes together, the crew seemed to have a rich understanding of each other's abilities and a trust that stems from consistent operations and training as a cohesive team. The researchers acknowledge that the findings of this research may not extrapolate to volunteer or even career firefighters working together from mixed companies that do not have the level of awareness of others abilities the participants had.

Recommendations

When a firefighter is separated from his or her crew, lost, or trapped alone, this seems to be an important difference that would change "what it is like" for him or her. Therefore, the application of the findings of this study must bear in mind the context of the fire and the crew's interactive dynamics during the firefight and their escape. Future studies are needed that look at the experiences of individual firefighters who survived a collapse. In addition, future research is needed regarding lessons learned from individual departments that have experienced similar events and what changes were enacted to the department's training and education of its members. More qualitative research is needed to represent firefighters' and other emergency workers such as emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and perspectives on the work they do professionally. Such research might give us better insights into the way critical incidents are conceptualized, understood, and learned from by the emergency workers themselves.

Conclusion

The emergent themes consisting of self-awareness, awareness of others, and situational awareness offers a foundation for developing future firefighters. This single case study spotlights the need for the fire and emergency services to incorporate awareness development into the

training and education of firefighters. For example, training scenarios that spark individual awareness through problem-solving. Incorporate safe training opportunities where firefighting crews are given one scenario; however, in the training evolution conditions change, and communications become confusing. Such offerings spark the needs to problem solve and lend to the strengthening of the firefighter's awareness (Gasaway, 2013; Halpern, 2013).

In addition, the findings of this study seem to support Russell's (2016) claim that fire service leaders need to build and foster the bonds of community. In the theme of awareness of others, even under extreme stress firefighters are keenly aware of the needs of their comrades. Firefighters and their crewmembers rely very much on one another both to perform their duties but also for socio-emotional support. These firefighters made meaning out of this horrific experience by socially supporting and valuing one another. While less-extreme incidents forge bonds between crewmembers, actually facing possible death together in a "close-call" deepened the participants' relationship.

It seems that self-awareness and awareness of others is inseparable in a lived-experience, even though we can intellectually discuss these as distinct. Perhaps this is why when firefighting crews lose a member the experience is like losing a part of oneself, just as family members describe the loss of a loved-one. Firefighting crews and firehouses become the second family for each member (Kirschman, 2004).

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Authors Biographies

Eric J. Russell, Ed.D., CHPP is an Associate Professor with Utah Valley University's Department of Emergency Services. His writings and research involve the influence and impact of servant leadership on fire and emergency services organizations and individual responders. He is the author of more than 70 peer reviewed and trade publications as well as two books: *The Desire to Serve: Servant Leadership for the Fire and Emergency Services* (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership) and *In Command of Guardians: Executive Servant Leadership for the Community of Responders* (Springer). Eric also speaks nationally on the subjects of servant leadership. Eric retired early as a Captain from the Department of Defense/USAF Fire and Emergency Services with combined active duty military and DoD service. His education consists of a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership-Grand Canyon University & a Master of Science in Executive Fire Science Leadership-Grand Canyon University. In addition, Eric is also a Certified Homeland Protection Professional (CHPP) from the National Sheriff's Association and the Global Society of Homeland and National Security Professionals (GSHNSP), and was awarded a graduate certificate in Homeland Security Studies from Michigan State University.

Rodger E. Broomé, Ph.D. is an associate professor of emergency services at Utah Valley University. Prior to his academic career, he retired fire battalion chief of West Jordan City, Utah, Rodger achieved his doctoral degree in psychology and is an expert in Phenomenological Psychology and Human Science Research as well as other qualitative approaches. Rodger began his professional career in law enforcement where he was made a field-training officer (FTO) within the first 3 years of his service. He cross-trained as a firefighter/EMT-B in 1994 and subsequently transferred to the fire and EMS division of West Jordan Department of Public Safety in 1996. Rodger became the lead arson investigator, fire-training officer, and Haz-Mat Technician. Rodger taught lead in the West Jordan fire recruit academy and later in the Salt Lake Fire Alliance Academy at the Salt Lake City Fire Training Center. Rodger developed the West Jordan Haz-Mat Response team through coordinating training and procuring equipment through federal grant monies. Rodger retired in the position of fire marshal and administrative officer over fire training, medical training, and logistics.

Jamie L. Russell, RN, DNP, BC-NE is an Assistant Professor with Utah Valley University's Department of Nursing. She has accumulated over two decades of nursing experience in various areas of patient care including medical, surgical, and cardiovascular specialty. Jamie is a licensed registered nurse as well as a board-certified nursing executive. In addition to her bedside experience, she has accumulated years of leadership experience and knowledge by serving as both a clinical nurse educator and nurse manager. Jamie's education consists of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Utah, a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Western Governors University, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice-Organizational Leadership from Utah Valley University.



The Nature of Disciplinary Processes in Police Organizations: The Disciplinary Continuum

Brad J. Castle
Marion Technical College
1467 Mt. Vernon Ave.
Marion, Ohio 43302-5694
Phone 419-651-8158
Email: brad@bradcastle.net

Eric J. Russell
Utah Valley University
800 West University Parkway
Orem, UT 84058
(801) 863-7700
Email: eric.russell@uvu.edu

Rodger E. Broomé
Utah Valley University
800 West University Parkway
Orem, UT 84058
(801) 863-7700
Email: broomero@uvu.edu

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Brad J. Castle
Marion Technical College

Eric J. Russell
Utah Valley University

Rodger E. Broomé
Utah Valley University

Abstract

On the surface, organizational disciplinary processes can be effective tools in changing behavior, improving performance, and holding individuals accountable for their actions; however, such processes can also be an arbitrary and cruel tool. The disciplinary process, or simply the accusation itself, can be stressful and anxiety inducing causing negative psychological consequences for the officer accused. This qualitative grounded theory study sought to explore the area of police organizational discipline through the experiences, interpretations, and responses of current or former police officers. Current and former sworn police officers (n=10) from various law enforcement organizations through the United States were interviewed for this study. Thematic analysis of the resulting data showed that among the experiences and interpretations of events relayed by the participants, a continuum of sorts is present within the disciplinary processes of law enforcement organizations, the researchers refer to this as the disciplinary continuum. The disciplinary continuum represents the evident arbitrariness and inconsistency which exists within the disciplinary processes as related by the stories of the participant officers.

Key Words: Law Enforcement, Police Disciplinary Process, Grounded Theory, Disciplinary Continuum, Officer Stress-Mental Health

Introduction

To the average civilian, disciplinary processes within police organizations go largely unnoticed unless something noteworthy occurs in the local community. When police discipline is considered, it is commonly thought of as many other aspects of policing are, within the experience and understanding of the one doing the considering. However, disciplinary processes, and how they are carried out, are often different than the processes described in the employee handbook. That is, human feelings, judgments and politics tend to motivate decision-making and the policy and procedures become a mere technical framework. This can create an opportunity for a range between unconscious bias to purposeful abuse of law enforcement officers by their administrators. This abuse has the potential to negatively impact police officers psychologically, thus leading to retention issues, officer burnout, poor community relations, and misconduct, as well as future discipline and psychological problems.

Citizens rarely see behind the scenes of an Internal Affairs investigation, and at best, are provided the “official report” after the inquiry and decisions have been completed. Levine (2016) pointed to the lack of firsthand knowledge and direct observation of scholars writing about certain aspects of police activity, and Meares et al. (2016) addressed the general detachment between police and civilians when interpreting police action. Kroes (1976) noted the conflict that arises when a highly trained and often experienced police officer who sees him or herself as an asset to the community, was suddenly accused of being harmful to that community through a complaint. Stinchcomb (2004) discussed the tendency to micromanage police officer decisions, particularly when their actions create political problems for the administration. These studies point to the stress and anxiety inherent in bureaucratic administrative systems. The police disciplinary process is a frequently used tool within that organizational system; however, it is the

political, arbitrary, and dynamic nature of the disciplinary process which is the focus of this paper. Even police psychologists are subject to being leveraged by administrators to render a political problem a psychological one in order to relieve an officer of his or her duty (Rostow and Davis, 2007). Therefore, the motivation of discipline is not always correction, but sometimes a problematizing and eliminating of the officer from the job.

This qualitative grounded theory study involving uniformed and sworn police officers from different departments throughout the United States (n=10) found disciplinary processes within organizations are often not consistently applied, and that there exists a continuum of sorts within the disciplinary processes of police organizations. The authors refer to this phenomenon as the *disciplinary continuum*. The disciplinary continuum encompasses the concept that a disciplinary process can be positive and helpful, it can be arbitrary and agonizing, or, it can also be aggressive, abusive, and harmful. An example might be administrative communication to a subordinate which can be beneficial, neutral, or abusive. It is within the control of the administrator to determine in which part of the continuum an organization's disciplinary processes will be carried out.

Literature Review

It is reasonable to suggest that when a police officer perceives they have been accused without justification, for some minor technical policy violation, or based upon an arbitrary interpretation, it will be a tremendously anxious and stressful time for the officer (Castle, et al., 2019; Kroes, 1976). Vuorensyrjä and Mälkiä (2011) wrote, “[o]fficers expect and are prepared for critical incidents at work. They do not expect to be treated unfairly by their own department” (p. 387).

Being accused of wrongdoing is generally anticipated to be a negative experience for police officers (Broomé, 2014; Reiser, 1974; Stinchcomb, 2004; Tuckey et al., 2012). If the officer faces potential disciplinary action as a result, the stress and anxiety can be understandably multiplied. This may be particularly true if the officer's status in the police community may be compromised as a result. But before one can explore the experiences and interpretations of those officers and their responses to a disciplinary procedure, a basic understanding of the concepts at play must be understood. It is reasonable to suggest that when a police officer believes he or she has been accused improperly, the officer may experience increased stress and anxiety. Moreover, the officer may seemingly understand the situation as an attack possibly motivated by malice.

Police Complaints

Recent studies addressing different aspects of police complaints note that they can be false or otherwise baseless. In addition, it seems that some researchers see police complaints as a measure of police misconduct (Ariel et al., 2015; Harris, 2014; Harris et al., 2015; Terrill and Paoline, 2015). However, as Harris (2014) noted, complaints can both over and under represent officer misconduct. As Ariel et al. (2015) discussed, complaints against the police have a low substantiation rate, and recognized the subjectivity of individual police encounters. An aspect of police complaints that seems to be underreported in the literature is that no actual misconduct needs to have taken place for a person to file a complaint against a police officer (Harris, 2014). False complaints may be filed in retaliation to officer activity, and as a result, productive officers may be the subject of complaints (Harris, 2014). Clark (2014) noted that police discretion falls within the area of not being completely right or completely wrong and often involves judgments by the officer about which reasonable people might disagree. However, if complaints against officers are considered a measure of police-public relations or police misconduct as suggested by

Ariel et al. (2015), the idea that not all complaints are the result of bona fide misconduct becomes problematic. It also needs noting that much research and writing regarding police misconduct utilizes statistics from the Bureau of Justice. Yet, as Hickman and Poore (2016) cautioned, using Bureau of Justice Statistics data on complaints for research purposes is not advised due to problems with the validity and reliability of the data.

While most complaints against officers seem to originate externally (i.e., from the public), not all complaints do. Because of the ponderous policies and structure of most police organizations, there are more than ample opportunities for administrators and officers to lodge complaints against other officers (Johnson, 2012; Phillips, 2015). As noted by Harris et al. (2015), in smaller agencies decisions in reference to a complaint against an officer is most commonly handled by a supervisor or chief. Such agencies do not typically have a counter-power like a police labor union in place to support the officers. Within the strict hierarchy of police organizations, the administrator is free, and trusted by elected officials, to make “judgment-call” decisions about a host of issues. Often, decisions that affect or determine officer discipline are therefore arbitrary in nature (Harris, 2014). As a result, questions of procedural fairness may give rise to anxiety and stress for the officer involved, particularly if the administrative officer who brings a complaint is also the officer who decides the outcome in its entirety. In this case, a disciplinary process seems to become weaponized.

The Psychology of the Disciplinary Process

In cases of police officers being accused and going through an agency’s investigation or disciplinary process, they have little, if any, control over the process that happens to them. This process may result in distress, but also the officers are likely to experience significant anxiety about the process and its outcome (Castle et al., 2019; Stinchcomb, 2004). Initially, the officer

may not even know the nature of the complaint. An email or note left in the officer's inbox instructs him or her to report at a certain time to the department's version of internal affairs about a civilian complaint. The officer may not even know the date of the alleged incident that precipitated the complaint. Yet, the officer will most likely ruminate about the notice and search his or her memory until the meeting trying to determine what he or she might have done that caused a complaint. This is anxiety (May, 1977; Sapolsky, 2004). When the interview is over and the investigator tells the officer, he will file a report with his recommendations to the chief of the department within 10-14 days, the officer is again left to ruminate and consider the potential risks to reputation, or worse depending on the outcome, of which he or she has absolutely no control which is another stress inducing characteristic of bureaucracies (Shane, 2013). The wheels of bureaucracy can grind an officer psychophysically and also negatively impact family, friends and colleagues. Organizational stress is a primary and significant source of psychological pressure on police officers (Kirschman, 2008; Paton et al., 2006).

Phillips (2015) referred to the self-perception of police officers as crime fighters and protectors of the public. Broomé (2014) discussed the self-perceptions of officers in relation to their peers and as good guys diametrically opposed to the bad guys. Kroes et al. (1974) and Stinchcomb (2004) referred to the understanding of the concept of professionalism in police culture. Kroes et al. (1974), found that,

“The average policeman takes pride in his work and in his special training and extended apprenticeship as a rookie. He perceives himself as, and is in fact, a trained law enforcement specialist. Within this framework he develops a certain perception of himself, that of a professional. Psychologically, it is very threatening and uncomfortable when a discrepancy occurs between one's self-perception and one's perception by others.

The officer perceives himself as a knowledgeable expert providing a vital service to the community, but he is often treated as if he is an enemy to the well-being of the community” (p. 152).

The role reversal of being accused of wrongdoing is a significant event in the life experience of a police officer because it tears at the very fabric of the law enforcement community, the organization, and the officer in question. This is reasonably assumed to be highly stressful and laden with anxiety because the officer cannot control the outcome of the investigation or the interpretations and beliefs of his or her peers (Kroes, 1976; Stinchcomb, 2004). Broomé (2014) discusses a similar concept to that of Kroes et al. (1974) when he used the term “good-guy/bad-guy dichotomy” (p. 18) to indicate that the self-perceptions of officers (i.e., self-worth or value within the organization) were viewed in relation to others. Reiser (1974) argued that identification as part of a peer group is a “powerful, if not irresistible, force” (p. 158). Reiser (1974) goes on to state in reference to peer group identification that “it bolsters and supports the individual officer’s esteem and confidence, which then allows him to tolerate higher levels of anger, hostility and abuse from external sources” (p. 158). This not only speaks to the importance of peer perception and support, but also to the influences of anxiety on the officers. As a result, complaints against police officers may cause lasting and far reaching effects beyond the verbal reprimand or written warning in the officer’s personnel file.

The Experience of Oversight in Policing

Given that an understanding of the existence of a division between administration and street level police officers seems commonly accepted (Wilson and Wilson, 2013), along with the lack of public understanding (Meares et al., 2016), the importance of bringing the voice of the street level officers to the literature is relatively clear. Police administrators and street level

officers have completely different jobs. Street level officers must act in consideration of lawfulness, constitutionality, and policy because this is the environment in which they operate. Conversely, police administrators are more intertwined with civilian perspectives and political processes. The two may not always share the same goals. Therefore, if only administrators are permitted to voice opinion to the scholarly community or the public, it seems that only part of the story is being told. Furthermore, if only administrative officers have influence over disciplinary processes, the broader scope and goals of justice could be lost all together in some instances.

Regardless of the inherent nature of complaints, much attention is being focused on an attempt to reduce their occurrence. Police body worn cameras (BWCs) are one attempt to address the phenomenon of police complaints. BWCs are anticipated to improve both police and client behavior, increase transparency, reduce complaints overall, and provide documentary evidence in the case of a complaint (Jennings et al., 2014; Pelfrey and Keener, 2016). Contrary to these expectations, Pelfrey and Keener (2016), as well as Jennings et al. (2014) found that nearly 70% to nearly 100% of officers disagreed that BWCs would improve either client or officer behavior. However, the appearance is that the cameras do often lower complaints (Pelfrey and Keener, 2016). Moreover, Adams and Mastracci (2019) found that BWC's contribute to increased officer burnout and the experience of less organizational support.

Levine (2016) argued that most scholars who are calling for increased penalties or scrutiny for police officers have no professional or personal experience on which to base their opinion. Meares et al. (2016) noted that civilians and police use different measures by which to determine appropriateness of police action. Both Levine (2016) and Meares et al. (2016) suggest police base their opinions on lawfulness and constitutionality, whereas civilians often use procedural fairness drawn from their experiences and impressions, while disregarding the

circumstances and background of a given situation. This highlights a clear lack of understanding of street level police officers by the public. This lack of understanding will not improve if the opinions the public hear are coming from only administrators.

The literature points to a consistent tendency of police officers being tight-lipped about issues within their organizations particularly where their own opinions or emotions may be involved (Anderson et al., 2002; Bell and Eski, 2015; Garbarino et al., 2013; Marchand et al., 2015; Ranta, 2012; Tuckey et al., 2012). This is likely a result of the police subculture that frowns on the expression of emotion and particularly emotional vulnerability or personal positions that are inconsistent with those of the agency's administration (Lee et al., 2013; Loyens, 2013; Miller & Rayner, 2012; Rose & Unnithan, 2015). The potential for arbitrary discipline is also a possible reason for this phenomenon (Harris et al., 2015).

Ultimately, there appears to exist a somewhat adversarial relationship between administrative oversight and street-level police officers. Increasingly, technology such as GPS on cruisers or BWCs combined with ever restrictive policies still leave something to be desired in reconciling the actions of police officers on the street with the understandings of the civilian population and academia. Because of the divergence of goals between administrative officers and street-level officers, the wall of silence still holds fast in most instances. The participants in this study expressed the feeling that they were consistently aware, or even concerned they could lose their jobs at any time. As a result, officers seem to be distrustful of oversight within police organizations.

The Subculture of Policing

Ranta (2012) noted the possibility of police culture's discouragement of officer expression of fear, frustration, or other emotion. In the strict hierarchy common to police

organizations, acting outside the accepted norm of the police subculture (e.g., talking about things to outsiders, expressing frustration with the organization) can bring punishment from an officer's organization if such behavior is discovered. Lee et al. (2013) discussed the proverbial code of silence that goes along with the solidarity of the police subculture. In relation to whistle blowing, officers were found to be subject to retaliation such as "physical and mental harassment, job suspension and termination, ostracism, police radio interference, and loss of backup during emergencies" (Lee et al., 2013, p. 389). Loyens (2013) listed retaliation and lack of support from management in addition to loyalty and solidarity to the police subculture as two of four reasons officers do not speak openly of issues within their agencies or profession.

Loyens (2013) noted that officers felt the need to lay low to avoid punishments for small procedural errors because they felt their managers were "highly punitive" (p. 29) and they could not trust their bosses to look out for their wellbeing. Lee et al. (2013) brings about an interesting point that strict discipline and punishment within police organizations help to curb police corruption; however, the authors also noted that supervisors would retaliate against those officers they believed broke the code of silence. The concept set up by Lee et al. (2013) is to suggest that it is the lower level officers who must be closely watched "as if" once an officer achieves higher rank or an administrative position that he or she is then automatically above reproach as described by Manning (2008). If police corruption is as prevalent as Lee et al. (2013) suggests, then it would be reasonable to suggest that there are just as many corrupt administrative officers as patrol officers. Therefore, it would also be reasonable to suggest that there is a possibility that senior officers will use their administrative power to force compliance with their will or whim, not only proper professional behavior among their subordinates. This seems to open the door to the potential for abuse of the disciplinary process against lower rank officers.

Furthermore, politics comes into play at the higher ranks of any governmental organization. Therefore, it is not at all unreasonable to suggest that some senior officers may engage in behavior at the expense of the subordinate officer to win political points with municipal government or members of the community. For instance, perhaps an officer gave a citation to the son of a wealthy businessperson. The administrative officer may illegally fix the ticket or otherwise influence the prosecutor to lessen the penalty. Or, the administrator could, upon becoming aware of the issue, consider this as a complaint and discipline the officer even though he or she did nothing wrong. *Pearce v. University of Louisville, and Hill v. City of Mt. Washington*, (Ky. 2014) addressed two cases in which police organizations in Kentucky had denied officer's due process as enumerated in the state's Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights. In the *Pearce-Hill* case, an officer was disciplined (i.e., he was reduced in rank and suspended) because he had spoken critically of the chief. Wilson and Wilson (2013) described an event where an officer was disciplined for arbitrary and potential political reasons even though he had arguably done nothing wrong. Phillips and Morrow (2016) outline a case where a police captain refused to withdraw citations to the chief's stepson. The captain was subjected to increased scrutiny and several disciplinary actions that a court later found to be pretext justifications for the captain ultimately being terminated by the chief in retaliation. Crenshaw-Logal et al. (2016) also discuss cases where officers may have been disciplined or even criminally prosecuted as a result of acts that arguably fall within their lawful duties and discretion.

Literature Review

Terrill and Ingram (2016) reported that in some studies, as high as 72% of the complaints received were for verbal discourtesy and improper use of force. Considering only verbal

discourtesy, this concept is very difficult to objectify. Of course, certain words should not be used in a derogatory nature to a driver during a traffic stop. However, in a situation where an administrator wishes to score political points at the expense of an officer, what is or is not verbal discourtesy is determined by the investigating administrator. What is or is not improper tone of voice is also determined by the investigating administrator through arguably arbitrary means.

Conduct unbecoming an officer is an example of a very common and ambiguous term that may be used to discipline a police officer. In small communities with small departments, police agencies are often not unionized, meaning the rank-and-file officer does not have representation in disciplinary matters. In these small departments, the determination of what is or is not appropriate behavior, or conduct unbecoming an officer, rests solely with a single officer, most commonly a department chief (Harris et al., 2015). Therefore, if that chief were to discipline an officer inappropriately for any reason, there is little effective recourse for the officer. Challenging the discipline would only incite further negative attention from the chief in these small departments. This could go as far as generating repercussions such as poor performance reviews or providing negative references if the officer were to seek employment with a different agency.

Hassan and Hatmaker (2014) noted that a public employee's relationship with his or her manager may be a central factor in the performance of that employee. This leaves open the possibility that public employees such as police officers who have a conflict of some nature with their administrators might typically receive lower performance reviews. As a result, officers will likely become accustomed to keeping opinions and feelings to themselves as a cost of belonging to, and being part of, the police subculture in an effort to avoid punishment (Anderson et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2013; Loyens, 2013; Rose and Unnithan, 2015). This makes under-reporting of

data related to stressors of an organizational nature (i.e., particularly stressors caused by senior officers or administration) a very real possibility when dealing with law enforcement populations.

Methodology

This study was undertaken as a grounded theory inquiry. This qualitative design allowed for a systematic collection and analysis of the data as well as the utilization of constant comparative analysis techniques (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser and Strauss, 1999). The researchers developed an interview script focusing on the *experiences*, *interpretations*, and *responses* of police officers subjected to a disciplinary process.

The researchers employed expert sampling wherein the participants had experienced circumstances which were the subject of the inquiry (Patton, 2002). Ten current and former law enforcement officers (n=10) who had been subjected to an organizational disciplinary action were individually recruited and interviewed. The participant officers represented a variety of police organizations. Organizations ranged from small to large and of various types of jurisdictions throughout the United States. Prior disciplinary encounters or official outcomes were not considered because this study was conducted from the perspective of the officers. The size of the sample was determined by *conceptual saturation* (Glaser and Strauss, 1999). Saturation is the point where new participants in the study yield little or no new information (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser and Strauss, 1999). Once saturation had been reached, no additional participants were recruited. The participant officers were all male and had between 8 and 32 years law enforcement experience.

After obtaining permission from the University Institutional Review Board, the data of the study was collected through personal interviews with the participants. The interviews were

digitally recorded and transcribed by the researchers. The transcripts of the interviews became the raw data for the study after all personally identifiable information was removed or necessarily altered to ensure anonymity.

From the prepared transcripts, the researchers developed a database from which relevant pieces of data could be cross referenced with similar data from different participants. This allowed them to systematically follow the processes of the grounded theory design while assuring security and reliability of the data itself as new interviews and data collection took place (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Garson, 2013; Glaser, 1998). The most relevant codes are represented in Tables 1-3.

The researchers utilized hand coding methods (Basit, 2003; Charmaz, 2014). The hand coding process allowed for constant comparison of data previously coded with the raw data, writing notes, and memos as the data was read and reread during analysis (Basit, 2003; Charmaz, 2014; Garson, 2013; Glaser, 1998). The coding process produced initial or *open* codes early in the process. These are simply short phrases or individual words which represented the message contained in the language of the data (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser and Strauss, 1999). As analysis progressed, connections and relationships within the open codes yielded axial codes (Charmaz, 2014). Axial codes represented major types and characteristics of open codes. The *themes* of the study were developed through deeply analyzing the relevant open and resulting axial codes along with their relationships and the messages they carried from the language of the participant data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser and Strauss, 1999).

Results

The thematic analysis process resulted in 44 initial codes, 43 of which were identified within the first five interviews. Since the disciplinary process within police organizations is

generally a negative occurrence, predictably, most responses were generally negative. This section of the study utilizes tables to display the coding results of the study. Table 1 displays relevant experience codes and their frequencies. Table 2 displays the relevant interpretation codes. Table 3 indicates relevant response codes and corresponding frequencies. It was the realization that some of the codes could be positive or negative which directly led to the concept of a continuum. These codes can show up anywhere along the disciplinary continuum depending on their degree of negativity. However, it became evident that certain codes were often associated with specific areas of the continuum –some never appearing in other areas.

Table 1.

Relevant Experience Codes

Code	Frequency
Unfair, Subjective, Arbitrary Discipline	183
Baboon-like Administrative Behavior	132
Communication	66
Confused by Administrative Action	61
Cliques	37
Blacklisting	28
Organizational Belonging	16
Disciplinary Progression	14
Disciplinary Challenges	10
Conflict Between Duty & Administration	9

Note. Baboon-like behavior had such strong support that it became one of the themes of the study depicting administrative behavior far beyond legitimate disciplinary action against an officer.

Table 2.

Relevant Interpretation Codes

Code	Frequency
Targeting	77
Politics	51
Ultimate Power	39
Lack of Trust, Feeling Alone	34
Humiliation, Loss of Status, Insulted	29
Not Being Trusted	26
Feeling Powerless	24
Jealousy	6
Gained Negative Attention	6

Table 3.


Relevant Response Codes

Code	Frequency
Fearful of Disciplinary Action	43
Cumulative Stress	41
Disbelief	34
Protective Behaviors	29
Stress & Anxiety	26
Negative Home Effects	22
Anger	22
Fear of Administrative Reprisal	20
Outsider Behaviors	18
Lesser Status or of Self-doubt	17
Frustration	11
Bad Moods	10
Depressive Symptoms	10
Medicating	9
Lost Faith in the System	8
Lack of Outlet	4

In order to further clarify the data, a visual image was created which indicates common traits of each of the three types of disciplinary processes identified in the study. This image is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Characterization and descriptors of the disciplinary continuum

Legitimate	Illegitimate	Baboon
		
Transparent	Obscure	
Objective	Subjective	
Consistent	Inconsistent	
Reasonable	Irrational	Aggressive
Predictable	Unpredictable	Abusive
Mission/Vision Oriented	Punitive	
Constructive	Injurious	
Necessary	Arbitrary	

If one interprets the version of the disciplinary policy in the employee handbook (i.e., any employee handbook) to be lawful, ethical, and necessary, it can also be considered legitimate. However, the farther an administrator strays outside the boundaries of the prescribed legitimate disciplinary practices, the less legitimate the process becomes. For instance, not giving proper notice to an employee or allowing the employee to appropriately respond as noted in a written disciplinary policy would cause that disciplinary process to fall outside legitimacy. Furthermore, when an administrator weaponizes the disciplinary process against officers with the intention of bringing the full weight of a governmental bureaucracy down on the head of a single officer, often without objective justification, the process can go beyond Machiavellianism and become more primal or baboon-like in nature.

The baboon reference is to the hierarchical behavior of wild baboon troops in Africa. The most dominant member of the group fears nothing from any other member. The dominant male does what he wants to whomever he wishes with no fear of retaliation or consternation. However, the lower ranking members fear every other member who is higher in status within the group. High ranking baboon members experience little stress; however, lower ranking members experience tremendous stress and suffer stress related ailments just as humans do (Marmot, 2003; Sapolsky, 2004). This is the reason baboon social structure and behavior makes a very good model for organizations with heavy top-down hierarchical structure, such as most law enforcement agencies. For this reason, the baboon area of the disciplinary continuum is not separate from illegitimate processes but is far outside the ethical norms of a legitimate disciplinary processes –it is aggressive and abusive with support so strong in the data that it warranted its own designation.

Discussion

The present study unexpectedly uncovered the disciplinary continuum by looking at the general experiences, interpretations, and responses of law enforcement officers to being involved in the police disciplinary process. A number of problematic conditions within the disciplinary processes became readily apparent during the study:

- Selective enforcement of rules often coupled with favoritism
- Arbitrary and creative interpretations of rules
- Policy catch-all phrases
- Disregard of actual factual information
- Political influence affecting enforcement or punishment
- Unlimited power and authority with disengaged oversight

One of the observations within the study was that the formation of cliques within the organization heralded the end of a feeling of organizational belonging and the presence of a disciplinary continuum. Cliques promote favoritism. This may be best described using social identity theory concepts of in-group and out-group dynamics (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Administrators determine membership of the in-group (i.e., the police subculture) based on perspectives of personal attributes the most prominent of which appears to be personal trust and perceived loyalty. Therefore, anything may be arbitrarily viewed as justification for the removal of any officer from this subculture in-group (e.g., disagreement with decisions or actions, exposing secrets of the group, etc.). Officers who are no longer part of the in-group are often subjected to disciplinary action at the slightest opportunity –even without factual wrongdoing being present. Participant 2 addressed this issue directly,

“I think every officer is different in every department. I think officers all have a certain amount of latitude, there’s officers that if they write a ticket at 3 miles an hour over everybody is happy. There are other officers that write one at 20 mph over and they’re in trouble. So, I think it all has to do with that officer and his relationship with his supervisor” (P2).

Alternately, even lower ranking officers who are members of the subculture in-group benefit greatly where actual violations of policy have occurred, yet administrators may refuse to bring formal processes against them as noted by Participant 10:

“If you are part of the group that is in power, you are the one that slips through without the discipline. You’re the one that gets the pass should you do something. And if you’re one of the other groups you are the one that gets slammed on” (P10).

Police officers are often regulated and controlled by ponderous rules and policy, both written and unwritten. Therefore, it was unexpected and stressful to participant officers when they realized that interpretation of policy within the disciplinary process of a police department could be carried out in a wholly arbitrary and capricious manner. As an example, assume there is a policy which requires a detailed inventory report of every vehicle which is towed by authority of the police department. An officer who is forbidden to work overtime hours makes an impaired driving arrest after a traffic crash minutes before the end of his scheduled shift. The officer notes there is essentially nothing in the car which would warrant a full inventory. In the rush to complete all the required paperwork, the officer does not file an inventory report. This example denotes a clear violation of a departmental policy. However, how an administrator might handle this violation commonly depends on who the officer is and the officer’s interpersonal relationship with the administrator. An officer who is a member of the subculture in-group might

be told in passing to be sure he takes the time to do the report next time without any documentation of the violation at all. An administrator who is *going by the book* per se may issue a verbal or even written warning to the officer for the relatively minor violation of policy. However, if the officer is someone the administrator does not personally like, not only may this cause a written formal complaint, but the officer may also be formally charged creatively with charges such as insubordination for disobeying a direct order. The creative justification being that the administrator views policy as his or her written word and therefore any violation is a direct challenge to the administrator's authority –hence insubordination. Not only did the study show arbitrary and creative interpretation of the rules within the disciplinary process, but also a general inconsistency and arbitrary nature to punishments as a result of the interrelationship of the subject officer and the administrator.

Policy is often written to be loosely interpreted. Catch-all phrases are common. Words to the effect of, “and any other reason deemed appropriate by the chief” have the effect of creating a catch-all within the documented policies of the agency. One of the primary examples is conduct unbecoming an officer. Most participant officers in the study conceptually viewed conduct unbecoming an officer to be a gross and clear violation of professional conduct such as drinking on duty, using excessively coarse language when unnecessary, or engaging in criminal behavior. However, their actual experiences were that conduct unbecoming could be arbitrarily interpreted and capriciously applied in nearly every police civilian encounter. As noted by Participant 3, “If your chief thinks you did something wrong...or your supervisor...they can make that fit you. No matter how they ...how you think they can't...they will” (P3).

Disregarding factual information seems counterintuitive to a policing organization. However, this was an ever-present issue which arose during the study. The participant officers

expressed the understanding that if an administrator wanted to punish or harm the career of an officer, the actual facts of an event were not going to stop it from happening. One participant officer explained that one agency had nearly a 70% lowering or reversal of disciplinary action brought by the administration. Also, that it was common for the administration to alternatively punish officers who successfully challenged the initial charges. In several specific cases, the participant related stories of how the chief of that department would assign an officer to much less than desirable duties as a form of unofficial punishment. Many of the participant officers of the study expressed similar sentiments. One officer described being disciplined by his department after being investigated by a different agency for an alleged crime which supposedly took place when he was not even physically present. The investigating agency immediately dismissed the investigation upon supervision review, and sent a letter of apology as the action was initiated in a reckless manner. Yet, the participant's agency persisted in disciplinary action against the officer. It appeared to be a sobering thought to the participant officers when they realized they need do nothing wrong in order to be charged and disciplined by their organizations. One participant officer received a civilian complaint in reference to a traffic stop. When he was brought into the office in reference to the complaint, he advised it was purely fictitious as evidenced by both his body cam and dash cam. Nevertheless, the administrator told the officer there was no need to look at the evidence of the event, and that he would be placing a written warning into the officer's permanent file.

Political influence should have no place in disciplinary actions. However, Machiavellianism is seemingly alive and well in police disciplinary processes (Castle et al., 2019; Reynolds and Hicks, 2015; Reynolds et al., 2018). In this area of toxic, destructive disciplinary action, administrators who display this trait will quickly charge an officer with

wrongdoing –even if no wrongdoing occurred- to score political points with friends or influential people in the community. In one case, an officer explained that he was given an undercover drug detail just prior to the sheriff running for reelection, a detail that resulted in a price being placed on his head. The investigation was solid and its scope was larger than the officer had expected. In fact, this investigation led to more than a dozen states, and a number of foreign countries. The participant officer explained that he believed the sheriff’s indifferent actions were purely politically motivated as noted by Participant 9,

“And when I went to the sheriff then he takes me out of undercover, puts me in uniform and he’d pay me \$50 overtime to take a dog up to the county seat but not to go up and follow up on drug cases. All the people we were investigating were big, big businessmen. So, if they got arrested, he certainly wasn’t going to get reelected (P9).”

Another participant officer described his termination after an impaired driving arrest of the mayor’s brother. In this case, the officer had been working fulltime with the organization for approximately seven years, with more than three years as a patrol officer. Yet, one day they called him into the office and terminated him. The reason given was that he had not successfully completed his probationary period.

Another common concept expressed by the participant officers was the powerful nature of the top administrative position (e.g., chief, sheriff, commissioner). The participant officers believed the person in this position wields unlimited power and authority over those below them in the organization. Furthermore, that the civilian oversight bodies are often disengaged and ineffective (Castle, et al., 2019). Manning (2008) describes policing as incorporating medieval concepts such as duty, honor, obedience, and personal loyalty to one’s supervisors. Manning (2008) also noted the process of the organization, “includes the elevation of chief as an

honorable position, hyper-elevation of rank and deference to command” (p. 23). In fact, the holder of the top administrative level of a law enforcement organization is often considered to be unquestionable and beyond reproach. Not only does this apply to the administrator’s subordinate officers, but it often extends to the *civilian oversight* body as well (Castle, et al., 2019). This leaves the administrator free to choose the nature of the organization’s disciplinary processes and implementation without fear of accountability to civilian oversight or subordinate officers’ challenge.

In the law enforcement world, being a disciplined officer is a good thing. Discipline is not a negative thing at all. The goal of every organization should be to use the disciplinary policy and process to outline proper organizational behavior and keep employees in their lane going the right direction to achieve organizational goals. Organizational disciplinary processes should never be a “gotcha” exercise. Unfortunately, because discipline is most often applied negatively, it has become overwhelmingly considered to be negative. That being said, a legitimate disciplinary process is mandatory for every organization. Not only because organizations require a way to remove troublesome and truly underperforming employees, but they need to do so ethically and legally, while at the same time protecting employees from fictitious accusations and unreasonable repercussions.

The data from the participant officers of the study showed strong evidence of unfair, arbitrary, and capricious disciplinary behaviors. Further, these officers either experienced or observed disciplinary processes being used aggressively and abusively (i.e., baboon behaviors). Often times, these participants interpreted the administrator’s goal as harming or ending of the subject officer’s career in law enforcement. A common thread among all the participant officers

is that the disciplinary process could be used as a tool to remove an officer from an organization at the whim of the administration.

Targeting was another very strong code that was present with a vast majority of the participants. This means there are disciplinary practices which go well beyond minding the business of the organization in a fair, impartial, and objective fashion. In fact, this study shows that there are police administrators all over the United States who not only selectively enforce and creatively interpret policy and rules (i.e., illegitimate disciplinary processes), but there are those who make it their mission to end an officer's career based on what was interpreted by the participants to be personal reasons or personality conflicts, not based on the quality of the officers' work (i.e., baboon disciplinary processes). This denotes a continuum within the disciplinary processes of law enforcement organizations where the same offense can be handled across a wide variety of ways –the disciplinary continuum.

In the end, there is evidence that a more accurate model of a disciplinary process includes legitimate, illegitimate, and baboon disciplinary processes. This concept must be viewed as a continuum because some codes can be both positive and excessively negative. Communication is a good example. In a properly functioning organization, employees are given the mission and vision along with the organization's goals to fulfill them. There should be continual coaching and consultation with the guys and gals who are doing the business of the organization. Particularly when as in policing, those employees are the people in the organization to interact with the community. A case review with a compliment for good work, or suggestions with the reasons something should be changed are good examples of positive communication. However, when a supervisor or administrator talks negatively about an officer to his or her peers, this is negative communication. Likewise, when a supervisor or administrator confronts an officer in a

hostile and physically threatening manner and calls the officer a liar to their face, this is aggressive and abusive communication and has no place in any organization.

During the study and conversations with the participants, a majority of the participants noted the immense and unchallenged power police administrators possess. The study showed that this power allowed some administrators to disregard rules and policy particularly where disciplinary issues were concerned and did as they pleased without fear of redress by other officers or civilian oversight. As Participant 2 explained,

“Well this was so far over the top. This had nothing...this went way beyond disciplinary.

This went to a personal vendetta level. And the problem is when you’ve got somebody in that position, the chief of police, they can literally just do anything if they want to” (P2).

The existence of a disciplinary continuum and the model of police disciplinary processes which emerged from this study show effective and engaged oversight is an important element in preventing police administrator abuse of the disciplinary process (Castle, et al., 2019).

Throughout history we have examples of men and women who have been corrupted by power when effective oversight is not present. From the documents leading up to the Magna Carta to the Stanford Prison Experiment and Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq we have countless examples of power corrupting its holders to abuse others.

So, the question then becomes, how do we fix this issue? The focus of this paper is on the disciplinary continuum which emerged unexpectedly in a study of police disciplinary action from the perspectives of police officers themselves. The disciplinary continuum shows disciplinary processes can be proper, restorative and correcting, and legitimate. However, it also shows disciplinary processes can be harmful, counterproductive, and illegitimate, or even aggressive and abusive. The disciplinary continuum denotes a symptom, not the disease itself. The disease

is unlimited, unchecked power concentrated at the top of some of America's law enforcement organizations. Acknowledgement and documentation of the disciplinary continuum not only brings better understanding to civilian authorities but in the right hands becomes a tool to guard against abusive use of the disciplinary system as a bureaucratic tool against officers without objective, reasonable, and proper justification. Civilian oversight should ensure the disciplinary process of a police organization is only used in concert with appropriate goals set forth for the organization.

Limitations

There are inherent limitations to any inquiry due to the design and delimitations of the study. A limitation due to delimitations is that of perspective focus in this study. We focused our attention and collection of data on that which would represent the officers' perspectives. Often, officers do not enjoy the privilege of publicly speaking out. Sometimes, they are advised to "remain silent" by advocates and attorneys, while other times department policies prohibit them from making public statements. Therefore, we intended to represent the officers' perspectives in this matter because it is rarely considered by the community, its elected officials, or the media. The constructivist grounded theory methodology used in this study is about developing a theory or model of a social phenomenon and assumes it is from someone or groups' point of view (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, police administrators or elected officials that have experienced disciplining a police officer were not entered into the purpose of this study. That is because, typically, they make official statements and have a lot more power and control in such situations to have their perspectives heard via the media in press conferences. At minimum, they have a lot of influence about what goes into the official record and what does not. We decided to, not necessarily to vilify police administrations, but to represent the voices of the officers. They are

after all, the community's "boots on the ground" that engage with civilians in the community to fight crime and keep peace.

Recommendations

The existence of a disciplinary continuum is only a symptom of a larger problem which must be fixed. If this problem is not fixed, disciplinary processes will continue to be used as a bureaucratic tool to protect the bad cops who enjoy the favor of their administrators, and mischaracterize, remove, and end the careers of good cops without objective justification. In the end we all lose if America's law enforcement organizations and civilian oversight does not get a handle on this problem. Community leaders and civil rights advocates seem not to consider that the culture of their police departments might be a top-down construction. The more autocratic and arbitrary the administrators, the more of this is manifest downward through the ranks to the space where the officers and civilians meet.

As the participants acknowledged, police administrators often stick together when it comes to hiring officers from other police organizations. As several participants noted, once a disciplinary record is established or an officer is forced from one organization, justified or not is irrelevant, there is little likelihood he or she will find employment with another agency. There is a kind of blanket ostracizing that the terminated officer suffers; there are rarely any second chances. This makes all disciplinary processes for the officers personally and professionally high-stakes ordeals. The other common aspect that emerged from the study was the fact that officers were commonly disciplined without doing anything wrong. This is possible through selective enforcement, loose interpretation, and catch-all phrases used within written disciplinary related policy. Catch all phrases should never be included in police organizational policy.

For this reason, many of the officers of the study suggested a form of peer review, however, this would be somewhat problematic. One of the more common codes from the participants was fear of administrative reprisal. Essentially, if an officer who served on a peer review board went against an administrator's wishes in a disciplinary matter, he or she could be subjected to retaliation from the administrator in question or his or her own administrator in a clique-like sympathetic fashion. Civilian review boards are often seen to be equally problematic because most civilians do not fully understand the nature of policing and the boundaries within which police must act. As Meares et al. (2016) suggests, civilians view police action through their personal perspective of procedural justice devoid of background information, whereas police view police action through its constitutionality and lawfulness to include a totality of the circumstances understood by the officer at that moment. Specialized training for civilian review board members would be costly, but the aspect of potential retaliation would still be present. Utilizing retired or former officers as members of a civilian peer review board has some merit. However, there seems to be a deference and loyalty toward other administrators in clique-like fashion which may not end once an officer is no longer active. Additionally, retribution is still a potential for those individuals.

One possibility is the creation of state level review boards (Castle, et al., 2019). With a concept similar to a jury system, line officers would be obligated to serve terms on the review board anonymously as decision makers who determine justification for charges, and resulting culpability according to the factual events (i.e., functioning similar to the peer review process in academia). Certainly, loyalty and retaliation issues must be addressed and therefore officers anonymously serving on a review board would be required to be from a different geographical area of the state. It would be the responsibility of the charging administrator to prove his or her

case to the review board through thorough documentation –which should avoid issues of policy differences from organization to organization. Any responsibility would be determined based solely upon the documentation of the event. Appropriate punishment, if any, would be set forth in a weighted suitable fashion with appropriate narrow ranges of punishment for specific classes of offenses.

Most states already have some organization or administration which oversees the qualifications and requirements to certify law enforcement officers. If states are already the keepers of the requirements of training and education required to be an officer, why not allow them to independently handle disciplinary issues beyond verbal warnings. Most police organizations file reports of some sort to state oversight agencies currently as a matter of common business. This way, if the disciplinary action beyond verbal warning is necessary, the administrator files a report with the state oversight agency. The oversight agency contacts the officer to submit a rebuttal, and then it is assigned to a peer group for determination. This would do three important things. First, personalities would not enter into the determination process of the disciplinary system. This would effectively put an end to the disciplinary continuum as it now exists. Secondly, punishment from written warnings all the way up to suspension and termination would be handled purely objectively and more importantly consistently. Finally, a state level agency with licensure power over all police officers of the state would have the power to effectively sanction administrative officers who attempt to abuse the disciplinary system. Such a system would go a long way to restoring trust in police organizations for the communities they serve and also help to protect the good officers who are trying to navigate a complex and dangerous career –particularly during trying times.

The concept of a disciplinary continuum is not unique to the field of law enforcement. Anywhere there is a hierarchical organizational structure, this type of disciplinary continuum may develop. Future research should inquire about the existence of a disciplinary continuum in other fields as well. Further, while a state level oversight agency may be a possibility for public sector organizations, it is not possible for the private sector. Researchers should look for innovative and reasonable solutions if this problem is confirmed in private sector fields. One possibility might be the formation of a professional review board that may be retained by private organizations to fill the role of impartial arbiters of responsibility and punishment should the evidence require.

The problems which cause a disciplinary continuum to form are not fully understood, and, the magnitude of this problem within law enforcement and other public sector organizations is not fully known. Additional research is needed to fully understand and reaffirm problems with disciplinary processes. The full weight and consequences of harm to officers subjected to illegitimate and baboon disciplinary processes is not yet fully understood. Future research should address the full scope of these effects to officers to analyze its impact to the police organizations and their communities.

In the end, the disciplinary continuum is a symptom, not a disease. As a concept, it can be used as a tool to help identify a huge problem within law enforcement organizations which is well known, but not documented or often talked about. This study shows that unlimited power and control by an exalted, powerful administrator cultivates abuse and corruption. Therefore, active and effective oversight is necessary to heal our wounds and correct our course moving forward.

Future Research

Future research needs to consider the personal perspectives of other stakeholders in police misconduct and internal affairs investigations. Law enforcement agencies vary in terms of their level of government (e.g., federal, state, county, & municipal), sociocultural, and geopolitical nature. Unlike Europe and other countries, the United States has a decentralized police model that values local control and institutionalizes it (Ames, 1981). That means local political control is at the helm and officers must navigate the local political landscape. It seems to reason that administrators and political leaders have pressures of their own to navigate. The point is, personnel discipline in the workplace seems to be always personal no matter how much the “rational” policy and procedure seem to leave subjective experience out of it. Manning (2008) argues from a sociological perspective that police organizations are justified by two distinct but not inseparable rationales: (a) the rational institution [bureaucracy], and (b) patrimonial loyalty. What seems apparent in this study is that the motivation for punishing a police officer can be the transgression of patrimonial loyalty (stepping out of rank, so to speak) but the process of punishment is bureaucratic which objectifies the situation and justifies all parties’ actions in the process. How is this experience understood by others in this dehumanizing process?

Contemporary governance is founded upon the natural sciences model and legal positivism. That is, what counts as evidence is that which is demonstrable, measurable (quantifiable) and reduced to simple explanations. More qualitative research is needed in the spirit of human science to explore and examine human affairs without the strictures of the natural sciences’ model that only provides a science of *objective certainty* (Dilthey, 1988). Human beings are not “things” in the world and are better not studied like such.

Conclusion

No documentation could be located which proposed the concept of a disciplinary continuum. However, participant officers clearly related their observations of discrepancies with organizational disciplinary policy and processes in actual practice with legitimate versions that existed in the employee handbook. The presence of catch-all phrases in written policy allowing arbitrary application of the bureaucratic disciplinary processes appeared to be instrumental to less than legitimate disciplinary processes. Beyond that point, creative interpretation of specific rules within written policy seemed to be commonplace. The concept the authors call the *disciplinary continuum* is well recognized by members of the law enforcement community with whom the authors interacted.

The lack of documentation in this area of inquiry might well be connected to the preferences of the police subculture which frowns upon openly discussing aspects of internal organizational life. One officer participant was charged with a violation of policy and punished for expressing a viewpoint on a current event via social media which was different than his administrator's position on the issue. This highlights the need for researchers to be culturally competent when working with groups such as police officers who tend to be overly cautious and distrustful in an effort to avoid running afoul of their administrations and the police subculture.

Ultimately, it is the lack of adequate and effective supervision and transparency within police organizational internal dealings that can lead to a disciplinary continuum. If administrators are held to account and must justify the actions they take against their subordinate officers, inconsistencies in the disciplinary processes would come to light. It is these inconsistencies which add to the stress and anxiety officers face as a result of being part of a law enforcement organization. If a disciplinary continuum exists within a local community's law enforcement

organization, it is a symptom of larger issues with which the community should address. The good news is that this can of course be corrected. It is with this hope we bring forth this paper and offer a conceptual understanding of the disciplinary continuum as a tool to help those charged with oversight of police organizations.

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Author Biographies

Brad Castle, Ph.D., is a police patrol veteran, holding instructor ratings for Taser and Radar/Lidar. In addition to degrees in criminal justice, and public safety administration, Dr. Castle holds a master's degree in public administration with emphasis on government and policy, and a doctorate in psychology with emphasis in industrial/organizational psychology. Dr. Castle currently teaches psychology, serves on doctoral committees, and also works as an investigator and expert witness in various court cases. Dr. Castle's research interests include effects of organizational behavior on employees, leadership effectiveness, employee performance among others –particularly involving emergency service organizations.

Eric Russell, Ed.D., CHPP is an Associate Professor Homeland Security with Utah Valley University's Department of Emergency Services. His writings and research involve the influence of homeland security education on responders as well as the impact of servant leadership on organizations and individuals. He is the author of more than 70 peer reviewed and trade publications as well as two books: *The Desire to Serve: Servant Leadership for the Fire and Emergency Services* (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership) and *In Command of Guardians: Executive Servant Leadership for the Community of Responders* (Springer). Eric speaks nationally on the subjects of servant leadership and homeland security education. Dr. Russell retired early as a Captain from the Department of Defense/USAF Fire and Emergency Services with combined active duty military and DoD service. Dr. Russell's education consists of a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership-Grand Canyon University & a Master of Science in Executive Fire Science Leadership-Grand Canyon University. In addition, Dr. Russell is also a Certified Homeland Protection Professional (CHPP) from the National Sheriff's Association's Global Society of Homeland and National Security Professionals (GSHNSP), and was awarded a graduate certificate in Homeland Security Studies from Michigan State University

Rodger Broomé, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Utah Valley University and has a professional background in law enforcement and fire/emergency services having retired after 22 years of service as a fire battalion chief. Dr. Broomé is a published psychological researcher in publications pertaining to Phenomenological Psychology, Humanistic Psychology, Police and Firefighting Psychology and Leadership. He co-edited and contributed to the book *Humanistic Contributions for Psychology 101: Growth, Choice, and Responsibility* and contributed to *In Command of Guardians: Executive Servant Leadership for the Community of Responders* by Russell. Dr. Broomé currently volunteers as a reserve police officer and EMT for a small city in Utah and volunteers on Utah State's Critical Incident Stress Management team.



Interest Based Bargaining: A Review of Ohio Fire, Police and Teacher
Collective Bargaining Agreements

Gregory L. Walterhouse
Bowling Green State University
108 Williams Hall
Bowling Green, Ohio 43404
419-372-6009
waltegl@bgsu.edu

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Gregory L. Walterhouse
Bowling Green State University

Abstract

This research examined the origin and evolutionary timeline of interest-based bargaining (IBB) and its current use in public sector collective bargaining specifically firefighter, police officer and teacher negotiations in the state of Ohio. The research hypothesis was that after gaining some notoriety thirty years ago, interest-based bargaining is not being widely used in public servant labor negotiations. Also examined was the relationship between interest-based bargaining and shared leadership. Review of approximately 1750 police, fire and teacher contracts from the state of Ohio provided data for this research. The data supported the research hypothesis in that no police or fire negotiations used IBB, and only about 8% of teacher negotiations used it. The literature suggests several reasons that IBB is not widely used. These include a lack of trust, reluctance to embrace shared leadership and relinquish control; concern over time involved in the IBB process and that decision-making may take longer. Some perceive IBB as unfair; believe that equal influence by team members is rarely unattainable, or desirable, and IBB does not work for economic issues. However, data suggests that IBB is implementable on a situational and incremental basis and expandable over time. IBB can produce amicable negotiations, shorter contracts in less time, less misinterpretation of contract language, fewer grievances, and improved communication. Accordingly, IBB may be a viable option for parties that continually find themselves in contentious labor negotiations.

Key Words: Collective Bargaining, Fire, Police, Integrative Bargaining, Interest Based Bargaining, Labor Contracts, Labor Negotiations, Labor Relations, Positional Bargaining, Principled Negotiation, Teachers, Leadership

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the origin and evolution of interest-based bargaining (IBB), and to determine its current level of use in public sector collective bargaining specifically firefighter, police officer and teacher labor negotiations in the state of Ohio. The research hypothesis is that after gaining some notoriety thirty years ago, interest-based bargaining is not being widely used in public servant labor negotiations. If the hypothesis proves true, this research will attempt to answer, through inferences from the literature, why interest-based bargaining has not gained in popularity.

The idea of integrative bargaining dates to circa 1900 and originated with management theorist Mary Parker Follett (Sullivan, 2002). The next notable milestone in the evolution of interest-based negotiations was in 1965 with publication of the book *A behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations* authored by Richard Walton and Robert McKersie, followed some sixteen years later by the publication *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving in* by Roger Fisher and William Ury published in 1983. In 1975, contemporaneously with the publications, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) began training new mediators in IBB. Then in 1995, the FMCS published *Guidelines: Innovative Collective Bargaining Contract Provisions*. This seemed to pique interest in both scholarly articles and practical application of IBB. Between 1996 and 2001, the FMCS was involved in just over 1500 IBB negotiations accounting for 5.44% of negotiations involving a FMCS mediator (Barrett, 2015).

In 1993, President Clinton directed all federal agencies to conduct a performance review of their respective agencies. As a result, the FMCS commissioned the *National Performance Review Survey* that involved interviewing union and management representatives from approximately 1,050 randomly sampled labor contracts from the agency's database. The agency

received 1,557 survey responses from 777 union and 780 management representatives respectively, comprising a 74% response rate (Cutcher-Gershenfeld, et al., 2001). Researchers Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, Thomas Kochan and John Calhoun Wells using a multivariate analysis, analyzed the data and found that the sample closely matched the “industry distribution of unionized firms in the country” (Cutcher-Gershenfeld et al., 2001, p. 6). The researchers also made clear that the data presented a cross-sectional snapshot of collective bargaining at the time. The researchers report that 62.6% of management respondents and 77.2% of union respondents were aware of IBB, with 35.4% of management respondents and 48.9% of union leaders reporting having used IBB. Michael & Michael (2012) report that during the years 2001-2003 the use of IBB rose 18% among union respondents and 4% among management respondents. However, since that time interest in the practical application and scholarly study of IBB has appeared to wane.

IBB is not unique to the United States with labor and management in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa using it. IBB has been used in a wide range of industries including manufacturing, airlines, rail, health care, petrochemical, utilities, mining, hotel industry, schools and government (Alexander, 2007; Long, 2016; Zeleznikow, 2008; Michael & Michael, 2012; Paquet, Gaétan & Bergeron, 2000; Miller, et al., 2010; Kennedy, 1999; de Villiers, 1999; Sullivan, 2002).

Literature Review

The reason parties negotiate is to achieve a better outcome than would otherwise occur (Zeleznikow, 2008). Traditionally labor negotiations have been based on positional bargaining, an adversarial form of negotiation involving concession and compromise. Several authors have characterized positional bargaining as adversarial, militant, losing, competitive, difficult,

frustrating, backstabbing, and contentious. Also, win-lose outcomes leading to resentment and continuous conflict, disharmony, mistrust, negatively influencing relationships, power-game and game playing, hurtful, divisive and lack of transparency with the goal of forcing the other side to concede as much as possible (Brown, 2015; Zeleznikow, 2008; Katz & McNulty, 1995; de Villiers, 1999).

In contrast, IBB, also termed interest-based negotiations (IBN), has been characterized as mutual gains or win-win bargaining (Cutcher-Gershenfeld et al., 2001), integrative bargaining (Walton & McKersie, 1965), principled negotiation (Fisher & Ury, 1983), and as a challenging process that requires both sides to commit to a culture of trust, honesty, respect for each other's views, and risk taking. It involves information sharing, and a free-flowing, dynamic and spontaneous process leading to creative and mutually beneficial or win-win solutions (Stepp, et al., 1998; Michael & Michael, 2012; Katz & McNulty, 1995). It also requires separating the people from the issues focusing on interests rather than positions and relying on objective criteria (Zeleznikow, 2008; Fisher & Ury, 1983). IBB has further been characterized as “middle ground, collective win-wins, human, respectful, validating, valued, empowering, broader, inclusive, creative innovation, thriving, collaboration, open conversation, problem-solving, satisfying and working together” (Brown, 2014, p.116).

IBB requires reflective listening and dialogue and focuses on interests that define the problem rather than taking stances and the resulting proposal and counterproposal approach of positional based bargaining (Alexander, 2007; Stepp et al., 1998; Katz & McNulty 1995; Fisher & Ury, 1983). The goal of IBB is to work together in the creation of options that will satisfy both parties (Fisher & Ury, 1983). Benefits of IBB include outcomes of the bargaining process being mutually owned and defended, solutions being more innovative, and agreements that are easier

to administer and less open to misinterpretation (Kennedy, 1999). Another benefit found in a study conducted by Michael and Michael (2012) is that IBB often results in shorter length contracts. In a study of three school districts, Freeman (2012) found that participants perceived the IBB process as beneficial to the faculty-administration relationship and created positive feelings among the parties due to the cooperative nature of the process. Study participants described the IBB process as collegial, promoting trust and respect, and fostering a feeling of equality at the negotiating table.

IBB has been described as including a number of steps. First, the parties identify their interests. Second, the parties describe and define the issues. Third, each party identifies its interest regarding the issues and considers the interests of the other party. Fourth, the parties, through brainstorming, develop options and potential solutions that satisfy the areas of interest. Fifth, the parties develop and agree on the criteria that they will use to evaluate the options. Sixth, the parties select the options that best meet the agreed-upon criteria. Finally, the parties based on objective criteria craft the options into comprehensive solutions (Stepp, et al. 1998; Katz & McNulty 1995). IBB employs the uses of subcommittees to gather data, explore options and present recommendations to the bargaining committee. Subcommittees can help parties build trust and achieve closure to prior conflicts (McKersie, et al., 2008; Kennedy, 1999).

It is best that IBB negotiations start with small manageable issues to achieve quick resolutions, and for the process to gain credibility and trust over time among the participants while still in the learning process (Brown, 2015; de Villiers, 1999). As with all new processes there is typically a learning curve involved and Stepp et al., (1998) report that as parties become more experienced with the IBB process efficiencies are realized.

Another essential aspect of the IBB process is extensive pre-bargaining training in IBB for both negotiating teams conducted by an independent third-party consultant (Michael & Michael 2012; Freeman, 2012; Miller, et al., 2010). IBB training is available at little to no cost through many state employee relations boards and from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. As reported by Kennedy (1999), training should include an initial joint training on the principles of IBB, followed by an off-site joint training incorporating simulated negotiations, role reversal and brainstorming techniques, followed by a second off-site training to review material learned in the first session and establish bargaining ground rules. Establishing ground rules and reaching agreement on meeting agendas are critical elements to successful IBB negotiations (Katz & McNulty, 1995). Agenda's should include meeting objectives, meeting flow, meeting start and end times and assignments including facilitator, timekeeper, and minute taker roles.

Concerns with IBB

Even when IBB is used, the parties often revert to positional bargaining on economic issues, and management often believes that IBB is only effective for non-economic issues (Barrett, 2015; McKersie, et al., 2008; Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 2001). Though applying IBB to economic issues may be difficult, Stepp et al., (1998) informs us that IBB can be useful with economic issues when the parties agree on the appropriate data to be use in exploring options. de Villiers (1999), provides an example of what can transpire when the agreed upon data is not clearly defined. The parties in the example, using IBB, agreed to use *inflation rate* as a basis of negotiating wage increases. However, because there was not a clear definition of *inflation rate* management used the official government index, while labor relying on popular journals used the recorded inflation index and an inflation plus index. As result neither party would budge from their respective *positions* accusing each other of dishonesty and bad faith bargaining. To avoid

weakening relationships in the early stages of negotiations it is best to address economic issues later in the process (Brown, 2015).

Starting negotiations with small manageable issues can help build trust and strengthen relationships among negotiators (Michael & Michael, 2012; Miller et al., 2010). Barrett (2015) reports that union members are often of the opinion that positional bargaining is the only means of achieving the union's goals. The perception of fairness is also an issue according to Zeleznikow (2008) who reports that fairness of the process is a major concern for parties considering IBB. Zeleznikow argues that developing negotiation procedures that include transparency, adhering to legally and just norms and the parties knowing their Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA) can establish fairness in the negotiation process. A BATNA is not a stance but rather a standard against which any proposed agreement should be measured and protects against accepting terms that are too unfavorable or rejecting an agreement that is in a party's best interest to accept (Fisher & Ury, 1983). Another problem stems from the amicableness among negotiators in the IBB process resulting in constituents becoming wary of their own negotiators (Michael & Michael, 2012; McKersie, et al., 2008).

The IBB process is generally more unpopular among labor negotiators relative to their management counterparts based in part on union's general avoidance of management, a decline in collective bargaining, and concessions by unions that have further dampened the appeal for IBB (Michael & Michael, 2012; Miller, et. al., 2010; McKersie, et al., 2008). The research of Cutcher-Gershenfeld et al. (2001) found that 39.2 percent of management compared to 28.0 percent of union leaders rated using IBB as either "excellent" or "very good." Others believe that revealing information normally withheld during positional bargaining benefits management (Sullivan, 2002). Nevertheless, to the contrary, Freeman (2012) found that the unions in his study

of school collective bargaining spoke more highly of contracts negotiated through the IBB process. Finally, as reported by Sullivan (2002), others believe the success of negotiations hinge on the skill of the negotiator and not the open revealing of information. Cutcher-Gershenfeld et al. (2001) conclude that IBB must in the end deliver mutual gains or risk being perceived as unbalanced and “overly susceptible to power dynamics” and losing support (p. 20).

Leadership and Culture

Top-down leadership has historically been the norm in most organizations, particularly public safety organizations that typically use a paramilitary leadership structure. Yet, some organizations, predominantly in education and health care, are moving toward a collaborative or shared leadership structure. Balch and Adamson (2018) report that over time, school boards and superintendents have worked more as partners and have increasingly shared responsibilities. This move is a result of the increasing difficulty of any single leader possessing the requisite skills and abilities to lead an organization today (Kocolowski, 2010). The challenge to shared leadership is that as a society collaboration is not taught, encouraged, or valued making implementation of shared leadership extremely difficult (Engard, 2011; Kocolowski, 2010). Advantages of a shared leadership structure include the diversity of thought and synergy that occurs when the organization accomplishes more than the efforts of individual organization members (Kocolowski, 2010). Moreover, Balch and Adamson (2018) tell us “trust, commitment, accountability and results are essential elements of every healthy team including the school board-superintendent team” (p. 2496). A shared leadership culture is not an all or nothing proposition, leaders can determine the level of collaboration they want and communicate this to the organization’s members. Effective communication processes are critical in creating or maintaining collaborative cultures. These communication processes include asking questions,

accepting responses, showing interest in organization member's ideas, responding positively to attempts at collaboration, creating and reinforcing a culture where organization members can collaborate and allowing experimentation (Kramer & Crespy, 2011). It is also important for leaders to create positive social relationships among organization members to foster collaboration.

Reasons that some leaders may be reluctant to embrace a culture of shared leadership include concern over the time involved in collaboration, relinquishing control, and no longer being able to create their vision for the organization (Kramer & Crepsy, 2011). Other leaders have concern that decision-making may take longer, that equal influence by team members is rarely unattainable, and may even be undesirable (Kocolowski, 2010).

Long (2016) tells us that communication is “central, defining and constitutive of leadership” in other words; leadership is contingent on effective communication (p. 178). Long suggests that for collective bargaining to be effective, that both sides need to embrace a more democratic leadership approach which includes asking questions, open discussion and engaging in meaningful collaboration. Collaboration is an essential element of collective narratives defined as a story or incident told from the perspective of several people. Collective narratives create concordance rather than discordance and tend to unite organizational members that can change the culture of collective bargaining and promote new understanding and ways of working together (Long, 2016, p. 177). In addition, unsolicited and complete information sharing are guiding principles of IBB according to de Villiers (1999)

The leadership style of the union president appears to have a greater impact on the participation of union members than does the leadership style of management. Using a mixed method research of 560 members of a United States based Educators Association representing

teachers, school counselors and social workers, Sadler (2012) found a direct relationship between the union president's participatory leadership style and overall involvement of union members. Sadler also found that there was no statistical evidence to suggest the leadership style of management directly affects union member participation. Further, union members who believe the union is doing a good job at making gains are less likely to engage in union activities. None-the-less, interest-based bargaining is not only a tool or technique to facilitate negotiation and problem solving, but is a change in mindset and culture of the organization (Kennedy, 1999). In this regard, the leadership of both the union and management must act as models in making IBB a way of problem solving within the organization. This requisite culture change in the organization and union may occur prior and form a foundation for the adoption of IBB or contemporaneously with implementation of IBB.

IBB Case Studies

The IBB approach does not need to displace or render obsolete other more traditional forms of collective bargaining it is not an either-or proposition. It is possible to use a hybrid approach to collective bargaining. A case study involving Kaiser Permanente and a coalition of Kaiser Permanente unions, though a bit dated, is instructive. Researchers found that the parties employed a mix of IBB and positional bargaining, with IBB techniques used successfully to reach agreement where the parties shared a common interest. However, where greater conflict existed between the parties on certain issues, the parties resorted back to positional bargaining to reach resolution. This was particularly true for wages and other financial issues (McKersie, et al., 2008; Kennedy, 1999). This is an example of how using the best features of both approaches to collective bargaining can result in reaching amicable solutions.

Michael & Michael (2012) cite an example where a lack of leadership and open communication had a destructive effect on the IBB process. In the example cited, negotiators from both sides kept a tight rein on subcommittees even to the extent of prohibiting the subcommittees from discussing certain issues resulting in an “arms-length relationship at the table and no deals” (p. 469). However, this failure resulted from a lack of effective leadership and recognizing the importance of open communication and trust in IBB and was not a failure of the IBB process itself. Other case studies reveal positive outcomes.

In a study of a change from positional bargaining to IBB in a community college, Brown (2015) presents several findings correlating IBB to organizational culture and relationships. Brown suggests that the principles and values of IBB “becomes a way of life” as they are integrated in various ways away from the negotiating table (p. 115). Researchers report that because the interest-based approach requires on-going commitment it can become the foundation of organizational culture having a positive impact on broader labor-management relationships throughout the organization (Brown, 2015; Freeman, 2012; Miller et al., 2010). One of the most common failures of IBB is for labor and management not to entrench IBB and interest-based problem solving in day-to-day relations (Kennedy, 1999). Brown also discovered that the more experienced negotiators are with IBB the more likely they are to replicate IBB values in everyday life.

In a Canadian study comparing 19 cases where IBB was used against 19 cases where traditional bargaining was used, with organizations in both groups having similar characteristics and economic activities, the authors found that clauses dealing with “joint governance and organizational innovation” underwent more changes when IBB was used (Paquet, Gaétan & Bergeron, 2000, p. 281). Specifically, when IBB was used contract articles dealing with

grievances, discipline, organization of work, and labor relations resulted in more changes. Conversely, when traditional negotiations were used contract articles addressing working hours and work schedules underwent more change. The authors also report that IBB leads to more monetary concessions by unions whereas traditional bargaining methods lead to more economic gains for unions. This could explain in part some union's reluctance to use IBB. However, the authors emphasize that IBB "generates a far greater number of mutual gains with respect to articles dealing with relationship between the parties" (p. 292). Conversely, Freeman (2012) reports that in his study of three school districts, the boards of education perceived that they would not have conceded as much financially had they used positional bargaining. However, the perceived financial cost of the IBB process itself was minimal. Miller, et al. (2010) in a survey of 84 union and management chief negotiators in the rail and airline industries found that positive experience with IBB in an industry is a predictor for others in the same industry to try the IBB approach.

Sullivan (2002) cites a case study of labor negotiations within the hotel industry in the San Francisco area with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union considered one of the "most confrontational unions in the country" (p. 1). Sullivan reports that after agreeing to use IBB the relationship between labor and management was "dramatically transformed" resulting in a more flexible labor contract and increases in hotel productivity and profitability over a five year period. (p. 12). Ramsey County Minnesota experienced similar results where years of tumultuous labor relations led the county and six different bargaining units of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) to try interest-based bargaining. The outcomes from using IBB included improved communications, a more amicable

process; contracts renegotiated in record time and before expiration, fewer grievances, and enhanced customer service (Brainerd, 1998).

Methodology

Existing data obtained from the Ohio State Employment Relations Board (SERB) website provided the foundation for this research. Within 30 days of execution, a copy of all firefighter, police officer and teacher collective bargaining agreements (CBA) must be submitted to SERB. This provides a searchable archive of the contracts stored as portable data files (PDF's). By selecting "Documents and Decisions" from the top menu on the SERB webpage, then selecting "Collective Bargaining Agreements" a search box populates from which public employee collective bargaining agreements may be searched. A search for teacher contracts resulted in 825 contracts being located. SERB has teacher contracts subdivided with 18 from the Ohio Federation of Teachers, 39 with the American Federation of Teachers, and 768 with the Ohio Education Association. The searches took place from early January through March of 2020. The contracts were date stamped as received by SERB between February 29, 2012 and January 16, 2020. The CBA's were filtered and only those contracts covering K-12 teaching staff were include in the analysis and contracts for school support staff and those for colleges and universities were filtered out. This resulted in a review of 648 contracts. Being the contracts are stored as PDF's word searches of the contracts was possible. Word searches consisting of "interest based" and the acronym "IBB" identified those contracts referencing IBB.

The SERB website was also searched for firefighter contracts using the terms "fire" and "IAFF" (the acronym for the International Association of Fire Fighters), resulting in 21 and 271 contracts, respectively. The contracts were date stamped as received by SERB between the dates of June 30, 2011 and January 8, 2020. Eliminated were duplicates, corrupted files and outliers

such as teacher contracts from *Firelands Schools* leaving 258 firefighter contracts for review. Word searches consisting of “interest based” and the acronym “IBB” identified those contracts referencing interest-based bargaining.

Searching for “police” and “sheriff” produced no results. Searching “OPBA” (the acronym for the Ohio Police Officers Benevolent Association) resulted in 371 contracts being located. A search for “FOP” (the acronym for the Fraternal Order of Police) resulted in 505 contracts being located. A final search for IUPA (the acronym for the International Union of Police Associations) resulted in 10 contracts being located. Eliminated were duplicates from the various searches and corrupted files leaving 846 law enforcement contracts for review. These contracts included local police departments, sheriff departments, and local jails with the following employee classifications: patrol officers and deputy sheriffs, correctional officers, security officers, corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, and dispatchers. In some cases, there were separate contracts based on employee classification, in other instances more than one classification was included in a contract. Word searches consisting of “interest based” and the acronym “IBB” identified those contracts referencing interest-based bargaining.

Results

Teacher contracts reviewed totaled 648. Ten contracts indicated the use of IBB to negotiate the contract. Forty-four of the contracts indicated that interest-based bargaining was preferred and used upon mutual consent of the parties. Combined, the number of districts that use or will consider using IBB is approximately 8% of the total districts. Interestingly, the data revealed two geographic clusters. In northeast Ohio, in the contiguous counties of Erie, Lorain, Medina, Cuyahoga, Summit, Geauga, Portage, Asthabula, Mahoning and Columbiana accounted for 25 district contracts, or 46% of the total districts that use or will considering using IBB upon

mutual agreement (Table 1). A smaller cluster of counties exist in southwest Ohio including Darke, Shelby, Montgomery, Greene, Butler, Warren, Clinton, Clermont, Madison, Union and Delaware accounting for 13 districts or 24% of the total districts that use or will considering using IBB upon mutual agreement (Table 1).

Of the 258-firefighter contracts reviewed, none referenced IBB. One, the Cincinnati Fire Department referenced IBB in the context of labor-management problem solving but not collective bargaining. Similarly, of the 846 police contracts reviewed, there were no law enforcement collective bargaining agreements that mentioned interest-based bargaining.

Discussion

The research data supports the hypothesis that interest-based bargaining is not widely used in public servant collective bargaining in the state of Ohio. The geographic clusters of school districts that use or will consider using IBB is suggestive that IBB is more likely to be used where superintendents, school board members, or union members share with their counterparts in neighboring districts, stories of successful outcomes achieved from using the IBB approach (Miller, et al. , 2010). The use of IBB to negotiate teacher contracts compared to those of police and fire is not surprising as educational institutions have been more accepting of shared leadership (Kocolowski, 2010). Conversely, police and fire departments still operate under a top-down paramilitary leadership structure. Some of the difficulty in implementing shared leadership is that society in general does not teach, encourage, or value collaboration (Engard, 2011; Kocolowski, 2010).

Even though the data indicates that IBB is used only to a limited degree in the educational setting, its use is virtually non-existent in police and fire labor negotiations in Ohio. The literature suggests there is reluctance on the part of both management and labor to use IBB.

Some of the concerns include the additional time involved with preparing for and conducting negotiations, more time needed to make decisions and those in leadership roles reluctant to relinquish control (Kramer & Crepsy, 2011; Kocolowski, 2010). The literature suggests that the IBB process is generally more unpopular among labor (Michael & Michael, 2012; Miller, et. al., 2010; McKersie, et al., 2008; Cutcher-Gershenfeld et al., 2001). There is the perception, particularly among union members that the IBB process is not fair (Zelevnikow, 2008). Many union members believe that positional bargaining is the only means of achieving union goals (Barrett, 2015) and that revealing information typically held in confidence during positional bargaining benefits management (Sullivan, 2002). Moreover, because the IBB process is more amicable it may lead some constituents of being wary of their own negotiators (Michael & Michael, 2012; McKersie et al., 2008). In summary, these concerns appear to center around a lack of trust, transparency, open communication, collaboration, and concern over fairness and the ability to achieve goals, and a reluctance to relinquish control. However, the literature suggests that overcoming these barriers is possible.

Any attempt at implementing IBB requires extensive pre-bargaining training in the IBB process and joint team building exercises for both negotiating teams conducted by an independent third-party consultant (Michael & Michael 2012; Freeman, 2012; Miller, et al., 2010). The training must focus on transparency, trust, open communication, collaboration and be the foundation for organization wide culture change. Cost free training is available through many state labor relations boards. In the end, IBB must deliver mutual gains or it will lose support (Cutcher-Gershenfeld et al., 2001). In order to achieve mutual gains, it is best that IBB negotiations start with small manageable issues in an effort to achieve quick resolutions. This

can help build credibility for the process and builds trust among the participants while still in the learning process (Brown, 2015; de Villiers, 1999).

Next, IBB is not an all or nothing proposition. Hybrid systems of using IBB for issues of common interest to the parties then reverting to positional bargaining for more challenging economic issues should not be discounted (McKersie, et al., 2008; Kennedy, 1999). One way for parties to become comfortable with the interest-based process is to use it for issues addressed by labor-management committees, such as the Cincinnati Fire Department collective bargaining agreement specifies. Then later expand IBB use to the collective bargaining process. The same holds true for shared leadership, which is an important precursor to effective implementation of IBB. Leaders can determine the level of collaboration they are willing to accept initially in shared leadership then expand implementation of the concept as trust, open communication and collaboration develop (Kocolowski, 2010; de Villiers, 1999).

The principles of IBB require a change in mindset and culture of the organization and integration into the daily operations of the organization (Kennedy, 1999; Brown, 2015; Freeman, 2012; Miller et al., 2010). Accordingly, both union and management leadership must act as models in making IBB a way of problem solving within the organization. Culture change within the organization may occur prior and form a foundation for the adoption of IBB or simultaneously with implementation of IBB. Culture change may be difficult for police and fire departments with a culture that is steeped in tradition and hierarchical in nature (Charrier, 2004). Slowly changing the culture of these organizations prior to implementing IBB may be more effective. Conversely, in the educational setting where shared leadership is generally more accepted changing culture contemporaneously with implementing IBB may be a viable and less time-consuming endeavor.

IBB may also be a viable solution where contentious negotiations have historically taken place as occurs with some police, fire and teacher unions. Freeman (2012), reports that school districts that continuously find themselves in contentious labor negotiations should consider the IBB approach. By inference, this recommendation applies equally to other public sector unions particularly police and fire unions. Research indicates that implementing IBB where contentious negotiations have existed has resulted in more flexible contracts, improved communication, amicable negotiations, contracts settled prior to expiring, fewer grievances and improved customer service (Sullivan, 2002; Brainerd, 1998).

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this research. First, the research has a narrow focus on public servant collective bargaining agreements from one state to the exclusion of CBA's from other states and industries. Second, it is possible that not all firefighter, police officer, and teacher labor contracts are on file with SERB as required. Third, some contracts were expired, and it is assumed they were in the process of renegotiation and the new contracts could be amended to include language on interest-based bargaining. This research is limited by virtue of being quantitative and not qualitative. Much could be learned as to why interest-based bargaining is or is not being used by conducting focused interviews or questionnaires directed at both management and union leadership. Another limitation is that some firefighter, police officer and teacher contracts may have been negotiated using interest-based bargaining without including language to memorialize it in the contract. Future research involving focused interviews or questionnaires could identify such instances.

Recommendations

Research indicates there are numerous benefits from implementing IBB both from a negotiation perspective and organizationally (Kennedy, 1999). Benefits derived directly from the negotiation process include mutually owned outcomes, more innovative solutions, more flexible contracts with less misinterpretations, shorter length contracts, less time needed to negotiate settlements, and a more amicable process resulting in more positive feelings (Kennedy, 1999; Michael & Michael, 2012). Benefits to organizations derived from IBB include change to a more open and collaborative culture, broad positive impact on labor-management relations, increased productivity, improved communication, and enhanced customer service (Freeman, 2012). However, the greatest challenge to implementing IBB may be the transition to a more shared style of leadership and change in organizational culture to include building trust, respect, transparency, open communication, and collaboration. Yet, public sector labor and management owe it to themselves and the public they serve to attempt to overcome their reservations of IBB and attempt to introduce it on some level even if incrementally. The following recommendations will facilitate these changes.

- Any effort at implementing IBB must begin with training on both the IBB process and team building to develop trust, respect and open communication between the parties. Scenario-based training will also help build confidence in the IBB process (Michael & Michael 2012; Freeman, 2012; Miller, et al., 2010; Kennedy 1999).
- Use IBB in labor-management problem solving prior to using it in contract negotiations. This will allow for the further development of trust and communication between the parties. It will also allow the parties to become familiar with IBB process and gain

confidence that mutually arrived at win-win solutions to problems are achievable (Kennedy, 1999).

- Contemporaneously with the above recommendations, develop shared leadership at an incremental rate that is comfortable to leadership. This includes empowering employees, establishing clear boundaries, granting employees more responsibly and discretionary authority. Unions also need to embark on moving toward shared leadership (Kocolowski, 2010; de Villiers, 1999).
- Begin by using IBB in negotiations on small manageable issues where mutual interest exists. This will aid in the parties further learning the IBB process and gaining confidence that the process results in positive outcomes for both parties. Then expand the use of IBB to more challenging and complex issues for example financial issues such a wages and benefits (Brown, 2015; de Villiers, 1999).
- Should IBB prove unsuccessful for complex issues there is no need to throw IBB out the window. At this point the parties need to use a hybrid system of IBB for manageable issues of mutual interest and positional based bargaining for the more challenging issues that the parties have been unable to resolve using IBB (McKersie, et al., 2008; Kennedy, 1999).
- Finally, and only if all other efforts fail, employ the services of a mediator trained in interest-based problem solving and negotiation.

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Table 1

Number of School Districts by Ohio County that Use, Prefer or Consider IBB

<i>County</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Total Districts</i>
Athens	1	5
Ashtabula	1	7
Butler	1	10
Clermont	1	9
Clinton	1	4
Columbiana	2	12
Coshocton	1	3
Crawford	1	6
Cuyahoga	8	10
Darke	1	7
Delaware	1	4
Erie	1	6
Fairfield	1	9
Geauga	1	6
Greene	1	7
Hancock	1	8
Henry	1	4
Licking	2	10
Lorain	1	14
Madison	3	5
Mahoning	1	13
Medina	4	6
Montgomery	2	15
Ottawa	1	4
Perry	1	4
Portage	3	11
Richland	2	8
Shelby	1	8
Summit	2	17
Tuscarawas	2	7
Vinton	1	1
Warren	1	8
Wood	1	10
Union	1	3
Total	54	261

Author Biography

Greg Walterhouse is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Political Science at Bowling Green State University and teaches in the Fire Administration and Master's in Public Administration programs. Greg holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management from Oakland University, a Master's degree in Legal Studies from the University of Illinois, a Master's degree in Personnel Management from Central Michigan University and a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Bowling Green State University. Prior to coming to BGSU Greg had over 35 years' experience in public safety holding various positions including Fire Marshal, Fire Investigator, Fire Chief, Manager of Emergency Services, Deputy Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management/Homeland Security Coordinator. Greg is Past President of the Michigan Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators, holds the Michigan Professional Emergency Manager designation and is a Certified Fire Protection Specialist with the NFPA.