POLICE CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

Police culture
Department culture

Police personality
Officer personality

Perspectives - Useful in understanding the problems associated with police deviance, misconduct, civil liability, etc

Psychological - personality “fixed” and does not change but remains static throughout life

Pre-dispositional model - behavior predetermined by a static, preexisting personality that is shared by people entering the law enforcement profession

Authoritarian personality model - conservative, aggressive, cynical and rigid behavior

Less depressed and anxious & more assertive in making and maintaining social contracts

More homogenous group

More like military personnel in their conformance to authority

Developmental and therefore subject to change

Note: all view behavior from an individualistic level - focusing on who an officer is has little to do with how an officer behaves

Sociological - behavior is based on group socialization and professionalization

Professionalization - the process by which norms and values are internalized as workers begin to learn their new occupation

Types of police officers
(Chokes)
Legalistic-abusive
Task
Community service

(White)
Tough cop
Problem solver
Crime fighter
Rule applier

(Muir)
Professionals
Enforcers
Reciprocators
Avoiders

(Broderick)
Idealists
Enforcers
Optimists
Realists

Anthropological - officers are influenced and shaped by their culture

Culturalization model - assumes that culture determines both personality and behavior

Police subculture - share beliefs and values of dominant culture but have separate and distinct values
Have unique role and status - Law based as the window or prism - perspective
World view - we-they (symbolic assailants)
Ethos - ideas valued most (bravery, autonomy, secrecy (blue wall))
Themes - isolation, solidarity
Postulates - support we they world view and isolation
  Tell need to know only
  Don’t trust anybody until the prove they can be trusted
  Know your bosses
  Don’t talk too much or too little
  Protect your ass
  Bravery
  Show balls SISU
  Be aggressive when you have to, but don’t be too eager
  Secrecy
  Partner first, then the rest
  Don’t give up another cop
  If you get caught off base, don’t implicate anyone else
  Don’t leave work for next tour
  Don’t make waves
  Don’t take on the patrol sergeant alone

Violence - two cops can go berserk, but 20 cops embody a subculture of policing
Stress - we know little about causes and disagreement about extent and effects

Stressors
  Life threatened
  Social isolation
  Organizational
  Functional - role conflict, use of discretion
  Personal - family, financial
Physiological - shift work, sleep
Psychological - masking fear, depravity of behavior observed

Personal problem
Structural problem

Effects - suicide, chemical use, mortality and health problems, divorce