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Police Stress: A Literature Study on Police Occupational Stressors and the Responses in Police Officers to Stressful Job Events

Katarina Ahlstrom Mannheimer
Portland State University

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[redacted]

Gary R. Perlstein, Chairman

[redacted]

Charles A. Tracy

[redacted]

Nancy J. Chapman

The present paper is a literature study of stressors and the responses in police officers to occupational stressors. It endeavors to identify and assess common stressors in policing. It further aims to provide an answer to the question of whether police administrative tasks and

situations, or the dangerous and traumatic events and situations inherent in policing, are perceived as equally or more stressful by surveyed police officers. The question is relevant as there seems to be disagreement among researchers on police stress about which elements (administrative or dangerous and/or traumatic) of the police occupation is more stressful. Much attention has been given to the treatment of post-traumatic stress in police officers while efforts to prevent administrative or organizational stressors have been largely ignored. If administrative stressors in policing are equally important as dangerous and traumatic situations and events, more attention should be given to the prevention of such largely preventable stressful events.

The theoretical framework used in the study is that of the transactional concept of stress. In trying to assess what parts of policing are more stressful, a number of empirical studies were examined and compared. Most studies applied a "checklist" approach to identify and rank the heaviest stressors in police work. The methodological quality of available studies was varied, influencing their comparability and generalizability.

In spite of these inequalities, the results from the assessment indicates that dangerous and traumatic situations are somewhat more often perceived as the largest stressors than administrative stressors in police work.

POLICE STRESS:

A LITERATURE STUDY ON POLICE OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AND THE RESPONSES IN POLICE OFFICERS TO STRESSFUL JOB EVENTS

by

KATARINA AHLSTROM MANNHEIMER

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[redacted]

Gary R. Perlstein, Chairman

[redacted]

Charles A. Tracy

[redacted]

Nancy J. Chapman

APPROVED:

[redacted]

Robert W. Lockwood, Chair, Department of Administration of Justice

[redacted]

Roy W. Koch, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Work related stress can result from a number of reasons, such as too much or too little work, lack of communication with co-workers or authorities, or considerations about ones own competence. It can also result from special characteristics of the occupation in question. One of the occupations where much attention has been paid to work related stress, is that of the police officer. Police officers face many stressors common to most large organizations, but also stressors that are specific to police work. There seems to be disagreement among researchers on police stress about which "side" of the police occupation is most stressful- the inherent, potentially dangerous and traumatic situations of policing- or the administrative tasks and problems facing police officers in their work. Some authors talk about policing as the most stressful of all occupations in the country, mainly because of its real and potential dangerousness, while others hold that these observations often overstate the case (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). In some research on danger in policing, descriptions of police work emphasize the risk factors inherent in the tasks, while police officers themselves tend not to focus on danger as a stressor (Wexler and Dorman Logan, 1983). Other authors (Spielberger, Westberry, Grier and Greenfield,

1981) have indicated that administrative and organizational factors are at least as important sources of stress in police work as the stressors of physical danger and emotional distress (Farmer, 1990) while yet others have identified the working conditions and administrative milieu in which police officers work as more bothersome to the police officer than potentially dangerous and traumatic field situations (Kroes, Hurrel and Margolis, 1974; Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrel, 1974, Hageman, 1978, Aldag and Brief, 1978, Singleton and Teahan, 1978). The apparent discrepancy as to the stressfulness of dangerous and traumatic situations and administrative tasks and problems has led to discussions as to whether police officers actually have learned to view such situations as an everyday aspect of their work (Terry, 1981) or if they simply might repress their true feelings (Kroes, Margolis and Hurrel, 1981). Or are the problems related to the administration of the police organization so large that administrative stressors have become as important as danger to life and limb and exposure to traumatic situations?

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The dangerous and traumatic elements of policing are an inherent part of the police occupation, and are therefore difficult to change (Kroes, 1985). The administrative elements, however, are easier to influence and change. As of today stress reducing programs are heavily concentrated on the treatment of effects of stress rather than the limitation of preventable stressors (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990).

If available research indicates that administrative stressors are equally or more stressful than stressors resulting from dangerous and traumatic situations, then there is a real possibility of reducing stress in the police occupation through the elimination of stressors. The identification of stressors relevant to work as a police officer, as well as the inquiry into whether administrative stressors or dangerous and/or traumatic situations or events are more stress inducing are important in the future formation of stress-reducing programs in policing.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This paper is a literature study that will try to identify and assess common stressors in policing as well as provide an answer to the question of whether the administrative or the dangerous and traumatic elements are perceived as equally stressful or more stressful by surveyed police officers.

DELIMITATIONS AND SCOPE

The theoretical framework used in this study is that of the transactional concept of stress. It will be presented in Chapter II. The transactional approach to stress was chosen for several reasons: a) it presupposes that the individual, consciously or subconsciously, experiences psychological stress as result of a stressor in the *environment*, b) it does not assume that harm or even life threat are inevitably stressful, since nothing is seen as a stressor unless *appraised* as such by the individual, c) stress, according to this formulation is seen as a negative sensation (Singer and Davidson, in Appley and Trumbull, Eds. 1986). Thus, according to the transactional concept of stress, stress is regarded as related to the individual's appraisal of a given event or circumstance as stressful. The events or situations eliciting the perception of stress will (in this paper) be considered as stressors.

Available research on stressors in policing will be presented and discussed in Chapter III. Events and circumstances that are often described by police officers as potential and/or real stressors according to available research on the topic of police stress will be presented, described and discussed.

Coping responses to stressors will also be discussed according to a selected bibliography in Chapter V. Coping resources, stress resistance and individual variation in coping with stressors will also be discussed in this chapter. Studies concerning the implications of research on policing,(or the formulation and evaluation of stress reducing programs) will not be addressed, as they seem somewhat beyond the limits of this paper.

The methodological quality of studies on the topic of police stress in general is quite varied. Many studies are simply based on personal experience of the author, and few existing studies utilize an empirical research design (Wexler and Dorman Logan, 1983). Most studies do not either clearly define the concept of stress . There is further a general failure of

research on police stress to link personality factors to stress (Lawrence, 1984). The presentation, examination and comparison in Chapter IV of empirical studies trying to identify and rank relevant police occupational stressors is based on a sample of available studies. As few researchers use the same measuring instrument (or list of stressors) the comparability of the studies is not very good. The studies do typically not distinguish between events that have been experienced by the police officers and events that have not. Neither are background variables such as age, marital status, length of training, length of employment, police department peculiarities or crime rate in the district taken into account. Only in a few studies has the distribution of gender been specified in the results. Some studies were hardly eligible for status as studies trying to rank stressors in police work, but were included because they could be interpreted by analogy.
The results from the presented studies are categorized as pertaining to one of two categories: *studies that rank administrative stressors as more bothersome and studies that rank dangerous and traumatic situations as the more bothersome stressors.* The categorization was done in relation to each study's particular ranking of stressors or indicators of stress.

The definition of stressors as either pertaining to the administrative category or the dangerous and traumatic category does not include such stressors that result from police-community interaction, as they are likely to fall in between the categories. The definition of administrative stressors will thus include everything that pertains to the internal police organization; paper-work, pay, shift work, relations with supervisors, promotions etc. The terms administrative and organizational stressors will be used interchangeably.

Regarding the dangerous and traumatic elements of police work, this category basically includes all potentially dangerous or traumatic tasks the police officer could be confronted with; car chases, investigations of crime, arrests, shootings, interfering in domestic violence etc. and exposure to accidents and crisis situations where others have been hurt or even killed.

Dangerous situations hence concern such events and situations that pose a threat to the officer's life and limb. Traumatic situations and events are thus such where there is no danger to the officers life and limb but where the emotional consequences are potentially overwhelming (see also Kroes, 1985, p. 73-74).

The paper will predominantly refer to the (lower ranking) police officer. The police officer is the uniformed police who patrols streets by car or feet, watches crime, participates in court and, in general, has as his or her duty to maintain law and order in the community (Broderick, 1977).

QUESTIONS THAT WILL FOCUS THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

In trying to identify and assess major stressors in policing, the primary question posed in this paper is that of whether the administrative or dangerous and traumatic elements of the police occupation are generally perceived as equally or more stressful by surveyed police officers.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of stress is very complex, and a broad range of definitions of stress and its components have been presented by an equally broad range of authors. The stress process involves all the systems of the body; all the systems of the psyche; and occurs in all social systems. It involves, and can occur, from all kinds of stimuli- from daily hassles to major crisis situations. Stress is not always a negative sensation. Eustress, or positive stress, is a normal process of the body's functioning and an essential part of life, a "sense of control and positive association with the environment" (Hobfoll, 1988 pp. 2,43). The term stress has, over the past several decades, evolved to comprise several phenomena and it is used in a number of different ways. Generally, however, research on the topic of stress falls into one of two broad categories. The first of these categories defines stress primarily from a physiological point of view, in accordance to the notion of physiological response to stress as originally formulated by Hans Selye in 1936, where Selye described stress as the reaction of the organism to external threats (Singer and Davidson, in Appley and Trumbull, Eds.,1986).

Selye (1978) later attempted to broaden his stressconcept to be applicable to a broader range of human situations, and redefined his concept of stress to be the "nonspecific response of the body to any demand, whether it is caused by, or results in, pleasant or unpleasant conditions" (p.74). Still, research done with Selye's conceptualization primarily followed the medical tradition where animal models are exposed to physical or physiological stressors, and where the physiological or endocrinological changes of the animal model indicates the stress. This approach to stress is often described as *pathogen* or *reactive* (Singer and Davidson, in Appley and Trumbull, 1986).

The second category of stress research can be described as *transactional*. The concept of stress can here be defined as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 19).

In the transactional model, an event in the environment is seen as a stressor only if the organism *cognitively appraises the event as a stressor*. The transactional model of stress consequently addresses different issues than the "reaction model" developed by Selye (but might however incorporate the reaction model as a special subclass).

Thus, in the transactional model, a stressor might be *any potential threat in the environment*. The word potential is used because in the transactional model, nothing is considered to be a stressor in itself; it all depends on the cognitive appraisal of the person to perceive an event as a stressor. Physical or psychological stressors will only produce stress responses after they have been defined as threatening by human beings. The transactional model, unlike the pathogen, or reaction model, does hence not assume that harm or even life threat are inevitably perceived as stressors. Research done in the transactional tradition is primarily human-oriented and utilizes psychological measures to assess how the subject evaluates the stressor and the reaction to stressors. This concept of stress, although it is formulated to be applicable to physiological and physical stimuli as well as to psychological, has almost exclusively been used within the framework of research on psychological or nonphysical environmental stimuli. Attempts to build an integrative model of stress, that considers biobehavioral research and that builds on both physiological and psychological contributions has been made, but are often complicated by confusion over terminology (Singer and Davidson, in Appley and Trumbull, Eds., 1986).

Such approaches have for example described the neuroendocrine responses to the psycho-social environment as reflecting its emotional impact on the individual. The emotional impact, in turn, is here determined by a "...person's cognitive appraisal of the severity of the demands in relation to his or her own coping resources..." (Frankenhaeuser, in Appley and Trumbull, Eds., 1986, p. 101).

This paper will use the transactional concept of stress, as formulated by Lazarus and Folkman, for the study of police *stress*. This definition has been chosen for several reasons. First, the transactional concept of stress presupposes that the individual, consciously or unconsciously, experiences *psychological stress* as result of a stressor in the *environment*. Second, it is not assumed that *harm or even life threat are inevitably stressful,* since nothing is seen as a stressor unless appraised as such by the individual. Third, is stress according to this formulation seen as a *negative sensation,* in contrast to positive stress, or eustress (Singer and Davidson, in Appley and Trumbull, Eds., 1986). The (transactional) concepts of stressors, cognitive appraisal and coping will further be described below.

STRESSORS

A *stressor* is the causal component of stress (Selye, 1978). Stressors are, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), part of life and the human experience. But stressors do not mean the same things to all people. Under comparable circumstances, one individual can respond to stress with anger, another might respond with depression or anxiety while yet another might respond with a feeling of challenge rather than threat. Events and circumstances that, according to available research on police stress often are described as stressful, will in this paper be considered as stressors.

COGNITIVE APPRAISAL

Whether an individual perceives a certain event or situation as stressful is determined by his or her *cognitive appraisal.* Cognitive appraisal is by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described as "...the process of categorizing an encounter, and its various facets, with respect to its significance for well being. It is not information processing per se...Rather, it is largely evaluative, focused on meaning or significance..." (p.31). The cognitive appraisal hence *shapes* the emotional and behavioral response to the stressor. It refers to subjective evaluative cognitive processes intervening between the encounter and the reaction to a stressor. As a private and subjective process, it has an uncertain relationship to the objective environment.

Lazarus and Folkman identify three kinds of cognitive appraisal; *primary appraisal, secondary appraisal and reappraisal.* Primary appraisal includes a judgment made by the individual of an event as either irrelevant, benign-positive or stressful. If an event is appraised as stressful, it can result in feelings of harm and loss, threat or challenge. Harm and loss here refers to damage an individual already has sustained, while threat and challenge can occur simultaneously (but must be considered as separate, even though often related to each other).

Secondary appraisal refers to the individuals judgment concerning what might and can be done and includes an evaluation about whether a given coping option will lead to desired results, that it can be effectively applied, and an evaluation of the consequences of using the coping strategy in question, in taking internal and external demands and constraints into question. Reappraisal finally means a changed appraisal based on new information from the environment and/or the person's reevaluation. Cognitive appraisal is not always conscious, nor are the sources shaping the appraisal always easily accessible. (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

This study will mainly focus on *primary appraisal*, in that it will assess events and circumstances, or in other words stressors, that are appraised as stressful by the police officers. It could also be *reappraisal* since the police officers are responding to events they have encountered previously. But as indicated above, and in accordance to the transactional concept of stress, it will *not* be presupposed that the perception of violent and/or traumatic events necessarily constitute the heaviest stressor in police work, even if this could be the case.

COPING

The emotional response of experienced stress is defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as *coping*. The coping process can be described as the "...constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person..." (p.141). The term coping relates to everything a person thinks or does in order to manage his or her experience of stress. It thus involves much more than problem solving in an everyday sense.

Coping is hence process oriented and limited to situations that are appraised as taxing or exceeding an individual's resources. The term coping is thus in effect applicable only to psychological stressors, requiring mobilization of thoughts as opposed to automatized behaviors and thoughts that do not require effort. The problem of confounding coping with outcome is here avoided through defining coping as *all efforts* to manage stress, regardless of how well or badly it works. Stress management is however not to be equated with mastery: managing stress can include minimizing, avoiding, tolerating, and accepting the stressful conditions. It can also include attempts to master the environment. Two forms of coping can be distinguished: *problem-focused coping* and *emotion-focused coping*. Problem-focused coping is directed at managing or altering the problem causing the distress while emotion-focused coping is directed at regulating the emotional response to the problem.

Problem and emotion-focused coping influence each other throughout a stressful encounter, and can both facilitate and impede each other. Problem-focused coping is often directed at defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, weighing the alternatives in terms of their costs and their benefits, choosing among them, and acting. It thus implies a wider variety of strategies than the concept of problem solving. Emotion focused coping, on the other hand, implies such cognitive coping strategies to lessen emotional distress as avoidance, minimizing, distancing, selective attention etc. Coping also changes from the anticipatory to the outcome stages of a stressful encounter, and one cannot understand coping without reference to the point in the encounter at which it is observed).

Styles of coping, as they vary among individuals and probably through stages in life, can also be composed by either a simple strategy or by multiple strategies. The way a person copes is determined in part by his or her resources, including health and energy, existential beliefs (faith) or general beliefs, about control, and further commitments, problem solving skills, social support and material resources. Efforts to exercise control are synonymous with coping. Finally, the prime importance of appraisal and coping processes is that they affect adaptational outcomes. How people evaluate and cope with the stressors of life are closely tied to their mental and physical health and their general quality of life (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

As will be seen in chapter V below, coping behavior like alcoholism, workaholism, cynicism, divorce and suicide have often been linked to the stressfulness of the police occupation. However, it might here be difficult to separate causes from effects, coping and outcome. Suicide, for example, could either be a coping effort or behavior, or an outcome of failed coping efforts and behaviors. It falls in between.

Divorce is another example that might fall in between the categories.

Stress reactions and coping in police officers will in this paper be discussed according to available research.

As coping cannot be understood without reference to the point in the encounter at which it is observed (see Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 142-143), and as such references are usually not employed in the studies concerning police stress, the approach to coping in this paper will be broad, brief and general. Coping responses in policing will be discussed in chapter V below. Finally, a broader stress model that also looks at coping resources will briefly be presented in chapter V.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A sizable number of studies have concerned themselves with the issue of police occupational factors. Even if somewhat overlapping, it is possible to identify at least three basic categories of research on police stress (Farmer, 1990). The most common type of police occupational stress research *relates stress outcomes or symptoms in police personnel to some aspect of the police occupation.* Such outcome studies are often medically oriented and focus on physical symptoms of stress such as coronary heart disease etc., but also on symptoms such as post- traumatic stress reactions, burnout, cynicism and suicide. A second category of studies tend to *focus on characteristics, and factors inherent in the individual that may influence how the individual responds to his/her (police) work experience.* Factors *contributing* to the stress experience are here the degree of socio-emotional support, personality structure, family problems, fear, financial problems etc.
The third category of studies on the topic of police occupational stress *focus on some inherent quality of the work and the work organization as contributing to the individual's experience of stress.* Such factors (or stressors) might be the individual's role in the organization, the structure and interpersonal relationships in the organization, or such police

occupational stressors that are related to policing but outside the police organization itself, for example court appearances. (Farmer, 1990). Research on policy, planning and evaluation of stress reducing programs for police officers will not be addressed as it seems beyond the scope of this paper.

This literature study will focus on the type of research that endeavors to identify and sometimes also rank stressors relevant to policing. Other categories of research on police occupational stress will however to some extent be covered in chapter V.

STRESSORS IN POLICING

Research concerning police work and stressors connected to the police occupation have mostly been carried out through interview studies and clinical observations, or by personal experience of the researcher (White, Lawrence, Bigger staff and Grubb, 1985). The quality of research in the field does therefore appear somewhat uneven. Few studies have, in fact, been empirical. As to the concept of stressors, most research does not indicate whether the stressful events and circumstances have actually been experienced by the subjects, or if they are just perceived. The stress concept is often not clearly defined (or not defined at all), and personality factors have very rarely been taken into account (Lawrence, 1984).

The review of the literature in the field of police stress must therefore be quite general. It will first look at some events and circumstances that, according to available research, have often been reported as stressful by police officers. The stressors in policing will here be divided into two broad categories: a) *such stressors that are external to the police organization or induced by police interaction with society, and* b) *such stressors that are internal in the police organization or inherent in police work itself.* Stressors external to the police organization or stressors that are induced by police interaction with society will first be presented. Secondly will stressors internal in the police organization or stressors inherent in police work itself be presented.

A selected number of studies that have endeavored to identify and rank stressors relevant to work as a police officer will also be presented. The word appraisal here refers to the judgment of an encounter as either irrelevant or stressful. Irrelevant stressors are by necessity only implicitly considered, as stressors irrelevant for some people may be relevant and mentioned by others. As to the stressors, or the events, the literature review assesses the evaluative process as the appraisal of an event or situation as stressful, regardless of whether it is experienced by the individual or not. As indicated above, coping will briefly be assessed through a presentation and discussion of findings on stress responses in relation to policing in Chapter V.

STRESSORS THAT ARE EXTERNAL TO THE POLICE ORGANIZATION OR INDUCED BY POLICE INTERACTION WITH OTHER GROUPS IN SOCIETY

The Legal System and the Courts

Several studies have pointed at the legal system and the courts as a major source of stress for police officers (Golembiewski and Byong-Seob Kim, 1990). Court related stressors often seem to result from discrepancies between the police and the legal system as a whole. Some authors (Kroes, 1985) describes "the problem of the courts and the restraints and frustrations placed upon policemen by the American judicial system" as one of the largest stressors that are unique to the police profession (1985, p.51-52). Police officers are in frequent contact with courts and legal staff, and yet they might not be adequately trained for their assignments in relation to legal participation. As laws or their accepted interpretation tend to change quickly, a police department without a large legal staff that can keep police officers informed about such changes, may face situations where the individual officer is unaware of the current law until confronted with it on court duty. Long waiting in or outside the court room and often inconsiderate scheduling of judicial proceedings are also often reported as bothersome (Stratton, 1981). Further, police officers tend to feel unhappy with tactics of defense attorneys, and often perceive the courts as lenient towards criminals (Golembiewski and Byong-Seob Kim, 1990). Sometimes defense tactics lead to acquittal or dismissal on a technicality. The police officer that is fairly certain that the suspect is guilty perceives this as very stressful. Many officers also perceive judges and juries as susceptible to the stories of defendants, and feel that court practice often is too lenient. Interestingly, defense attorneys often have the opposite perception of the same events; they feel that the odds favor the police, who will create or destroy evidence or otherwise falsify testimony in order to close a case and "put away an individual they do dislike" (Ellison and Genz, 1983).

Police-Relationships with the Community

The police officer's relationship with the society he or she serves has often been characterized as rather poor. Feelings of hostility and lack of support and respect for one's occupation and skills is notably quite common among police officers (Ellison and Genz,1983). Negative or distorted mass media presentations, as well as unfavorable attitudes toward the police are also often felt as a stressor by the police (Stratton, 1981). According to Kroes (1985), the police officer holds a low-status job and is disliked by a large segment of the society. On duty, he or she may be target of such incidents as name calling, picketing, public demonstrations, or the throwing of rocks, bottles and the like at police cars. Off duty, a place, such as a restaurant, often "freezes up" when a uniformed police comes in for a cup of coffee, and people tend to feel a general uneasiness around a police officer.

On the other hand, and according to Bouza, (1990) "...cops don't take real or imagined assaults on their authority lightly. (In policing)...the greatest power and autonomy exist at the lowest rank level...Their temptation to cow those whose behavior they're trying to control into compliance often proves irresistible..."(pp. 3, 5). Problems regarding the relation between the police officer and the society he/she serves have often resulted in a "us" against "them" situation: "...It is not an accident that cops speak of the "outside world" and of "civilians" with a barely concealed scorn for the uninitiated..."(Bouza, 1990, p. 6). Another aspect of the relations between the police and the community is the police officer's experience of having to handle family fights, being involved in mediation rather than arrest, and so on. This direction toward a service orientation while the community, afraid of crime, demands deterrence, has been believed to create tensions that results in worsened police-community relations (Golembiewski and Byong-Seob Kim, 1990).

STRESSORS THAT ARE INTERNAL IN THE POLICE ORGANIZATION OR INHERENT IN POLICE WORK ITSELF

Administration and Policy

According to Kroes, the problem of administrative pressure on the employee is so ubiquitous across different occupations that one might question whether there are any larger organizations that completely escape the rigors of problems such as unnecessary rules, excessive paperwork, poor communication between different levels in the organization, employees lack of voice in decision concerning their own position, and so forth (Kroes, 1985). Administrative variables have also often been mentioned as one major source of stress related to police work. Police organizations are usually organized on a quasi-military basis. Policy and supervision are hence often autocratic or even authoritarian (Golembiewski and Byong-Seob Kim, 1990).The typical police department is consequently one of extremely hierarchical constitution (Ellison and Gentz, 1983). The low ranking police officer is generally discouraged from expressing his or her opinions to superiors, which often leads to gaps in communication. Feelings of lack of voice in decisions that vitally affect one's work and life are noted as common and may refer to such situations when patrolmen are transferred from one partner to another or from one duty assignment or district to another without advance notice (or later explanation).

Such incidents are found to result in feelings of the police administration as neglecting to see the individual police officer as a professional, especially so when assignments are ordered without respect to the officers special training or skills. The highly trained crime fighter might be expected to direct traffic, give parking tickets or to undertake non-police activities that belong to the health department or some other department of the city as result of agreements reached between the departments competing for the limited tax revenues.

Assignments such as following up a dog bite complaint or investigating the growth of weeds on someone's property leads to feelings in the police officer of his or her skills being misused or not used at all (Kroes, 1985). According to Kroes (1985) the average policeman has received "...special training, has served an extended apprenticeship as a "rookie", and, therefore, understandably takes pride in his work. He perceives himself as the trained law enforcement specialist he is..." (p. 14). The feeling of not being paid what one is worth has been noted to be a problem for law enforcement officers nationwide. Lack of proper (or intact) equipment and a shortage of personnel is also reported as a large stressor as the quality and maintenance of the equipment here is extremely important for one's work performance and safety (Flanagan and Ayres, 1990). Further, there is often a lack of clear definitions of line and staff policy as well as poor training and/or supervision from police supervisors (Stratton, 1981).

The experience of unfair discipline such as favoritism, overemphasis on negative discipline, inconsistency and arbitrariness, lack of guidelines or criteria for disciplinary action, and vindictiveness is also reported to be a very common stress factor in law enforcement organizations. Unfairness in the performance evaluation is also a source of stress for many police officers, as well as the occurrence of unfair or non-objective promotional practices (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990).

Work Schedule and Workload

Many studies report shift work as a large stressor in policing (Golembiewski and Byong-Seob Kim, 1990). Changing shifts has been found as very disruptive to one's personal and occupational life. Especially rotating shifts has been shown to have an adverse effect on a person's physical condition as well as on his or her ability to work effectively (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). Night work is assumed to be especially fatiguing and conductive to mental distress. Most investigators however agree that shift work becomes less stressful in proportion to habituation and that rotating shift work probably produces the most severe disturbances (Selye, 1978). Studies concerning stress in police work have indicated that changing shift routines are felt as unsettling especially in relation to eating and sleeping habits. But besides the physiological stress in relation to changing shift routines, psychological stress is also experienced to the extent that shifts have negative effects on the individuals social and family life (Kroes, Margolis and Hurrel, 1981).

Night shifts with their typical decrease in activity are often related to sensory under-stimulation and fatigue, and this is especially so when the police officer works alone, which is often the case. Much of the inactive time is taken up by simply cruising the assigned geographical zone over and over again. The night patrol officer has often been noted to experience severe boredom. He or she might cope with this stressor through actions like racing along on a high-way, or engage in sexual activities, or sleep (Kroes, 1985). On the other hand, the police officer must always be prepared for sudden action. Unpredictability in relation to workload and work assignments is thus an inherent and constant stressor (Cruse and Rubin, 1973, in Kroes, 1985).

Job underload as described above is thought not the only time the police must wait for something to happen. He or she may be on call, which is another such situation. Further, in relation to qualitative work underload, the police duty implies many repetitive and less stimulating tasks such as operating a radar unit or writing out citations. Such assignments might lead to mental under-stimulation and hence boredom (Kroes, 1985). It has been noted that the experience of work overload, both quantitatively and qualitatively, seems more common than the experience of work underload in policing (Golembiewski and Byong-Seob Kim, 1990). Such situations are for example, when patrol districts that are very demanding are assigned or when expectations from supervisors and the public are higher than the individual police officer can meet, in relation to his training and skills (Kroes, 1985).

Job Conflict and Difficult Decisions

Job conflict occurs when the individual feels caught between discordant expectations. Discordant expectations may be placed on the officer by others, or the job conflict may be a conflict between one's own values and the values of others. Sometimes a police officer must enforce laws that he or she personally questions. Such laws might, according to Kroes (1985), concern for example the writing of parking tickets, or the arrest of marijuana smokers, illegal gamblers, or prostitutes. Cases of "societal hypocrisy", when the police is pressured to "do something" without having the proper authority to do so, are also examples of job conflict. When relevant legislation does not exist, and at the same time there is pressure on the police to maintain order, this might lead to the informal rousting of public drunks, youth "hanging out" at night etc. (Bouza, 1990). The police officer might experience that the values or expectations of his or her boss conflict with the values or expectations of another influential individual high up the organization. For example, conflict often arise between what the "...top brass expects and what the immediate line supervisors want..." (Kroes, 1985, pp.19,23).

Job conflict might also be experienced in relation to cases of police corruption. The pressure or temptation of accepting a bribe, or the pressure to regard some politically important or otherwise influential individuals as "hands off" as to arrests and citations, can be a tremendous stressor. Further, a police officer is often required to make decisions that have major consequences for the lives of others, and often without having clear guidelines to follow. For example, the decision to arrest a suspect will seriously affect the life of that person. In making an arrest for a major crime, the police realizes that his/her decision can be the direct cause of a long prison sentence or even someones' death (Kroes, 1985).

Dangerous and Traumatic Situations

Police officers are often at higher risk of experiencing traumas than individuals in other occupations. Accidents, assaults, and shootings are examples of situations in which police officers are involved more often than the average citizen. When one thinks of a police officer, one often thinks of danger. Even the police officer that has never fired a shot while on duty is likely to have been involved in at least one physical altercation or one accident on the job. The emotional impact of a shooting incident has been recognized as the most traumatic work-related incident that can happen to a police officer (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). These types of events and situations have been defined as line-of duty and crisis situations (Kroes, 1985). According to this definition of line-of-duty and crisis situations, there are two types of problems involved: *crisis situations* primarily refer to those on-duty situations that pose a threat to the officer's physical well-being (i.e. danger to his/her life and limb), while *line-of-duty situations* refer to situations where there is no actual danger to the officer's life, but where the emotional consequences are potentially overwhelming. The corresponding definition used in this paper is *dangerous and traumatic situations*. Often the events or situations described are a combination of both. This could for example be the case in the event that the police kills someone in the line of duty. The situation foregoing the killing was probably very dangerous, even if the killing in itself was more traumatic than dangerous. Perhaps somewhat surprising is that one of the most dangerous situations that might confront an officer is intervening in a family crisis situation. The risk of being hurt is large for the police officer. It has been estimated that 22 percent of police officer deaths and 40 percent of injuries nationwide are results of family crisis interventions. Other dangerous situations that can be mentioned are dealing with drunk individuals, robberies in progress, calls to investigate a man with a knife or gun, and high speed chases.

Line-of-duty situations include incidents in which the officer must face distasteful or tragic duties. Traumatic events like fatal accidents and battered and dead adults or children are examples of such line-of -duty situations. The fear of a police officer of being exposed to a communicable disease, for example when transporting ill persons in one's squad car, is also referred to as an area of line-of-duty situations. According to Kroes police officers over time eventually learn to deal with most of these distasteful duties (Kroes, 1985).

Dangerous and traumatic situations are, even if extremely stressful, not always reported as the highest ranking stressor in police work. Some authors (Spielberger, Westberry, Grier and Greenfield, 1981) have indicated that administrative and organizational factors are at least as important sources of stress in police officers as the stressor of physical danger and emotional distress in policing (Farmer, 1990). Others have identified administrative problems as more bothersome to the police officers than potentially dangerous and traumatic line-of-duty situations (Kroes, Hurrel and Margolis, 1974; Kroes, Margolis, and Hurrel, 1974, Hageman, 1978, Aldag and Brief, 1978, Singleton and Teahan, 1978). It has also been noted that officers tend to eagerly look forward to dangerous situations. This is in part explained by the "need for action to avoid boredom" as a result of job underload (Kroes, 1985, p. 31). Further, in research on danger in policing, descriptions of police work tend to emphasize the risk factors inherent in the tasks, while police officers themselves tend not to mention danger as a stressor (Wexler and Dorman Logan, 1983).

This apparent discrepancy has led to discussions as to whether police officers repress their true feelings (Kroes, Margolis and Hurrel, 1981) or have learned to view line-of-duty and crisis situations as an everyday aspect of their work (Terry 1981).

According to Kroes (1985), only dangerous and traumatic situations are automatically and truly built-in to the police occupation. All other stressors relevant for the police occupation are a result of how the job is structured, artificially produced rules, the court system, the style and competence of police management, and the way the police officer is seen by the general public. In other words, all other stressors can be changed.

STRESS AND THE FEMALE POLICE OFFICER

Much of the research concerning police stress deals with stress as it relates to male police officers. Women are still highly underrepresented in the police force. Since the early 1970's, however, many of the discriminatory barriers that kept women out of police work (as well as many other male-dominated occupations) have been either reduced or eliminated, and female officers are found in most departments. Women entering law enforcement are not only exposed to the same types of stressors as male police officers; they are also exposed to various other stressors simply because they are females. The female officer is often faced with disbelief from superiors, peers and the public. Not only does she have to work harder to earn approval from her peers, she also frequently receives less support from her family and friends in relation to her choice of occupation (Washington, 1981).

Love and Singer (1988) refers to several studies confirming the existence of predominately negative attitudes held by male police officers towards their female counterparts (e.g. Hindman, 1975, Vega & Silverman, 1982, Martin, 1979, Bloch & Anderson, 1974, Bouza 1975). Wexler and Dorman Logan (1983) found in an interview with 25 female police officers , that 80 % reported the attitudes of male police officers towards female officers as a stressor. Several female officers felt the department did not want women. There were also several reports of sexual harassment (Wexler and Dorman Logan, 1983).

CHAPTER IV

STUDIES IDENTIFYING AND/OR RANKING POLICE OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS

BACKGROUND

The stressfulness of police work, as compared with other occupations, has been a debated issue. Some researchers have asserted that police work is a highly stressful occupation, maybe the most stressful of all occupations, while others have concluded that police work is no more stressful than many other occupations (Coman and Evans, 1991, Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). The stressfulness of police work has most commonly been attributed to the *real and potential dangerousness* of the work. But several authors have indicated that dangerous and traumatic situations are not necessarily the heaviest stressors for the police; rather, police officers see themselves as trained crime-fighters and have learned to live with the risk of dangerous and traumatic situations and are equally or even *more* bothered by administrative and organizational stressors (Farmer, 1990, Kroes, 1985, Terry, 1983). In spite of these findings, stress reducing programs are today heavily concentrated at the treatment of *effects* of dangerous and traumatic stressors while the *prevention* and *limitation* of administrative stressors seem largely neglected (Ayres and

Flanagan, 1990).

This paper tries to assess the question of which parts of the police occupation are more stressful in relation to available literature and empirical studies. The majority of the studies presented have endeavored to rank police occupational stressors and identify police occupational situations and/or events that are perceived as particularly stressful by the surveyed police officers. The question of whether the administrative parts of policing or the dangerous and traumatic parts are perceived as more or equally troublesome by the police will be examined in relation to findings from studies endeavoring to identify and rank relevant stressors in policing. The inquiry into what parts of policing ~~that~~ are more stressful is relevant as it could help in future efforts to create and implement programs for stress reduction in police officers.

Obviously, the dangerous and traumatic parts of policing are inherent in the police occupation and therefore difficult to change. Although training, adequate equipment and enough manpower on the site etc. might help in the prevention of tragedies (and hence in reducing the stressfulness of line-of-duty related situations), it can never fully eliminate the dangerous and traumatic elements of policing. However, if it is true that the administrative sides of policing are equally or more stressful for the police officers, there is a real possibility of significantly reducing police occupational stress through the elimination of stressors.

METHOD

In trying to understand what parts of policing are more stressful, a number of empirical studies were examined and compared. The definition of stressors as *either pertaining to the administrative category or the dangerous and traumatic category* does not include such stressors that result from police-community interaction, as they are likely to fall in between the categories. The definition of *administrative stressors* will thus include everything that pertains to the internal police organization; paper work, pay, shift work, relations with supervisors, promotions etc. The terms administrative and organizational stressors will be used interchangeably. Regarding the *dangerous and traumatic elements of police work*, this category basically includes all potentially dangerous or traumatic tasks the police officer could be confronted with; car chases, investigations of crime, arrests, shootings, interfering in domestic violence etc. and exposure to accidents and crisis situations where others have been hurt or even killed. Dangerous situations hence concern such events and situations that pose a threat to the officers life and limb. Traumatic situations ~~and~~ events are ~~thus~~ such where there is no danger to the officers life and limb but where the emotional consequences are potentially overwhelming (see also Kroes, 1985, p. 73-74). A more careful distinction of stressors was difficult to make because of the use of differential definitions of stressors in the studies assessed.

The methodological quality of the presented studies is further somewhat varied, and differences in conceptual framework and scope might make meaningful comparisons difficult. The account of empirical studies on police stress below will define three categories of studies on police stress that all, in one way or another, aim to identify and rank stressors in policing. The categorization was done to enhance the comparability of the studies. Common for all the studies presented are that they are basically exploratory in their scope, trying to build a firmer body of knowledge around the problem of stressors in policing.

STUDIES RANKING POLICE OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS

The exploratory scope of the assessed studies on police occupational stress imply that several potentially important background variables are left without consideration. Ideally a study endeavoring to identify and rank stressors in the police occupation would include both person and department-oriented background variables such as age, gender, race, social class, marital status, social support, length of training at police academy (or other police occupational training center), length of service (totally and at the location), and rank in police service or type of assignment. It should further ideally include the official crime rate (especially as to violent crimes) in the geographical area where the officer works as an indicator of experience/risk for dangerous traumatic situations, the urban versus rural location of the department, and finally the number of employees at the department.

The above variables are examples of characteristics and circumstances that in one way or another, alone or in concert with other variables, could affect the perception of a situation or an event as stressful. There is believed to be no universal police personality; different police officers will perceive different stressors as stressful in different situations and respond to the various stressors differentially, using a variety of coping strategies. As will be seen below, few of the studies presented in this paper consider many background variables. Individual variation in the perception of police occupational stressors is considered only in one of the ten presented studies. In the discussion of the results, there is a table over how the assessed studies stack up to the ideal "police stress study" in terms of the consideration of background variables (see Table XV below). Studies that include background variables but do not use them in the analysis of results are given an (x) in the table.

The first set of studies to be presented have a general focus on identifying and ranking major stressors in policing. The events and situations used to indicate police occupational stressors usually include both those that are administrative and those that are associated with dangerous and/or traumatic situations in police work. The first study presented here was carried out by Kroes, Margolis and Hurrel in 1974. This study listed only stressors pertaining to administrative police practices and tasks. One hundred male police officers employed in the police force of Cincinnati were interviewed for the study. The police officers were asked to determine 1) what they considered as bothersome about the job and 2) what they thought bothered other policemen at the same job. The second question aimed to control for possible personality bias. The results from this study are represented in a Table I where the rankings are illustrated.

TABLE I

POLICE DEFINITIONS AND RATINGS OF STRESSORS IN 100 CINCINNATI POLICE OFFICERS

Definition	Perceived stressors	Stressors perceived as bothersome to others.
Court rulings and procedures	56	37
Administrative policies and support of patrolmen	51	43
Adequacy and state of repair of equipment	39	24
Public apathy, negative reaction to, and lack of support of policemen	38	19
Twenty-eight day rotating shift work schedule	18	7
Difficulties in getting along with supervisor	16	17
Tasks required of officer not considered by respondent to be police responsibility	14	12
Fellow officers not doing their job	8	6
Work assignments which the office disliked	6	4
Those stressors not fitting into the above categories	5	1
Periods of isolation and separation from social contact	3	2
Adequacy or equity in salary	2	7

(Source: Kroes, Margolis, Hurrel, 1981, p. 84-86).

As earlier mentioned, the alternatives on the questionnaire did not list dangerous and traumatic situations, but only potential stressors that pertained to the police organization or police relations with colleagues and the public. As to the alternative "those stressors not fitting in to the above categories", crisis situations were only mentioned by two individuals. When the police officers later were asked to consider five stressors, among them crisis situations, this was seen as the second most bothersome stressor after those categorized as pertaining to the police administration. It is also interesting to note that the respondents almost exclusively rated their own appraisals of stress as probably being higher than the stress appraisal of others (Kroes, Margolis, Hurrel, 1981).

Another effort to rank stressors in the field of police work was made by James Sewell in 1981. Sewell constructed a questionnaire of 144 events, both administrative and line-of-duty oriented. The events were assumed to commonly be experienced as stressful by police officers. The scale was inspired by the Holmes and Rahe (1967) Stressful Life Events scale (SLE). Students at the FBI National Academy and members of a Virginia County police department were asked to rate their estimation or experience of stressfulness on a scale from 1-100, using changing work shifts, with an arbitrary value of 50, as an anchor. The study resulted in a list of 25 "Law Enforcement Critical Life Events" as a measure of the heaviest stressors of police work. Sewell also presented a list including the 25 *least* stressful law enforcement critical life events (where item # 1 is the least stressful). Both lists are presented below in Tables II and III. The 94 potential stressors *between* the most and the least stressful law enforcement events were not listed.

Eight of the 10 worst stressors in Table II could be described as pertaining to the category of dangerous and traumatic situations, and totally 60 percent of the 25 worst stressors are potentially dangerous or traumatic. The highest ranking stressor is the "violent death of a partner in the line of duty". The worst administrative stressor, "dismissal", ranks as # 2. As to the 25 *least* stressful events, the majority of potential stressors concern basically non-dangerous, non traumatic routine and administrative tasks. It is interesting to note that some of the 25 least stressful events are roughly comparable to some of the worst stressors in Kroes', Margolis' and Hurrels' (1981) study assessing 12 police definitions and ratings of occupational stressors (see table I above). This is the case in for example the stressor "court rulings and procedures" in the Kroes et al study, compared with the court-related stressors "court appearance" (traffic and misdemeanor), "delay in trial" and "release of an offender by jury" in Sewell's study. For both stressful events-lists in Sewell's study, some stressors are not directly job-related. This is the case in for example the stressors "suicide of an officer who is a close friend" Table II and "vacation" in Table III.

TABLE II

25 MOST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS

1. Violent death of a partner in the line of duty
2. Dismissal
3. Taking a life in the line of duty
4. Shooting someone in the line of duty
5. Suicide of an officer who is a close friend.
6. Violent death of another officer in the line of duty
7. Murder committed by a police Officer
8. Duty related violent injury
9. Violent job related injury to another police officer
10. Suspension
11. Passed over for promotion
12. Pursuit of armed suspect
13. Answering a call to a scene involving violent death of a child
14. Assignment away from family for a long period of time
15. Personal involvement in a shooting incident
16. Reduction in pay
17. Observing an act of police corruption
18. Accepting a bribe
19. Participating in an act of police corruption
20. Hostage situation resulting from aborted criminal action
21. Response to a scene involving the accidental death of a child
22. Promotion of inexperienced/incompetent officer over you
23. Internal affairs investigation against self
24. Barricaded suspect
25. Hostage situation resulting from domestic disturbance

(Source: Sewell, 1981, p. 9-10).

TABLE III

25 LEAST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS

1. Completion of a routine report
2. Court appearance (traffic)
3. Issuing a traffic citation
4. Vacation
5. Making a routine traffic stop
6. Overtime pay
7. Pay raise
8. Dealing with a drunk
9. Working a traffic accident
10. Court appearance (misdemeanor)
11. Call involving the arrest of a female
12. Assignment to a single-man car
13. Routine patrol stop
14. Call involving juveniles
15. Assignment to a two-man car
16. Making a routine arrest
17. Work on a holiday
18. Assignment to day shift
19. Award from a citizen's group
20. Response to a "sick or injured person call"
21. Delay in trial
22. Letter of recognition from the public
23. Overtime duty
24. Release of an offender by a jury
25. Departmental budget cut

(Source: Sewell, 1981, p. 9-10).

A revised version of Sewell's (1981) "law enforcement critical events" was developed by Australian researchers Coman and Evans in 1990. The survey, somewhat modified for Australian use, was distributed to members of the Australian Federal Police (comparable to FBI) and the Victoria Police, 50 participants were female and 221 were male police officers (271 altogether). A list of altogether 128 stressors resulted. Coman's and Evans' study has the advantage of including the relative *frequency* with which police occupational stressors were reportedly experienced by the interviewed officers. In the study, the respondents were asked to indicate how often, over a twelve month period, each event had occurred. The study further distinguishes between *"job content"* and *"job context"* situations, defining "job content" as ..." stressors intrinsic to police work ..including...such activities as attending unknown or threatening situations, officers' perceptions regarding police community relations and aspects of the court system...". "Job context" stressors are defined as .." perceived difficulties in the environment in which the officer works, not actual work duties" (Coman and Evans 1991, p. 154-156). Even though administrative and organizational stressors are included also in the "job content" category, the "job context" category includes mostly administrative and organizational stressors, as well as stressors that are not really job-related. It does not include any dangerous/traumatic situations or events. In Coman and Evan's study, the potential stressors were rated on a 1-100 point scale, with "change of shift" being assigned an arbitrary value of 50, consistent with the original study carried out by Sewell in 1981.

TABLE IV

25 MOST STRESSFUL JOB CONTENT LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS

Job Content Events Ranked :	Reported Frequency 0-100%
1. Violent death of a partner in the line of duty.	0.7
2. Participating in an act of police corruption	0.4
3. Shooting someone in the line of duty	2.6
4. Attending call to non-accidental death of a child	5.9
5. Attendance at scene of accidental death of a child	15.4
6. Confronting a person with a gun	14.7
7. Duty related violent injury to yourself	13.2
8. Personal involvement in a shooting accident	4.1
9. Pursuit of an armed suspect	16.9
10. Taking a life in the line of duty	1.5
11. Being taken as a hostage in a crime	0.4
12. Call to a sexual battery/abuse scene with child victim	12.1
13. Observing an act of police corruption	7.3
14. Violent death of another member in the line of duty	5.2
15. A situation where you were not able to rely on your partner	26.9
16. Violent job-related injury to another officer	18.0
17. Delivering news of death	29.5
18. Internal investigation hearing	14.3
19. Unfair plea bargain by a prosecutor	19.9
20. Facing a situation with the possibility of physical injury	58.6
21. Release of offender by court	39.4
22. Physical assault on you	22.8
23. Barricaded suspect	5.9
24. Having a complaint made against you	38.3
25. Facing an unpredictable situation	57.9

(Source: Coman and Evans, 1991, p. 153-164).

The results were presented in two separate lists, one for each category of stressors. The top 25 ranking stressors from both lists will be presented below in Table IV and Table V. The frequency of occurrence reported by the subjects will also be given relative to the total number of potential stressors (for a complete account of the stressors in the survey, please see Coman and Evans, 1991, p. 153-164). Even here does the "violent death of a partner in the line of duty" rank as the worst possible stressor. The large majority of the 25 highest ranking stressors are those that could be categorized dangerous and traumatic rather than administrative or organizational. Of the 47 remaining items on the list of stressful "job content" events are roughly 40 percent administrative and 45 percent dangerous and/or traumatic stressors. The remaining 15 percent could be categorized as stressors generated by "unpleasant" situations. These include situations like "investigation of political/publicized case", "harassment by a solicitor in court" or "verbal abuse from traffic violator". It is noteworthy that the highly stressful events are reported as occurring very infrequently: few of the most frequently occurring stressors are included among the "top 25" stressful events.

The 10 stressors that were reported as most common were: Giving evidence in court (stress rank=s.r.=43/100), Shift work (s.r. 54/100), Having to take command (s.r.62/100), Facing a situation with the possibility of physical injury (s.r.20/100), Facing an unpredictable situation (s.r. 25/100), Work on a public holiday (s.r. 68/100), Interrogation of a suspect (s.r. 55/100), Arrest of criminal (s.r. 53/100), Physical arrest of suspect (s.r. 41/100), and Completion of a routine report (s.r. 71/100). Only two of the ten most frequent stressors are among the 25 most stressful in Table III above. They are here # 20 and #25 respectively.

The "job context" events list, as mentioned above, primarily include administrative and organizational stressors but also stressors that are not really job-related. Like the "job content" list, it looks at both the stress rank and the reported frequency of occurrence of the 56 events listed.
The 25 most stressful "job context" events as well as the reported frequency will be presented below in Figure IV.
The 10 most commonly occurring "job context" events are: Long hours (stress rank =s.r.= 31/100), Job overload (s.r. 11/100), Change in supervisors (s.r.48/100), Negative community attitudes (s.r. 29/100), Changing work shifts (s.r. 45/100), Duty under a poor supervisor (s.r. 17/100), Being in a situation where you were not able to express what you felt (s.r. 21/100), Not getting support from senior officers (s.r. 07/100), Conflict with a supervisor (s.r. 15/100) and, finally, Inadequate pay (s.r. 18/100). 50 percent of the most frequently occurring stressors are among the "top 25" stressors. Coman's and Evans' study raise an interesting point: the most commonly occurring stressors, especially in the case "job content" situations, are seldom identical with the most stressful events. This implication indicate that dangerous and traumatic

events and situations occur much less often than daily hassles that are more or less related to routine work situations.

TABLE V

25 MOST STRESSFUL JOB CONTEXT LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS

Job Context Events Ranked:	Reported Frequency 0-100%
1. Failing police training course	3.3
2. Failure on promotional exam	5.9
3. Suicide of an officer you know	3.6
4. Unsatisfactory personnel evaluation	22.8
5. Passed over for promotion	19.5
6. Having an unfair administrative policy applied to you	26.9
7. Not getting support from senior officers	54.6
8. Ambitions thwarted	31.7
9. Promotion interview	34.3
10. Interference by political official in a case	9.3
11. Job overload	
12. Improperly conducted internal investigation of another officer	19.5
13. Job-related illness	15.4
14. Personal use of illicit drugs	0.4
15. Conflict with a supervisor	53.1
16. Promotion of inexperienced officer over you	22.1
17. Duty under a poor supervisor	59.0
18. Inadequate pay	52.3
19. Inadequate training	20.6
20. Assignment away from family for a long period of time	25.4
21. Being in situation where you were not able to express what you felt	58.6
23. Verbal reprimand by supervisor	32.4
24. Role ambiguity	40.2
25. Reduction in pay	11.4

(Source: Coman and Evans, 1991, p. 159-160).

A third study using the Law Enforcement Life Events list developed by Sewell in 1981 was carried out by Gaines and Van Tubergen in 1989. This study is by all means the most elaborate of the studies endeavoring to identify and rank stressors in policing. It is the only study to include both a number of background variables in the analysis. It is also the only "stressor ranking study" that consider the notion of different stressful situations having varying effects on police officers.

The study was carried out among 50 police officers at a medium sized police station. Sewell's (1981) original set of 144 stressful events was reduced to 72 through a process of combining overlapping statements (to make sorting more manageable). The officers were then asked to indicate the degree to which he or she perceived each stressor as stressful by placing the statement into one of nine ranking categories. The majority of the police officers were patrol officers. 26 percent were female. The analyses used the Q-sort methodology, an instrument developed specifically to identify and describe patterns of individual subjectivity. The police officers were sorted into three "officer type groups" defined by the patterns of responses given by the types of officers to the stress inventory. Five demographic factors: Gender, Assignment, Age, Mean years of Service and Mean education level were then identified for each of the three officer groups. The 12 job events rated as the most stressful by the different officer types will be presented below in Tables VI, VII and VIII. Common characteristics for each officer type will also be presented below.

TABLE VI

12 MOST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS FOR TYPE I OFFICERS

1. Being suspended
2. Civil suit against you as an officer
3. Being under departmental investigation
4. Press criticism of you as an officer
5. Reprimand by a supervisor
6. Conflict with a supervisor
7. Citizen complaint against you
8. Wrecking a department vehicle
9. Passed over for promotion
10. Taking a promotion test
11. Sexual advancement toward you by another officer
12. Changing from one shift to another

TABLE VII

12 MOST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS FOR TYPE II OFFICERS

1. Hostage situation or barricaded suspect
2. Response to felony in progress call
3. Having to use physical force in making arrest
4. Emergency run to unknown trouble
5. Pursuit of traffic violator
6. Handling a mentally or emotionally disturbed person
7. Handling a domestic disturbance
8. Response to an alarm drop
9. Response to sick or injured person call
10. Inability to solve a crime
11. Routine patrol or traffic stop
12. Dealing with a drunk

TABLE VIII

12 MOST STRESSFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT CRITICAL LIFE EVENTS FOR TYPE III OFFICERS

1. Suicide of another officer
2. Injury to another officer
3. Use of alcohol/drugs by another officer on duty
4. Shooting incident involving another officer
5. Participation in a strike, slow down or sick out
6. Severe disciplinary action against another officer
7. Press criticism of other officer or department
8. Civil suit against another officer
9. Official inquiry into other officers misconduct
10. Citizen complaint against another officer
11. Change in administrative policy or procedure
12. Assignment to a specialized training course

(Source Gaines and Van Tubergen, 1989, p. 203-206)

As indicated by the rankings in Tables VI-VIII, the stressors perceived as most bothersome to the officers were quite different for the three officer types. Type I officers indicated they were more bothered by stressors related to *criticism of their job performance* (organizational stressors). They were less bothered by police activities and potentially dangerous and traumatic events. Type I officers were typically young (average age was 32.4 years). Their average years of service was 8.8, and they typically had a rather high level of education; on average 4.2 years. 20 percent of Type I officers were female. Most of the female officers in the category were assigned to administrative duties. Most males were patrol officers.

Type II officers appeared more bothered by *police-task related stressors* (or potentially dangerous and traumatic stressors) and less bothered by possible negative actions by supervisors or disciplinary actions. 58 percent of the female patrol officers in the study were characterized as Type II officers. 75 percent of Type II males were either patrol or traffic officers. Average age was again 32.4 years and average length of service was 8.2 years. Type II officers had the highest mean level of education, 4.4 years. Type III officers, finally, appeared to be more bothered by *problems and criticism and negative actions of their co-workers*. They perceived working conditions and potentially dangerous and traumatic events as less stressful. 100 percent of Type III officers were male. They were on average older than the other categories. Their mean years of service was considerably higher than for the two other groups; 12.7 years. Their mean level of education was however somewhat lower; 3.6 years.

None of the type III officers were assigned to administrative duties. 50 percent were patrol officers, 30 percent were traffic officers. The last 20 percent were investigators.

The results from this study seem to suggest two possible explanations for the differences in the perception of occupational stressors: a) the perception of an event as stressful is determined by the individuals personality traits and b) it is determined by type of job assignment. The police officer may adjust to the requirements of the job over time. When assigned to a new type of duties, the ranking of stressful events may change. A third possible explanation might be time on the job; it is interesting to note that the importance of fellow officers seem to increase dramatically over time; the officers that had served the longest almost exclusively rated stressors connected to fellow officers among the 12 most bothersome.

The results also points to the notion that police officers should not be treated in a global fashion in research on police stress. The categorization of the police officers revealed interesting characteristics of the different officer types. However, since only one study on police occupational stressors have taken more background variables into account in the analysis of stressful events, the generalizability of the results from this study is very limited.

In conclusion, the results from the studies using different versions of Sewell's (1981) measure of Law Enforcement Critical Life Events seem to indicate that the *heaviest potential stressors in policing are those inherent in the job when police officers are treated in a generic fashion.* The most bothersome stressors are thus the task-oriented dangerous and traumatic events and situations that are part of the police occupation and difficult to change. On the other hand, according to Coman and Evans, *these are also events and situations that are unlikely to happen very often.*

When age, job assignment, mean years of service, gender and level of education are considered in the analysis, a typology of three officer types emerge: some *officers are more bothered* *by potentially dangerous and traumatic events, others are more bothered by administrative and organizational events, and yet others are more bothered by organizational/administrative or dangerous and traumatic events facing their fellow officers.* It is likely that these differences are connected to variables related to the officers personality and/or job assignment.

Gaines' and Van Tubergen's (1989) study and Coman's and Evans' (1991) study are however somewhat contradictory in their results; while Coman and Evans suggest that the more stressful the event, the less frequently it seem to occur, Gaines and Van Tubergen suggest that the perception of an assignment as stressful is connected to the work assignment of the officer, and thus indirectly to the (expected) frequency of the event. It is also interesting to note that several of the "least stressful" law enforcement event identified in Sewell's (1981) study, show up among the 12 most stressful as rated by the Type II officers in Gaines and Van Tubergen's study.

The results from the three "stressful police event" studies are quite different from the findings of Kroes et al.(1981) where *only administrative and organizational stressors were included as relevant*. However, although Kroes' and his associates did not include potentially dangerous and/or traumatic stressors, the subjects were asked to list stressors they felt were missing from the list. Only 2 of the 100 subjects mentioned dangerous and/or traumatic situations. When asking the police officers to consider five stressors, among them crisis situations, this was seen as the second most bothersome stressor after those categorized as pertaining to the police administration (Kroes, Margolis, Hurrel, 1981).

A factor analysis of stressors confronting police officers was carried out by White, Lawrence, Biggerstaff and Grubb in 1984. Sworn personnel in the Greensboro City Police Department were asked to indicate on a 0-100 point scale the relative amount of stress they felt in relation to 85 stressful police events. Of the 355 employees, 121 were police officers. Fifteen officers were female.

Although the majority of the respondents were officers, (47 did not specify rank) the results from the study do not distinguish between officers, patrol squad leaders, sergeants and lieutenants. The respondents were asked to consider the event "changing from day to night shift" as having a stress rating of 50, and to rate all other items on the scale relative to this. The mean ratings for the 25 most reported stressors in this analysis will be presented below in Table IX (for the complete ratings on the 85 items, please see White, Lawrence, Biggerstaff and Gruff, 1985, 111-123).

The results from this study are quite mixed. Among the heaviest stressors are both administrative and dangerous and traumatic situations; with stressor number one being the "rating system for pay" and stressor number two being "fellow officer killed in the line of duty". There are though more line-of-duty and crisis situations than administrative, organizational etc. among the 10 stressors that are appraised as being heaviest, so that this study will be categorized as *finding dangerous and traumatic situations as more stressful.*

Looking at the 25 heaviest stressors altogether (the original study listed 85 stressful events and situations) it might be interesting to note that only 32 % of the potential stressors are such that pertain to dangerous/traumatic situations. Looking at the whole list of 85 potential stressors, roughly 30% of the events and situations included were potentially dangerous/traumatic while about 60 % of the stressors could be characterized as administrative or organizational. The remaining 10 % are potential stressors that are not really police related; for example "parking problems" and "strained relations with own family" (White, Lawrence, Biggerstaff and Gruff, 1985).

STUDIES ASSESSING STRESS IN RURAL POLICE OFFICERS

The second category of studies concern stress in rural police officers as opposed to the studies earlier mentioned that concentrate primarily on police officers working in larger metropolitan areas. The two studies presented are also different in kind. The first describe stressors in a somewhat different way than earlier studies presented, the other is not directly aimed at identifying stressors in policing.

TABLE IX

MEAN RATINGS FOR 25 MOST REPORTED POLICE OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS

Stressor	Mean Rating	Stressor	Mean Rating
1. Rating system for pay (performance evaluation)	73.59	15. Promotion System	52.01
2. Fellow officer killed in the line of duty	70.29	16. Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations	51.45
3. Inadequate salary	69.14		
4. Exposure to battered and dead children	62.06	17. Inadequate support by supervisors	51.38 5.
Killing someone in the line of duty	59.82		
6. Being investigated by internal affairs	58.18	18. Fellow Officers not doing their job	51.20
7. Confrontations with aggressive crowds	59.11	19. Ineffectiveness of the judicial system	51.16
8. Physical attack on ones person	58.14	20. High Speed Chases	50.89
9. Distorted or negative press accounts of police	57.89	21. Inadequate Support by Department	50.64
10. Excessive paperwork	57.41	22. Changing from day to Nightshift	(50)
11. Receiving a "standard" rating	55.32	23. Making critical on the spot decisions	49.90
12. Insufficient manpower to adequately handle a job	53.03	24. Public criticism of police	48.94
13. Affirmative Action policies and procedures	52.65	25. Assignment to new or unfamiliar duties	48.79
14. Situations Requiring use of force	52.34		

(Source: White, Lawrence, Biggerstaff and Gruff, 1985, p. 111-123).

Rather, it assesses the importance and enjoyability of several job functions. It is included in this paper because it is assumed that enjoyability and stress are inversely related, so that perceived enjoyability indicates the absence of negative feelings or in other words, stress. The first study to be presented was carried out in 1982 by Walsh and Donovan and endeavored to assess job stress in 139 male Pennsylvanian Rural

Game Conservation Officers. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between occupational stress and the special law enforcement function in a non-urban area as compared to police occupational stress in urban settings. A self-administered questionnaire was developed from a review of past research, including 36 statements describing stressful situations. The study divided occupational stressors into three subdivisions: stressors related to the nature of the function, stressors related to the internal organization and stressors related to personal situations. The 9 most predominant stressors that were found are presented in Table X below. As it appears from the results of this study, *the dangerous element of work as a game conservation officer is the highest ranking stressor*. Somewhat paradoxical is however the finding that statement number 4; Work Physically Threatening, receives the next lowest ranking of the described stressors.This apparent contradiction (in what way is the work dangerous if not physically threatening?) is not discussed by the authors. Perhaps could it be an indicator of differences in experienced and not experienced events, so that the *perceived* danger of the work would be reported by the large majority, but the actual physical danger of the work only by the officers who actually have been exposed to such situations.

TABLE X

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN GAME CONSERVATION OFFICERS

	Officers (% N 139)	Rank
Nature of Function		
1. Work dangerous	93.5	1
2. Work more demanding	84.9	2
3. Work hours too long	82.7	3
4. Work physically threatening	51.8	8
5. Authority challenged	61.9	5
Internal Stress		
6. Management's support for officers decision	28.1	9
7. Paper work a waste of time	55.2	7
8.No voice in decisions that affect me	57.6	6
Personal Stress		
9. Work isolates from family	64.0	4

(Source: Walsh and Donovan, 1984, p. 333-338).

Other particularly large stressors are here the demands of work, long working hours, and being isolated from the family due to work. The conclusion as to differences between urban and rural officers were that stressors facing the officers were basically the same except for the fact that urban officers have on-duty relationships with the populations they serve and are therefore less isolated, and their personal lives are more often separate from their occupational lives (Walsh and Donovan, 1984).

Another study focusing on the rural police officer was carried out in 1988 by Maguire, Faulkner, Mathers and Wozniak. 151 rural Illinois police officers were interviewed. Although the study primarily focused on police job functions, and was not aimed at identifying stressors in policing, it also addressed attitudes and perceptions held by rural police officers and will therefore be mentioned in this paper. The enjoyability of different police job functions where ranked from 1 (most enjoyable) to 5 (least enjoyable) by the police officers, as well as the perceived importance of the same functions. The ranking of the functions are presented below in TABLE XI.

TABLE XI

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE AND ENJOYABILITY OF POLICE JOB FUNCTIONS IN RURAL POLICE OFFICERS

Job Functions	Main Score: Perceived Importance	Enjoyability
Law Enforcement	2.1	2.2
Patrol	2.3	2.3
Keeping Order	2.8	3.4
Community Service	3.4	2.9
Administrative Duties	4.2	4.2

(Source Maguire, Faulkner, Mathers and Wozniak, 1991, p. 182).

The police functions perceived as most important and most enjoyable, were coinciding in every but two functions, namely "Keeping order" and "Community service", where "Keeping order" was seen as somewhat more important than enjoyable, and "Community service" as less important but more enjoyable.The function "Law enforcement" was defined as the "immediate response to crime, talking to victims, apprehending suspects, etc." (Maguire, Faulkner, Mathers and Wozniak, 1991, p. 181), and ranked as both the most important and the most enjoyable for the police officers while administrative duties were reported as the least important as well as the least enjoyable. Administrative duties were defined as "paper work, court appearances, etc." (Maguire, Faulkner, Mathers and Wozniak, 1991, p. 181-182).

It can probably be assumed that enjoyability and perceived stress are inversely related, but in drawing the conclusion that this study qualifies as one of those claiming that administrative duties are much worse stressors than the dangerous and traumatic situations in police work, one must probably consider that the officers in question face a completely different set of problems than inner city police officers. Their law enforcement practices might not as often be potentially life threatening or severely traumatic.

The main conclusion drawn from the study by Maguire et al. was that rural policing is qualitatively distinct from urban and suburban policing mainly because of the different level of "violence on the streets" (Maguire, Faulkner, Mathers and Wozniak, 1991). Looking at both the studies on rural policing it seems that the *first study rates the dangerous elements of policing as the largest stressor, while the second, although indirectly, seems to indicate that administrative stressors are more stressful* (or at least less enjoyable and less important) than such duties having to do with law enforcement, including such that are potentially dangerous and/or traumatic.

STUDIES ASSESSING STRESSFUL EVENTS AS RATED BY MALE /FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS

The third category of studies focus on the ranking of stressors as perceived by male and female officers respectively, or, in one study, as perceived by female police officers only. These studies are treated separately because of the specification of gender. Although other studies, (perhaps unwittingly) have concerned only male officers, the study assessing stress in the female officer will be presented in this section to enhance comparability to the other gender-specific studies presented here.

A study that aimed to rank police occupational stressors was carried out by Pendergrass and Ostrove in 1982. The study compared male and female officers from Maryland departments on ratings of stressful events. The officers where asked to rate the impact and frequency of stressful police events and also to rate support, job-ambiguity and conflict, and other organizational factors. The Police Stress events developed by Spielberger et al. in 1980 was used to assess the impact of the stressors. The subjects were asked to rate 62 events from 0-100 in a comparison to a standard- "assignment of disagreeable duty"- which was given the (arbitrary) value of 50. Eight most stressful events were listed on a scale for each sex.The results of the study are given in figure Table XII below. As seen,the lists were somewhat different for male and female respondents, although only the two last items were listed by females alone. *The worst stressors were those of dangerous and traumatic events and situations.* These were also very similarly rated by males and females.

TABLE XII

STRESSFUL EVENTS AS RATED BY FEMALE AND MALE POLICE OFFICERS IN MARYLAND

Male respondents	**Female respondents**
1. Fellow officer killed in the line of duty	Killing someone in the line of duty
2. Killing someone in the line of duty	Fellow officer killed in the line of duty
3. Exposure to death or battered children	Exposure to dead or battered
4. Inadequate support by department	Insufficient manpower to handle a job adequately
5. Insufficient manpower to handle a job adequately	Physical attacks on ones person
6. Competition for or lack of advancement	Inadequate support by department
7. Physical attack on ones person	Making arrests while alone
8. Changing shift hours	Responding to felony in progress.

(Source: Pendergrass and Ostrove, 1984, P. 303-309)

For male respondents, three "administrative" stressors were listed (# 4,6,8) while only one such item was listed by female respondents (#6). It might be suggested that the greater perception of physically dangerous or difficult situations as stressful in women could be due to their relative difference in body size and disposition as compared to men.

However, in a study on police stress in female police officers carried out in 1980, Wexler and Dorman Logan found that *stressors associated with dangerous and/or traumatic situations did not receive the highest stress ratings.* Wexler and Dorman Logan interviewed 25 Californian female police officers. The officers were all working in a large, metropolitan police department employing 120 female and 1035 male patrol officers.

Stressors specifically mentioned by the subjects during 2-3 hour unstructured interviews were sorted into five categories; External Stressors, Organizational Stressors, Task-Related Stressors, Personal Stressors and Female-Related Stressors.The sources of stress and the number of women mentioning the stressor(s) are presented below in Table XIII. As indicated in the table, the police officers mentioned stressors in all the categories. *The organizational and female-related stressors were mentioned by 96 and 92 percent of respondents respectively.* 87% of the respondents who mentioned female-related stressors specified "negative attitudes of male officers". Sixty eight percent of the interviewed police officers mentioned dangerous and traumatic (or task-related) stressors. The only task-related source of stress mentioned by a majority of the women was the *constant exposure to tragedy and to people in trouble.* The women that mentioned this police occupational stressor as troublesome also indicated that it was changing them; making them less sensitive, less easily moved. As mentioned above, it is interesting to note that such stressors that are task related and associated with the traumatic and dangerous sides of policing, did not receive the highest rankings (Wexler and Dorman Logan, 1983). There are however several problems with this study. In using unstructured interviews, the subjects might have forgotten to mention stressors. The interviewer might also have led the subject to mention a potential stressor she otherwise would not have mentioned. Further, the number of women mentioning a certain stressor is not necessarily an indicator of the stress level-it could also be an indicator of frequency of occurrence of a certain type of stressor. Finally, this paper will present a comparison of male and female police officers carried out by Love and Singer in 1988. The authors assessed job satisfaction, job involvement, the feeling of self efficacy and psychological well being in 103 male and 75 female New Zealand officers. A combination of instruments was used in the study, e.g. an efficacy scale developed by Kerber, Andes & Mittler in 1977, the 20-item Affectometer 2 scale developed by Kamman & Flett (1983), a five-item scale assessing general job satisfaction and a 14 item scale assessing specific job

TABLE XIII

AREAS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED AS SOURCES OF JOB STRESS IN FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS

Sources of Stress	Number of Women Mentioning It (n= 25)
External Stressors	18
Negative Public Attitude	9
Media	8
courts/Crim. Justice System	8
Organizational Stressors	24
Training	17
Rumors	11
Promotional Opportunities	8
Low Salary	6
Inadequate Equipment	2
Administrative Policies	0
Task-Related Stressors	17
Exposure to Tragedy and Trouble	13
Danger	10
Danger to self	6
Danger to partner	3
Stress Reactions after "Runs"	4
Boredom	2
Personal Stressors	13
Lack of Recognition	5
Health Problems	6
Alcohol/Drug Concerns	2
Marital Problems	1
Female-Related Stressors	23
Negative Attitudes of Male Officers	20
Group Blame	12
Responses of Other Men	10
Lack of Role Models	6

(Source: Wexler and Dorman Logan 1983, p. 48).

satisfaction developed by Hackman & Oldham in 1974-75. The variables of "job satisfaction", "self efficacy" and "psychological well being" were used as indicators of the degree of occupational stress. The results from the study are shown in Table XIV below.

TABLE XIV

SELF EFFICACY AND OCCUPATIONAL BEHAVIOR RANKINGS IN FEMALE/MALE NEW ZEALAND POLICE OFFICERS

Self Efficacy Ratings in police Officers. (1= extremely effective, 7= extremely ineffective)	Male	Female
General Effectiveness	2.21	2.43
Effectiveness in Handling Violent Offenders	2.34	3.92
Effectiveness in Handling Domestic Disputes	2.47	2.41
Effectiveness in Handling Riot Situations	2.56	3.88
Effectiveness in Handling Youth Aid Problems	2.92	2.77
Psychological Well being -4= extremely low well being, +4= extremely high well being)	+1.89	+1.91
Specific Job Satisfaction (1= extremely dissatisfied. 7= extremely satisfied)		
Pay	3.83	3.98
Security	5.40	5.36
Social	5.23	5.36
Supervision	4.76	5.10
Growth	5.02	5.13
General Job Satisfaction	4.76	4.94

(Source: Love and Singer, 1988, p. 99)

The study found that *female officers perceived themselves as significantly less effective in handling violent offenders than males and less effective in handling riot situations*. This probably indicate that they feel more stress in such situations. However, as to job satisfaction and psychological well being, no significant differences were found between the two samples. It is worth to note that only administrative stressors were listed in the measure of specific job satisfaction. If we interpret job satisfaction and psychological well being as indicators of stress, then the overall result would here be that female and male police officers feel the same amount of administrative stress in their work, but female officers experience more stress in potentially violent situations. Since on the "ineffectiveness scale" where potentially dangerous and traumatic situations were listed, both male and female officers on average scored lower than as to the "specific job satisfaction scale" assessing administrative issues, it will here be inferred that dangerous and traumatic situations were perceived as more stressful by the surveyed officers. (Love and Singer, 1988).

RESULTS

If we, in spite of methodological and conceptual inequalities in several of the studies, try to answer the question of ~~If we, in spite of method~~*whether police officers seem more bothered by administrative stressors or stressors related to* *dangerous and traumatic situations*, the overall impression from the studies presented above is that dangerous and traumatic situations are somewhat more often perceived by the responding officers as the largest stressors in policing than administrative and organizational stressors as long as police officers are treated in a global fashion in relation to all background variables except for gender (it should however be noted that the categorization in this paper may not agree with other authors). Of the presented studies, 66% found that the dangerous/dramatic parts of policing are more bothersome to the police officer than the administrative parts. However, one study, controlling for frequency of occurrence of the event, found that the very stressful dangerous and traumatic events are also those that tend to occur extremely seldom. Also in the studies that control for gender, 66% of the findings indicated dangerous and traumatic situations to be the most stressful for police officers. One study, controlling for several background variables in the analysis, found that different officers rated different stressors as bothersome. The ranking of either administrative/ organizational (or in this study also peer-related) stressors or dangerous and traumatic events as more bothersome did here seem to depend on for example job assignment and time on the job. As to the studies on rural policing, one presented the results that administrative chores were more bothersome, the other (although indirectly) indicated that line-of-duty situations and events were more stressful. The results were hence 50-50 %.

DISCUSSION

The line-of-duty related police occupational stressors that appear to be the worst possible are loosing a fellow officer or partner in the line of duty and taking a life in the line of duty. If we try to distinguish between dangerous (threat to life and limb) and traumatic (emotionally overwhelming) events and or situations, it appears that *officers seem to report traumatic situations as somewhat more stressful than dangerous situations*. Then again, the two are difficult to distinguish. Many traumatic situations are initially dangerous, and most dangerous situations will probably elicit emotional distress. An example also mentioned above is the shooting of another person in the line of duty. This situation is likely to have been initiated by danger, and followed by a severe feeling of emotional distress. Among the *administrative stressors there was no one stressor that was reported by several studies as being the worst*.

The results from the comparison of the studies assessed above indicated that the difference as to *stressors related to dangerous and traumatic situations and administrative stressors* in terms of seriousness might be very small or none. Several factors must be taken into account before we trust the conclusion that administrative stressors might be as bothersome to the police as dangerous and traumatic stressors. The sample of studies presented in this paper was very small and the categorization in this paper of studies as pertaining to one category or the other is subjective. Further, the general failure of most of the studies to consider several potentially important background variables might have had significant influences on their results. The studies do not always list the same stressors (or as in the case of open-ended questions, not listing the stressor at all). Therefore, the results from the several studies are probably different than they would have been if the same measuring instrument had been used. In other words, the studies endeavoring to identify and rank major stressors in policing might be too different in scope to allow for a meaningful comparison of the results. The several variables that ideally should be included in a study on police occupational stressors, and the extent to which they are included in the nine studies presented above will be illustrated below in Table XV. The large majority of the studies used a "checklist" approach, including a large number of stressors, and asking the research subjects to rate these on a scale from most to least stressful. The advantage of this method is that given an adequately large number (and variety) of exemplified stressors, the subjects are given the possibility to rank the stressors from most to least stressful, which may provide a quite accurate picture of how stressful particular stressors are perceived as in relation to other stressors. However, there are also several disadvantages to this method. The exemplified stressors might exclude specific situations and events that are perceived as stressful by the surveyed officers; the survey may not have been taken seriously

TABLE XV

IDEALLY INCLUDED VARIABLES IN A STUDY ON STRESSORS IN POLICING AND VARIABLES INCLUDED IN THE TEN ASSESSED STUDIES (WHEN INCLUDED BUT NOT ANALYZED=(X)).

Study #:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Included Variables:										
Police rank specified	(x)			(X)	x		(x)	(x)	(x)	x
Job assignment specified										x
Gender	(x)		(x)	(x)	(x)		x	x	x	x
Age										x
Race										
Social class										
Marital status										
List most stressful events		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
List least stressful events		x								
Administrative Stressors	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dangerous Stressors		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Traumatic Stressors		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Frequency of Stressor			x							
Length of police training										x
Length of police service										x
Length of service on location										
Official crime rate in area of work										
Urban/rural location	x				(x)	x	x			
Size of Department										

Study #
1= Kroes, Margolis & Hurrel, 1981
2= Sewell, 1981
3=Coman & Evans, 1991
4= Lawrence, White, Biggerstaff & Gruff, 1985
5= Walsh & Donovan, 1984
6= Maguire, Faulkner, Mathers & Wozniak, 1991
7= Pendergrass & Ostrove, 1984
8= Wexler & Dorman Logan, 1983
9= Love & Singer, 1988
10 = Gaines & Van Tubergen, 1989

by the officers, or the officers might, for one reason or another, not have given an honest answer.

Further, different individuals will more than likely appraise different situations as more or less stressful depending on several person and department-related background variables. The assessment of a situation or event as more or less stressful may hence be dependent on, or closely related to, variables that are excluded in the given survey, rendering the information virtually worthless. The background variables illustrated in the above table are hence both such that were included in the assessed studies and such that ideally should have been included (my comment). When background variables were included, they were often not considered in the analysis. Such cases are in Table XV marked with an (X).

As illustrated in Table XV, only one of the ten studies considered the *officers' age*. Only one of the studies took into account the *officers' length of police training* (level of education) and *length of service*. One study considered the relative *frequency* with which a potential stressor was experienced by the officers. All studies failed to discuss the difference between the perception of a potential stressor that has *never been experienced* by the person, and a potential stressor that has *been experienced* one or more times.

Also, the hypothetical *risk* of experiencing a given stressor is likely to have an impact on the officers' perception of the stressor as bothersome. For example is the risk of physical injury likely to be considerably higher in a high crime-risk neighborhood than in a low crime-risk neighborhood. The perception of "risk of physical injury" as a serious stressor may therefore vary largely with official crime rate in the police officer's geographical area of work.

Job assignment, considered only in one study, could also be indicative of the frequency of an event. Thus, the assessment of own experience of a stressor and/or risk would help in answering the question of whether and to what extent personal experience (of a given stressor) is related to the perception of that stressor as more or less stressful: on one hand, the officer working in a very high crime-risk area might be more likely to perceive dangerous and traumatic events as stressful either because he/she already has experience from one or more such events (and are afraid for it to happen again) or because the probability of it happening is likely to be larger. On the other hand, if the police sees himself as a trained "crime fighter", and prefer "action" before boredom, he/she might suffer more from "red tape" or court proceedings. At least theoretically, a larger experience with dangerous and traumatic situations or a larger probability of experiencing such situations could be seen as enhancing the development of "crime fighting" skill and therefore reduce the perception of the event or situation as stressful. In other words, if there is a relation between the experience of a given stressor or risk of experiencing the stressor and the perception of that stressor as bothersome, what is the direction of that relation? It would be impossible to tell from the limited evidence. While Coman and Evans'(1991) found that the events rated as the most stressful (according to the rankings) are the ones that happen the least frequently, Gaines and Van Tubergen (1989) found that job assignment, by analogy indicative of frequency of occurrence of an event, seemed to render a frequently occurring event much *less* bothersome to the police officer.

So while Coman and Evans suggests that the frequency of an event may be unrelated to the perception of that event as stressful, Gaines and Van Tubergen suggests that the higher frequency of an event result in the officer's adjustment to the event so that he/she perceives it as less bothersome.

As indicated, the findings from the different studies assessing the order of stressors as appraised by police officers appear somewhat diverging. Because of the unequal methodological quality of the studies, there might be problems of internal validity influencing the generalizability of the results.

The emphasis in the results on either administrative or dangerous and traumatic task related stressors could thus have been dependent on how the research was carried out, for example how the stressors were defined and if the questions were open-ended or (as the large majority were) close-ended. The differences in results might also be due to the fact of different people being interviewed at different times and in different places. The only study to control for a large number of background variables did also suggest that different individuals assigned to different jobs indeed perceived different stressors as bothersome.

An explanation of why some studies indicate that administrative stressors are more bothersome to police than line-of- duty related stressors, and some studies indicate that it is the other way around, could (when samples are small) also lie in the failure to distinguish between events that have been experienced and events that have not been experienced by the research subjects: individuals that actually have experienced one or more line-of-duty and crisis situations might appraise them as a more severe stressors than others.

Or, as indicated above, they might appraise them as less severe because they have experienced them before. Another possible explanation could be that when asked about stressors, police officers might tend to mention such stressors that, at least theoretically, can be changed before such stressors that inevitably "comes with the job". Finally, an explanation to the diverging findings could be that *there is very little difference in the severity of the two categories of stressors; administrative stressors and dangerous and/or traumatic stressors are basically equally troublesome to police officers.*

If this is true, why is it so? Is the implication that the police organization is so poorly administered that administrative stressors have become an inherent part of policing as well, a part that is as bothersome to the officers as danger to life and limb and exposure to traumatic situations?

If so, the impact on officers of administrative stressors should deserve much more attention both in police stress reducing programs and in the police organization as a whole. Administrative stressors are largely changeable and removable. They need not, and should not, be an inherent part of the police occupation. A general reflection from the assessment is that much more careful research is needed if we are to adequately answer the question of which stressors in policing that are most troublesome to the police officers. As of today, most available research gives very little valuable information on the topic of police occupational stressors.

CHAPTER V

STRESS RESPONSES AND COPING

As indicated above in part II, coping refers to the "...constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person..."(Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 141). The studies on police occupational stress assessed in this paper do not include a discussion of the *resources* that help people cope with stressors. Therefore, Lazarus' and Folkman's (1984) more limited concept of coping is used for the discussion of stress reactions and coping. However, a more detailed theoretical framework for the notion of coping is presented and discussed later in this chapter.

Different people react in different ways to stress, which also results in different coping efforts or coping behaviors. Some individuals respond to stress with depression, some with anger and yet others with a feeling of challenge. Examples of coping responses that have been noted in police officers have for example been alcoholism and personality changes (cynicism). There is however, as mentioned above, a distinction between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. The first form of coping predominantly directed at defining the problem, generate alternative solutions, weighing the alternatives as to their costs and benefits, choosing among the alternatives, and acting. The second, emotion-focused form of coping, refers to such cognitive coping strategies as, for example, avoidance, minimizing, distancing and selective attention (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

A distinction has here been made between such coping responses that more clearly can be described as *coping efforts and behaviors,* and such that better can be referred to as *effects of such coping efforts and behavior.* But there are cases that fall in between. For example could suicide either be a coping effort or behavior, *or* an outcome of failed coping efforts and behaviors. Divorce is another example that falls between the categories. Mortality and disease among police officers, especially as to such stress related diseases as coronary heart disease and gastro-intestinal malfunctions, will briefly be discussed in a separate category.

EFFECTS OF COPING EFFORTS AND BEHAVIORS: SUICIDE, ALCOHOLISM AND DIVORCE

Suicide

Even if here categorized under "effects" of coping efforts and behaviors, suicide was suggested to be an example of either coping behavior or an effect of previously failing coping behaviors. The coping behavior could be either emotion focused (in the form of escape) or problem focused (an effort to seek something better on "the other side"). However, it is here categorized under "effects". There are relatively few studies regarding the suicide rate among police officers.

However, there is a quite widespread presumption that suicide rates are especially high among the police (Lee Josephson and Reiser, 1990). Several authors (Niederhoffer, 1967, Heiman, 1975, Nelson and Smith, 1970) have found much larger suicide rates in police officers than in the general public or among individuals in other occupations (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990, Violanti, Vena and Marshall, 1985). Kroes (1985) asserts that even if suicide rates for police officers are typically high, the number of police deaths by suicide are held artificially low through a tendency to report suicides as accidents. Lee Josephson and Reiser (1990), on the other hand, found that the average suicide rate for police officers in the Los Angeles Police Department both in 1977 and 1988 were lower than the average suicide rate for adults at county, state and national levels, and further question the credibility of available research on police suicide.

Alcoholism

Alcoholism is a slowly developing chronic disease that, in most cases, results from long-time drinking. Applied on Lazarus and Folkmans' (1984) definition of coping, alcoholism could be the result of both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping behavior. Drinking in itself would rather be an example of either emotion-focused or problem focused coping behavior: the individual might believe that he/she is more capable to handle a certain situation while under the influence of alcohol. Excessive drinking of alcohol is reported to be common among police officers. However, little compelling evidence exists as to the relation between police job demands, stress, coping and alcohol use (Violanti, Marshall and Howe, 1985).

Kroes (1985) unofficially observes that within a major local department over 25 percent of the police men have a serious drinking problem and that many police officers undergoing treatment for stress related symptoms, at one time or another during their career, have had a serious drinking problem. Somewhat more elaborated findings regarding alcoholism in police officers (Unknovic and Brown, in Violanti et al 1983) indicate that alcohol is an important problem in the police occupation, and that compared to other occupations, 8 percent of all "heavy drinkers" were police officers (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). In Walsh and Donovans' (1982) study of stress in game conservation officers, 27.3 percent of the interviewed officers reportedly had problems with excessive alcohol use (Walsh and Donovan, 1984). While many police administrators believe the notion of alcoholism in the police occupation to be exaggerated, at least one study seems to show that police officers might be larger consumers of alcohol than the general population (Pendergrass and Ostrove, 1986, in Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). In a study on alcohol use as a coping strategy in relation to the police occupation, Violanti, Marshall and Howe (1986) found a strong positive relation between stress and alcohol use. It is here interesting to note that alcohol use as among the police officers was almost totally unrelated to the coping strategy cynicism. However, cynicism tended to increase rather than decrease police occupational stress, which in turn increased the use of alcohol. It was also found that emotional dissonance indirectly had an effect on increased use of alcohol because it increased stress. It was therefore suggested that alcohol use is a coping strategy that is chosen when other coping strategies fail (Violanti, Marshall and Howe, 1986).

Divorce

As indicated above, divorce could be both an example of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping, and it could either be a coping effect or a coping strategy. When police stress has been related to family problems leading to divorce, it has often been suggested that the police never gets "off the job" and that the odd working hours often makes it difficult to maintain common hobbies and a common social life (Swartz and Swartz, 1981, Stratton, 1981). There also seem to be a common belief that police divorce rates are very high. While some studies have indicated that the divorce rate among police officers is unusually high (Kroes, 1985 Swartz and Swartz, 1981), others seriously question this claim and state that the best available evidence support the notion that police divorce rates are not particularly high, and are at least lower than the popular image would lead one to belief (Terry, 1981).

COPING EFFORTS

Personality Changes: Cynicism and Role Distancing

While research on stressors in policing typically does not consider personality factors, behavior and personality *changes* of police officers are believed to be an (emotion focused) way of coping with stress. Although personality changes in itself could be seen as an effect of coping efforts, the process of change could also be seen as ongoing and hence an ongoing effort to cope with distress. The existence of cynicism among police officers is broadly documented (Langworthy, 1987). It is, among authors on police stress, an accepted truth that few police officers escape a negative personality change as a result of years in police service (Kroes, 1985). Cynicism, or the hardening of emotions, has been noted as a coping effort police officers display in order to function adequately at work in spite of being upset, angry or disgusted. Over time, this "stoic" image often bleeds into the officers private life causing problems with family and friends (Territo and Vetter, 1981).

Since Niederhoffers' (1967) creation of the "police cynicism scale", a twenty item questionnaire originally used to measure the amount of cynicism in officers by scoring and summing up the responses to survey questions, several studies assessing the change in police officers' attitudes have been conducted (Langworthy, 1987). However, a more careful review of the results from these studies indicate that few findings are statistically significant, and that the validity of the Niederhoffer scale is very questionable. And according to Langworthy (1987), if the (Niederhoffer) instrument is to be considered valid, the "...overwhelming conclusion must be that police, on average, are not cynical..." However, more likely is the notion that the instrument used is flawed and that cynicism, in fact, might occur (p. 33). Related to the notion of cynicism is "role distancing" as a coping effort. Role distancing might be demonstrated by behaviors such as police officers jokes about dangerous situations, police ignorance of citizens, or the apparent excitement in relation to chases in response to burglar alarms and so forth (Moyer, 1986).

Combat Stress Reactions

The term "combat stress reaction" refer to the "psychiatric breakdown under combat in soldiers under war-fare" (Solomon, 1985, in Hobfoll, 1988, p.12). Symptoms of combat stress are characterized by primitive, regressive or desperate emotion-focused forms of coping. Typical reactions are severe anxious agitation, conversion reactions or apathy (Hobfoll, 1988).
The overt reactions of people however varies tremendously. Such reactions might imply laughing or joking in inappropriate situations (see also about cynicism and role distancing above), crying, denial, or extreme calm. Combat stress reactions have been divided into three distinguishable phases: *the acute crisis phase, the denial/integration phase and the secondary crisis reaction phase.*

The acute crisis phase starts with the incident and will probably endure a few hours or perhaps one day. The coping responses exemplified above are here typical. The denial/integration phase is often characterized by attempts to integrate the traumatic event to ones life and self concept. The length of this phase vary tremendously between individuals. Some experience this phase during a couple of weeks, others for months and yet others experience the denial/integration phase for years. The secondary crisis reaction phase, finally, is characterized by nightmares, "flashbacks" and the like. Coping behaviors that were experienced shortly after the critical incident might now reoccur. This phase might also alternate with the denial/integration phase for some time (Ellison and Gentz, 1983). Accidents, assaults, disasters (man-made or natural), and shooting incidents are examples of situations in which police officers experience stress as a result of critical incidents. This area of law enforcement stress has also received much attention in the literature. Critical incidents are in this paper described as dangerous and traumatic events or situations. Research on officers' emotional and physical reactions during and after critical incidents have shown that the emotional impact of a shooting incident is the most traumatic experience a law enforcement officer can face during his or her career (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990).

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT STRESS

Occupational stress can affect an individuals physical health as well as his/her psychological well being. However, not many recent studies look at the relation between health problems and job stressors in policing (Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). Some of the more recent efforts will however briefly be presented below. Stress related illnesses such as coronary heart disease, gastro-intestinal malfunctions and dermatological problems have been found to be common in police officers. But also "less severe" conditions such as current headaches and sinus attacks, spastic colons, and grinding teeth have been identified as commonplace (Terry, 1981, Kroes, Margolis and Hurrel, 1974, Ayres and Flanagan, 1990). A study carried out by Grenick and Pitchess in 1973 found that the majority of the officers were more or less overweight (between 6-20 pounds).

In a study carried out by Violanti, Vena and Marshall (1985), elevated rates of cancer, in particular as to cancer of the digestive organs, were documented. 2,376 Buffalo, N.Y. police officers were included in the study. It was found that police officers had somewhat higher mortality rates that the general population of white males. They had a significantly higher degree of deaths from cancer (again in particular as to cancer of the digestive organs), and a high (but not significant) degree of allergic, endocrine and nutritional diseases. Controlling for age, risk for heart disease was found to increase considerably with years of police service. Senior police officers were hence at significantly higher risk of death from all circulatory diseases, including coronary heart disease, than the general population. However, deaths from respiratory diseases were significantly less common among police officers than the general population white males. It is interesting to note they also had a significantly lower degree of deaths from (non- specified) accidents than had the general population. The high rate of cancer among police officers in the study was attributed to poor eating habits, high rates of smoking and especially alcohol use among police officers. These coping efforts, in turn, are related to police occupational stress. A contrasting view on the issue of physiological effects of police stress was presented by Terry (1981): having examined the standard mortality ratios for cardiovascular disease and diabetes mellitus on occupation by occupation basis, he suggested that these illnesses may result from membership in the working class social structure, rather than in membership in certain occupational groups (Terry, 1981, in Ayres and Flanagan, 1990).

COPING, RESOURCES, STRESS RESISTANCE AND INDIVIDUAL VARIATION

While Lazarus and Folkman (1984) propose that coping behaviors are the response to stress, they do not define the *direction* coping takes. As mentioned above in chapter II, the problem of confounding coping with outcome is in their theoretical framework avoided through the definition of coping as "all efforts to manage stress, regardless of how well or badly it works" (p.142). A more elaborated model in this respect is presented by Hobfoll (1988), who looks at the resources that help individuals to cope with stress. In his models of "conservation of resources" and "ecological congruence, *stress* is defined as a "product of perceived loss of resources or the threat of such loss". Stress response, or *strain* is defined as "the response to stress that is manifested by the organism". Depression or anxiety are examples of psychological strain, disease is an example of physical strain. *Stress resistance* is by Hobfoll defined as "the process of responding to stressors for the purpose of limiting strain" and should not be confused with *coping*, which here is defined as "behaviors that are employed for the purpose of reducing strain in the face of stressors". Coping is hence one of several activities in the domain of *stress resistance*.

The concept of loss obviously entail negative life events such as the loss of a loved one or the loss of ones' work. But it also refers to positive transitions: even these may imply loss as they may require the use of other resources. Hobfoll define resources as "a) those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or b) the means for attainment of those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies". One important resource is social support, by Hobfoll defined as "those social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance or that embed individuals within a social system believed to provide love, caring, or a sense of attachment to a valued social group or dyad" (pp.16,25-41,121). Central to the concept of stress is here the notion of gain and loss of resources, and that individuals are primarily concerned with the conservation of these resources.

Environmental circumstances are seen as often threatening our resources as they may threaten our time, our lives, our loved ones, our happiness, our self-esteem, our jobs, our homes, or many other entities that we perceive ourselves as belonging to us. In other words, the loss of resources constitute a threat to our identity or what is important to us and hence initiates the stress process. As we seek to preserve our identities and what is important to us, we endeavor to minimize loss by expending, borrowing or risking other resources. Once resources have been lost, we will (consciously or subconsciously) act to cognitively, physiologically, or behaviorally maximize gain through the investment of different resources.

The model of conservation of resources suggest that a surplus of resources is a desired condition in that it may act to shelter an individual from future stressors. It also begets eustress; " a sense of control and positive association with the environment" (Hobfoll, 1988, p.43). Much of our time is spent trying to insulate ourselves from potential stress; we plan our investment of resources to make a psychological, social and economic protective shield around us. The accumulation of resources helps the individual to exert positive energy to build additional resources, which in turn will help to insulate him/her against future loss of resources and help preventing negative chain reactions of loss (Hobfoll, 1988). An example of such a chain reaction could be the police who gets a serious reprimand from his supervisor. The officer may experience lowered self esteem and begin to seriously doubt his skills. This self-doubt might be "signaled" to fellow officers and lead to loss of respect among them. Loss of respect among co-workers may lead to loss of pride which might be channeled into irritability or even aggressiveness at home, negatively influencing the officer's relation with his spouse. The importance of the reprimand will in large parts depend on the officer's *surplus of resources*: much in the same way as the loss of $1000 is much more aggravating to the economy of a low income individual versus a high income individual, will the amount of loss the reprimand represents largely depend on his prior resources; his initial self-esteem, prior belief in his competence, the prior relation with fellow-officers and the prior relation and level of communication with his wife.

The officer might also endeavor to minimize the loss through denying any fault on his part, or by starting to distrust and/or dislike the supervisor. He may also exhibit negative coping behaviors like increased drinking. Or he may start investing more energy into other parts of his life (increasing other resource gain); become more engaged in a hobby, or see more of his family or non-police friends.

Also long after the event, there might be a need for coping responses: the police officer may continue to act to decrease the net loss of security and self esteem in relation to the reprimand. He might even go back to school so as to increase his training and limit future losses of resources.

The essence of the model of conservation of resources is thus that individuals will invest, expend or risk resources in order to insure the net gain of resources, or, at least, minimize the net loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1988). But the model does not imply which factors affect an individual's choice of resources in order to obtain the most positive outcome. It does not either indicate the likelihood of success of a given strategy of resource utilization.

Whereas the model of conservation of resources focus on *stress*, Hobfoll's (1988) complimentary model of "ecological congruence" focus on *stress resistance,* defined as "the process of responding to stressors for the purpose of limiting strain". The model defines and details the several factors that affect the investment, the expenditure and risking of resources to maximize resource gain or minimize the loss of resources and outlines the major parameters involved in stress resistance emphasizing the cognitive, biological, and unconscious processes that operate in stress reactions. In short, the five dimensions of the model of ecological congruence are a) individual resources, b) strain, (both as defined earlier in this section) c) the internal needs of the individual - environmental events and internal needs interact in the formation of demands on those experiencing stress- d) time - developmentally and in terms of temporal distance from the stressful event e) individual values, defined as the "principal set of standards by which the individual measures the self and the environment" and, finally, f) perception, defined as "cognitive processes that involve the assessment of environmental events, resulting in individual differences in the interpretation of the personal interpretation of the event" (Hobfoll, 1988, 72-108).

Three mechanisms interconnect the five dimensions of the model of ecological congruence: perception, biological links (including instincts) and subconscious processes. Accordingly, the resource-needs fit, and the impact of values and time on this fit, are sometimes determined by perception, at other times by biological responses, and yet in other instances by responses determined by subconscious processes (Hobfoll, 1988). None of the studies endeavoring to identify and rank stressors in policing have concerned themselves with the resources that help individuals cope with stressors or with the parameters connected to stress resistance. They do not include personality factors, individual variations in responses to stress or availability of social support. As stated by Malloy and Mays (1984), the bulk of research on the topic of police stress has "...been done by law enforcement professionals while behavioral scientists have rarely ventured into (the) area. This is unfortunate because a body of well-controlled stress research is available and could serve as a guide for controlled studies on police stress. Even more unfortunate is the gap that exist between the police stress literature and the general experimental literature on stress. As a result, the police stress literature fails to reflect the conceptual shifts regarding stress that have been made as a result of accumulated experimental evidence..." (p. 206).

The authors also present the "stress diasthesis model" for the measurement of differential responses to the stressors in policing. The stress model is built on the assumption that all individuals, regardless of occupation, experience stress that they must manage. While some occupations may be more or less stressful, this does not necessarily mean that "high stress occupations" precipitate physical, psychological or social disruption *among all or the majority of its members*. Rather, it is hypothesized that a) the inability to manage the experienced stress level and b) a complex interaction between genetic and social-psychological illness mediating variables.

The inability or ability to manage a given stress level is highly individual and dependent on several factors, both personal and circumstantial. Different individuals will more than likely react differently to the same task: a white police officer assigned to evening/night patrol in Harlem, N.Y. may perceive the assignment differently than a black officer assigned to the same duty. Additional examples of differential perception of events are: a female officer may perceive a physically threatening situation differently than a male officer. An older married officer may perceive a longer assignment away from the department differently than one that is younger and single. A highly educated police officer may perceive the threat of job loss differently than one with very little education. From this perspective, research on stress should focus on physical and social-psychological variables that in significant ways influence the management of stress that all police officers are believed to experience to varying degrees. Also, the model suggest that physical and social-psychological variables that mediate development of a given concomitant of stress should be a major target for future research on police stress (Malloy and Mays, 1984).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This literature study has addressed the problem of stressors in policing. Common stressors in policing were discussed in relation to available research, defining stress as it is understood within the theoretical framework of the transactional concept. Coping responses to stress were also briefly discussed. The paper further endeavored to answer the question of whether the administrative elements, or the dangerous and traumatic elements of policing are perceived as equally or more stressful by the police officers. This inquiry seemed relevant since there is an ongoing debate as to the stressfulness of the police occupation in general, as well as what parts of policing that are more stressful in particular. It was assumed knowledge on the heaviest stressors in policing could have an implication for the development of stress reducing programs in the future as the administrative stressors in policing are easier to influence and change than the stressors elicited by dangerous and traumatic events or situations. The inquiry into what elements of policing that appear most stressful was done through a study of available research identifying and ranking stress.

The assessment found that dangerous and traumatic situations appear to be the heaviest stressors in policing somewhat more often than administrative/organizational *when police officers are treated in a global fashion,* without controlling for several individual and departmental background variables.Only one study controlled for several such variables, and the results from this study were quite different, suggesting that individual differences and assignment largely account for the perception of stressors as bothersome.

The relative difference between studies that tended to identify dangerous and traumatic situations as the most bothersome stressors and studies that tended to identify administrative and organizational studies as the most bothersome was small. This could indicate that administrative stressors in policing are almost as stressful or equally stressful to police officers as stressors related to dangerous and traumatic situations. This conclusion should however be regarded with much caution as the number of studies assessed was small, and methodological problems and inequalities are likely to have influenced the comparability and generalizability of the studies.

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