

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

Participative Management in a Narcotics Section

**A Leadership White Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**

**By
Phillip B. Foxall**

**Farmers Branch Police Department
Farmers Branch, Texas
May 2016**

ABSTRACT

The proper supervision of a police narcotics section is of vital importance to any police organization. There are many different models of police supervision that are used to manage police officers in today's police organizations. These range from the scientific models of supervision of Frederick Taylor to the more open theory of management highlighted in the Hawthorne study and in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Police narcotic units are a highly specialized group of men and women who are typically selected for their self-motivation, intellect, and ability to work without direct supervision.

The traditional theory of direct control over each decision by a supervisor inhibits these types of individuals making the authoritarian style of management ineffective for narcotic sections. The participative management style should be used by narcotic section supervisors to elicit the most productive and successful section. The participative style of management in these sections will allow employees to reach higher levels of self-actualization, while the minimized span of control found in these sections allows for the participative management style to work better than other styles of management. Further, the participative management style will increase production while reducing complaints. With newer generations of officers not responding well to the authoritarian style of leadership found in police departments that have failed to keep up with change, the participative management style appeals to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Introduction	1
Position	2
Counter Position	8
Recommendation	13
References	16

INTRODUCTION

The narcotics section of a police department is a unique culture within an already distinct culture. Additionally, working in a narcotics section is highly stressful and dangerous (Miller, 2006, para. 7). The management of these sections is often conducted in a dissimilar fashion than the remainder of the department.

There have been numerous research studies in the field of management and in the field of police management specifically. Two of the more popular groups of management theories are the scientific management theories and the behavioral management theories. Wuestewald and Steinheider (2006) suggested that the increased reliance on “knowledge-workers” has allowed the chain of command to be compressed, allowing for a more self-directed workforce. This has caused scientific management to be gradually replaced by a participative style of management. The participative style of management places a high degree of stress on “employee empowerment and job involvement” (Wuestewald & Steinheider, 2006, para.1). Law enforcement has often been recognized as having a paramilitary or authoritarian type of leadership style, and over the past several years, this style has waned to more of a participative style of management. Participation management is not a new idea, and it can be traced back to the Hawthorne studies conducted by Elton Mayo at the Western Electric Plant in the 1920’s – 1930’s (Wuestewald & Steinheider, 2006, para. 4).

Participative management has been gathering recognition as an appropriate style of management for police departments. In order to understand what participative management is, it needs to be defined. According to Leidecker and Hall (1974), Assistant Professors at the University of Santa Clara California and publishers of

several articles in the field of participative management, "Participative management has been described variously as 'a subtle means of having employees think they are a more important part of the organization' or as 'group decision-making'" (p. 28). In the Texas Police Chief's Association Code of Ethics is the following: "The members of TPCA are dedicated to innovative and participative management, at all times seeking to improve their departments, increase productivity and remain responsive to the needs of their community" (n.d., para. IV B).

The participative management style should be used by narcotic section supervisors to elicit the most productive and successful section. Using the participative management style in these sections will provide the group a better chance of achieving self-actualization within their careers, and the management style is better received by the new generation of police officers. Additionally, participative management will increase productivity while the minimized span of control of a narcotics section allows for the easy implementation of such a management system.

POSITION

The participative style of management should be used in the narcotics section because the needs of the employee can be met at a higher level than other styles of management. One famous study concluded in 1943 by Abraham Maslow with the publication of what has become to be known as Maslow's Self-Actualization Theory. According to Lyman (1993), the one-time Director of Criminal Justice at Columbia College, Maslow's Self-Actualization Theory was a significant step forward in understanding how to motivate people. For an individual to become a productive member of an organization, they must first meet their basic needs. Maslow's theory

describes the following five fundamental needs in ascending order: Physical Needs; Security; Belongingness and Love; Self-esteem; and Self-actualization. Lyman (1993) described self-actualization as “One's ability to fulfill one's potential” (p. 244). The goal of any employee is to move upwards from fulfilling physical needs to self-actualization. Once someone's physical needs, food and water for example, are met, then the person would move to the next higher need, which would be security. Once that need is met, the person would progress upwards until meeting their self-actualization needs. Lyman (1993) further stated, “The ultimate goal of the worker is to achieve self-actualization, thereby fulfilling all basic needs and becoming a confident, mature, and responsible employee” (p. 245).

The narcotics sections of police departments are comprised of groups of individuals who have been trained and brought up in an organization that prides itself on being a part of something bigger than them. In Dr. Enter's (2006) book titled *Challenging the Law Enforcement Organization*, he described the concept of dualism. Dualism is dividing human needs into two categories: individual accomplishments and the need to be a part of something bigger. According to Dr. Enter (2006) dualism is often found in narcotics sections where there is a high level of “camaraderie and group identity” and the participants in these groups often do not want to be moved out of the groups (p. 117-118).

In his book *Managing the Investigative Unit*, McDevitt (2005) believes investigative units should be supervised with a little bit looser style than other units. The reason that these units can be supervised differently than patrol divisions is because the process for selecting investigators targets people that are capable of working

independent of direct supervision. These officers are selected because they are able to think for themselves and are intelligent. Since these officers are able to work more independently, they usually do not work well in a restrictive structured environment (p. 63). Since the members of a narcotics section are described as having a high level of group identity, then these team members are thought of as achieving at minimal the level of belongingness and love as described by Maslow. These team members have already satisfied their physical need and their security need and have moved higher up on the hierarchy of needs. With the feeling of being a team and belonging, the assignment to a narcotics section often fills the need of self-esteem. The members of these sections have status and are admired by others. Since these needs are met, then they move to the need of self-actualization as described by Maslow. Employees who are in the self-actualization phase of their needs do not need directive management. These employees are already motivated and skilled; they just need to be part of the decision making and given general direction. Since employees of a narcotics section have met this high level of needs satisfaction, then the participative style of management is the style that these employees will find the most effective.

Narcotics sections are made up of small groups and, therefore, the supervisor in charge of the section, or even a team within that section, has a smaller span of control than other sections within a department. This minimized span of control in a narcotics section allows for the participative style of management to work the best. Riley (2012) explained that span of control is the number of subordinates that a supervisor is responsible for. If a supervisor is responsible for a large number of personnel, then the span of control is wider than the span of control of one who supervises fewer personnel.

The speed of communication is proportionate to the width of the span of control, with a narrow span allowing for quicker communication and better control than a wider one (Riley, 2012). There has been a lot of debate on the topic of what the ideal span of control should be in narcotics sections. According to an essay by UK Essays (2013), the Hawthorne experiments showed that smaller groups or employees are more satisfied, and work better than larger groups. McDevitt (2005) believes that the span of control for patrol and for investigative units should be different and explains that the patrol span of control is typically between eight and ten officers. When looking at more complex job assignments like supervising investigative units, the span of control should be five to seven investigators per supervisor. This minimized span of control leads to more accountability and better supervision (McDevitt, 2005, p. 65). Since the participative style of management involves actively engaging the group or team in the decision making process, this limited span of control naturally allows the participative style of management to occur easier than a larger span of control.

Law enforcement has to make adjustments to their management styles to facilitate the newer generations of workers. Many people refer to the newer generations of officers as the Entitled generation, the Me generation, or the Why generation. In today's law enforcement environment, it is possible to have three different generations of officers working at one time, and the management styles must be adjusted to fit this unique time.

The narcotics sections of these departments can be as diverse in terms of generational issues as the department. Warren (2012) pointed out that leading a group is different than just managing that group and modern supervisors need to be able to

lead. Police supervisors need to move to a participative management style by incorporating “transformational and servant leadership concepts” into the organization (Abstract). When speaking directly about generational differences, Warren (2012) stated, “The modern police leader will need to be aware of the differences, adjust leadership styles accordingly, and have the ability to view differently the art of leading” (p. 3). The participative style of leadership works great with the newer generation of narcotics investigator and gives the older generation of officers a revitalized look at supervision. The new generation wants to be involved in the decision making and often asks “Why?” as a response to an activity as opposed to just doing the activity. If supervisors include the officers in the decision-making and management process, the question of “Why” is answered as they participate.

Wuestewald and Steinheider (2006) weighed in on this issue by encouraging supervisors to coach new employees more as opposed to directing them to do something (para. 15). By including the officers in the management of the narcotics section, supervisors take the best and brightest officers in the department and ask for their help. This is a win-win situation since “Today’s law enforcement officers and civilian employees are far more knowledgeable and sophisticated than at any time in the history of policing” (Wuestewald & Steinheider, 2006, para 14). The experience, training, and education of the supervisor coupled with the education and sophistication of the newer generation is a powerful tool that can be utilized through participative management.

The use of the participative style of management in a narcotics section will increase the level of production of the section. Lyman (1993) wrote of two different

systems of management: the traditional theory and the open theory. The participative style of management would fit into his open theory. When addressing productivity, Lyman (1993) stated, "In open systems theories, it is generally held that a satisfied employee is also a productive employee, therefore the needs of the subordinate should be identified and addressed in to help further the goals and objectives of the organization" (p. 242).

Lyman (1993) also talked in detail about Elton Mayo's Hawthorne Studies, saying these studies showed that interactions between a manager and their subordinates are social systems. The experiments conducted showed that "Additionally, they had been receiving constant attention from the experimenters, thereby creating the 'Hawthorne effect', which ultimately resulted in a higher productivity" (Lyman, 1993, p. 243).

Working in a team or a group resulted in higher productivity, not because of higher pay or other benefits, but because they were being paid attention to and participated in the experiments. As Wuestewald and Steinheider (2006) pointed out, "Research in both the private and public sectors suggests a wide array of benefits of employee productivity, organizational citizenship behavior, labor-management relations, and overall organization performance" (para. 6).

In an examination of data over a five year period within the Broken Bow, Oklahoma police department, Wuestewald and Steinheider (2006) determined some key statistics in productivity after the implementation of what they referred to as shared leadership. According to their research, the following statistics were developed: 24% increase in all arrests; 6% rise in traffic citations; field interview reports increased 51%; a 34% increase in clearance rates; a reduction in UCR reported crimes by 5%; and a

reduction in citizen complaints by 56%. These are amazing statistics to consider since there was not a capital expenditure on manpower, equipment, or resources. The participative style of decision making, through training of managers and employees, reduced crime, which is the goal of any narcotics section.

COUNTER POSITION

Although many benefits to participative management have been covered in this paper as well as many books and backed by scientific evidence, there are still critics to this style of management. As with any sort of deviation from the traditional theories of police management, there is resistance to the new idea. It is important to address these issues to ensure that participative management is truly the style of leadership to be used in an area like narcotics enforcement.

One of the critiques of the participative management style is that it slows down the decision making process. An online article ("Management Study Guide," n.d.) explained that with participative management, the process of making a decision slows down. This is in order to analyze the input of the parties involved in the decision and will increase with the number of people engaged in the participation (para. 9).

Whisenand (2011) agreed, saying, "Participation takes time. You'll have to listen to others (eight, nine, or more people at one time)" (p. 286).

Both of the previous statements are true; however, they need to be put into perspective. Participative management does take more time than the directive or authoritative style of management; however, it is not slowed to a point where it is a destructive force in a narcotics section. Typically, narcotics sections have fewer officers relative to other sections, and as stated by Riley (2012), "A narrow span of control

allows a manager to communicate quickly with the employees under them and control them more easily" (para. 5). Since narcotics supervisors are able to communicate quickly with their teams, the decision-making process is not delayed in any measurable amount in the participative model.

Secondly, Whisenand (2011) describes the decision making process extensively in his book. One of his recommendations is to delay the decision making process if possible. Often managers rush to make a decision that can be reasonably delayed to obtain more information to make the correct decision. This rush to make a decision often leads to the incorrect decision, or not the best decision being made. The participative management style slows down the decision making process which produces the better results. If managers would adapt the participative management style, then the decision could be delayed until input can be received and the correct decision made.

Finally, a well-trained, adaptive manager will recognize when the participative management style is not appropriate. Like every management style, there are times when it is not the best style to use given the situation. In emergency situations where participation in the decision making process cannot be accomplished, the manager needs to seamlessly transition to a directive style of management. In narcotics sections, this can happen quickly and can have dire consequences if not recognized and accomplished. A narcotics operation changes quickly and managers must transition into a directive style to give immediate direction to the group so that everyone acts together to solve the situation. Once the emergency has passed then the manager should transition back into the participative style. Whisenand (2011) addressed this by

saying “I’m not against fast decisions. At times they are needed. What I am arguing for is flexibility. Sometimes fast, sometimes slow – it all depends on the situation” (p. 159).

Other critics of the participative style of management believe that it takes control away from the managers and gives it to the employees. These critics say that a managers job is to make the decisions and an employee’s job is to carry out those decisions. In reading Cowper (2000), he indicated that police supervisors depend on the top-down approach to decision making and then rely on their officer’s obedience to maintain control. Whisenand (2011) addressed this issue saying that there are some police supervisors who may reject the participative approach to management. These supervisors believe that they are the ones with the power and authority to make decisions and the officers are supposed to obey them. They compare their brand of leadership to a dictatorship by saying, “We’re not runnin [sic] a democracy here” Whisenand, 2011, p. 285).

Having a team like a narcotics section participate in management is not giving up the manager’s control over the group. In fact, just the opposite is true, as stated by Whisenand (2011): “The truth is that letting others participate in decisions that may affect them does not surrender your authority or responsibility for the ultimate decision. It’s yours; you got it when you decided to become a supervisor” (p. 285). Whisenand (2011) explained that the responsibility to make decisions is the supervisors, but this does not mean that supervisors cannot include the ones that are affected by the decision in the decision-making process.

Whisenand (2011) provided a story involving President Abraham Lincoln where the president was taking a vote on an issue that he wanted passed. According to

Whisenand (2011), President Lincoln stated, “One eye and seven nays – the eyes have it” (p. 14). This is an example where the group was asked for their input in the decision; however, they were overruled by the ultimate decision maker. Some would argue that this is not participative management at all, and they would be incorrect. The group participated in the decision, yet the ultimate decision rests with one person. That person, in this case, the President of the United States, was responsible for eliciting their input; however, he had the ultimate responsibility for the decision. Sometimes managers of narcotics sections have to do this. If the majority of the team wants to do something that, through their training and experience in dealing with upper management the supervisor knows will not go over well, then the supervisor must make the unpopular decision and then take the responsibility for it. It may not be the popular decision, but if it is the right one, the employees will follow and respect the supervisor.

Yet another critique of the participative style of management is that the authoritative style of management found in military and paramilitary organizations, like police departments, is a better form of management than the participative style of management. There are many ideas of what this military style of leadership looks like. According to Reams, Kuykendall, and Burns (1975), leaders in an authoritarian style of management do not trust their employees and show little support towards them (p. 476). They go on to say that decisions are made at the top of the organization and filtered down with little to no upward communication. They also pointed out that there is no teamwork and employees do not feel like they are a part of the organization. According to Wuestewald and Steinheider (2006), this style of leadership arose out of a need to control corruption and to establish credibility of dysfunctional police agencies (para. 7).

Additionally, Cowper (2000) stated that “It is a commonly accepted law enforcement notion that police agencies of the free world today are designed on the ‘military model’ of organization and leadership” (p. 228). Cowper (2000) further explained that police organizations are similar to military organizations since they have a rank structure, chain of command, and uniformity (p. 229).

The problem with this criticism is it is based on a flawed understanding of the current military management styles. According to Warren (2012), “The modern military model of leadership fosters atmospheres for creative and individual thinking, independent action, and the ability to make decisions without autocratic direct supervision” (p. 8). Further, Warren (2012) indicated that the police agencies are moving to a more participative style of management and they are encouraging teamwork. This plays directly into a participative management style for the narcotics sections. In dealing directly with this misconception, Cowper (2000) stated that modern military is no longer a top down “monolith” that conventional police supervisors believe in and more progressive police supervisors condemn. The modern military tries to eliminate the autocratic style of manager from their ranks. The military has decentralized their decision making, which leads to a more participative style of management. In instilling this decentralized decision making, “Military commanders and leaders down to the lowest levels are mandated to take action to solve problems and accomplish any and all assigned missions without detailed orders and with little or no supervision” (Cowper, 2000, p. 231 - 236).

Another problem with believing the authoritative style of management works best in narcotics sections is believing that control starts at the top. According to Wuestewald

and Steinheider (2006), “control – oriented” style of police supervision once worked. Additionally, in light of police scandals, administrators are worried about allowing officers the empowerment and self-sufficiency participative management calls for. What these “control-oriented” managers do not recognize is that police work is highly discretionary and that control is with the officers making the decisions in the field (Wuestewald & Steinheider, 2006, para. 8). Law enforcement, and especially narcotics sections, are extremely autonomous and discretionary.

Narcotic sections usually work in situations that are not under constant audio and video monitoring like patrol officers. Additionally, the narcotics investigators are working in environments completely dissimilar to the patrol officers. Working in a bar, nightclub, or in hostile areas where people do not know the investigator is a police officer presents a very discretionary environment. Wuestewald and Steinheider (2006) also recognized that “The basic paradox of police hierarchy is that discretionary authority tends to be greatest at the bottom of the police organization” (para. 9).

RECOMMENDATION

There are as many styles of management as there are people in the world. Each person manages their sections or their area or responsibility based on their experiences and their training combined with their personalities. There are several areas of management that have been studied and applied to the police services and to specialized sections like narcotics sections. As has been shown, narcotics sections are small groups within police departments that operate differently than other sections. In years past, the authoritative style of management was the prevalent style in police organizations and in the narcotics sections. This style has some merit in narcotics

groups. There are times when decisions must be made in an exigent circumstance and the manager of the team must make that decision and accept that responsibility. This occurs during rapidly changing situations where there is no time for discussion and the decision must be made immediately. Examples of these situations in narcotics work would be during search warrant execution, or hand to hand narcotic transactions, where there is no time to discuss the situation and a decision must come fast. In these instances, the participative management style will not work. In all other situations, where there is time permitted to make a decision then participative management is the best style of management in narcotics sections. This style allows each member of the team to participate in the decision making, and to take ownership of the successes and the failures of the team. The leader of the team has to retain the ultimate authority in making the decision; however, the participative management style allows the group to make their recommendations and have the ability to give their opinions. This style of management allows employees to reach a higher level of motivation, and for the younger generation of officers, this style of management plays into their personalities. The participative style of management has been shown to increase productivity in police organizations.

This style of management is difficult to instill in police organizations that are reluctant to change; however, narcotics sections can be changed in a much easier manner. These sections have a minimized span of control and should be managed by someone who is trained and educated in the different management styles. This training should be conducted before the officers are even promoted and should begin when they are hired. Having employees empowered to make decisions will greatly improve the

organization. The participative management style is the preferred and recommended style of management in narcotics sections and should be the style of management used to greatly increase the likelihood of success.

REFERENCES

- Code of Ethics. (n.d.). Texas Police Chiefs Association. Retrieved from
<http://www.texaspolicechiefs.org/tpca-code-ethics>
- Cowper, T. J. (2000, September). The myth of the 'military model' of leadership in law enforcement. *Police Quarterly*, 3(3). Retrieved from
<http://pqx.sagepub.com/content/3/3/228>
- Enter, J. E. (2006). *Challenging the law enforcement organization: Proactive leadership strategies*. Dacula, GA: Narrow Roads Press.
- Leidecker, J.K., & Hall, J. L. (1974, Spring). A new justification for participative management. *Human Resource Management*, 13(1), 28-31.
- Lyman, M. D. (1993). *Practical drug enforcement: Procedures and administration*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Management Study Guide. (n.d.). *Advantages and disadvantages of participative management*. Retrieved from
<http://www.managementstudyguide.com/participative-management-advantages-disadvantages.htm>
- McDevitt, D. S. (2005). *Managing the investigative unit*. Springfield, IL: C.C. Thomas.
- Miller, L. (2006, September 1). Undercover policing: A psychological and operational Guide. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 21(2), 1-24.
- Reams, R., Kuykendall, J., & Burns, D. (1975, December). Police management systems: What is an appropriate model? *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, 3(4), 475-481.

- Riley, J. (2012, September 23). *Organisation - span of control*. Retrieved from http://www.tutor2u.net/business/gcse/organisation_span_of_control.htm
- UK Essays. (2013, November). *Participatory management the history of participatory management*. Retrieved from <http://www.ukessays.com/essays/management/participatory-management-the-history-of-participatory-management-management-essay.php>
- Warren, W. (2012, July). *Leadership qualities for the 21st century examination of servant and transformational leadership*. Huntsville, TX: The Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas
- Whisenand, P. M. (2011). *Supervising police personnel: The fifteen responsibilities (7th ed.)*. Boston, MA: Prentice Hall.
- Wuestewald, T., & Steinheider, B. (2006, January). Shared leadership: Can empowerment work in police organizations? *The Police Chief*, 73(1). Retrieved from http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arc_h&article_id=789&issue_id=12006