Welcome to the first edition of Texan Justice, the official newsletter of the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Strategic Studies at Tarleton State University. For the past year, we have been working to transform the Department of Criminal Justice at Tarleton into a nationally recognized academic unit. I am happy to report that we are well underway to make this a reality.

In June of 2014, we submitted for approval to The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents, a request to form a new school within the College of Liberal and Fine Arts. The School houses several academic units including criminal justice, public administration and military science. In addition, it has given rise to the creation of four new Institutes, each focusing on a specialized area: 1) Institute for Homeland Security and International Criminal Justice Studies, including cybercrime; 2) Institute for Predictive and Analytical Policing Science; 3) Criminal Justice Leadership and Public Institute; and 4) Mediation, Arbitration and Forensics Institute. I am pleased to report that the Board of Regents has approved the creation of the new School and that two of the four Institutes are now in place; the remaining two will emerge this coming fall term. We have also created a masters cohort program, which will start next fall.

Throughout its rich history, the military science program has had a strong presence at Tarleton. The corps of cadets has been responsible for the development of hundreds of military and civilian leaders throughout the years. I am happy to report that the current corps of cadets will soon be housed in brand new barracks which will enjoy the commodities of modern day life while preserving the traditions that have made this program one of a kind. In addition, the corps will be led by a commandant of cadets who will enjoy permanent residence at Tarleton.

The School of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Strategic Studies continues the long tradition of focusing on the education of practitioners. There is no greater honor for me to say that we "serve those that serve"! Indeed, we provide educational opportunities to those that risk their lives each and every day for the benefit of others in our community. This commitment goes beyond public servants in the United States. In fact, we have a close partnership with the Ministry of Interior of the Abu Dhabi Police. I recently visited the United Arab Emirates and found that our graduate studies program is highly visible and there are future opportunities to expand our current partnership.

I have no doubt that with the help of our talented faculty we will soon become one of the best programs in the United States. I am very excited about the future prospects and see only amazing things for us in the future.

ALEX DEL CARMEN, PH.D.
Executive Director and Professor
School of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Strategic Studies
NEW FACULTY

DR. KATHERINE M. BROWN was an Assistant Professor of Justice Studies at Methodist University where she taught at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Typical courses included topics related to homicide investigation, victimology, research methods, and statistics. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Government with a minor in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1993, and received both her Master of Arts in Criminal Justice and Criminology in 2005, and her Doctorate of Philosophy in Criminal Justice in 2008 from Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brown’s research interests include: child abduction murder investigation, crime scene investigation, serial murder, crime scene assessment, forensic evidence and other solvability factors affecting murder investigations. Her most recent publications have been featured in several books, and the Journal of Forensic Sciences. Dr. Brown is a member of several professional organizations including the Vidocq Society, American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and the North Carolina Homicide Investigator’s Association. She serves as a consultant to Child Abduction Response Teams (CARTs) across the United States.

DR. RANDY BUTLER in January joined Tarleton State University as Program Coordinator and Director of the Advisory Board for the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Strategic Studies. He was formerly a Senior Lecturer in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Texas at Arlington. Prior to UTA Dr. Butler was an Assistant Professor of History at Northern Arizona University. His Ph.D. is in American History, and he holds three MA degrees including one in Criminology and Criminal Justice. He has served at several different universities as a University Librarian (Director), University Archivist and Preservation Officer, a full professor of history, and Director of a Criminal Justice program. Dr. Butler is also a commissioned Texas Peace Officer and serves the community of Keene. His teaching areas of interest include police procedures, policies, and leadership. His area of research interest involves Navajo juvenile delinquency and policing.

DR. RHONDA DOBBS came to Tarleton in September 2014 as Associate Professor and Interim Department Head. She earned her B.A. in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1993, her M.S. in Sociology from Virginia Tech in 1996, and her Ph.D. in Criminology from Florida State University in 2004. Her primary research and teaching interests are gender and crime, fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system. Dr. Dobbs’ research has been published in such journals as: the Journal of Criminal Justice Education, Criminal Justice and Law Review, Women and Criminal Justice, the Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and the Western Criminology Review.

DR. MEGHAN E. HOLLIS joins the faculty of the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice and Strategic Studies as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Hollis has worked as an Assistant Professor with the Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection (A-CAPP), the School of Criminal Justice, and the Program on Police Consolidation and Shared Services at Michigan State University. Her current research focuses on police organizations; race, gender, justice, and crime; situational crime prevention, evidence-based crime policy, and environmental criminology. Dr. Hollis has published in numerous academic journals, including Crime, Law, and Social Change, the Journal of Experimental Criminology, Security Journal, and Crime Prevention and Community Safety. She is currently the co-editor of a special issue of Sociological Focus – Ethnography from the Margins and the Handbook on Race, Gender, Crime, and Justice (anticipated release in October 2016). She has also co-authored systematic reviews for the Cochrane Collaboration and Campbell Collaboration, and has authored and co-authored several book chapters. Before joining MSU, she was a research associate with Northeastern University and the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement, and a consultant for Learning Innovations at WestEd. In these roles, she worked on policing, crime prevention, and social disorganization/routine activities theory-based research.
As an inevitable component of a modern democratic society, police are expected to sustain the status quo primarily by maintaining social order, preventing crime, apprehending criminals, and providing a wide range of police services. Police works are carried out with or without enforcement of law. When police work relies on enforcement of law, the last resort to achieve its goal is use of deadly force. By nature, police work often requires police officers to confront citizens in conflicts and cases in danger. As a result, police work is generally deemed to be a dangerous and stressful occupation. Studies have demonstrated over the years that police officers’ work efficiency is gravely affected by their recurring and persistent exposure to strain (He, Zhao, & Archbold, 2002). Even though there are polemics on the degree of risk and stress, police work is generally considered dangerous by the public, practitioners, and scholars. Considering that police officers are continually confronted with hostility, physical violence, and harshness, and routinely become involved in high-pressure, urgent situations, policing is deemed as one of a handful of vocations that require workers to deal continually with potential risk and to put their own lives at risk at any time (Spielberger et al., 1981). Such features of police function are linked to work-related stress as stress triggers, i.e., stressors (Hickman, Fricas, Strom, & Pope, 2011). Police work-related stress adversely affects its employees; for instance, police officers who are subject to substantial degrees of work-related stress are exposed to an increased number of physical and mental health troubles that inhibit job performance (Morash, Haarr, & Kwak, 2006). The majority of people under serious work-related stress are plagued by bad health (Kirkcaldy, Cooper, & Ruffalo, 1995), exhibit more absenteeism (Wright & Saylor, 1991), suffer from exhaustion (Brown, Cooper, & Kirkcaldy, 1996), are discontented with their job assignments (Norvell, Belles, & Hills, 1998), do not properly commit themselves to their careers, and retire early (Kop, Euwema, & Schaufeli, 1999). When people experience work-related emotional tension, they may develop elevated persistent substance and alcohol abuse, digestive system disorders, cardiovascular disease, depressive disorders, and divorce. Suicide can be a result of overwhelming stress (Anshel, 2000).

Police performance has often come under inspection because of the critical function that the police have in contemporary society (Biggam et al., 1997). Manolias (1983) stated that there are vital rationales why police officers’ stress should be examined seriously. First, police officers play an essential role in the protection of society (Roberg, Novak, Cordner, & Smith, 2012). In order to meet their responsibilities effectively, the police force should be efficacious; however, work-related stress quite possibly undermines that efficacy along with the quality of the law enforcement service provided (Hickman et al., 2011). As a consequence, the impact of police occupational stress, which includes hyper-aggression and an excessive use of force, can result in public mistrust and deterioration of public support for police agencies in general (Gershon et al., 2009). In addition, on a more individual basis, it is possible that a police officer under stress can become an actual menace to his or her own safety as well as others (Biggam et al., 1997). Therefore, police officer stress impacts both the general public safety and personal officer health (Gershon et al., 2009).

Due to a high occupational demand, individuals such as nurses, physicians, teachers, or law enforcement officers who work in human-service occupations and are charged with responsibility for the public’s overall health, safety or wellness is especially susceptible to stress (Shane, 2010). For this reason, also, police officer work-related stress can be a considerable issue for police managers and for the general public to face (Hickman et al., 2011). Consequently, it is necessary to note specific stress triggers which may then be ameliorated to relieve work-related stress (Morash et al., 2008).
The Issues in Police Stress Study

Four questions are worthy to discuss police stress. What is stress? How has it been conceptualized? What is the concept as used in police stress studies? And how can it be operationalized? To the first question of what is stress, it is safe to say that the effort to establish an agreed upon concept of stress is an ongoing project. Since the concept of stress overlaps with both physiological and psychological processes, it is a highly complex notion (Roberg et al., 2012). Therefore, scholars and practitioners have not arrived at an agreement on the concept of stress, which complicates consistent scientific study and theoretical construction (Shane, 2010). In their efforts to clarify the meaning of job stress, Sager and Wilson (1995) reported 15 different definitions of stress employed in previous research. The scholars' questions regarding whether stress ought to be specified throughout the individual human standpoint (micro), the environmental viewpoint (macro), or both (interactive) leads to fragmentation in studies and is a threat to construct validity (Brown & Campbell, 1994). To the second question of how has stress been conceptualized, as outlined by Cooper and Dewe (2004), the notion of stress was virtually unknown prior to the 1940s other than as an engineering term. With the concept of physical stress as a certain volume of pressure per square inch for a certain length of time, the engineering illustration of stress states that if a material can withstand a certain quantity of pressure per square inch for some time period, then short-term stress or pressure of an endurable intensity should not be anticipated to result in a dysfunction (Vuorensyrja & Malkia, 2011). Basically, the concept of physical stress in the industry of engineering begins with a neutral status. If stress leads to a dysfunction, this can be negative, but not so negative as to result in malfunction if the intensity of the pressure is endurable. However, when the concept of physical stress is applied to human beings instead of industrial materials, endurable stress or pressure might be valuable to a person if it leads to an alert response and forces the person to perform extraordinary efforts; valuable stress is identified as the notion of eustress, normatively positive and beneficial stress (Hickman et al., 2011).

In Selye's exploratory work, physiological stress referred to the body's abnormal response to any demands put upon it (Shane, 2010). These demands could be thought of as a set of repugnant stimuli that built up over time and resulted in negative physiological states and mental adaptations to undesirable requests (Roberg et al., 2012). The repugnant stimuli that Selye described as stressors are the external variables, which are recognized by an individual to result in emotional strain, i.e., stress (Shane, 2010). The significance of the concept of stress as shaped by Selye was demonstrated in occupational studies. Apparently, determining the sources of repugnant stimuli along with the scope of their connections to functionality offers theoretical grounds for how individuals connect with and react to their environment (Shane, 2010). Virtually all debates regarding physiological stress in criminal justice discipline start with the work of Selye (Hickman et al., 2011). For a general stress study, Selye introduced the concept of general adaptation syndrome (GAS) which incorporated two concepts: that the human body showed a remarkably equivalent range of reactions to a wide array of stressors, and that when stressors last for long, they could cause human beings to be tired and sick (Sapolsky, 2004; Selye, 1956). GAS, which is called the stress-response nowadays, is the result of a nonspecific stressor that affects and changes homeostasis (or equilibrium) in the human body, and it consists of three developmental stages: first, an initial warning stage where a stressor is detected; second, a more elevated struggling phase wherein the human body attempts to go back to homeostasis immediately by adapting to or resisting against a stressor; and the final stage, a chronic phase in which energy sources are used up and the human body cannot go back to homeostasis but instead develops stress-related diseases (Hickman et al., 2011; Saporsky, 2004).

To the third question of what is the concept as used in police stress studies, Hickman et al. (2011, p. 230) defined police stress as “an officer's physiological response to the perceived imbalance between situational demands and his or her capacity to meet or overcome those demands, induced by task-related stressors common to the law enforcement occupation.” Edwards (1992) suggested that stress is an adverse psychological state caused by an assessment of an individual's perceived condition and desired condition, provided the existence of this disparity is regarded as critical by the individual. While Hickman and his colleagues and Edwards defined stress as a response to stimulus that leads to distress, Brown and Campbell (1994) characterized stress as “self-perceived negative impact” (p. 16). In addition, from a cognitive perspective, Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, and DeLongis (1986) conceptualized stress as “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and as endangering well-being” (p. 572).

Likewise, these suggested concepts of stress encompass physiological, psychological, and cognitive processes resulting from external or internal variables as a whole. Therefore, stress can be conceptualized as a disruption of physical, psychological, and cognitive homeostatic balance caused by external stimuli and/or internal individual variables (stressors) which are negatively assessed and abnormally responded to by an individual (distress as opposite to eustress). This definition includes the external and individual variables producing distress in the human body and mind as the stressors, but excludes the eustress which works in a positive direction for the human being. Therefore, it can be assumed that stressors (pressure triggers) produce stress (disruptions in a biological, psychological, and mental state of homeostasis) which brings
outcomes (expressions of physical, psychological, and mental disruptions in homeostasis, i.e., stress, such as irregular heartbeat, disrupted hormone secretion, sweating, anxiety, hostility, frustration, tension, or depression) and physical, psychological, and/or cognitive behavioral stress-response (attempts to reestablish homeostasis by coping with the stress such as an effort to be calm down, to find a source of the problem from inside or outside to solve, diverting one’s attention to an irrelevant subject to avoid stressful thoughts, meditation, exercising, drinking, smoking, or use of legal or illegal substances) to stress outcomes. Since occupational stress is normally assessed not only by the psychosomatic and/or physiological symptom that impedes the performance of a person in the work environment but also by the outcomes generated by various circumstantial variables in which an individual is imbedded, stress can also be described as multidimensional when various categories of biological, emotional, and cognitive responses to a number of external or internal stressors are highlighted (Derogatis & Savitz, 1999; Zhao et al., 2002).

Finally, to the question of how stress can be operationalized, due to the ambiguity of causal relationships in contributions of specific triggers to specific responses, an assessment of stress is considered complicated. However, researchers have demonstrated that stress can be measured by biological changes (such as changes in hormone, urine, blood, hormone secretion, blood pressure, or heartbeat rate), psychological changes (such as somatic symptoms, depression, irritability, or anxiety), or behavioral changes (such as an increase in cigarette smoking, consuming alcohol, a change in the amount or type of medication, and eating habits) (Brown & Campbell, 1994).

Although a substantial number of projects have been carried out to understand law enforcement officer stress (Buker & Wiecko, 2007; Kroes & Hurrell, 1977; Violanti & Aron, 1995; Violanti, Vena, & Marshall, 1986), the majority of these studies tend to center on perceptual strategies which do not directly appraise the stress felt by police officers while in the midst of their duty (such as a patrol shift) using biological, psychological, and behavioral measurements (Hickman et al., 2011). In fact, this perceptual approach is based on the belief that the biological outcomes of the physical stress-response mechanisms are not different whether or not the tension that triggers them is genuine or recognized, physiological or sentimental, or acted on or ignored (Hickman et al., 2011; Violanti et al., 2007).

Even though a direct measurement of the physiological response of the police officer during the course of duty is desirable, due to practical, technical, and ethical issues, little research has implemented direct measurements (Hickman et al., 2011). In addition, as Sapolsky (2004) pointed out, the problem is that the allegedly hard-nosed researchers are generally requesting a relatively unsophisticated, straightforward query: does stress trigger the illness in the majority of sufferers? The much more refined queries to inquire of are whether stress exacerbates pre-existing disease, whether variations of stressors and of symptoms change in parallel over time, and whether these affiliate links take place only within a subset of susceptible individuals. When inquired in these ways, the stress-illness link becomes much more solid.

Complete citation list of references are available on request from the author: JLKim@tarleton.edu

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