

# Officer robert barton case study research paper example

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



When people have to work in a cohesive group or as a team, there is a lot of pressure to conform to the beliefs, attitude and culture of the group. The theory of groupthink best explains what happened in the officer Robert Barton Case. The constant and frequent interaction between Officer Barton and his fellow group members created a lot of opportunities which were significantly influential in determining his loyalty and commitment. It is obvious that with time there will be a conflict between personal values and convictions and that of the group. Groupthink theory argues that a person will either uphold his beliefs or subscribe to those of the group depending on the cohesive nature of the group. Another factor includes what is at stake during the decision making. In this case, failure of Officer Barton to conform to the group's traditions would have severed his chances of being a 'stand-up guy'.

Group cohesiveness ceases to become positive influence and becomes pathological when the group members start thinking as a group and not as individual persons. This raises the stakes to emotional levels where trust, loyalty and group members' commitment to group objectives become cardinal elements in order to fit in the group. If a person believes that he has similar goals and aspirations as his group members he will be tempted to ignore individual caution at the expense of group success. Members become more interested in maintaining the status quo and enhance their togetherness because of conformity pressures. This is a precursor to the group starting to commit illegal activities because there are sure everyone 'got your back'.

Subcultures in police departments are inevitable. On the contrary, their

presence should not only be encouraged, but rather enhanced. This is because regular police work has a lot of challenges. They have to fight crime and criminals and this is dangerous work. Therefore, a police officer needs to be sure that he can trust and rely on his group in case he is in trouble. It is vital that the benefits of cohesion through subcultures be reflected in performance. Cohesion of team members is directly related to their performance. The more cohesive the group the more likely the performance will be better than a less cohesive group. Moreover, police officers are also human beings. Human beings have a tendency to search for a sense of belonging. This is human nature and cannot be avoided. Formation of group subcultures has also emotional factors which are beyond the control of the administrators.

However, as an administrator it is vital to be awake to the fact that subcultures are inevitable. Therefore, the prudent thing to do is to put up measures that will act to avert a scenario where a police group engages in criminal activities and cover up for each other. This can be done in the form of education to the officers. They need to be educated on the principle reason why they are police officers. This is to maintain law and order. They are supposed to be the custodians of the law. Critical thinking lessons can also be significant. Lastly and more fundamental, is the need to hold those who commit illegal acts responsible. Moreover, all members of a group that helped in the cover up also need to face the same punishment. The penalty should be severe enough to deter any group member from colluding with another member to commit a crime.

## **References**

Cordner, G. W. (2013). *Police Administration*. New York: Newnes.

More, H. W., & Miller, L. S. (2010). *Effective Police Supervision*. New York: Elsevier.

More, H. W., Vito, G. F., & Walsh, W. F. (2011). *Organizational Behavior and Management in Law Enforcement*. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.