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## **Book Review: A New Trait Discovered in the Police Culture**

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Book Title: Police Technophobia  
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This book is the first original research on the police fear of not using technology. The book endeavors to discover a new trait of police culture — technophobia — that the author has observed as a police officer and embarked upon this project to unearth its reasons.

The author is a senior police officer at Police Service of Pakistan. Currently, he serves as director general of forensic science division Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police at Peshawar. He has remained district police chief at various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Previously, he has served as additional secretary at the Home and Tribal Affairs Department Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He has also worked as a chief financial officer of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police department. He has been awarded distinguished service award for establishing an Institute of Forensic Science at Peshawar on self help basis. He has remained member of police policy board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He has authored a research peace brief on *Former UN Peacekeepers: Agents of Cultural Change in Pakistan's Police* published by the United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC. He is the lead trainer at Police School of Investigation Peshawar. He has received master in criminology from King's College London and graduate certificate in public policy from University of Minnesota. He is the recipient of Fulbright Award.

The book, Police Technophobia, is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction about the concepts of police culture and police

technology. It further narrates how police culture resists the advent of new technology and how police culture adapts new technology. Chapter two deals with the types and history of police technology starting from the eighteen century nightstick and comes up to to the recent developments in policing technology like the DNA's, lie detectors and geo tagging. In chapter three, the genesis of police technophobia is explored.

And thus the following five main universal causes of police fear of not using technology especially information and communication technology (ICT) have been found. In the first place, cop culture has a pet aversion to the learning of new skills and information sharing. Cops believe that they can learn everything on the streets and many aspects of policing cannot be taught in sterile environment of classrooms of police training institutes. This point of view is further reinforced by the prime traits of the police culture: cynicism, conservatism and pessimism. Similarly, they are averse to information sharing: they are retired from service and take their personal information diaries to the grave but do not share it. However, information technology makes them share information in a meaningful way, both vertically and horizontally. Secondly, information age has lead to the erosion of police discretion and the idea of 'real police work'. They believe that using the IT equipment is not the real police work: the real police work is the robust law enforcement, making arrests, interrogations, sting operations and huff and puff of hot pursuits. The use of cyber space gadgets has made the police data filling clerks. There is no thrill in it. Thirdly, information technology has enhanced organizational accountability. The ICT has put them under a microscope and thus it has reduced their powers. ICT is like a big boss breathing over at police staff shoulders all time. Fourthly, ICT has lead to the civilianization or pluralization of police work. Every new ICT related equipment brings a civilian in the police department. The civilian or non-sworn officers then become the analysts or consultants and do performance audit of the uniformed police. They become masters of comparative statistics .and thus believed to be the Oracles in the police although they are operating outside the main police culture. Lastly, ICT has created new hierarchies and job structures. The rigid layers of command and control are melting away. New network type hierarchies came into existence where staff members can interact across all ranks and files. Leading from the

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front role hardly exists. The ICT has also altered the job structures. Many police jobs now do not look like police jobs at all.

The fourth chapter is a critique on the actual use of information and communication technology by the police forces world over. It demonstrates how police culture actually resists the use of new technology both at street level and management level and what happens to technology when it is partially accepted. The last chapter aims at a conclusion where the future policing - as *information brokering service* - has been analyzed with reference to the growing policing role in counter terrorism scenarios which has led to major shifts in the policing styles all over the world.

Understanding of police technophobia is important for police leaders, police reformists and other public safety professionals as it has wide range of operational and policy implications. As stated earlier the new security environment has redefined policing as an 'information brokering service'. And the post 9/11 and other world counter terrorism scenarios has ushered in an era of multilateralization of policing which means, inter alia, more computers, acceptance of more civilians in the police departments, large number of fusion centers, across the board accountability and establishment of output based budgeting regimes.

The author comes with some of the shelf recommendations. To him, the future researchers would make some new inroads in police technophobia which would help in the demystification of police culture as a whole. I suggest that the antidote for cure of police technophobia lies in the organizational change which can be brought about by seven different ways: Firstly, the change can be accelerated through the creation of some new specialized agencies or task forces for specific limited purpose and defined missions and once these specialized units achieve the objectives then that should be disbanded and fresh task forces should be formed. This attempt would break the organizational age of the main police culture because older the organization the difficult it is to reform. Secondly, many police departments are re-employing the retired senior cops; this practice needs to be discontinued and police departments should be made free of dinosaurs: truly, some retired police officers are the IT gurus,

exceptions are always there. Thirdly, proper accountability mechanism should be put in place that exclusively deals with the problems arise from communication failure or technophobia. The accountability units should gauge the level of acceptance and resistance of new technology in the police both at street level and senior level. Fourthly, the ICT component in police training and other refresher courses should be further enhanced and the trainees should be made to use information technology in all their daily activities and fifthly, Laptops or other Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) should be made an integral part of the police uniform. Efforts should be made to innovate and promote new police icons where ICT gadgets should be given equal importance as batons, guns and handcuffs. Further, fresh avenues should be opened for civilians to join the police and the civilian staff should be provided equal opportunity to rise and shine. Lastly, two different approaches should be adapted to fight police technophobia amongst the street level cops and senior level police managers.

Lastly, it is noted that there should have been two more considerations in the book. Firstly, there are certain typing and linguistic mistakes and proper and ample proof-reading was must before final publication. Secondly, the author should have taken the KPk Police as a case-study where new technologies are added to the Police Department since September, 2013. It would have been better to have assessed the impact of these new additions to the police for enhanced efficiency, quick responses and scientific investigation. The author may have a second and revised edition with critical evaluation of the ‘KP Police response to technophobia’ which is no doubt a great success.