ON LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP: THE ON-GOING DIALOGUE WITHIN POLICING

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Introduction

Effective leadership is a concept both strikingly simple and stunningly complex. Bookshelves are filled with texts defining leadership and detailing the behavior of leaders, yet we struggle to identify a universal definition of either concept (Bass, 1990) and, more importantly, we continue to see too many police agencies struggling to find suitable candidates for promotion (Haberfeld, 2006) and struggling under the weight of ineffective leadership (O' Hara, 2005; Reese, 2005). In a recent project the author surveyed one thousand police supervisors seeking their definition of "effective leadership" and their beliefs about the traits and habits of effective leaders. The responses suggest the presence of some commonalities, but also disagreement and contradiction in what constitutes leadership and what ensures leadership efficacy. While we can reach general agreement on what leadership means, detailing how to lead is far more nuanced and generates divergent points of view.

This volume will not resolve the ambiguity and uncertainty regarding leadership and leaders. If some contributors achieve their objectives, readers may find their thinking challenged by new perspectives and complexities they had not previously considered. The objective of this volume is to discuss the dynamic and complex nature of leadership within the context of policing; this task is undertaken with the secondary objective of discussing leadership while focusing on the future of policing. As such, the intention of the editors and contributors is to not dwell excessively on the past and present, though consideration of both is necessary. Rather, the intention is to consider the leadership challenges policing will confront in the future and the ways in which police leaders and agencies might best prepare for and confront those challenges.

This volume does not offer a universal definition of leadership or leaders, though some contributors have proffered definitions of these terms for the purposes of individual chapters. The editors would, however, submit that leadership and leaders are interrelated, but distinct

concepts. For the purpose of this volume leadership is accepted as the practice of influencing and mobilizing people and resources to secure a desired outcome. Leaders are those who seek to engage in that practice, though their efforts might sometimes fail. Defining the act of leadership in general is a relatively simple task; defining the "ideal" way to lead in a given situation is far more complex. Though members of a given police agency might share a common definition of leadership, they may each hold subtly (or radically) different views on how to lead and how they wish to be led.

Leadership is not about formal authority; it is the process of motivating, inspiring, convincing, persuading, and in some other way compelling others to follow. There is a line of thinking that suggests, "every officer is a leader" (Anderson, Gisborne, & Holliday, 2006) in myriad forms and contexts. Advocates of this perspective contend even rookie patrol officers exercise a form of leadership in the handling of matters as routine as a traffic accident or the organization of a community outreach event. Accepting such a broad vision of leadership further complicates our understanding of what it means to be a leader. Though the fundamental concepts of leadership may be quite similar for the chief of a large agency and their newest rookie officer (i.e., moving people and/or the organization from point A to point B), the ways in which these processes are accomplished fundamentally differ. Viewed in this way, the mechanisms an individual uses to achieve leadership success might be quite different across contexts, work groups, and career levels.

At times readers may wonder how the content of this volume falls under the umbrella of a future issue; some contributions seem to be grounded more in the present than in the future. At its core, leadership is a fundamentally futures-oriented enterprise. One cannot guide a group, organization, or process from point A to point B without some understanding of "where" point B is located and why it is preferable to the current state found in point A. In other words, the act of leadership is a process of considering how things can be made better...it is the identification and pursuits of a preferable future. Although the notion of "the future" in such leadership processes might have a shorter time horizon than other aspects of futures thinking, the former is still important and necessary.

The "Crisis" In Police Leadership

In one of the best recent considerations of contemporary police leadership, Maki Haberfeld comments on an experience all too common for American police agencies, writing that: "Many law enforcement agencies face real problems in identifying good leaders when a position becomes available" (2006, p. 1). The editors of this volume are not aware of definitive empirical evidence suggesting a lack of adequate leadership exists in far too many police agencies. The members of the Futures Working Group (FWG); however, have experienced this problem first hand and repeatedly heard it expressed by police officers and supervisors in myriad contexts from the FBI National Academy, to International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), to Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), to state association meetings, to various training programs FWG members have facilitated and attended as participants. We suspect most readers have witnessed leadership deficiencies firsthand, both in terms of a failure to lead by those in positions of authority and an inability to find suitable candidates for promotion.

Toby Finnie leads off this volume with a chapter that presents three crises within police leadership…events and circumstances that might have been averted if the involved agencies had been able to overcome exigent conditions and manage constraints in a more effective manner. At the core of all three stories are agencies in transition due to the rapid departure of large segments of the force and/or the rapid growth of the organizations. In each case, circumstances evolved so that large numbers of new employees entered the agency without adequate training, mentoring, and leadership. To what extent is this cautionary tale salient for agencies today? Since the mid-1990s departments across the country have lamented the existence of a recruitment and retention crisis in policing. In the future will this situation manifest itself in additional agencies that struggle not only with the loss of institutional knowledge, but also the loss of sufficient personnel possessing the temperament and knowledge to exhibit leadership and professionalism commensurate with their position? The crisis might involve more than simply the hiring and training of a large numbers of new officers; it might also manifest itself in large numbers of new supervisors who have not been provided adequate training and mentoring to understand the importance of their new position.

Whether a full "crisis" will emerge surrounding police leadership has yet to be seen, but it is clear that retirements coupled with the hiring challenges most agencies are experiencing creates this potential for several reasons. First, the rapid turnover experienced in many agencies means that officers are often being promoted at unusually early points in their careers, at least relative to past practice. Personnel who would normally not be competitive for supervisory positions (though they may meet the requisite years of service) are being promoted because agencies have little choice. Because the officers who have less experience, they have less context and exposure to different leadership challenges and the good, bad, and ugly ways of meeting those challenges. Second, as Haberfeld (2006) reminds her readers, policing (among other career fields) tends to confuse management and leadership. The little training new supervisors are given is all-too-often focused on the mechanical aspects of being a shift sergeant (for example), such as staffing issues, handling paperwork, and understanding policies and procedures. How many agencies provide new supervisors with education regarding leadership theories and styles to help them understand the various ways in which their actions can alternatively inspire or disillusion reporting employees?

Third, officers are promoted based on their skills in their prior position, rather than their aptitude to excel in the position their agency seeks to fill. Officers are promoted because they have shown proficiency as a patrol officer and they have typically passed a test assessing their management knowledge of policies and procedures. Assessing leadership aptitude is a much more complicated enterprise, so it is often downplayed or ignored in the assessment and promotion process. Measuring a candidate's mastery of written dictums regarding officer conduct and agency protocol, in contrast, is a far more objective undertaking. Consequently, agencies lean toward the latter process, coupled with a vague assessment (often completely subjective) of the leadership acumen of those in the pool of promotional candidates. In extreme cases, agencies are forced to select the candidate believed to pose the most manageable threat to themselves, their subordinates, and the agency; the appointment goes to the lesser of various "evils."

Finally, the potential crisis within police leadership exists because too many agencies wait too long to begin developing the leadership potential of employees. Though some pre-

service training academies place primacy on the importance of officers showing leadership while performing their duties, how many agencies continue to develop officers as leaders once new recruits advance to field training? Do agencies continue that theme by having field-training officers stress that message and build upon recruits' potential as leaders? Do agencies continue to groom officers to be leaders, or are "followership" and conformity suddenly the desired traits? Do agencies continue to train, educate, and mentor post-probation patrol officers to enhance their skills and provide them opportunities to gain more experience, skill, and confidence as a leader? Though stressing the importance of leadership in training academies is laudable, does that process accomplish anything if the development does not continue once the recruit is on the streets?

This volume seeks to offer some ideas for how agencies can manage the gap between their leadership needs and the leadership behaviors actually demonstrated by personnel. The chapters contain information that can help avert the emergence of a leadership crisis. The contributors would not claim to have "THE" solution to enhancing police leadership in the future; readers would do well to be skeptical of any product claiming to offer such answers. Rather, the contributors seek to offer ideas and insights to generate further thought, deliberation, and experimentation among police personnel.   Some of these ideas are grounded in current practice, while others extend the horizon of our thinking into the police agency of the future. Readers are reminded that futures thinking is not about making bold predictions of future states…it is about defining a preferred state of affairs and bringing that situation to life.

The Context of Leadership within Policing

As articulated earlier, the editors and contributors do not adhere to a strict dictionary definition of what leadership entails. For the purposes of this volume, leadership is loosely recognized to be the act of moving people, organizations, and/or processes to preferred states of being. Stated another way, leadership in policing is the act of bringing about change to enhance the equity, efficiency, and/or efficacy of police operations. In the context of policing, leadership can also mean exercising command authority in times of crisis. This distinguishes police, public safety, and the military from many other occupational fields, where there is

almost always time to seek input, generate consensus, and communicate rationales. Effective police leaders might need the capacity to do all of those things, while recognizing when it is time to issue split-second orders. Likewise, effective police followers must have an ability to be aware of times when their role is to provide unquestioning compliance with a peer or supervisor. Leadership in such environments becomes more complex, because the doctrines and dogmas espoused by many leadership visionaries may be ill suited for the low frequency, high impact events that define these disciplines.

Distinctions are sometimes made between "wartime" leaders and "peacetime" leaders, suggesting that different skill sets might be needed to achieve success under these differing circumstances. As noted in Gene Stephen's chapter, Churchill is sometimes viewed as a strong wartime prime minister, but not a leader who had a strong skill set for times of peace. Military commanders are sometimes viewed in the same fashion—as leaders who excelled during times of conflict but not in the times between conflicts. Likewise, some police leaders excel under the routine circumstances of leading organizations in the face of the onslaught of tedious day-to-day demands. Other police leaders excel within the crucible of the crisis situation where split-second, life-and-death decisions and judgments must be made. Some leaders can stand with feet firmly planted in these two very different environments, while many others are less fortunate.

Though leadership may be a broad concept, the specific traits and habits of effective leaders might be more bound to a given context or situation. The idea of "situational leadership" has wide popularity within policing. It implies that a given leader might need different skill sets to achieve efficacy based upon the circumstances at hand. These circumstances will vary across problems, time of day, period in history, geography, and the culture and personality of those the leader seeks to influence, among other variables. In other words, a leader with a "winning" record in one agency might fail spectacularly in another jurisdiction; this has been observed repeatedly when externally hired police chiefs "crash and burn" when they confront a new agencies with unique norms, standards, expectations, and traditions (Reese, 2005, pp. 43-63). Parallel experiences can certainly be found in the corporate world, as well. The techniques used to lead a neighborhood association in an anti-gang

initiative might be fundamentally different than those used to lead an organizational change initiative. Furthermore, those whom leaders seek to influence vary in the tactics and tools to which they best respond. Followers vary in how they want to be led, though they may not consciously recognize that which they seek from a leader; they vary in what coerces, motivates, compels and inspires them to do better and work harder.

The fragmented nature of American policing, with some 18,000 different agencies, further contributes to the situational nature of effective policing. There is considerable variation across these agencies in terms of jurisdiction, mandate, responsibilities, expectations of constituents, and organizational norms, traditions, and culture. The result is the "followers" in these variations seek to be led in divergent manners. Though the broad notion of leadership and its associated goals might be quite universal across these different settings, the actual process of leading might be quite different.

Leadership versus Management

There is a tendency in policing to confuse the concepts of "leadership" and "management"; this situation is further complicated when these terms and concepts are used interchangeably with the concepts of "administration" and "supervision" (see Jones' chapter for a more detailed discussion of this point). Leadership's function is strategic, while management's is tactical. Both are needed to ensure an organization operates in an effective, efficient, and equitable fashion, and both are needed, in some balance, for an individual to be effective in a position of authority. Though an effective supervisor might be stronger as a leader than as a manager, a basic level of proficiency on the latter dimension is a requisite to achieve desired outcomes. A supervisor can only be effective while displaying minimal leadership skills if their current duty places them in a role where little leadership is expected.

In considering the relationship between leadership and management, FWG member Tom Cowper offered an insightful perspective, paraphrased here. Viewed from a warfare metaphor, both strategy (leadership) and tactic (management) are of considerable importance; both are required to win a battle, but strategy is what wins wars. Leaders, no matter the agency, profession, sector, culture, or job, operate globally, providing strategic direction and

long-term vision (though the "long term" in some contexts might only be a matter if days), inspiration, and motivation. The leader helps the team focus the appropriate tactics in a way that wins the war. Without leaders providing that direction and motivation, all the tactics (management) in the world will not ensure success.   It can also be argued that without effective tactics (management) victory will likewise remain elusive.   This may be true, though strategists can sometimes still achieve desired outcomes with mediocre tactics; concerns may arise, however, of the losses associated with such a style of operation. Great leaders can achieve victory with less-than-ideal management, but great managers will rarely create a success while exhibiting poor leadership. Truly great leaders will, of course, recognize the need for balance in both of these dimensions. Individuals who excel through vision and motivation will generally find themselves limited if they lack basic credibility for their management skills and their ability to handle day-to-day tactics associated with their occupation.

Thus, it is the belief of the editors and most contributors to this volume that both leadership and management skills are needed to effectively lead, though not every supervisor needs to excel in both domains. Highly routine and formulaic tasks (the budget, the property room, the evidence process, the quarter master, etc.) might be better suited for those who excel in management. Persons who are detail-oriented and task-centered may be less effective if they rely on those traits in rapidly changing circumstances (leading a tactical operation). Strong managers may also struggle to develop the vision and support needed to bring about sweeping organizational transformation.

The distinction between leadership and management becomes problematic when we expect personnel to excel in one of these areas despite few efforts by the organization to develop those skills. In some points of view, developing management skills might be easier, as such processes are more task-oriented, routine, and formulaic. An employee with a reasonable attention to detail and a good work ethic should be able to excel as a manager. Leadership, in contrast, is a more amorphous concept involving a broader skill set. It may be more difficult to develop leadership acumen and most agencies make little/no effort to do so or wait until well into an officer's career to pursue such development. Confusing leadership and management also becomes problematic when agencies assessing and promoting based on a candidate's

aptitude in one domain, while the position at hand requires skill in the other domain. Though a strong leader with reasonable management skills may perform adequately in a management-focused supervisory capacity, a strong manager with reasonable leadership skills may struggle when assigned to a position requiring greater vision, communication, engagement, and collaboration with constituent groups.

The Content of this Volume

This volume is organized as a series of independent, but interrelated essays on contemporary and future aspects of leadership within policing. In the fall of 2007, the FWG convened a series of meetings in Pittsburgh, PA. Members of the group engaged in online discussions leading up to this meeting. Large and small group discussions in Pittsburgh helped members to further solidify their ideas on these issues. Consideration was given to leadership, including: definition and scope; nature; traits and habits; challenges; development; enhancement; and future dimensions. The essays in this volume distill these discussions. Though each was developed independently (hence, attentive readers will notice some redundancy and contradiction), our intention is to guide readers through a coherent consideration of the present and future state of police leadership.

The volume begins with Toby Finnie's presentation of three case studies in which insufficient leadership created and compounded crises in three urban police departments. Her cautionary tale may not represent the challenge facing every agency, but it is an all-too-common and recurrent theme in policing literature (see Haberfeld, 2006; O'Hara, 2005; Reese, 2005). Marshall Jones, Earl Moulton and James Reynolds follow with a consideration of the relationship between leadership and management in policing. Their essay also addresses the extent to which these domains have common elements across American police agencies.

Thomas Petee, John Jarvis, and Lin Huff-Corzine review the challenges of defining and measuring leadership within policing. Such measurement is of key importance to identify those who show leadership potential, to develop leadership skills within existing personnel of all ranks, and perhaps to evaluate the performance of current police leaders. The challenge, of course, is different definitions and measurement protocols may be needed to accomplish each

of those three very different tasks. This is followed by Marshall Jones' consideration of how organization culture and leadership play off one another. The relationship between culture and leadership can create either harmony or tension, depending on the context and how leaders address their interplay.

Generational change in policing has sparked considerable discussion and debate in the past decade. Jay Corzine, Tina Jaeckle and Jeri Roberts provide an overview of this situation and how it relates with aspects of police leadership. Their essay provides important insights for agencies experiencing personnel transition, particularly those struggling to retain young officers. Gene Stephens provides an insightful discussion of a futures-oriented leadership development program created in South Carolina. His essay provides a strong case for the merits of leadership development, the need for integrating futures-thinking into such developmental efforts, and the perils and pitfalls best avoided by those working to establish leadership development programs.

Michael Buerger's essay on Janus leadership illustrates how leadership is an inherently futures-oriented enterprise. Buerger illustrates the rationale for his position on this matter while also articulating how this situation creates a challenging situation for police leaders. Effectively straddling the worlds of the past/present and the future, while a requisite element of leadership (particularly in policing) is perhaps easier said than done. Truly effective leaders often find themselves moving to new positions, sometimes in new organizations. Coupling this reality with the current out-flow of experienced police personnel is creating a knowledge drain in many agencies. Gerald Konkler provides a solution to this potential loss by articulating how institutional knowledge can be retained and managed to avert large-scale problems. Though this matter may seem present- and management-focused, a prime example of true leadership would include recognizing and preventing the loss of key institutional knowledge.

Alan Youngs presents an account of the Lakewood (CO) Police Department, which has produced an amazing number of police executives in its relatively short history. Youngs reviews how the operations and culture of that department have contributed to the success of its employees. Sid Heal's essay on tactical science reminds us that while leadership is concerned with long-term, visionary efforts, strong leaders must often make sound tactical judgments, as

well. The program he describes is designed to help leaders understand the ebb and flow of tactical operations. Armed with such knowledge, it is hoped police leaders will be more effective in both strategic and tactical domains.

Though consideration of Opposing Force Networks emerges from military literature and doctrine, Robert Bunker articulates the lessons this matter holds for policing efforts. Bunker contends that effectively targeting a criminal enterprise requires an understanding of how a group of offenders is structured and organized to carry out their operations. Furthermore, it is helpful to recognize what motivates a group. Armed with this knowledge, police personnel can more effectively study, intervene, and neutralize the threat posed by a group. John Jackson, Richard Myers and Thomas Cowper provide a discussion of what leadership might look like in a net-centric police organization. It has been suggested that organizations are beginning to shift toward net-centric structures, which offer greater efficiency, flexibility, and adaptability. Though the military is experimenting with these types of structures in their operations, examples to date have largely been witnessed in the corporate world. These authors make a compelling case for how net-centric structures could significantly enhance policing (overcoming deeply entrenched limitations in current operational paradigms) and what leadership would entail under those conditions.

Michael Buerger, Greg Weaver, and Toby Finnie comment on the need for greater research insight into the leadership process in police organizations. The questions they propose are in need of resolution to support both scholarly pursuits and to help police organizations make more informed policy, training, and promotional decisions. Finally, the author, Bernard Levin, and John Jarvis offer an essay examining the possible and preferable paths forward toward more effective leadership in policing. This contribution also details the ways in which further debate, research, exploration, and experimentation can enhance the development and expansion of effective leadership practices.

Final Thoughts

Members of the Futures Working Group recognize some will disagree with our assertions. The intent of FWG is never to provide "THE" solution to, or future of, a given issue.

Rather, FWG seeks to encourage police personnel to consider possible, probable, and preferable futures in policing. In the context of this particular volume, the intent is to generate consideration, debate, and discussion of how police leadership can be refined to ensure more efficient, effective, and equitable police operations. It is our hope that readers will find the ideas intriguing, even if they may disagree or dispute some of the conclusions.

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