

Police Leadership in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Law Enforcement in the 21st century faces many new challenges. Law enforcement leaders must find innovative solutions to address increasingly complex criminal threats, including threats of terrorism. Law enforcement leaders face the challenge of finding a balance between security and crime reduction with society's expectation that police agencies provide transparent and ethical policing. Law enforcement leaders are responsible for implementing policing practices that ensure public support and community cooperation, while at the same time, protecting their community from crime. The purpose of this research is to evaluate critical events in recent American society and their effects on policing culture to identify an effective policing philosophy for 21st century law enforcement. Law enforcement leaders need to adapt to their environment and implement effective policing philosophies for their agency. This research evaluates 21st century policing models and significant historical events to identify strategies which can be used by law enforcement leaders to more effectively police their communities.

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Two significant events that effected policing models and created cultural shifts include the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11) and the officer-involved shooting in Ferguson, MO, on August 9, 2014 resulting in the death of Michael Brown. The 9/11 Commission Report identified national intelligence failures that served as a catalyst for intelligence reform and innovation in intelligence practices. The 9/11 Commission Report was the foundation for Intelligence Led Policing. President Obama's commission task force on 21st century policing was formed after several major incidents such as Ferguson. President Obama mandated an effective response to restore the relationship between law enforcement and the community. The Task Force on 21st Century Policing identified six pillars of responsible law enforcement Police Leadership in the 21st Century leadership and the need for change on different levels including leadership in local government, law enforcement and leadership within the communities they serve.

Spain (2019) discussed adaptive leadership as the way a leader approaches a situation and their willingness to adapt to the situation. Adaptive leadership is about mission accomplishment, taking care of the people within the agency, while being open minded and adapting to the environment. The law enforcement philosophy needed in the 21st century is adaptive philosophy that can evaluate the environment and implement a responsible policing model best suited for the community.

Literature Review

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New York, NY (September 11, 2001)

At 8:46 a.m. on September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 11 collided with the North Tower of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. Within minutes, commercial airliners struck the South Tower and the Pentagon. A fourth airliner crashed in a field in southern Pennsylvania. The events of that day, in which nearly 3,000 Americans lost their lives, became the deadliest attack on American soil. These events also created a seismic shift in society's expectation of public safety and national security. During a post event investigation and analysis, several failures and deficiencies were revealed. Amongst other findings, the 9/11 Commission found that, "The intelligence community struggled throughout the 1990's and up to 9/11 to collect intelligence on and analyze the phenomenon of transnational terrorism." (2004, p. 12). Agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) had become singularly focused on event-specific and compartmentalized intelligence. The absence of unified and shared goals amongst the intelligence organizations served as the catalyst to conflict. The 9/11 Commission (2004) determined the FBI's approach to investigations was case specific, decentralized, and geared toward prosecution.

Because of the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent report, federal, state and local law enforcement philosophies shifted towards intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination. The extraction and exploitation of data became the focal point in the application of law enforcement. Many of the Clinton-era community-oriented policing programs yielded to national security programs. Significant resources were invested towards the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the National Counterterrorism Center, fusion centers and the

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Police Leadership in the 21st Century FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force. This concept of data and numbers collection and analysis came to be known as Intelligence Led Policing (ILP) and remained a cornerstone of public safety for over a decade following 9/11.

Ferguson, MO (August 9, 2014)

On August 9, 2014, Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson encountered an unarmed individual by the name of Michael Brown. Wilson had identified Brown as a potential suspect from a recent convenient store robbery. This police-citizen contact concluded in Officer Wilson fatally shooting Brown. While Wilson's actions were determined to be compliant with the law, a subsequent investigation by the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) highlighted the adverse impact of seeing people as numbers. The failure to see citizens as humans further eroded police-community relations in Ferguson and resulted in destructive protests. Citizens throughout America got to see the negative impact of Ferguson's failed police-citizen relationships live on television from their homes.

In the Ferguson investigative report by USDOJ (2015), several conclusions were reached about the events that led to poor police-community relations in Ferguson. Primarily among those conclusions was the practice of seeing community members as revenue generators rather than problem solving stakeholders. A policing culture void of training related to constitutional policing and a lack of supervisory oversight by the department leadership contributed to these breakdowns in community relations.

According to USDOJ (2015) in the late 2000's, much of the City of Ferguson's revenues were derived from the issuance of municipal citations. The reliance on this revenue stream bordered on compulsiveness as city leaders urged the Chief of Police to increase the issuance of citations. This message was then carried down from the Chief to patrol officers. The end results

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of this practice, coupled with the excessive fines enforced by the local courts led to residents being cited or arrested for one or more minor offenses. Many times, these arrests occurred during situations where the arrested party was trying to report a crime or caring for the victim of a crime. Enforcement of these offenses also had little to no regard for improving public safety and correcting immoral behavior within the community. Another byproduct of this practice was unpaid fines turning into warrants ultimately leading to additional arrests.

A second conclusion from the report outlined the negative impact of failing to train law enforcement officers in Constitutional policing. Ferguson Police routinely conducted illegal stops and searches of its citizens for the sole purposes of locating individuals with outstanding warrants and collecting unpaid fines. Often times, the anger and outrage felt by the residents led to use of force incidents escalated by officers. Many of these incidents could be considered excessive and certainly preventable.

Finally, the USDOJ (2015) determined there to be a lack of supervisory oversight within the Ferguson Police Department. Because the primary mission of the Ferguson Police Department focused on revenue generation, many other leadership processes were ignored. Ferguson officers frequently failed to document use of force incidents, supervisors within the department were quick to ignore seemingly valid citizen complaints and department leadership failed to consider calculating an obvious racial disproportionality in their officer's contact with citizens. Many of these oversight issues were in direct conflict with already existing Ferguson Police Policies.

Most of the police department engaged in practices that were numbers driven and misguided, this resulted in a lack of community trust. While these issues developed over the course of several decades no one person could be blamed for these failures. The DOJ Report

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(2015) led to a nationwide transition from numbers driven ILP back to many of the community-oriented tenets outlined in the President's 21st Century Policing Report.

21st Century Policing Report

The President's 21st Century Policing Report (2015) identified that many community members perceived that law enforcement officers shoot first and ask questions later this lead to law enforcement officers being viewed as killers and not guardians. In order for this interpretation to change law enforcement officers needed to make modifications to how they deal with citizens in certain types of situations. The report identified a need for increased transparency and higher standards for law enforcement professionals. Following volatile encounters with citizens, it was recommended that law enforcement agencies implement review boards to evaluate police-citizen interactions involving the use of force. Agencies striving for improvements should frequently review and update their policies and training practices related to the use of force. Law enforcement agencies should demonstrate the importance of de-escalation and alternatives to arrest, where situations may be deemed suitable.

Local governments need to create opportunities for community members to express their concerns related to a lack of confidence in law enforcement and have an opportunity to voice their expectations. In order to demonstrate transparency, law enforcement organizations should make all policies and procedures available to the public. If it is determined a law enforcement agency violated policy, leadership needs to be open about mistakes and willing to discuss them openly with community members. Together law enforcement leaders and community members should work together to improve the dynamics of future encounters. When it is found that there are changes that can be made to help improve engagement between law enforcement and their communities' leaders should identify ways to support the application of the recommendations.

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Leaders willing to make these changes shows community members that there is an effort being made to improve accountability and transparency within the agency. There is a need for law enforcement officers to value their organization, community and themselves. Officers need to be responsive to the culture within their community to improve their connection with the citizens. All community members need to be treated with dignity and respect. Organizations need to train their officers on how to properly interact with community members in whatever circumstance they are engaging in. This can include but is not limited to culture, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Officers need to be able to recognize and understand community members with mental and physical disabilities. Moreover, organizations must set guidelines that encourage practices that safeguard the constitutional rights and treatment of all members within the community.

There is a necessity for law enforcement leaders to emphasize the significance of community engagement to encourage open dialogue and non-enforcement interaction between law enforcement officers and the communities that they serve. Law enforcement officers need to be encouraged to participate in community meetings, school functions, and community gatherings, not just when a person is in crisis. Leaders within law enforcement organizations need to adjust schedules and allow officers to interact with their community during community engagement events.

Barton (2019) emphasized the need for adaptability stating, “We need to accept that we are living in a very volatile period as we shift into a new century” (video).

ILP and COP

The ILP model does not have a manual or a set of practices that will be effective or appropriate for every law enforcement agency. Each agency implementing this policing

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philosophy must tailor 'intelligence-led' policing to fit within their agency structure and fulfill the specific needs of their community based on the size and demographics of their community. Agencies implementing ILP must embrace technologies that assist with the collection and analysis of larger amounts of information (Carter, 2009).

There is a growing need throughout the nation to focus on the leadership required to implement ILP, while maintaining the tenets of public trust associated with community policing. Law enforcement leaders need to master the ability to guide agency assets to extract and analyze information in order to reduce criminal threats within the community. The implementation of effective ILP practices requires agency leaders to be educated and understand the ILP philosophy and practice. A common theme related to ILP implementation as a philosophy deals with the requirement for this model to be supported at the highest levels of a police agency. The lack of strong leadership within police agencies adopting ILP can impede the implementation (Connor, 2009).

The Community-Oriented Policing (COP) model was designed to address the immediate conditions that cause public concern, while building community relationships that promoted public trust. The ILP model builds on the COP model and emphasizes the need for agencies to gather information for analysis. Community relationships are emphasized in the ILP model as a means for information to be gathered for analysis. The COP model focused on crime causing community disorder. ILP primarily focuses on intelligence analysis as a scientific approach to problem solving. Community policing has been shown to improve police-community relations by building trust between the police and the community and by changing the perceptions of each toward the other. In many communities, there are deep divisions between the police and some members of the community. Community members do not completely trust the police to treat

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them fairly, and the police do not trust residents to come to their aid in the event of a crisis.

Many of these feelings stem from real events, stereotypes and even misperceptions. Regardless of the source, the lack of person-to-person contact between the community and police has the potential to deepen mutual mistrust.

Law enforcement policies focused on ‘crime fighting’, and arrest statistics are not sufficient to ensure an orderly society or a culture that encourages public trust. The effectiveness of an agency’s enforcement strategy should not be measured by statistical crime reduction numbers alone. Citizens in 21st century democracies measure law enforcement success on multiple levels to include sub-criminal activities that effect the character of social order. A law enforcement agency’s failure to maintain public trust can result in the loss of cooperation from the public and likely threaten public compliance with the law. This lack of compliance with the law is evident during protests and riots related to police related shootings throughout the US. Law enforcement leaders must focus on not only policing strategies that will have the greatest effect on crime reduction, but also those that will have a positive effect on building public trust (Bradford & Myhill, 2014).

Conclusion

In order to be effective a credible law enforcement leader needs to be adaptable. An effective leader is capable of adapting to an environment that is constantly changing. Situations cannot always be prepared for or controlled, but an adaptive leader anticipates the situation as much as possible, makes proactive decisions and works diligently to influence the outcome. The Golden Circle, explained by Sinek (2009) discusses why some leaders and organizations can inspire and why others are not. An inspirational leader communicates from the inside out, which focuses on influencing and inspiring behavior. This means they

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focus on why they exist, which attracts those that believe what they believe. Using inspiration gives people a sense of purpose or belonging that has little to do with any external incentive or benefit. Great leaders can inspire people to act, they create a following of people who act for the good of the whole. A leader's decision to incorporate intelligence led policing or community oriented policing strategies and philosophies within their agency, needs to start with identifying "why" these policing models are best suited for their community.

Authentic leadership involves a leader doing and saying the things they truly believe (Normore, 2018). For law enforcement leaders, authenticity is acting in accordance with the agency's mission, vision and core values. Responsible law enforcement leaders continue to embrace core values along with technologies such as less lethal devices and body worn cameras to provide responsible and transparent law enforcement services for their community. The fundamental duty of law enforcement agencies will likely continue to revolve around keeping society safe, but no doubt the dynamics of the profession will be constantly changing. In order to prepare for future demands, law enforcement leaders will need to take proactive steps to prepare for the future, which requires not only knowledge of the trends shaping the future, but also an understanding of law enforcement's past. As law enforcement continues to evolve, it is important to look back at its history to understand where we came from and what we can do to solve our most pressing challenges. The challenges associated with 9/11 and the Ferguson incident should be used by law enforcement leaders to shape their policing philosophies. In order for 21st century law enforcement organizations to implement an effective intelligence led philosophy that incorporates responsible community policing, progressive law enforcement leaders must remain observant of history in order to benefit from the "lessons learned". Past events such as 9/11 and Ferguson have taught law enforcement leaders valuable

lessons about societies expectations and responsible policing philosophies.

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