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## Leadership in Modern Policing

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## **Leadership in Modern Policing**

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BIS 437: Senior Project

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### **Abstract**

The growing need for effective and moral law enforcement leadership is at an all-time high due to the changing societal needs and complexities. Modern law enforcement leaders must possess many skills and competencies that reflect the profession's demands and their communities. Effective police leadership requires a commitment to transparency, accountability, and community engagement obtained through effective knowledge, skills, and abilities that are enhanced by training. A review of available research literature supports that to be an influential and effective police leader, you must possess high-quality and moralistic leadership values and attributes to advance departmental and public trust. This conclusion points to the importance that modern law enforcement leaders have a wide range of skills and competencies to confront contemporary law enforcement's diverse and complex challenges.

## **Leadership in Modern Policing**

Leadership in modern policing faces many complexities and challenges as they lead their officers and agencies into the future. Law enforcement leadership can successfully and effectively lead their agencies by training, practicing, and evolving ethical leadership theories, styles, skills, traits, and powers to overcome the challenges of modern-day policing.

Leadership is a critical component within law enforcement agencies, and effective leadership can help officers maintain public confidence, improve their community, and advance their organizations. Through leadership emphasizing accountability, transparency, and ethical behavior, law enforcement agencies can enhance their effectiveness and foster greater trust and collaboration between law enforcement and their communities. However, there are significant challenges that leaders in law enforcement face. These factors include organizational structures, a rapidly evolving society quickly driven by technological advances, leaders lacking training, and leaders not practicing appropriate leadership practices. Addressing these challenges requires a subtle and knowledgeable approach.

The word Leadership is defined by Tony Robbins (2021) as "...leadership is to influence, inspire and help others become their best selves, building their skills and achieving goals along the way" (para. 2). Leadership, according to this definition, is very significant for anyone in a managerial role. Leadership is a powerful concept to fulfill the spirit of working in the law enforcement profession in today's society. Leadership is crucial to a successful law enforcement operation and key to a community's success. Successful law enforcement leadership focuses on leadership theories and styles, ethics within leadership ranks, training and educational advancement, accountability, and community engagement. Strong and effective leadership is essential to ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities and the successful operation

of law enforcement agencies. Focusing on situational leadership, servant leadership, ethical leadership, and referent power can help address the challenges facing modern law enforcement leadership.

## **History and Structure**

Law enforcement has evolved immensely since Sir Robert Peel, the "Father of Modern Policing," formed the first modern law enforcement agency in London in the late 1820s. Sir Robert Peel focused on his 9 Policing Principals when setting up the modern-day police force. Sir Robert Peel knew a police force could and would be powerful, and having guiding principles would be very important to the success of the idea of policing and the trust of the public. The University of Washington's website (2021) states, "The Peelian Principles summarize the ideas that Sir Robert Peel developed to define an ethical police force" (para. 1). For Peel to focus on the idea of an ethical police force at the beginning of policing is monumental. Peel's focus on ethical policing shows that policing would be a powerful force and that ethical decision-makers would be detrimental to the idea's success.

Modern-day policing has a chain-of-command management structure. The chain of command structure is an essential aspect of law enforcement departments as to how decisions throughout the departments are made and their effects on outcomes. The Fredrick Police Department (Maryland), like most police departments, has a chain-of-command management structure. In the Fredrick Police Department policy manual (2016) it spells out the chain of command structure as follows:

The hierarchy of supervision between the Chief of Police and every individual within the Department. It is a series of positions, each of which is directly commanded by the one

immediately above it. Each individual's chain of command is determined by his assignment within the Department. The chain of command includes both those individuals who are superior to and subordinate to any particular employee. (para.3)

A chain of command structure allows for a disconnect between the top and bottom ranks. Disconnection between the ranks can be a significant problem in policing when unethical decisions happen at any level from within the chain of command. An unethical decision at the top of the chain can cause unethical choices to be made lower in the chain. An unethical decision at the bottom of the chain may never make its way to be acknowledged by the top of the chain. During a discussion panel workshop by the Institute of Medicine (U.S.) Board on Health Sciences Policy (2008) found that an organization supports ethical decisions through communication, education, and organizational processes to nurture a just culture. In law enforcement, ethical decision-making from top leadership is detrimental to subordinates' ethical decision-making due to the department's command structure.

The history and structure of a law enforcement agency can play a significant role in the department culture of law enforcement. Law enforcement departments traditionally have been shaped by the communities they serve. Department history and structure can influence department culture immensely. An agency's command structure alone can significantly impact the department's leadership and directly affect the department's culture. Understanding the history and structure of a law enforcement agency can help officers and community members understand the department's culture and values.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Police leadership in modern policing involves various roles and responsibilities essential for maintaining public safety and essential in an agency's success. In recent years, modern police leadership has become more complex as policing practices have evolved to meet changing societal and community needs. In order for the profession to work as designed and continue to advance for the betterment of society strong and effective police leadership is a must. The complexity of law enforcement has grown the need for law enforcement leadership that is accountable, ethical, and transparent in everything they do. To be effective in modern-day policing, law enforcement leaders must build and maintain essential leadership traits, skills, and styles and implement appropriate powers, practices, and ethics to improve followers and their community. By doing this, law enforcement leaders can develop and sustain positive community relations that promote safer and more just communities while leading their officers and agencies to success.

A law enforcement leader has many roles and responsibilities within the department. These roles and responsibilities include but are not limited to; policy development and implementation, creates and implements strategic planning, ensures laws are followed and enforced, builds relationships with elected officials, community leaders, and the community, manages personnel and resources within the department, and ensures policy compliance.

Law enforcement leaders should practice an open-door policy. By practicing an open-door policy, leaders are said to be more accessible and available to their subordinates. Being more accessible and available to your subordinates should foster an environment of trust, communication, and transparency throughout the organization. There are numerous benefits to having an open-door policy within a law enforcement agency. It creates an environment to build



mutual respect between law enforcement leadership and officers. When officers feel that their leaders are approachable and willing to listen to their feedback and concerns, they are more likely to discuss issues affecting an agency. This type of two-way communication can be beneficial for a leader to identify department-wide problems that may become more significant issues down the road. This type of communication and trust builds transparency and trust among leaders and followers. A law enforcement leader armed with the correct information early on can take corrective measures to address issues before they become detrimental to the agency's success or taint the agency's culture. Building relationships and trust with subordinates can build morale within a department and lead to higher job satisfaction, which can lead to officer longevity and retention.

Relationship building through an open-door policy can make subordinates feel more valued and wanted within their agency. However, law enforcement leaders should not stop with an open-door policy. According to Masterson (2019), having an open door is good; however, you should be approachable within the office and when out from behind your desk. Masterson (2019) states you should approach your subordinates regularly and within the department's walls to build relationships and trust. Masterson (2019) says, “rather than see the open door as an opportunity for others to visit us, we should consider it an invitation to go out and interact with personnel where they perform the work so we can ask how to improve” (para. 31). An open-door policy is an important aspect of an effective leader in law enforcement. An open-door policy creates an environment of trust, open communication, and transparency within an agency which is essential for the success of a leader and agency alike. Law enforcement leaders are responsible for creating an atmosphere and culture that promotes healthy relationships among all

employees in order to lead a thriving organization with high morale and high employee commitment.

A law enforcement leader's role is essential to an agency's success. Law enforcement leaders have various roles and responsibilities. One of the biggest, if not the most significant, responsibilities that a law enforcement leader will undertake is the role of writing and implementing departmental policies and procedures. The effective writing and implementation of a department policy are essential to the success of the policy itself and the department. In regards to successful policy implementation Orrick (n.d.) states,

If completed properly, the community, its governing authority, chief executive, and department's staff can be assured their operations are in compliance with current standards. It will ensure staff act in a consistent, professional and legal manner. It will also ensure department staff are prepared for unusual circumstances and the correct course of action is identified (p.8)

A department's policy manual is its guiding set of principles for the department and gives the department personnel a strict set of rules to follow. A department's policy manual will typically spell out everything from an honesty policy and department ethics to a use of force policy. With a police leader having the overall say and ability to alter and implement new policies it is extremely important that a leader has high morals and values that are reflected in the policy. The policy manual will set the stage for the department's culture.

### **Department Culture and Values**

Organizational culture is a shared set of values, traditions, and behaviors that define an organization. Law enforcement leaders set the culture for their departments, and they should

enforce the morals and values that accompany an ethical organization. Simmons-Beauchamp and Sharpe (2022) explain that "Police leadership has immense influence on police culture. Leaders set the tone for the mission, values, and care for the employees of police organizations" (p.4). According to Simmons-Beauchamp and Sharpe (2022), "a significant and impactful organizational stressor is ineffective leadership, which include leaders who are non-supportive, inconsistent, egocentric, and morally ambiguous" (p.1). An agency's culture reflects in everything they do. When officers interact with the public, they should embody the organization's values and morals; if an officer sees a leader making unjust and immoral decisions, the likelihood of the officer making an unfair or immoral decision increases. According to Thoms (2008), ethical leadership and organizational moral culture are directly related, and an organization may need considerable time to change an organization's culture. It is imperative that law enforcement leaders have high morals and values because it can take years to effect change in the department and community, even after immoral leaders have left. According to the Office of Community Oriented Policing (2015),

Law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian mindset to build public trust and legitimacy. Toward that end, police and sheriffs' departments should adopt procedural justice as the guiding principle for internal and external policies and practices to guide their interactions with the citizens they serve (p.11).

It is vital that leaders in law enforcement address issues when they arise within the organization to keep the culture at the department ethically sound. Law enforcement leaders must be willing to engage with those around them when a mistake has been made and be ready to hold those accountable who have tarnished the organization. Law enforcement leaders are responsible for maintaining high standards for themselves and their organization. One of the critical roles of a

law enforcement leader is to establish a clear vision and mission for the department. The vision should be aligned with the community's expectations and the agency's goals for community safety. An effective law enforcement leader should be able to communicate this vision to their officers. Clear agency visions will help to focus the department's efforts toward achieving community and department goals.

Law enforcement leaders will have many challenges throughout their careers. One difficult challenge, if not the most complex challenge, they may face is when an officer from their organization displays misconduct. According to Shults (2019), when an officer or an employee of a department reveals misconduct, it is essential that leadership needs to show the community that it is an isolated incident. It is not the agency's culture that is to be blamed. For this very reason, it is imperative that law enforcement leaders have a solid and ethical culture in their departments to show the public that the incident was not the norm. It is also crucial for the agency to investigate the misconduct thoroughly and swiftly for internal reasons. The agency promptly needs to come to a conclusion for not only the individual(s) involved but the department and the community. Once misconduct is identified, the agency must be transparent about the situation. According to Shults (2019), an agency should be proactive about the problem and get ahead of it by releasing details as they become available and can be legally released. Displaying proactive transparency is very important in today's society with social media and the internet. Being proactive, departments can shape the narrative of the incident early on to maintain trust in the community and minimize misinformation from being circulated.

Outstanding leadership can help prevent misconduct and ensure accountability within a law enforcement agency. Leaders who highlight ethical conduct and accountability, promote transparency, and support whistle-blowers, create an atmosphere where officers feel encouraged

to report wrongdoing. Encouraging others to report wrongdoing helps prevent misconduct by officers and promotes accountability within the agency.

An essential aspect of developing and maintaining a just, fair, and balanced department culture is the element of diversity. A law enforcement department's diverse makeup should reflect that of which the community they serve. According to the Office of Community Oriented Policing (2015), "hiring officers who reflect the community they serve is important not only to external relations but also to increasing understanding within the agency" (p.51). A critical aspect of having a diverse law enforcement agency is that it allows for different experiences, cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds to make better-informed decisions on a multitude of issues. The more diverse a population is, the more culture and norms play into the identities of those we serve. According to the Office of Community Oriented Policing (2015);

Law enforcement agencies should strive to create a workforce that contains a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities. (p. 16)

The responsibility of building and maintaining a diverse workforce is reliant solely on law enforcement leadership. Law enforcement leadership should have realistic and measurable goals for building a diverse workforce. Law enforcement leaders should actively recruit officers from underserved communities and diverse populations to create a balanced and inclusive environment for employees and the community.

Law enforcement professionalism is essential for public perception. The public constantly judges those around them, and law enforcement officers are not immune to it. Law enforcement officers often face challenging and discouraging situations that most community

members would lose control over. Law enforcement officers are expected to keep their composure and stay professional no matter the situation. Just like any other job, the employees at a law enforcement department have very diverse backgrounds and experiences. Law enforcement officers are expected to remain cool, calm, and collected no matter the circumstances while knowing that a large part of the population would not do the same. According to Bohrer et al. (2011), training is key to law enforcement professionals. Training an officer keeps them updated with the most recent information, improving their training, skills, and abilities, and improving their work performance through newly gained knowledge and confidence. Good leadership can also help create an environment where officers are given the necessary training, guidance, and resources to do their jobs correctly.

Over the past 200+ years, law enforcement has evolved into a prominent and noteworthy profession. Law enforcement officers today are trained and equipped better than ever before. In today's world, law enforcement officers in the United States are better trained and equipped than other countries' militaries. Law enforcement professionals must continue to train and evolve to keep their communities' respect and professionalism at the forefront.

The culture of a law enforcement department can significantly impact leadership theories within the law enforcement agency. The culture of an agency can influence the type of leadership theories that are most effective within the department. Leaders need to understand and adapt to their department's positive cultural aspects to succeed in their role.

### **Leadership Theories**

Individuals become leaders for a multitude of reasons, some positive reasons and some negative reasons. Leadership theories attempt to explain why specific individuals seek to be

leaders. Law enforcement agencies, just like any other workplace, have a workforce with various backgrounds and personalities that affect this list of theories. Although numerous leadership theories exist, Western Governors University (2021) breaks them into seven major ones. According to Western Governors University (2021), the seven major leadership theories are: behavioral theory, contingency theory, great man theory, management theory, participative theory, power theory, and relationship theory.

According to Orticelle (2016), the contingency theory has recently become prominent when teaching law enforcement leadership. Although the contingency theory has been around since the 1960's it has only recently been taught. Orticelle (2016) writes:

The Contingency Theory of leadership is based on the premise that the leader will help the follower by adapting their leadership approach to follower development. This approach is based on the willingness of the follower to adapt and perform required tasks. (para. 6)

Orticelle (2016) further explains that the contingency theory has limitations, such as it may not be useful in complex situations or situations with time limitations. This is important to note in law enforcement since decisions often come with time restraints and are often complex in nature.

Law enforcement leadership is vital to any law enforcement organization's success. Law enforcement leadership should be able to inspire and guide others toward achieving common goals for the good of their community and society. Effective leadership involves utilizing a combination of personal characteristics, skills, and behaviors that enable a leader to inspire, empower, and engage those around them.

Leadership theories directly impact leadership styles, providing a framework for developing effective and practical leadership principles. Understanding and applying different leadership theories can help improve an effective leadership style that meets the needs of a law enforcement agency.

### **Leadership Styles**

Al Khajeh (2018) writes, "there is a considerable impact of the leadership styles on organizational performance. The leadership style influences the culture of the organization which, in turn, influences the organizational performance" (p.2). Al Khajeh (2018) studies the "impact of autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, transactional leadership style, transformational leadership style, charismatic leadership style, and bureaucratic leadership style on the organizational performance" (p.2). These six leadership styles are found in any organization and law enforcement is no different. Al Khajeh (2018) concludes that "organizational performance is associated with the leadership style and they have both a positive and a negative impact on the performance. It is important for a leadership style to offer opportunities to employees, offer a sense of belonging along with allowing them to participate in the decision making" (p.9). Leadership styles have a more significant, if not the most significant, impact on the organization's success than almost any other factor. Choosing leaders within an organization that have leadership styles that match the organization's goals is detrimental to the success of an organization.

Just as policing has evolved over the years, so has the study of leadership. Leadership studies have grown rapidly over the past several years as the need for authentic leaders has become apparent. Early studies in law enforcement leadership were very simplistic but typical of the times. George Henderson (1981) completed a study about human relations within policing



and concluded that "police leadership style may be either autocratic or democratic; the autocratic style results in more hostility and lower morale but also higher quality work. Autocratic leadership is best in crises, while a democratic style is useful in guiding a group toward commitment to their mission" (para.2). Henderson's study is a very early study into law enforcement leadership and shows how law enforcement leadership studies have evolved for the better. Leadership styles have evolved, and it is evident that policing involves more than just two leadership styles. Over time leadership studies have developed, and you will get many answers from many organizations on how many actual leadership styles there are. A first-page Google search will yield results ranging from 4 leadership styles all the way to 17 leadership styles. Below are some of the main leadership styles you will see in law enforcement and their significance to the profession.

The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) is an accredited organization and is the largest leadership honor society in the United States, with 751 chapters and close to 2 million members nationwide. According to The National Society of Leadership and Success [NSLS] (n.d.), the NSLS focuses on 5 of the most common leadership styles in their teachings; servant leadership, transformational leadership, autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, and laissez-faire leadership.

The Center for Leadership Studies (CLS) has over 50 years of leadership training and organizational development. CLS is a global corporation that has trained over 70% of Fortune 500 companies, with around 15 million managers trained. The CLS focuses primarily on teaching situational leadership. Situational leadership uses four different leadership styles to address leading individually instead of a blanket leadership style.

Authentic leadership is extremely important in the law enforcement profession. Law enforcement officers are trained to detect lies, deceit, and authenticity while speaking with the community and investigating crimes. Most law enforcement officers will see through leaders who are not authentic. Sparrowe (2005) explains a direct relationship between authenticity and self-awareness of a leader's values and purpose. Sparrowe (2005) further explains how ethical leadership directly affects authenticity. Leading will come easy for authentic leaders because they are leading naturally and from a moralistic and genuine standpoint.

### ***Servant Leadership***

Servant leadership, the NSLS (n.d.), describes servant leadership as, "Putting the needs of your team first. Instead of concentrating on results, servant leaders focus more on mentoring, empowering, and supporting their teams" (para. 6). Benefits of servant leadership include empowerment of subordinates, respect from subordinates, and it encourages teams to grow. Teams who have servant leaders leading them are typically highly satisfied due to the relationship built with the leader. Challenges from servant leadership include not having the ability to make quick decisions and the difficulty some leaders may have trying to put their own needs down and put others first.

Servant leadership in law enforcement can be hard to find due to the nature of the profession. A large portion of law enforcement officers have strong personalities and are typically 'type A' personalities. According to Wells (2016), "Type A personalities are drawn to a career in law enforcement because the key traits are practically copied from a LEO's job description" (para.8). 'Type A' personalities may find it hard to lay their own needs down and put others first because of their competitiveness and self-critical needs.

### ***Transformational Leadership***

Transformational leadership, the NSLS (n.d.), defines transformational leadership as, motivated leaders that are passionate and energized. These leaders are dedicated to helping team members grow and reach goals. Transformational leaders have to be acute listeners and good communicators. Those leaders who practice a transformational leadership style do so by encouraging and pushing subordinates to do better and grow, pushing them constantly to improve. Transformational leaders are your typical motivational speakers who work to transform and motivate their crowds. The transformational leadership style has its benefits and challenges. The benefits of this leadership style are that it focuses on team-member growth and can boost team morale. A few noted challenges are that it can overlook team accomplishments due to its one-on-one relationship focus. This leadership style can also wear down team members because of the constant push for them to accomplish goals.

A study by Boies et al. (2015) discovered that transformational leadership might affect team performance more than any other leadership style. The leader builds trust among group members through solid communication. According to Denton (2020), "the transformational style of leadership is; therefore, one of the best ways to lead a law enforcement agency, encompassing the best of the other styles of leadership while embracing the importance of others' contributions" (para. 7). Denton (2020) further states that transformational leadership style is one of the best styles to use during turbulent times for law enforcement, this was said concerning on-going protests in America and the conflicts involving law enforcement across the United States.

### ***Autocratic Leadership***

The NSLS (n.d.) explains the autocratic leadership style as leaders who make decisions independently and do not seek input or guidance from others. Benefits of an Autocratic leadership style include dependability of the leader, confidence, and consistency. Autocratic leaders are often seen in high-stress jobs. Challenges of this leadership style include a team with low morale due to the leader always making the decisions and not allowing team members to have a voice in the outcome, although they are playing a role in the process.

Often time's, patrolmen at the street level will use an autocratic leadership style when coming to a decision for a call for service. A patrolman will likely make most, if not all, decisions on an ordinary call for service and not allow a suspect to have any say in the outcome. Denton (2020) states that an autocratic leadership style is the most common leadership style in law enforcement. Denton (2020) further states that "...this is the least favorable leadership style for law enforcement. Law enforcement agency administrators should consider the various commanding officers and frontline officers and deputies that report to them because they are just that – the front line" (para.5). This is a point of emphasis and causes a disconnect between leaders and subordinate within a law enforcement agency. The disconnect can cause a subordinate to feel untrusted or unvalued due to their opinion not being considered. Denton (2020) describes a situation where the most used leadership style in law enforcement is the most used by leaders in a department.

### ***Democratic Leadership***

Democratic leadership the NSLS (n.d.) defines democratic leadership as transparent leaders who give team members all the information they need to make a decision. These leaders engage all members and encourage them to work together. The benefits of this leadership style includes all team members being valued as well as their opinion. Team members also have high

morale due to feeling valued, thus leading to higher productivity. Challenges of this leadership style include possible confrontation due to all members having input and the availability to be heard. Democratic leadership styles aren't an ideal leadership style where quick decisions need to be made, and this isn't always an option in the law enforcement field.

In law enforcement, there is often a disconnect between leaders and subordinates due to the lack of respect between the two sides. Saint Thomas University (2014), describes democratic leadership style as "...based on mutual respect. It is often combined with participatory leadership because it requires collaboration between leaders and the people they guide" (para. 1). This style of leadership is the least used by law enforcement leadership yet of all the leadership styles it encourages subordinates to accomplish goals and makes them feel valued. With a democratic leadership style, a leader has to be willing to let go of power to involve subordinates. As discussed earlier, most leaders in law enforcement already have a 'Type A' personality, so letting go of any power is a struggle for them.

### ***Laissez-faire Leadership***

Laissez-faire leadership the NSLS (n.d.) explains laissez-faire leadership as a hands-off leader who gives support to members when needed but does not micromanage. Laissez-faire leaders leave all decisions to the individual yet are still held accountable for all outcomes. The Laissez-faire style is better suited for experienced employees who do not need much coaching or direction from management. A laissez-faire leader will usually like to delegate tasks and be comfortable with whatever happens along the way. Benefits of the laissez-faire leadership style include high morale, and it empowers the team members. Challenges to this style include the lack of management over a team and the lack of progression of team members.

Laissez-faire leadership within law enforcement can and is used but should only be used with trusted, seasoned officers who can make decisions independently based on experience and training. In regards to the laissez-faire leadership style being used in law enforcement, Denton (2020), writes "In regard to law enforcement, this hands-off approach is not ideal because the executive leader should lead, as well as considering information provided by the staff and rank-and-file police officers or deputies" (para. 8).

### ***Situational Leadership***

According to The Center for Leadership Studies (n.d.), "The Situational Leadership methodology is based on the relationship between leaders and followers and provides a framework to analyze each situation based on the performance readiness level that a follower exhibits" (para.3). Situational leadership has its advantages and disadvantages just like all other leadership styles. According to The Center for Leadership studies (n.d.), the benefits of situational leadership are that it creates a mutual standard of performance, teaches leaders to effectively lead in different types of environments, develops employees quicker, effectively changes behavior, and influences others numerous ways. According to Joshi (2023), challenges of situational leadership include but are not limited to, it misses long-term goals, it's dependent on what type of relationship a leader has with an employee, not very practical for repetitive responsibilities, and if a leader is consistently changing how he leads it can confuse employees.

According to Purdue University (n.d.), five generations are working in the workplace together for the first time in history. Five generations working together is challenging enough for leaders, and then to add that each individual within each generation may need something different from a leader; for this very reason, a leader needs to stay flexible and able to adjust. De Paris (1997) states, "To be effective, police supervisors must depart from their dominant

leadership style and modify their behavior situationally, depending on the leader, the follower, and the situation" (para. 2). This journal article was written in 1997 and the need for an effective law enforcement leader to be able to adapt their leadership style for different situations was already needed. Twenty-six years later, it is much more evident that this style of policing is needed with so many different types of employees within a department.

Leadership styles have a profound impact on leadership skills because different leadership styles relate to various skills that leaders possess or develop. Leaders need to recognize which leadership style is most appropriate for different situations and develop the essential skills to be adequate for that situation. Leaders can positively influence their followers by adopting the right style and possessing the relevant skills.

### **Law Enforcement Leadership Skills**

While there is not an all-inclusive list of leadership skills that one should possess to be an effective law enforcement leader, you need to possess several minimal and idealistic traits. Fritsvold (n.d.) states there are soft skills such as; effective communication, ability to evolve, understanding of different perspectives, attention to detail, and hard skills such as; management, budgeting, policy and legal knowledge, and media and technology are all important to possess. Effective communication is a must-have for an effective law enforcement leader. Without being an effective communicator, a law enforcement leader will find it difficult to lead or even build on any other skills to advance their career and leadership abilities. Influential leaders should always build on and refine their skills throughout their careers.

Effective communication is essential in law enforcement leadership, from leaders to their subordinates and the public. A leader should be able to communicate clearly and concisely,

ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. A leader should also be able to listen actively, obtain feedback from their subordinates, and be open to constructive criticism, making changes and improvements accordingly.

It is crucial for law enforcement leaders to possess strong decision-making skills. They should be able to make quick, informed decisions in high-pressure situations while keeping calm and maintaining professionalism. They should also be able to develop effective strategies that ensure the smooth operation of the department while achieving its goals and objectives.

According to Landry (2019) "emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of those around you" (para. 3). Emotional intelligence is vital for a law enforcement leader to possess. Turner (2009) states, "being an effective and efficient law enforcement officer in today's environment requires intelligence about and control of emotions in order to meet the demands faced on the streets" (para 3). Emotional intelligence may be one of the most critical skills to possess as a law enforcement leader. Emotional intelligence is essential to maintain by law enforcement officials because it affects everything from dealing with suspects while on calls for service to dealing with politicians about everyday issues and department focus.

Leadership in any organization is essential, but poor leadership can be detrimental to the success of that organization, and law enforcement is no exception. Municipalities, law enforcement organizations, and community leaders must choose administrators who share the community's values and value the officers within their departments. Bunker and Wakefield (2010) state, "Leaders must be tough enough to make difficult, bottom-line decisions that serve the overall needs of the organization. Being tough involves being decisive and unafraid to take a stand in the face of public opinion or strong resistance" (p.12). In recent years we have seen



many leaders in law enforcement abandon the very officers that work for them because they face harsh public criticism and strong resistance. Many leaders in law enforcement are more worried about themselves and their careers than the morale and trust within their departments and their organizational values and morals. Bunker and Wakefield (2010) further explain this by stating, "However, leaders must also make such decisions with sensitivity to the impact and consequences for others in the organization. Failure to do so can erode loyalty and trust, as well as morale and motivation—at the very time when leaders need them most" (p.12). Patrolmen within the department will look to leaders within their administration during the difficult times, and the difficult times are often when you will make or break your organization. A true leader makes a decision that is true and based in fact, not on public opinion.

Law enforcement leadership skills can impact law enforcement leadership traits in several ways. The management and improvement of leadership skills can help enhance existing leadership traits. Developing new skills can also make a leader more effective and competent. Leadership skills can strengthen existing leadership traits; they can help establish unique leadership traits and enhance a leader's overall effectiveness in leading a law enforcement agency.

### **Leadership Traits**

Just as important as law enforcement leadership skills are law enforcement leadership traits. Although the list of attributes to be an effective law enforcement leader would be extensive, a few characteristics are extremely important for the job. Fritsvold (n.d.) lists several law enforcement leadership traits that he believes are important for leaders to possess; this list includes commitment, honesty, integrity, humility, and mentorship. Of Fritsvold's list, integrity stands out the most for a law enforcement leader to possess. The U.S. Army (n.d.) lists the

definition of integrity as "Do what's right, legally and morally. Integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles" (para. 7). A leader who does not possess integrity will find it hard to gain a followership and find it even harder to possess other quality traits to be an effective leader.

A few values that leadership principles are based on are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring. These foundational values guide the creation, maintenance, and enforcement of laws and regulations and ensure consistent practice within the law enforcement department. When an officer acts in a way inconsistent with these values, it damages the community's trust in and support of the department. Therefore, effective leadership is vital to the success of a law enforcement department in both practical matters and community relations. The importance of moral leadership in law enforcement can be observed in many ways. Ethical leaders can instill a sense of trust and confidence in the community. They can establish strong community relationships that help promote cooperation, and increase trust and collaboration between law enforcement and the public.

Law enforcement should be held to the highest standard of ethics, morals, and values and be fair and impartial. Law enforcement, no matter of rank, should practice ethical leadership in their everyday actions. Ethical leadership is defined by Brown and Trevino (2006) as appropriate conduct through your actions and relationships and encouraging the same behavior through communication and decision-making. Ethical leadership should be a standard for all law enforcement leaders, and they should never have their ethics called into question. When a law enforcement leader practices ethical leadership, there is a trickle-down effect. The relationship between an ethical leader and a follower is stated by Brown and Trevino (2006) as follows;

Followers of an ethical leader know that the leader will be holding them accountable for their decisions and will use rewards and discipline to do so. Thus, the followers of ethical leaders should be more likely to focus on the ethical implications of their decisions and make more ethical decisions as a result. (p. 607)

One component of increasing ethical leadership is training. Over time from exposure to negative influences, the stress of the job, or many other factors, an officer can stray from their ethics that may have been very strong once before. Department-wide ethics training from reliable sources is a great way to stay on top of the ethical decision-making dilemma organizations may face and leaves them better equipped to face ethical challenges. Fortenbery (2015) states that developing ethical leadership in law enforcement is an on-going progression and that leaders set an example of moral conduct for their subordinates to follow.

Strong law enforcement leaders exemplify leadership and inspire their officers to work harder and more efficiently. A leader committed to professionalism, accountability, and integrity will give their officers a sense of purpose and a roadmap for success. When officers see that their leaders are invested in them and their work, they are likelier to police from a moral and ethical standpoint. Law enforcement officers are trusted to do many things within society that range from carrying weapons to arresting individuals and taking away their constitutional freedoms. Yet, many times, there seems to be a lack of trust from the top down. The lack of trust often leads to micromanagement of subordinates and results in a lack of motivation and low morale. Trust is an essential factor on both sides of any leadership role. You have to trust your employees, and they must trust you as a leader. Bunker and Wakefield (2010) state, "Trusting others involves being comfortable with allowing others to do their part of a task or project. Leaders who trust others are open to input and support from colleagues and friends. Such

leaders respect others and demonstrate trust through a willingness to be vulnerable in their interactions with them" (p.13). Trust is essential in law enforcement as officers must trust that their leadership will back them when they make a decision.

Many decisions made in law enforcement are split-second decisions and are made with a minimal amount of information. Officers need to know that when they make these decisions and the decisions are made properly with the information they have available, leaders within the department will support them and not run when public opinion says something different. Bunker and Wakefield (2010) state, "when a pattern of trust has been established, leaders can judiciously step in and advise, adjust, and if need be, override. This is different from constant micromanaging and undermining. It is, in fact, the appropriate use of the authority bestowed by position and experience" (p.13). Trust is one of the most important values in a leader and follower relationship. Trust can make or break a leader, leading to making or breaking an organization. You must trust your leaders to be fully committed to any job, which is very important in a law enforcement organization.

Respectful leadership is an example of effective leadership that should be used by leadership within law enforcement agencies. Respectful leadership goes a long way with anyone. When leadership fails to be respectful from within the walls of an agency the patrolmen or the part of the agencies that interact with the community fails to be respectful with the community they serve. At most agencies, you will hear, "Brass doesn't care about us or what we do." This statement is then the attitude that is reflected in the work of those who believe that. Hanson & McKenna (2011) state, "because front-line service delivery offers the litmus test for what works in any police service, it is essential that everyone within the department work strategically on processes and improvements that are actually relevant to those people at the

operational level. From experience this is a major issue within most police departments" (p. 289). Front line workers are a crucial aspect to consider regarding public opinion of a law enforcement agency. When those at the top show poor morals and values and disrespect, this will be shown to the community. For a law enforcement organization to succeed, this has to be a point of emphasis so that it is portrayed the same way to the community.

In the law enforcement community over the past several years the attitude amongst the patrolmen has been "us against administration and us against the community." This is important to keep in mind as to why society sees a disconnect between the patrolman who serve the community day in and day out and the community itself. You have to start trying to patch together relationships, starting with leadership stepping up and leading their departments instead of looking out for their self-interests. Hanson and McKenna (2011) state "working as a team, it is essential that members of the senior executive understand that they themselves do not 'own' their human, financial, material, or technological resources." (p.292). A level of trust is needed for law enforcement to work. Society, law enforcement administration, and officers must have mutual respect for one another. Without trust, no level of law enforcement can work as it is designed to do.

Leadership traits can significantly impact the execution of power by a law enforcement leader. Leaders with positive qualities are more likely to enhance and put a department on a positive trajectory. Leaders lacking positive leadership traits may struggle to exercise power effectively thus leading to a negative impact and environment. Leadership traits can influence how leaders exercise their power; leaders must be mindful of this while interacting with others within the department and during interactions with the community.

## **Powers in Leadership**

Just as law enforcement officers are given an extraordinary amount of power to perform their jobs, law enforcement leadership is given tremendous power to lead their officers.

According to Duryee (2022), the five main powers in leadership are coercive power, legitimate power, reward power, expert power, and referent power. The type of power a law enforcement leader utilizes will vary, and they can also use a combination of different types of powers. Using the appropriate type of leadership power in the right situation is extremely important.

Coercive power punishes subordinates, and managers use this type of power to intimidate employees and/or threaten them. Duryee (2022) defines this type of power as manipulative behaviors to achieve a desired outcome from an employee. This type of power can be successful when a leader tries to change a specific behavior from a subordinate. Coercive power is an effective leadership power; however, it damages relationships between leaders and followers. This type of leadership power, used primarily in excess, can lead to low morale not only by the follower who is being coerced but also by other followers who are witnessing the coercion.

Legitimate power is the type of power that comes from a leader's position within an organization. Law enforcement leaders use this type of power frequently due to the organization's command structure. Law enforcement subordinates understand the command structure of a law enforcement agency therefore, they will almost always take orders because their leader told them to do it. This type of leadership power can be tough for law enforcement subordinates to accept if they do not respect the leader giving the order.

Reward power, according to Duryee (2022) is "a positive means to assist an employee or team to want to be better...using reward power requires transparency, fairness and clear

expectations from managers in order for it to be effective" (para. 7). Providing incentives to employees can cause jealousy among team members who may not receive such an incentive but feel as they may have contributed to the success. Reward power can also cause an "every man for himself" type of atmosphere if you have several employees vying for one reward. A leader should be cautious when utilizing this power due to its complexity and potential to pit employees against each other. It is essential for law enforcement leaders to explain their expectations to ensure everyone is working together productively. Having standards will enable law enforcement officers to make quick, informed decisions in potentially unpredictable situations.

Expert power is the power a leader holds because of their knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific area. Subordinates will often assign this power themselves once they have the facts about a leader. Each subordinate may look at a leader differently and assign different values for a leader's expertise. If a leader holding expert power is incorrect or their expertise becomes invalid, they will begin to lose followers. It is crucial for a leader using expert power to do so cautiously. If a leader using this type of power is questioned because of mistakes or wrong answers, the leader can quickly lose those who follow him.

The last type of leadership power is referent power. According to Duryee (2022), referent power is "a form of personal power...Leaders possessing referent power influence others through respect and trust garnered over time. Plain and simple, they are well liked due to their positive reputation" (para.14). This type of leadership power requires an intimate relationship between the leader and the follower. For this reason, this may be one of the most effective forms of power a leader can possess. A follower typically wants to please a leader; if the leader has an intimate relationship with a follower, then the follower will be even more likely to want to please the leader, not to harm their relationship. If this leadership power is present,

the leader could lead with any of the listed leadership powers and apply them when and where it is needed.

Followership is an essential element in leadership; leaders must have followers or are not leaders at all. Duryee (2022) states, "Managers who understand how to leverage power in leadership for good possess the ability to encourage, motivate and help employees strive to improve" (para. 5). One thing is certain, for a leader to gain followership among their subordinates they have to be willing to practice the proper form of power. A leader can quickly lose a follower with abuse of leadership power, and once a follower is lost, it is tough to regain their trust and respect.

### **Challenges in Law Enforcement Leadership**

Challenges in law enforcement as a profession are daunting, evolving, and multiplying daily. Challenges for law enforcement leaders are the same as they are for the profession but with the added stressors of leading subordinates in the evolving world. According to Batts et al. (2012), two of the biggest challenges to law enforcement are the addition of a whole new set of generational officers and the opportunities of new technology entering the profession and the challenges that come with the new technology.

Batts et al. (2012) explains that the traditional organizational model of law enforcement is growing irrelevant as it was set up during the industrial revolution to suit worker's needs. As discussed previously, five different generations in the workforce are working together. The current model of law enforcement agencies has been in place since the conception of modern policing by Sir Robert Peel. Although these models have evolved, they are still rooted in traditional values and a law enforcement response to better suit the industrial complex at the



time. Individuals who are currently applying for policing jobs are now mainly in the Gen Z generation. According to De Witte (2022), "a typical Gen Z'er is a self-driver who deeply cares about others, strives for a diverse community, is highly collaborative and social, values flexibility, relevance, authenticity and non-hierarchical leadership" (para. 7). De Witte's description of the Gen Z generation is everything that a law enforcement officer should stand for yet departments are finding it hard to integrate the Gen Z generation into its structure. In 2012, Batts et al. (2012), already said that the command structure of modern-day policing was an obstacle. Nine years after Batts et al. research you have Gen Z entering the workforce, a workforce that has a non-hierarchical leadership stance. Law Enforcement leaders now have to lead officers who do not agree with the very system they are working for. Gen Z officers may not fit entirely into the traditional law enforcement platform; however, they do bring with them a skill that others currently in law enforcement may lack. Gen Z brings technical skills to the traditional law enforcement platform, which, according to Batts et al., is a challenge to law enforcement.

According to Columbia Southern (2022), the number one challenge for law enforcement is recruitment and retention. This problem is concerning and real and lies solely on the backs of the department leadership. In response to the on-going recruitment and retention problem for law enforcement, Orrick (2018) states;

Never before has the recruitment and retention of police personnel been as critical or as challenging for police organizations as it is today. To address these challenges successfully, law enforcement leaders must examine the process in an entirely different manner. This process will require a constant review of the labor market, compensation

systems, leadership, recruiting techniques, supervision of recruiters, employer brands, leadership and operational management systems, and retention systems. (pg. 13)

Not only will law enforcement leaders have to employ differing and evolving strategies to make sure that recruitment and retention stay high, but they must also look at their leadership and leadership skills to make sure they too, are evolving and building to meet the demands of the department and the needs of the officers.

Law enforcement leadership also faces challenges in diversity and inclusion of their departments. These two factors are significant when policing a diverse and inclusive community. A diverse and inclusive law enforcement agency is important for numerous reasons, including the department's ability to build trust amongst the diverse and inclusive communities that they serve and ensure that all community members' voices are heard, and they are treated with respect. When a law enforcement agency has a diverse and inclusive workforce, it brings in different perspectives and experiences to better serve community members. According to Wiseman (2016), diversity hiring goals should be made clear and concise and supported by the chief, with a senior leader at the department in charge of the efforts to make sure the goals are being accomplished.

A challenge law enforcement agencies face that law enforcement leadership bears the weight of is the mental health of their officers. According to McAward (2022), a law enforcement officer is 54% more likely to commit suicide than the average citizen and more officers died by suicide than at the hands of a criminal while on duty. These facts should be highly concerning to law enforcement leaders and the health of their departments. According to McAward (2022), there are numerous factors for such a high rate, but two main factors that affect an officer's health are exposure to traumatic events and work-related stress. Law

enforcement leaders should be concerned with the staggering rise in law enforcement suicide as it keeps rising. Law enforcement leaders need to be willing to provide outlets for mental health and well-being for their officers and a way to get help if the need arises to that level.

Challenges faced by law enforcement leadership can help generate and refine the best practices for law enforcement leadership. When a significant situation challenges a law enforcement leader, it can lead to practices that are implemented through experience which are developed through tried and true practices and not just on paper. Law enforcement leadership's challenges can often lead to the development of best practices for both the leader and the agency. Through effective and challenging opportunities, a law enforcement leader can take an active role in improving policy and procedure for a department, which eventually leads to greater trust in the community they serve.

### **Best Practices in Law Enforcement Leadership**

Best practices in law enforcement leadership are learned through experience and failures. As a leader, you should not be scared to fail; when you do, you should fail forward, it's always best to learn from your mistakes so that next time you are better prepared for that situation. There are many best practices in law enforcement leadership and many scars to prove them. One practice as a law enforcement leader is to have strong law enforcement-community relations. The relationships that are built when times are easy will benefit a leader and department immensely when times are tough. The U.S. Department of Justice makes five recommendations when building community relations to help leaders form lasting and beneficial relationships. The U.S. Department of Justice (n.d.) recommendations are; to acknowledge and discuss the challenges you are facing with your societies, be transparent and accountable, take steps to reduce bias and improve cultural competency, be visible in the community, promote internal

diversity, and encourage professional development opportunities. These tasks are critical in building relationships, especially with misrepresented sectors within our communities.

One of the primary reasons that strong leaders are critical in law enforcement is their need to build and maintain trust within the community. Without trust, law enforcement agencies are unlikely to garner public support, which is crucial in maintaining a peaceful and secure society. A strong leader can cultivate such trust through effective community outreach programs, meaningful dialogue with citizens, and leading an agency in a transparent and accountable manner. Leaders who promote transparency and accountability within their agency can help ensure that their officers act with integrity and follow the law, thereby reducing law enforcement brutality and misconduct incidents.

Law enforcement officers, especially those in leadership roles, must receive proper training to discharge their duties as law enforcement officers and as a leader within the department. You can achieve this by continuing your education and attending training. Ellis et al. (n.d.) states "The proper personal and professional development of all employees provides an opportunity not only to enhance the organization beyond the technical skills its staff possesses, but also to provide an avenue for building great organizational values and cultures" (para. 7). To build great organizational values and culture you have to devote time, money, and resources into your organization, not just for management but for the department as a whole. Law enforcement leadership training is critical as it equips law enforcement leaders with the evolving knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out their duties as a supervisor effectively and efficiently. Ensuring law enforcement leaders have the appropriate training prepares them for the multitude of situations they may face. Schafer (2010) states that during a study and questionnaire of law

enforcement officers and officials, three-quarters of respondents noted that leadership training and development was helpful in building leaders within an agency.

Law enforcement leader accountability is crucial to an agency. Law enforcement leadership accountability revolves around the ability of law enforcement leaders to be held accountable for their actions and decisions even when they may not be carrying out the action but also includes giving orders. Law enforcement leaders are trusted with much power to protect their citizens and uphold the law. Over the last several years, public cases of law enforcement misconduct, corruption, and abuse by law enforcement have raised many questions about how law enforcement is held accountable for their actions. Considering recent law enforcement abuses, President Biden signed Executive Order No. 14,074 (2022), which calls for establishing a National Law Enforcement Accountability Database. This database would act as a central repository for records. The records would include documentation of misconduct by law enforcement but also any awards and accommodations that officers receive. Executive order 14,074 has 20 sections, just on law enforcement accountability and the law enforcement accountability database.

There are numerous ways to hold law enforcement leaders accountable for their actions. Law enforcement leaders should be held accountable with internal procedures, external procedures, and by the legal system if necessary.

Holding law enforcement leaders accountable through internal accountability procedures includes but is not limited to thorough internal affairs investigations and disciplinary investigations and proceedings. Internal affairs investigations and disciplinary investigations are in place to enforce professional standards, the law, and officer conduct. The investigations into law enforcement misconduct should be conducted free of bias and not have any bias or leniency.

The U.S. Department of Justice (2005) released a report stating that an internal affairs investigation should be "complete" and all required information should be obtained before making a determination. The report further says that a mediator should be able to conclude without resorting to speculation, prejudice, or any assumption. A bias-free investigation is essential, especially in the court of public opinion.

You can also hold law enforcement leaders accountable through external accountability procedures. External accountability procedures include a law enforcement advisory board, civilian review boards, and law enforcement commissions. External procedures are designed to provide transparency and allow for public analysis and oversight of policing practices. These advisory boards act as a connection between law enforcement to the communities they serve. In an article by Reece and Macy they state;

Citizen advisory boards are becoming important components of most law enforcement organizations and, when handled appropriately, will result in more democratic and effective organizations. Police leaders should encourage an engaged citizenry. With citizens participating actively in the organization, the public may be less critical of the difficult decisions often required of public administrators. (para. 25)

Legal accountability is an essential component of law enforcement leader accountability. Although this is typically a hard decision for most departments and can stain their organization, this component must be upheld. Prosecuting law enforcement who have committed a crime sends a strong message to other officers who may be committing criminal acts or are walking the line on committing illegal acts to where the department and its leadership stand on such actions. Officers around them judge law enforcement leadership in many ways and are always watching. Suppose law enforcement leaders turn a blind eye to officers breaking the law. In that case, they

show the other officers that their values and morals are not to a certain standard and only encourage them to continue misconduct.

Law enforcement leadership accountability is essential in ensuring officers, the community, and other leadership know that an agency upholds the law and practices ethical accountability with high morals and values. It is essential that accountability procedures are in place and used to hold law enforcement officers and law enforcement leaders accountable. Holding law enforcement leader's accountable builds community trust and shows those watching that the leadership and agency practice ethical policing.

Law Enforcement leadership needs to have a strong understanding of law enforcement strategies to protect and serve as they are sworn to do. The overall job of law enforcement is to prevent and stop criminal activity, and this is what the community they serve expects of them. Although there are many different concepts for law enforcement strategies, one of the most important and widely used is the Community Oriented Policing strategy. Community Oriented Policing is a strategy that uses the relationship you build with the community to help prevent and address crime. Law enforcement officers who use this strategy work closely with the public and work very hard to build relationships with community members; this can sometimes be a prolonged and challenging process. Once a bridge is built from officer to community member, the goal of Community Oriented Policing is to identify and solve crime hopefully before it ever begins. Community Oriented Policing has been found to be very effective in reducing crime, thus creating a safer environment and improving community relations. Community Oriented Policing is so popular and proven that the U.S. Department of Justice has the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services branch. According to the U.S. Department of Justice

(n.d.), the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services started in 1994 after the passage of the specific law enforcement legislation.

The developing environment of modern policing challenges leadership in law enforcement. As law enforcement departments migrate from traditional law enforcement to crime prevention initiatives and community outreach, effective leadership is required to move their departments forward. Equally important is the understanding of the importance of technology in policing and how its use can enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement and further community relations and trust.

### **Technology in Law Enforcement**

Law enforcement leadership has been considerably impacted both positively and negatively by technology. Technology has completely transformed how a law enforcement agency operates regardless of the agency or its budget. The availability and now affordable options in technology have impacted everything from how an agency combats crime to how it monitors its officers. According to Chapman (2017), "technological advances in recent years have changed the nature of policing so significantly that many methods and tools from just a decade ago have become antiquated and incompatible with current technology" (p.4-4).

A highly substantial impact of technology on policing is that technology has enabled very proficient communication. The effect on communication and policing ranges not only from communication between officers but also has opened up a new line of communication to the public in real-time. Officers now have the ability to gather information immediately and disseminate that information as quickly as they can get it. Officers can send and receive pictures of suspects, suspect vehicles, or any other pertinent information that not only allows officers to



locate suspects quicker but also allows them to rule out individuals quickly. The impact of social media on policing has been astronomical and has been very effective in interacting with the public. Fritsvold (2023) states that social media allows law enforcement agencies to speak to their citizens in real-time, allows for 2-way communication, and it expands an agency's reach; it can now reach audiences that it typically wouldn't.

A significant impact of technology on policing is the advancement of predictive policing. Predictive policing has been a game changer for law enforcement leadership to apply when forming plans to combat crime in their jurisdictions. Law enforcement leadership can now better allocate resources when combatting crime. Pearsall (2010) states that with current analytic tools we can anticipate problems and criminal activity, thus allowing law enforcement leaders to better decide on resource allocation and better inform citizens and community planners.

Regardless of when or where the technology is being applied and utilized, law enforcement leaders must have a policy for its use. Technology can be abused in any profession, however, with the authority of law enforcement and all the technology at its fingers tips, it's easy to manipulate the information. In *Deliberative and Pre-decisional*, the U.S. Justice Department (n.d.) writes:

Emerging technologies have an impact on law enforcement in two primary ways.

Emerging technologies present great opportunity to increase law enforcement capacity and aid in the efficient use of public funds while enhancing law enforcement's ability to identify victims and bring perpetrators of crime to justice. At the same time, risks and costs associated with the adoption of new technologies must be addressed prior to use by law enforcement. Technologies can enhance, enable, or better facilitate a law enforcement agency...Conversely, law enforcement agencies who use available

technologies without appropriate restraints will negatively affect both the mission and public trust. These risks, threats, and costs contribute greatly to the complex environment in which modern police agencies work. (para. 4).

The use of technology in law enforcement has become progressively prevalent over the past several years, and a full range of technology is being deployed in the field for use by law enforcement. The dependence on technology by law enforcement has led to several political factors, such as violating an individual's right to manipulation by political figures. Technology use in law enforcement has also led to several social factors, such as the loss of trust and relationships between law enforcement and the community.

### **Political and Social Factors**

In law enforcement, political and social factors often go hand-in-hand. Political factors begin to take effect when social factors become prevalent and sensationalized. Over the past several years, we have seen significant stories involving law enforcement covered by the media giving these cases national exposure. These include the Michael Brown case in Ferguson, Missouri, where the "hands up, don't shoot" narrative became a significant social narrative. Although the Black Lives Matter movement was started before the death of George Floyd according to the Howard University School of Law (2023), "it has established itself as a worldwide movement, particularly after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis, MN" (para.1). The Black Lives Matter movement was another very impactful social factor that greatly affected law enforcement agencies. Both of the above social factors poured over into major political factors. When protesting started out of the movements, political factors became very important to how law enforcement responded, treated protestors, and upheld the law every day after that. The decisions on the law enforcement response during these

movements were placed on the backs of the law enforcement leaders who had to be able to safely protect protestors, officers, citizens, and communities while keeping politicians and their citizens satisfied.

Law enforcement agencies political environments significantly impact their overall success and abilities. All law enforcement agencies answer to some political power, who typically want to be reelected—the political factors affecting law enforcement leadership effect day-in and day-out operations at an agency. Batts et al. (2012) states, "political influences was identified as critical to contemporary leadership by a group of prominent police executives" (p. 17). Orrick (2018) builds on Batts et al. statement saying "a recent survey of police chiefs identified the most discouraging, dissatisfying aspect of their job as being frustrated by working in the political environment and dealing with politicians" (p.1). Law enforcement leadership will typically be the go-to for politicians. Law enforcement leadership bears the responsibility of ethically providing answers and solutions to politicians' problems but not acting as their personal law enforcement officer. Law enforcement leaders, no matter the political system they are involved in, must realize that politics are part of working for a government organization. According to Orrick (2018), a law enforcement leader should develop strong relationships with employees within their department, the public, the media, other law enforcement agencies, and elected officials to succeed. Strong leadership traits and skills will make navigating the political aspect of law enforcement much easier when the need arises. Law enforcement agencies are constantly subject to political pressures. The constant political pressure on law enforcement executives can influence everything from policy and procedure to daily operations by the officers.

As political and social factors change, so should leadership. Leaders cannot simply stand by and watch as the atmosphere changes; a leader must be flexible and willing to bend and make hard decisions. According to Yukl (2008), for effective performance a leader should be able to cooperate with other organizational leaders, and they should be flexible and adapt to the situation as it changes.

It is important for law enforcement leadership to understand the political and social factors affecting the department's everyday operations. Leaders facing touch political and social environments need to practice extremely ethical leadership in order not to fall victim to unethical practices that outside forces may push.

### **Ethics in Law Enforcement Leadership**

Most, if not all, law enforcement agencies in the United States have some code of ethics, often called a code of conduct. A code of ethics is a set of standards that an organization swears to uphold. In a code of ethics, you will find a promise to; protect the innocent, defend the constitution, hold high morals and values, and many other points of interest that an agency holds important. According to Norwich University (2017), "in order to properly and ethically serve their respective communities, law enforcement organizations must operate under the guidance of educated and experienced public administrators" (para.13). It is paramount that law enforcement leaders have extraordinary morals and values. They must be willing to stay educated and always be evolving to practice the best ethical leadership for themselves, their followers, their organization, and their communities. A code of ethics serves as a base for law enforcement and their communities. It is imperative that agencies have clear and concise codes of ethics that is reflected in their policy. Leaders must hold those around them to the standard of the code of ethics and correct any and all issues when they are in violation of any part of the code.

Law enforcement leaders should set an example for those around them, not only within the department but within the community. Law enforcement leadership should build everything they do from an ethical standpoint. Law enforcement leadership should build their departments on ethical decisions, everything from hiring new officers to writing policy and procedure, developing and attending training, interacting with citizens, and how they conduct their behavior while they are off-duty. Law enforcement leadership is the ground on which departments are built on; any unethical behavior by leadership can be compounded by subordinates. Fitch (2011) states, "Law enforcement leaders must create a culture of ethics within their agency... establish standards for employees' behavior at all levels and illustrate that ethics play a crucial role in an officer's success in the agency" (para. 23).

Ethics training for law enforcement leadership is particularly important to keep the leadership in the department educated and up-to-date with ethical considerations. Law enforcement leadership should be able to make not only ethical decisions for the good of the department but also identify unethical behavior when it occurs. Once unethical behavior is identified, a leader should be able to investigate and discipline those who choose to display unethical behavior. Jones et al. (1995) state that an ethical training program should be in place at law enforcement agencies to impart, reiterate, and regulate ethical policing.

Law enforcement leadership transparency is essential for building trust between a law enforcement agency and the community. Transparency in policing is simply being honest with the community you serve and being open to allowing them access to information they may seek about the department. Although some information may be restricted from being released, a minimum amount of information needs to be released. When citizens are not allowed access to information about an incident or a department issue, then citizens start filling in the blanks. The

lack of information transfer builds distrust and dissent among the community, and it appears that the law enforcement agency is trying to hide or cover something up. Dekmar (2018) explains that after forming an advisory board to advise on public trust, a listening session revealed that community members had a desire for transparency from law enforcement agencies across the board.

Transparency is not only essential to build and maintain trust among the community, but it is also paramount to commit to transparency with subordinates within the agency. Lack of trust within departments can lead to low morale for the officers. Law enforcement leadership must do a better job of explaining the reasons when officers ask, why? The autocratic leader answer of "because I said" is no longer a valid reason among the ever-changing workforce that leadership is now leading. Trautman (2015) explains how lack of trust in leadership leads to low morale and poor relations with community members. Trautman (2015) goes on to describe the seven steps for building trust within a department with one of the most needed steps is for leadership to create goals for transparency and stick to them.

One recommendation to build transparency among the community is to form a citizen advisory board. Law enforcement advisory boards are an essential step in building community trust because they give citizens an insight into policing. Advisory boards allows community members to buy into a department by being involved in some processes, information exchange, and decision-making. Reece & Macy (2015) explain that citizen advisory boards are imperative to law enforcement and that leadership within a department should embolden citizen involvement within their department. Citizen involvement is significant to a department because, during critical incidents, it gives a department a direct channel to the community they serve.

The President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing has many recommendations on law enforcement transparency for departments and leadership within the department. One of the first recommendations made by the Office of Community Oriented Policing (2015) is that a law enforcement agency should establish a culture of transparency. As previously discussed, department culture is extremely important in establishing through ethical means to not only build an ethical department but also to establish legitimacy and accountability to the public; part of this can be achieved through department transparency.

Over the past several years, numerous law enforcement agencies have established and implemented transparency policies and procedures intended to increase transparency within their communities. The Office of Community Oriented Policing (2015) recommended that an agency, to maintain transparency, should make all departmental policy and procedure available for review by the public as well as data regarding actions that the department has taken against different demographics. A search of the Lexington Police Department's website gives just that information. The Lexington Police Department (n.d.) website shows the exact information that the Office of Community Oriented Policing recommends by providing all department policies and a statement on the department's stance on transparency.

It's essential for a leader to promote a culture of transparency and honesty. Transparency in the decision-making processes ensures that everyone at the agency clearly understands the organization's goals and expectations, fosters trust, and lets team members be more devoted to the organization. Honest communication also allows a law enforcement leader to recognize better the department's needs, attitudes, and feelings towards specific decisions or actions.

## **Future of Policing for Leaders**

Law enforcement has changed drastically since the inception of the internet, and the landscape continues to change rapidly. Society and culture are changing thanks to the constant technological advances, and law enforcement must keep up. With the rapid pace of technological advancement, law enforcement leadership will become heavily reliant on technology. The future use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement is becoming more and more apparent as technology advances. With the help of facial recognition, biometric systems, drones, automated driving, and robots, the uses for law enforcement could be endless. Just as law enforcement will continue to evolve their use of technology, so will the criminal aspect of society. Law enforcement must stay updated with information and training to be effective in the future.

Law enforcement leaders are seeing more and more information sharing among agencies. The information sharing between agencies can be crucial to case development and case closure, which is what our communities deserve and ask for. In the future, agencies will be more connected than ever. Data, evidence, and information sharing will see very important advances. It's not unrealistic to believe that agencies across the country will be connected from a central location where any and all information will be at the fingertips of an officer.

With the change in society and the change to a non-hierarchical leadership, it's not out of the question that law enforcement in the future looks a lot different. Could law enforcement get to the point where there is no authority, and there are shared leadership roles? According to Richards (2022), the future of law enforcement will not be leaderless, but you may see leadership roles being combined with more tribal leadership where formal leaders are absent, and the tribe leads together.



Policing has become highly polarized and politicized over the last several years. This can be mainly contributed to the rise of the internet, cell phones, and peer-to-peer sharing. Citizens now have the ability to release information to one another live with no editing and no oversight. While this keeps law enforcement honest and on their toes oftentimes these videos will not show the beginning of an event or what led up to the eventual release of the information. In a study by Vitro et al. (2022), they made an interesting find that, “it is notable that police attitudes seem sensitive to highly publicized events that—while of broad interest—do not have a direct impact on most people” (p.21). This is a notable discovery in that most people who these events are publicized to only see one side of the story and also they do not see all of the positive change that law enforcement is making. The media polarization of police brutality and other polarizing police events that play on people’s emotions has set an example for everyone to get involved. There have been numerous times when the media has pushed a narrative on law enforcement and it was later determined to be a false narrative. This type of polarization and pitting one against another has led to a hostile environment at times for law enforcement. The pushing of narratives has led to a belief among the community that law enforcement has as a whole is after the minority communities. The issue of policing has become very polarized for many reasons but with the advancement of technology it appears the polarization and politicization is here to stay.

### **Leadership Training**

Law enforcement leadership training is an important element of law enforcement that offers significant benefits to both law enforcement agency and the community. Leadership is a vital piece of an agencies success, and it plays a major role in the capability a law enforcement agency to provide effective policing to the community. Law enforcement leadership training

helps to develop necessary leadership skills, traits, and decision-making and creates a culture of positive change in law enforcement agencies.

The current strain between law enforcement and the community is evident and the need for strong and effective law enforcement leadership is now more important than ever. Law enforcement leadership training can only help with the overall success of an agency and can help build an effective law enforcement agency. By developing leadership skills, law enforcement leaders can learn to better drive their officers to success and improve not only the officer's performance but also the agencies. Law enforcement leadership training plays an essential role in not only developing a departments current leaders but also the future leaders of the department. Effective leadership training provides the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to develop future law enforcement leadership.

One of the most important attributes of any police leader is humbleness; humbleness to know when we are wrong, humbleness to know when we need help, and humbleness to know when we need to further ourselves and our abilities. As previously discussed a large majority of law enforcement officers are type-A personalities and those in leadership roles are no exception. In order for a law enforcement officer to better themselves they have to be willing to humble themselves and continue learning about leadership. Leadership can be a diminishable skill and should always be practiced, perfected, and evolving. According to Warren (n.d.), veteran officers that are in leadership positions need to admit when they need additional training and education on how to lead their organizations. A law enforcement agency is only as good as its leaders therefore the agency leaders have to be willing to better themselves for the overall good of the agency.

Leadership training takes on many different forms from agency to agency and can be both internal and external sources. External choices for law enforcement training include colleges that are offering law enforcement leadership training classes, organizations that are devoted solely to training law enforcement leaders, and government organizations devoted to training law enforcement officials. Internal choices for law enforcement training include department guided training or municipality training. According to a discussion by law enforcement officials on the best choice for training, Demmon-Berger and Simpson (2010) report that there is no best way to train a law enforcement leaders and that both internal and external leadership training is successful. According to Warren (n.d.), possible solutions to leadership issues within a department can be fixed by attending training early and at every level within the agency and encourage everyone within the department to develop their leadership skills through training and education.

The significance of law enforcement leadership training should not be overlooked. Law enforcement leadership training creates and builds the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for law enforcement leaders to further community relations, inspire and influence followers, build future leaders, and drive their agencies to success. According to Office of Community Oriented Policing (2015), a recommendation by The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommends that;

The U.S. Department of Justice should develop, in partnership with institutions of higher education, a national postgraduate institute of policing for senior executives with a standardized curriculum preparing them to lead agencies in the 21st century. (p.55).

The recommendation would allow for law enforcement leaders to attend training and education advancement where there would be consistent and specialized training to better prepare agency

leaders for the future of policing. Law enforcement agencies should invest in their employees through leadership training and programs to ensure that the agency is equipped with able and capable leaders poised to face the evolving challenges they face.

### **Conclusion**

Whatever the future is for law enforcement, law enforcement leaders must undoubtedly be flexible and willing to learn to continue moving their agencies forward. The future of law enforcement may not be tied to the same traditions and norms we know today. The profession's evolution may be what is best for law enforcement, which has seen little to no change for years. Law enforcement leadership must be able to adapt to change and be willing to sacrifice their own needs for the better of the group. An effective police leader must navigate the political and social factors by practicing effective leadership, communicating with all citizens, and making the communities inclusive. By demonstrating the best practices in police leadership, such as staying up-to-date with technology, staying attuned to societal needs, progressing education and training, and building strong community relations, police leaders can have an effective and vital career. By practicing situational leadership, a police leader can develop career-changing techniques for themselves and their subordinates, who will one day lead the agency they are building. An organization is only as strong as the leaders who lead their followers into the future. Modern police leaders must be able to look past their own egos and ideologies and progress their agencies by being able to work alongside a generation that may have different life perspectives and different diverse ideologies, and a deep sense of care for others.

Strong and effective police leadership will undoubtedly become more and more critical as society advances. At the conception of policing, Sir Robert Peel knew the need for an ethical police force and for the police force to be led by ethical leaders. According to Willis (2011);

Effective law enforcement managers should be persistently looking within themselves to honestly evaluate how they can work proactively to develop each of these principles of leadership. Effective managers always look for ways to learn from others and to actively train and develop them to become future leaders of the organization (para. 13).

Law enforcement leadership is not one-size-fits-all; many different types of leaders are within an agency's walls. There are, however, essential traits and skills to be an effective leader in law enforcement. An effective police leader must establish an ethical and moral department culture and values and practice them with their followers. A strong police leader must have an effective leadership style that influences their organization's culture in a way that drives performance and personal accountability. A strong police leader must establish an effective leadership theory that allows them to lead their followers while advancing the careers of those around them. Effective police leaders must exhibit and practice strong leadership skills in order to lead their followers and influence change. Effective leaders should establish leadership traits that exhibit strong moral and cultural values to positively influence their agency's culture. An effective police leader should develop and practice effective powers in leadership by using and applying the appropriate power when and where it is needed. Effective leaders should face the challenges in law enforcement head-on by being honest and calculating in their response to the challenges they face. Effective leaders should use all tools at their exposure by utilizing technology to drive their departments into the future while maintaining ethical practices. A strong leader will employ practical and ethical decisions when dealing with any social and political factor that may arise. A strong and effective leader should establish ethical and moral decision-making in all aspects of their career and set an example for others to follow. By

possessing effective and strong leadership attributes, law enforcement leaders can lead their officers and agencies into the future better prepared for the unknowns.

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