The ineffective police leader: Acts of commission and omission

Article in Journal of Criminal Justice - July 2010
DOI: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2010.04.048

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The ineffective police leader: Acts of commission and omission

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**ABSTRACT**

The consequences of ineffective leaders and leadership practices, both in policing and in other occupational contexts, are well-established. Though ineffective leadership is often lamented, it has been subjected to limited scholarly inquiry. This study seeks to understand the traits and habits a group of police supervisors perceived in leaders they characterized as ineffective. Mid-career police supervisors attending the FBI National Academy completed open-ended surveys assessing their experiences with and perceptions of a variety of leadership matters. Based upon a consensus approach, the findings provide a framework to link negative leadership traits with individual and organizational outcomes. Respondents identified a number of traits and habits that were common among the ineffective police leaders participants had observed. In particular, five acts of commission (focus on self over others, egotistical, closed-mindedness, micromanagement, and capriciousness) and five acts of omission (poor work ethic, failure to act, ineffective communication, lack of interpersonal skills, and lack of integrity) emerged as recurrent themes in the survey responses.

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**Introduction**

Across a variety of occupational and professional contexts, studies of effective leaders overwhelmingly focused on leadership as a positive, benevolent process (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Burns, 1978; Conger & Benjamin, 1999; Kotter, 1990; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Theoretical developments in leadership scholarship advanced appreciably from the mid-20th Century, providing a robust understanding of the traits and habits of leaders regarded as effective. Leadership scholars and authors provided extensive articulations of how leaders were able to achieve their desired outcomes through a range of strategies and tactics (see generally Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2002). Empirical inquiry provided a robust body of research testing various theories and perspectives linking behaviors with actual outcomes (see generally Bass, 1990). A large body of academic and professional publications articulated these insights, often gazing the message toward corporate audiences.

Extant literature tended to cast persons in positions of power who abuse their authority, commit acts of corruption, engage in untoward conduct, or who fail to shoulder the mantle of their responsibilities are not considered to be actual leaders despite holding a leadership position. Leadership is considered a set of positive traits; those lacking the requisite skills are not true leaders. The proclivity to ignore the “darkside” of leadership is an ironic omission. Despite a half-century of research, the publication of more than 15,000 books and journal articles, and annual “leadership development” expenditures in excess of $50 billion, many organizations are considered to lack effective leadership (Burke, 2006). This situation lead some (e.g., Burke, 2006; Kellerman, 2004a, 2004b) to contend the tendency to overlook ineffective leadership in scholarship, training, and education is a key factor contributing to the perceived shortage. By limiting or omitting the attention given to ineffective leaders or leadership traits, lessons for prospective leaders are artificially constrained.

In critiquing the tendency to frame leadership as positive behavior Barbara Kellerman challenged the idea that “to be a leader is, by definition, to be benevolent” (2004b, p. 44; see also Clements & Washbush, 1999; Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Gardner, 1990; Kellerman, 2000, 2004a; Kets de Vries, 1993). She saw the tendency to focus research and writing on skilled and successful leaders as an extension of humankind’s passion for compelling stories with happy endings. Paraphrasing political philosophy Leo Strauss, Kellerman observed that “[c]apricious, murderous, high-handed, corrupt, and evil leaders are effective and everywhere—except in the literature of business leadership” (2004b, p. 43). Kellerman argued that constructing the definition of leadership (and, therefore, the focus of most leadership scholarship) to only those who lead properly and effectively ignored the reality that leaders can be bad, ineffective, and failures, either in part or in whole. The “leadership-is-a-positive-action” orientation overlooked the reality that even effective and well-regarded leaders are not perfect; they had short-comings, sometimes used less-than-ideal means in pursuing desired ends (Bailey, 1988), and may have achieved their goals nonetheless.
Leaders who might generally be viewed in a favorable manner can still display poor choices and counter-productive behaviors; those appointed or appointed to leadership positions can fail to live up to the responsibility they are given. Since the late 1980s a growing body of leadership scholarship considered leadership as more than just a positive process and outcome. A modest but increasing number of scholars considered ineffective leadership practices and the results, often framed as examinations of leadership failures, bad leadership, power failures, derailing leadership, or the dark side of leadership. These volumes focused on the leadership and personal shortcomings of leaders in the corporate sector (Burke, 2006; Einarsen et al., 2007; Finkelstein et al., 2004; Kellerman, 2004b; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; McCauley, 2004; Schackleton, 1995; Swartz & Watkins, 2003); and, to a lesser extent, in government executive offices (Barras, 1998; Stanton, 2003). Largeley absent from these small but growing body of scholarship was consideration of poor leadership within policing contexts. The moderate level of direct supervision given to most police employees and the geographically diffuse nature of police work environments, coupled with the centrality of concerns of ethics and integrity, it is reasonable to question whether prevailing theories and models derived primarily the corporate sector have applicability for policing. Using data derived from surveys of police supervisors, this study offers insights into the traits and habits of ineffective police leaders. The data and analysis focus on those leaders deemed to be ineffective by the respondents. Consensus data are used to provide a better understanding of the ways in which police leaders fail to achieve positive and benevolent outcomes.

Literature review

Scholars employed a range of conceptual and operational definitions in studying both effective (see McCauley, 2004) and ineffective (see Burke, 2006) leadership practices. As the definition of leadership varied widely across scholars and studies (Bass, 1990), so did the conception and definition of what it meant for a leader to be effective (Brewer, Wilson, & Beck, 1994). Effective leaders were often characterized as having strong interpersonal skills, an ability to articulate a vision, a capacity to motivate others to follow that vision, and an ability to effectively involve others in decision making processes (Bass, 1990; Bennis, 2003; Burns, 2003; Gardner, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Yukl, 2002). Less evident in scholarship written for corporate settings, but very important in policing contexts, was the role of leader integrity in shaping effective outcomes (Anderson, Gisborne, & Holliday, 2006; Meese & Ortmeyer, 2004). Taken as a whole, these traits and habits were viewed as enabling leaders to achieve a variety of desired outcomes, including achieving desired change (Kotter, 1996).

Dominant perspectives suggested that an ineffective or poor leader would be the inverse of a well-regarded leader (Kellerman, 2004b). More contemporary perspectives framed the quality and outcomes of a given leader in a broader fashion. In the latter framework, leaders were viewed as working to balance traits and habits that both enhanced and diminished their efficacy (Bailey, 1988; Clements & Washbush, 1999; Dotlich & Cairo, 2003; Kets de Vries, 1993). More effective leaders were those who maximized their assets and minimized their liabilities, or who had a mixture of assets and liabilities that was well-suited for a particular contextual or situational environment (McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Schackleton, 1995). This conceptualization allowed for variation in the specific acts of commission or omission that would relegate an individual to be classified as an ineffective leader. For example, an ineffective leader might have had poor interpersonal skills, failed to delegate, or been indecisive (Einarsen et al., 2007; Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling, 2005; Kets de Vries, 1993).

The significance of ineffective leadership in policing

Ample research existed to demonstrate the favorable outcomes leaders and supervisors can achieve within the workplace. Empirical inquiry assessing supervisory influence generally considered the capacity of supervisors to shape traditional policing outcomes (such as enforcement decisions and the use of force). Studies offered at least tentative evidence supervisors can reduce incidents of misconduct and abuse of authority (Huberts, Kaptein, & Lasthuizen, 2007; Weisburd, Greenspan, Hamilton, Williams, & Bryant, 2000) and influence patrol officer conduct and decision making in desired manners (Engel, 2000, 2001, 2002; Engel & Worden, 2003; National Research Council, 2004), at least in the aggregate. Leaders who were open, followed rules, and lead by example were thought to achieve more favorable performance from subordinate personnel (e.g., followers), including greater organizational commitment (Brewer, et al., 1994; Huberts et al., 2007; Jermier & Berkes, 1979). Prevaling evidence endorsed the contention effective leadership practices equated with desired outcomes in police organizations.

Yet leadership, regardless of how well-intended, was not always wielded in a benign manner (Clements & Washbush, 1999). Poor leadership was linked with a variety of mental health issues among employees, including stress, retaliation, helplessness, alienation, anxiety, depression, and general distress (Buzawa, 1984; House & Podsakoff, 1994; Kelloway et al., 2005). Poor leadership and supervision practices, including bullying, abusive, and destructive behaviors, were associated with decreased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional motivation (Einarsen et al., 2007; Kelloway et al., 2005). For example, five to ten percent of corporate workers reported being the target of workplace bullying; among those reporting such experiences, eighty percent indicated the offender was their supervisor (Einarsen et al., 2007). Ineffective leadership, particularly the failure to act or respond to known problems, was identified as a recurrent factor in organizational failures (Dias & Vaughn, 2006; Garrett, 2004; Hall, 1980; McCabe, 2005; O’Hara, 2005). In policing, such organizational failures might have extended into matters that generated adversarial relationships with employees and/or the community, increased unionism, litigation, turn-over, or outside involvement in local police operations (Jermier & Berkes, 1979; Krippel & Lindemuth, 2001; O’Hara, 2005).

The emergence of ineffective leaders and leadership

Existing leadership and policing scholarship offered a variety of explanations for why ineffective leadership and leaders might have emerged within an agency. Police departments, like many other organizations, too often failed to identify those with a strong potential to be effective leaders. Given the multiple and competing definitions and measurements of leadership, too often agencies defaulted toward “safe” methods of assessing those seeking promotion. The tendency to base promotion assignments on performance on exams measuring mastery of bureaucratic rules and protocols (i.e., “book smarts” and “bean counting”), as well as the interfering influence of departmental politics and personalities (Hall, 1980), contributed to the gap often observed between “street cops” and their supervisors (Manning, 1997; Mastrofski, 2002; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Van Maanen, 1984; Wilson, 1968). In other words, ineffective leadership outcomes were a partial product of an individual’s personality, traits, habits, and actions (Dotlich & Cairo, 2003); however those individual factors were conditioned and constrained by aspects of the prevailing institutional environments and practices observed in police organizations.

Furthermore, popular vernacular included the idea of the “Peter principle”—that employees rose to their highest level of incompetence (Peter & Hull, 1969). The limits of a supervisor’s skills and abilities were only discovered once that supervisor had been placed in a
position that exceeded their capacities, at which time it was often too late to correct the matter. The supervisor’s career might stall at that level, but the net effect was the individual was not competent to perform the duties of his/her assignment. In studying corporate executives who “derailed” in their careers, McCall & Lombardo (1983; see also Leslie & Van Velsor, 1996; Schackleton, 1995) found a common reason for the interruption of a seemingly promising career occurred when leaders were placed in situations where their skill set no longer provided effective outcomes. This might have occurred in a situation where promotion decisions were made based upon observed efficacy at a prior level of responsibility, rather than predicted success at future levels of responsibility. A good police officer did not always make a good sergeant; the behaviors and actions associated with being an effective officer may have differed from those associated with being an effective first-line supervisor. Leaders were unwilling or unable to adapt their style and techniques to meet the new context; in some cases, the traits and habits that had brought them prior success ultimately became a liability contributing to their downfall (Kets de Vries, 1993; Maccoby, 2000; Panzarella, 2003).

Consideration of ineffective leaders and leadership was rare in policing literature. When leadership has been considered, it was often used as a variable predicting other policing outcomes such as the exercise of discretionary behavior (Engel, 2000, 2002) or planned organizational initiatives. Most considerations of the influence of leadership did not directly incorporated leadership as a variable. Jermier and Berkes (1979) offered one of the most significant early studies of leadership in their exploration of the outcomes of leader behavior. Their focus, and the focus of most subsequent police leadership scholarship, was on “what works” in creating leadership efficacy or how effective or favorable leadership relates with other organizational outcomes (e.g., Adlam & Villiers, 2003; Anderson, Gisborne, & Holliday, 2006; Geller, 1985) though a few notable exceptions were evident (see Haberfeld, 2006; Mastrofski, 2002; Reese, 2005). The present study sought to contribute to the modest body of scholarship considering ineffective leaders and leadership.

Research objective

Within the complexity of organizational environments it becomes difficult to sort out competing factors that might contribute to organizational failures and inefficiencies. How do we differentiate a leader who fails due to their traits, habits, actions, or decisions, from a leader who fails due to a structural dysfunction endemic to their agency and its bureaucracy? From an empirical perspective, the lack of consistent and valid metrics that assess the efficacy of a leader is problematic. One approach to overcome the latter weakness is to consider leadership (in)efficacy through a consensus model, such as asking personnel to reflect on (in)effective leaders. Though employee perceptions of leadership efficacy (in general or in the context of a specific supervisor) may not always be valid, in the aggregate such an approach is thought to yield valid outcomes. For example, within the corporate world it is popular to subject leaders to “360 evaluations” in which the leader, their supervisors, their peers, and their subordinates all provide input and feedback on the individual’s performance. While such subjective assessments may individually be separate from a leader’s objective successes or failures, the presumption is that on the whole a reasonably robust picture of the leader will be developed.

The objective of this research was to develop a better understanding of the traits and habits ineffective police leaders are perceived to display. Specifically, using a consensus approach this study sought to identify what leaders rated as ineffective did or failed to do in order to contribute to the perception of inefficacy. Two primary questions were addressed. First, what were the undesirable actions these leaders exhibited; what traits and habits did they demonstrate that worked against their ability to be effective leaders? Second, what were the desirable actions ineffective leaders failed to demonstrate; what acts of omission undercut the perception they were effective leaders? These insights provide a framework for future efforts seeking to measure actual behaviors and leadership, or lack thereof. Though perceptions may not equate with actual performance, a leader who is perceived as ineffective might be reasonably presumed to achieve lesser outcomes by virtue of that stigmatizing label.

Data and methods

Findings were based upon open-ended surveys completed by police supervisors attending the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy (NA) in Quantico, VA. The NA was intended to be a mid-career developmental experience for police supervisors from a cross section of American and international agencies. The program was structured as a ten-week session comprised of 250-300 officers. They resided at the FBI Academy and completed the equivalent of one quarter of university-level education. The NA allowed officers to earn credit through the University of Virginia for the courses they completed. The faculty were comprised of FBI agents and support personnel. Attendees selected from a catalog of courses to fill their academic schedule. The duration and residential aspect of the program were intended to help attendees step away from the day to day “noise” and distractions within their agency. Participants were encouraged to think critically and creatively about how they could improve both their agency’s performance and their own professional development, while networking with peers from around the world.

Individual law enforcement agencies nominated their supervisory personnel to attend the program. A small number of international participants were included in each session, comprising around ten percent of attendees. Domestic participants represented all forms and levels of American policing. Seating in NA sessions were assigned to agencies, which selected the specific supervisor who would fill the available slot. Those responsible for operating the NA made an effort to distribute seats to agencies in such a way that attendees represent diverse experiences, mandates, and regions, though such intents were not based on rigorous statistical sampling. Given these circumstances, supervisors sent to the NA were generally among the “best and brightest” within their agency, though departmental politics, favoritism, and nepotism sometimes dictated who agencies select to attend the program. While a purposive sample, NA participants represented a highly diverse mix of agencies (e.g., agency size, location, context, and jurisdiction) and they could answer key research questions based on extensive knowledge and familiarity with supervision, management, and leadership. The sample provided insights from a collection of police professionals and was well-suited to support inductive inquiry into aspects of police supervision and leadership.

Participants in NA Sessions 227-229 (October 2006 – April 2007) were asked to complete an open-ended survey instrument addressing a range of leadership and leadership development topics. Surveys were administered to multiple groups of participants (approximately fifty officers per group) within their first two days of each NA session and prior to the first session of courses. Early survey administration helped to preclude response contamination based upon what participants may have been studying in their courses. Across the three sessions officers were asked to describe the traits and habits of police supervisors, with approximately half directed to consider leaders they considered to be particularly effective and half leaders they considered to be particularly ineffective. During this timeframe 835 supervisors participated in the NA. Of the 418 asked to describe ineffective leaders, 304 (72.7 percent) chose to participate in the research project and respond to this question.

The resulting narrative responses were subjected to several rounds of analysis to facilitate the identification and classification of primary patterns and themes within the answers (see Lee, 1999; Strauss, 1987). The survey question’s open-ended format produced individual
Some participants included or utilized bulleted lists of phrases, abbreviations, or short-hand in lieu of complete sentences, a situation that at times made problematic the determination of the author’s exact intent and meaning. Consequently, the analysis focused on latent patterns and themes, such as identifying common traits and habits that emerged across the responses (Berg, 2001). The vague and ambiguous nature of some responses precluded precise categorization in all instances; therefore the following findings report the approximate prevalence of individual themes. The proportions reported in this study should be viewed as representing each theme’s general pervasiveness rather than its exact prevalence. In addition, response themes were not mutually exclusive; a given reply could have reflected multiple themes.

**Findings**

Respondents did not reveal their identity or specific agency affiliation, however they were asked to report their years of service, years as a supervisor, military experience, level of education, agency size, agency type, current job title, and whether they were American or an international officer. Quotes provided in this section are attributed to individuals based on their title, agency size, and agency type in order to provide a contextual framework; unless otherwise noted, respondents were American. On average, respondents had just less than twenty years of policing experience (range six to thirty-seven years) and just over ten years of supervisory experience (range zero to thirty-six years); 91 percent were American. Approximately one-quarter (seventy-four respondents) indicated prior military service with an average duration of just over eight years (range less than one to thirty years). Table 1 provides additional contextual information on respondent education, agency size, and agency type. Nearly all participants had some level of college education, with one-third reporting the completion of post-baccalaureate coursework.

Participants in the NA tend to be from medium and large agencies relative to the actual distribution of agencies by size in the United States (see Hickman & Reaves, 2006). Smaller agencies likely have more trouble finding the resources to release personnel for a ten-week program.

Respondents were first asked to estimate how often they observed effective leadership practices within their agency. Responses to this open-ended comment were quite diverse. Approximately one-third of respondents indicated they observed effective leadership practices never, rarely/seldom, or not often enough. Approximately one-quarter (seventy-four respondents) indicated prior military experience (range six to thirty-seven years) and just over ten years of supervisory experience (range zero to thirty-six years); 91 percent were American. Approximately one-quarter (seventy-four respondents) indicated prior military service with an average duration of just over eight years (range less than one to thirty years). Table 1 provides additional contextual information on respondent education, agency size, and agency type. Nearly all participants had some level of college education, with one-third reporting the completion of post-baccalaureate coursework.

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**Characterizing the ineffective leader**

Though subsequent sections elaborate on specific common elements of ineffective leadership practices, some responses provide rich insight into the overall characteristics of the ineffective police leader. A captain from a mid-size municipal agency described ineffective leaders as:

> ...quick temper, judgmental, lazy, inability to follow through, lack of focus, poor communication/interpersonal skills, moody, negative thinkers, lack of ability to delegate, lack of confidence in others, micromanagers. These are all things that make people poor leaders. Most of these, they would like to overcome, but are either unable, or don’t know how.

The experiences of a captain from a small municipal agency demonstrated that ineffective leaders displayed (emphasis provided in the original response):

> Dishonesty, lack of candor, lack of empathy, selfishness. They fail to inspire, fail to lead by example, and fail to work hard to solve long-term problems, and fail to empower subordinates to solve the short term problems. Failure to recognize good, hard work.

A captain from a mid-size municipal agency noted that

> Among the traits I have witnessed in those described: selfishness, unwillingness to make tough decisions, failure to delegate responsibilities, making decisions while angry/upset, failure to trust others. Most of those I am describing failed to use to resources around them, namely the experiences and minds of those around them.

A lieutenant from a large county agency described ineffective leaders as “usually inconsistent and do not possess the characteristics or self discipline needed to become and effective leader. Where many fail is by not taking a balanced approach to their role; either too authoritarian or fail to transition into the role and try to remain ‘one of the guys.’” Similar themes emerged in the response from a commander in a small state agency, who noted ineffective leaders are “self-centered, only interested in making him/herself look good, lack of confidence and trust in subordinates, micro-managing, knee jerk reactions to situations, and over-reacting to simple matters.”

These global responses illustrated a key theme emerging from the responses. The traits and habits associated with ineffective leaders could be divided into two categories: actions/behaviors and actions/behaviors that should have been taken, but were not. The former (acts of commission) served to erode leaders’ efficacy because they presumably embodied behaviors that were deleterious to a leader’s objectives and ability to secure followers. The latter (acts of omission) undermined efficacy presumably by representing situations where leaders failed to embody their label—they failed to lead. The following sections detail five acts of commission (focus on self over others, ego/arrogance, closed mindedness, micromanagement, and capriciousness) and five acts of

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent's highest level of education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School/GED</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates degree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate/law work</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate/law degree</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal/city</td>
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<td>54.7</td>
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<th>Respondents' agency type</th>
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<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
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<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Respondents' agency size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-50</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>27.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>101-250</td>
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<tr>
<td>251-1000</td>
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<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001+</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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</table>

* Data were available for 300 of the 304 respondents; percents may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.
omission (poor work ethic, failure to act, ineffective communication, lack of interpersonal skills, and lack of integrity) that emerged as dominant themes in the survey responses.

Focus on self over others

Some larger law enforcement organizations used the term “careerrism” to refer to employees who were focused on their own professional interests and aspirations above the concerns of others, the organization, and the community. One-third of the respondents characterized ineffective police leaders as displaying this type of “self-first” focus, a proclivity that appeared to generate additional problems. Leaders seeking continued career advancement were likely to focus on what was necessary to secure their next promotion, rather than doing what was needed to achieve goals in their present position. “It’s all about them and doing whatever is needed to climb the promotional ladder” (lieutenant medium municipal agency). They may have failed to be mindful of their current duties, what was in the long-term best interests of the office they currently hold, and the human needs of the personnel they supervised. “The largest failure occurs when leaders forget their own responsibilities to the position they hold and to the people under them” (investigation supervisor small state agency). As such, they may “look at the position as a job and not a career” (captain major county agency); this could be particularly problematic if the leader’s aspirations were outside of the agency (i.e., obtaining employment with an alternative agency or within another industry).

Any number of examples of this conduct could be seen in the various corporate scandals that plagued the financial industry in the 1990s and 2000s (McLean & Elkind, 2003). At times the “self-first” problem was exacerbated because organizational structures created incentives to take a selfish focus, such as performance bonuses that pushed executives to pursue a payout rather than doing what was best for the corporation’s health and stability. This situation has parallels in policing, where leaders may have opted to do what would help them secure continued career advancement (which might actually have involved inaction or indecision) rather than what was best for the agency and/or community. “They fail because they are not concerned about others and more focused on themselves and their progress, instead of the agency being successful and the community being a safer place – self above service” (commander major state agency). The low tolerance for failure found in many police organizations might have resulted in leaders who avoided actions and judgments likely to invoke negative outcomes. As stated by a major from a medium municipal agency, “we promote those who do not self-destruct.” All-too-often, avoiding self-destruction meant placing self-first and averting actions that might have repercussions, even when a decision needed to be made.

Ego or arrogance might not have generated problems in and of themselves. Rather, it is possible problems arose from the positions and actions ineffective leaders took because of their ego or arrogance. For example, ineffective leaders might have tended to adopt the attitude that it is “my way of the highway” and demonstrated “unyielding personalities, [and] lack of self confidence” (commander large municipal agency). Their near-absolute belief in their own opinions and judgments could have been their undoing. “What keeps them from being effective is they cannot see their own faults an accept responsibility for those faults” (lieutenant small municipal agency).

This situation introduced a degree of subjectivity into the process of evaluating a given leader’s efficacy and behavior; what one person saw as self-confidence and drive, another may have perceived as an arrogant refusal to listen to others. It may be difficult or impossible for the average leader to be judged as appropriately confident and humble by all those around them.

Closed minded

Related with arrogance and ego is the tendency for ineffective leaders to be closed minded to the suggestions of others, a trait discussed by around fifteen percent of respondents. For various reasons, these leaders seemed unable or unwilling to listen to other perspectives, opinions, and voices. As stated above, this represented a fine line leaders needed to navigate. They required self-confidence and a capacity to be decisive, yet they must had to recognize the value of other voices and the need to take time, when possible, in making decisions to consider alternatives and ramifications. A captain from a large municipal agency described ineffective leaders as “inflexible, uncompromising, and don’t foster a participatory style of leadership.” Though police supervisors had to bear a tremendous responsibility for the choices they made, management and leadership experimentation yielded evidence supporting the effectiveness of participatory models of leader-follower interactions and organizational decision making (Steinheider & Wuestewald, 2008).

Being closed minded was also characterized to include not adapting, innovating, or changing when such actions were needed within an organization. Ineffective leaders “fail to examine issues from all sides. They fail to consider unintended consequences. They don’t educate themselves on the big picture, so when circumstances change (as they always do) ineffective leaders fail to adapt” (deputy chief large municipal agency). This stood in contrast to the very concept of leadership, which implied a capacity to move a group to an alternative position. Being closed minded to the need for change—for leadership to guide a group or organization toward an alternative state—may have been a reflection of a leader who was out of touch, was too stubborn to listen to others, or feared change might result in failure. Policing has not, however, excelled in cultivating visionary leaders. A tendency to produce leaders who were closed-minded to alternative structures and approaches was not surprising from a highly bureaucratic and entrenched profession (Mastrofski, 1998; Sklansky, 2007).

Micromanagement

Leadership scholars, trainers, and consultants have gone to great length to differentiate between leadership and management (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2002). Leadership has been defined in countless ways, but was generally conceived as a capacity to move a group and/or organization through a process of change. Management, on the other hand, represented technical proficiency at a more finite set of tasks. Truly effective leaders were likely to need proficiency in both leadership and management (Stamper, 1992); they required an ability to motivate and develop personnel, while also attending the nuances of budgets, law, and contracts. The efficacy of a leader may have been partially predicated on their ability to delegate responsibilities and trust that subordinates
would exercise appropriate discretion and due diligence in fulfilling assigned tasks. Police leaders, as leaders in many other sectors, may have struggled to embody this ideal. American police agencies tended to do a poor job developing leadership skills among supervisory personnel (Van Maanen, 1984). The litigious nature of American society also created avenues by which liability for an officer’s conduct could be attached to supervisory personnel (e.g., Ross, 2000). Consequently, newly promoted personnel struggling to delegate and demonstrate leadership may have defaulted to bureaucratic management tactics (Krimmel & Lindenmuth, 2001) or preferred a focused style of supervision in order to mitigate liability risk.

Approximately fifteen percent of respondents indicated that a tendency to manage or, worse yet, to micromanage was common among ineffective leaders. A sergeant from a small municipal agency noted most ineffective leaders were “far too autocratic and fail to delegate when appropriate.” Requiring that subordinates secure excessive permission, approval, and review, particularly for routine choices, slowed the pace of organizational action and output, while sending the message to subordinates that their judgment was not trusted. Such a heavy focus on controlling subordinate and routine actions could have actually prevent desired outcomes because ineffective leaders “fail to delegate authority [to subordinates] that is necessary for the success of desired results” (chief of detectives mid-size municipal agency). Though a proclivity toward management may have emerged when supervisors lack comfort with other forms of personnel management and/or fear liability, it could also arise when supervisors feared that subordinates would outline the leader’s own accomplishments if they were empowered. In the case of the latter, ineffective leaders may “lack self-confidence. They make up for it by micro-managing people” (lieutenant medium municipal agency).

Capricious/political

Though leaders made decisions within the context of a given situation and timeframe (Brewer et al., 1994), respondents indicated they desired a sense of continuity in how decisions were derived. A follower who has a history with a given leader should have been able to generally assess the likely choice that leader would make. Ten percent of respondents characterized ineffective leaders as being arbitrary and capricious in how they made decisions. A commander in a large state agency noted such leaders were “inconsistent and [they] don’t adhere to a systematic approach.” Having a general sense of a leader’s likely response to a situation was of importance because peers and followers wanted to make decisions and take actions in support of the leader. If they did not understand the base from which the leader operated it became difficult for followers to know how to exercise their own discretionary authority. Followers wanted to function in a manner that supported the leader and her/his objectives, while knowing how to avoid the leader’s wrath and criticism. Followers wanted to understand “what matters” within the agency and to the leader in furthering the standing of the agency and, in some cases, advancing their own career objectives.

Capriciousness also extended into how leaders made personnel decisions. Organizational politics had the potential to become significant sources of stress when leaders demonstrated “[i]nconsistent, arbitrary discipline. Cronyism, nepotism” (sergeant mid-sized municipal agency). Ineffective leaders were described as tending to put personal relationships ahead of what was right, just, and consistent with past practices. Followers wanted to know that all rules, criteria, and standards applied equally to all personnel; that friends and relatives of police leaders did not enjoy special privilege in how they were treated. Likewise, officers may have sensed that leaders were not likely to support them if their actions were appropriate, but generated public outcry (i.e., the use of force or the handling of major cases). Ineffective leaders tended to engender the feeling that “officers often do not know where he [sic] stands, they cannot count on him in controversy” (chief small municipal agency).

It was well-established that officers prefer to have the sense peers and leaders “had their back” (Manning, 1997; Rubenstein, 1973). The absence of that perception may have generated distrust, hostility, and strain in the leader-follower relationship (Reuss-Ianni, 1983).

Poor work ethic

The concept of “leadership by example” suggested leaders ought not to ask followers to perform any task or exhibit a work ethic they were not prepared to demonstrate themselves. Almost two-thirds of respondents indicated ineffective leaders lacked a proper work ethic. Respondents cast ineffective leaders as being lazy, doing the minimal amount of work, and failing to “give 100 percent” to the job and their responsibilities. Some of these leaders were labeled with conventional policing terms for this act of omission, such as “ROD” (retired on duty) or “RIP” (retired in place) (see Barker, 1999). Ineffective leaders who displayed a poor ethic were frequently framed as being late in their careers; there were noted as having lost their enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the job. These ineffective leaders were consumed by “[l]aziness, negativity...They fail to have passion for the work” (captain major municipal agency). “They are lazy, don’t provide guidance, never jump in and do their fair share, always have excuses” for why they fail to be productive workers (lieutenant medium state agency).

This situation represented a fine line for a leader. To avoid being characterized as a micromanager a leader must have sought to empower subordinates and delegate responsibility, while not being seen as shirking too many tasks. A reasonable rejoinder to the “poor work ethic” critique would be to ask whether these types of leaders should be criticized for not “giving 110 percent” or whether they deserved praise for having a more healthy and evenhanded approach to balancing their career and personal life. Variation on this issue was, of course, expected across a sample of leaders. By not displaying an honest work ethic and by not demonstrating the proper way to police a given community, ineffective leaders failed to show the dedication and standard of performance they presumably expected from others. Quite simply, they “fail to lead by example” (captain small municipal agency). This inability or refusal to show commitment to the organization and its objectives undermined the leader’s credibility and/or implied to followers that a committed, diligent work ethic was not expected.

Failure to act

Leaders were expected to live up to their label—to lead. Though leaders might have been expected to engage in appropriate contemplation and consult with relevant parties, ultimately leadership required decisiveness and action. One-third of respondents described ineffective leaders as failing to act in a variety of circumstances. “Leaders must be able to make decisions” (sergeant small municipal agency). Lacking sufficient self-confidence, a leader might have struggled to trust his/her own judgment enough to select from a range of options when confronted with a choice. “Ineffective leaders often refuse to make a decision” (captain major county agency; emphasis in response). A leader might have avoided taking critical or unpopular actions as a means to preserve their career trajectory. A preferred strategy would have been to put an issue on the proverbial “back burner”, leaving it up to a successor to be the “bad guy.” Alternatively, a leader may have feared that action later deemed poor or inappropriate could harm the leader’s career aspirations, generate liability, or, in extreme cases, result in injury, loss of life, or property damage. Though police officers were routinely confronted with situations in which they must make a decision and act, a leader may have struggled to do so when a poor choice could have resulted in
harm to subordinates. More simply, they may have a “fear of looking bad or not knowing what to do” (sergeant small county agency).

In chronicling fifty years of executive leadership in the Los Angeles Police Department, Reese (2005) contrasted leaders who acted in the best interests of the agency with those who acted in the best interests of police officers, particularly front-line patrol personnel. For some ineffective leaders this failure to act could have reflected concern over personal popularity with subordinate personnel and/or an aversion to situations likely to generate conflict. “They are afraid to be disliked by their subordinates and refuse to discipline them” (sergeant small county municipal agency). Ineffective leaders may have had a “fear of confrontation, fear of hurting feelings” (sergeant small county municipal agency) and might have been “more concerned with upsetting their subordinates rather than doing their jobs” (captain mid-size municipal agency). They had an “inability or unwillingness ... to make unpopular decisions that are in the best interest of the organization” (supervisor major county agency). A failure to act might have also reflected divergent perceptions as to whether or not change or decision was actually warranted; a leader who was quite comfortable with the prevailing status quo in a system could disagree with followers who viewed this situation as ripe for change, enhancement, elimination, or modification.

**Ineffective communication**

One-third of respondents characterized ineffective leaders as having trouble with communication. This situation was not simply a matter of weak written or verbal expression skills. Rather, it encapsulated a number of fundamental communication omissions, including an inability or unwillingness to participate in two-way dialog, a refusal to explain key decisions and actions, and a failure to accept input and criticism. Ineffective leaders were described as being unwilling to give a “chance to the team to participate in making the decision” (captain major international federal agency). This circumstance served to constrain the input and outflow of communication through a leader’s office or position. Ineffective leaders exhibiting this trait felt little need to seek out or listen to the suggestions of others and would see little reason to articulate their rationale for decisions. Subordinates and co-workers found this situation frustrating and it was not uncommon to see this appearing in conjunction with comments alluding to a leader being closed-minded or arrogant.

Ineffective leaders were typified by “not [being] willing to explain the reason why a decision needs to be made” (captain from a medium county agency). They “fail to effectively communicate change in an organization or the reason for change or decisions made” (sergeant small municipal agency). Whether this act of omission was due to arrogance (e.g., the belief the leader did not have to rationalize or justify her/his actions) or indifference (e.g., not being concerned that followers might desire more information) varied within the data. Respondents also expressed a desire to see leaders who were open to the possibility that there might be ways to improve aspects of an agency or unit’s operations. Ineffective leaders were resistant to this type of constructive input from those internal and/or external to the agency. They did not want to “listen to other ideas or admit there is a better way” (captain mid-size municipal agency).

**Lack of interpersonal skills**

One quarter of respondents described ineffective leaders as lacking appropriate interpersonal skills, such as the inability to understand the human needs and motivations of those they sought to influence. This act of omission was distinct from poor communication in that the former related more with the informal and “human” aspects of the workplace. Interpersonal skills were not simply a matter of communicating and explaining policy changes; they were a matter of developing and maintaining positive relations with peers, supervisors, subordinates, and constituents. Strong interpersonal skills were often characterized as a hallmark of effective leadership, as in the case of the “charismatic leader” (Conger, 1989). Ineffective leaders struggled in trying to “know their officers and tend to their welfare” (executive officer major military service). “They lack of basic human personal skills. They fail to realize that they are leading people” (investigations supervisor small state agency). Such relationships were important because they could engender a sense of trust between a leader and her/his followers. “Sometimes you have to care from the heart, then the mind will follow” (commander large state agency).

Interpersonal relationships mattered because they helped to develop trust and allegiance between leaders and followers. The failure to “develop some level of relationship with the employees and to gain their respect” (special agent in charge mid-size state agency) could erode a leader’s efficacy and impact. Interpersonal relationships should not have mattered when organizations were viewed as Weberian bureaucracies, however since the 1950s organizational research suggested that outcomes were often predicated on the bonds, allegiance, trust, and respect that interpersonal relations engendered. While charisma may not have been sufficient to ensure leadership efficacy, the data strongly suggested it was a necessary, or at least important, trait for leaders to express. Ineffective leaders either did not recognize the importance of relationships or struggled to establish and maintain these connections. Because subordinates and followers saw the leader as distant, detached, and disinterested in getting to know them as a person, the follower’s starting orientation was to not trust or act upon the leader’s call to action. This created an interesting challenge for leaders in larger agencies, where developing that level of connection and interaction may have been difficult or impossible.

**Lack of integrity**

Honesty and integrity had long been considered virtuous within policing. The belief in policing by consent that served as one of the anchors of British policing was predicated in part on the idea the police were only effective so long as they maintained the public’s trust. Actions that abrogate that trust acted as a corrosive force on the capacity of the police to achieve desired outcomes. Parallels were seen with the importance of integrity and trust in the relationship between leaders and followers (Villiers, 2003). A leader’s ability to establish effective relationships with followers was partially predicated on being viewed as trustworthy, honest, and ethical.

Problems associated with an absence of integrity were mentioned by one-fifth of respondents in characterizing ineffective leaders. Ineffective leaders were characterized as lacking the requisite level of integrity to maintain the trustful following of subordinates and others. These leaders were described as being “immoral, unethical” (captain major municipal agency) and having “no core values” (commander large municipal agency). Poor integrity was also similar to the underlying behaviors related to a poor work ethic; leaders were framed as being less effective when they performed their duties in a manner that lacked professionalism, diligence, and dedication. Such a situation might often have been a subjective determination for individual followers. For example, a leader who allegedly engaged in marital infidelity or poor integrity in an off-duty business transaction might have been vilified by some followers, while generating indifference among others. Poor integrity (or the perception thereof) had a lingering effect. Ineffective leaders often had “done something in their past to lose the trust and respect of the employees” (commander large state agency). That trust and respect, once lost, was difficult to recapture.

**Discussion**

Ineffective leadership is not simply a product of a leader’s actions or inactions. To the extent that efficacy is based on the assessments of
those a leader seeks to influence, the leaders traits and habits are interpreted and filtered through the expectations of would-be followers. The relationship between leaders and followers (at times referred to as leader-member exchange) has been the focus of more scholarly inquiry in recent decades (Engle & Lord, 1997; Martin, Thomas, Charles, Epitropaki, & McNamara, 2005; Shamir, Pillai, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2007). Within a discussion of the traits and habits of leaders it is necessary to recognize that followers/members will evaluate leadership through the lens of their individual expectations. This is a relevant issue given the nature of the data in this study. The perceptions and experiences NA participants have with ineffective leaders are partially a function of their own beliefs about effective leadership. It is possible that based on other outcome metrics (evaluations by peers or superiors, citizen perceptions, achievement of performance objectives, etc.) the ineffective leaders characterized in the data might have received a different evaluation. Given the centrality of followers/members in helping leaders achieve outcomes perceptions of the former remain salient despite the filtered interpretation of efficacy.

Leaders were characterized as ineffective for exhibiting behaviors that under mined and eroded follower’s senses of trust, legitimacy, and confidence. Leaders were also characterized as ineffective when they failed to exhibit the key actions that might be associated with actual leadership. These traits and habits represent ways in which leaders worked against their own interests and/or failed to live up to their label or position. Trait-based research seeking to predict leadership efficacy in corporate settings has not been found to be highly predictive of specific outcomes, though this is partially due to methodological issues (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986), as well as the tendency of this approach to ignore situational variables (Brewer et al., 1994). The intent of these findings is not to test causal connections between leadership (in)actions and specific policing outcomes. Rather, the research sought to provide a better understanding of the traits and habits police supervisors perceived within less effective leaders they had observed. To an extent the findings mirror what would be expected based on corporate leadership literature, but this is an important confirmation largely absent from studies specific to policing contexts.

Beyond the action/inaction dichotomy, the ten emerging traits and habits can be loosely grouped into three categories of problematic behaviors: individual problems, occupational problems, and leadership problems. Individual problems were actions, inactions, traits, and behaviors that would more generally reflect the character and personality of the ineffective leader, including ego, poor integrity, a poor work ethic, and placing one’s self before others. Certainly these characteristics have a strong subjective element; one observer’s egomaniac is another’s self-confident and decisive leader. In the context of leadership development or enhancement, these individual problems might be the most difficult to overcome. The nature of the problems could suggest leaders would resist seeing a need for personal development or improvement within these or any other behavioral domains. Because they are partially a reflection of the leader’s character and personality, it might be difficult for a leader to recognize and acknowledge that he/she is engaging in these behaviors. Even in situations where these traits are recognized it may be difficult for a leader to learn how to overcome and correct such entrenched behaviors.

Occupational problems are, relatively speaking, more susceptible to improvements and enhancements. Issues with communication, micromanagement, and being closed-minded can certainly reflect upon the character and personality of an individual leader, but they also can emerge within bureaucratic and litigious organizations. Given the latter, organizations can take measures to overcome these problems by instituting protocols and practices that, for example, routinize employee input into decision-making loops (see Steinheider & Wuestewald, 2008). These problems also represent behaviors more susceptible to correction through leadership development processes. Though a leader might be predisposed to micromanage for a variety of reasons, a common factor might be a lack of familiarity and/or comfort with alternative methods of leadership and supervision. Absent an awareness of, and comfort with, leadership styles emphasizing delegation and empowerment, a leader may default to micromanagement (Krimmel & Lindenmuth, 2001). Introducing leaders to alternative styles and approaches would seem to hold strong potential for overcoming occupational problems, particularly when coupled with structures that encourage or even mandate a leader’s style.

Finally, leadership problems most centrally relate with the failure of leaders to personify their label and actually lead. As detailed above, the failure to take action can be caused by a variety of organizational, environmental, situation, and personal circumstances. Leaders can fail to act in order to avoid unpopular choices that may halt their professional advancement. Alternatively, leaders can fail to act because they lack confidence in their own judgment. The diverse origins of a failure to actually lead make overcoming this inaction a challenge because it suggests the need for multiple potential corrective measures. The problem is not merely a function of individuals, but is also a reflection of the prevailing culture of police organizations and leadership selection practices.

Consideration of ineffective leaders and leadership must also take into account the dominant elements found in police organizations and culture. To an extent, ineffective leaders might be products of their own environment. As a profession policing has not placed a high primacy on the development of prospective and current leaders (Anderson et al., 2006; Van Maanen, 1984). In the absence of education and mentoring on how to lead in a more effective manner, it is perhaps not surprising that subsequent problems and tensions can be observed in the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Reese, 2005; Reuss-Ianni, 1983). Those who are or desire to be a leader bear some responsibility for educating themselves on various theories, styles, and perspectives, yet organizations also contribute to this situation. In effect, leadership is lacking in policing because there is a lack of leadership; as a profession current police leaders have been late in realizing their collective responsibility to develop those who will someday assume leadership roles. Resource constraints, personnel limitations, and lack of suitable training and education opportunities contribute to this divide, but do so ego, culture, tradition, and indifference. In the end the responsibility for advancing the quality of police leadership might lie with the profession itself.

Perhaps one of the most striking concerns associated with the tendency of literature to focus on leadership as ever virtuous and a leader as nearly infallible is the risk of distorting the realities of both leaders and leadership. Immanuel Kant noted “...from such warped wood as is man made, nothing straight can be fashioned” (trans., 1983). Joanne Ciulla extended Kant’s idea to the realm of organizational leadership, suggesting leaders are “morally fallible humans who are put in positions where they are expected to fail less than most people” (2001, p. 313). Ciulla’s contention is often lost in the writings and scholarship that dominate the discourse on leaders and leadership. This situation extends into policing literature, which has succumbed all-too-often to the “romance” of police leadership (Mastrofski, 2002). This study adds to the limited literature considering the “dark side” of leadership in policing by describing the common traits and habits displayed by those leaders deemed to be ineffective by others. Much of what has been written about leadership failures appears in media sources, rather than academic and professional literatures. The result may be the perpetuation of myths or oversimplifications describing why leaders fail to achieve desired outcomes (Finkelstein, 2003). Consideration of these ten acts of commission and omission is not meant to imply that all ineffective leaders display all of these behaviors; indeed, it is quite possible that even leaders regarded as effective might demonstrate one or more of these acts periodically or
even on a recurring basis. As Ciulla's observation implies, it is not that strong leaders are perfect; rather, strong leaders may find ways to avoid personal and professional errors more often than those who surround them. Leaders are periodically called upon to make difficult choices that will displease at least a segment of their followers or constituents. It has been argued that in some instances the most expedient way to accomplish individual or organizational objectives is through manipulative and deceitful actions (Bailey, 1988; Kets de Vries, 1993). Those in leadership and supervisory positions are not immune from the allure of “blue lies” and “police placebos” (Klockars, 1984). Consequently, “no leader can survive as a leader without deceiving others (followers know less than opponents) and without deliberately doing to others what he would prefer not to have done to himself” (Bailey, 1988, p. ix).

The line separating effective and ineffective leaders remains unclear. Framing effective leaders as occasionally using improper, ineffective, destructive or deceitful methods only exacerbates that uncertainty. Though a consensus model might be used to generate a general agreement on the line between efficacy and inefficacy, subjective individual assessments will mean some leaders are disparaged by many, yet followed by a few. The data in this study do not provide direct clarification of that situation. The complexity of leadership and leader tactics makes strong empirical assessment of key concepts quite challenging. Even where efforts are made to quantify leadership outcomes, it has been suggested that its effect size is more modest than conventional thinking implies and that “...it is easier to believe in leadership than to prove it” (Meindl, 1990, p. 161).

Though it might be unexpected to see an ineffective leader as a highly placed and/or long-standing supervisor, such circumstances do arise. Ineffective leaders might have a long track record of problematic and sub-standard performance, as observed by a Precinct Commander in a large county agency.

In most cases they were ineffective officers to begin with but somehow get promoted. They do not pay attention to what goes on around them, they do not set the example, they lack interest, motivation & dedication. They fail to recognize when something is wrong and correct the problem. They don’t lead.

This gives rise to vital questions about how ineffective leaders manage to obtain a supervisory position. Given the low tolerance for failure in many American law enforcement agencies such undesirable outcomes may be far too common. In addressing this situation, a major from a small municipal agency remarked that agencies have an unfortunate tendency to “promote and continue to promote those officers who avoid self-destructing” over the course of their career.

Future studies might build upon this descriptive foundation by seeking ways to more systematically study the prevalence of these behaviors and to determine whether they can be empirically linked with undesirable policing outcomes. Do leaders judged to display a large number of these traits and habits receive lower evaluations, exert less influence over employees, “derail” in their rise to higher ranks, or receive less favorable assessments from followers? For now, these empirical questions remain open. Making such assessments is complicated if, in fact, leaders are accurately framed as being “warped wood” prone to error or fault. Those working to develop police leadership and leaders might incorporate consideration of the “dark-side” of leadership into curricula. Those seeking to study policing and police outcomes might be well-served by considering both effective and ineffective police leaders and leadership. A better understanding of ineffective leaders and leadership practices might not only enhance understanding of this problematic circumstance, but might also offer a more realistic and robust understanding of the type of leadership that is effective and desired in modern police organizations.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks the officers who participated in FBI National Academy sessions 227-229 for their cooperation and candor. Additional thanks to Dr. John Jarvis (FBI Behavioral Science Unit), Supervisory Special Agent Dr. Carl Jensen (FBI retired), Mr. Harry Kern (retired Unit Chief of the FBI Behavioral Science Unit), and the staffs of the FBI National Academy Unit and Behavioral Science Unit for their support of this project.

Notes

1. The present focus did not overlook the fact that generally effective leaders could make poor choices and/or demonstrate weaknesses and failings. As the prior paragraph suggests, this situation was largely overlooked in extant research literature. Due to space and resource limitations, this study was only able to focus on leaders generally regarded as ineffective, though even the latter likely had redeeming traits and periodic success.

2. The focus in this literature review and study is on traits and outcomes that are widely regarded as effective or ineffective. Followers and other key constituents did not always respond in a uniform fashion to a given leader and her/his leadership approach and personal traits/habits (Jermier & Berkés, 1979; Krimmel & Lindemuth, 2001). This study concerned itself with those behaviors that facilitated or inhibited effective outcomes in the aggregate, recognizing that even effective leaders were held in low-regard by some and even ineffective leaders likely had at least a few champions.

3. Respondents in the latter group were asked to provide an open-ended response to the question: “Consider the police officers you believe to be especially ineffective leaders. What traits, habits, and characteristics contribute to their ineffectiveness? What do they fail to do that prevents them from being effective leaders?”

4. The total number of participating officers was based on first day counts provided by the FBI Academy.

5. Respondents reported sworn agency size using fixed categories. For the purpose of this analysis agency size was categorized as small (0-50), medium (51-100), mid-size (101-250), large (251-1000), and major (1001 or more).

6. Respondents selected from the following classifications: municipal/city, county, state, nation, or other.

7. Though the NA was intended for those with supervisory experience, in rare cases agencies were allowed to send non-supervisory personnel. This generally occurred in small special jurisdictional agencies with compressed hierarchies.

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