Police leadership development: Intentions and critical success-factors

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Abstract
The Norwegian police has been heavily criticized after the 22 July 2011 terror attacks at Utøya and in Oslo (see e.g., Fimreite, Langlo, Lægreid, & Rykkja, 2013; Thomassen, Strype, & Egge, 2014). An evaluation report (NOU, 2012:14) stated three shortcomings in the Norwegian police force: culture, attitudes and leadership. Management and leadership in the Norwegian police has to be improved and strengthened, and this shall happen through developing the policy document ‘Leadership in Norway’s Civil Service’ (Meld.St.21:2012-201) elaborated into a manifest called Platform for medarbeiderskap (Platform of Employeeship for the Norwegian police force).

This paper addresses two problems:

1) How can police leadership skills be operationalized and measured, and

2) What are the key critical factors in transferring police leadership principles into improved leadership practices?

Police are required to understand and effectively operate in a complex social, political and organizational environment (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2013). By systematic review and synthesized findings from 57 peer review journal articles the authors concluded that despite the work done on the topics to date we still have little understanding of “what works” in police leadership beyond what others perceive to be effective. They call for the need for robust research and hope that researchers are spurred into undertaking work to establish objective measures of effective leadership behaviours to organizational outcomes, to consider the heterogenic nature of police leadership, and to help inform our understanding of the best ways that individual can be prepared for the leadership tasks they are faced. This paper will elaborate whether a relevant response to police leadership challenges could be the new leadership policy in NPS named The Platform of Employeeship. Based on the current emphasis on co-workership introduced in the NPS, we will look into which types of leadership this may indicate and what are the critical factors for successful implementation.
and integration into improved leadership policing practices. Co-workership (also known as employeeship, followership or employee engagement) is described as something more than to develop a cooperative relationship with one’s leader, but also about the relationship to one’s work tasks, colleagues, clients, students, and co-citizens (Tengblad, 2009; Tengblad & Andersson, 2014; Velten, 2008) and can be described as a form of self-leadership or a principle of leadership where responsibility and scope of action is decentralized in so that leaders may delegate parts of their work tasks to their employees.

The common platform in the NPS is founded on two principles:

- the platform is expousing values, attitudes and normative behaviour
- a common platform for all persons employed in the police – both managers and employees.

The philosophy behind the platform is that both managers (formal leaders) and employees are employees. The platform contains 4 basic values expoused in an imperative form: I am brave, I have a holistic perspective, I show respect and I am focused (tett på). The formal leaders (managers) have some additional requirements: set direction and precipate and enable change, motivate and develop the employees and achieve results in cooperation in an interplay with others.

The intention behind the platform is that it should be a leverage to influence and change attitude, culture and leadership in the police.

Four main success-factors are listed in the platform manifest:

- Aim, intention and level of ambition should be distinct.
- The platform must be regarded as relevant
- Adequate commitment to the platform from top management in the police
- The plan for implementation and following up is distinct.
Leadership in an front-line organization

The document Leadership in Norway’s Civil Service’ clearly specifies the premise for managers within the state and focus on four leadership functions (1) Strategic and operational functions, (2) building relations and (3) information and communication functions. Strategic functions describe that managers at all levels have to make choices and set priorities, for example with regard to targets, plans and effective measures. Before such decisions are taken, the expectations of higher authorities, target groups and customers as well as the manager’s own staff must be clarified. All Civil Service managers are responsible for following up sectorial policy objectives in their own areas and for complying with the general regulations and values governing the public administration. Managers must (1) decide how financial, human and other resources are to be used in order to ensure the best possible performance, and organise personnel management accordingly, (2) choose methods, coordination procedures and forms of leadership that produce the best results, (3) and view facts in the light of expert assessments of risks and impacts. Further, (4) decision making can be particularly demanding for Civil Service managers since their decisions often affect the general public.

Operational functions describe how managers often have to introduce, develop and maintain systems in order to ensure that tasks are performed and goods and services are delivered. This applies in particular to technical, financial and personnel systems. The manager must ensure best possible general administration, personnel management, financial management and quality assurance. In large agencies, the responsibility for various operational functions may be delegated to managers at lower levels. In small agencies, the top senior executive may have to take care of a number of tasks relating to day-to-day operations. High-level officials must in any case distribute the responsibility for operations and results,
and ensure that the agency complies with the relevant requirements and standards, for example for financial management, quality, and health, safety and environment.

Building relations describes how managers must establish, foster and develop relations both within and outside their own agencies. All Civil Service managers are part of a politically governed apparatus, including those who have little or no direct contact with the governing political leadership in their day-to-day work. Building relations is important for ensuring that political signals are picked up and implemented effectively. Managers must build solid working relations with their own staff and the employees’ organizations. High-level officials have a particular responsibility for ensuring that sound personnel management is practiced throughout the agency.

Communication and information functions describe how the Civil Service shall be characterized by transparency both in relation to the general public and the employees and between the various parts of the public administration. This means that managers have to ensure adequate communication and the dissemination of necessary information. Information and communication have their own intrinsic value, but are also vital for successful task solution and for developing democracy in working life and society as a whole. The policy document pertains to how the public sector in general ought to be managed, and the document is based on leadership research and are in accordance with mainstream management theory. The idea of formulating a principle of management that would characterize the classical contributions is also evident in this document (Vanebo and Andersen 2014).

From a general description of a police view on civil service leadership, we will now turn to one specific civil service, namely the NPS. The police in general and the NPS especially have a vital role in the civil society. For one, it is one of few civil institutions, along with health care, that is allowed the use of legitimized force against its own population, when urgent (see
e.g., van Ewijk, 2012). This powerful role necessitates knowledge based leadership and management (Coleman, 2008; Gundhus, 2013). One initiative in this regard is *Pearls in Policing*, which is an initiative for top-level police leaders from all over the world. The aim is to make use of professional knowledge and experience to find solutions for international safety and security issues. The aim of this initiative is to stimulate future-oriented, out-of-the-box thinking by the use of informal, think-tank settings, away from the everyday hustle and bustle and the glare of the media. In this way, international police leaders are encouraged to brainstorm more intensely and creatively. In a paper presented at the 2012 Pearls-conference in Singapore, contributions were made from police forces in Denmark, Cayman Islands, Germany, Belgium, South-Australia and the Netherlands. One of the chapters written after the conference on the basis of the discussions, concerned the importance of the police being a learning frontline organisation.

According to these discussions, a frontline organisation has the following characteristics (see Smith, 1965) (1) the initiative lies at the base of the organisation, not at the top, (2) there is a large degree of independence in the performance of tasks, (3) there are great obstacles to hierarchical management and for the police, there are two specific additional characteristics (Tops, Bruijn, Spelier, Hogeboom, & Arkel, 2012): (4) frontline activities are complex, subject to conflict and ethically loaded and (5) the higher aim is more important than individual lives.

It seems sensible to assume that developing the learning capacity of a frontline organisation with the characteristics described above also involves special requirements. Curiously, little has been found out about this up to now. A great deal has been written about police education, but this is based particularly on the question of how people learn best at different levels of education (secondary vocational education, higher vocational education, etc.). Relatively little attention has been devoted to the institutional or organisational aspects.
What are the institutional conditions for turning the police into a learning organisation? Under what conditions do police officers want to learn? According to Tops and colleagues (2012) the following factors emerge: (1) the basis must be in order, (2) the bosses must provide credible support, and (3) “the big picture” must be clear. From this description of a way to work knowledge based in the police we turn to one way of working in practice, through employeeship.

The Canadian Police Sector Council was incorporated in 2004 to facilitate more integrated and innovative human resource planning and management. Its mandate was to understand and address the most critical issues facing all policing organizations, including the sustainability of policing services through improvements in productivity and performance. The 2010 Policing Leadership Development Project examined the roles and responsibilities of police leaders to define what is required to become an effective police leader. It defined the leadership competencies required for successful job performance of uniform police members at four levels of increasing leadership responsibility. The resulting model for leadership development is consistent with the Policing Competency Framework and focuses specifically on the development of leadership competencies across the organization.

The project resulted in the identification of a model with fourteen essential competencies for leadership proficiency levels. The leadership competencies are grouped into three categories (1) performance, (2) partnering, and (3) accountability. Competencies are defined as « the observable and measurable skills, knowledge, or other attributes that contribute to successful performance in jobs» (Referanse og sidetall?). The statement is that competencies are all about behaviours that help us produce results at work. We will now turn to some of the ways (1) police leadership skills can be operationalized and measured, and (2) what critical factors in transferring police leadership principles into best practices may be?
Critical success factors: enabling creative leadership

In general the analysis of critical success-factors must focus on the concept or architecture of the new leadership policy, the intentions behind the policy decision, the implementation decision and the integration of the new leadership policy into the (hopefully: improved) leadership practice. Employeeship means to a large extent self-leadership and three forms of self leadership can be identified (Boswell og Boundreau, 2001; Kristensen and Pedersen, 2013): general self leadership, self existence leadership and strategic self leadership. The first two has to do with autonomy for the workers and commitment to oneself, and the third one (strategic self-leadership) is about aligning self leadership to mission, role and the strategic logic of the organization. Strategic logic is defined as (Sanchez 199?:5):an organization’s operative rationale for achieving its goal through coordinated deployments of resources» shared ideas of the people in the organization about the nature of the organization’s goals for creating value, the resources needed to achieve those goals, the ways resources will be coordinated in pursuing those goals, and how value created by the organization will be distributed to all the stakeholders that provide resources to the organization.

Employees should understand the work on three levels to be able to lead themselves strategically (Kristensen and Pedersen, 2013,bid.):
-Understanding the business (mission and role): Why do I work?
-Understanding the objective: What is the objective of the work?
-Understanding the task: How shall I Work?

An obvious statement will be that that adequate managerial skills is a precondition for successful implementation and integration of the Platform of employeeship.

If we look at the components of employeeship, this may seem as somewhat related to the elements of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership can be described as a leader’s ability to create commitment to common goals, motivate, and inspire (Bass, 1991; Hetland & Sandal, 2003). A related concept is transformational change, which is described as strategic change which “affects a number of the major systems in the organization”. This is a “multilayered process affecting different levels of the organization and even the context of the organization’s operation, simultaneously” (Ferlie et al., 1996, p. 89). Ferlie and colleagues suggest that there are six indicators for transformational change, namely (1) the existence of
multiple and interrelated changes across the system as a whole, (2) the creation of new organizational forms at a collective level, (3) the development of multilayered changes which impact below the whole system, at a unit and individual level, (4) the creation of changes in the services provided and the mode of delivery, (5) the reconfiguration of power relations (especially the formation of new leadership groups), and the (6) development of a new culture, ideology, and organizational meaning (p. 94).

Another associated concept is distributed leadership, which is described by co-leadership and leading with others as opposed to hierarchical leadership through others (Gronn, 2002).

Authentic leadership describes similar leadership qualities in the form of trustworthy support from one’s superior (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), with key characteristics such as the leader being him- or herself, as opposed to playing a role, being governed by one’s own convictions as opposed to driven by a need for status, honor and personal benefits, basing one’s actions on personal values and convictions. But, what about the police?

Even though many have described transformational leadership as one of the types performed in the police, others have pointed at the difficulty of finding this in empirical research (Cockcroft, 2014). This has led some to argue that the simplistic way of dichotomising transactional and transformational leadership in the police “fails to recognize the nuances of organizational life”, and that synthesising the two leadership models may “be a way of overcoming” these criticisms (Cockcroft, 2014, p. 12). In a Norwegian study of leadership styles in the NPS (Fjærli, 2008), the author also struggled to found this dichotomy empirically and as a result suggested the term “trans-leadership” (our translation). Even though laissez-faire leadership, the lack of leadership, turned out to be the form of leadership that mostly characterised leadership style in the study of one Norwegian police district and a total of 140 respondents. Another study found that …….(Hole, Glomseth, & Gottschalk, 2010). Thus, while transformational leadership may the theoretical leadership framework that
to greatest extent resembles employeeship, the empirical evidence suggest that the most common leadership styles are laissez-faire and trans- leadership for this being the case in practice, is not equally clear cut. Based on this policy outline, we will in the following look into some of the studies on what may be described as leadership competencies in the police.

**Leadership competence**

Leadership skills is «the ability to use one’s knowledge and competencies to accomplish a set of goals or objectives» (Northouse, 2013). According to Katz (1955), leadership requires three forms of competencies or skills (1) technical skills, which are “an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques”, and involves “specialized knowledge, analytical ability within that speciality, and facility in the use of the tools and techniques of the specific discipline” (p. xx). Human skills (2) are characterized by the “ability to work effectively as group member and to build cooperative effort within a team” as opposed to a technical skill, which primarily “is concerned with working with things (processes or physical objects), so human skill is primarily concerned with working with people” (p. xx). Conceptual skills (3) are described as “the ability to see the enterprise as a whole” and involves “recognizing how the various functions of the organization depends on one another, and how changes in any one part affect all the others” and “extends to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole “(p. xx). Based on conceptual skills, a leader should “be able to act in a way which advances the over-all welfare of the total organization” (p. xx). This last part is inspired by Barnard (1938): “… the essential aspect of the (executive) process is the sensing of the organization as a whole and the total situation relevant to it” (p. xx). According to Katz (1955) it is assumed that technical skills are not so important for the chief executives in large organisations where such executives have extensive staff assistance and highly competent,
experienced technical operators available. However, in smaller organisations, technical expertise may not be pervasive and seasoned staff assistance less available. Thus, in this case, the chief executive has a much greater need for personal experience in the industry.

The leadership skills and competencies tradition of leadership theories after Katz divides leadership skills into technical, human and conceptual skills, where the first is especially important in first line leadership, but declining at higher levels in the leadership hierarchy according to Northouse. Conceptual skills are assumed to have the opposite development (Northouse, 2013). Opposed to leadership theories which focus on personality and the characteristics of the person that is a leader, the leadership skills venue focus is that there are many people that may have a potential for being a leader if they are able to learn from their experiences (Northouse, 2013). Thus, the focus of this leadership venue are «the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that make effective leadership possible» (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000, p. 12).

Leadership skills, as described by Mumford and colleagues (Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro, & Reiter-Palom, 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000) may be divided into (1) individual attributes, (2) competencies and (3) leadership outcomes, where the skills section includes problem-solving skills, ability for social decision making and knowledge of how to be effective (Northouse, 2013). Problem-solving skills is the ability to creatively “solve new and unusual, ill-defined organizational problems”, social judgment skills is the “capacity to understand people and social systems”, while knowledge is the “accumulation of information and the mental structures used to organize that information” (Northouse, 2013, pp. 48-51).

In addition to the described tradition on leadership skills, there is also the idea of the “Leadership Pipeline” model. This model is a model developed by Charan and colleagues and aims at understanding leadership requirements across hierarchical levels within an
organization (see e.g., Dahl & Molly-Søholm, 2012; Dai, Tang, & De Meuse, 2011). While the Norwegian Police Directorate (NPD) has introduced co-workership as their main leadership initiative, such policies describe general leadership guidelines more looking into leadership requirements across hierarchical levels in the NPS.

In a study of police units, Yang and colleagues (2012) examined which factors that influence job satisfaction among employees and the impact on project success. A project leaders attempt to increase job satisfaction among their employees can improve the employees’ motivation and morale as well as the quality of project execution itself. The results showed that job satisfaction could mediate (and be an intervening variable that may be an indirect cause, see eg., Skog, 2004) the relationship between leadership skill and project success (Yang et al., 2012). The results further showed that complexity, workload, methodology and project length had a moderating effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and project planning success. According to the authors, leadership skills, such as intellectual, leader, emotional and social skills is necessary for achieving job satisfaction among their employees in the form of, for example, personal growth, relationships and perceived opportunities for advancement. However, despite an increased focus on leadership skills, Yang and colleagues state that “no previous studies have empirically analyzed leadership competency and its impacts on police project performance” and that none of the previous studies they had undergone “attempted two deal with the benefits of leadership competency”, despite that the lack of it, often is one of the biggest obstacles to the exercise of police projects (Yang et al., 2012, p. 542).

Experiences on the development of leadership skills from the Swedish Police Service (SPS) has shown that they have divided all leadership roles into three, namely (1) the business manager, where it is expected that the leader develops the business so that it achieves the expected goals, including follow-up and "take action" if necessary. As a manager, regardless
of level, one should contribute to an open and tolerant culture in which diversity and equality is a matter of course, (2) the employer role, that leaders at all levels should take on the employer role, and take responsibility for employer policy and leading from the employers mandate, duties and rights and interacts with other leaders, and (3) leadership, to achieve tangible results with the help of employees. To motivate, support, develop employees, communicate, create dialogue with participation. The aim of the SPS leadership policy is that all leaders know the expectations to and from them.

Regarding leadership levels, the SPS have further described three leadership levels (1) the direct leadership level includes executives who have no leaders between themselves and their employees. The (2) indirect leadership level includes leaders that may find themselves in between strategic management and operational activities; leaders who lead through other leaders. The (3) static leadership level sets out framework and operational guidelines to be followed. These leaders work towards the outside world and have long term and visionary focus, and must be able to interpret and understand the demands of society to the police, as presented as conceptual skills earlier. Compared to the NPS, the SPS have made divisions in leadership levels and developed clear leadership skills and competencies at all levels, although actions to develop similar procedures are being undertaken. In the SPS, leadership education is attuned to the developed leadership levels in a systematic manner.

In Danish Police Service (DPS), leadership levels have been divided into four, with (1) Professional leadership, (2) Staff leadership, (3) Administrative leadership, and (4) Strategic leadership. In addition, these four levels are guided by four leadership perspectives. One of these perspectives is direct leadership, which in this context is characterized by an authoritarian leadership style that may be used at all levels at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. This leadership perspective is applicable when there is a risk to their own or someone else's life, or when needed for coordination of efforts for example inter-sectorial
efforts. In the DPS, leadership education is now attuned to the presented leadership levels and perspectives in a systematic manner.

After having done a review of the police leadership literature, the authors described the situation in the following manner: “although competency-based development approaches have much to offer in that they provide clear guidance for when one has achieved such leadership skills, the question remains whether we are using these frameworks to develop leaders, because there is a shared understanding about what characterizes effective leadership, or because of a received wisdom based on flawed evidence focusing on perceptions. The findings from this review suggest the latter” (Pearson-Goff & Herrington, 2014, p. 21).

Thus, as with co-workership, it may seem as leadership competence and skills in the police especially, until now, are more policy based interventions than empirically evolved ways of increasing leadership outcome in the police. So how do we proceed? One way is to look at venues for increasing creative leadership.

**Leadership policy into practice**

The change in leadership policy may mean incremental or radical change in the actual leadership practice. If it is a radical change, institutional entrepreneurship, institutional leadership or creative leadership will be needed. Selznick draws a distinction between administrative management and institutional leadership: ’ if one of the great functions of administration is the exertion of cohesive force in the direction of institutional security, another great function is the creation of conditions that will make possible in the future what is excluded in the present. This requires a strategy of change that looks to the attainment of new capabilities more nearly fulfilling the truly felt needs and aspiration of the institution. The executive becomes a *statesman* as he makes the transition from administrative management to institutional leadership’ (ibid.154).

Normally a policy is developed by a small core of team members, but implementation will require deployments of significant amount of resources to overcome organizational inertia and resistance to secure the commitment of organizational members on whom implementation would depend (S. Raub, 2001) The policy should in a convincing way be communicated as the
desired future practice to achieve understanding and acceptance among the managers on all levels and employees in the whole organization.

A critical success-factor for implementing and integrating the new leadership policy will be necessary and adequate social support and this has to do with understanding the elements of the social structure (Selznick, ibid.): assigned roles (division of labor), internal interest groups (sources of energy), social stratification (hierarchy), beliefs (culture), participation (affects communication) and dependency (line, staff).

These six elements of social structure, taken together, form a complex network of relations among persons and groups. This network acts as a filter through which policy is communicated; and it represents a system of accommodation among potentially conflicting parts. As a result, policy may be nullified in the filtering process, and any imbalance may lead to active measures for self-protection or aggrandizement by constituent units. To become the master of his organization, the leader must know how to deal with the social structure in all its dimensions.

Social structure refers to the patterned or regularized aspects of the relationships existing among participants in an organization (Scott, 1992). The above six elements of social structure can, according to Scott (ibid.), analytically be separated into two components: the normative structure (values, norms and role expectations) and the behavioral structure (actual behavior rather than prescriptions for behavior).

Successful implementation and integration is dependent on handling both the instrumental and the social-construcive (sensemaking) elements of creative leadership: "to formulate and define the purposes, objectives, ends, of the organization... The function of formulating grand purposes and providing for their redefinition is one which needs sensitive systems of communication, experience in interpretation, imagination, and delegation of responsibility" (Barnard, 1938:231-233)

The new leadership policy is built into the social structure of an organization when official aims and methods are spontaneously protected and advanced (Selznick, ibid.100), or when ‘expoused theories’ (values) have become ‘theories in use’:

References


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