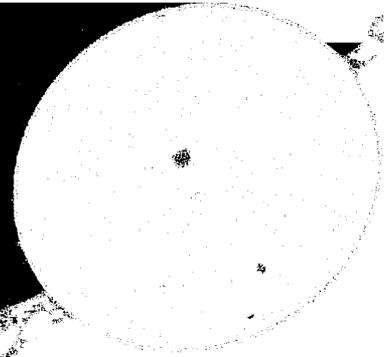


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The Cover: Voyager symbolizes one example of the advantages and absolute necessity of planning for the future. The Editor wishes to thank the FBI's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Audits and the Behavioral Science Instruction/Research Unit for helping to prepare this issue.

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The Future of Policing



By
WILLIAM L. TAFOYA, Ph.D.

In August 1982, law enforcement executives gathered in the FBI Academy auditorium to hear Alvin Toffler speak. In his speech, Toffler suggested that because change was taking place so rapidly, tremendous social pressures were occurring and will continue to ferment and explode unless opportunities were created to relieve those pressures.¹

According to Toffler, law enforcement, like society, has two possible courses of action. The first is to cling to the status quo; the

second, to facilitate social change.² For law enforcement officers, this means not only protecting civil rights but also ensuring that all lawful means of dissent and petitioning of government concerning grievances are permitted and protected.³ This will help secure the ideals of democracy and facilitate an orderly transition into what Toffler has referred to as a "third wave" society.⁴

In support of these ideals, this article addresses major societal change from an historical perspec-

tive, ongoing social norm and value shifts, periods of reform in policing, the research that addresses the phenomenon of resistance to organizational change, and the implications for law enforcement of maintaining the status quo.

Historical Perspective

Historically, the role of law enforcement has been to maintain the status quo. However, this does not mean that this is what "should be" in the future. Reliance on current practices will not prepare law

enforcement for the future. Therefore, to be able to deal with change, law enforcement must understand the process of change.

Toffler's comments offer a challenge to law enforcement and suggest that unless the police are viewed by the public as amicable, they will be perceived as adversaries. They must be viewed as in-

function a positive image. Therefore, systematically shifting public perception, and the self-image of the police themselves from "crime fighter" to "social engineer," seems appropriate.⁵

If law enforcement administrators do not plan properly today, they may be forced to reassess the way their agencies carry out

value shifts.⁸ In 1980, he followed up with *The Third Wave*, in which he expanded his views and drew an analogy between the waves of the ocean and the three major changes of society: The Agricultural Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Technological Revolution.⁹

According to Toffler, the first wave, the Agricultural Revolution, swept aside 45,000 years of cave dwelling about 8,000 B.C., and mankind shifted from a nomadic existence based on hunting and gathering to domesticating animals, farming, and settling on the land.

The second wave, the Industrial Revolution, began about 1760, and mankind moved from the field to the foundry. The transition from plough to punch-press was filled with consternation. In fact, from 1811 to 1816, bands of workmen, called Luddites, destroyed machinery because they believed their jobs were at risk from the technology of the day. Machine power, they feared, would replace manpower. With the exception of a few Third World countries, the Industrial Revolution provided the economic base for second wave society.

About 1955, the Technological Revolution began, signifying the third wave. Since that time, the American work force has shifted from blue collar to white collar. In barely three decades, a parade of high technology has marched into the home.

The driving force for this shift is information; the economic base for third wave societies is the quest for knowledge. The ubiquitous microcomputer, ushered in just over a decade ago, has turned Western society inside out. In the wake of

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...law enforcement must anticipate tomorrow in an imaginative, analytical, and prescriptive manner.
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tegral to the neighborhood and as indispensable members of the community, not as an army of occupation.

One need only reflect back two decades to be reminded of how destructive civil unrest and social injustice can be. Law enforcement has made important and laudatory strides to heal those wounds, but there is more to be done. Law enforcement administrators must not allow themselves to be content with past achievements. If law enforcement stops to congratulate itself for the progress it has made thus far, it could drift backwards.

In addition, isolated and sometimes tragic events tend to dramatize and exaggerate the excitement of policing. For some police officers, the service function is something begrudgingly tolerated while waiting for the hot pursuit and in-progress calls. In fact, many police officers believe that the service function should not be part of their responsibilities. This belief is compounded by the lack of a concerted effort on the part of police administrators to give the service

their responsibilities tomorrow. For example, California's 1978 Proposition Thirteen triggered a decade of so-called "cutback management" for law enforcement and other agencies nationwide. Such reappraisals are likely to come about as a result of the kind of initiatives Toffler has called "anticipatory democracy."⁶

Economizing measures, referenda, and trends, such as social norm and value shifts, accreditation, education and training, and consolidation,⁷ will bear close scrutiny from now through the turn of the century. If changes in these areas continue at their present rate and direction, they are likely to lead to major, unanticipated changes in both the role and organizational structure of policing. Perhaps the most important, most subtle, and most likely to be overlooked by police administrators is the shift in social norms and values.

Changes in Society

In his 1970 classic, *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler discussed the world's major social norm and

this micro millennium, a new "disease" has been discovered, cyberphobia—fear of computers. Computer phobes today express remarkably similar views about computers as 19th-century Luddites expressed about mechanical devices.

Changes in Law Enforcement

A rough correspondence to Toffler's wave analogy can be drawn with respect to the historical changes in law enforcement. Passage of the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829 in England marked the beginning of the "first wave" of major law enforcement reform. Robert Peel and Charles Rowan were two visionaries who brought order and the military model to policing.

A century later, in the 1930s, August Vollmer and O.W. Wilson, two American police pioneers, advanced the goal of "professionalizing" law enforcement. Their efforts ushered in the "second wave" of major law enforcement reform. Standardization, specialization, synchronization, concentration, maximization, and centralization dominated law enforcement during this era. Toffler's "Breaking the Code," in *The Third Wave*, for example, is almost a mirror image of the history of modern police administration.¹⁰

The civil unrest of the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s was the impetus for the advocacy of the "third wave" of major law enforcement reform. Change agents, such as Patrick V. Murphy and Quinn Tamm, began to question the value of the bureaucracy and the military model of policing.

Substantial improvements in law enforcement have taken place since the mid-1960s,¹¹ but most efforts to change have fallen short of their intended goals or have failed all together.¹² In fact, law enforcement, being characteristically highly resistant to change and intolerant of organizational dissent, has been about as flexible as granite.¹³

Organizational Change

There is a vast body of literature in organizational behavior,¹⁴ management,¹⁵ and innovation¹⁶ that addresses the issue of resistance to change and reasons why so many organizations are so unyielding.¹⁷ In general, an inverse relationship exists in bureaucracies between organizational size and receptivity to change. The bigger the organization, the more rigidity and less affinity toward innovation there is.¹⁸

“**When 'experience' becomes dogma, it can be not only misleading but also dangerous as well.**”

As illogical as it may sound, in law enforcement, it also appears to be the case that the smaller the agency, the more resistance there is to change. Even though positive, meaningful innovation is taking place, many police administrators are unwilling to "rock the boat."¹⁹

However, a 1983 study revealed that a surprising number of police officers have begun to voice strong objections to the rigid or-

ganizational structure and autocratic management styles that typify so much of law enforcement.²⁰ In effect, the study concluded that "the traditional managerial methods are not serving to motivate officers."²¹ One reason for this phenomenon may be traced to a decline of unquestioned obedience to authority.²² Until about 15 years ago, most police recruits were men who had served in the Armed Forces. These men were accustomed to unquestioned response to command. Today, however, few of the young men and women entering law enforcement have such experience. They often ask questions that are unsettling to traditionalist managers, who often believe that people need to be, coerced, controlled, and threatened.²³

In a more recent study, a panel of law enforcement management experts discussed the future of law enforcement.²⁴ One of the issues examined was leadership styles and the phenomenon of resistance to change. One panelist, a law enforcement executive, stated, "The general perception is that things have worked well as they are and that there is no need to change." Another panelist, who is a criminal justice scholar, admitted that "police executives are not risk takers and police departments are getting more, not less, defensive."²⁵

Today, there is ample evidence to indicate that insofar as dealing with people is concerned, the good ole days may best serve as memories, not models for future personnel practices. Between now and the turn of the century, law enforcement administrators will continue to be reminded that the organizational and managerial

methods of the past—even though enlightened for their time—may no longer work. In the future, the number of disciplinary cases and the use of annual and sick leave will increase steadily under traditionalist managers. Unfortunately, many police administrators will be oblivious to these signs or will staunchly defend current personnel practices. However, the astute administrator will recognize these indicators for what they represent and will adjust accordingly.

Implications

What do such findings imply for law enforcement? For administrators, what one does not want to hear may be precisely what one needs to know.²⁶ For operational officers, some may feel trapped and unable to leave; they will become cynics.²⁷ Others will leave to join less bureaucratic and militaristic organizations. The fact that many college graduates leave law enforcement early because of autocratic management was recognized over two decades ago.²⁸ But, the departure of personnel who rebel against authoritarianism will

beyond. As a result, an effort has been made to highlight ~~some~~ issues viewed as central to our ability to police such a changing society. It is vital that law enforcement administrators understand that:

- Powerful dynamics are transfiguring virtually every facet of American society
- The forces that are recasting social institutions will also alter law enforcement organizations
- As society's values change, so will those of law enforcement personnel
- To deal effectively with diversity, the process of change must be understood
- The role and goals of policing must be clearly and concisely articulated.

If the professionalization of law enforcement is truly desirable, the fact that "the reform movements may have succeeded to some extent in creating the appearance

However, while the methodological rigor of past research continues to be debated, the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment³³ represents a giant leap forward for police professionalism and has demonstrated that it is "o.k." to question dogma.³⁴ However, problem-oriented policing³⁵ and the Minneapolis domestic violence study,³⁶ for example, have been received with more reticence.

Law enforcement is capable of substantive change, but this requires an objective examination of policy and a willingness to adjust and adapt.³⁷ Unexamined are a number of visionary ideas that may have been ahead of their time. One such untested proposal that evidences a great deal of merit is John Angell's democratic model of policing, which calls for greater organizational and decisionmaking decentralization.³⁸ He argues, for example, that rigid discipline and authoritarianism fosters, rather than discourages, corruption.³⁹

Conclusion

Regardless of what lies ahead, law enforcement must anticipate tomorrow in an imaginative, analytical, and prescriptive manner. This means that law enforcement administrators must not be seduced by the tried and true tenets of the past. When "experience" becomes dogma, it can be not only misleading but also dangerous as well. Administrators should reflect on what has passed, not be driven by it. Law enforcement administrators of today—if they are to shape the course of tomorrow—must look ahead.

For 45,000 years, mankind huddled in the darkness of caves, afraid to take that first step into the

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...to be able to deal with change, law enforcement must understand the process of change.

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likely not be an exodus of college-educated personnel in terms of numbers, but of talent.

The discontinuity of social norms and values, which began more than two decades ago,²⁹ is still evident today.³⁰ And, the trend will continue over the next 20 years and

without the substance of fundamental reform" must be faced.³¹ Only by "puncturing the myths and slaughtering the sacred cows"³² will we advance the substance of policing. This has not always been easy for law enforcement.

light of day. Will history record each law enforcement agency's contribution as Luddite or luminary? Bold leadership is essential today—to prepare for the "fourth wave" of law enforcement reform.

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Footnotes

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⁸ Supra note 6

⁹ Supra note 4.

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