Management position as determinant of leadership roles in police districts.

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Abstract: The job of a manager consists of several parallel roles. A manager may perceive one role as more important than other roles. The goal of this paper is to present results from a survey of police managers in Norway on the relative importance of leadership roles. A questionnaire was developed to measure leadership roles in police districts. Respondents emphasised the role of personnel leader where the manager is responsible for supervising, hiring, training, organising, coordinating and motivating a cadre of personnel to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Keywords: managerial roles; enterprise development; survey research; personnel leader; resource allocator.

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1   Introduction

Policing is the most apparent aspect of the criminal justice system, and a well-regarded police service is a prerequisite for the positive perception of law enforcement and justice (Dean and Gottschalk, 2007; Gottschalk, 2010; Schafer, 2009; UNODC, 2006). Leadership is one of those obvious elements required for integrity and accountability in policing, but how to generate and maintain professional leadership is a difficult question (Prenzler, 2009). One approach to answer this question is to study the job of a police manager that consists of several parallel roles.

At a certain point in time, a police manager may perceive one role as more important than other leadership roles. Yet, the manager may spend most of his or her time on less important roles, and the manager may perceive himself or herself as more qualified for some roles than other roles. Mintzberg (1994) found that it is a peculiarity of the management literature that its best-known writers all seem to emphasise one particular part of the manager's job to the exclusion of the others. Together they cover all the parts, but even that may not describe the whole task of managing.

The purpose of this paper is to present results from a survey of police managers in Norway on leadership roles. This study is important, as leadership roles indicate the relative emphasis placed on relationships and tasks in management.

2   Police leadership

Policing has become more complex, more knowledge-based and more professional in the last decade. These challenges are felt across the world – a fact recognised by a growing national and international sharing of practice and personnel. Policing in the 21st century is a *potpourri* of sectors, levels, systems and models that coexist in a whirlpool of continual interaction. Policing is a social process and as such it spans both public and private sectors (Dean and Gottschalk, 2007).

At the top of any police organisation there will be one chief officer presiding over a hierarchy consisting of strong lines of authority with clearly defined roles and responsibility at each level. This will often take the form of a central headquarter with a web of subordinate, locally based branch offices, sometimes called districts or divisions.

The point of delivery for almost all police services is the local police station that can draw on knowledge resources from central units. Organisational structure, organisational culture, attitudes and behaviour of local officers will have a significant effect on the success of the whole criminal justice system (UNODC, 2006).

Police leadership is important in a number of policing areas including community policing. Case studies of community policing cited by Schafer (2009) have highlighted the role of leadership as a mechanism to facilitate rapid, and sometimes radical, organisational transformation. Leadership concerns how groups can be influenced and/or induced into compliance through the personality, power, persuasion and behaviour of key individuals. These efforts are generally intended to create needed structure and/or coordinate efforts towards the achievement of goals.

Mostovicz et al. (2009) argue for a definition of leadership as the ability to act authentically according to one's worldview, either Theta or Lambda. Leadership characteristics of Theta vs. Lambda worldviews include:

- *Motivation*: socially oriented vs. personally oriented.

- *Behaviour*: communion vs. agency.

- *Goal*: seeking unity and certainty vs. seeking challenge and creation.

- *Benefit*: building respect vs. looking for personal freedom.

- *Principle*: truthfulness vs. genuineness.

- *Inclination*: towards choice vs. towards contrast.

- *Truth*: objective vs. rules.

- *Responsibility*: security vs. freedom.

These two approaches clash fundamentally because the drive for achievement ends in separating oneself from others (or making oneself unique), while its counterpart seeks to affiliate itself with others and work in unison. As a consequence, this tension can lead to personal bias or distortion of the paradox of leadership (Mostovicz et al., 2009).

A distinction is often made between transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Fitzgerald and Schutte, 2010; Gong et al., 2009; Michaelis et al., 2010). Transformational leadership includes direction and goal setting, boundary spanning and management, empowerment and staffing and resource acquisition. Transformational leadership tends to be focusing on the moral development of the followers and naturally lead to ethical decision-making (Dion, 2008). Transactional leadership is characterised by transactions between supervisor and subordinate, where the supervisor makes decisions that the subordinate carries out because the subordinate is paid for it.

Schafer (2009) finds that the importance of police supervisors (formal leaders) in shaping organisational contexts and outcomes in police organisations is generally accepted. Although external pressures and the culture of a police organisation can be powerful forces shaping and influencing officer conduct, the tone set by supervisors throughout the organisation seems to play a key role in these processes.

3 Leadership roles

Mintzberg's (1994) role typology is frequently used in studies of managerial work (Andresen et al., 2007; Glomseth et al., 2007). An important strength of the Mintzberg typology as a leadership instrument is its ability to be generally unbiased. It is unbiased because there is not one role in general, which as such seems better than another role. Rather, the appropriate or preferred role depends on the situation. Hence, the contingent approach to management is applied by making role importance dependent on the situation.

In the context of police management, Glomseth et al. (2007) applied six roles from Mintzberg's role typology: personnel leader, resource allocator, spokesman, entrepreneur, liaison and monitor. In this research, the same six roles are applied. The role terminology is commonly in use and is genderless. We will employ the following role descriptions for leadership roles:

1 *Personnel leader*: as a leader, the manager is responsible for supervising, hiring, training, organising, coordinating and motivating a cadre of personnel to achieve the goals of the organisation. This role is mainly internal to the police unit. It is argued that transformational leadership is a motivational leadership style most appropriate for the personnel leader (Fitzgerald and Schutte, 2010).

2 *Resource allocator*: the manager must decide how to allocate human, financial and information resources to the different tasks of police work. This role emphasises planning, organising, coordinating and controlling tasks, and is mainly internal to the police investigation unit. Administrative tasks are included in this role. An important resource in policing is knowledge among police officers (Leszczynska, 2010; UNODC, 2006). It might be argued that transactional leadership is a leadership style most appropriate for the resource allocator, as decision-making in terms of allocation represents transactions on resources and policing tasks.

3 *Spokesman*: as a spokesman, the manager extends organisational contacts to areas in the police force outside his or her own unit. This role emphasises promoting acceptance of the unit and the unit's work within the organisation of which they are part. For the manager, it means contact with the rest of the organisation. Frequently, he or she must move across traditional departmental boundaries and become involved in personnel, organisational and financial matters.

4 *Entrepreneur*: the manager identifies police needs and develops solutions that change situations. A major responsibility of the manager is to ensure that rapidly evolving policing methods are understood, planned, implemented and strategically exploited in the organisation. An important element of the entrepreneurial leadership role is creativity (Lin et al., 2010).

5 *Liaison*: in this role, the manager communicates with the external environment, and it includes exchanging information with government agencies, private businesses, media and the public. This is an active, external role.

6 *Monitor*: this role emphasises scanning of the external environment to keep up with relevant changes, such as politics and economics. The manager identifies new ideas from sources outside his or her organisation. To accomplish this task, the manager

uses many resources, including professional relationships, media and the public. This is a passive, external role.

Six leadership roles are applied in this research as framed in Figure 1. The original set of leadership roles by Mintzberg (1994) consists of three main categories and ten managerial roles. Within the category of informational management, we find the monitor, the disseminator and the spokesman. Within the category of interpersonal management, we find the figurehead, the leader and the liaison. Finally, within the category of decisional management, we find the entrepreneur, the disturbance handler, the resource allocator and the negotiator.

The illustration of six leadership roles in Figure 1 is adopted from the works by Glomseth et al. (2007). The personnel leader and resource allocator are roles internal to the unit for the unit manager. The spokesman and entrepreneur are roles directed towards the base police organisation, while the liaison and the monitor roles are external to both the unit and the base organisation for the unit manager.

Figure 1   Leadership roles for police managers
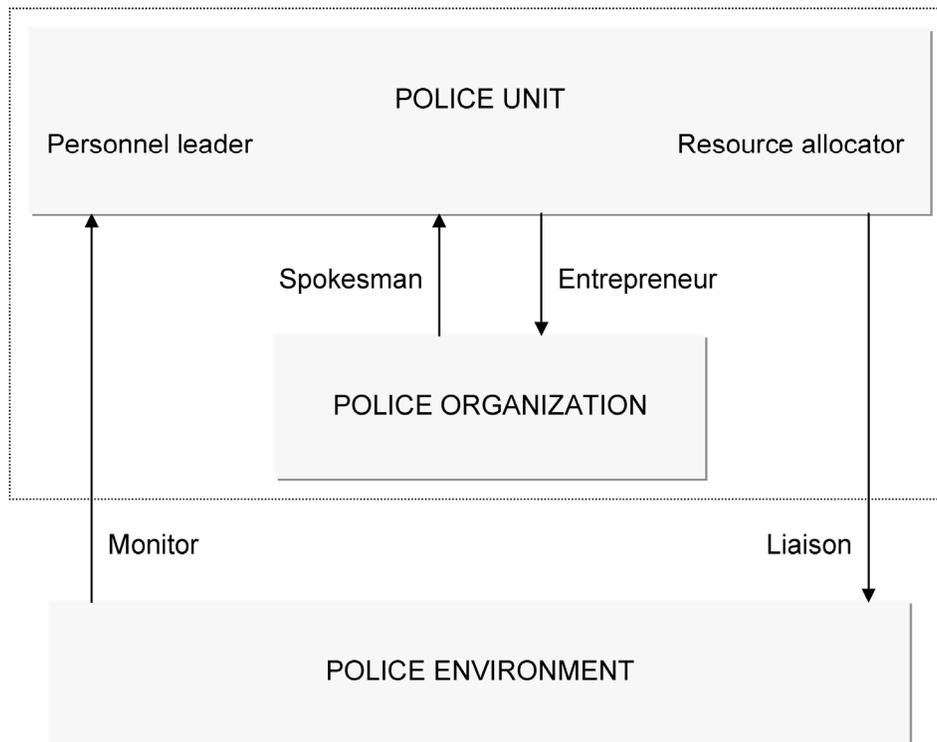
4   Research design

A convenience sample of two police districts in Norway was selected for empirical study of leadership roles. In Norway, there is only one police force. The organisation of the Norwegian Police is largely based on the principle of an integrated police, where all functions of the police are collected in one organisation. There are 27 local police districts, each under the command of a Chief of Police. In addition to the police districts, there are five central police institutions in Norway. About 13,000 persons work in the Norwegian Police force in some capacity. About 9,000 are trained police officers, while almost 800 are trained lawyers and about 3,200 are civilian employees. The Norwegian Police and prosecuting authority follow a parallel track system, where responsibility for combating crime is shared between the Police Directorate and the Public Prosecution, both linked to the Department of Justice.

The Chief of Police in each police district has full responsibility for all kinds of policing in the district. A police district has its own headquarter as well as several police stations. All police officers in Norway are trained to be generalists, able to fulfil every aspect of ordinary police work, including criminal investigations, maintaining public order and community policing.

Two police districts were selected for this survey research. They are Follo and Hedmark police districts in the southern part of Norway. Both of these districts have several towns and rural areas, and they have similar geography, demography and crime statistics. In both police districts, executive training programmes were carried out in 2008–2010. Participants in these programmes were selected for this survey research as a convenience sample. Follo and Hedmark police districts had a total of 130 participants in these programmes with 60 managers from Follo and 70 managers from Hedmark.

A questionnaire was developed to measure leadership roles based on previous research by Glomseth et al. (2007). The questionnaire was first tested on 15 police managers at different leadership levels and from different police districts. Seven of them provided written comments and some others made comments through the telephone. All comments from the pre-test were considered and several changes were made to the questionnaire.

The web-based survey research was carried out in March and April 2010. Around 65 out of 130 managers responded to the questionnaire, thereby representing a response rate of 50%. Most of the respondents had worked as the police for more than 25 years. A total of 52% of the respondents were from Follo police district, while 48% were from Hedmark police district. A total of 44% were working in a local police station, while 49% were working in a functional unit.

Among the respondents, 49% were first-line managers, 27% were middle managers, while 22% were top managers. In terms of leadership position, 28% had 0–5 subordinates, 22% had 6–10 subordinates, 26% had 11–20 subordinates and the remaining 24% had more than 21 subordinates.

Among the respondents, 38% had been in a management position for more than 11 years, while 62% had been in a management position for less than 11 years. A total of 81% were trained police officers, while 5% were trained lawyers and 13% were civilian employees. A total of 80% were men and 20% were women. Most respondents were in the age ranges of 41–45, 46–50 and 51–55 years old. Retirement age for police officers is 57 years in Norway.

Many respondents (33%) had three years of college education. Some had less, and some had four years (12%) and some had five years (9%). Police education in Norway is three years in terms of a Bachelor degree, and lawyer education is five years in terms of a Master degree.

5   Research results

Table 1 lists results for leadership roles on a scale from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). The complete set of six leadership roles was repeated four times in the questionnaire to measure:

1   leadership role importance as perceived by the respondent

2   actual time spent by the respondent on the leadership role

3   desired time spent by the respondent on the leadership role

4   the respondent's perception of his or her own competence in the leadership role.

Personnel leader is reported as the most important role where managers spend most time. Ideally, managers would like to spend even more time on this role. Respondents feel most competent in the role of resource allocator, followed by personnel leader and spokesman.

From a statistical point of view, the role of personnel leader is significantly more important to respondents than the role of resource allocator. This significance was established when applying the statistical t-test for the means (Hair et al., 2010). Similarly, the ideal time spent on the personnel leader role is significantly longer than the ideal time spent on the resource allocator role at a significance of $p < 0.01$. However, the actual time spent on the personnel leader role is not significantly longer than the actual time spent on the resource allocator role, thus making ranks 1 and 2 in the second number column not significant. Respondents feel more competent in the resource allocator rather than the personnel leader role, but this difference in means is not significant. Lack of significance implies that although the numbers are different, a normal distribution of findings will not exhibit differences in means.

How is leadership role importance dependent on management position in terms of first-line managers (49%), middle managers (27%) and top managers (22%)? Results are listed in Table 2. Generally, we see that higher-ranked managers find all roles more important than lower-ranked managers. Furthermore, at all three levels managers agree that personnel leader is the most important. Middle manager find the role of resource allocator to be the least important, while both first-line managers and top managers find this role to be the second most important.

From a statistical point of view, a top manager finds the personnel leader role significantly more important as compared to a first-line manager but not when compared to a middle manager. Statistical significance was studied using the t-test for comparing means (Hair et al., 2010).

Among the respondents, 80% were men and 20% were women. Differences in responses between male and female police managers are listed in Table 3. In terms of role importance, both groups emphasise the personnel leader role, while the greatest discrepancy between men and women can be found in the entrepreneur role, that female managers find much more important than male managers. Female managers spend much

less time on the monitor role than male managers. Female managers would like to spend more time on all roles except for the monitor role, where role time ideal is lower. The reluctance of women to spend time on the monitor role might be linked to their lack of role competence as indicated by the very low score of 3.70.

From a statistical point of view (Hair et al., 2010), the most significant difference between men and women regarding the personnel leader role, is that women would like to spend more time in this role by indicating significantly higher score on role time ideal. The difference in role importance depending on gender for personnel leader is not significant. This finding implies that female and male police leaders perceive this role as equally important.

Table 1   Measurement of leadership roles

Leadership role	Role importance	Role time actual	Role time ideal	Role competence
Personnel leader	5.68	4.68	5.50	4.68
Resource allocator	5.20	4.59	4.50	4.77
Spokesman	5.09	4.18	4.96	4.49
Entrepreneur	4.96	4.09	4.69	4.28
Liaison	4.96	4.07	4.86	4.21
Monitor	4.75	3.98	4.54	4.25

Table 2   Importance of leadership role depending on leadership position

Leadership role	First-line managers	Middle managers	Top managers
Personnel leader	5.32	5.67	6.46
Resource allocator	5.11	4.60	6.08
Spokesman	4.63	5.20	5.92
Entrepreneur	4.52	5.13	5.69
Liaison	4.89	5.13	4.92
Monitor	4.21	5.00	5.62

Table 3   Comparison of role importance for male and female police managers

Leadership role	Role importance		Role time actual		Role time ideal		Role competence	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Personnel leader	5.59	6.10	4.59	5.10	5.41	5.90	4.63	4.90
Resource allocator	5.11	5.60	4.57	4.70	4.37	5.10	4.80	4.60
Spokesman	5.13	4.90	4.11	4.50	4.87	5.40	4.51	4.40
Entrepreneur	4.78	5.80	4.02	4.40	4.56	5.30	4.36	3.90
Liaison	4.91	5.20	4.00	4.40	4.80	5.10	4.26	4.00
Monitor	4.83	4.40	4.13	3.30	4.59	4.30	4.37	3.70

6   Discussion

Both police districts have been through turbulent times in terms of frequent organisational changes. This might have influenced managers to become more people oriented in the personnel leader role. Also, newly promoted leaders seem to have more focus on personnel management than their predecessors. As Norwegian Police develops from a semi-military organisation to a knowledge organisation, more attention is paid to leadership and knowledge management.

However, it is interesting to note that respondents select the personnel leader role as most important while they select the resource allocator role as the top regarding their own competence. A possible explanation is that traditional police management has been concerned with decision-making where the police manager makes decisions about who should do what and when. This is very much in line with the resource allocator role. More recently, police officers in Norway have experienced empowerment, causing police managers to shift their main focus away from resource allocation over to personnel leadership. This recent shift from resource allocation to personnel leadership is also in line with the more recent thinking of transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership in modern organisations.

An important challenge in police management is to promote police integrity and accountability and to prevent police misconduct (UNODC, 2006). Integrity is defined as the quality of being honest and morally upright (OPI, 2007). Police integrity is an important element of what is called public integrity (Fijnaut and Huberts, 2002). According to Cossette (2004), the intention to deceive, even if difficult to determine, is a key element in this conception of misconduct. Accountability refers to situations in which someone is required or expected to justify actions or decisions (OSJI, 2005).

Leadership roles that focus on integrity and accountability include personnel leader and also monitor, because the monitor role emphasises scanning of the external environment to learn how the police and police service is perceived in society. When we look at leadership levels in this perspective, we see a growing awareness and importance of the monitor role from first-line managers (4.12) via middle manager (5.00) to top managers (5.62), where top managers report greater concern for the external environment than do managers at lower levels.

7   Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to present results from a survey of police managers in Norway on leadership roles. A questionnaire was developed and administered among police managers in two police districts in Norway. Six leadership roles were defined and measured in terms of their role importance, actual role time, ideal role time and managers' role competence. Respondents emphasised the role of personnel leader where the manager is responsible for supervising, hiring, training, organising, coordinating and motivating a cadre of personnel to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Among the respondents, 49% were first-line managers, 27% were middle managers, while 22% were top managers. How is leadership role importance dependent on management position? Generally, we see that higher-ranked managers find all roles more important than lower-ranked managers. Furthermore, at all three levels managers agree that personnel leader is the most important. Middle managers find the role of resource

allocator to be the least important, while both first-line managers and top managers find this role to be the second most important.

An important implication for practice from this study is the necessary shift from resource allocation to personnel leadership. This shift needs to find its reality in the actual time spent on the role. Furthermore, police managers need to develop their competence in personnel leadership as transformational leadership becomes more important than transactional leadership in law enforcement organisations.

There are several avenues for future research. For example, influences from demographic and position variables can be studied. The nature of management levels can be explored. Each finding needs to find its causal explanation. This is best done in exploratory research by interviewing some police officers at different ranks. Furthermore, findings from this study can be linked to normative approaches, i.e. what the situation in police roles should be. Finally, reference to categorise the service type and channel might be done (Ranta and Takala, 2007; Tinnilä and Vepsäläinen, 1995).

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