Pearls in Policing

Assignment 2023 - 2024

International Action Learning Group (IALG)

The Future of Policing: Fostering Trust and Legitimacy

How to foster trust and legitimacy – both on a strategic level and translated into your (IALG) local context – in the policing ecosystem of the future, effectively incorporating emerging technologies, and navigating the polycrisis age?

Police all over the world are facing more challenges today than at any other time in recent history. Complex and interrelated challenges today mark what some call a polycrisis[1] era where crises compound and exacerbate one another – changing demographics, climate change, environmental degradation, geopolitical instability, mass migration, technological advancements, cybercrime, misinformation/disinformation, economic instability, social unrest, and funding constraints, etc. All these are having profound impacts on our profession.

Strengthening trust and legitimacy is crucial for maintaining social order and fostering public cooperation as we confront this moment. This assignment aims to explore strategies that will foster *trust and legitimacy* in the policing ecosystem, in light of the rapidly evolving landscape of law enforcement, and new mindsets are introduced. The impact on both the community and law enforcement agencies should be addressed.

TRUST AND LEGITIMACY IN POLICING

Trust and legitimacy are fundamental pillars of effective policing. Trust is the foundation upon which police agencies are able to establish strong relationships with the communities they serve. When community members and private enterprises trust the police, they are more likely to cooperate, share information, and collaborate with law enforcement efforts. Without trust, cooperation and collaboration between law enforcement and the community become compromised, hindering the effectiveness of crime prevention and control efforts.

Legitimacy is the perception that the actions and decisions of the police are fair, just, and lawful. When the community perceives the police as legitimate, they are more likely to comply with the law, cooperate with law enforcement efforts, and actively contribute to the safety and security of their neighborhoods.

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[1] Homer-Dixon, T (2022 November). "What happens when a cascade of crises collide" *New York Times*. https://homerdixon.com/what-happens-when-a-cascade-of-crises-collide/ (Accessed 01 September 2023).

THE POLYCRISIS ERA WE FACE

The world faces a more complex range of social, geopolitical, economic, environmental, and technological threats, risks, and opportunities than at many points in recent memory. Effectively navigating these is key to the future of policing and to ensuring *trust and legitimacy* in our profession grows in the years ahead.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND THE POLICING ECOSYSTEM

Emerging technologies can play a force multiplying or a fundamentally destabilizing role in the policing ecosystem. Technologies, ranging from artificial intelligence and data analytics to biometrics and unmanned aerial vehicles, have the potential to enhance law enforcement capabilities, increase efficiency, and improve public safety. Many of these same technologies and others such as troll farms and encryption-by-default create equally damaging prospects.

Adoption of new technology in society, and in policing, must be carefully managed to ensure that these new technologies are not abused, and trust and legitimacy in our profession are not compromised. Several strategies for the effective integration of new technologies are relatively well-understood – establishment of transparent Policies and Procedures; adherence to clear ethical standards; collaboration and co-creation with the communities and the private sector; robust training and familiarization of officers; and continuous evaluation and adaptation. Deployment of these – and the right mix of them – is nonetheless a perennial challenge.

ENGAGEMENT OF ALL GENERATIONS

In tackling competing crisis, police around the work also face demographic challenges including attracting and engaging the next generation to our ranks. To this end, the strategies we adopt must innately appeal to the personal and professional aspirations and values of younger generations -- understanding their unique perspectives, their job requirements and their technology driven mindset. How best to manage the polycrisis era, while also designing recruitment plans and strategies to create a positive image of policing as a career, embracing a modernized approach, fostering an inclusive workplace culture, collaboration with academic institutions, and the provision of competitive incentives.

FORMAT

By tradition, the IALG assignment is always a complex one that tackles a wicked problem. The exercise is designed to encourage systems and future-oriented thinking. The IALG outputs should be grounded in:

• **Thinking creatively:** The IALG is encouraged to be bold and look for ideas and solutions outside the everyday. Unconventional, creative and future-oriented thinking is an essential part of this assignment.

• **Providing practical advice and tangible strategies or practices:** Although this assignment encourages the IALG to 'think big', the ultimate outputs should be clear and tangible. What deliverables can a police leader take home and immediately identify within their own organization?

• **Determine what works:** How are large organizations in other sectors tackling the same problems that the police will face in the future?

The IALG will present their findings to the delegates of the Pearls in Policing conference in 2024. In addition to the presentation, a "take-away" document that the delegates may share with their own police services will be provided.