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Angela L. Workman-Stark

Inclusive Policing from the Inside Out

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Preface

When you are a Mountie, you wear more than the uniform. You assume the identity of a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). I proudly wore the Mountie identity for more than two decades until my last day of work in April of 2016, when I retired at the rank of Chief Superintendent. Throughout my career I experienced many diverse opportunities that took me from patrolling western parts of Canada to money laundering investigations, undercover operations, criminal intelligence, recruitment, terrorism prevention, and finally to leading and guiding large-scale organizational change at the RCMP headquarters in Ottawa.

Although I enjoyed all the experiences in between, no role has had such a profound impact on me as when I was appointed to oversee the efforts of the RCMP to respond to serious allegations of gender discrimination, bullying and harassment reported by current and former female employees.

In late 2011 Corporal Catherine Galliford, the former spokesperson for the RCMP in British Columbia, was the first of a number of women who went public with stories of sexual harassment and bullying by male colleagues. In response to these allegations, and based on the outcomes of a gender-based assessment, the RCMP developed an action plan to address the culture and composition of the RCMP through initiatives that focused on harassment policies and practices, employee conduct, recruitment, mentoring, promotion processes, work-life balance, and creating respectful workplaces.

In the role of senior advisor, one of my first steps was to attempt to look beyond the symptoms of harassment to better understand the deeply rooted aspects of the RCMP culture and elements of the internal climate that needed to change. I searched in vain for a resource book that would better guide our efforts. Nowhere could I find a sufficient roadmap that would assist us in implementing meaningful changes—changes that would address root causes and not just symptoms.

I found myself reading everything I could find about bullying and harassment in the workplace, specifically as it related to policing. The more I read the more I began to challenge my own assumptions about the internal environment of the RCMP—assumptions about how people should behave and about who is in and who is out. I also found myself reflecting upon a particular discussion at my first

detachment when some of my colleagues were criticizing a former female officer who was successful in suing the RCMP for sexual harassment she experienced on the job. I do not recall their exact words but I do remember my response. I essentially joined them in condemning her for not being tough enough to fit in, for no other reason than it was simply easier to go along.

Alice Abernathy (now Clark) was her name. She joined the RCMP in 1980 and voluntarily resigned in 1987 after experiencing sexual and other forms of harassment from some of her male colleagues that caused severe stress and depression. In her lawsuit, she described having her performance assessed more harshly than her male colleagues, being subjected to unwelcome comments and pornographic material, being fearful that backup would not come when needed, and an overall sense of feeling unwelcome.

Recalling these criticisms about Alice and her lawsuit reinforced for me that my starting point in this new leadership role was to uncover my own conscious and unconscious biases from more than 20 years in policing. My first priority was to actively listen to the men and women who shared their experiences of being bullied, harassed and excluded in the workplace: men and women who suffered from low self-esteem, depression and even post-traumatic stress disorder as a result. I found their stories to be very powerful as they humanized their experiences rather than reducing them to a mere footnote in a report.

One of the first people I met with shared a story so egregious that I was unable to sleep through the night for weeks after we first met. Due to confidentiality concerns I can only say that she was sexually harassed and stalked by her first supervisor and completely vilified by her colleagues and even some senior leaders for daring to report the harassment. She now suffers from severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and I am doubtful she will ever fully return to work. It is her story that compelled me to better understand the experiences of others and the conditions in which such conduct is tolerated. It is her story that I continue to carry with me today.

It was not long after these initial meetings before other members reached out to me to share their stories and to solicit my assistance. On many occasions I just listened as the individuals did not want any further action taken. In others, I intervened where I could. Still in others, I felt powerless to do anything.

Someone recently asked me if I bear scars from this experience and I have to admit that I do. It has more to do with feeling both powerful and powerless at the same time. I was a high-ranking officer and should have been able to make more of a difference but in reality I had to concede that we might not have been ready to accept certain *cultural truths* about the organization and our roles as leaders. My point here is not a criticism; it is simply to acknowledge that organizational culture is a complex beast and one we need to understand better.

Building on my previous Ph.D. work I began to write. I wrote about women in policing and the police culture and how it is manifested in the ways that people interact with each other, in what behaviors are valued and even tolerated, and in the types of people that get ahead. I realized that the workplace issues were much more deeply rooted, requiring a better understanding of how policing has evolved since

its early origins and how this evolution has contributed to more bureaucratic structures and impersonal management approaches as well as the formation and reinforcement of a unique police culture and associated identity.

I also began researching, writing and teaching about creating a more inclusive police organization—an organization in which all people and all groups have a voice, are treated fairly and are included in decisions that matter. I soon acknowledged that I needed to write this book to support police leaders who are attempting to address workplace issues that lead to a lack of procedural fairness and the exclusion of people who do not fit in.

This book draws from my experiences in leading, researching, and teaching about organizational change; my extensive research on the police culture/climate, issues of identity and belonging within policing and building inclusive workplaces; interviews with serving and former police personnel; and from my work with police leaders who have initiated change in furtherance of a more inclusive environment. My intent in sharing these insights is to honor the men and women who entrusted me with their stories in the hopes that meaningful change can be undertaken.

This book is meant to be a consolidated resource for police practitioners and reform specialists and to also serve as a textbook for students in specialized seminars or topics within criminology and criminal justice programs. The first half of this book describes the numerous changes in policing that have helped shaped the police culture and organizational structures, the various divides that exist within police organizations, and issues of internal procedural fairness. The second half describes a process of change and the essential elements for building the foundation for change to occur.

In Chap. 1 I briefly cover the nature and evolution of policing as well as challenges faced in policing today. I then introduce the concept of police legitimacy and the recent actions of police officers wherein that legitimacy has been questioned. Police leaders have suggested that having more diverse officers can improve relationships with communities; however, in this book I argue that this is only part of the equation, as a greater focus on improving the internal police climate is also needed.

Due to the role of organizational culture in either supporting or impeding change, Chap. 2 examines the police occupational culture. The various cultures found within policing are also explored, such as those found between ranks, between functional units, between individual officer style, and even between organizations. I also discuss how the police culture has been modified over time through changes to policing philosophies and practices.

Chapter 3 begins with an introduction to the concepts of identity and belonging. Policing is often referred as having a *blue identity* that tends to reflect the traditional crime fighter and an officer in uniform, who is strong, hard working and defends the weak. In addition to a singular police identity, multiple identities may also exist in policing, such as ones that may be defined by tenure, rank and function, as well as those defined by membership in different groups distinguished by gender, race/ethnicity, or by sexuality. These latter identities are quite relevant given the necessity for police officers to carefully manage their diverse identities in order to

avoid being seen as a weak fit and excluded by their peers. Similar to the process of socialization presented in Chap. 2, I also explore how the police identity is formed over time.

Chapter 4 builds on the concepts of identity and belonging and examines the common barriers to inclusion within policing. These include conscious and unconscious biases and stereotypes; lack of networking and mentoring opportunities; organizational policies and practices such as those related to promotion, leadership development and flexible work arrangements; social status; and the police culture. While I acknowledge there are many men and women who have rewarding and positive careers in policing, the purpose of this chapter is to better understand the barriers that preclude some people from being able to enjoy a fulfilling career in policing.

In Chap. 5 I delve further into an exploration of organizational climate, primarily focusing on the creation of a justice climate in which people share common assessments about the fairness of treatment. The advantage of an internal climate that is perceived as fair and supportive is that organizational members are more likely to internalize the organization's values and behave in ways that are consistent with these values. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the precursors to justice climates in policing.

In Chap. 6 I begin with an introduction to the concept of inclusion and an expanded definition of diversity, followed by a discussion of the benefits of both. I describe the attributes of an inclusive police organization along with an organizational development model that depicts an evolutionary process from exclusion to inclusion. The second part of this chapter introduces a framework for building more inclusive workplaces in policing. A key requirement of this approach is that it focuses on restructuring the entire organization rather than attempting to fit *outsiders* into an existing culture.

Chapter 7 outlines the foundational elements for creating a culture of inclusion. This consists of conducting an in-depth organization assessment that examines employee's perspectives of the workplace and aspects of the internal climate such as values, structures and interactions between people. Leadership commitment, assessing and creating readiness for change through persuasive communication, employee involvement, and change leadership represent the remaining necessary elements of the foundation phase.

In Chap. 8 I propose an approach for designing a change process that is focused on creating a more inclusive workplace. In reaching this stage in the process it is assumed that senior police leaders have accepted the findings from the organization assessment that they have committed to a process of change and that important steps have been taken to create individual and organizational readiness.

Chapter 9 introduces inclusive leadership and its role in improving the internal dynamics of police organizations and interactions with the public. This is followed by an examination of conscious and unconscious biases about people that influence decision-making processes. I next explore inclusive team leadership, and more broadly, the steps that will guide police leaders through a process of embracing a

new leadership focus. Specific examples of inclusive leadership in action are also showcased.

The final chapter of this book focuses on an often-overlooked element of organizational change—monitoring and evaluating progress. This involves ensuring that what was planned is being accomplished and that planned interventions are achieving their intended outcomes.

This book provides an account of what I have learned both academically and experientially, and it is an important read for police leaders who are ready to undertake the challenging journey of creating a more inclusive workplace that promotes safety and acceptance and leverages the best of all members. This process starts with a willingness to ask the right questions about the experiences of people in the workplace and to be open to the truths that might emerge. Just because leaders might not have heard about specific workplace issues does not mean they do not exist. More often than not, people are looking for the opportunity to be heard, and a proactive approach to change is a better alternative to one that is generated from external sources.

The costs of workplace incivility are significant; victims are not only more likely to decrease their work effort, quality of work, and their level of commitment to the organization, they are also likely to mistreat others in the workplace and to take their frustrations out on members of the public. While these costs have a significant impact on police organizations, incivility against members of the public can have a much greater impact in terms of eroding perceptions of police legitimacy. Given the role of police culture in guiding the behavior of police personnel, it is the central premise of this book that inclusive policing begins from the inside out.

Ottawa, Canada

Angela L. Workman-Stark

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About the Author



Angela L. Workman-Stark is a retired Chief Superintendent from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. With more than 24 years of policing service, her experience has consisted of roles in general patrol, criminal intelligence, money laundering/proceeds of crime investigations, undercover operations, human resources, terrorism prevention, and organizational development. For much of the past decade she has held significant leadership roles in implementing organization-wide transformation related to organizational effectiveness, leadership and culture.

More recently, Angela was primarily responsible for overseeing the implementation of an organization-wide action plan in furtherance of the RCMP goal to effect significant cultural change relative to diversity and inclusion.

In her current role as Associate Professor, Organizational Behavior at Athabasca University, Angela teaches, undertakes research and consults in the areas of leadership and creating inclusive workplaces. Angela can be contacted at angelaworkmanstark@gmail.com.

Chapter 1

Introduction: A Basis for Policing and Inclusion

Abstract For many western societies, Sir Robert Peel’s principles have served as the framework for modern policing, beginning with the establishment of the London Metropolitan Police in 1829. Considered as relevant today as they were at their origin nearly two hundred years ago, Peel’s principles stipulate that the basic mission of the police is to prevent crime and disorder. The ability of the police to fulfill this mission is dependent on the cooperation and consent of the public, and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public trust and confidence. These principles require that the police provide service to all members of society without regard to race or social standing. Despite the many positive changes that have enhanced the professionalism of the police and introduced more modern management practices, attempts to reform the police may have inadvertently caused the police to move away from the spirit of Peel’s principles through bureaucratic structures, rigid performance management regimes and internal control mechanisms that reinforce the divide between the ranks and an “us against the world” mentality.

The authority and responsibility that is granted to the police permits the use of physical force in the execution of their duties. However, Peel’s principles imply that the police should only use as much force as is necessary. Notably, as the degree of cooperation from the public increases, the requirement for the use of force should simultaneously decrease. In democratic societies the methods utilized by police should also reflect democratic values.

A key aspect of Peel’s vision for policing was that it should remain a shared responsibility between the public and the police. Effectively, Peel called for the police to maintain such a relationship with the public that gives rise to the tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police. In a democracy the obligation of *doing police work* falls not just on the shoulders of a professional police force but also on every citizen. In an article published in the *Indiana Law Review* in 1953, the author states that: “we must come to regard the police not as our substitutes for police service, releasing us from any obligation, but as our trained specialized helpers...” [20]. More recently, New York Police Commissioner

Bill Bratton noted that Peel's principles inform a vision of collaborative policing that guides efforts to promote shared responsibility for public safety [38].

In this chapter I provide a brief overview of the evolution of policing and highlight the complexities of policing today. A key theme I discuss in the first section of this chapter is the necessity of police leaders to promote a more democratic and inclusive policing model that begins with the internal environment. Failure to embrace democracy in the workplace may also have contributed to internal and external issues of incivility and misconduct. Studies in the US and the UK have discovered a link between officer perceptions of fair treatment and public complaints of misconduct [7, 73].

I then introduce the concept of police legitimacy and specific actions of the police wherein the legitimacy of the police has been questioned. Increased diversity of officers has often been suggested as a means to address issues of incivility within the police; however, in this chapter I refer to diversity as a partial response only and identify the internal police climate as a more appropriate target for intervention.

1.1 Evolution of Policing

Since the inception of the modern police department there have been numerous examples where the police have been accused of not living up to the principle that public safety remains a joint responsibility between the public and the police. Instead of maintaining respectful and collaborative relationships with communities, the police have been criticized for incivility and racial bias, excessive use of force, and failing to sufficiently represent the communities they serve.

Part of the explanation for these issues has been the view that the police have adopted a military model of policing which has led to the creation of organizations that are:

centrally controlled and highly inflexible, characterized by top-down order transmission and bottom-up reporting; less creative and more intellectually rigid individual officers bound to tradition and regulations, unable to deal effectively with both the dynamics of modern policing theories and the communities they serve; and a more combat/enforcement-oriented force [15: 119].

Under more rigid structures officers tend to be controlled through heavy supervision, which can result in isolation and hostility between front line officers and senior ranks, and between the police and the citizens they serve. The outcomes are additional challenges to the legitimacy of the police and the implementation of additional reform efforts to address these challenges.

1.1.1 *Police Professionalism*

Many improvements to policing have tended to be described as professionalization, yet police professionalism was primarily focused on three core elements: crime

suppression, the application of objective and scientific procedures that are free from political influence, and the centralization of authority [53]. Police professionalism dominated police reform efforts for much of the 20th century in the US and influenced the evolution of policing in other parts of the world.

The new bureaucratic model, and the focus on a military style of discipline, became pervasive in the 1950s and 1960s through the emergence of bureaucratic police organizations that were resistant to change and isolated from the public [72]. To a great extent, individual officer discretion and autonomy were largely replaced with strict rules and an adherence to the chain of command for decision-making [42].

The influence of the military model on policing is particularly evident through the appearance of what is described as hyper-masculinity or military masculinity [6]. This form of masculinity is characterized by the use of force, physicality, hierarchy, superiority, courage under fire, and the suppression of feminine characteristics [12], such as displaying emotion or showing weakness.

Overall, the introduction of police professionalism has led to improvements in human resources practices through merit-based hiring practices and personnel evaluation standards, the implementation of modern management principles, increased training, reduced turnover, and greater opportunities for women and minorities within police departments [27, 71, 72]. These changes were not limited to the US alone. Similar shifts were also seen in other western democracies.

Notwithstanding these accomplishments, police professionalism may be best regarded as contributing to the creation of a more complex police organization governed by impersonal rules of procedure and a distancing of the police from the public [72]. Its management techniques have been characterized as more military than professional, and it has often been accused of reinforcing rather than challenging the racism and biases that exist in wider society due to its predominately white and male-dominated focus [59]. Police professionalism has also been blamed for creating more insular police organizations that are resistant to criticism [53].

1.1.2 Community Policing

By the end of the 1980s community policing was welcomed as a new era for policing due to its focus on improving police legitimacy through proactive partnerships with community resources to solve local problems [45]. Community policing also called for greater accountability of police, a greater public share in decision-making, and greater concerns for civil rights and liberties [17]. Community policing also reversed the three key elements of police professionalism as police organizations expanded their focus from crime control to a range of other goals that they selected and pursued in consultation with communities [53].

Accompanying the shift to community policing was the added understanding that the police gained their legitimacy, and therefore their authority, from the citizens they policed. Whereas police professionalism was about the “thin blue line”, community policing emphasized partnerships with communities [53]. The values

considered important to the public are the same values that should be considered relevant and important to the police in the performance of their function: ethicality, honesty, and fairness [56, 60]. Ideally, these are the same values that should be inherent within police organizations, yet these values are not always applied in practice. I will return to this issue in greater detail in a later section of this chapter and again in Chap. 5.

In an effort to achieve the objectives of community policing, law enforcement agencies have attempted to reduce bureaucracy, to decentralize decision-making, to eliminate layers of hierarchy, and to explore quality improvement programs [69]. External influences have also pressured law enforcement agencies to become learning organizations in order to adapt to the changing environment and to flatten organizational structures to allow for greater discretionary power and increased participatory management among officers. However, evidence suggests that many of these recommendations have been largely resisted [19, 49].

Aside from the shift in police focus, perhaps the most significant transformation associated with community policing has been the push to embrace different skills and qualities: from the hyper-masculine attributes of strength, power and authority; to those perceived as feminine, such as communication, empathy, compassion, trust and relationship building [24, 33, 34]. In this regard, community policing expected police officers to subvert traits associated with a militarized masculine culture and to instead develop cooperative relationships with the public [24].

Similar to Robert Peel's early principles for policing, community policing also promotes prevention over reaction, thereby further opening the door for women and other minority groups, who were previously not welcomed [45]. One of the central themes of community policing has been the pursuit of workforce diversity. Over the past few decades there has been a significant increase in the representation of women and minorities, although the growth of women in policing appears to be slowing of late [43].

Beyond the advantages of a more diverse workforce and enhanced relationships with communities, Stanford law professor David Sklansky [53] argues that the actual meaning of community policing has been too vague and too widely interpreted with many unanswered questions remaining. What does it mean to actually partner with a community? What are the roles of individual officers and of their supervisors? How do the police respond to competing views from different community groups about how the police should function and what they should focus on? And worse yet, what do the police do about a large percentage of the population that does not attend community meetings?

Relatively new policing models such as intelligence-led and predictive policing are seemingly replacing or overshadowing community policing, which effectively signifies a return to the three core elements of professional policing: crime control as the dominant function, scientific analysis as the determinant for enforcement strategies, and an emphasis on centralized and "top-down" decision-making [53]. For instance, upon his appointment to Commissioner of the RCMP in 2011, Bob Paulson centralized reporting and proclaimed "primacy of operations" as the core focus of the organization, which implied a greater focus on enforcement activities.

These changes present new challenges for police organizations in clearly articulating their mandates and the expectations for police personnel. In Chaps. 8 and 9, I will focus on the role of leadership in clarifying the direction of the organization and the roles and responsibilities of police personnel as an initial part of the process in creating a more inclusive organization.

1.1.3 Policing Today

The core functions of the police today are much more than controlling crime. They commonly include law enforcement, emergency response, maintaining public order, providing assistance to victims of crime, and crime prevention. Although traditional law enforcement activities often receive the most public attention, in reality the police respond to a variety of emergencies and personal crises, including crimes in progress, domestic disputes, public disturbances, motor vehicle collisions involving injury or death, sudden deaths (including suicides), episodes of mental illness, and locating lost children and vulnerable adults.

The police are also often called upon to notify family members of the death of loved ones and to look after people who cannot take care of themselves due to intoxication or mental disorder. In many of these instances the police will exercise their discretion and not pursue enforcement action, thereby making the role and effectiveness of the police difficult to measure [48].

Policing today is arguably much more than complex than it has ever been. The rapid spread of new forms of communication, increasing migration stemming from conflict in other parts of the world, growing income inequality, and the fragmentation of families and communities have created new threats and new criminal opportunities [26]. These changes present significant challenges for the police, such as: working across borders and effectively collaborating with a global police workforce; responding to new kinds of offences and new ways of committing them; engaging with rapidly changing communities and communities that are created and connected through social media; and meeting increasing public expectations for security and demands for non-traditional policing services at the same time as budgets are shrinking.

The new generation of police personnel is more collaborative, team-oriented, tech savvy, and appreciative of diversity as strength [41]. They are also more demanding of a workplace that is transparent, allows for greater input into decision-making, permits questioning of authority and challenging the chain of command, provides regular feedback, provides coaching and mentoring opportunities, places a greater value on balancing work and family, and generates instant feedback through social media and other forms of electronic communication—all of which are in direct contrast to the traditional paramilitary policing model [4]. This creates an additional challenge of attempting to attract new officers to a workplace that has not sufficiently adapted to meet changing expectations.

Economic pressures, increased public accountability and public scrutiny, the changing nature of demand for police services and the need to exploit significant advances in information and communications technology contribute to a new reality for policing and the necessity of police leaders to devise new ways of responding to these challenges and maintaining legitimacy in the process.

1.2 Police Legitimacy

Under a democratic system of governance policing is by consent of the people. Therefore, the police must be viewed as an extension of the community, and not some force acting against it [55]. A key value that is generally held by the public is their support for the legitimacy of the police [61], and the belief that the public has the right to call on the police and seek their assistance, to help combat crime, and also the obligation to obey and engage in cooperative behavior [61, 62].

Police legitimacy is determined through the trust and confidence members of the public have in the police to perform their duties, and it refers to the belief that legal authorities should be obeyed and that individuals should defer to their judgments [60]. An important aspect of legitimacy is institutional trust, which represents the public's belief that legal authorities are fair, honest, and that they will uphold civil rights.

In a democratic society the police depend on legitimacy as a means of securing cooperation, compliance and support from the public. If the public view the police as legitimate, they are more likely to provide the level of support and cooperation required for the police to effectively control crime and disorder [50]. Conversely, if the public no longer views the police as legitimate they are unlikely to assist the police with crime prevention activities, to be cooperative as victims and witnesses, to accept officers' commands and decisions, and to voluntarily comply with the law [18].

A primary mechanism for establishing police legitimacy is procedural justice—the fair implementation of laws and policies. Procedural justice generally consists of two key concepts: fair treatment and quality decision-making. Specifically, judgments about procedural justice are influenced by whether the police are considered as neutral and transparent; whether they explain their actions and seek input from community members before making decisions; and whether they treat people with dignity and respect [63]. Procedural justice is an essential element of positive police-community relationships as it communicates the message that an individual is a respected member of society and deserves to be listened to.

Being treated respectfully and having basic human rights acknowledged and considered is more important than the actual outcomes of decision-making processes. That said, police decision making processes must also reflect the concerns and values maintained by all groups that are affected by the process, and it must be applied consistently across all people at all times [31]. In other words, how the police do their work is just as important as what they do.