Article Type: Comparative review From: Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, Volume 34, Issue 1

When crisis strikes inside police organizations, affected communities, and political bodies invariably react with shock and concern. Task forces, review boards, and special commissions are empanelled to root out the evildoers and to restore public trust in the institution of policing. The organization in question frequently experiences forced leadership change as a solution: the new leaders are tasked with fixing the issues.

Maurice Punch and Jann Ellen Karp have each attempted to unravel the intricacies of police corruption. Punch has authored the book, *Police Corruption: Deviance, Accountability and Reform in Policing*, (Punch, 2009. Karp has penned an eBook titled, *Corruption and Crisis Control: The Nature of the Game* (Karp, 2008).

This review will examine the key issues of each book as they relate to modern policing. The cross-cultural utility of their work will be considered.

1 Corruption defined

Punch (2009) and Karp (2008) both draw distinctions between officer misconduct and police corruption. Karp (2008, p. 53) specifies that misconduct that involves misuse of power is corruption. Karp then illustrates misuse of power with a scenario in which an officer learning about corrupt actions of another officer and not properly reporting the corrupt acts. The use of the example does not deal with the underlying failure to operationally define the concept. The lack of such in both books inhibits the ability to develop research and inhibits the utility of the

books to those working to understand the static and dynamic variables that need to be addressed for change.

Karp (2008, p. 52) cites a 1985 definition of corruption provided coincidentally by Maurice Punch. The definition reads:

Corruption is when an official receives or is promised a significant advantage or reward (personal, group or organizational) for doing something that he is under a duty to do anyway, that he is under a duty not to do, for exercising a legitimate discretion for improper reasons, and for employing illegal means to achieve approved goals (Punch 1985, p. 103).

Karp proceeds to discard this definition because it does not reach far enough into police conduct. We will see that Punch modifies previously stated views on corrupt police behavior and offers up a revised definition.

Punch (2009, p. 31) muddles the concept "…corruption is not one thing as it takes diverse forms and can alter over time". Punch explains further that:

It relates centrally to abuse of office, of power and of trust and manifests itself in many ways but most frequently in consensual and exploitive relations with criminals, in discrimination against certain groups, in excessive violence, and in infringement of the rule of law and due process.

Punch uses a broad brush and paints a dire picture that police corruption is inevitable and pervasive within the law enforcement community.

2 Case study approach

Karp and Punch examine specific, notable corruption cases on three continents and predominately among English speaking organizations. They discuss some of the same topics such as the Knapp and Mollen Commissions in the United States, the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Britain, and the Wood Royal Commission in Australia. Karp explores the Wood Royal Commission in great detail; as New South Wales, Australia is Karp's home. Punch additionally explores corruption in the Netherlands. Neither author provides case studies related to police corruption in third world countries, Eastern Europe, Russia, or China. This lack of inclusion of a global view limits the ability to understand the contribution of underlying cultural factors and alternative responses. Readers are unable to assess the role of static and dynamic factors across cultures. This limits the ability to identify universal variables or the lack of such universals.

3 Police corruption: cyclical and unavoidable

Several common themes develop throughout the two works. Police corruption is cyclical; corruption is spawned from breakdowns in organizational functions, values, and deviance; police work is a unique environment in which to be employed, thus facilitating and harboring corruption; police organizations operate under well established and insidious "codes of silence" and that a unique police culture exists. Finally, corruption violates public trust.

Punch (2009, p. 57) noted that New York Police Department has been racked by major corruption scandals about every 20 years since the Lexow Commission circa 1894. The Lexow Committee uncovered police involvement in election fraud, voter intimidation, extortion, bribery, counterfeiting, brutality, and scams. Punch (2009, p. 85) further states:

A perusal of police corruption in the US leads to the conclusion that it is virtually endemic, pervasive, cyclical, shifting in form over time and often systemic.

Punch (2009, p. 157) goes on to explain that corruption in Great Britain is more sporadic than in the US and less organized. The lack of clear operational definitions leads the reader out on a limb. Is it the free donut that begins the cycle of corruption? Is everything one can imagine corrupt?

Karp (2008, pp. 4-5) provides a more thoughtful treatment of cyclical police corruption. The author proposes that the cycle of any policing organization consists of five parts: Operation of on-going policing; trigger; inquiry; police response; and community:

The cycle of corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon deeply embedded in the nature of police work. It is the work itself, rather than simply the corrupt behavior of some of the individuals doing this work, which can provide the fundamental key to the cycle.

The author goes on to apply in great detail how this plays out in New South Wales.

Punch and Karp discuss lessons learned from the notable corruption scandals, trends that consistently point to organizational failures at many levels. These organization failures as identified by the plethora of commissions consistently highlight supervision and leadership failures in the organizations. Changes are made and over time, organizations seem to slip back into similar scandalous conduct. In the chapter advising what to do about corruption, Punch (2009, p. 238) paraphrases the earlier quote pertaining to US corruption and generalizes it to all police corruption reinforcing the idea that police corruption is inevitable.

Both authors endorse the practice by treating police corruption differently from other types of corruption. Part of this difference from the authors' points-of-view is that codes of silence exist within the policing fields, and somehow, do not exist in other disciplines or at least the intensity is different. Neither author significantly discusses nor examines causes and perpetuation of corruption in the corporate world, financial industries, various military, religious, and political domains. More discourse around similarities and differences of police corruption and corruption within other realms would be useful to the reader. Is corruption a sign of the human condition, and hence inevitable: can, or do institutions exist corruption-free for a long duration? If such utopias exist, why has corruption not taken hold in those environments? Are there lessons from industry, business, or other institutions that might instruct readers on successful paths for intervening and holding the interventions over time?

Punch (2009, pp. 36-37) identifies police culture as having several elements, such as, a sense of mission; solidarity; danger and sacrifice; hedonism; excitement/action; "real" police work; etc. These are some of the elements that Gilmartin (n.d.) attributes to entitlement amongst law

enforcement ranks. The fact that police may view themselves as special, does not dictate that their deviant conduct should be held in any different light than say, the world banking industry. Doing so only perpetuates the subculture of entitlement.

Brewer *et al.* (1995, pp. 410-411) suggest that policy makers in police organizations are reticent at accepting performance and psychological studies that have not been conducted within police ranks. A similar ethos seems to be rampant on the three continents discussed. Is it possible to study and resolve police corruption in spite of the existing ethos?

4 Opinion

Punch and Karp tackle police corruption in direct no-nonsense styles, although Punch's style is more informal tone than Karp's. Punch uses terms such "bent cops" and offers a Knapp Commission categorization of police as, "grass eaters, meat eaters, and birds". These cavalier terms tend to trivialize a very sensitive and important area of concern. Punch's general approach to the issues of police corruption and deviance is thought out and detailed, resulting in a book that is relatively easy to read.

Karp uses terms like doxa, habitus and field. Karp goes to great lengths to reference theory and to propose charts and diagrams to assist in explaining concepts. Karp's book, however, is not without challenges. For instance, throughout Chapter 5, Karp relays anecdotes of actions and perceived failures of the New South Wales organization. Chapter 5 deviates from the general tenor of most of the book. We found the tone to be distracting from the overall work. One could view Karp's experiences as detailed examples of corruption at work within the ranks of department in which the author spent many years or the experiences of someone unhappy with their experiences in a particular department. The over-reliance on material from the author's department decreases the usefulness of this portion of the book.

Karp's (2008, p. 128) suggested changes to the policing philosophy are for the most part aimed at the New South Wales Policing Service. The author identifies a current structure consisting of 80 percent command and control, 10 percent innovation and 10 percent human error. Karp proposes to shift that model to 60 percent adaptive philosophy, 30 percent command and control, and 10 percent human error. The figures are arbitrary and the author does not offer documented research to support the recommendation. Karp falls short at offering a change model based on empirical information.

An area of concern that Karp does address better than Punch, is the idea that individual personal issues may affect deviance and police corruption. Karp attempts to illustrate that personal, emotional and psychological effects must be considered while assessing development of individual corrupt practices. It is the interaction and convergence of environmental forces with fragile interpersonal conditions that allow some otherwise honest police to adopt corrupt practices. Gilmartin (2002) suggests officers' internal hyper-arousal is not only a contributing factor to the entitlement concept, but also an influencing factor on some officers deviating from the righteous path to one of corruption.

One area both authors do not address is that of empirical research in the areas of prescreening techniques and instruments that police organizations. Do such tools work? Can they assist in addressing any of the static factors that underlie this cyclic pattern of corruption? Tools such as the Matrix-Predictive Uniform Law Enforcement Selection Evaluation Inventory (M-PULSE, Davis and Rostow, 2004) that focuses on agency liability risk may be useful. An in-depth approach that focused on this as well as other tools and approaches with an examination of the literature, would have been of great use to readers.

Walker *et al.* (2007) explain another emerging practice: that of Early Intervention Systems (EIS). Early intervention systems collect data on specific officer behaviors, analyze the data, and attempt to identify problematic officer behavior before it has gotten out of hand and overly troublesome for the organization, thus mitigating extreme liability. Common behaviors tracked are sick leave, use of force incidents, and community complaints. Once problematic areas are identified, interventions are initiated. A supposed strength of early intervention systems is that they rely on strong supervision. Supervision deficits and failures are exactly what Punch and Karp repeatedly identified as significant factors in many of the corruption scandals. Such approaches need to be analyzed and explored to focus on solution rather than just restatement of the problem of corruption.

Hughes and Andre (2007) discusses the function and role of personality assessment in screening for officers likely to exhibit misconduct. The author specifically opens the door in regard to using the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) in lieu of the long-standing use of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI).

Last, to reiterate the point, Punch and Karp clearly identify that police corruption seems to be endemic to the job at hand for police organizations and that corruption seems to be cyclic. Where is the review of research that exist and the development of specific directions which are needed to determine what factors contribute to this cycle in police organizations? Could institutional memory ebb and flow as attrition occurs with generations of officers in and out of organizations? Is it possible to evaluate and interpret organizational personality? Is organizational personality merely police culture or is there more to it? Can the cycles be controlled for or interrupted for extended periods? What roles do community expectations and interactions have on the cycles? How do organizations build institutional memory?

Mark E. Foreman and James T. Turner
California School of Forensic Studies, Alliant International University, San Diego, CA

References

Brewer, N., Wilson, C. and Braithwaite, H. (1995), "Psychological research and policing", in Brewer, N. and Wilson, C. (Eds), *Psychology and Policing*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, pp. 410–11

Davis, R.D. and Rostow, C.D. (2004), *Matrix-Predictive Uniform Law Enforcement Selection Evaluation Inventory (M-PULSE)*, Multi-Health Systems, North Tonawanda, NY, available at: www.mhs.com/product.aspx?gr=saf&prod=mpulse&id=overview (accessed March 5, 2010)

Gilmartin, K.M. (2002), *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*, E-S Press, Tucson, AZ

Gilmartin, K.M. (2010), "Ethics-based policing: undoing entitlement", p. 15, available at: http://emotionalsurvival.com/ethics_based_policing.htm (accessed February 15, 2010)

Hughes, F. and Andre, L. (2007), "Problem officer variables and early warning systems", *Police Chief Magazine*, Vol. 74 No. 10, available at: http://policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arch&article_id=1313&issue_id=102007

Karp, J.E. (2008), *Corruption and Crisis Control: The Nature of the Game*, VDM, Sydney

Punch, M. (2009), *Police Corruption: Deviance, Accountability and Reform in Policing*, Willan, Portland, OR

Walker, S., Milligan, S. and Berk, A. (2007), *Supervision and Intervention within Early Intervention Systems: A Guide for Law Enforcement Chief Executives*, available at: www.policeforum.org/upload/Chief%27s%20Guide%20EIS_246642045_1272006115525.pdf (accessed March 5, 2010)

Further Reading

Murphy, K.R. (1995), "Integrity testing", in Brewer, N. and Wilson, C. (Eds), *Psychology and Policing*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ, p. 205

O'Conner-Boes, J., Chandler, C.J. and Timm, H.W. (2003), "Personality tests do not indicate the potential for corruption", in Roleff, T.L. (Ed.), *Police Corruption*, Greenhaven Press, San Diego, CA, p. 81

57. Loo R. A typology of burnout types among police managers, Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 2004, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 156–165. 58. Adams G. A., Buck J. Social stressors and strain among police officers: It's not just the bad guys, Criminal Justice and Behavior, 2010, Vol. 37, No. 9, pp. 1030–1040. 63. Espinoza C., Ukleja M. Managing the millennials: Discover the core competencies for managing today's workforce, Hoboken, NJ, Wiley, 2016. 64. Hershatter A., Epstein M. Millennials and the world of work: An organization and management perspective, Journal of Business and Psychology, 2010, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 211–223.