

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICE AND CITIZENS: WHAT WE KNOW, WHAT
WE'VE DONE, AND WHAT CAN BE DONE

By

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Abstract

Bridging the Gap Between Police and Citizens: What We Know, What We've Done, and What Can Be Done.

There is a long history of distrust between police and citizens and there have been no meaningful and sustained steps to correct this situation. Death and injuries are sustained by citizens and police, but still there has not been a real attempt to prevent this occurring because there is no trust between police and citizens and this lack of trust has created a rift or gap between police and citizens and this projects aim is to address the gap.

Research into what causing damage and finding a way to repair the damaged relationship between police and citizens by way of finding approaches that tend to lead to trust between groups of people. Communication, a better ethics base for police, training and education, restorative justice, media, and the studying of social theories will help find a way to repair the damage.

A collaboration of all of the aforementioned categories will tend to help bridge the gap between police and citizens. It is believed that by addressing the issues and the roots of the problems between police and citizens, a new relationship built on trust will emerge. By having a more trusting relationship there will be less harm caused to police and citizens.

Key Words:

1. Police
2. Citizen
3. Trust-Building
4. Restorative Justice
5. Ethics

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Introduction

This author has been a Peace Officer in the state of Alaska with the Alaska State Troopers over seven years and during that time this author has worked in several environments. This author has worked patrol in city environments where his duties consisted of responding to calls of service, traffic enforcement, and typical police duties. This author has worked patrol in rural communities that were largely spread across several hundred miles of highway, and his duties consisted mostly of typical police duties with the addition of search and rescues. Finally, this author has worked in remote villages that can only be reached by airplane or boat, and access to these villages is largely dictated by weather. Besides environmental differences, his duties as a Peace Officer were basically the same. However, the one consistency that this author noticed at each location he worked in as a Police Officer was the gap between police and citizens.

The consistencies in each community were that police did not trust members in the community due to past wrongs; community members did not trust police due to past wrongs. These thoughts and feelings of mistrust were passed from one generation to the next, parent to children and senior officer to junior officer. Often this author has heard stories from more senior officers of the “good old days” when they were allowed to be more direct with citizens who were disrespectful with them, and how we (police) had to look out for one another because they (citizens) were, for all intents and purposes, against us. This is the same old “them” versus “us” mentality that has slithered its way into the minds of police and citizens alike and, if conditions are to improve, this must change. Citizens believe there is a “good ole boys club” only open to

members of police, fire departments, dispatchers, public servants, and, elites... whether that's a favored clan or those who control the "growth engine" (property, industry) in that community. Citizens should know that there is a "club" and they are welcome to join it because we are all a part of the same community.

Today, it is not uncommon for police officers to be assaulted and or killed by members of the public. It is also not uncommon for police to use higher levels of force against the public to gain compliance with the law. There are many factors that cause these incidents, which imply there are many factors that can prevent these incidents. The relationship between citizens and police can be mended and repaired through strong ethical values, communication, training, and Restorative Justice practices and methods. There has been a gap between police and citizens for as far back as policing goes and for many reasons, that gap is only growing wider. For instance, we "know" that this is the best generation there has ever been of officers who try their best not to use excessive force and do their best not to police in a biased manner. Despite us "knowing" this, perception is reality; however, our communities, aided by media reports, do not perceive the improvements that have been made. We need to find a new approach to policing that will help bridge this gap and bring citizens and police closer together.

In this paper, the author examines best practices and applies them to his experience gained as an Alaska State Trooper. In part, the author concludes that the police must take the first step in bridging the gap by receiving training. Topics should vary and be designed to provide police with the skills and knowledge to mend and heal relations with communities. Training in ethics, history, communication, use of force, and

community oriented policing will assist with this first step. Though police must take the first step, citizens must take the second step if trust is ever to be gained between the two because trust is a two-way street. Training is only one step of many that must take place because for anything to last, it must have follow-through and maintenance protocols. If this step is ignored, the gap will resume and become worse than before. The author will return to additional recommendations below, but first, he'll provide some background on the nature and extent of the problem

According to the Officer Down Memorial Page, 58 police officers were killed in 2016 and according to The Washington Post, 963 people have been killed by police in 2016. These numbers fluctuate from year to year, but people are still dying. Something must be done or people, both police and citizens, will continue to die. These numbers haven't fluctuated much over the past decades, but what have we done to address this issue? The answer is not much, and the little we have done has been fragmented, decentralized, and uncoordinated and leads to little or no results. This project suggests a more centralized, grand, and coordinated approach directed at the cause of these symptoms (deaths). Unlike modern medicine that focuses on treating the symptoms of an illness, this research will attempt to treat the cause of the symptoms. Medicine trains doctors to treat symptoms, but nursing and the public health model teaches people to care for their own health and to return to healthy living. That is what this paper is proposing. In law enforcement, officers have been more akin to being doctors, but in this paper, the author is arguing that police officers should become more like nurses. According to NANDA International, "a medical diagnosis deals with disease or medical

condition. A nursing diagnosis deals with human response to actual or potential health problems and life processes,” (nanda.org, 2017).

This project discusses the history of policing, social theories, restorative justice, ethics, communication, ways to build trust, and the effects of training and education in policing. The history of policing is researched to help find a basis for the study and a starting point. As the saying goes, “you can’t know where you’re going until you know where you’ve been.” We can learn from our mistakes and make better decisions. There are several social theories that may have answers to building trust between police and citizens that will be explored in this project. Restorative justice has shown success in other countries and this will be explored to determine why. Restorative approaches to crime tend to have better effects on citizens than retributive ones. Ethics is an invaluable lesson that can and must be taught to police, but the current ethics-training police receive is inadequate. Ethics training needs to provide room for more free thinking and decision /solving skills instead a list of “do’s and don’t’s.”

Trust hinges on communication for its continued existence. Without it, you have nothing. Given this, it behooves police to find better ways of communication with citizens, not just on the individual level, but the agency level as well. This means two-way communication, but, perhaps more importantly, communication is the tool by which we can engage the community to not only treat the symptoms of disorganization, but help them find solutions to improving community health. This project discusses ways to build trust. Education and training is a large portion of what modern day police agencies do to improve the quality of policing; consequently it will be one of the best ways to move large amounts of information and effect reformation on a large scale. This paper

identifies ways to begin working towards this goal, as well as to identify some working hypotheses for future research of this topic.

Literature Review

History of Policing:

Policing in America mostly started in two different ways with two different purposes. In northern states police development was similar to that of England with informal and communal design (Potter, 2013). Their duties consisted of night watchmen who mostly warned when impending danger was near. This was largely ineffective due to sleeping on duty, drinking on duty, and the fact that many people were forced into this service as a form of punishment or used it as a way to get out of military service. Boston created the first watchmen in 1638 and by the 1880s, all major cities had a formal centralized police agency (Potter, 2013).

In southern states, policing started as "Slave Patrols" which, as the name implies, had patrols for runaway slaves. The first Slave Patrol was created in 1704 in the Carolina colonies. Potter (2013) goes on to explain that Slave Patrols had three main objectives, "(1) to chase down, apprehend, and return to their owners, runaway slaves; (2) to provide a form of organized terror to deter slave revolts; and, (3) to maintain a form of discipline for slave-workers who were subject to summary justice, outside of the law, if they violated any plantation rules," (Potter, 2013). After the Civil War, these Slave Patrols evolved and changed their mission from apprehending runaway slaves to controlling freed slaves and enforcing Jim Crow laws which prevented freed-slaves from

basic freedoms by enforcing segregation and restricting access to political systems such as voting.

This is very important information because the very foundation of policing was built on, or at least can be viewed as being built on, either a tool for creating fear (Southern states) or primarily a civil warning mechanism (Northern states). By the 1830s, centralized and bureaucratic police forces were developing at an alarming rate, but there was no evidence that it was due to an increase in crime levels. Potter (2013) continues by indicating the change in policing from informal and communal was largely due to mercantile interests, which had a greater concern for social control than crime control¹. These industrial police were equally reprehensible as the slave patrols in the south.

In order for businesses to flourish communities needed social order and a way to maintain social order. Police history shows police were initially designed to serve the need of the community, even in the South, whether the need be right or wrong (Waddington, 1998). This has significance because, as stated earlier, by knowing where you started you can know where you are going. Sometimes that place may be back to the roots of things, in this case, community-driven policing as theorized by Kenneth Arrow. Kenneth Arrow (1950) suggests that one's beginning is one's ending in the theory known as the Arrow Theorem, also known as the Impossibility Theorem. The theory states "We start from here, from where we are, and not from some idealized world peopled by beings with a different history and utopian institutions. Some

¹ Williams, Hubert & Murphy, Patrick V., The Evolving Strategy of the Police: a Minority View, Perspectives in Policing, No. 13, January, 1990, U.S. DOJ

appreciation of the status quo is essential before discussion can begin about the prospects for improvements,” (Buchanan, 2000, p. XV). In the case of policing in America the beginning is community oriented policing.

The Coase Theorem adds to this line of thought by presenting the idea that all things will work out and become balanced in the end regardless of who has the most power, government or the people (Harrison, 1985). So regardless to who started out with the power and who ends up with the power, efficiency and balance will ultimately be the ending result. It should be noted that efficiency does not always mean equity. Now this begs the question, what does the community want from its police and how do we give it to them? Of course, this is not an advocacy for police to do whatever each community wants, but communities should have some say in how they are policed. Perhaps this is where communication comes in. In his paper titled, *A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures*, Charles Tiebout (2017) agrees that citizens should have more say in the goings of their community. Tiebout stated, “[e]xcept when this system [balance of power] is in equilibrium, there will be a subset of consumer-voters who are discontented with the patterns of their community,” (p. 420).

Note there are many more contributing factors to the history of policing going back hundreds of years that helped shape modern day police. Understanding this will ensure readers of this project are not under the impression that police were created with the sole purpose of tormenting or oppressing. J. Robert Duke (n.d.), in his unpublished paper titled *Seven Habits for Effective Policing: Using the dispute resolution toolbox*, posits that the inception of police started in the Aftermath of The Glorious Revolution in 1688 when William and Mary were offered the throne with the condition that the English

Bill of Rights be instated and the Seditious Act be repealed. With this came a stronger rule of law, property rights were strengthened, and governments had more accountability. With this more "fair" government, new businesses were allowed a fighting chance instead of being shut down because a merchant or lord had favor with the monarch.

Eventually, this set the foundation for the Industrial Revolution and with that came the need for social order. However, the military was not the answer and Sir Robert Peel of England observed this and created the first true police officers that American police officers are modeled after today. Unlike military soldiers, police were members of the community. While the military soldiers were bound to the federal government, police were bound to the community and that came with less power and more rules. However, it also comes with the respect of the people and a more legitimate authority than a military presence could have ever hoped to achieve.

Of course, American history has had a huge impact on the direction that led to modern day policing. The Progressive Movement (1880-1920) and the Civil Rights Movement (mid 1950s to late 1960s) greatly influenced what police do today. Police went from an intensive political/community oriented approach, which caused corruption due to political ties, to an intensive professional approach that largely cured corruption but alienated police from their communities. Many citizens feel police are becoming more and more militarized as time goes by. In addition, the terrorist attacks on the World Trading Center on September 11, 2001, had a role in directing police into a more paramilitary force due to constant threats of terrorist activity.

In more modern times, police have vehicles, radios, and computers all designed to help them catch criminals through reactive and proactive policing strategies. Mark Moore and George Kelling (1983) suggest that modern policing is largely ineffective and is partially, if not fully responsible for the gap between police and citizens. “[Police] reject citizen requests for simple assistance so that they can get back ‘in-service,’ that is, back to the business of staring at the community from their cars. No wonder so many citizens find the police unresponsive,” (Kelling, 1983, p. 64). Kelling also co-authored the Broken Windows Theory, which played a significant role in the creation of zero-tolerance and stop-and-frisk. These tactics are famously known to be used in large agencies such as New York Police Department. According to Richard Curtis (2012), “if small infractions are policed aggressively bigger crimes will not be committed,” (p. 243). Some are of differing opinion.

The American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) suggests that police should have less interaction with citizens in order to create a more just society, (aclu.org, 2016). They feel police should essentially respond when called upon much like that of firefighters. There would be benefits to a police force like this because citizens see less of police officers and therefore have less to complain about in regards to police brutality or use of force. However, many more citizens would have complaints about the lack of police presence. Police presence can make citizens feel like their community is safer even when statistics show no difference in crime rates. This is similar to victim satisfaction and perhaps can be called community satisfaction.

Social theories/ trust in police:

There are two main social theories this paper will examine and those are social integration theory and social capital theory. According to Emile Durkheim (2010), social integration refers to the ties that bond members of a community to one another through family, religion and moral solidarity. "Social capital theory posits that social capital's social relations matter in forming social assets, such as trust, norms of reciprocity, and civic engagement," (Ugur Sen, 2010, p. 9). Social capital is built through interpersonal interactions with ones' friends, family, and community. Symbolic interactions such as gestures also contribute to building social capital.

Elizabeth N. Sikes (2014) paper on social integration and its effect on trust in police suggest that the more one is socially integrated with their community, family, and friends the more they tend to trust the police. Sikes' study went on and found that the more money one has the more one trust the police. If citizens had closer bonds with their communities and the people in that community there, trust levels towards the police would improve. By increasing the amount of money one has at their disposal, their trust levels would tend to increase with police as well. Sikes' study also showed that minorities tend to have less trust in police than that of Whites. However, social integration and social status were more influencing than race and ethnicity in predicting citizens' trust levels in police. Sikes' research suggests that increasing social integration with citizens would increase trust between police and citizens.

Tabatha Johnson (1993) states that,

"police, more than any other public service agency, must have the support of the community if they hope to effectively perform their roles as service

providers and crime fighters. Police work is mostly reactive...without the support of citizens and their willingness to come forward with information, the police would be incapable of doing their jobs on a day to day basis," (1993, p. 2).

The relationship shared between police and citizens are symbiotic in nature; one cannot survive without the other. Johnson's study posits that victims are the key points of contact that tend to improve or lesson the trust and confidence in police.

The relationship between victims and police, "is very tenuous" due to reports of crime being met with uncaring, unknowledgeable, and poor results, all of which tends to leave victims with a dampened feeling of satisfaction with the police. Johnson's (2003) study suggests that citizen initiated contact with the police, specifically victims who report criminal acts taken against them are the most important factor in building trust in police. Johnson believes trust can be rebuilt between police and citizens, but only with hard work and determination from all parties and also with training for citizens to educate them on police crime fighting reasoning.

While Johnson makes some very good points, it should be recognized that when resources are put into one incident they are taken away from another, which in accordance with J. Robert Duke (n.d.), brings about a paradox. This means that if police put all of their time and effort solely into reported crimes and victims of those crimes, police business will favor the ones who call and report crime. This would be a tragedy because many violent crimes are deterred by police presence (Chalfin et al, 2012). It is common knowledge that the majority of crime goes unreported so putting most of police

efforts into the reporters of crime is taking police services from other people, neighborhoods, and communities that need police services perhaps even more so than the ones reporting crime.

Ugur Sen (2010) studies on social capital suggests "social networking and social trust positively influence individuals' trust in the police in the United States," (p. vi). Citizens need to have a vested interest in their community if trust is to be built between citizens and police. Police should not be the only ones interested in reducing crime and creating safer communities. Sen went on to study the relationship between social capital and trust in policing which concluded that very little is known about this particular area of study, but social capital tends to breed more trust in police than no social capital. Needless to say, trust is a pivotal part in bridging the gap between police and citizens.

Charles Rowley (2012), in his work titled, *The intellectual legacy of Gordon Tullock*, states that Tullock recognized "that individuals fear the imposition of external costs upon them by government... [and] challenged head-on the Platonic model of beneficent government that then dominated the political science literature." Citizens have always feared government over reach of power, but by including citizens in the functioning of their community, particularly the policing of it, social capital is being created. Trust is the byproduct of social capital as Ugur Sen posited.

Paul Joseph Figueroa (2012) found that if police officers showed concern, competency, and integrity they would build trust between themselves and the communities they serve in. Figueroa concluded that trust-laden police organizations must maintain a constant effort to have trust building policies. The U.S. Department of

Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) believes that each community's view of police depends greatly on the department in their community. Police interactions, accessibility, and management are the typical ways citizens make their judgments about police. This means that even though one police officer in a different part of the country conducts themselves unethically, it won't necessarily ruin the good efforts made by police in another community. The "devil is in the details of everyday interactions... As long as someone is committed to the care and feeding of personal interaction, governance is healthy; but, when even one party became selfish or divisive, the entire operation of a city or county could fall to pieces—usually for several years afterwards," (Duke, 2003). This project would add that in order to build trust between police and citizens, trust must first be gained between police and police leadership. Having faith and respect towards one's employers tends to create an environment of high morale that will show in work performance.

When study on trust between police and citizens is evaluated, there is a perspective that I believe has not been touched upon and that is leadership and trust; Police are leaders in the communities they work in. David Mineo (2014) posits that, "trust is the glue which binds the leader to her/his followers and provides the capacity for organizational and leadership success," (p.1). Police taking the first step in building trust in the communities they work in will forge a relationship that can endure human error or misinformation often presented by the media. The dynamic existence of police will always present situations that do not sit well with communities, but if communities had trust and understanding in the police, progress in addressing the real problems can be made.

Another way to help build trust is building confidence. It has been this author's experience that police tend to focus on one problem at a time, the situation at hand. A police officer is dispatched to a call and they deal with the incident. This would be referred to as "rowing" by Janet and Robert Denhardt meaning the focusing on the problem directly in front of you and not the future ones ahead. The Denhardt's are proponents of "steering" which they contend helps one recognize "a wide range of possibilities and striking a balance between resources and needs, rather than rowing, concentrating on a single objective," (Denhardt, 2007). Police could help steer the public into taking control of their own futures and conflicts by providing them with the skills they need to do so. Every police contact with a member of the public is an opportunity to effect change, but contacts that don't have the loom of law enforcement (citizen committed a crime or violation) could have a better effect. To this end police should be looking at ways to get the public more involved in the police department, perhaps a civilian branch in the police department.

Restorative justice:

Jeff Latimer et al. (2005) wrote that, "the fundamental premise of the restorative justice paradigm is that crime is a violation of people and relationships rather than merely a violation of law" (p. 128) Citizens and police view criminal behavior as an act against the law more so than the people who are affected by it. Sure, they understand that people are negatively affected by crime, but that is more of an afterthought, which is displayed mainly through the court process. Victims are treated as witnesses to their own victimization. So, a criminal might view getting away with crime as a victory over the police and the criminal justice system more so than a getting away with a wrong

towards a member of their community. The criminal might not grasp the fact that their actions go far beyond the actions of their crime, but has a lasting effect that breeds mistrust and fear in the community. Police might view crime as a violation against the law they swore to uphold, but the community must be considered a victim of crime as well. However, if citizens and police viewed crime from the same perspective then trust could be built.

Australia and New Zealand are world leaders in the Restorative Justice realm and have had great success. Australia has fully embraced Restorative Justice practices in juvenile and adult settings. Practices such as victim-offender mediation, circle sentencing, and conferencing are used in Australia. Jacqueline J. Larsen's (2014) study suggests positive impacts for offenders and victims in terms of reoffending, victim satisfaction, and offenders taking responsibility for their criminal behaviors. There have been implications with starting pilot programs and having low referral rates from the courts. For the most part, mixed outcomes are the results. This is because looking at restorative justice from a "numbers" standpoint doesn't capture the essence of what Restorative Justice is. Recidivism rates are slightly better in Restorative Justice than that of conventional means, but victim and offender satisfaction is many times greater (Larsen, 2014).

Satisfaction with the results of the criminal justice system can go a long way in bridging the gap between citizens and police even if crime rates are the same. Adam Graycar (2001) observed that victims' fear and anger are reduced after going through Restorative Conferencing. Citizen satisfaction with their justice system is much higher

with Restorative Justice than that of the current criminal justice system. That alone should be of interest and will definitely help bridge the gap between police and citizens.

Many Restorative Justice practitioners believe Restorative Justice is more effective when used with juveniles than it would be with adults. The US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP; 1998) wrote a guide for implementing the Restorative Justice model. The study suggests prevention is better than treatment after crime has been completed. Crime can be prevented by taking actions that make committing crime more complicated such as Target Hardening, increased security, or after school programs; "The opportunity to commit offenses is restricted by community surveillance or by involving known juvenile offenders in structured, supervised, and productive activities" (ojjdp.gov, 1998). The chart below shows that prevention is more effective than dealing with crime after-the-fact.

Table 3. Range of Community Safety Interventions for Use by Juvenile Justice Professionals

Type of Prevention	Strategy	Goal	Cost Effectiveness
Tertiary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incarceration. ▪ Surveillance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electronic monitoring. ▪ Tracking. ▪ Random drug testing. 	Reduce short-term juvenile offending	Low cost effectiveness.
Secondary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuum of graduated sanctions: "progressive offending response system." ▪ Structuring juvenile offenders' time in competency development, reparative activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Natural surveillance" and community guardians. ▪ Employers. ▪ Educators. ▪ Relatives. 	Reduce long-term offending	Medium cost effectiveness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentors. 		
Primary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community problem solving. ▪ Mediation and dispute resolution. ▪ Capacity building. ▪ New roles and leadership experiences for all youth. 	Prevention	High Cost Effectiveness

Redlands Police Department, California, developed Risk-Focused Policing at Places (RFPP), which is described as a community-oriented policing program. The program focused on juvenile delinquency and attempted to find ways to prevent criminal behaviors in youth. RFPP used place-based policing to help address and prevent juvenile delinquency. Place-based policing suggests that the, “crime situation and the opportunities it creates play significant roles in the development of crime,” (Weisburd et al, 2008, p. 165). This essentially means that certain places tend to receive higher volumes of criminal activity and focusing police services on those places can help prevent crime. Weisburd’s et al (2008) logic coincides the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention that would likely have high cost effectiveness.

It is common knowledge that children are more impressionable and willing to change their beliefs than adults. If there is going to be a chance for a successful, trustful, lasting relationship between police and citizens than there has to be an outreach to the youth in the community. There have been attempts in the past to exercise this train of thought, but without any major success. Police organizations such as the Los Angeles Police Department and New York Police Department have seen the importance of targeting youth members in the community and building social

attachments between youth, police, and community. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Crime Prevention state, "Restorative community safety practice is based on the belief that youth who have strong connections to their communities and who care about the people in their neighborhoods are less likely to offend" (ojjdp.gov, 2017) This holds true regardless of age, race, gender, and religious belief. Children are the future and what we do today will have a direct result to the future of our communities.

Ethics:

Ethics are crucial in rebuilding the relationship between police and citizens. Currently, police receive training on ethics that has a heavy focus on following the rules with little thought required. Some might refer to these ethics as principle based ethics. Guidelines of "do's and don'ts" are provided, but no real training is provided on the subject of ethics. There is no free thought and decision-making skill provided to assist with situations that occur infrequently and have no established protocol. I agree with Felicia Wilczenski (2011) in that it is important for police to have, "honorable motives and adhere to an ethic of care that goes beyond the basic legal/ethical principles incorporated in professional codes" (p. 3). Wilczenski goes on to suggest Virtue Ethics encourages one to use other-regarding perspectives, meaning seeing things from the perspective of citizens and not just the perspective of the officer. Understand that virtue ethics should not overrule law or policy, but there are many "civil issues" that police deal with on a day-to-day basis and virtue ethics may assist.

To add to the Virtue Ethics proposed by Wilczenski (2011), I once again call upon the writings and tutelage of J. Robert Duke (n.d.), Assistant Professor at University

of Alaska, Fairbanks. There are situations that police deal with on regular basis where doing nothing is better than doing something even if doing nothing goes against current policy or law. This was coined the name "Beneficial Corruption" by Duke. Beneficial corruption differs from other forms of police corruption due to its inherent nature of correcting injustices, enhancing governance capacity, and advancing community concerns.

Duke borrows his theory from Nas, Price, and Weber's economic theory. In short, they assert that there are three conditions under which regulations might be set aside. These are: 1. When a clear case of injustice will result for a particular individual or group as a result of rule enforcement; 2. When a group, by nature of their lack of knowledge, resources, or other conditions lacks access to the levers of power where they would likely find some sympathy for their interests as these relate to a particular rule(s); and/or, 3. When social norms have evolved more quickly than has formal rules/laws.

In any of these cases, the law or rules might be relaxed, ignored, or set aside. Duke argues that this sort of analysis is preferable to the current condition where departments empower officers to use "discretion" without clear guidelines as to what this means. Duke asserts that unbridled discretion is a slippery slope that has contributed to many temptations of power and corruptions. Better by far to define discretion within the context of "follow the rules, except when you can make findings that a relaxation of the rules is necessary to uphold the interests of reasonableness and human dignity (see Newland below for more on this idea). In the next section, I cite an

example of what this author's agency, the Alaska State Troopers, does in a similar situation as what has been outlined here.

At first glance it seems unreasonable to even consider such lines of thought, but after looking deeper underneath the surface it seems to make more sense. With more consideration one realizes that this already happens in policing. It has been the experience of the author of this project that police agencies in Alaska do not investigate minor crimes or infractions such as underage drinking, traffic offenses, and in some cases driving under the influence of alcohol when the offender of these minor crimes is reporting a more serious crime such as assault, sexual assault, or domestic violence crimes. The reasoning behind this, as learned through casual conversation from practitioners in the fields, is because the state does not want to discourage victims of crimes to be afraid to report their victimization due to fear of punitive action from the state. This most certainly shares characteristics with beneficial corruption; it helps correct injustices, enhances governance capacity, and places community concerns first.

Ryan Johnson (2013) indicates that teaching ethics based on negative examples such as case law where the officer made a mistake can have a more negative effect on learning. Ryan is of the opinion that a positive approach to learning ethics or at least a more balanced one will be better for the officer's confidence in doing their job. Police officers are taught ethics through many examples of the mistakes of other police officers so they learn very well what they should not do. Many officers have shown reluctance in action because they were more afraid of the legal ramifications than the immediate ones. Not much time is spent on what officers should be doing except for "follow policy"

and “enforce the law.” A more positive view on ethical decisions made by police officers would help officers know “what to do” and not just “what not to do.”

Edward Gabriele (2011) uses the term Lexification, which “is a process wherein individuals or groups strip the law and regulations of their essential complexity (in fact, their beauty) in favor of a rigid oversimplification that does not respect the need for adaptation, interpretation and even consultation with those who really are the experts in the law itself” (p. 94). Gabriele goes on to state this is because, “Some institutions insist upon high metrics of productivity that force ethics structures to adopt procedures that are swift and seemingly easy” (p. 94). A good example of forced ethics structures in policing is mandatory arrest laws or ticket quotas. “In some other instances, the human tendency to self-aggrandizing power can become a harmful factor that undermines and/or might even contradict actual ethical discernment,” (Gabriele, 2011, 94). An example of this would be police writing frivolous citations to citizens that displease them during a traffic stop, “the attitude test.”

Amartya Sen (2009) believes that ethical justice must change from the perspective of the organization (government) and include perspectives from the people who live with the rules of justice (citizens). *Niti* and *nyaya*, “the term *niti* are organizational propriety and behavioral correctness... The term *nyaya* stands for a comprehensive concept of realized justice,” are used to describe how justice from that of the government may seem fair, while in reality (at least from the citizens point of view) justice is not so fair. Differences of perspective are one of the main reasons that distrust and discord exist between police and citizens. Of course justice solely from the perspective of government or from that of citizens would only fail, but a collaborative of

the two, as suggested by Sen, would be better. People need rules to live in a healthy and productive society, but people should have a say on what those rules are.

The Original Position used by John Rawls (1985) as an unbiased focal point can be used when deciding the fundamental principles of justice. To achieve true objective decisions one must clear their minds of self-identities and ideals such as gender, race, social standing, and life's teaching and then view true justice. This is known as the "Veil of Ignorance." It is common knowledge that our justice system or any justice system for that matter is based on morals and ethics of current society to some degree, however morals and ethics are subjective and learned from life experiences. Judgments and decisions are going to be clouded by these learned things, but with a veil of ignorance objectivity can be more easily reached. Ethics and morals are subjective, but a veil of ignorance can add some objectivity.

Communication:

Alan Goodman (1989) conducted a study on how effective communication skills were in lowering citizens' complaints and the results were positive. Officers who received training in communication skills to help deal with "provocative" citizens received fewer complaints than those officers who did not receive communications training and this was all due to a 1-day training session. This study helps show that communication is important when rebuilding a trusting relationship with citizens. Many Alaska State Troopers spoken to by the author of this project indicate that taking a few extra minutes to talk to someone and explaining their options and the situation usually helps prevent physical altercations. The phrase "talking someone into handcuffs" is

often used in the police world because police have learned that effective communication is key to gaining willful compliance.

This author would contend that effective communication works both ways and one must listen in order to attain true communication, in other words communication must be two-way. In any given community there are far more citizens than police officers, so citizen complaints must be investigated and the complainant must receive an in-person or telephonic contact from supervisors in response to the incident. If results are not what the citizens expect than careful explanation should be provided to the citizens on why that is. This is where audio and video footage such as body-cams, of police-citizen contacts are convenient.

Gail Zeman (2009) in her article, *Communication: A Two-Way Street*, stated, "If you speak, write, or otherwise communicate with an audience that doesn't hear, read, or understand, it's as if you didn't communicate at all. Worse, members of the audience might take away a message that you never intended" (p. 35). After doing police work in a city environment, highway/ small town community environment, and a village environment, it has been the personal experience of the author of this project that knowing your audience is crucial to affective communication and gaining lasting compliance, not just immediate compliance. Lasting compliance meaning you've communicated in such a way that all future contacts with the previous contacted citizen(s) are more positive due to the initial foundational communication work with that citizen(s).

Valerie Barker et al. (2008) found that police communication accommodation

(talking in a way that is more common to the citizens you're contacting) has a direct influence on the trustworthiness citizens feel towards police. In other words, if police accommodate their communication in favor of the citizens they are talking with then citizens will tend to find police officers trustworthy. Baker's (2008) study indicated communication, "accommodation was key in predicting perceived trust in police which, in turn, influenced willingness to comply" (p. 96). Compliance is the ultimate goal, and indeed the purpose, for police officers. Compliance with rules, laws, and regulation, verbal commands of police, and social norms are what makes a society work. Society cannot endure without compliance.

It is quite clear that communication is key to a good relationship rather than be personal or professional. This is also true with the relationship between police and citizens. Citizens will have to understand that their communication towards police officers will have reactions. Many police officers use what has been termed the "attitude test" to determine whether or not a citation or ticket should be issued to citizens during traffic stops and studies have shown that citizens who have less respect and more attitude when talking to police have higher probabilities of being arrested. Traffic stops are the most frequent form of police and citizen contact according to Matthew R. Durose et al (2005) and therefore has a huge impact on what the average non-criminal citizens feel and think about police. Citizens should be reminded that treating police with dignity and respect will help maintain a lasting relationship between community and police departments.

Training and education:

Michael K. McHenry (n.d.) in his paper, *A Need For Change: The Importance of Continued Training and Education for Modern Day Police Officers*, contends that police officers require consistent training to stay up-to-date on modern policing and threats from modern criminals. Formal education is strongly recommended for police officers as well because society as a whole is becoming more formally educated and the police officers have a responsibility to be able to work in the modern world. There are technological advancements that help police conduct their jobs that were not available less than a decade ago. An example is search and rescue tools. A modern Smartphone has the ability to send it's coordinates to another cell phone with the click of a button, yet not every police officer knows of this basic function of smartphones.

It is not uncommon for people to apply for and work as police officers in neighborhoods, cities, and even states that they did not grow up in. This inherently means that the police will have very little if any understanding of the people they are sworn to protect and serve. Their perspective is completely different from the citizens of the area they work in, thus there is no common ground. This ignorance that the people police are supposed to serve have has made building a trusting relationship between police and citizens difficult. A great example of that is the Alaska State Troopers².

Many of the troopers come from the lower 48 states and of those that are from Alaska, the vast majority have never lived in any Alaskan Native Villages. Cultural

² Of course, being familiar with a neighborhood means that you're also known by the neighborhood. This means they remember when you made mistakes as a child, and, thus, expect that you wouldn't arrest them for similar mistakes. The hypocrite accusation can be a very powerful and corrupting problem for the "local kid made good". It also means that you're related to some of them and they may expect leniency or other favors. But, most of all familiarity invites intermingling and relationship building that can interfere in unbiased policing. I have personally observed this situation transpire with VPSO's (Village Public Safety Officers) that work in the villages they grew up in. When assisted by these VPSO's in police matters, the arrested person would mention past deed of the VPSO and feel it's unfair for them to go to jail when the VPSO has done the same thing in the past. For a more complete discussion of this problem see Daryll Gates book: *Chief: My Life in the L.A.P.D.*, Bantam, 1992.

differences, such as simple things like signs of respect are often misinterpreted by newer troopers and more senior troopers (having learned this lesson) have to explain it to those not familiar. Alaskan Natives don't typically look one in the eyes when talking because in accordance with their upbringing, it's a sign of disrespect. Typical American adults are taught that not looking someone in the eye when talking to them is a sign of deception. One can see how this could be problematic in building a trusting relationship.

Amartya Sen (2009) states that, "Lack of smartness can certainly be one source of moral failing in good behavior" (p. 32). "Smartness" refers to lack of understanding or lack of education on certain subjects before acting. Making decisions on how to deal with the public from an ignorant standpoint only serves to hinder any progress towards rebuilding relations. Cultural awareness and sensitivity training can assist with ignorance. The same stands true when the public deals with police. Educating police on the history and cultural makeup of the area they are assigned to work in can be the difference of a fruitful prospering relationship and a doomed one. Educating citizens on police history and an emphasis on what police are doing to make things better can have lasting effects on what citizens think about police. Most citizens' only knowledge of police is what they are told by other citizens or what they see on television.

The term "knowledge is power" is said for a reason. Modern policing is much more complicated than it used to be and it is likely for this complicated profession to become more so in the future. McHenry stated, "Without knowledge, one will be ineffective, unproductive, and unable to accomplish tasks at maximum efficiency" (p. 3). There is no task more important than improving the relationship between police and citizens so actions should be taken to create the most solid of foundation possible.

Simple things such as attending Town Hall meetings, creating Citizens Academies, and raising awareness to National Night Out³ can help improve the relationship between police and citizens by making information more readily available to the average citizen (cops.usdoj.gov).

Media and technology:

The media has a large role in everyday police business and in some ways shares the blame in why police are less trusted by communities today than in the past. The media can also play a role bridging the gap between police and citizens. According to Jarrett Lovell (2002), “[a]s mass media are the primary image builders in contemporary society, an ability to shape the contents of media has become central to impression management... and public relations and the dynamics of police-media relations shift during times of police-involved accidents or scandal” (p. iv). There is no doubt that the media wields mighty power in direct imaging and opinions in public eye, but what happened in the last decade that put police in such a bad light with the public? It is posited by this project that easy access to the media with devices such as smart phones and tablets are the reason.

We must also consider that this increased media accessibility has altered the way news is consumed and the way opinions are formed. Does the “new media” make it easier for the formation of “folk devil” ideology and the larger “moral panics” associated with these ideas?

³ National Night Out is a community-police awareness-raising event in the United States, held the first Tuesday of August.

Stanley Cohen first identified this condition in his 1972 book, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. In this research, Cohen makes a convincing case for the use of media and information by different class groups to manage social politics, or the competition for scarce resources and power. In other words, the poor use mostly information sources, but also limited use of exchange processes to upset the current status quo. As the group most likely to lose out in a changed legal/social/political change, the middle class resist these efforts; and the rich likely manipulate both the poor and middle class in a case of keeping both occupied in order not to realize the extent to which the poor and middle class have more in common with each other than with any other class.

Muir makes a similar argument concerning an over-emphasis on the Power of the Sword (coercion) when the Power of the Word (persuasion) and the Power of the Purse (reciprocity) are also subject to manipulation and abuse (Muir, 1977; Muir, 2010). In times past, the “victim” of the moral panic was a convenient and marginalized group (i.e. 1950’s: “commies” and “homosexuals”; 1960’s: “hippies”; 1970’s: “druggies” and religious cults such as the “Moonies”; 1980’s: “rock & rollers”, etc.). But, as the media age dawned, these marginalized groups began to have their own niches and micro-media with which they “fight back”.

As such, McRobbie and Thornton (1994), argue that these groups are now more likely to successfully “contest society”. Thus, the process is far from as one-sided “us” vs. “them” as it once was cast; and, now relatively powerful groups, such as the police and “Wall Street” have become targets in a sort of “reverse-moral panic”. Despite this, the remedy seems to have remained the same: more open and plural systems. As the disempowered have become empowered, it’s not unexpected that they demand a

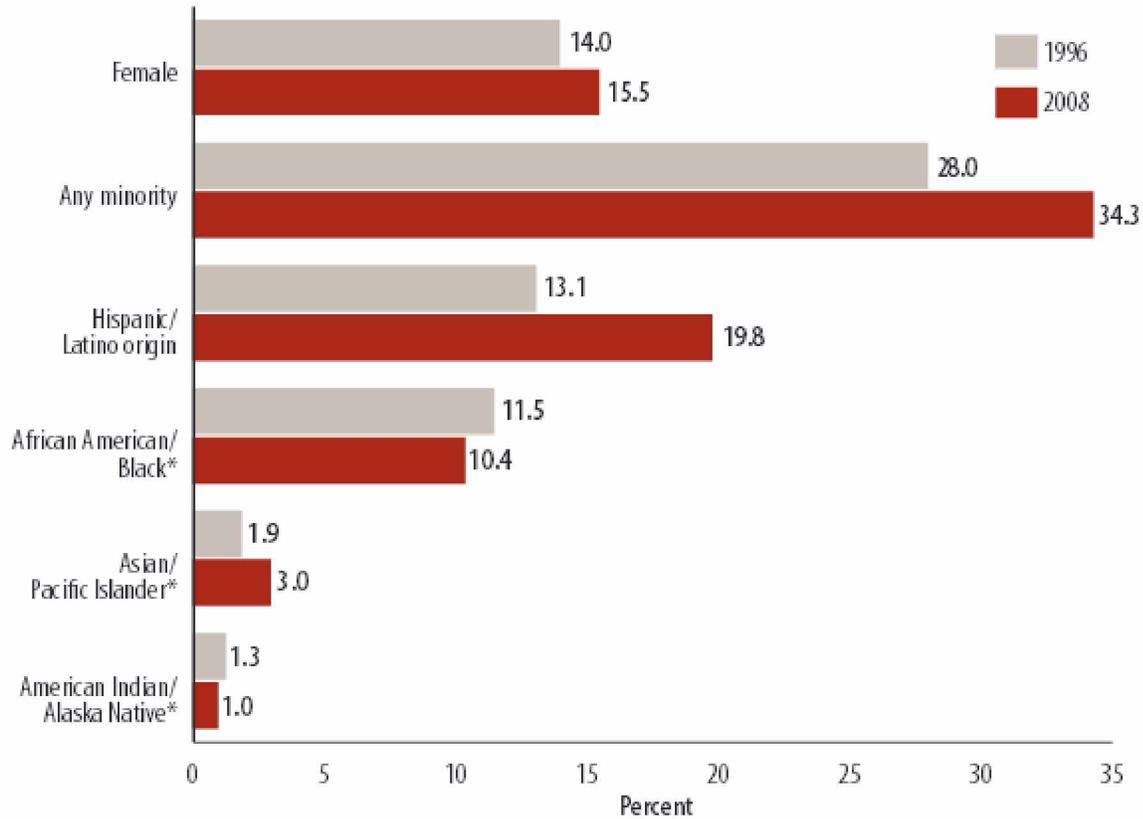
platform. Instead of viewing this as an attack, the police should view this as an opportunity. We see evidence that this is, in fact, in progress as agencies adopt Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms to disseminate information and invite citizens to have a conversation with them (DOJ, 2015).

As discussed above, over the past 40-50 years, police have made drastic improvements in the way they do business, “from who becomes an officer to how relations with civilians are managed and what technologies are used,” (Frederic Lemieux, rawstory.com). Police are more professional, take measures to prevent civil rights violation, look into incidents of potential racial based profiling, and better trained and educated. Lemieux continues and states;

“Demographically, the 20th century has seen a slow but steady integration of minorities and women within police forces. Different managerial models aimed at improving relations with citizens have also influenced policing over the last forty years. The most prominent among these are community-oriented policing (COP), problem-oriented policing (POP), and intelligence-led policing (ILP). Finally, policing strategies and operations have been deeply transformed by the rapid integration of new technologies leading to computerization of police forces, access to a broader range of weapons and the deployment of surveillance technologies” (rawstory.com)

The federal government has also made changes towards diversifying their agencies to improve relations with citizens. See chart below, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2012):

FIGURE 4
Percent of female and minority federal officers with arrest and firearm authority, 1996 and 2008



*Excludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Federal Law Enforcement Officers, 1996 and 2008.

One can assume that, given all the improvements police agencies have made to better relations with communities, that police of today are much better at their job than they were 50 years ago. This theme is echoed in both media supportive of the police, such as *Police One* (2010); and, in media that is less-supportive of the police, such as *Think Progress* (2014). As suggested above by James Buchanan, open and plural systems “learn” and improve as long as they remain open and plural. Thus, while 9/11 has meant a more “militarized” police, at the same time, the police are more efficient,

more effective, more economical...and even more equitable. They have learned to reduce crime as well as arrest using traditional methods augmented by evidence-based policing, while at the same time becoming less violent. Consider that while population continues to increase, the absolute number of officers' use of force remains relatively constant. According to Dr. Chris Gu (abcnews.com), "About 51,000 people are sent to the ER every year with injuries hospitals characterize as "legal intervention injuries" — and less than 1 percent of these injuries result in death" (a This number has been consistent from 2006 to 2012 according to Gu, but police are some how viewed in a worse light today than they were 11 years ago, let alone 50.

Gu (abcnews.com) goes on to suggest the reason police are having so much unrest with local communities is police interaction with offenders that end in violence is being captured on video and posted online. Things posted online are often edited to fit the needs of certain agendas and those agendas are rarely the same as the police. Police and citizens are aware that this happens, but it does not change the effect of media's actions. Major news corporations such as CNN or Fox News play their roles as well. Headlines that highlight the fact that a police officer was White and the suspect was Black or another racial minority group only serves to keep the gap between police and citizens.

The media has power to sway the minds and moods of the public towards police in a more positive manner. Police can use this power to bridge the gap between police and citizens. Lovell (2002) further posits that;

"departments that do not streamline public information through one official

spokesperson only but encourage communication with reporters at all ranks report a more favorable media image. Police training in television appearance skills is similarly significantly associated with a more favorable department image,” in the public's eye. (p. iv).

Police have improved in many ways, but all the improvements in the world won't bridge the gap between police and citizens if the public is not made aware of these improvements.

Methodology:

The research that exists on this subject is fragmented and inconsistent at best. The literature gathered using the archival methodological approach for this project consists of journals, dissertations, articles, websites, and newspapers. Public service practitioners, social and ethical theorists, teaching professionals and police practitioners are the primary authors of the sources used in this paper. Finally, partial action research methodology was used for information and perspectives proposed in this project. Renowned psychologist Kurt Lewin coined the term action research⁴. Much of the perspective presented in this project was gained through casual conversation with peers and supervisors, experiences learned from responding to police calls of service, and through interactions with community members as an Alaska State Trooper.

⁴ Action research is collective reflection wherein participants in social, economic, and political organizations seek to improve the rationality and justice in their own interactions. It is much like day-to-day business except that it is more circumspect and self-aware. According to Lewin, this form of research is valid and necessary because of the complexity of human organization. The alternative is the controlled experiment, which by the very nature of the experimental control, oversimplifies human conditions and loses the essence of the object of your study. Action-research is messy, but so is human interaction (Lewin, 1944)(Lewin, 1946). While some have criticized the science of action research (Stone, 1982), it remains a valid and useful tool and has enjoyed the support of many prominent scholars, such as Chris Argyris and Clayton Alderfer to name just two (Aguinis, 1994).

The relationship between police and citizens has significantly changed since its inception and therefore police history was briefly explored. Ways to improve relationships between police and citizens is a multifaceted and long-term journey that requires an in-depth study before action can be taken or one risk causing more damage. Because of the complex nature of mending relationships between government and citizens, this study was demarcated into several categories and phases that will assist with explanation of the problem and the solution. The categories are designed to explain one facet of the problem and one solution to that facet. The goal is to provide solutions simultaneously.

Due to the enormous and complex task of addressing and explaining in a comprehensive manner the difficulties that have caused gaps between police and citizens, each category was addressed independently. This was done with the intention of providing a more detailed, objective, and diverse elucidation of the gap. After research and study on the subject matter (social theories, ethics, communication, and history) was completed, a discourse of the observations of the gathered information to determine what it all means was conducted. Certain investigative steps were taken to determine the best approach to apply any solutions.

Investigation in nations such as New Zealand and Australia were conducted to learn what restorative and community justice looks like in successful settings as to provide a framework to apply to American society. Research of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) was also conducted to obtain information on successful and unsuccessful attempts to build trust from communities in police. Information gathered from all sources was used to determine what the next stages in

rebuilding the gap between police and citizens.

This author is an active law enforcement officer and thus uniquely suited to evaluate the writings found as a result of the literature review methodology described here. As previously stated, the author utilized an action-research model as advocated by Kurt Lewin. The nature of this research is that it is conducted inside an agency or organization without the formal control of an experiment. The complex nature of organizations and communities makes it difficult to perform research related to “big” ideas without losing the nature of the “big” idea through the structure and precision of the scientific method (Lewin, 1944; Lewin, 1946). To this end, the author used action research as a tool to search for hypotheses that will be further refined and explored in future research.

Action research has the benefit of avoiding some of the most common threats to validity, including:

The research method does not include a scientific “experiment” and thus avoids several errors that tend to plague these types of studies:

1. Ambiguous temporal precedence;
2. Repeated testing;
3. Instrumental change;
4. Regression toward the mean;
5. Diffusion

6. Compensatory rivalry/resentful demoralization;
7. Selection-maturation interaction:

But, is still subject to several threats to internal validity. These include:

1. Confounding factors: lacking controls, it will dangerous for the author to make any concrete “findings” since it will be difficult to say with certainty what, if anything, has contributed to causation of those conditions observed by the author.
2. Selection bias: by its nature, the author had no choice but to compare what he knew from his own agency, but this introduces threats to validity;
3. Experimenter bias: the same concerns apply here as for the previous category.
4. History: those things that happen during the research and can't be helped but tend to change conditions significantly. The state of policing in America has meant significant internal and external change for this topic in the 18 months it has been pursued by the author.
5. Maturation: all parties are inevitably changed by time and experience.
6. Mortality/differential attrition: It's also inevitable that Troopers, citizens, victims and offenders will move in and out of the sphere of this study.

Significant threats to external validity exist due to the limited nature of this research. As such, the author does not attempt to make any claims that the research

may or may not apply to a larger population. The research findings will be restrained to the case of the Alaska State Troopers for the time frame researched; however, the research method will still represent unique knowledge and provides value in that it helps to reform these related questions in order to frame hypotheses that may prove useful in future research (by the author and by others).

Discussion of Results:

This project has summarized and revealed some of the less well-known history about the origin of the modern police. In addition, this research unpacks social theories that show promise and learned the origin of modern police, social theories that show promise in building trust between citizen and community and then community with police. This project has found that Restorative Justice has been successful in building victim satisfaction with the criminal justice system and that satisfaction in the criminal justice system will tend to help bridge the gap between police and citizens. Ethics in the police is paramount in maintaining a long-lasting trusting relationship between police and citizens and they should be taught with the ability to evolve and adapt to ever changing times.

Education and training are imperative to the success of any large-scale plan of change. Educating citizens is just as important as educating police if trust is to be earned and the gap is to be bridged between police and citizens. Police need to understand the culture of the neighborhoods they work in and citizens need to understand the goals of the police. While education, ethics, understanding the history of policing, and viewing new ways to deal with crime (Restorative Justice) are all very

important, communication is perhaps the most pivotal tool in bridging the gap between police and citizens. These ideas of change and progress need to be communicated in a way that is understood by all. This project has found that the relationship between police and citizens can be repaired with the right amount of dedication and open-mindedness. In this review and literature, this author has compiled some “best practices” gleaned from the global police experience. In summary, this author believes there should be:

1. More exploration and testing of restorative processes as these related to circumstances actually experienced by police officers in the field.
2. Development of an ethical model that encourages officers to utilize discretion in micro cases to elevate reasonableness and human dignity; and, in the macro conditions to improve the community’s capacity to co-generate public value related to: a. order maintenance; b. deviance control; and, c. value consensus.
3. Refocus management to provide relevant training for police officers (e.g. cultural awareness, de-escalation of force, community policing, etc.);
4. Create education opportunities for officers and community members to learn together;
5. Create conditions where community members and officers routinely interact on day-to-day micro interactions (cases) and on long-term macro interactions related to policy formation.
6. Create conditions for officers to help community members become connected to, and part of, the governance structure. This means that we never become

focused too much on customer service, but always recognize the primacy of an open and plural system, which is itself not only a valuable “end”, but is the foundation for equitable governance.

This project’s goal was not to add new and enlightening information never thought of before, but perhaps to add a new perspective that incorporates many ideas that show promise and bringing them together to bridge the gap between police and citizens. There are many reasons why police and citizens do not trust one another and therefore there are more than one way to begin the healing process and get police and citizens to work together for a common goal and that goal is safe communities.

It is the opinion of this author that police are often the main institution society expects to change and make efforts towards building good relations between police and citizens, but that is not working with any lasting effect. The reason for this strategy’s failure is not because police were not up to the task, but because the task was only approached from one side. Citizens need to play their part as well. The biggest mistake that is often made is forgetting that police are citizens and a part of the community as well (Waddington, 1998).

Most people don’t see police officers as people, but as uniforms. There is reason for this and regardless of that reason it has had a horrible side effect on society. People have made it their dying wishes or desire to kill police regardless of who they are because they view police as an entity of the government instead of members of their community. If police could be viewed as members of the communities instead of just “police” then police would find it easier to view themselves as members of the

community. When this happens bridging the gap between police and citizens will be much easier to obtain and maintain.

Opinions, Recommendations, and Conclusions:

The relationship between police and citizens are in dire need of improvement. The numbers of deaths of police and citizens each year proves this. Tensions are rising and it seems to the outsider that they will eventually come to a head that leaves everyone hurt; but that need not be the outcome. There are things that can be done to prevent this: steps can be taken to mitigate and rebuild relationships. By understanding and learning from the history between police and citizens, studying social theories, and learning from the lessons of others we can start to fix the problems. Training and good two-way communication along with a solid educational and training regimen will go far in repairing and rebuilding trust between police and citizens.

Based on research in the subject at hand, it is believed that action must be taken to bridge the gap between police and citizens. Once actions are taken through training of police and citizens and creating good communication, there must be a maintenance protocol that helps keep things working, keep things up-to-date, and fixs problems as they arise. No system is perfect and a good working system can easily become bad for the community when natural evolution occurs and the system doesn't have room to grow. It is suggested that there be two parts addressing the issue: (1) Initiate and find a system that works and (2) have a way to keep the system flexible and able to adapt to unforeseen changes in the future.

As mentioned in the introduction of this project, the experience of this author as a Peace Officer in the state of Alaska has shown me that there is a rift between police and citizens. Police tend to think citizens can't possibly understand the life of a police officer because they're not police officers. Members of my family and friends that are not police officers tend to think police are a bit arrogant, uncaring, and superior. The bottom line is, there is no trust between police and citizens and the gap between the two groups won't be bridged unless actions are taken to bridge it. This author thinks there are a few things that police organizations in Alaska can do to help with this. This author addressed Alaska specifically because that is where his experiences come from and he understands that each police agency has different environments that require different actions. However, this author still hopes the following suggestions will be useful, even if modification is required to make them work, in bridging the gap between police and citizens.

Nine suggestions and recommendations to begin bridging the gap between police and citizens:

1. Police need to show citizens that they care about the community.
 - a. Participate in community events
 - b. Get to know not only the leaders in the community, but some of the everyday normal citizens.
 - c. Be personable when contacting members of the public in all situations that don't compromise officer safety.
2. Police need to remember they are members of the community, not just it's guardian.

- a. Train more community-oriented policing models designed to prevent crime
 - b. Lose the “them versus us” mentality
 - c. Attempt to learn the culture of the community you work in and be accepting to ideas different than your own.
3. Train and educate police better.
- a. Police need to be up to date on the latest trends in technology.
 - b. All training provided should be current and relevant and continuously updated. This training should then be passed on to police.
 - c. Formal education should be encouraged.
 - d. Police should be educated about the community they work in, the culture, and the history between police and citizens. Police should also be provided with a plan or guidance on how they can help improve relations in the communities.
4. Provide training and education to citizens.
- a. Citizens’ academies designed to provide the police perspective to citizens.
 - b. Explain why police do things the way they do them instead of explaining what police are legally allowed to do.
 - c. Actively seek opportunities to educate citizens on police affairs and encourage community members to come to police stations (predetermined times) just to see what it is police do.
5. Improve ethics training for police.
- a. Ethics should allow room for thinking, reasoning, and common sense. Ethics should not be a list of tenets, but more of a guiding principle.
 - b. Virtue ethics, aforementioned, might work.

- c. Ethics should be taught with both positive examples (successes) and negative (failures) in equal share. This will help prevent fear in police when they are doing their jobs.
6. Media.
 - a. Train police how to respond to the press.
 - b. Train police to act as if they are always being recorded.
 - c. When citizens pull out their camera-phones, train police that it's okay.
 - d. Be more transparent as an agency. Encourage and accept good publicity, such as good deeds police done by police.
 7. Look for ways involve the community in how they are policed.
 - a. Restorative justice
 - b. Have police/community meetings where citizens can express their opinions about what crimes are occurring in their communities and what they would like to be done about it.
 - c. Two-way communication. Actually listen to what citizens are saying, consider what they are saying, and reevaluate current policy if citizens tend to disagree with it. Marijuana laws are a good example of this.
 - d. Citizen complaints should be taken seriously and encouraged if citizens feel they have something to mention. Most complaints will be found untrue or mistaken, but time should be taken to explain to citizens what steps were taken to address their complaint and why the officer acted as they did. If corrective actions were taken, let the citizen know.
 8. Give conflict back to citizens.
 - a. Encourage citizens to find solutions to their civil problems, just educate on the rules (laws, regulations, ordinances, etc...).

- b. Be patient. Spend the extra time to mediate problems because mediation can be more permanent than police arbitration.
 - c. Educate citizens on most common issues police get calls about that citizens can handle themselves.
9. Remember police serve the community:
- a. Customer service is at the heart of what police do; remind police officers of this. We treat people as gentlemen and ladies, with dignity and respect, not because they are gentlemen and ladies, but because we are. (not implying people are not).
 - b. If our services are requested and it is not a typical police call, respond anyway and show that you care.
 - c. Do more knock and talks. Go to citizens' houses and solicit information on what they think their community needs from its police.

Caveat to suggestions – Remember that officer and citizen safety comes first. Police services are always going to be prioritized to who needs them most, so apply suggestions when/if time allows. Each community is different, and it is not expected for all suggestions to work in all areas. Modification or simply not applying all of them might be more appropriate. The author decided to only add a few suggestions, but much more is needed to completely address the problems facing polices' relationship with citizens. These ideas reflect best practices gleaned from the global policing experience. Each represents an area of interest, or a hypothesis, and should be researched further.

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