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THESIS

CAN YOU LEAD ME NOW? LEADING IN THE COMPLEX WORLD OF HOMELAND SECURITY

by

Nola Joyce

September 2007

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

This thesis focuses on a theory of leading and the activities and processes used to move a bureaucratic, public agency to a higher level of fitness in the contexts of dynamic equilibrium and the edge of chaos. The main claim is that leading and all of its components – thinking and sensemaking, storytelling and demonstrating the right ideas, and organizing action and shaping collective movement – are required for an organization to address the complex, coordinating problems of homeland security.

This research is exploratory using the methodology of grounded theory. An in-depth analysis of a single case was used to test a theory of leading in complexity. Descriptive examples are provided of the activities identified in the process of leading.

The findings supported the theory of leading and offered some suggestions for leading the work of homeland security. The analysis demonstrated that leading is a process that weaves in a non-linear way from thinking to sensemaking to demonstrating the "right ideas" and identities to organizing collective movement and back around to thinking. It is a process without ends and a process that shows how to accomplish organizational change in the realm of complexity and chaos.

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CAN YOU LEAD ME NOW?
LEADING IN THE COMPLEX WORLD OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

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I.   INTRODUCING THE COMPLEX WORLD OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Practitioners in the field of homeland security find themselves heaped in complexity and sometimes dancing on the edge of chaos. They are balancing newly emerging threats, increasingly difficult performance demands, and the ever changing landscape of executive orders, regulations, and funding flows. Laurence J. O'Toole uses the term "wicked problems" to describe problems that cannot be handled by dividing them up into simple pieces and assigning them to isolated boxes of a bureaucratic organization.[1]   The "wicked problems" of homeland security include terrorism and natural threats that know no jurisdictional boundaries, lessening resources, and intricate relationships.

The complexity of homeland security arises out of the nature of the problems facing those who are engaged in agencies or actives that address, in some way, elements of terrorism and other threats.   Homeland security problems are often those of coordinating across time space. These problems require multifaceted organizational responses — like networks and collaborations — that, in turn, demand sophisticated leadership skills. Leading in such a world requires not only an *understanding* of this complexity, but how to *operate* within the complexity.   This complexity can be understood by examining it through the lens of chaos theory and using the methodology of grounded theory.

A.   CHAOS AND COMPLEXITY THEORY

Chaos and complexity theory is one theory that provides a theoretical framework for understanding some of the homeland security problems. Chaos theory emerged in the late 1980s as the *new* science in physics and the biological sciences. By the 1990s, chaos

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[1] Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., "Treating Networks Seriously: Practical and Research-Based Agendas in Public Administration," *Public Administration Review* 57, no. 1 (January–February 1997): 45-52.

and complexity theory began to be reflected in the literature on organizational theory. Russ Marion explains how chaos and complexity theory differs from earlier organizational theories:

> Both Chaos and Complexity theorists propose that a system's dynamics involve more than "if A then B" relationships in which outcome is the simple function of inputs. They argue instead that system behavior more often results from complex, nonlinear interactions among constituent parts and, that because of this nonlinearity, behavior is difficult or impossible to predict.[2]

The nonlinear nature of complexity means that a decision maker cannot be assured that his action will result in the intended outcome. It also means that the organization may be experiencing the results of actions and actors far removed from the decision maker's realm of knowledge and influence. Complexity theorists argue that the mechanistic and functional view of organizations cannot explain how an organization evolves and orders reality where complexity reigns.

The term *complexity* has a very specific definition and application in the field of organizational studies:

> Complexity theory encourages us to see organizations as complex dynamic systems composed of agents who interact with one another, and thus promote novel behavior for the entire system that also influences the environment of the system.[3]

For Marion, organizations cannot exist in chaos, but they can and do sit at the edge of chaos where complexity allows for some stability and information processing. It is at the edge that organizations innovate — or die. At the edge, there is this ebb and flow between order and un-order. C. F Kurtz and D. J. Snowden define un-order as emergent order and argue that the term *un-order* reflects the paradox that exists in states

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[2] Russ Marion, *The Edge of Organization: Chaos and Complexity Theories of Formal Social Systems* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1999), 5.

[3] Richard N. Osborn, James G. Hunt, and Lawrence Jauch, "Toward a contextual theory of leadership," *Leadership Quarterly* 13, no. 6 (December 2002): 798.

of complexity.[4] It is a state in which a different kind of order exists, one that is not directed or guided. This un-order may emerge as middle managers attempt to achieve their goals in the midst of an organizational crisis, or when executives and employees use social networks to gather information and initiate solutions for survival.

The traditional theories of organizations and leadership work fine during times of directed order, but do not fit when un-order is dominant. Complexity theory can help describe the process as an organization begins to morph into something new — or dies. Such is the time for organizations involved in homeland security. This phenomenon is seen as the Department of Homeland Security works through the issues of combining multiple institutions under one umbrella, as Federal Emergency Management Agency responded (or not) to Hurricane Katrina, and as the National Capital Region plans for all-hazard events. There are lessons to be taught if we are willing to look at the mess of complexity and appreciate how to work within it.

B.   GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory offers a different way of knowing and understanding social interactions and patterns. The positivistic and deductive approach to traditional scientific knowing argues that the advancement of science occurs through the systematic testing of hypothesizes derived from a theoretical model. Following this approach, the study of leadership would consist of deriving the principles of leadership, determining the operational definition of the principles, and creating a measurement tool for assessing the degree to which the principles existed in successful and unsuccessful leaders. This effort will eventually identify the principles necessary to be a successful leader. Gabriele Lakomski offers an assessment of the empirical, hypothetico-deductive approach to leadership:

> The main problem with these issues is that the empirical methodology of mainstream leadership studies is not able to separate out what people

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[4] C. F. Kurtz and D. J. Snowden, "The New Dynamics of Strategy: Sense-making in a Complex and Complicated World," *IBM Systems Journal* 42, no. 3 (2003): 465-466.

implicitly believe about leadership [in] anyway from what they report as having observed in a specific situation by filling our a questionnaire.[5]

Using the methodology of grounded theory, the researcher assumes that there are latent patterns underlying social organizations and interactions. These patterns will emerge if the research endeavor is constructed correctly. The purpose of the research is to discover these patterns through observations and interviews, and to generate and test theory based on the discovered patterns. The intent is to "tap the latent structure that drives and organizes behavior."[6] The grounded theory approach focuses on people's experiences and their interpretation of those experiences. The researcher derives meaning from the participants feelings about events, processes, and structures.

There are two assumptions underlying this thesis that are derived from chaos theory and grounded theory. First, from chaos theory, paradoxes are expected and co-exist. Two things that appear to be different, and even opposite, can co-exist in the same place and time. C. F. Kurtz and D. J. Snowden talk about order and un-order at once, "because in reality order and un-order intertwine and interact."[7] This thesis suggests that to understand the world of homeland security, one must talk about organizational structure and problem typology and, at the same time, talk of leading as a phenomenological, sense-making process. As John Lawler states:

> The development of management thinking is characterized as the search for certainty, as a means of dealing with complexity. Leadership, however, is the means of dealing with chaos (Barker, 1997; Kotter, 1990). We might be faced here with another example of "absurdity." The absurdity here lies in searching using an objectivist system to identify the components of leadership, which is inherently a chaotic, irrational, emotional phenomenon.[8]

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[5] Gabriele Lakomski, *Managing Without Leadership: Towards a Theory of Organizational Functioning* (Oxford: ELSEVIER Ltd, 2005), 7.

[6] A. Celio, A. Sousa, and Paul H. J. Hendriks, "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly: The Need for Grounded Theory in Developing a Knowledge-Based View of Organizations." *Organizational Research Methods* 1, no. 3 (2006): 323.

[7] Kurtz and Snowden, "New Dynamics of Strategy," 466.

[8] John Lawler, "The Essence of Leadership? Existentialism and Leadership," *Leadership* 1, no. 2 (June 2005): 227.

Most of the literature looks at leadership and organizational structure separately, as if one can be independent of the other. Yet, the act of leading defines the structure, and the organizational structure will demand requisite activities. This research will contribute to our understanding of how the activities of leading, in the realm of complexity, can move an organization to a higher level of fitness.

The second assumption comes from grounded theory. A theory that focuses on context, processes, and complexity will be of more pragmatic use to practitioners. Grounded theory provides such a focus and is the induction of theory from the data. This means that the researcher must be willing to immerse herself in the data in order to discover emergent classifications and categories. Chaos theory suggests that emergent patterns occur as actors are pulled by attractors. Grounded theory is a method by which to discover these patterns and attractors.

C. OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLEX WORLD OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Principles of grounded theory are beneficial in understanding the concept of *leading* in the complex world of homeland security. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of how this researcher envisions a problem bombarding an organization and resulting bureaucratic adaptation.
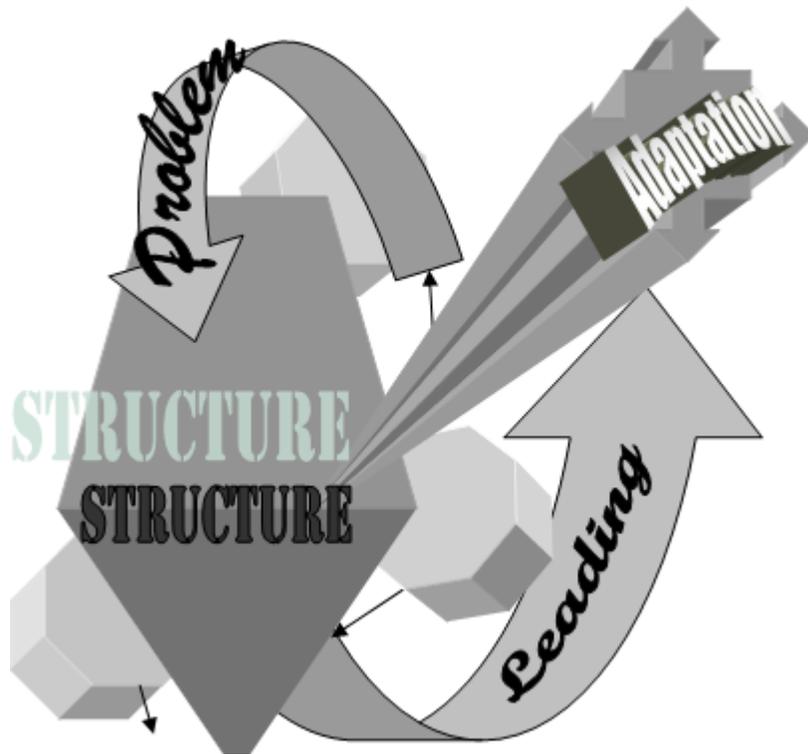
Figure 1.   A Model of Complexity.

        Coordination problems bombard bureaucracies and demand solutions by employees and bosses. Government work is done and services are delivered through bureaucracies that have a structure and stability; however, such a structure may not be the best to handle problems of coordination. How a bureaucratic agency deals with a problem is influenced by its historical background and the type of coordination problem facing the bureaucracy. These are some of the forces that help spin organizations into complexity and onto the edge of chaos.

        As suggested by Figure 1, a problem assaults an organization and, depending upon the nature of the problem, it may require an adaptation of the bureaucratic structure. The very nature of crisis may increase complexity because a crisis often raises problems of coordination. For homeland security, these crises may be the result of man-made or human disasters, demands to prevent terrorism, or the need to share resources and information. Donald Kettle reports that public administration theory has long recognized

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the coordination of area and places as one the field's fundamental tensions.[9] This is because the cause and effect of a place-based problem knows no jurisdictional boundaries.   However, politics and government bureaucracies divide the world into political entities with boundaries and rules.   For example, the terrorist threat to the District of Columbia emanates from the other side of world, and it is likely that potential terrorists are preparing their war materials and themselves in Virginia, Maryland, New York, Miami or California.   To protect the nation's capital, an umbrella of prevention, detection, and response is required that extends far beyond Washington, D.C., and yet must be known by the local government and law enforcement.   This situation demands that the chief of police of Washington, D.C., if he is truly to do his job, would have informational networks and collaboratives that extend into our federal government and other nations.   Such is the challenge of the coordination of area and places for a public administrator.

Nodes of networks and collaboratives exist on the edges of the bureaucratic structure. *Edges* are those places where an organizational unit touches the white space that exists between organizational units or other organizations. Innovation can arise from these holes, or white space, and people who work near the organizational edges are more likely to be the innovators. Innovation arises here because new information and demands are first discovered by those near the edge. Networks and collaboratives can grow and connect the edges of organizations — similar to how crystals grow.

These nodes can influence the bureaucratic adaptation by being the source of information, resources, and helping to focus attention of those individuals on the edge of the bureaucratic structure or at the top of the organization. It is the process of leading, by individuals on the edge and at the top, that will move the organization to address the problem and raise the organization's level of fitness.

Successful leaders of organizations on the edge of chaos will seek information through social networks to help know what is knowable and begin to adapt to the changing environment. Leading organizational responses to complexity help move the

[9] Donald F. Kettl, "Contingent Coordination: Practical and Theoretical Puzzles for Homeland Security," *American Review of Public Administration* 33, no 3 (September 2003): 257.

organization from the realm of complexity to a more stable environment. The more stable the environment the more structured and ordered the response. However, there are cases when the process of leading demands that the organization is moved from a stable realm into complexity in order to raise the organization's level of fitness.

Chaos and complexity grow out of order, and order out of complexity. Kurtz and Snowden describe the forces that move chaos and complexity into the realms of the known:

> . . .people living together and sharing mutual needs lead to the emergence of ideas; convenience leads to stabilization and ordering of the ideas; tradition solidifies the ideas into ritual; and sometimes either lack of maintenance or the buildup of biases leads to breakdown.[10]

They also provide an example of movement from the *knowable* to complexity and chaos:

> . . .the death of people and obsolescence of roles cause what is known to be forgotten and require seeking; new generations filled with curiosity begin new explorations that question the validity of established patterns; the energy of youth breaks the rules and brings radical shifts in power and perspective; and sometimes imposition of order is the result.[11]

These two forces — stability of the known and the instability of exploring uncertainty — are ever present in organizational life. Both conditions exist and leading in this type of situation demands the awareness of both the known realm and the ever present possibility that the un-order realm will emerge. So, this thesis will explore the complex world of homeland security and the process of leading as a means by which organizations are moved from the edge of chaos, use complexity, and sometimes transverse into the knowable realms and back again.

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[10] Kurtz and Snowden, "New Dynamics of Strategy," 479.

[11] Ibid.

D.   LEADING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

This research is about discovering the aspects of *leading* activities and how these activities help solve coordination problems of homeland security, and increase the level of organizational performance and problem solving in the midst of complexity.   An understanding of leading, grounded and validated in experience, will contribute to moving organizations forward in achieving homeland security goals.

Leading is part of a larger set of the organizational dynamics required for problem solving.   Leadership does not exist in a vacuum; it changes as the context for it changes. As Richard Osborn, James Hunt, and Lawrence Jauch eloquently argue, leadership is embedded in context:

> It is socially constructed in and from a context where patterns over time must be considered and where history matters.   Leadership is not only the incremental influence of a boss toward a subordinate but most important, it is the collective incremental influences of leaders in and around the system. [12]

Perhaps by pulling on the single thought string of leading, we can begin to untie a knot and understand the linkages between problem solving, organizational structure, and leadership.   Osborn, Hunt and Jauch urge researchers in the field of leadership to expand their view by using the lens of organizational context by which action, its purpose and context, are socially constructed.   They see leadership as "a series of attempts, over time, to alter human actions and organizational systems."[13]   Such actions will vary according to where the actor is located in a hierarchical level and the problems facing the organization at the time.   Leadership is contextual — "an emerging social construction embedded in a unique organization." [14]

Leading on the edge of chaos consists of promoting networks, experimentation, and information gathering.   The researcher asserts that leading requires thinking,

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[12] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 797.

[13] Kurtz and Snowden, "New Dynamics of Strategy," 831.

[14] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 831.

sensemaking, storytelling, and organizing collective action. These activities will in turn promote a more flexible organizational structure and strategy, often reflected in forming social networks and collaborations with other organizations at the edge. Leading at the edge of chaos requires the use of networks and collaborations to solve the coordination problems of homeland security. These are the alignments that begin to move the organization from un-order to order where, once again, traditional organizational and leadership principles will emerge as the status quo.

E.   OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis focuses on discovering the leading activities and processes used to move a traditional, bureaucratic, public safety agency to a higher level of fitness. Specifically it is on leading in the contexts of dynamic equilibrium and the edge of chaos. The main claim of this research is that leading and all of its components — thinking and sensemaking, storytelling and demonstrating the right ideas, and organizing action and shaping collective movement — are required for an organization to address the complex, coordinating problems of homeland security.

Specifically, this research will attempt to address the following questions: What are the activities of leading? What does leading look like at the edge of chaos? What can be learned from an innovative leader in the National Capital Region as he attempts to network and collaborate across organizational stove pipes and geographic boundaries to solve homeland security problems?

A first step in this research was to identify a uniquely positioned and successful leader in the National Capital Region who worked to address the emergent issue of homeland security.[15] Such a leader is Charles H. Ramsey, who served as police chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C., from 1998 through 2006. Chapter IV provides the justification for selecting Ramsey as the subject of this research. A series of in-depth interviews were conducted with Chief Ramsey to discover his leadership activities and whether key principles could be identified. The findings from

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[15] The term "successful" means achieving significant key results which are discussed in Chapter IV.

the interview were then validated through participant observation and archival sources. The purpose was to elicit the natural history of Ramsey's leadership activities in reforming the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and telling the story of how he led MPD in addressing homeland security problems.

This work will advance research efforts in leadership and non-traditional organizational structures that homeland security problems demand. By grounding research and theory in practice and from the perception of the actors, a more comprehensive view emerges of how the acts of leading can affect an organization, a system, and a region. Leading produces a ripple throughout a complex system, sometimes resulting in unexpected outcomes.

Homeland security practitioners at all levels of government will benefit from additional insight into how leading in complexity can foster organizational success. Christopher Bellavita argues that "the most significant strategic issues the homeland security community will face in the next ten years are in the unordered domain of complex adaptive systems."[16] If Bellavita is right, then looking at how individuals and organizations deal with "wicked" homeland security problems — through the lens of chaos and complexity theory using the methodology of grounded theory — will help move the field forward.

Chapter II describes the research methodology and the grounded theory principles that guided the researcher. The research starts with a review of literature described in Chapter III on leadership and leading. This discussion results in a proposed theory of leading. Chapter IV describes the rationale for selecting Charles H. Ramsey and his work as the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., as the subject of this study. Chapter V analyzes the findings from interviews, participant observations, and content analysis of archival sources used to flesh out and breathe life into the models. Chapter VI provides the conclusions and implications for homeland security professionals.

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[16] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: Shape Patterns, Not Programs," *Homeland Security Affairs* 2, no. 3 (October 2006): 8 (Accessed November 9, 2006, http://www.hsaj.org/?fullarticle=2.3.5).

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II   METHODOLOGY FOR DISCOVERING LEADING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

The research problem is one of discovering the leading activities and processes used to move a traditional, bureaucratic, public agency to a higher level of fitness. In some cases, this requires leading traditional agencies to engage in networks and collaboratives to advance the agency's mission. The researcher must explore leading as a social process, studying incidents and behaviors that elicit people's perceptions and expressions of leading. Lesley Prince challenges the researcher to look at how leadership is actually done, to look at the process between people within a specific context, and develop models that speak to and from experience.[17] Similarly, Annie Pye argues that leadership research should focus on how people make sense of their world and how that sense influences the sense others construct. Sensemaking, it appears, may be a key aspect of leading. Pye argues for a greater emphasis on discovering what is happening in a direct, human way.

A research approach that discovers how leading is done can result in an action-oriented theoretical model. Karen Locke found that research products coming from grounded theory were able to "capture movement in organizational life by theorizing select action relationships and also movement through time."[18] She also found that Mode 2 research,[19] research designed to close the gap between academic research and practical domains, tends to benefit from the grounded theory approach. Finally, when the topic studied crosses academic disciplines, there is usually not a mature theoretical framework developed within the boundaries of any particular academic disciplines.[20] These three conditions — of needing to capture action relationships and movement through time;

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[17] Lesley Prince, "Eating the Menu Rather than the Dinner: Tao and Leadership," *Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2005): 108-113.

[18] Karen Locke, *Grounded Theory in Management Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2001), 107.

[19] Mode 2 research shows concern for the gap between the academy and practice domains, advocating research aimed at advancing the interests of the practice domains.

[20] Locke, *Grounded Theory*, 96.

closing the gap between research and practice; and establishing a new trans-discipline of homeland security — all demand that this research reflect the grounded theory methodology.

A.   GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory focuses on context, processes, and complexity and is designed to result in a theory that has pragmatic usefulness. Grounded theory allows knowing to be expanded with subjectivity and interpretation. It offers a general logic for conducting qualitative research, an operational model of theory building, a research process and science, and language to express the findings.[21]

Grounded theory is the induction and application of theory from the data. This means that the researcher must be willing to immerse herself in the data in order to discover emergent classifications and categories. The true practice of grounded theory begins when the researcher enters the area and subjects of study with little or no conceived idea of how things work. The researcher allows the participants to tell their story, how they make sense of their world, and how they operate within it. It is this understanding that the researcher uses to create categories that begin to build the participants' theory of operation. Next, additional research tests, fills out, combines or eliminates categories. This is accomplished by comparing categories across data sources. This analysis is also done across time and events in order to pull out a fuller understanding. The research effort is one of a constant comparative method consisting of collecting data, coding data, and creating concepts. The concepts are tested by more data collection that produces categorizations, eventually yielding a theoretical framework.

This process is guided by three key principles: triangulation, theoretical saturation, and theoretical sampling. These principles help to ensure that the grounded theory is as complete and robust as possible. Triangulation refers to the different sources of data that the researcher uses to expand the number of vantage points to understand the topic. The source of data may include literature review, observations, interviews, and

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[21] Locke, *Grounded Theory*, 130.

archival sources. Discovering more than one data source to support a concept is one way to validate a conceptual category. Theoretical saturation occurs when the researcher is not finding new data. Within the limits of the researchers' activities, the questions asked, or who is asked, provides equivalent information to the point where the significance of additional information is limited. Theoretical sampling is the process of selecting data sources to obtain rich, multi-dimensional conceptual categories.

B.   RESEARCH DESIGN

This research begins with a literature review on leadership. Strauss suggested that grounded theory methodology could be used in the context of previously developed theory. He suggests that grounded theory could be used to extend previous theory and make it denser by filling in what had been left out — that is by extending and refining its existing theoretical categories and relationships.[22] Literature, when used as an analytical tool, "can foster conceptualization."[23] So, the next chapter reviews the literature to build a theoretical understanding of leading. This theoretical insight is used in examining a single case in order to extend and demonstrate the theory of leading.

Next, a series of open-ended interviews were conducted with Charles H. Ramsey. Ramsey was the Chief of Police for the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C. (MPDC) from 1998 through 2006. He came into a police department embattled by the daily press reporting on incompetence and leadership failures. Ramsey guided the MPDC through internal disarray and the external threats of the U.S. Capitol Police murders, the high-profile murder case of Chandra Levy, 9-11, anthrax attacks, IMF and World Bank protests, and the D.C. sniper. He built the capability and reputation of the MPDC. These interviews were examined and coded to test the theory developed from the literature. The interviews were iterative to test concepts and fill holes.

The Ramsey interviews were triangulated through participant observations re-constructed by the researcher. The researcher worked closely with Charles Ramsey

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[22] Locke, *Grounded Theory*, 103.

[23] Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory,* 2nd edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1998), 53.

during his tenure as the Chief of Police. Observations were re-constructed and were validated by analyzing archival sources including news articles.

These data sources provided different vantage points for understanding what constituted Chief Ramsey's leadership of MPDC. The research design allowed for testing the theoretical concepts and categories across time and events, providing illustrative examples and stories to help tell and show the power of leading.

C. DATA COLLECTION AND CODING

Charles Ramsey was initially interviewed over three separate sessions totaling four-and-half hours. The interview began with the simple question: "How did you run MPDC?" This question elicited a laugh and the story-telling began. Questions were not constructed based on the literature review. The intent was to encourage Ramsey to tell his story. Coding started only after the initial interviews were completed. The coding of interviews used the conceptual categories identified from the literature. Follow-up interviews were conducted to probe holes and to expand the concepts. Categories and concepts were dropped or expanded, depending on the data. The process, of collecting data, coding and categorization, and testing the categorization, was iterative.

Finally, reflected observations and content analysis of press accounts and other archival sources were added to triangulate the findings from the interviews. The intent was to extend or refine the existing theoretical categories found in the literature.

The research design and data collection used the three basic principles of developing grounded theory:

Theoretical saturation:	concepts were probed until they were either eliminated or expanded as new data was provided by the sources.
Theoretical sampling:	data sources were selected to obtain a multiple views on the concepts and categories.
Triangulation:	a variety of data sources were used including, interviews, focus groups, observations, and content analysis to ensure that the concepts and the model were valid.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Coding and memos were prepared, providing direction and leads for future data collection and the building of the model. Just like the data collection, data analysis was iterative until the total picture of Ramsey's leading became clear and nothing new could be found. The interviews and archival sources were analyzed separately to discover concepts, themes, events, and topical makers. Next, all the analysis of data from different sources was combined to discover patterns, refine, and elaborate concepts.

This process resulted in demonstrating the theoretical insight of leading and how it can be observed, talked about, and described. It means that the concept of leading could be shared, tested, and taught. The intent is not to create replicates of Ramsey, but to learn how a prominent homeland security professional led his department, city, and profession through crises and to a new reality.

The next chapter is an analysis of the literature on leadership and leading, examined in an effort to develop a theory of leading. This theory is pulled from a variety of theory and conceptual reviews and research studies. The work begins by reviewing the literature on leadership and leading, and then distilling the essential concepts of leading, or the action necessary to move a collective or organization in a particular direction.

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III.   REVIEWING THE LITERATURE: LEADING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

The concepts of leaders and leadership tend to convey an air of promise and mystery, with a near spiritual connotation. It is estimated that there are around 35,000 definitions of leadership in academic literature.[24] Annie Pye quotes C. I. Barnard, who wrote in 1948, "Leadership has been the subject of an extraordinary amount of dogmatically stated nonsense." Almost sixty years later, it is hard to disagree with his assessment. Lesley Prince writes that, despite thousands of studies on leadership, there are "still no generally agreed definitions, and the mountains of accumulated data and ideas seem to have brought us no nearer to a detailed understanding of what the concept [leadership] means."[25]

Yet, there is a strong belief that the promise of leadership and leadership development will address and solve the problems of increasing uncertainty, instability, and the impending threats facing our government institutions. Leadership is like art and pornography; you may not be able to define it, but you know it when you see it.[26] This amorphous sense helps perpetuate the mystery and the art associated with the acts of leadership but does little to help the once and future leaders develop skills and techniques necessary for leading in the global war on terror.

This state of affairs is especially true when the question of leadership is explored outside of traditional bureaucracies. For example an electronic search of the CSA database of journals using the terms *leaders* or *leadership* yields 121,399 articles.[27] The same search only yielded 1,878 articles when the qualifying phrases of *collaboratives* or *networks* were added to the search criterion. This is a crude measure but nonetheless illustrates that leadership research in the context of non-traditional organizational

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[24] Annie Pye, "Leadership and Organizing: Sensemaking in Action," *Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2005): 32.

[25] Prince, "Eating the Menu," 105.

[26] Justice Potter Stewart made the most frequently quoted U.S. Supreme Court opinion on obscenity when he wrote, "I know it when I see it."

[27] CSA stands for the Cambridge Science Abstracts and it now contains references to journals in the fields of social science, business, political science, and organizational management.

responses is still in its infancy. Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire find that "network management is in search of an equivalent to the hierarchical organizational authority paradigm for bureaucratic management."[28] These authors speak of management and not leadership. Is there a false dichotomy between management and leadership when talking about non-traditional organizational arrangements? Or, as Beverly Cigler asks:

> Does leadership behavior in developing a multi-organizational, multi-sector, multi-community organization differ from leadership in traditional top-down organizations?[29]

The nature of some of the homeland security problems and government policy are driving the development of complex multi-organizational arrangements. We must build a better understanding of how or if leadership contributes to the success of bureaucracies, networks and collaboratives. This understanding is urgently needed in today's world of complexity known as homeland security.

A. THE STATE OF LEADERSHIP THEORY AND RESEARCH

One only has to examine some of the 35,000 definitions for leaders and leadership to grasp the current state of leadership theory and research. For example:

> Leaders are persons who, by work and/or personal example, markedly influence the behavior and thoughts, and/or feelings of a significant number of their fellow beings.[30]

> Leadership is a process that occurs within the minds of individuals who live in a culture with a capacity to create stories, understand and evaluate these stories, and appreciate the struggle among stories.[31]

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[28] Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire, "After the Network is Formed: Process, Power & Performance," in *Getting Results Through Collaboration, Networks & Network Structure for Public Policy and Management*, edited by Myrna P. Mandell (Westport, CT: Quorum, 2001), 11.

[29] Beverly Cigler, "Multiorganizational, Multisector, and Multicommunity Organizations: Setting the Research Agenda," in *Getting Results Through Collaboration, Networks & Network Structure for Public Policy and Management*, edited by Myrna P. Mandell (Westport, CT: Quorum, 2001), 82.

[30] Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996), 6.

[31] Gardner, *Leading Minds,* 22.

Consider leadership not as a set of intellectual principles, but much more as a set of experientially located and responsive relational skills-in-process.[32]

Formal leadership is defined as the incremental influence of position holders exercised via direct and indirect means to maintain and /or alter the existing dynamics in and of a system.[33]

Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.[34]

It is no wonder that we still do not understand what the concept of leadership means or how best to manifest it on a routine basis, let alone in a time of crisis. Is it just by luck, or a unique character trait, or the demands of the time that create leaders and cause leadership to appear?

Keith Grist offers four kinds of leadership theories: trait, contingency, situational, and constitutive.[35] Grist describes each theory. The trait theory looks for personality or character traits that define a leader or a set of behaviors that constitutes leadership. This approach assumes that the person makes the leader and allows for little variety in what constitutes a leader and leadership. It is what is held in common by those who lead.

Grist suggests that contingency theory holds that there are optimal matches between leadership style and the characteristics of a given situation. This approach broadens the field of examination to include the context. A linear relationship is still implied, the key characteristics of the context should determine the requisite leadership style needed to achieve the desired results. The situational approach is more varied than

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[32] Prince, "Eating the Menu," 113.

[33] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 803-804.

[34] John W. Gardner, *On Leadership* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990), 1.

[35] Keith Grint, *The Arts of Leadership* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2-3.

contingency and recognizes variation in not only the context but also with the followers. Yet, like contingency the direction of influence is primarily from the leader to the audience.

The final theory identified by Grist is constitutive and stresses the interpretative and inter-relationship between leader, audience, and context. It suggests that we must examine the social construction of leadership. The view from this theoretical perspective is that people — leaders, followers, and audience — are active interpreters of their world and their place in it. It is this act of interpretation that creates meaning and meaningful action on the part of all of the actors and that this meaning is embedded in history and the current context. Leadership is not the mechanistic application of traits or skills but the skillful dance of socially constructed reality, a dance in which the lead may change and change often. This thesis falls into the constitutive theory and examines from a *leader's* perspective how the process of leading helps to socially construct reality and organizes collective movement.

B.   DEFINING LEADING

Annie Pye suggests that the confusion surrounding the topics of leader and leadership is that the words themselves are problematic and that "the leader (person) often becomes confused with leadership (process) and outcomes in terms of social influence are often over-attributed to the influence of the leader."[36] This sentiment is echoed by Lesley Prince who suggests that our efforts to understand leadership are confused with assumptions around "position and status, process and personality, behavior and relationships."[37] It is not the person that is key but the act of influencing that must be understood. It is the process of leading that must be made explicit.

Pye suggests that the field can progress by putting the focus on leading or the act of movement and progress, and by taking it off of leadership which is the process by which the movement is shaped. "Analyzing leading is a more complex challenge of

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[36] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 35.

[37] Prince, "Eating the Menu," 107.

exploring the process of enacting, organizing, explaining, managing, and shaping collective movement/action/ing."[38] This orientation focuses us on what happens between people. By examining leading, we must also explore following. Followers must make an active choice and are part of the larger social system acting within a specific context. What are the dynamics between leading and following? Prince suggests that leading does not always have to be active and forceful but also gentle and reflective. Both authors talk about sensemaking and argue the need to reframe the issue of leadership and leading as sensemaking in action. The daily acts of leading are defined by making sense of the world, synthesizing that understanding, communicating, and organizing action around that understanding.

Leading and sensemaking is especially crucial within the realm of complexity. Complexity is that area of action found between chaos and predictability. For humans to act, we must make sense out of the patterns that impinge upon us. The more we can categorize our experience, the more typical it becomes and the more comfortable we are in our world. It is the process of sensemaking that allows us to function in complex situations. Choices are made based on past experiences, yet the current experience may be very different than the past. Leading is being able to assess the situation and know when to rely on old behavior and when to innovate.

C. F. Kurtz and D. J. Snowden describes decisions models in four domains — two are order and either known or knowable, and two are un-order and reflect complexity or chaos.[39] These authors suggest that there are different decision-making actions for each domain.

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[38] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 35.

[39] Kurtz and Snowden, "The New Dynamics of Strategy," 468-469.

COMPLEX	KNOWABLE
Cause and effect are only coherent in retrospect and do not repeat	Cause and effect separated over time and space
Pattern management	Analytical/Reductionist
Perspective filters	Scenario planning
Complex adaptive systems	Systems thinking
Probe-Sense-Respond	Sense-Analyze-Respond
CHAOS	**KNOWN**
No cause and effect relationships perceivable	Cause and effect relations repeatable, perceivable and predictable
Stability-focused intervention	Legitimate best practice
Enactment tools	Standard operating procedures
Crisis management	Process reengineering
Act-Sense-Respond	Sense-Categorize-Respond

Figure 2.   Cynefin Domains.[40]

In the known domain, a person first senses the situation or problem then categorizes the problem and responds. A problem or situation in the knowable domain again requires sensing first then analyzing, because this problem has yet to be categorized, and then responding. Acting in these ordered domains allows one to use the rational method of decision-making. The complex and chaos domains are un-order and less knowable. Here, in the complex domain, one must probe-sense-respond because you do not yet know what you are facing. While in the chaos domain, action is required first, then sensing the outcomes to the action and responding. The Cynefin model suggests that the sensemaking and social construction of reality processes of leading are more important in the complex domains.

Today's reality of homeland security is one of inter-agency, cross-jurisdictional, multi-level governmental work. The work of homeland security is complex and for some a strange, new world. Are the activities of sensemaking and leading discernable from those who have been successful in this complex world? Can these activities be identified and described? That is the challenge of this research.

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[40] Kurtz and Snowden, "The New Dynamics of Strategy," 468.

C.   THE ACTIVITY OF LEADING

As previously mentioned, studying leading as opposed to leaders or leadership offers definite advantages. This approach takes the researcher away from looking at individuals and their power and influence and places the focus on the acts and activity that move people, groups, and organizations. We begin to examine the work of doing — leading — and what constitutes that work. Such discoveries can be shared and learned, and they stress that leading is done by many in an organization at all levels.

This approach also allows us to explore the non-active side of leading. Leadership implies active control and manipulation of the environment, people, and events to achieve the desired end. However, leading suggests not just control and manipulation, but it can also suggest engagement, coordination, information processing, and modifying ones own views and direction.

Ronald Heifetz suggests, "Rather than define leadership either as a position or authority in a social structure or as a personal set of characteristics, we may find it a great deal more useful to define leadership as an *activity*."[41] Robert Tucker makes this same point. "In the final analysis, the strength of leadership as an influencing relation rests upon its effectiveness as activity."[42] The success of leaders and leadership are defined by the results of the activity of leading. The challenge then is discerning from the literature on leadership and leaders the activities in the process of leading. It is this activity that we must understand.

Howard Gardner did short case studies of eleven prominent leaders of the twentieth century. The leaders consisted of Margaret Mead to Margaret Thatcher, from Pope John XXIII to Martin Luther King, Jr., from George C. Marshall to Mahatma Gandhi. It is indeed a study of leaders. Yet, what he found were four factors crucial to the practice of effective leading: having a relationship between leader and followers that is on-going, active, and dynamic; maintaining a rhythm of contact and withdrawal from

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[41] Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1994), 20.

[42] Robert C. Tucker, *Politics as Leadership* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press 1981), 25.

the community or the people; having a consistency between the stories of the leader and his actions or embodiment; and leading through choices.[43] This practice of effective leadership is the activity of leading. He found story-telling to be one of the most essential activities. An innovative leader takes a story latent in the population and brings new attention or a fresh twist to that story. A visionary creates a new story and achieves a measure of success in conveying that story to others. A successful story must fit the audience and where they have been, where they are, and where they are going. And, to be successful, the leader must not just tell the story, but fully and completely live it.

Annie Pye talks of sensemaking as the key activity of leadership. She identified seven characteristics of sensemaking. She states that sensemaking is grounded in identity construction; it is retrospective; enactive of sensible environments; social; ongoing; focused on and by extracted cues; and driven by plausibility rather than accuracy.[44] Identity construction refers to establishing oneself in a role, developing relationships with key people, bringing in new energy and is accomplished through enactment and discovered retrospectively. It is about constructing a shared reality through negotiations, testing, and evaluating what has happened. It is storytelling. Storytelling that helps constructs reality and organizes structure and procedures that limit the range of random response. For Pye, leadership failures occur because of non-compliance with the leader's vision of reality. So, leadership in action is a "delicate balance of constructing and blocking of forces for and against in the continuing negotiation and shaping of the prevailing definition of reality."[45]

Gardner and Pye approached the questions of leaders and leadership from very different perspectives, ten years apart, and yet came to some common conclusions. The activities of leading are building relationships, creating a shared reality through sensemaking and storytelling. Relationships and reality are fragile and demand constant attention and consistency of action. It requires the one leading to be both active and

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[43] Gardner, *Leading Minds*, 36-38.

[44] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 38.

[45] Ibid., 43.

reflective, to be part of and withdrawn from the community, and to synthesize past actions with future demands. These are among the activities we will search for in this research.

Thinking is an important leading activity for Elizabeth Smythe and Andrew Norton. "A leader lives the thinking, always ready to think again and make a new decision, yet never quite knowing if the decision is right." [46] Leading is being attuned to sensing the *right* idea, looking for that one idea, accessing the quality of ideas, comparing and deciding which idea will be the change idea. Smythe and Norton found that, for those who practice leading, thinking was not a task but a meditative way of being. This sounds very similar to Pye's activity of sensemaking. Thinking and sensemaking influence choice and actions. These activities help drive decision-making and communication in order to achieve implementation or responses that actualize and sustain the vision. We are beginning to discern the activity process of leading.

John Storey looked at executive leadership within corporations. He identified three themes facing leadership at the executive level:

1. Structural and relational issues, or how the chief executive fits alongside other top executives, and key to this is how conflict is handled;

2. Functions and priorities that consist of changing or defining of the business model, sensemaking, prioritizing, and direction-setting; enabling creativity and innovation; formulating and defending corporate purpose;

3. Legitimacy or the image building of the CEO by the team, reputation capital and stakeholder perception.[47]

Storey broadens our view of leading by placing it within an organizational structure. Indeed, he says, "Leadership behavior is extensively shaped by organizational characteristics."[48]

Storey is not the only researcher who found organizational structure to be an independent variable that affects leadership or leading. Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen

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[46] Elizabeth Smythe and Andrew Norton, "Thinking as Leadership/Leadership as Thinking," *Leadership* 3, no. 1 (2007): 80.

[47] John Storey, "What Next for Strategic Level Leadership Research," *Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2005): 95-101.

[48] Ibid., 94.

found that leadership activities, processes and effectiveness were influenced by the structure of the collaboration, and in fact the structure of the collaboration influenced the communication processes and who participated. That in turn influenced the agendas and progress made by the collaboration.[49] They go on to suggest that no single person had control over the structure, communication process, and participants. Huxham and Vangen conclude that new forms of leadership are needed to make things happen in collaboration because there are not clear reporting structures as well as specified and agreed to goals. Yet our review of the activities of leading suggests that reporting structures and goals are all in the realm of creating through leading.

John Gardner talks of managing interconnectedness. This is leading between the white spaces on an organizational chart and the linkages between the systems, organizations, jurisdictions, and boundaries. It demands the skills of navigating through the stickiness of *no-man's land* where the rules are not clear and the relationships difficult. This work requires "leaders who have the wit to perceive and the courage to act…"[50] Russ Linden suggests that by definition, collaborative leaders must use persuasion, technical competence, relationship skills, and political smarts to get and keep the coalition together and produce the desired goals. Linden and Gardner's lists do align and suggest that there is some agreement on the type of leading necessary to advance non-bureaucratic organizations' goals.

Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire found that the primary activities of network managers consist of selecting the appropriate actors and resources, shaping operating context of the network, and developing ways to cope with strategic and operational complexity. Myrna Mandell reports that core network leadership activities articulate the initiative, build the consensus, manage change process, weather storms and continually refine and redesign the effort without losing support. These are the same type of activities described by Garnder, Pye, and Prince. These activities are very similar to

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[49] Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen, "Leadership in the Shaping and Implementation of Collaboration Agendas: How Things Happen in a (Not Quite) Jointed-up World," *Academy of Management Journal* 43, no. 6 (2000): 1168.

[50] Gardner, *On Leadership,* 131.

the tasks required of managers in a bureaucracy. Leading may be more demanding in collaboratives and networks but is it substantially different?

Osborn, Hunt and Jauch challenged researchers in the field of leadership to expand their view and see leadership theory as a keystone for any theory of organization. For them, leadership theory is part of a larger series of theoretical perspectives that includes the system, boundaries, and causal mechanisms that are used by leaders to achieve results. Leadership is influenced by these contextual elements and can not be understood without considering them. Osborn, Hunt and Jauch propose four leadership contexts: (1) **stability** or routine functions deep in the organization, (2) **crisis** functioning in the middle of the organization, (3) **dynamic equilibrium** at the top-level and strategic leadership, and (4) **edge of chaos**-complexity theory and dynamic systems.[51] As the context moves from stable to chaotic, the demands for increased network development increases in order to obtain, interpret, and use information to influence the dynamics in and of a system. Agencies at the edge of chaos will eventually either move to a higher level of fitness or careen out of control and into failure. Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch suggest that the determining factor is how information is gathered, identified, and used to help the organizational system understand and work within the complexity.

Specifically, what changes with context is the leader's gathering of information, how and where he directs the attention of the organization based on information, and the development and use of networks to increase his knowledge and to direct attention. Attention focusing is important because it drives the organization toward ends, means, and outcomes. The act of leading requires obtaining, synthesizing and using information.

D.   THE ACTIVITIES OF LEADING

Based on this literature review, a theory or categorization of leading was derived. This theory was developed by using Annie Pye's concept of leading and synthesizing the literature cited above. The activities of leading can be categorized as:

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[51] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 6.

- **Thinking and Sensemaking**
  - Sensing and collecting ideas;
  - Assessing ideas by comparing, weighing and thought testing;
  - Picking or deciding on the *good* and *right* ideas;
  - Synthesizing the picked ideas.
- **Storytelling and Demonstrating the *Right* Ideas**
  - Identity construction through role establishment, relationship development, image building, and embodiment of the story;
  - Reality construction through negotiating, organizing structures and procedures, determining the business model, and limiting random response;
  - Communicating and enacting the stories that define and legitimatize the leader, leadership team, and chosen reality.
- **Organizing Action and Shaping Collective Movement**
  - Shaping the operational context, setting and communicating direction as well as strategy;
  - Coordinating and managing, building consensus, handling conflict, selecting people and resources;
  - Information gathering through testing, evaluating, and communicating.

The activities of thinking and sensemaking require reflection and withdrawal. Part of the thinking and selecting activities is the idea and conviction that one is "special and ready to confront others in positions of power on equal terms, across all domains."[52] Thinking and sensemaking also requires the involvement of others to help weigh, assess, and synthesize ideas. These others are often the leadership team who are individuals that the leader trusts to provide clear, concise, and honest feedback and challenges to her thinking. Selecting and involving the right people in this crucial phase will set the context for success or failure. In the end, however, leading means selecting one set of ideas as the *right* ones.

The external expression of the ideas consists of storytelling and demonstrating the *right* ideas. This expression occurs through storytelling. It is telling the potential followers not only about the selected course, but perhaps more importantly about the one who is leading. Deciding to follow is an active choice and followers are part of the social context and must participate in the social construction of reality being offered to them. Leading demands that selected ideas are actively communicated, negotiated, and enacted

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[52] Gardner, *Leading Minds*, 253.

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in order to create the social reality envisioned by the leader. Leading means getting others to share in, act on, and communicate through the ideas selected because it is these ideas that will manifest the change the leader has determined is necessary in order for the group to be successful.

The leader and the leadership team must communicate these key ideas by stories and action. They must embody and reflect the ideas in their behavior. Followers will choose based not just on the words but also on the congruency between the words and actions. The decision-making process of followers is very similar to that of leaders; they will sense, test, and respond to ideas. In doing so the followers are negotiating the leader's identity and view of reality. The leader wants to limit the random response of followers to his story and ask that they agree to his construction of a patterned response to the complexity in which they are working.

It is not enough to just *get it* or even to get others to *get it*, as leading is doing something with *it* and making a difference now that we understand the reality we are facing. Here is where leading and managing intersect. This is where action is taken and requires an operational context, consensus, communication, and information gathering that include testing and evaluating of the actions. These actions are done by everyone and are managed by some. Leading takes this information and works to maintain support through continual storytelling, reassessing, and changing direction by thinking through what is being learned.

This process of leading plays out within the contexts of organizational structure and the degree of knowing and the level of complexity that exists. These external factors may control the content and limit the degree of influence of each activity, but the importance of thinking, storytelling, and organizing exist in all contexts. The leading activities described here are necessary whether crossing divisions within a single organization, or coordinating action between agencies, or focusing effort across jurisdictions. Leading is a process that consists of a mental process, tacit knowing, and action. This process is emergent and grows out of the organizational structure, the problem to be solved, and the complexity that surrounds it.

The next chapter tells the experiences of Chief Ramsey as he confronts the challenges of increasing the level of fitness of the Metropolitan Police Department and the new world of homeland security. The complexity of the homeland security challenge and the dynamics of leading become clear through the telling of his story. In turn, the theories of complexity and leading are shown to be useful in understanding how Ramsey achieved the results listed in the following chapter.

IV. INTRODUCING THE CASE: THE RAMSEY ERA IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.

A. INTRODUCTION

Charles H. Ramsey was appointed the Chief of Police of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C. (MPDC) in April of 1998. He came from a successful career at the Chicago Police Department (CPD) where he rose to the rank of Deputy Superintendent. He along with Barbara McDonald and a small team developed and implemented the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS). CAPS was changing the way the CPD did policing and was viewed as a national model. Ramsey demonstrated that he was an innovator and capable of turning a 14,000 member department onto a new course. He and his team did what Mayor Daley asked – make the CPD a community policing department. All signs pointed to the belief that Ramsey would be the next Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department but it was not meant to be. Mayor Richard Daley selected Terry Hillard for the Chicago job.

The D.C. Control Board, a board running the District of Columbia and appointed by the president, called Charles Ramsey just a few short days after hearing that he was not selected as the CPD's Superintendent of Police. Several members of the D.C. Chief's Search Committee flew to Chicago and met with Ramsey at the O'Hare Airport. They asked Charles Ramsey to consider D.C. as his next job.

There is no doubt that Ramsey was disappointed, but perhaps not surprised, by losing the Chicago top cop job. He recalls a moment driving down Lake Shore Drive when he was just a sergeant at the CPD. In his words, "I was driving Lake Shore Drive, heading south, looking at the Drake Hotel, and out of the blue a thought or a realization came to me, 'you were going to go a long way in this job but you are never going to be a superintendent.'"[53]   It is this intuition, this knowing without knowing how, this awareness that Ramsey used and trusted throughout his nine years as the Chief of Police

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[53] Charles Ramsey, interview by Nola Joyce, March 2007.

of the nation's capital. It is one of many skills that marked his career and him as someone who knew leading involved both an internal and external process.

B.   THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical context, tradition and culture are the back drop to understanding the challenges facing Ramsey as he came to D.C. and the obstacles he had to lead the MPDC over for the department to become a premiere law enforcement agency. This section will briefly look at the years of 1995 to 1997 and set the back drop for Ramsey's entrance onto Washington, D.C.'s center stage.

Marion Barry was D.C.'s mayor for three terms from 1978 to 1991 and then re-elected as D.C.'s mayor for a fourth term from 1995 to 1999. His re-election occurred after being convicted of a misdemeanor drug charge and a six month prison sentence. Barry was videotaped in a downtown hotel room smoking crack cocaine. "On January 2, 1995, Barry was sworn in for this fourth term, backed by a minority of the city's black population, strongly opposed by the city's white voters and facing a fiscal crisis."[54]

A June 1994 federal audit sent a warning that the city was close to bankruptcy. Payments were being delayed to vendors and basic supplies were not being bought. A second report was released predicting that without spending cuts and revenue increases the city's budget deficit could rise to $1 billion in 2000.[55]

The capital city of the United States had a convicted drug user as its mayor and it was broke, mismanaged, and failed to deliver basic government services. The U.S. Congress and President Clinton responded by creating the D.C. Control Board and authorized it to remain in existence until the District presented a balanced budget over four consecutive years. The Control Board was given fiscal responsibility and veto authority over union contracts and new city laws. Initially the Chair of the new board claimed it had no interest in running the daily operations of the city, but that soon

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[54] Kenneth Jost, "Governing Washington, DC," *CQ Researcher* 6, no. 44 (November 22, 1996): 8.

[55] Ibid., 9.

changed. The board became very involved in the hiring and firing of department heads and the Mayor and City Council saw their power and authority eroded by the Control Board.

Scandals not only rocked the Mayor. Soon the MPDC was the subject of corruption charges, mismanagement, and budget overruns. Larry Soulsby was named Police Chief of the MPDC in October of 1995. Mayor Barry yielded a heavy hand in the MPDC. He appointed the twenty command officials and had a say in the department's hiring and assignment details.

Soulsby was willing to do the Mayor's bidding. He assigned a detective to the Mayor's detail based on the Mayor's request, even though the detective was under investigation for witness tampering.[56] Soulsby did not need the Mayor's help in making bad decisions. He transferred Captain Hennessy from the homicide division. Hennessy and Soulsby had an angry confrontation which Hennessy tape recorded. Eventually, the two made a secret, signed pact that Hennessy would not testify against Soulsby at his confirmation hearing if Soulsby would give Hennessy choice assignments. The details of this arrangement were leaked and made national news on "60 Minutes."[57] Chief Soulsby and the MPDC were gaining a national reputation for corruption.

The Control Board took over daily management of the MPDC from Mayor Barry in November 1996. The Board brought in Booze, Allen, and Hamilton to do a series of management studies and recommendations on MPDC operations. A series of confidential reports by the consulting company were provided to the *Washington Post.* These reports "had some talking of an agency fallen into chaos."[58] The *Washington Post* summed up the conditions at MPDC in this way:

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[56] Doug Struck and Michael Powell, "By Denying and Disavowing Troubles, Soulsby Brought Himself Down," *Washington Post*, November 26, 1997.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Michael Powell, Sari Horwitz, and Cheryl W. Thompson, "D.C. Police Problems Festered," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1997.

. . . the department has been on a 20-year descent. Once recognized as a national model of fine policing, the force has endured two decades of political interference by Mayor Marion Barry (D) and the D.C. Council, a persistent lack of fiscal controls, bad hiring practices and poor management.[59]

Perhaps more damning than the leaked reports was the acknowledgement by MPDC command officials that all of the problems identified — cardboard boxes filled with drugs and cash, unguarded warehouses with guns and equipment, missing police cars, unsolved homicide cases, and evidence destroyed or lost — were known by most in the department for years.

Talk of needing a chief that came from outside the department began to be heard. Patrick Murphy, a police icon and former public safety director for D.C., summed up the sentiments of many.

Do we need someone from the outside for police chief? On Monday, please. I do not care how badly the chief says his hands were tied. He has a responsibility. This Department is in scandalous shape.[60]

William Bratton, former chief of the New York Police Department even joined the conversation. He said of the MPDC, "It is a classic turnaround situation." From his view point, only an outsider could turnaround the department. "The reality," according to Bratton, "is that an insider has baggage, and it's a hell of a lot harder to reform a police department that way."[61]

Chief Larry Soulsby resigned November 1997 under charges of impropriety. He served as chief for twenty-seven months. It was alleged that Soulsby and his roommate, Lt. Jeffrey Stowe, obtained a luxury, downtown apartment at a significantly reduced rate because Stowe told the landlords it would be used for undercover work. Lt. Stowe, who was in charge of the investigations unit on extortion and fraud, was charged with

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[59] Powell et al., "D.C. Police Problems Festered."

[60] Ibid.

[61] Michael Powell, "D.C. Police Changes Should Start at Top, Specialists Say," *Washington Post*, October 21, 1997.

embezzlement and extortion.[62] Stowe was accused of stealing money from department funds, attempting to blackmail married men who frequented gay bars in the city, and using subordinates to obtain information about the FBI's investigation of him.[63] Soulsby's association with Stowe was the final action that brought him down. In 2003, the U.S. Attorney declared that the investigation of Soulsby ended with no charges brought against him.

The MPDC was the subject of never ending City Council Hearings. The Control Board created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Group that basically exercised oversight of the MPDC. Almost every day there was another negative article in the *Washington Post* about MPDC operations, failures, and misconduct. The members of the MPDC were hiding the fact that they worked for the department. It was a time of low morale, dysfunctional systems, and no or inoperable equipment. It was time for a real change.

C. RAMSEY LEADING FOR RESULTS

Charles H. Ramsey became the Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C., in April 1998. The prospect for a long tenure was not good. Between 1989 and 1998, the MPDC had four chiefs each serving an average of three years — the national average for a major city chief. Ramsey almost tripled that tenure to eight years and seven months. When Ramsey left the MPDC, he was the longest serving chief in more than three decades of home rule.[64] Longevity, however, is not by itself a mark of exceptional leading skills and abilities. Chiefs of police are measured by community relations, crime, and working conditions.

Ramsey came from Chicago with a reputation of involving the community in policing. Dr. Wesley Skogan and his team of researchers from Northwestern University

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[62] Toni Locy, "Luxury unit allegedly for Soulsby," *Washington Post*, January 27, 1998.

[63] Human Rights Watch, "Washington, D.C." (Accessed May 20, 2007 http://www.hrw.org/reports98/police/uspol136.htm).

[64] Allison Klein and David Nakamura, "Chief Ramsey to Step Down, Sources Say," *Washington Post*, November 18, 2006.

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studied the implementation of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) over a ten-year period. In his November 1997 report, Skogan wrote:

> Overall 60 percent of Chicagoans were aware that beat community meetings are taking place, and among those who attended, almost 30 percent reported going to at least one meeting in the last year. About 90 percent of attendees thought they learned something at a meeting and that they were useful for finding solutions to neighborhood problems.[65]

> A special study of CAPS activists in every police district found they were extremely optimistic about the program's progress. They were the most satisfied with beat community meetings, their districts' commanders' efforts to implement CAPS, program marketing efforts, and the quality of service being delivered by the beat officers. Their views grew more positive between 1996 and 1997 on most measures.[66]

It was a combination of Ramsey's ability to mobilize the CAPS implementation team, the Chicago Police Department, and Chicagoans coupled with Dr. Wesley Skogan's reputation in the academic field that put Ramsey and CAPS on the national policing stage. It was this reported success that captured the attention of the D.C. Chief's Search Committee. More importantly for this thesis, it is the manifestation of this type of success that will be explored in detail.

Ramsey's ability to capture the imagination and hopes of residents living in urban centers of high crime also marked his work in Washington, D.C. *Washington Post* reporters Allison Klein and David Nakamura provide a description of Ramsey in the community:

> Ramsey has been a telegenic chief since he arrived in Washington in 1998, deft in front of a bank of microphones and a larger-than-life presence at community meetings. Sometimes referred to as a "celebrity police chief," he is well-known in national police circles and frequently speaks publicly about social problems in the city.[67]

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[65] Wesley G. Skogan, et al., *Community Policing in Chicago, Year Four; An Interim Report* (Chicago, Illinois: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, November 1997), 2.

[66] Ibid., 3.

[67] Klein and Nakamura, "Chief Ramsey to Step Down, Sources Say."

Walking the streets of D.C. with Chief Ramsey was like walking with a rock star. Residents and visitors to D.C. would stop him to shake his hand, say thank you, and ask to have their picture taken with him. Ramsey knew how to inspire and capture a community vision and convey it in language that encouraged the audience to see the possibilities.

The Part I Index crime rate in 1997 in Washington, D.C. was 9,860 per 100,000 residents. By the end of 2006, the crime rate was cut by 57 percent to 5,666 per 100,000 residents. [68]

Major city chiefs are judged on the number of homicides and closure rates for homicides. Even if everything else is going right, rising homicides can bring down a chief. The D.C. homicide rate was decreased by 49 percent between 1997 and 2006. This represents 132 fewer people murdered in D.C. in 2006 than in 1997. The figure below compares the homicide rates for D.C. and benchmark cities.[69]

Homicide Rate Across Comparable Cities
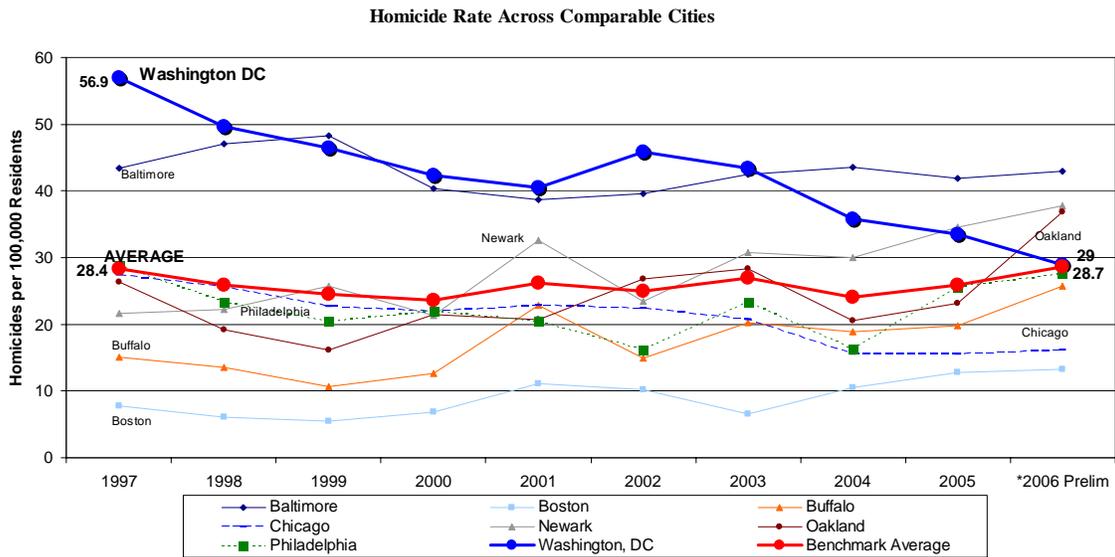
Figure 3.   Homicide Rates Across Comparable Cities.

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[68] Metropolitan Police Department, *Building a Safer DC: Statistical Report 2001-2005* (Washington, DC: Metropolitan Police Department, December 2006), 22.

[69] Office of the City Administrator, CapStat*, Homicides in the District: Trends and Reduction Strategies* (Washington, DC: Government of District of Columbia, May 29, 2007), 7.

The average reduction in homicides for the benchmarked cities is 1 percent. Boston, Buffalo, Newark all posted over a 70 percent increase, while only Baltimore (1 percent) and Chicago (41 percent) posted decreases in their homicide rate. Washington, D.C. out performed other comparable cities in reducing the number of homicides during Ramsey's tenure.

The homicide closure rate is the third crime measure used to judge the success of a major city chief. The review by Booze-Allen and Hamilton severely criticized the MPDC's homicide closures. The homicide closure rate was at 46 percent.[70] By the end of 2006, the MPDC's homicide closure rate was at 64 percent. Again, the MPDC's performance was higher than the average for the benchmarked cities of 52 percent and higher than all seven cities as illustrated in Figure 4.[71]
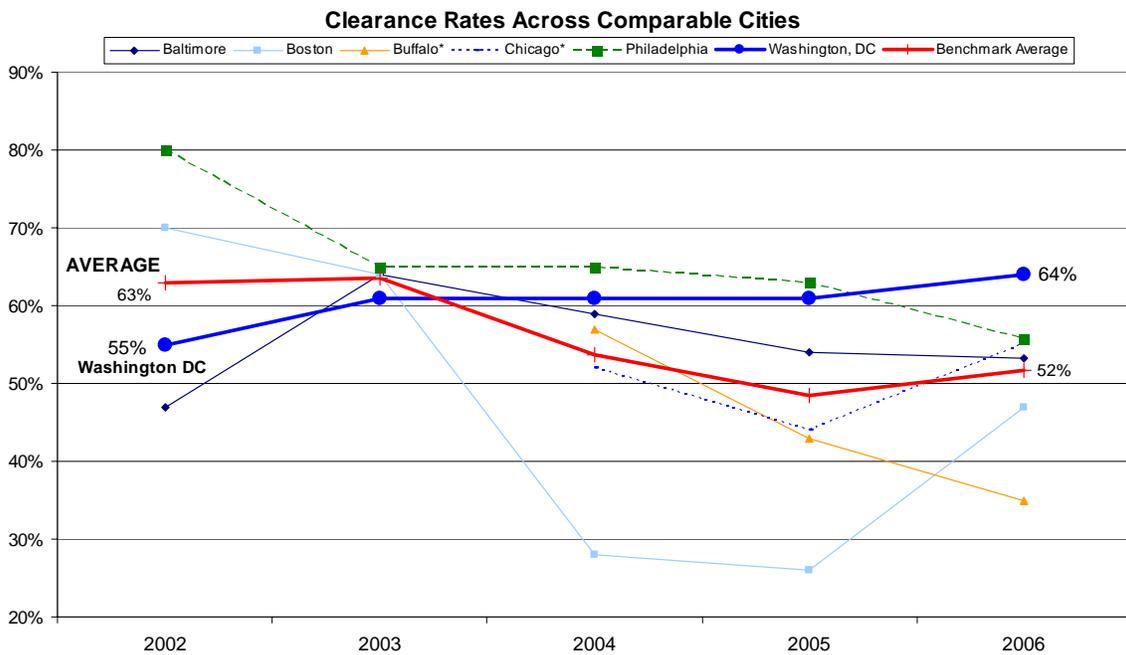
Figure 4.   Clearance Rates Across Comparable Cities.

[70] 1998 Annual Report, Metropolitan Police Department (Washington, DC: 1999), 19 (Accessed June 7, 2007 http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/frames.asp?doc=/mpdc/lib/mpdc/publications/98ar_pdf.pdf).

[71] Office of the City Administrator, CapStat, *Homicides in the District: Trends and Reduction Strategies,* 8.

While homicide clearance rates were on a downward trend in the other cities, the MPDC consistently improved on this performance measure.

By these measures, Washington, D.C. became a significantly safer city under Chief Charles H. Ramsey and did so at a faster pace than comparable cities. Obviously, crime trends and patterns are influenced by a great many factors. It is not suggested that Ramsey was the sole influence in reducing crime and improving public safety in the District. However, as Chief, he was a primary factor and the fact that D.C. outperformed similar cities suggests something unusual happened in the District during this time period. This thesis is not so interested in what happened but in how it happened. How did Ramsey raise the performance level of the MPDC?

In 1997, the MPDC still had rotary phones, police cars that escorted the President of the United States were missing hubcaps, and raw sewage regularly backed up in a district station locker room. Officers were buying gas for their squad cars, cannibalizing parts to keep cars running, and buying their own toilet paper. MPDC officers received no regular in-service training, and a majority of officers had not recently qualified with their service weapons. Much like the rest of the District government, the MPDC was in a state of disrepair and dysfunction.

In 1998, the *Washington Post* published a Pulitzer Prize-winning series which documented that MPDC officers shot and killed more civilians than any other police department in the nation. By 2002, following a series of reforms implemented by Chief Ramsey, police-involved shootings were down 62.5 percent. The MPDC was recognized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and others for its model use-of-force policies, procedures and investigations. Every officer now attends an annual forty-hour in-service training, re-qualifies with their service weapon twice a year, and participates in daily roll-call training. Ramsey introduced and advocated for an independent Police Officer Standards and Testing Board that sets the minimum standards for the selection and training of police officers to ensure that training never slips backwards.

The average age of the MPDC's fleet dropped from ten to three and one-half years years. Ramsey was able to get a $100 million dollar congressional appropriation to

the MPDC for the repair and building of police facilities. Repairs and upgrades were made to existing facilities and new facilities were opened.

Charles H. Ramsey retired on December 31, 2006, after serving almost nine years as the Chief of Police for the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C. His tenure was marked by improved community relations, reduced crime, improved working conditions and a more professional work force. Significant improvement on any one of these fronts would mark success.

Ramsey was uncomfortable when it came to talking about his successes or himself as a leader. He saw his job as one of creating the context, holding the space for change, rewarding desired patterns, and demonstrating desired values. Others helped achieve the results identified above. For Ramsey, he was just doing what need to be done at the moments he found himself in history. It is this doing that we want to understand.

The following chapter will explore how Ramsey was able to move a department of four thousand people on so many fronts — community relations, crime fighting, and working conditions and professionalism. Did Ramsey use the aspects of thinking and sensemaking, storytelling and demonstrating right ideas, and organizing action and shaping collective movement to accomplish his success? If so, how did he do it? The next chapter examines these questions in an attempt to test the theory of leading in action.

V. ANALYZING THE CASE: LEADING IN COMPLEXITY THROUGH ACTION

A. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed what Charles H. Ramsey accomplished in his eight years and seven months as the Chief of Police of the Metropolitan Police Department, District of Columbia (MPDC). This chapter will describe how Ramsey lead the MPDC from a dysfunctional and disillusioned police department to a respected police department in the District of Columbia, the National Capital Region, and the country. There were key national events during Ramsey's tenure – the murder of two Capitol Police officers in the Capitol, the Chandra Levy murder, the 9-ll attack on the Pentagon, the anthrax attack, the IMF and World Bank protests, and the Washington snipers. Ramsey guided not only the MPDC through these challenges but in some cases changed the way other police departments would handle future events. This chapter will explore how Ramsey was able to achieve exceptional change within the MPDC, made the District a safer city, and maximized historical events to help achieve his vision. This is not a historical review of Ramsey's era in Washington, D.C. It is discovering the process of leading through action.

The theory of leading outlined in Chapter III provided the framework to analyze the interviews with Charles Ramsey. This study is exploratory in its very nature and the intent is to provide descriptive examples of the activities identified in the process of leading.

B. LEADING AS A PROCESS

Ramsey saw leading as a process without an endpoint. When asked to identify his successes or achieving goals, Ramsey responded:

> A goal to me is almost like looking out over the horizon. If you are moving toward that horizon, you will eventually get there, but when you look ahead, there is another horizon up ahead. That is what is exciting

about it. The job is never done. That is why I am reluctant to say success.
My job was to accept the baton and run the race the best I could and then
pass the baton to someone else to make it better. I took it as far as I could
take it.

It is this process view — of moving people and the organization, of leading —
that the researcher believes contributed to Ramsey's accomplishments.[72] He was not
aiming for an endpoint. He was just constantly moving the organization to a higher level
of functioning. This thesis suggests that the process of leading consists of thinking and
sensemaking, storytelling and demonstrating the *right* ideas, and organizing action as
well as shaping collective movement. In action, leading in complexity requires doing
many of these activities and hitting on all three cylinders simultaneously. As Ramsey
said,

There is no one way you run anything. You do what is necessary at the
time, adapt to the environment that you are in. Identify the issues and
keep moving forward. Practice flexibility.

C.   THINKING AND SENSEMAKING

When Ramsey was questioned about his decision-making process and what he
looks at when making a decision, his reply was "a lot of instinct." He went on to say that
in most cases he already knew what he wanted to do. The question for him was should
he do it. "You have to rely on your instincts, your training and your experiences."[73] For
Ramsey, the process is "I get certain amount of information, I feel a decision come, and
I'm ready to roll." This is leading and it involves a combination of cognitive knowledge,
tacit knowledge, and an internal commitment to do it. Ramsey's description is very
similar to Kurtz and Snowden's process outlined for the order domains of either sense-
categorize-respond or sense-analyze-respond.

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[72] The first person is used when the researcher is conveying the data from personal observations and
the third person is used when the researcher is analyzing the data.

[73] Ramsey interview.

Ramsey was asked how he ran the MPDC. His reply was:

> I think it evolved over time. At first I was in a learning mode - trying to listen, learn, trying to identify the problems. I had to get a grasp of what was taking place.

For him, coming into an organization as an outsider meant his first task was to make sense of what he was seeing and hearing. He was alone for the first couple of months. Terry Gainer joined him in late May, and Kevin Morison and I joined him in June of 1998. The early months were primarily spent in the cycle of thinking and sensemaking. Ramsey described the early years as a time of getting a handle on the organization, understanding the culture, and listening to troops and the community. He had a series of town hall meetings throughout the city and open door sessions with any member, sworn and civilian, just to hear their complaints and their hopes. He did this not just to get information but also "to establish credibility."

Another example of Ramsey using thinking and sensemaking to create change was his visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. This visit resulted in an expanded mission for the Museum and a national model for training police. Ramsey and I were invited to a special VIP tour of the Holocaust Museum in 1998. The tour was lead by a Holocaust survivor. It was a very powerful experience and one I will never forget. For Ramsey, it was so powerful that it challenged him to think and make sense of his experience. He described the experience in this way:

> I knew there was something there. First of all it caught me completely off guard. I went back by myself and walked through the museum and it hit me. I thought… policemen think of themselves as just law enforcement officers…you never hear them say they are defenders of the Constitution. We [police] study the Constitution because we want to keep from screwing up. It's not about why there are laws regarding search and seizure, why freedom of speech? And I think that is the essence of what being a policeman is all about. It is to have that balance between enforcing the laws and protecting basic rights.

The above passage describes thinking and sensemaking. He knew or sensed something important was there for him and his profession. He could not quite put his

finger on it but he knew he had to go back and take another look. In fact, he made two more visits to the Museum. As before, he walked in front of a picture that ran from the floor to ceiling of two German police officers with a muzzled German shepherd. It hit him — the German police helped create the horrors of the Holocaust just by enforcing the laws of the day. They forgot their larger mission of protecting the life and human dignity of all people. That was the lesson of the Holocaust for police officers in the United States today. He picked the *right* ideas and synthesized them into a message. Elizabeth Smythe and Andrew Norton suggest, "for a leader a situation will demand thinking, and thinking gives rise to decisions that create change."[74] I observed Ramsey lead this way a multitude of times, as if without thought, it was just his way of doing — leading. Again, from Smythe and Norton:

> The "what" of a leader's thinking is about getting things going, getting them done, maximizing opportunities, fulfilling potential. While other people just hang about, a leader moves into thinking.[75]

We worked with the Holocaust Museum and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to set up a one-day class for all recruits that consisted of visiting the museum and then participating in a facilitated discussion of lessons of the Holocaust for modern policing. Eventually, every member of the MPDC participated in this program. Ramsey was challenged on why officers should talk about Germany and the Jews when there were enough examples in this country of how the police enforced laws that violated basic human rights. His reply was that the history of the blacks in America was too close and still too raw, and the lessons would be lost in the debate about who did what to whom.

The program, "Law Enforcement & Society: Lessons from the Holocaust," started in 1999. By October 26, 2005, more than twenty thousand police officers from the National Capital Region and four thousand FBI agents participated in the program.[76] Similar programs were started in other cities. It was Ramsey's insight that led the

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[74] Smythe and Norton, "Thinking as Leadership," 81.

[75] Ibid., 72.

museum to create a whole series of "lesson" programs for the military, judges, State Department officials, and others with vital roles in defending individual liberties. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum named a scholarship in Ramsey's honor.

These results did not happen just because Ramsey had a *good* idea. It happened because he had a good idea, communicated it to the museum and the ADL, and charged the director of the MPDC's Institute of Police Science (training academy) to make it happen. Before a single recruit went through the program, the entire command staff spent a day at the museum. This is leading through action.

Ramsey reflected that storytelling and use of metaphors was a way to deliver lessons to people in a way that they do not necessarily realize they are receiving a lesson. "It's like through a back door and I think it is pretty powerful."[77] The next section illustrates how Ramsey combined sensemaking with storytelling and metaphors as a means of leading people to understand his vision for the profession of policing and the MPDC.

D.   STORYTELLING AND DEMONSTRATING THE "RIGHT" IDEAS

When Ramsey would talk about community policing, he often offered two metaphors. The phrase "thin blue line" is still used to describe the police. For Ramsey, this is not the right metaphor. A thin blue line means there is something that separates two sides. "So what are you part of — part of the good or part of the evil?" Or are you the line and part of neither side?"[78] He prefers the metaphor of a tapestry and the idea that the police are threads that are woven throughout the tapestry [community]. The police are part of and help to form the community. Ramsey knows the philosophy of community policing and helped write the book, but these simple metaphors are what he uses when he talks to community members and police officers. He does not talk about community policing; instead he paints a picture that everyone can visualize.

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[76] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Chief Charles Ramsey to be Honored," Press Release, October 26, 2005 (Accessed June 30, 2007, http://www.ushmm.org/museum/press/archives/detail.php?category=07-general&content=2005-10-26).

[77] Ramsey interview.

[78] Ibid.

Ramsey understood the relationship between the chief's identity and the identity of the police department. Ramsey said, "I think an important part of a police chief's job is nurturing the image of the department. The image of a department and the image of the chief are interwoven."[79] This is what John Storey found when he studied CEOs. A theme for CEOs was the image building of the CEO, his reputation capital, and the stakeholders' perception of both. Ramsey believes that image is perception as he expressed below:

> If people perceive that you are bad, then it is very difficult to overcome that perception. That becomes the image that is planted in their [the public] minds. If you do not like the image that they have of you, you have to create a new one.

Ramsey spent a good deal of time nurturing the image of the MPDC, especially in the early and middle years of his tenure. Again, he expressed image building as a process.

> You have to pay a lot of attention to image building. You have to handle it very delicately. It takes time. It takes a lot of time.

When Ramsey arrived at the MPDC, the Public Information Officer (PIO) had been in place for many years. He was well known and loved by the press. Ramsey, however, saw the PIO as the old face of the MPDC. Ramsey needed to create a new face of the MPDC so early on he did a lot of press himself. He did this to show that the chief had nothing to hide and was ready to take on all the issues. He actually had his daily calendar faxed to reporters on a regular basis. He did regular, monthly television and radio shows and responded to questions from the viewers. Then, at some point, Ramsey said he began to sense the image of the MPDC change. That is when he started to have other members of the department do press conferences because "I did not want to become the image — there is more to MPDC than just Chuck Ramsey." Ramsey wanted to change the perception that the MPDC was incompetent and had a bunker mentality. So, he began changing the image of the MPDC, first by being available to the press and then

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[79] Ramsey interview.

by demonstrating that there were a lot of quality people in the MPDC by putting them out there as the face of the new MPDC. Ramsey, in his own words, "sensed that the image had changed." It is this sensing that signaled to Ramsey that he needed to take the next step in this time-consuming process of image building.

Ramsey knew the power of the media and used it to help build the new image of the MPDC. He clearly talks of the power of media and his responsibilities in reference to it:

> You look at the power of the media. The way heroes and villains are created. How an organization can be called inept. You name it — it can be manufactured through the media. You have to manage those things. Image is 95 percent of everything. You can be the best in the world, but if your image is negative, it is not going to make a difference. If you are mediocre but your image is spectacular, you are spectacular because people don't know you.

"Because people don't know you," Ramsey knew that his identity and the image of department were mediated through the media. On July 24, 1998, at 3:40 p.m., Russell Eugene Weston Jr. rushed past officers and a weapons detector at the East Front entrance of the U.S. Capitol. Within minutes, two Capitol Police officers were killed and a tourist was wounded. The police wounded Weston and arrested him. At the time, Ramsey and Terry Gainer were heading back to the MPDC headquarters, which is only a block away from the U.S. Capitol. They headed straight to the Capitol and were present while the scene was still unfolding.

By federal law, any homicide committed in the District of Columbia is to be investigated by the Metropolitan Police Department, whether it happened in public housing, the White House, or the U.S. Capitol. Ramsey reports that there was a "fierce" debate between the FBI, Capitol Police and himself about who had charge of the scene. In the end, it was agreed that the MPDC had the lead with the assistance of the FBI. Ramsey knew this could be a key turning point in the MPDC's image if handled well. The gunman was already arrested, and there were eyewitnesses and videotape showing the shootings. Ramsey was comfortable that the conclusion would be clean and swift because the facts were clear and FBI agents were working side-by-side with MPDC

detectives. As Terry Gainer suggested, Ramsey had the MPDC's command bus brought to the scene. In telling the story, he laughed and said, "I was not sure that old thing was going to make it up the hill." He had it positioned behind the bank of national and international media microphones with the Capitol as backdrop. On the side of that bus was "Metropolitan Police Department" and that proud name was the backdrop of every press conference, regardless of who was talking about the Capitol Police murders. The *New York Times* reported:

> The Capitol grounds were secured, and nobody was allowed to leave until cleared by teams of investigators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Capitol Police and the Washington Metropolitan Police, with the latter eventually assuming the lead role in the investigation. [80]

The nation's paper of record documented that the MPDC, not a federal agency, had the lead role in investigating an attack on U.S. Capitol and the resulting murders. Not only did this maneuver help chip away at the old public image of the MPDC, it also began to bring pride back to the members of the department. The detectives on the scene made sure others knew that Ramsey thought they could handle this high profile case. It was the beginning of a turning point. This leading activity, to use events to help drive change, will be seen over and over in Ramsey's story and we will come back to it.

In April of 2000, the IMF/World Bank protestors came to D.C. on the heels of a "successful" protest in Seattle. They were going to bring the Battle of Seattle to the nation's capital. In Seattle, the protestors overwhelmed a small group of officers and caused property damage and fires in the street. Many in the country thought this was the beginning of violent protests that were witnessed in the 1960s and 1970s.

Ramsey was determined that the anarchists, who wanted to use the peaceful protest to cause property damage, would not have their way in D.C. The Assistant Chief in charge of the Special Operations Division drew up the plan for policing the protest.

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[80] Francis X. Clines, "Capitol Hill Slayings Overview; Gunman Invades Capitol, Killing 2 Guards*, New York Times*, July 25, 1998 (Accessed June 30, 2007 http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9803E5DA1139F936A15754C0A96E958260&sec=health &spon=&pagewanted=1).

Ramsey re-did it. Ramsey knew he angered the Assistant Chief but this was one he had to handle. Over one hundred thousand protestors showed up over two days. It was known that some protestors intended to get arrested. For the most part, the protest was peaceful. There were scenes of protestors trying to block a motorcade carrying the delegates and one police officer sitting on the hood of a car pushing protestors back.

I was in the command center (CC) watching the action. This was one of the first times that CCTV cameras were used to assist in assessing the situation surrounding a large protest. There were thousands of protestors on one side of a fence and police officers standing on the other side. The police were geared up in their riot gear. The protesters were storming the fence and attempting to bring it down. Ramsey asked the CC what they saw on the cameras. It was reported back that he had police officers four deep backed by horses and other officers in reserve. Ramsey knew he had the situation if he had to take it.

At some point, Ramsey walked the line between officers and protestors talking more to his troops than the protestors. His intent was to calm them down. He had them take off their riot helmets. He then turned his attention to the protesters and engaged them in conversation. The tension eased and everyone took a breath. This was another new tactic — the Chief of Police on the front line. Usually, the chief would stay back in the command center.

Towards the end of the last day of the IMF/World Bank meetings Ramsey knew the MPDC was successful. The meetings were not stopped by the protestors and there was no property damage. Chief Ramsey and Executive Assistant Chief Gainer began a negotiation with the protestors to arrange for peaceful arrests. Ramsey saw the negotiated arrests as a way to let legitimate protestors save face. This was not only unusual but also difficult because the protestors consisted of many groups with no real leaders. Therefore, the conversations flowed between the chiefs and several protestors who carried the message back to other members and groups. In the end, an arrangement was made that four hundred protestors could cross the police line and be arrested.

At one point, a female protestor gave Terry Gainer a bouquet of flowers. Ramsey and Gainer escorted the first group of protestors across the police line. Almost everyone got what they wanted. The protestors would chant, "Whose streets are these? They are our streets." Towards the end of the second day of the protest, the chant was changed to "They are Ramsey's streets." The anarchists and the more entrenched protestors later wrote about how Ramsey was able to take the protest away from them. As one protestor wrote:

> I hate to bring anyone down from the tremendous rush of kicking ass and taking names and the later onslaught of the A16 dem. . .. . .But we all got played by Chief Ramsey.[81]

Leading means knowing where you are at and recognizing that even your opponents need to take something away from the encounter. Prior to the protest, Ramsey reached out to the surrounding jurisdictions to help out if necessary. One of the jurisdictions that responded was Arlington County, where the Pentagon is located. There were threats that some of the protesters were going to try and shut down the bridges that connect D.C. to Virginia. Arlington County police agreed to protect the bridges. A *Washington Post* article reported that Ramsey's request to invoke the mutual-aid agreement marked an important change in the relations between suburban police departments and the MPDC saying, "it will likely lead to a more cooperative and regional approach to policing."[82] In that same article, Arlington Police Chief Edward A. Flynn said, "the symbolism of the act was twofold…It demonstrated a willingness on the part of MPDC to be a real partner to other law-enforcement agencies... And it gives the suburban police departments more confidence in the MPDC…What I see happening is MPDC beginning to be that regional leader that they haven't been." [83] The *Washington Post* gave Ramsey and the MPDC a glowing editorial on how the protest was handled. In

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[81] Tom, "Ramsey Played us Like a Fiddle," DC Indymedia, April 20, 2000 (Accessed July 4, 2007 http://dc.indymedia.org/mod/comments/display/2440/index.php).

[82] Patricia Davis, "Police Pact Suits D.C., Suburbs," *Washington Post*, May 4, 2000.

[83] It must be noted that there are still civil suits by protesters against the MPDC's handling of their civil rights. Later, IMF/World Bank protests also brought legitimate criticism and large settlements against the city on decisions made by MPDC officials and their handling of protesters.

building coalitions, the more powerful player must be open and willing to involve other partners. That is the first step in building trust and confidence.

Ramsey believes that the 2000 IMF/World Bank protests marked the turning point in the how the members and the community viewed the MPDC. He believes it gave them back their pride. When I asked why he believed this to be the case, he first said it was just something you could feel on the streets and in the hallways but then he told this story:

> You know when we came to MPDC the officers were ashamed to be known as members of our department. They would wear a regular shirt over their uniform shirt so no one would know they belonged to MPDC. After the 2000 protest, a female officer came up to me and told me of an experience she had. It was shortly after the protest, maybe even that final day. She walked into a McDonald to get something to eat. She was in uniform. When she walked into the restaurant, people began to applaud her. That is how I knew we turned the image around.

One of Ramsey's primary goals when he took the chief's job was to restore the pride of the department's members and improve MPDC's reputation in the profession. The second inauguration of George W. Bush in 2004 was another opportunity to raise the department's image and reputation within the policing profession. President Bush had taken the country to war and it was a very close election with hanging chads. Anti-war protestors and those protesting the election process were planning to be at the inauguration along with the president's supporters, plus there was now the ever present terror threat. Ramsey sent out a call for help to any police department that could send officers. Over three thousand police officers from across the country came to stand on the parade route of the inauguration. They came from Chicago, Las Vegas, Miami, and up and down the East Coast. All three thousand were sworn in and Ramsey gave a moving call of purpose. A standing cheer went out and for Ramsey it was a goose bump moment. It was also national recognition by rank and file police officers of the prominence of the MPDC.

Ramsey knew that "you are one mistake away from going back to the same old image that you had before." That one mistake was ever present in the investigation of the

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Chandra Levy murder. Chandra Levy was reported missing on May 1, 2001. She had completed an internship at the Federal Bureau of Prison and was preparing to go back to California for her college graduation. She never made it back home. The investigation revealed she had an affair with U.S. Representative Gary Condit, who was a married man. This story had all the makings of a soap opera — young college co-ed interning in the nation's capital, an affair with a powerful politician, and a disappearance. This story had real legs and it ran a marathon from May through September 10, 2001. It was on nightly news and the constant talk of cable news programs.

For Ramsey, it was a story he had to manage very carefully while ensuring that the detectives were doing everything possible.

> I had to manage the Chandra Levy case so carefully because we made so many errors in that case. I had to keep out in front of it, keep it from turning the tide against MPDC.

Ramsey could not help but recall the effect of another high profile murder case; JonBenet Ramsey. JonBenet was a six-year-old beauty queen who was found murdered in the basement of her Boulder, Colorado, home. The media frenzy around this case, according to Ramsey, "nearly destroyed Chief Tom Coby, absolutely destroyed him and his career." Ramsey saw his job as giving protection to the department and to the detectives so everyone could do their job. During the five months that the Chandra Levy case held national attention, Ramsey and the MPDC's press office handled thousands of media inquiries. Ramsey handled most of these inquiries personally because "the press is like a big dog, if you don't feed it, it starts to rummage through your garbage." It is uncertain how much longer the "big dog" would be satisfied with just a meal of Ramsey. Ramsey's sensed the tone was beginning to turn against the department, but then September 11, 2001, happened.

Ramsey understood the importance of identity and reality construction in making the dramatic and necessary changes in the MPDC. It was my experience that the very public nature of Ramsey gave back pride to the members of the department and built confidence of the community in the police. However, his work was much more than a

media campaign. He made substantial changes to the organization, improved the quality of personnel, and drove crime down. Ramsey saw all of this working together:

> Give people something else to look at, to think about, while you work on the problem over there. Then people will look up and ask — what's going on, crime is going down. "All of a sudden" you have created something different.

It is an old magic trick. Draw the attention of the crowd away from the real action. This is necessary in order to give the time and space necessary for the change to take place without diverting efforts to defending the changes. It is the job of the one leading to offer protection and support for those doing the work.

Annie Pye argues that leading is:

> Something grounded in identity construction, about which we make retrospective sense, enactive of sensible environments, undoubtedly social and ongoing, focused on and extracted by cues and most definitely driven by plausibility – shaping plausible meaning – rather any notion of accuracy.[84]

This is probing and sensemaking in the domain of complexity. Ramsey was a master at this activity of leading. Ramsey, as Pye describes leaders, "sought to limit the range of responses to any action so that the preferred definition of reality prevailed."[85]

E.   ORGANIZING ACTION AND SHAPING COLLECTIVE MOVEMENT

Ramsey would laugh to hear me say that he was a master of the process of leading. He hates process. In his own self-image, he is a man of action. Yet action without thinking and sensemaking, without managing image and constructing reality, is doing without leading. Another set of leading activities consists of shaping operational context, communicating strategy, building consensus, handling conflict, selecting people and resources, testing and evaluating, and changing direction as necessary. Vision can only be sustained if it is supported through the structures, systems, and working practices

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[84] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing, 38.

[85] Ibid., 36.

of the organization. Structures, systems, and practices aligned with the vision help to minimize random response. Ramsey's vision for the MPDC was to restore the pride in the department by:

> Creating an efficient, well-managed police department — one rooted in, and guided by, core values of honesty, integrity, respect for one another and for the community, fairness, dedication, commitment, and accountability for individual actions and organizational results.[86]

Recall that this pledge came on the heels of the former chief resigning in a storm of fraud and corruption allegations and decades of mismanagement by city officials. Ramsey not only had to create a new image and reality for the MPDC, he had to create the structure and cultural transformation to match the image with reality.

The organizational structure is a major component of the operational context. In some cases this may just be re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, but real and dramatic organizational structure change can make multiple contributions in leading an organization forward. Ramsey strongly believed that one of the reasons that community policing was not fully institutionalized in the Chicago Police Department after six years was its organizational structure. The CPD, just like the MPDC, had the traditional bureaucratic police structure. It consisted of four bureaus: patrol, investigations, technical, and administration. Each bureau was headed by an assistant chief or deputy chief all of equal rank and all reporting to the chief of police. In the last year at the CPD, the CPD and several other police departments were working with Elliot Jacque, an organizational theorist. Ramsey had this idea that organizational structure of a police department was holding the profession back from its next big step.

Ramsey recalls sitting in a MPDC executive staff meeting discussing a recent police shooting. No single chief could answer his questions because each one had a little piece of the answer. The patrol chief could talk about the incident. The assistant chief in charge of investigations could provide an update on the criminal investigation but did not handle the internal investigation. The assistant chief in charge of the Bureau of

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[86] Charles H. Ramsey, "Laying the Foundation for a New Beginning," Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, DC (May 11, 1998), 4.

Administration had information on discipline and personnel aspects of the case, and, everyone was pointing fingers at everyone else in terms of accountability. This caused Ramsey to reflect on the conversations he had with Jacque. The MPDC's organization was dysfunctional not necessarily because of people but because of its structure. Ramsey described the situation as:

> In MPDC the structure did not support the work that needed to get done. The structure of most departments was the product of the 1960s, the traditional model of policing, the various bureaus organized by function, the vertical nature of the chain of command; while the work flow is horizontal. Bureau heads organized their own fiefdoms and there is no incentive to coordinate, it lends itself to a dysfunctional environment.

As already mentioned, Ramsey came to the MPDC as an outsider. The interim chief prior to Ramsey was still in the department as well as another contender for the chief's job, as both were assistant chiefs. In the years prior to the Control Board and Ramsey, command appointments were political. Appointments were made based on who you knew. Strong cliques were created and alliances were formed. The two assistant chiefs who competed for Ramsey's job had strong supporters inside and outside the department and the two chiefs were at each other and "causing major disruption in the organization."[87]

The mayoral campaign was in full force by the fall of 1998. Marion Barry was running again and a newcomer, Chief Financial Officer Anthony Williams, was recruited to join the crowded field. Several city council members were also running for mayor. The city's attention was on whether Marion Barry could pull off another victory. The city and the police department were barely coming back from the chaos created by Barry's administration. Chief Ramsey was still in a *honeymoon* state with the community. Now, if there was ever a time, was the time to drastically re-organize the department. Ramsey saw this time as a closing window of opportunity.

Ramsey did away with the traditional bureau structure and replaced it with "a more logical and streamlined command system which promotes team work,

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[87] Ramsey interview.

communication and geographic accountability for fighting crime."[88] Instead of a Patrol Division, typically the most powerful division in a police department, Ramsey created three Regional Operations Commands (ROCs). Each ROC had a third of the city and each was accountable for preventing crime in their area. The Investigative Bureau was downgraded to Special Services Division. The ROCs and Special Services all reported to an Executive Assistant Chief (EAC). All sworn operations rested under the EAC. He was the one person accountable for the crime-fighting efforts in the department. The second major group was Corporate Support which subsumed the old Technical and Administrative Bureaus. This group was headed by a civilian and the majority of its members would be civilians, and it handled all the back office functions from human resources, facilities, fleet, equipment and supplies, to records and cell block. A number of small offices were created and fell under the Office of the Chief.

This dramatic organizational change accomplished several things. First, it put those functions that must work in coordination under a single command. Secondly, it organized the patrol function on a geographic basis from the police officer and his beat all the way up to the ROC Chief and his region. Finally, it significantly reduced the number of power positions down to two: the Chief of Police and the Executive Assistant Police. It also allowed Ramsey to make personnel changes at the Assistant Chief level.

Ramsey had five assistant chiefs and under the new organization he would still have five but at different levels. The Chief was a four-star chief, the EAC was a three-star, the three ROCs were two-star, and Chief of Special Services was a one-star. All the assistant chiefs were involved in defining the new organization but no one knew where they would fit. Ramsey demoted one of the assistant chiefs participating in the daily power struggles to a commander of a police district and offered the other a lateral staff position working for a civilian. She decided to retire. A third assistant chief, who had

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[88] Charles H. Ramsey, *Rebuilding the Metropolitan Police Department* (Washington, DC: Metropolitan Police Department, September 9, 1998).

the patrol division, was put in charge of the training academy but he kept his rank. Only one of the four original assistant chiefs became a ROC Chief. Three new assistant chiefs were promoted.

The day after the personnel changes were announced I got a phone call from a former assistant chief and was asked if I knew what Ramsey just managed to do. I said no and was then told, "He just destroyed the old clique system in one swoop!" I later naively asked Ramsey if he knew what he had done, and he just smiled. In the most recent interviews, Ramsey provided this explanation for the changes:

> One of the reasons I reorganized the department so drastically was so I could put people in positions. I needed to create a paradigm shift where people go back to zero. When you go into a strange environment, you are at a disadvantage because everyone else knows where all the mine fields are located. You have to change the environment so that at least you are on an equal playing field. I had to take the opportunity to change things around—mayoral election going on—I had to strike really quickly. The window of opportunity was there and I took advantage of the chaos. Chaos is not always a bad thing.

These organizational and personnel changes took place in September 1998, six months after Ramsey became Chief of Police. Ramsey took the time to assess the situation and thought about the changes he had to make, communicated them, and then changed the operational setting and context. He intentionally took advantage of the surrounding chaos in the political community and created a little chaos within the police department. He wanted an operational setting that would give him an advantage as a stranger in the land he created as opposed to the land he inherited. Now everyone had to figure out where they belonged and the new rules of operations. C. F. Kurtz and D. J. Snowden write about visiting chaos:

> There are times when it is necessary to break rigid structures . . .there are times when a strong disruption is the only mechanism that will break up a strong but unhealthy stability.[89]

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[89] Kurtz and Snowden, "The New Dynamics of Strategy, 478.

Ramsey encouraged the MPDC to visit chaos long enough to break up an unhealthy stability and to create the new shared operational reality. Leadership in action means implementing the actions necessary to sustain the vision, and "demands a delicate balance of constructing and blocking forces for and against [the desired reality] and the continuing negotiation and shaping of the prevailing definition of reality."[90] The organizational and personnel changes helped to block forces against Ramsey's effort of defining a new reality of the MPDC.

Although Ramsey saw himself as a man of action, he often let his leadership team do a "good deal of the heavy lifting" of this work. His view was that if he brought good people into the organization and promoted good people from within, people who demonstrated leading and attention to detail would "push the ball forward." Pushing the ball forward was easy because you trusted and respected the coach and you knew, and if necessary, he would get you out of the tight spot. In most cases, Ramsey would set the parameters for action and charge his leadership team to make it happen. However, he was a hands-on leader. He had standing, monthly, internal meetings focused on key topics: budget, technology implementation, progress toward meeting professional standards, and personnel issues. Every month he expected to hear about the progress made, issues needing his attention, and next steps. This was his way of assuring that he knew the important things were happening.

Crime fighting was the most important thing that had to happen if the MPDC was to achieve the image as the best police department in the country. In 2002, Ramsey started daily crime briefs. Every day, for two hours, the district commanders, executive staff, and operations support staff would talk about the crime that occurred over the past twenty-four hours and decide how to deploy discretionary resources for the coming twenty-four hours. These discussions were directed by Michael Fitzgerald, who replaced Terry Gainer as EAC. He was aided by a computerized mapping system that displayed all the crime from the previous day and a customized database search engine called "Columbo." With the *real-time* crime mapping and inquiry capabilities of Columbo

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[90] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 43.

everyone sitting in that room could see the facts. The approach was a modified CompStat but without the harsh criticism and punishment first associated with CompStat.[91] Ramsey saw this as a means to help command staff understand how to understand what was going on and how they could fight crime and the criminals. This was Ramsey's way of directing the attention of the command staff to crime fighting.

A good deal of what happened in these daily sessions was the drawing of connections — connections between crime patterns and connections between patrol, detectives, and forensics. It also brought to a higher plane the level of knowledge for all the participants about the elements and nature of crime in the District. It was a way to teach command officials how to operate in a complex environment. In the crime briefs, Ramsey was demonstrating and teaching the aspect of leading that consists of synthesizing and using information

These daily sessions first started with just the assistant chiefs. Ramsey wanted to make sure they understood the change in approach, the desired outcomes, and the expected way of thinking and drawing connections and patterns. Then in month two, the district commanders were brought into the room and finally the operational support group: detective commanders and lieutenants, forensics and firearm examiners. Problems in processes were identified and solutions offered on the spot. Implementation of the solution was followed-up at subsequent briefs. By the end of the second year, these briefs were carried throughout the department in Targeted Organizational Performance Sessions (TOPS). TOPS were routinely held with the homicide unit and involved prosecutors, youth services, forensics, and then every district commander was charged with holding a monthly TOPS session with their district personnel. These district TOPS sessions were fed into headquarters via teleconferencing so the chief and others could watch and participate.

Ramsey attended most of the daily crime briefs and TOPS. There were complaints about the amount of time this took but for Ramsey it was simple, "Crime

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[91] CompStat is an accountability mechanism first put in place by William Bratton at the New York Police Department. This early model was reported as one intentionally causing embarrassment and in the early years resulted in a high turnover of command officials.

fighting is our job and if you can not find two hours a day to do this, then I will find someone who can." Ramsey firmly believed that the crime reductions that occurred between 2002 and 2006 could be attributed to these sessions. This is how he held people and the organizational accountable for achieving the mission of the department.

So by the end of his first year, Ramsey had re-structured the MPDC and placed new people in top positions. He was working on rebuilding the image of the MPDC while his leadership team was busy rebuilding the infrastructure and the crime-fighting capability of the officers. He was leading the MPDC into the brave new world – a world that soon would consist of the global war on terror.

F.   LEADING IN THE NEW NORMAL

Prior to 9-11, Ramsey had already demonstrated the leading activities that are necessary in the post 9-11 world of homeland security. These very same activities are required when leading in the complex world of homeland security.

I was in a meeting with Chief Ramsey on the morning of September 11, 2001, when his chief of staff interrupted us and suggested we take a look at what was going on in New York. We walked into the outer office and watched as the second plane hit the World Trade Center. We all turned to each other and said, "That was no accident." We rushed down to our new Joint Operations Command Center (JOCC) that was about a week away from being operational. Technicians began tearing off the wrapping of large monitor screens and began plugging in components. The room was operational before the plane hit the Pentagon. I had returned to my office and could see the smoke rising from the Pentagon from my window. As I walked back into the JOCC, we heard that one or two planes were unaccounted for and may be heading for D.C. but then the "all clear" was given.

Command staff was called into headquarters for a briefing. Traffic was grid locked. The public was scared. We sat in a small windowless room being briefed on what was known. The POTUS (President of the United States) was in Air Force One and would stay up until further notice. The FLOTUS (First Lady of the United States) and

the VPOTUS (Vice President of the United States) were moved to a safe location. Assignments were made and general orders given. It was a scene out of a bad movie.

These first hours, days, and even weeks were chaotic. Ramsey's style during this time period was more autocratic than usual. He was making the decisions and providing the direction. Kurtz and Snowden defined a dynamic called "imposition" which is the forceful movement from the chaotic realm to the known.[92] Ramsey imposed order on a chaotic situation by reminding the command staff in a compelling way that they knew what to do and how to do it. He imposed order that allowed the commanders to act.

Also during this time, Ramsey reached out to federal and suburban law enforcement agencies to obtain information and coordinate action. Ramsey had already established the MPDC as leader in the National Capital Region. He had gained the respect of the federal agencies and exerted his influence among his peers. A good deal of his effort was to gather information and stretch resources. He established a weekly conference call with the federal agencies and regional law enforcement so everyone would know what was happening. He worked with Secret Service and The U.S. Park Police on ensuring that key embassies and other high risk targets were covered. Osborn, Hunt and Jauch suggest that the more direct linkages that top leadership have with other leaders, the more likely the system will undergo adaptive strategic alterations and influence its environment.[93] In this case, Ramsey's linkages with other chiefs in the NCR allowed him to influence how MPDC resources would be used in the early response to terrorism and influence the future. As Richard Osborn, James Hunt, and Lawrence Jauch eloquently argue, leadership is embedded in context:

> It is socially constructed in and from a context where patterns over time must be considered and where history matters. Leadership is not only the incremental influence of a boss toward a subordinate but most important, it is the collective incremental influences of leaders in and around the system. [94]

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[92] Kurtz and Snowden, "The New Dynamics of Strategy," 476.

[93] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 825.

[94] Ibid., 797.

Ramsey had taken on a new role of leading the NCR police leaders. This activity of leading the leaders came to him because of his earlier actions of networking and collaborating, and in the time of crisis he was expected to step up and he did.

The last half of 2001 was spent trying to, in Kettl's terms, "link place-based problems with functionally organized systems, for problems with enormous stakes."[95] In other words, the problem was how to secure Washington, D.C., and make its populace feel safe with the limited resources available to the MPDC? The short-term answer was through networking and sharing of resources. Ramsey also knew that the longer-term challenge was balancing the resources needed for homeland security with neighborhood policing.[96] As he said, "It will not be long before people get over the shock of 9-11." He was already getting complaints about squad cars sitting in front of the residence of the VPOTUS.

Yet, at the same time he knew this was something different:

> I recall the evening we were finally allowed to talk with the press. One of the reporters asked me when things will go back to normal. I said normal has just been redefined. Homeland security has had a tremendous impact on law enforcement. I go back thirty-five years in the profession. This is totally new — new responsibilities, new equipment, new training, and new relationships.

Ramsey approached this newness the same way he approached becoming the chief of police. He thought about what it meant to his organization, how to balance the demands, discovered the *right* approach, began to create the image, and structured the operations and communicated the strategy. For him the most critical question was how to balance the new demands with the old demands. Again, he saw the window of opportunity created by the chaos to create something new and he looked internally for a change agent.

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[95] Kettl, "Contingent Coordination," 256.

[96] Ramsey interview.

So there was a small window of opportunity and I searched for a way to deal with the serious crime problems we have and the new demands of homeland security. The Special Operations Division was the only unit I had to assign the new function. They were not tied to calls for service and they were already handling Presidential and dignitary details. But, I also knew I needed new leadership in that unit. I knew I needed to change the paradigm for SOD and that is when I put Cathy Lanier into that command. Cathy was the right person because I was going to have to reshape how SOD went about its job.

Ramsey saw this homeland security problem as one of balancing new with old and solved the organizational problem by using the current structure and adding new tasks. The structure remained bureaucratic but the leadership context for Cathy Lanier was one of crisis functioning. For Lanier and the Special Operations Division (SOD), they were given a new function with little clarity and the rules of the game changed. As Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch describes managing crisis from the middle of the organization, Ramsey could not tell Lanier what to do because this was new territory. Ramsey "isolated and communicated what information was important and what to give attention to from an endless stream of events, actions, and outcomes."[97] This activity is one of helping to pattern information in a complex situation.

Yet, Ramsey also knew if homeland security was going to be effective it had to go beyond the SOD. He charged Lanier with the responsibility of inculcating homeland security, not only in the SOD, but throughout the MPDC. This is similar to how community policing evolved from being a tactic like foot patrols done by community officers to a philosophy that guided daily police activities.

Mission and strategy is what the organization's leadership believes and has declared is the organization's mission and what the employees believe is the central purpose of the organization. The MPDC changed its mission statement:

The mission of the Metropolitan Police Department is to prevent crime and the fear of crime, **including terrorism**, as we work with our partners to build safe, healthy and **prepared** neighborhoods throughout the District of Columbia.

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[97] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 809.

Only three words were added, "including terrorism" and "prepared". Yet, it declared that the mission had expanded and we had new and different responsibilities. Just like the earlier re-organization, the new mission statement gave the signal that change was coming.

Ramsey also recognized that this new function demanded more than just existing resources. Ramsey believed that the security of the nation's capital was dependent on the networks and collaboratives he joined or created. "MPD is only one part of a much larger mosaic that creates an umbrella of homeland security for our nation's capital."[98] For him collaboratives allowed him to pool resources while networks helped in sharing information. When asked how he saw the difference between collaboratives and networks, he responded:

> Networks seem more like information systems. Collaboratives are more actionable, operational, like task forces that work together to get things done. If you have a drug investigation or chop shops and you bring others into work on it. Fusion centers are networked. It all comes down to information sharing and working together. Networking makes certain things available while collaboratives stretch your resources more.

Ramsey saw participating in networks and collaborations as a means of stretching his resources and a way to be a player in homeland security in the region. The primary area that Ramsey used a collaboration to expand his information and influence was with the Washington Field Office's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The MPDC does not have the manpower resources of the New York Police Department. Ramsey could not dedicate large number of officers to counterterrorism. He could however assign ten or so detectives to the JTTF but this was dependent upon a promise by the FBI. In the early phase of the JTTF shortly after 9-11, MPDC detectives on the JTTF were used to track down tips. If the tip turned out to be fruitful, the case was turned over to an FBI squad for investigation. In 2006, Ramsey and the Assistant Director in Charge (ADC) of the Washington Field Office agreed that if Ramsey increased the number of detectives assigned to the JTTF, the FBI would put them on whatever counterterrorism squad the

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[98] Ramsey interview.

chief requested and they would work cases. The MPDC went from three detectives to ten working JTTF and each was assigned to a different squad. For Ramsey, this meant he was expanding his flow of information about JTTF cases in the District and Northern Virginia by dedicating a limited number of resources.

Oliver and Ebers found in an analysis of studies on networking and collaboration that the dominant perspective of inter-organizational network research tended to view

> Inter-organizational networking as an intentional response to dependencies among organizations that aims at enhancing the power and control of the networking organizations in order to foster their success.[99]

Indeed, Ramsey and the ADC of the FBI's Washington Field Office formed an expanded collaboration because of what each saw as a mutual benefit that would foster the success of their individual organizations.

Ramsey's networks and collaboratives extended beyond the National Capital Region because the threat to the District came from beyond this boundary. The MPDC was one of the first local law enforcement agencies to participate in the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) established by the Department of Homeland Security. Coordinated action against threats to the homeland was to flow from the HSOC. Ramsey placed a detective sergeant in the HSOC. The sergeant's job was to provide local insight to the work of the HSOC and to keep Ramsey informed of any activities in and around the District and the nation. Later, other major cities sent representatives to the HSOC.

The relationships between the federal and state and local law enforcement agency representatives (SLLEA) slowly deteriorated. The SLLEAs were not getting clearances quick enough to be used in the HSOC, information was being "horded" by feds on the high side of the HSOC, and the people running the HSOC did not trust the SLLEAs. The tension and frustration grew so great that Ramsey wrote a letter to Secretary Chertoff on behalf of the other chiefs who had personnel assigned to the HSOC, outlining the

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[99] Amalya L. Oliver and Mark Ebers, "Networking Network Studies: An Analysis of Conceptual Configurations in the Study of Inter-organizational Relationships," *Organizational Studies* 19, no. 4 (1998): 565.

problems and requesting a meeting with the secretary. Secretary Chertoff agreed to meet with Ramsey and the other chiefs. This meeting resulted in changes in the HSOC operations and a standing work group between the DHS and the major cities' chiefs.

The problems that SLLEA were experiencing in the HSOC were because the procedural coordination did not align with the contractual coordination. An agreement, contract was made that gave SLLEAs access to resources (intelligence) but the procedural arrangements constricted the flow of those resources on a day-to-day basis. As a result, the SLLEA's dissatisfaction grew to the level that they threatened to leave the HSOC if changes were not made. So often there is an assumption that a contractual agreement is the only thing needed to get the work done. It is needed to get it started but more is needed to keep it going and to accomplish the desired outcomes. This parallels a key finding by Sobrero and Schrader that contractual and procedural coordination mechanisms were two separate but complimentary dimensions for structuring inter-firm relationships, and, that both must be aligned for the relationship to thrive.

G.   LEAVING MPDC

Ramsey also had his detractors. The most vocal was the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) who represented the rank and file. Ramsey was the lead negotiator between the Chicago Police Department and their local FOP. The Chicago FOP gave Ramsey a resounding endorsement when the MPDC's FOP contacted them prior to Ramsey becoming Chief of MPDC. Ramsey and the FOP in the first years of Ramsey's tenure at MPDC were amicable. As Ramsey began to crack down on medical leave abuse, increased the number of rank and file disciplines and firings, and instituted mandatory overtime and redeployment to increase police visibility and crime fighting efforts, the relationship between Ramsey and the FOP deteriorated.

Kristopher Baumann was the fourth FOP Chairman that Ramsey worked with at the MPDC. Bauman came into the department as a lateral transfer; he had served as a police officer in another department prior to joining the MPDC. He was not with the MPDC during the turbulent, early years of Ramsey's administration. Kristopher

Baumann said in November 2006, "There is deep, deep dissatisfaction in the department and the morale is low. Things need to change."[100] For him, this meant Ramsey had to go.

However, to suggest that Officer Baumann and the FOP led to Ramsey's retirement is not accurate. A majority of the officers in the MPDC in 2006 joined the department during Ramsey's tenure. They did not experience the dark days of the late 1990s. When they joined they were given better uniforms, newer equipment, mandatory training, and a community wanting to work with them. Ramsey experienced what Kurtz and Snowden described as a natural process of death and growth:

> . . .the death of people and obsolescence of roles cause what is known to be forgotten and require seeking; new generations filled with curiosity begin new explorations that question the validity of established patterns; the energy of youth breaks the rules and brings radical shifts in power and perspective; and sometimes imposition of order is the result.[101]

A new generation became a majority that questioned changes that Ramsey brought into existence almost a decade earlier.

In addition, a new, young Mayor, Adrian Fenty, was elected. Fenty was a council member and he and Ramsey had a few public words in council hearings. Fenty ran on a platform of youthfulness and change. In fact, Fenty made it clear that if elected he would replace Ramsey. It is not really known why Fenty believed it was necessary to replace Ramsey with eighteen months left on his contract. It could be the generational issue or just as Ramsey found it necessary to express his authority by reorganizing MPDC, perhaps Fenty needed to demonstrate his authority by removing a popular chief. Else, as Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky suggest, leading is a dangerous endeavor. Ramsey certainly became more vocal about the underlying causes of crime. As he saw it, children having children, easy access to guns, a deplorable educational system, and the

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[100] Klein and Nakamura, "Chief Ramsey to Step Down, Sources Say."

[101] Kurtz and Snowden, "New Dynamics of Strategy," 479.

deterioration of black family were the social causes of violent urban crime. On more than one occasion, he joined Bill Cosby in talking about these circumstances and how black America needed to stand up against these trends.

Ramsey remarked, "There are three groups that a Chief must keep satisfied, the community, politicians, and the union. When you have two of these groups against you for any period of time, you are in trouble." On December 31, 2006, Charles H. Ramsey retired as Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department. He left behind a police department operating at a higher performance level, well networked, and an organizational leader in major homeland security collaboratives.

H.   SUMMARY

Leading was the way Ramsey built community policing, which improved the MPDC's image and reduced crime. It was also the way he took the MPDC into the post 9-11 world. He used leading to build and used networks and collaboratives to get information, extend resources and accomplish a new mission. The activities of leading were found beneficial whether Ramsey was directing a hierarchical bureaucracy, participating in a network of police chiefs, or negotiating the agreements of a collaborative. The theory of leading warrants further exploration by researchers.

VI. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

This was a review of how Ramsey used the activities of leading to help a traditional, bureaucratic organization move to a higher level of functioning. Ramsey used the activities of thinking and sensemaking, storytelling and demonstrating the *right* ideas, and organizing action and shaping collective movement to change the image of the MPDC and achieve successes in crime-fighting, personnel development, and community relations. The concept of leading was found not only useful but beneficial in understanding how dramatic changes occurred in the Metropolitan Police Department.

Leading was how Ramsey did his work. Thus, he found the same techniques useful as he and his organization were forced into the new world of homeland security. The demands of homeland security also forced Ramsey to use the network linkages he had established in the National Capital Region to expand his information base and maximize his resources after 9-11. The more informal, informational linkages were called upon as needed. The longer-term collaboration with FBI and the DHS required a formal agreement that documented the exchange of resources.

A.   THE PROCESS OF LEADING

The findings clearly illustrate that leading is a process, a way of doing, of moving people and organizations in a desired direction. This process includes cognitive knowledge, tacit knowledge, and action. The conceptual theory of leading describes three major categories of leading: thinking and sensemaking, storytelling and demonstrating the *right* ideas, and organizing action and shaping collective movement. Leading is using elements from all three categories almost simultaneously.

The analysis of Ramsey's story shows that these categories of action were used by him to move the MPDC to a higher level of functioning. He did not use the conceptual terms but his telling of how he led the MPDC demonstrated the theoretical concepts. There are several key findings that require highlighting. Primarily leading is a dynamic and perhaps a dialectic process where the actor moves from thinking to storytelling to

sensemaking to organizing and back to thinking or some other series of actions. Leading is a process, a process we can understand.

One pattern that came clear in the case is how leading can and does help construct social reality. Ramsey believed that an important part of his job as chief was to reform the image and the social reality of the MPDC. He expressed this belief soon after taking office and consciously worked toward raising the pride of the force, the reputation of the department, and the confidence of the community in the department. This was more than just a public relations campaign. It was a *right* idea that he demonstrated and organized collective movement around to achieve his vision for the MPDC.

Annie Pye argues that instead of continuing to try and fail in developing a theory of leadership that the task should be reframed. Her suggested reframing is that the field should explore "the daily doing of leading, grounded in organizing, just as it is in everyday life."[102] This research provides evidence of the fruitfulness of such a reframing. The depth, interpretation, and color of Ramsey's leading would never be reveled through a standardized leadership questionnaire. This research discovered the *how* of leading.

Reframing leadership as leading also allowed the author to explore the social construction of reality and the use of the media to mediate image and social reality. There is no doubt that Ramsey held a unique time and location in history. However, if Ramsey was not chief during this time someone else would have been. The point is that Ramsey was aware of his time and place and maximized them to achieve his vision for the MPDC. The social constructionist view encourages us to look at how actors interact with each other and how all actors are shaped by one another and by their context. This is what Pye calls the human dialectic. Ramsey understood this dialectic at a basic level. Leading requires this understanding not as a struggle but as a dance.

Several times through the nine years Ramsey sensed "turning points." Leading is driving change and using context and events to move the collective toward a tipping point. W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne described the tipping point as "once the beliefs and energies of a critical mass of people are engaged, conversion to a new idea

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[102] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 33.

will spread like an epidemic, bringing about fundamental change very quickly."[103] Ramsey also worked to counterbalance tipping points that could be negative for the organization, such as the Chandra Levi case. Leading is creating and holding a positive balance in favor of the organization achieving its mission. As Annie Pye suggests, leading is about constructing and blocking forces for and against promoting the desired social reality. Ramsey saw this as a very large part of his job so the rest of the members of organization can get the "real" work done.

Reviewing the list of leading activities certainly suggests that only a super person could accomplish all the activities of leading. Ramsey's story suggests that these actions do not have to be the responsibility of a single person but of a team. Gabriele Lakomski suggests that organizations were created to off-load the computational or work demands from individuals. Similarly, the activities of leading can also be off-loaded. Based on Ramsey's case, it was the organizing for collective movement that he delegated to his leadership team. Ramsey took responsibility for selecting the *right* ideas and storytelling and demonstrating. He certainly put the new organizational structure in place but left it to others to develop the operating procedures. Ramsey handled the "softer" side of leading.

This case clearly illustrates Osborn, Hunt and Juach's statement:

Complexity theory encourages us to see organizations as complex dynamic systems composed of agents who interact with one another, and thus promote novel behavior for the entire system that also influences the environment of the system.[104]

The world of homeland security consists of adaptive complex problems. The solving of these problems is best understood through the lens of leading in complexity.

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[103] W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne, "Tipping Point Leadership," *Harvard Business Review on Leading Through Change* (Cambridge, MA: 2005): 24.

[104] Osborn et al., "Toward a Contextual Theory of Leadership," 798.

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B.   LEADING IN COMPLEXITY

Leading in complexity means being able to perceive desirable emergent patterns, reinforce those patterns, set boundaries, and disrupt negative patterns. It is finding "order or pattern in organizational functioning."[105]   Ramsey also understood complexity and chaos, not as a theory but in practice. Ramsey performed the role as one of assessing the fitness of the organization, reinforcing positive patterns, and taking the energy away from negative patterns. His dramatic reorganization illustrated this awareness. He held no illusions about controlling the cliques in the organization. He hoped that the change he desired would happen by disrupting the negative patterns and pushing the organization temporarily into chaos. He also knew that in moments of chaos the way out was by exercising authority. The re-organization and the top personnel changes allowed him, as an outsider, to establish his authority.

This researcher suggests that most of the "tipping points" identified by Ramsey occurred at the edge of chaos. All organizations must be able to maintain enough stability to continue functioning while adapting to new situations and problems. Lakomski quotes Kauffman that organizations at the edge of chaos are "best able to carry out ordered yet flexible behavior."[106] This was true at the time of the Capitol murders, large protests, the Chandra Levi case, and the terrorist attacks. Ramsey was able to help the organization work in these times of complexity.

C.   IMPLICATIONS FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

John Gardner quotes Abigail Adams, "These are the hard times in which a genius would wish to live. Great necessities call forth great leaders."[107] Abigail Adams was talking about the founding of a new country and the realities facing America today are no

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[105] Lakomski, *Managing without Leadership*, 118.

[106] Ibid., 127.

[107] Gardner, *On Leadership,* 39.

less formidable and crucial to our future. We all hope that great leaders are being called forth to exercise superb leadership in homeland security. But hope and belief is not enough.

There is a strong belief that the promise of leadership and leadership development will address and solve the problems of increasing uncertainty, instability, and the impending threats facing our government institutions. Yet, when we examined the concept of leadership, we found it encrusted with multiple meanings, and it was difficult to find a coherent theory. Pye put forth the concept of leading and "understanding the daily doing of leading and organizing."[108] This thesis took Pye's concept and expanded it to include thinking and organizing collective action. The case study supports these concepts as crucial in moving an organization to a higher level of functioning.

Today, perhaps more than ever, leading is required at all levels of government, in all organizations, and across all boundaries so that people and organizations can function in the complexity of homeland security. So, what does leading have to tell us about meeting the demands of homeland security?

It tells us that homeland security leaders must, as George Keenan did at the beginning of the Cold War, exhibit "leadership through the sheer force of ideas, ideas shaped in a context of action and relevant to future action."[109] Although the concept of homeland security is not new, today's reality is new. The concept today carries with it undertones of uncertainty, fear, and denial. The nation today, much like Washington, D.C., in the late 1990s, is willing to work with people who can help provide meaning and understanding in this new world. They will not follow blindly but the people will engage those who are willing to engage in the work of sensemaking and organizing collective movement from that understanding. This work does not rest just with the bosses but with the police officer, the public health official, and the federal agent.

It means developing and telling a story that demonstrates a clear vision of homeland security and the goals to get the nation to that vision. What does a secure

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[108] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 47.

[109] Gardner, *On Leadership,* 46.

homeland look like? How do we balance our treasured values of democracy, diversity, and tolerance with securing the homeland? How much are we willing to pay, in terms of money, restrictions, and lives to be secure? Leading homeland security means forging this debate and leading us where we do not want to go and persuading us to make difficult decisions and to accept the consequences. However, vision is not enough. The vision must be grounded in reality and point us to an achievable future by showing us what we must do to get there.

Leading homeland security means strengthening the organization and providing a trusted space for those working to secure the nation. It requires building and re-building communities of interest. It is guiding everyone's involvement in the debate and working with them to set objectives and actions. It means being willing to actively and intentionally construct the image and social reality of homeland security. It is working with partners to define roles and responsibilities and building the trust necessary to accomplish the common good.

Directors and chiefs of large government agencies that are charged with the important work of homeland security need to understand the process of leading. More importantly they must be capable of leading. What are the lessons from this research? Leading is thoughtful; it is looking for the *right big idea* that energizes and evokes our values. Leading is caring for the relationship created between the bosses and the workers, between organizations, and the people they serve. Leading is protecting and promoting the organization so the work can get done. Leading is action oriented and directed towards solving the wicked problems that beset and bewilder. Leading is probing, sensing, learning, failing, and acting. Leading occurs not only at the top of the organization but also at the middle-management area and on the street. Leading is what is done when others are frozen in the past or in the current fear. Leading is doing the work necessary to fulfill the promise of the founding fathers in today's world of networked terrorists. Leading is everyone's job.

D.   IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research suggests that the viability of leading as a theoretical concept warrants further exploration. These findings correspond to Lesley Prince's discussion on leadership. Prince suggests that leadership is not found in a set of intellectual principles, but as "a set of experientially located and responsive relational skills-in-process."[110] The examples provided in the analysis illustrate this point.

I believe Prince is right. Our models of leadership must arise from experience, even if the models seem muddled and imprecise. Given the complexity of homeland security, "perhaps now is the time to reinvestigate the importance of process and bring it into the core of our leadership models."[111]

This thesis also illustrates the power of qualitative research in understanding the daily situations and demands of leaders in homeland security. Qualitative methods still get the criticism of lacking rigor and precision. Yet, applying rigor and precise measures to a fluid, dynamic, and complex phenomena may yield less interesting results; or, as Annie Pye suggests, it just might continue to produce a type III error — solving the wrong problem precisely.[112] The natural sciences discovered decades ago that the physical world is not as mechanical as once believed. Social scientists must surely understand this is doubly true for our social life. As we begin to understand the complexity and sometimes chaotic nature of social relations and organizations, our research methods must reflect this understanding. Richard Osborn, James Hunt, and Lawrence Jauch suggest some modifications to the traditional leadership and network studies to include structured case analysis and the measurement of the existence and use of "mental maps" by leaders and leadership teams. The point is the depth and color of the findings in this thesis could only be found through qualitative analysis and the nature of the research — exploring theory — demanded this type of analysis.

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[110] Prince, "Eating the Menu," 113.

[111] Ibid., 120.

[112] Pye, "Leadership and Organizing," 46.

E.   CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I intended this thesis to be ambitious. It attempted to link complexity theory with the theoretical concept of leading. Dealing with complexity requires directing attention, discovering patterns, and watching insights emerge. Perhaps the troubled state of leadership theory is due to our efforts to apply the analytical and reductionist approach to a problem that will always reside in the complex realm. The best leaders possibly are those who understand the complexity of the problems they face and whose actions reach a level of complexity that matches and uses the chaos they face in the this post-9-11 world.

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