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Creating an Organizational Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

Police bureaucracies are significant to community life in the United States and in understanding causal motivational needs of public employees and the connection between those needs and bureaucratic outcomes (Wise, 2004). The purpose of this paper is to provide new insight and ultimately a new paradigm for creating a police department's organizational design, which will enable the department to meet both internal and external needs. Altering foundational principles within a bureaucratic environment allows for substantive change. Two emerging problems surface in most police environments, which are centralization and decentralization components not aligned with organizational structure and operational goals, and failure to provide organic structures within the organization that "promote flexibility, so people initiate change and can adapt quickly to changing conditions" (Jones, 2010, p. 110).

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Creating an Organizational Paradigm

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Introduction

Police organizations are significant to community life in the United States and in understanding causal motivational needs of public employees and the connection between those needs and bureaucratic outcomes (Wise, 2004). Important, are the strategies used to achieve goals, as they relate to the performance of police bureaucracy as an “institution in matters of workforce motivation, important institutional outcomes such as high performance or advancing the public interest” (Wise, 2004, p. 669). Public interest is the sum of collective benefits, which belong to a specific community, it is not static, and reflects the requirements and requests of potential generations (March & Olsen, 1989). As rational bureaucratic forms of management, police departments operate as lawful institutions empowered by state and municipal authority to act on behalf of the state in matters pertaining to state law and municipal ordinances, and are considered a closed system because of mandated jurisdictional guidelines. The purpose of this paper is to provide new insight and ultimately a new paradigm for creating a police department’s organizational design, which will enable the department to meet both internal and external needs. We will briefly provide a background of bureaucratic systems, describe the Phoenix Police Department organization structure and address flaws of the design, submit a new design, and provide features to forecast and evaluate the functionality of the new design for the future. The significance of this study is there are more than 20,000 police departments in the United States, which employ approximately 800,000 officers and organizational design is critical to effectiveness and efficiency (DeLone & Thompson, 2009).

Background

Literature depicts the modern bureaucratic model as a classic, traditional, and rational model of management formulated by Max Weber (Carnis, 2010; Daft, 2007; Heady, 1959; Kouzes & Posner, 1997; Jones, 2010; McAuley, Duberley & Johnson, 2007; Scott, 2003; Scott & Davis, 2007, Singh, 2009; Udy, 1959). A classic bureaucratic system is a closed, mechanistic, standardized organization, which relies on formalization and goal specification through vertical hierarchical governance (Daft, 2007; Heady, 1959; Jones, 2010; Miller, 1970; Scott & Davis, 2007; Singh, 2009). Heady (1959) informs that although reformulations of Weber's bureaucratic model have been completed by authors such as Friedrich, Dahl and Lindblom, Dubin, Blau, Slesinger, and Morstein Marx, all agree with Weber's central elements, which are "a rational orientation toward goal attainment, a hierarchy of authority, work specialization, professionalism, and systematic rules as a basis for operations" (p. 516). The defining characteristic of bureaucratic administration is structural design (Falk, 1935; Heady, 1959; Miller, 1970).

The rational system's defining characteristics are goal specificity and formalization, and bureaucratic systems of management are aligned with this approach and philosophy. A classic bureaucratic system is one in which organizational goals are defined, executive advancement exists, rational-legal authority prevails (Weber), formalization dominates, and a rigid hierarchical structure is in place (Scott & Davis, 2007). Bureaucratic organizations identify and control through rules that pre-specify appropriate task behaviors (Scott & Davis, 2007). Rational control is defined as processes within a bureaucratic environment in which a utilitarian appeal is made to the employee's economical rational self-interest (McAuley, Duberley & Johnson, 2007). Barley and Kunda provide key assumptions within bureaucratic systems, which are organizations are perceived as machines, managers are perceived as experts dictating action, employees are rational actors who comply out of self interest and benefits, and control is exercised by manipulating the system (McAuley, Duberley & Johnson, 2007).

Max Weber wrote about the emergence of bureaucracy from more traditional organizational forms and its continued growth and dominance in modern society

(Scott & Davis, 2007). At the center of Weber's bureaucratic approach is the differences in authority, and his preferred form of governance is rational-legal authority (Scott & Davis, 2007). Rational-legal authority is based on employees' beliefs in the legality of rules (Scott & Davis, 2007). Weber delineates six features that outline bureaucracy from traditional structures, which are: jurisdictional specificity, organization follows hierarchical principles, "abstract rules govern official decisions and actions," "means of production or administration belongs to the office (position) not the officeholder," officials are selected and appointed on the basis of qualification (not elected) and compensated by salary, and employment is considered a career (Scott & Davis, 2007, p. 49). Jones (2010) adds additional characteristics in defining bureaucracies, which are authority is established on technical competence, role responsibility and decision-making authority are clearly defined, and rules, standards, and norms are used to control behavior, create predictability, and define relationships. Standardization is a method by which organizations gain control over employees and ensures their behavior is predictable (Jones, 2010). The use of standardization decreases the need for face-to-face managerial control over subordinates and lowers the threshold for hierarchical levels of supervision. Instead, standard operating procedures (SOP) and rules substitute managerial roles and indoctrinate the employee in regard to organizational norms and values (Jones, 2010). The ability to delegate authority is also increased because subordinates have specified procedures to follow. However, standardization is more difficult to achieve when the complexity of the task is increased. Finally, Jones (2010) informs that "administrative acts, decision, and rules should be formulated and put in writing" (p. 134).

Description of Phoenix Police Department

The Phoenix Police Department (PPD) is a closed centralized hierarchical bureaucratic system containing six divisions, and clustered by work function (Jones, 2010; Scott & Davis, 2007). The PPD is composed of 3,000 sworn officers and approximately 1,000 civilian personnel. The Police Chief, who is subordinate to the city manager, bears ultimate responsibility for the police department and each division is horizontally differentiated into functional

hierarchies with the chief retaining ultimate power and control of each division. The six divisions are clustered according to work function, which are management services division, patrol operations south division, patrol operations north division, professional standards division, investigations division, and technical services division. Each division is directed, guided, and administrated by an assistant chief and each division contains three to five bureaus, precincts, or both, which are led by commanders. Twenty-four bureaus or precincts exist within the organization. Day-to-day operations are conducted within functional hierarchies directed and guided by the bureau or precinct commander through a direct chain of command with specific span of control guidelines that provide for direct supervision at the lieutenant and sergeant levels (Jones, 2010). Authority delegated to commanders permits them to hold personnel responsible for their actions and to influence the direction of the bureau or precinct from a limited decentralized position. The PPD bureaucratic characteristics include; authority is established through a direct chain of command, role responsibility and decision-making power is clearly defined, and rules, standards, and norms are used to control behavior, create predictability, and define relationships. Standardization is the control system used by PPD to achieve compliance by all personnel through rigid conformity to Operations Orders, which delineate every detail of organization function and consists of 1,474 pages of policy and procedural guidelines (Scott & Davis, 2007).

The PPD handles complexity through specialization units and dividing the work to precincts and bureaus, which perform similar functions much like Woodward's large-batch technology (Jones, 2010). Police function, within its scope of responsibility, is predictable by its very nature. Police are mandated by Federal, State, and Municipal statute to administrate and enforce law. Actions by police are delineated by courts of law and their interpretation of law. Unpredictability comes from human action, not legal mandates. Police departments are generally self-contained, and interdependence occurs between designated work groups assisting in a vast array of investigations and associated functions required to maintain police operations. External interdependence occurs with court systems, other law enforcement agencies, probation and parole, community groups and associations, and media.

Although PPD is a service provider, it attempts to maintain mechanistic structures, which result in many challenges in performing the varying complex tasks associated with police function (Jones, 2010; Scott & Davis, 2007). Mechanistic structures are characterized by individual specialization, simple integrating mechanisms, centralization, and standardization, and are formulated to provoke personnel to act predictably (Jones, 2010; Scott & Davis, 2007). In mechanistic structures, hierarchy is the principle integrating mechanism, and are “suited to organizations that face stable environments” (Jones, 2010, p. 110). The purpose of these boundaries is to “separate people, processes, and production in healthy and necessary ways” (Ashkenas et al. 2002, p. 3).

Issues and Challenges

Indicative of bureaucratic structures are impediments, which affect inter and intra-organizational cooperation, philosophy, public policy, public interests, decision-making processes, allocation of resources, and internal structures. “Bureaucracy is characterized by an organizational form whose non-legitimately-owned resources are allocated by one or more administrators (bureaucrats) according to a more or less elaborate system of rules whose origin and implementation are governed by command and control relationships” (Carnis, 2010, p. 56). Central to Carnis’ viewpoint is that public bureaucracies are stewards of public resources, not owners, and economic principles are not applicable to bureaucratic entities. However, bureaucratic organizations retain legitimate and coercive power over their geographical spheres of influence.

Economic theories explaining bureaucracies focus on internal mechanisms and decision-making processes. Consensus by theorists is private and public bureaucracies exist and generally, most theorists do not differentiate distinctions between them. Carnis (2010) explains this viewpoint by quoting Niskanen’s, who believed no formal distinction between a “charitable organization and the Department of Justice (p. 55) exists, Tullock’s “notion of power does not allow for a distinction between a big company and a state administrative body” (p. 55), and Wintrobe and Breton’s “concept of hierarchy is equally applicable to private firms and public organizations” (p. 55). Mises’s (1983) view of bureaucracy provides no distinction between family, clan, and public-sector organizations (p.

50). Placing a private company in the same category as a government department does not account for distinctions, functioning processes, decision-making processes, political influence and leverage, and economic principles, which include profit and loss indicators of sound business management (Carnis, 2010).

However, recent social movements are forcing PPD to integrate its function with external environmental structures affecting communities, politics, and social concerns and movements while integrating internal governmental constraints and directives, which are mandated by law or ordinance. PPD and many police organizations lack the organic structure to facilitate this process effectively. This trend is compelling police departments to implement decentralized hierarchies and organic structures, which permits for speed, flexibility, integration, and innovation (Ashkenas et al., 2002).

Government bureaucracies are legislated entities, which are granted legitimate and coercive power, provide mandated services to the public using resources they do not own, are financed through taxation (coercion) while maintaining a monopoly of the services they provide, and are in no way comparable or similar to the private sector (Carnis, 2010). To some degree, “the bureaucratic production process implies forced collectivization of its financing through an appropriation of resources based on compulsion” (Carnis, 2010, p. 58). The distinctions between private enterprise and government bureaucracies are evident, and according to Carnis, Mises was the first theorist to emphasize the “absence of economic calculation in the allocation of resources within bureaucracies” (quoted by Carnis, 2010, p. 56).

In general, private companies take risks in creating a new business ventures or product, and are financed by capital the organization has procured by using sound business management principles or financing obtained from an outside source. With growth, the company must address organizational design, structure, and vertical, horizontal, external, and geographic boundaries (Ashkenas et al., 2002) while creating contingency strategies to obtain resources to compete with existing companies (Jones, 2010). In a free market, deciphering market conditions is imperative to gaining profits, and profit and loss measures are a gauge of sound business management practices (Carnis, 2010). Typically, private companies

experience an organizational life cycle, which is referred to as birth, growth, decline, and death (Jones, 2010).

In contrast, bureaucracies do not share the same ethos and method of management as private industry. First, investment capital required to initiate a business venture is not necessary and bureaucracies retain a monopolistic control of the market. Bureaucracies do not own property, but are only stewards of property and resources. The “allocation of resources does not depend on any economic calculation,” and there “exists no real definition of rights of ownership of the resources used by these organizations and the resultant production” (Carnis, 2010, p. 56). Third, maximizing profits is not a concern to bureaucracies because profits are not required; bureaucracies are not competing for resources and within markets. Because of the absence of production and sales cycles, bureaucracies “lacks the necessary instruments for determining, the viability of its production and is unable to correct the production dysfunctions that may arise” (Carnis, 2010, p. 57). Resource allocation, which is generally dependent on profit and loss margins and production and sales cycles, are no longer indicators to determine the allocation of resources within a bureaucratic environment, therefore, the determining factor for resource allocation is based on rules and orders prescribed a “higher authority” (Carnis, 2010, p. 57). The internal promotion process is left to hierarchical interests and is not generally performance-based (Carnis, 2010; Lipsky, 1980; Scott & Davis, 2007). Fourth, consumers of bureaucratic services have no say or input in regard to services rendered, which creates a vacuum for the bureaucratic organization to function out of self-interests, and without guidance and direction from the dynamics of commerce and production (Carnis, 2010; Lipsky, 1980). Finally, three major economic consequences occur within bureaucratic environments, which are the inefficient allocation of resources, destabilization of markets, and the destruction of the entrepreneurial function (Carnis, 2010).

Important to police departments is understanding the ethos and methodology of bureaucratic organizations and how this mind-set infiltrates every function, structure, decision, resource allocation, and hierarchy. Government bureaucracies are not comparable to the private sector, but the principles and practices private enterprise use will enhance value to the police organization. Because police

maintain a monopoly of the service they provide to the public, it is important that police departments attain the respect of the community to ensure its value to the public. The private sector often rewards their leaders by promotion or status because the leader has generated more value to the organization. Government bureaucracies do not generate financial value, but they are considered a valued commodity if they meet the general needs of the public. Leaders that are capable of providing direction, focus, and facilitate valuable change within communities should be promoted accordingly because the leader is creating value for police departments.

New Structure Design

Scott and Davis (2007) propose that organizations are comprised of critical elements, which include the environment, strategies and “goals, work and technology, formal organization, informal organization, and people” (p. 138). Jones (2010) defines an organization as a means to achieve a goal through the coordination of skills, knowledge, and division of labor, technology, and management. “Organizational structure is the formal system of task and authority relationships that control how people coordinate their actions and use resources to achieve an organization’s objectives” (Jones, 2010, p. 23). Organizational culture is shared values and norms, which influence employee behavior and interactions between supervisors and subordinates, and internal and external participants. Organizational design is the process selected by management to coordinate and facilitate aspects of structure and culture to control the functions required to accomplish the goals of the organization (Jones, 2010).

According to Scott and Davis (2007), core technology is the primary tasks performed by an organization, which includes the equipment, machines, along with the skills and knowledge of the personnel performing the work. Environment is defined as including the technological, political, and institutional aspects of the organization (Scott & Davis, 2007). Task environment concentrates on input to output function of the organization and its relationship while conducting exchanges through power-dependence roles (Scott & Davis, 2007). Hulin and Roznowski (as cited in Scott and Davis, 2007) defines technology as transforming inputs to outputs (primary task of the organization) and the technical system as “a

specific combination of machines and methods employed to produce a desired outcome” (p. 125). Scott and Davis (2007) link the environment with the organization’s technology in that the environment is a recipient of outputs, provides physical sources for inputs, and the environment provides “technical knowledge, work techniques and tools, and trained personnel employed by the organization” (p. 126). Scott and Davis (2007) inform that technology determines organizational structure (citing previous work by Thompson and Woodward) and the three important aspects of technology, which must be addressed to formulate structure, are complexity or diversity, uncertainty or unpredictability, and interdependence. Generally, diversity or complexity refers to multiple tasks, which must be completed concurrently; uncertainty refers to the organization’s ability to establish predictability, and interdependence refers to the effect each specific function has on other operations and elements within the organization (Scott & Davis, 2007).

Organizational design significantly influences organizational effectiveness and efficiency through procedural processes. “Organizational designs that facilitate variety, change, speed, and integration are sources of competitive advantage... are difficult to execute and copy because they are intricate blends of many different design policies. Thus, they are likely to be sustainable sources of advantage” (Galbraith, 2002, p. 6). Companies capable of responding and adapting to changing conditions are more likely to succeed within competitive markets (Day, 1994). Police departments are no different in they must design and apply organizational structure that can respond and adapt to changing environments by design, which is facilitated through leadership and management.

Hegelian interpretation of the class of civil servants lays foundation for philosophical framework whereby bureaucratic structures operate. Leadership is a critical component of organizational effectiveness and Hegel states (as cited in Gale & Hummel, 2003), “The class of civil servants is universal in character...and so has the universal explicitly as its ground and as the aim of its activity” (p. 413). Hegel understands that individuals pursue self-interests, but believes it possible to raise the consciousness of the individual to such a state whereby the individual seeks the best interest of the state as his or her own self best interest (Gale & Hummell, 2003). Hegel’s beliefs are similar to the

transformational model of leadership supported by Bass and Burns. Actions by the leader and the contextual environment affect all organizations, its strategies, production, and outcomes. However, transformational leadership tends to deal more specifically with the idealizations supporting leadership rather than systematic processes and structuring of the organization. Burns (1978) believed transformational leadership “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20). Burns (1978) continues his ideological thoughts in describing the leader’s effect on followers by making followers more aware of the value of outcomes, placing the needs of the organization over their own needs, and motivating employees to maximize his or her potential. Bass, as cited in Yukl (1998), defines transformational leadership as those who “formulate vision, develop commitment to it among internal and external stakeholders, implement strategies to accomplish the vision, and embed the new values and assumptions in the culture of the organization” (p. 230-1). Transformational leadership works at changing the internalized environment (values, beliefs, and goals) of the follower, leader, and the organization. Transforming an organization through internal idealization has the possibility of changing leadership, management, and employee performance at every level of endeavor. Barnard’s cooperative system defines formal organization as “that kind of cooperation among men that is conscious, deliberate, and purposeful” (cited in Scott & Davis, 2007, p. 70). Organizations rely on the willingness of participants to make contributions to the organization. Barnard’s concept of accepted direction involves the imposition of goals from the top down, but realizing attainment of these goals can only be achieved from the bottom up (Scott & Davis, 2007; Kuratko, Hornsby & Goldsby, 2007). Important to Barnard is “the most critical ingredient to successful organization is the formation of a collective purpose that becomes morally binding on participants,” and the role of the leader who imparts vision and direction (Scott & Davis, 2007).

Hierarchy dominates most social organizations today and is the primary method of management for police departments. Organizational hierarchy facilitates large groups to accomplish vast tasks through management and amalgamation of activities (Laszlo, Laszlo & Johnsen, 2009). Problematic for many police departments is its inability to adapt and change quickly when circumstances

deviate from pre-planned scenarios, which are meticulously articulated within Operation Orders or Standard Operating Procedures. The design in which hierarchy is achieved is critical to the bureaucratic organization, and generally is centralized. Rigid compliance to hierarchical systems influences governance, methodology, decisions, decision-making, improvising, innovation, creativity, and autonomy, which effects actions and reactions by personnel from the officer level to chief. The concept of ‘thinking outside the box’ is nonexistent and when it occurs, it is immediately suppressed. Standardization is the control system used by police departments to achieve compliance by all personnel through rigid conformity to rules and regulations, which delineate every detail of organization function (Scott & Davis, 2007). Standardization restricts and suppresses the greatest asset of police departments, which is human capital.

Two problems often emerge as structural design flaws within police departments, which are centralization and decentralization components not aligned with organizational structure and operational goals, and failure to provide organic structures within the organization that “promote flexibility, so people initiate change and can adapt quickly to changing conditions” (Jones, 2010, p. 110). We will briefly discuss concepts related to centralization and decentralization in management models and provide recommendations to improve structural design. We will then provide solutions for police departments to create organic structures within the department, which will enable the department to adapt and change to surrounding environments. Changing two aspects of structure, decentralization and implementation of organic structures, will effectively change police organizations.

Centralized authority is an organizational design in which the authority to make decisions affecting the organization are restricted to managers at the top of the hierarchy, whereas, decentralized authority permits decision-making to occur at division, unit, and subunit levels by managers in the hierarchy (Jones, 2010). Patrol operations in the PPD are based on a limited decentralization model, whereas all other specialty units operate within centralized structures. At issue are conflicting models of authority and decision-making, which affects precinct commanders responsible for all police function and operations within their assigned geographic area. Although precinct commanders are responsible for

geographic areas, they do not have specialized resources to combat crime related issues but must rely on specialized units that operate from a centralized role, and whose function is to serve the city at large rather than specific geographic locations. Precinct commanders are at the mercy of the specialized units in implementing crime suppression programs, and the result is that specialty units, such as vice, robbery, auto theft, property crime detectives and so on, respond when it is convenient for them or unless directed by division chiefs. This process is indicative of the “tail wagging the dog.” If precinct commanders are responsible and accountable for reducing crime and providing a safe environment for residents within the precinct, they must have the authority and resources necessary to complete the task. “Precincts should be self-contained decentralized operational centers, which include the resources of both patrol and detectives, under the same chain of command, working in concurrent partnership, creating a more productive method of operation, for the apprehension of criminals and changing environments” (T. Hampton, personal communication, April 22, 2009).

The advantages of decentralization is it provides a platform for decision-making by lower level managers in day-to-day operations and the ability to implement programs geared to address specific problems and issues within precinct environments. Flexibility is crucial to managing precincts, and each precinct is comprised of varying issues and challenges, which cannot be addressed by using template type strategies and replicated crime suppression programs. What works in one geographic community does not always work in another and the issues in one precinct vary from issues in another, especially for a city the size of Phoenix. Precinct commanders require both decentralized authority and resources to administrate precinct communities properly. However, to maintain balance between centralized and decentralized authority as Jones (2010) alludes to, precinct commanders will manage their area of responsibility based on general guidelines, strategies, and goals. Otherwise, if centralized authority insists on managing every detail of the organization, precinct commanders “become afraid to make new moves and lack the freedom to respond to problems as they arise in their own groups and departments” (Jones, 2010, p. 105). The ideal balance, according to Jones (2010), is middle managers are permitted to make operational

decisions, whereas top managers concentrate on managing long-term strategic decisions.

By decentralizing authority to middle managers, it becomes possible to implement organic structures within the organization, which provide framework that allows for flexibility, and the ability to adapt and modify responses, strategies, and programs in changing environments (Daft, 2007; Jones, 2010). Organic structures provide a conduit for integration and information flows within internal and external environments creating a more open and functional working environment capable of adapting, learning, and re-directing resources (Barnett, 1992; Jones, 2010). Rather than restricting access to functional units of a police department by other units, employees from different functions should work together to solve shared problems. Included in this process is double loop learning which allows the organization to seek systematically new ways of performance improvement, address changing demands, identify root causes of problems, change work practices, and improve methods (Wong, Cheung, & Fan, 2009). Organic structures encourage and facilitate organizational knowledge by allowing units the freedom to work together using the knowledge base of the collectivity to generate new organizational knowledge. Organizational learning begins with seeking out best practices from other agencies and applying them to current issues and challenges; organizations can create new ideas by learning what other companies do (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr, 2002). Peter Senge (1990) states, "...organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning, but without it no organizational learning occurs" (p. 139). Senge (1990) states that learning organizations is one "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, and where collective aspiration is set free" (p. 77). In this sense, "learning organizations promotes continual organizational renewal by weaving in/embedding a set of core processes that nurture a positive propensity to learn, adapt and change" (Jamali, Khoury & Sahyoun, 2006, p. 337). To ensure the successful development of a learning organization, culture must be considered (Daft, 2007). O'Toole (1995) states, "corporate culture is the complex, interrelated whole of standardized, institutionalized, habitual behavior that characterizes that firm and that firm only"

(p. 72). Ashkenas et al. (2002) provides five recommendations for encouraging a culture committed to learning, which are “develop a shared mindset, build organizational competence, clarify consequences for learning, shape governance processes, and build capacity for change” (p. 173-175). Finally, internal organic structures provide the benefit of creating a learning organization which “involves breaking down boundaries both within and between organizations to create companies that are focused on knowledge sharing and continuous learning” (Daft, 2007, p. 421). This environment produces a synergistic relationship among participants, units, and the organization (Senge, 1990). Amabile (1998) suggests that employees are more creative in high skill task environments in which a high-level of motivation exists between members, and employees are allowed to think outside the box.

Alignment and Integration of a Cybernetic System

Regardless of the industry, a mission must be defined, lines of authority implemented, control and coordination established, function of groups within the organizations delineated, support and production functions clearly defined to facilitate relationships with its environment and improve the efficiency of the organization. Organization structure and formalization are related to the nature of the organization, purpose and scope, and complexity. Boulding’s typology explains how organizations vary in range and the variety of systems used in organizational environments (Scott & Davis, 2007). Scott and Davis (2007) clarify the sequence of Boulding’s typology through steps of increased complexity as the “system becomes more complex, more loosely coupled, more dependent on information flows, more capable of self-maintenance and renewal, it is more able to grow and change, and more open to the environment” (p. 89).

Although cybernetic systems appears to be lower in Boulding’s typology and considered as a physical system; the cybernetic system seems to be a more accurate assessment of organizations in general, and an excellent systems choice for police departments because police departments operate in closed systems. The prominent characteristic of cybernetic systems is the ability to be self-regulated (Scott & Davis, 2007). According to Beniger, programming is of central importance to cybernetic systems, and once programming occurs, it becomes a

closed system (Scott & Davis, 2007). Programming is defined by Beniger (as cited by Scott & Davis, 2007) as the process to make decisions (control) based on comparisons with new information (inputs) to existing information sources (programming) “to decide a predetermined set of contingent behaviors (possible outputs)” (p. 90). Programs precede causes and these causes precede action. Decision-making or control determines the causes, which in turn determines action. Programming can be re-programmed, but once the system is programmed, it again becomes a closed system. However, as organizations evolve, programming changes as the organization evolves and much of this process includes double-loop learning, both internally and externally (Scott & Davis, 2007). Assessments and re-assessments are the catalyst for re-programming and adaptive behaviors of the organization. Buckley believes cybernetic systems tend toward goal-directed behavior, which is re-evaluated within feedback systems and assessments to keep the organization on track and to improve performance and output (Scott & Davis, 2007). Cybernetic models place emphasis on the operational levels of the organization and pragmatic features, which define how the organization operates. Finally, cybernetic systems are applicable to the organization or can be applied to its many subunits (Scott & Davis, 2007). Cybernetic systems appear to be a more realistic snap-shot of an organization in action. All systems are programmed through human interaction by comparing and analyzing old methods with new information and new methods, and from this evaluative process, decisions are directed toward the goal of the program (programming). Rigid or loosely coupled systems are generally reflective of the internal or external environment influencing the process. The same can be said about hierarchical systems; they reflect the environment in which they operate in. A cybernetic system appears to be the right match for police department environments.

Functional Evaluation and Implementation of Proactive Measures

Functional evaluation is both proactive and reactive, developing two different mindsets that require different strategies, goals, and outcomes. Organization development is defined by Gallos (2006) as an organization-wide plan, managed from the top to increase effectiveness and health through planned interventions

using behavioral knowledge. John Gardner provides five rules in which an organization can achieve success, which are the organization must have effective programs for recruitment and development of talent, capable of continuous renewal, have built-in provisions for self-criticism, have a fluid internal structure, and the design must allow for change and adaptation (Gallos, 2006). Schein (1965) presents that organizations must develop coping mechanisms, which allow it to access, evaluate, and restructure organizational flaws through reliable communication of information, internal flexibility to make changes, integration, and support. Areas to be evaluated are authority or power, control and coordination, function of a group, subunit, and division of labor, support functions, production functions, maintenance functions, adaptive functions, communication and technological function, and managerial functions. Each function is characterized by specific responsibilities and accountability. How the organization is designed will determine functionality; assessments are of no value if the initial design is flawed. Neely Gardner believes that people gain power by empowering others, not by controlling them, and that leaders are facilitators. Gardner instructed that complex systems are changed by small interventions and that leverage points are not found rationally but by intuition (Barnett, 1992). Changing organizations requires the leader to think differently; a fundamental shift of mind allows the leader to see order emerging from chaos (Barnett, 1992). The process is as important as the content, and in reality, functional evaluation is organizational development.

However, evaluations, assessments, and forecasting are required to ensure organizational adaptability within changing environments as well as ensuring the objectives and goals are accomplished within the functions of police departments. Decentralization of authority produces a prominent change for supervisors and employees (Jones, 2010). According to research presented by Jones (2010, p. 122), the average vertical hierarchy for an organization with a population of 3,000 is seven levels. A flat hierarchy creates an improved conduit for communication, whereas tall hierarchies tend toward distortion and manipulation of information (Jones, 2010). Studies have revealed that when organizations have flattened levels of hierarchy, managers have more authority and respond favorably in accepting their responsibility than those in taller hierarchies (Jones, 2010). Jones (2010)

proposes that managers operating within flattened hierarchies are more likely to have greater motivation than those in a taller system. Tall hierarchies incur greater bureaucratic costs and police departments have demonstrated their ability to function within acceptable standards with a flat hierarchical structure, which is important in light of the current economic situation.

Bureaucracies require performance appraisals of each employee, which is generally connected to function. Bureaucracies formalize the appraisals, and in my 33 years of experience, they bare little weight or provide significant insight about the employee; they are matters of routine and procedure. Although police departments can be large organizations, the units are relatively small numerically, stable, supervised by one sergeant, and are confined to geographical locations. These small units contain immense tacit and explicit knowledge, which will benefit the department and the community they serve if this knowledge is harnessed and released to similar work groups within the division of labor in which they operate. The complexity of police work requires a general knowledge of all crimes, response to crimes, evidence collection, investigative procedures, interrogation and witness statement techniques, crime analysis, suspect analysis, and a host of other skills. Distributing this knowledge base throughout the department is critical to organizational success (Ashkenas et al., 2002; Jones, 2010; Scott & Davis, 2007).

Organizations will always have boundaries differentiating between specialization in different tasks, levels of authority and influence, supervisors and subordinates, and differences between internal and external participants, places, and cultures (Ashkenas et al., 2002). Boundaries are necessary, but can be modified to meet the continuous change of an evolving environment. Traditional assumptions of boundaries include they are permanent barriers or unbending separators; however, they are capable of being “replaced by an organic, biological view of boundaries as permeable, flexible, moveable membranes in a living and adapting organism” (Ashkenas et al., 2002, p. 3). This organic structure permits information, resources, ideas, and energy to pass through its membranes quickly and easily so that the organization as a whole functions effectively, while retaining its definition and distinctions. In this environment, leaders will continue, authority will be delineated, specialization will persist, distinctions will remain between

environments, and the work will be completed (Ashkenas et al., 2002; Jones, 2010). However, collapse of an organization occurs when faced with a rate of change that exceeds the organizations capability to respond (Ashkenas et al., 2002), and police organizations are especially susceptible because of their rigid structures and centralization of power. Successful organizations today demonstrate four factors, which permit it to operate effectively and efficiently. Ashkenas et al. (2002) state these factors to be speed, flexibility, integration, and innovation. Speed is characterized as the ability of the organization to respond to customer more quickly, provide new products to markets, and change strategies more rapidly. For police, speed refers to customer satisfaction and reduced response to calls for service, new technology in investigative procedures, and crime suppression programs created by officers and supervisors closest to the work. Current centralization of power requires an extended time cycle for decision-making processes, which impede progress and change. Organizational structure must mirror how work is actually done, and not reflect hierarchical chains of command that are unable to determine what is needed for the specific situation (Ashkenas et al., 2002; Jones, 2010, Scott & Davis, 2007). Flexibility within a police environment includes officers doing multiple jobs, are constantly learning new skills, willingly shift to different locations and assignments, whereas, standardization promotes constrained flexibility, officers are locked into specific roles, and generally are less than willing to assist other bureaus or precincts (Gallos, 2006). Integration is the organizations ability to “adept at shifting direction, have processes that carry change into the institutional bloodstream, disseminating new initiatives quickly, and mobilizing the right resources to make things happen” (Ashkenas et al., 2002, p. 7). Finally, innovation is essential for an organization to improve and succeed. Police organizations must create an environment in which its members can succeed (T. Hampton, personal communication, August 10, 2009). Innovative organizations “create innovative processes and environments that encourage and reward creativity, rather than stifling the creative spirit with the systems of approvals and double-checks needed to preserve standard operating procedures in organizations that focus on control” (Ashkenas et al., 2002, p. 7).

Conclusion

Altering foundational principles within a bureaucratic environment allows for substantive change. Two emerging problems surface in most police environments, which are centralization and decentralization components not aligned with organizational structure and operational goals, and failure to provide organic structures within the organization that “promote flexibility, so people initiate change and can adapt quickly to changing conditions” (Jones, 2010, p. 110). By decentralizing police departments, organic structures can exist, whereas within a centralized hierarchy, only mechanistic structures can survive. Decentralization flattens the structure, allows for decision-making to occur at division, unit, and subunit levels, increases flexibility to adapt and modify responses, strategies, and programs in crucial situations, reduces span of control, and increases direct supervision. Decentralization facilitates organic structures, which provide a conduit for integration and information flows within internal and external environments creating a more open and functional workplace capable of adapting, learning, and re-directing resources (Barnett, 1992; Jones, 2010). Organic structure facilitates and enhances single and double loop learning, organizational knowledge, and creates a learning organization in which influences “continual organizational renewal by weaving in/embedding a set of core processes that nurture a positive propensity to learn, adapt and change” (Jamali, Khoury & Sahyoun, 2006, p. 337). This process will affect the culture of the police organization making it more effective, efficient and, valuable.

“Bureaucracy has been and is a power instrument of the first order,” (Weber, 1947 trans., cited in Scott, 2003, p. 326). Hegel and Weber provide the ideals for bureaucratic worth and the structure for its functionality. It is hard to imagine that the benefits and applicability of bureaucratic systems will ever be obsolete, but it is possible to improve on this model by altering composition, forms, and structure. Neely Gardner instructs that complex systems are changed by the smallest interventions, which are capable of the improving, strengthening, and empowering organizations (Barnett, 1992).

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