

## Police Organizations

### Chapter 4

## Quasi-Military Style of Police Organization

- Similarities:
  - 1) Wear uniforms
  - 2) Use military-style rank
  - 3) Hierarchical command structure
  - 4) Authoritarian organizational style
  - 5) Armed officers authorized to use force

## Quasi-Military Style of Police Organization

- Differences:
  1. Serve a citizen population vice fight a war
  2. Provide services designed to help people
  3. Constrained by laws protecting the rights of citizens
  4. Routinely exercise individual discretion

## Criticisms of the Quasi-Military Style

- Cultivates an "us vs. them" attitude
- Encourages the idea of a "war on crime"
- Authoritarian style is contrary to democratic principles of participation
- Produces low morale
  - Rigid rank structure fails to provide sufficient job satisfaction for officers

## Peter Kraska

- Contends that there has been a militarization of the police since the early 90s

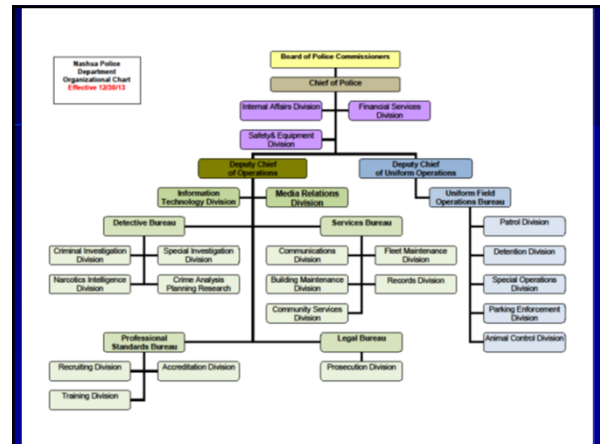


## Police Dept.s as Organizations - *Dominant Style of American Police Organization*

- Complex bureaucracy
  - Hierarchical structure
  - Authoritarian management style
- Governed by some sort of civil service rules that regulate personnel policies
- Legally bound by collective bargaining contracts with unions

## Bureaucracy Characteristics

1. Complex organization performing many different tasks in pursuit of a goal
2. Different tasks are grouped in separate divisions/bureaus
3. Organizational structure is hierarchical
4. Responsibility for specific tasks is delegated to lower-ranking employees
5. Clear chain of command
6. Unity of command
7. Written rules & regulations designed to ensure conformity & consistency
8. Info flows up/down according to the chain of command
9. Clear paths by which personnel move upward in the organization in an orderly fashion



## The Problems with Bureaucracies

- 1) Rigid/inflexible/unable to adapt to external change
- 2) Communication w/in the organization breaks down
- 3) Tend to be inward-looking/self-serving/isolated from the people they serve
- 4) Do not use the talent of their employees & stifle creativity

## Positive Contributions of Bureaucracy in Policing

- Development of specialty units
- Control of discretion
- Reduction of misconduct

## Informal Aspects of Police Organization ("Office Politics")

- Information flow stifled
  - Protect other officers
  - Self-preservation
  - Plausible deniability
- Info flow outside of prescribed channels
  - True gossip
  - False gossip

## Informal Aspects of Police Organization ("Office Politics") – *Protective Cliques*

- Vertical
  - Shared understanding of a problem/work together to address it
- Horizontal
  - Protect officers from supervisors
- Often based on work groups
- Can create rivalry between different units
  - Bureaus
  - Shifts
- Can also be based on personal friendships

## Bureaucracy & Police Professionalism

- Professionalism challenged by the bureaucratic nature of policing
- Professional dept.s adopted a "by the book" approach to policing
- The bureaucracy imposes formal controls over the behavior of police officers

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## Changing Police Organizations - *Community Policing*

- **Decentralize** decision-making
- **Deformalize**
  - Eliminate many of the rules/policies that can stifle creativity & do not encourage problem-solving
- **Despecialize**
- **Delayerize**
  - Decrease the amount of social & administrative distance between beat officer & the chief

## Changing Police Org. (cont). - *Task Forces*

- Recognizes that many lower-ranking officers are competent to make intelligent decisions about police policy
  - Offers them greater job satisfaction
  - Prepares them for supervisory responsibilities
  - Increases likelihood that innovations will be accepted w/in organization

## *Task Forces (cont.)*

- Intra-agency
- Interagency (Multiagency)
  - Advantages:
    - 1) Eliminate duplication of services in adjoining communities
    - 2) Afford smaller agencies services they would otherwise not be able to afford
    - 3) Result in the benefit of shared resource management
    - 4) Allow officers to work outside their jurisdiction
    - 5) Increase amount of info that officers have at their disposal

## Comparison Statistics (COMPSTAT)

- 1) Clarifies dept. mission/goals/values
- 2) Holds managers accountable
- 3) Organizational power & resources are transferred to the commanders who are responsible for an area
- 4) Data used to ID problems & evaluate success & failure
- 5) Middle managers are expected to use innovative problem-solving tactics

## COMPSTAT (cont.)

- Hailed as one of the most important organizational innovations in American policing
  - Claimed it was responsible for drop in crime in NYC
- Criticisms
  - Came at the expense of due process & morale
  - Citizen complaints increased

## COMPSTAT (cont.)

- Only been two studies of COMPSTAT
  - 1) Ft. Worth, TX study:
    - Substantial drop in property & total index crimes
    - No impact on violent crime
  - 2) Large SE police dept.:
    - Officers misunderstood the process & sgt.s did not follow through
    - Increased competition among units, resulting in less info-sharing

## Civil Service

- A set of formal & legally binding procedures governing personnel decisions
- Purpose is to ensure that personnel decisions are based on objective criteria, not on favoritism, bias, & political influence

## Civil Service Hierarchical Structure

- Rewards Hierarchy
  - Corresponds with rank & seniority w/in dept.
  - Does not always correspond w/individual skill/performance
- Seniority hierarchy
- Status hierarchy
- Rank hierarchy

## Civil Service Hierarchical Structure (cont.)

- Civil service problems
  - Limits the power of chiefs to make personnel decisions
  - Chief cannot change existing standards at will
  - Limits opportunities & incentives for individual officers
  - Provisions for discipline make it very difficult to terminate/discipline bad/poorly performing officers

## Police Unions

- Organization legally authorized to represent police officers in collective bargaining with the employer
- Collective bargaining
  - The method of determining conditions of employment through bilateral negotiations

## Collective Bargaining - Scope

- Wages, hours, & other conditions of employment
- Generally excludes management rights issues
  - Recruit
  - Assign
  - Transfer
  - Promote

## Grievance Procedures

- Provides due process for employees
- Typical grievance procedure
  - Right to be notified about a disciplinary action
  - Right to a hearing
  - Right to an attorney
  - Right to appeal

## Impact of Police Unions

- Produced significant improvements in police salary & benefits
- Reduced the power of chiefs
  - Introduced the concept of shared governance
- Introduction of due process to discipline procedures
- *But*, unions are often seen by some as an obstacle to change in police organizations

## Impasse Settlement & Strikes

- Impasse
  - When a union & a political subdivision cannot agree on a contract
- Private sector unions can strike
- In most states it is illegal for the police to go on strike
- Impasse procedures
  - Mandatory mediation
  - Fact finding
  - Arbitration

## Police Organizations & Their Environment

- Contingency Theory
  - Organizations are structured to achieve specific goals (crime control)
- Institutional Theory
  - Organizations operate in relation to their external social & political environment ("sovereigns")
- Resource Dependency Theory
  - Organizations must obtain resources to survive