Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Discuss how organizational conflict impacts a criminal justice organization.
2. Describe the different types of organizational conflict.
3. Discuss the stages of a conflict and the evolution of a conflict and reconciliation.
4. Describe police and sheriff department functions from a historical perspective and explain how those organizations operate today.
5. Describe court organization and administration and explain the difference between the various state and federal court systems.

Unit Lesson

Organizational Conflict

Organizational conflict typically takes one of four forms: personal, group, intra-organizational, or inter-organizational conflict. Other subcategories of conflict exist within some of these groups. For example, intra-organizational conflict may appear as vertical, horizontal, line-staff, or role conflict. Chapter 11 of the Stojokovic, Kalinich, and Klofas (2012) textbook discusses these forms of conflict, as well as the various stages of conflict in more detail.

Understanding the root causes of conflict within an organization is one of the first steps towards effectively managing the conflict. Stojokovic, Kalinich, and Klofas (2012) discuss the six-stage process for minimizing conflict and moving towards reconciliation. The six stages include: (1) Confrontation; (2) Truce; (3) Collaboration; (4) Cooperation; (5) Interdependence; and (6) Integration. It is important to remember that conflict within an organization is a dynamic process. The way conflict affects various members of an organization will vary, thus making it important to view conflict from both an administrative (top looking downward) and from the impacted employee (bottom looking upward) perspectives. Conflict within an organization can be managed, however successful resolution requires that an administrator/manager understand all aspects of the conflict.

Law Enforcement and Courts Organizations

During the final three units of the course an examination of various segments of criminal justice administration will be conducted. During Unit VI the law enforcement and courts vertical segments are examined.

Agencies responsible for enforcing federal, state, and local laws are typically grouped into the law enforcement segment of criminal justice. This includes agencies such as local and state police, sheriff departments, and federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and those that fall under
the Department of Homeland Security. While there are a few exceptions to the rule, typically criminal justice professionals that have the power of arrest are part of a law enforcement agency.

Various forms of law enforcement can be found throughout history. For example, the shire reeve was an early form of our modern day sheriff after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The watch and ward system introduced in 1285 in England was another early form of protection. However, credit for the first official police organization is typically attributed to the passage of the Metropolitan Police Act by the British Parliament in 1829, which was the result of the efforts of Sir Robert (Bobbie) Peel (Ortmeier, 2006). August Vollmer, police chief in Berkeley, California from 1909 to 1932 is acknowledged for introducing innovations that more closely resemble modern day law enforcement agencies. These innovations included the establishment of a police academy, use of a motorized police patrol, and psychological testing of police recruits. The first scientific crime laboratory in the United States is also credited to Vollmer (Ortmeier, 2006).

While the organizational structures of different law enforcement agencies will vary, they all share the characteristic of having a hierarchal chain of command. A variety of supplemental reading materials that examine the structures of law enforcement agencies have been provided in this unit.

Similar to law enforcement agencies, courts can be traced back through history. The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi in 1750 B.C. is one of the earliest records of criminal offenses and the prescribed punishments. Egypt developed a court system with judges that were appointed by the Pharaoh around 1500 B.C. (Ortmeier, 2006).

Today, the United States operates with a dual court system that consists of 50 state court systems and one national federal court system. Each of these systems is broken down into criminal and civil divisions. In addition to these court structures; tribal court systems also operate on Indian reservations (Peak, 2010).

A video that explains the history and structure of the federal court system has been provided in this unit. While the specific structure of each state court system may vary slightly, they all resemble the federal system by being composed of a different court levels through which individuals can pursue justice, typically culminating with a State Supreme Court. Another similarity between the state and federal court systems is the existence of some type of Administrative Office of the Courts that oversee administrative issues related to matters addressed by the court system (Peak, 2010).

References


Supplemental Reading

Click [here](#) to access a PDF of the article, “Structural Arrangements In Large Municipal Police Organizations: Revisiting Wilson’s Theory Of Local Political Culture.”

Click [here](#) to access a PDF of the article, “An Organizational Strategy For An Effective Police Department.”

Click [here](#) to access a PDF of the article, “The Command Rank Structure Of American Police Organizations.”

Click [here](#) to access a PDF of the article, “Wilson’s Theory of Local Political Culture Revisited In Today’s Police Organizations: Findings From Longitudinal Panel Study.”