Criminal justice organizational trends essay sample

Law, Security

The act of making or becoming different; change. Change is a process of evolution and remains constant. What accompanies change could be good or bad, but regardless of the change adjustments must be made to accommodate change. These changes, adjustments and accommodations, are referred to as trends. Such trends within United States criminal justice organizations are vital in keeping pace with societal change and combating crime. Some recent trends are the privatization and militarization of criminal justice organizations. In this writing, I will discuss and attempt to compare these trends with current criminal justice organizations. The privatization of criminal justice organizations stems from the idea that awarding contracts to private companies that could run such services efficiently and effectively would potentially save and even earn the government money. (Nichols, 2010)

To understand privatized policing we must first differentiate between police and private security force. Although both function as public safety officials and the duties performed are similar, they are two separate entities. " The term police typically refers to sworn officers working as members of the executive branch of government rather than to private security agents or agencies." (Forst, p. 22, 2000) A private security agency while serving in the same capacity as a police officer is defined differently. The private security term refers to " non governmentally provided services and products used to protect the lives and property of commercial and residential patrons against crime." (Forst, p. 22, 2000) The most notable differences between police officers and private security agents would be that the police are sworn-in officers working as members of the government, while the privatized security

agents do not work as members of the government and are not sworn-in officers.

As most Americans know, criminal justice organizations emphasis for policing lies in crime prevention, with the minimal use of force needed. However, in the past decade or two, policing strategies across the nation have made a complete turnaround and the emphasis is now thought of like fighting crime rather than preventing it. In attempts to fight crime organizations have turned to militarization of police forces. The term militarization is derived from using military style training, tactics, weaponry and even military style uniforms. Police militarization was prompted from the late 1960's to early 1970's when police needed military style SWAT teams to disperse and diffuse riot situations. Since the 1970's militarization has evolved into what it is presently and it has society on the edge and in fear of the police.

Many police organizations of this era are furnished with arsenals significant enough to wage war against small countries. It is my thought that the original emphasis of policing, which was to build a trusting relationship between police organizations and the community which they serve has been lost. There has been a disconnect between police forces and the communities they serve partially due to societal changes, but also due to police militarization. The " standard dress for patrol officers, and the stress training patterned after military boot camps may have a negative impact on the very relationships between police and community members that are critical to the operationalization of community policing." (Bickel, p. 1, 2013)

Although many military traits are compatible with community policing, such as the hierarchy model of organization, and the rank structure. Police organizations should lean towards a more user friendly police force that involves the community instead of a militarized force that instills fear among communities.

Criminal Justice Organizations, just like any other major company rely heavily on employee moral and motivation to reach certain levels of success. In order to achieve such success, criminal justice managers use motivational theories as a tool to help give an understanding as to what motivates employees under their tutelage. For example; the equity theory of motivation is a balance between an employee's input and output. Input is the quality or quantity of work, the individual skill level which they perform at, and the enthusiasm in which they carry out their duties.

The other spectrum is output. Output consists of what the employee is receiving in salary, benefits or appreciation. Employer's who show great respect and appreciation for an employee's input will continue to receive above satisfactory results from employee's work, thus making better work environment, which improves morale and keeps employee's motivated. When employee's feel that they are adequately compensated (output) for work performance (input) then the organization is off to a good start at building a solid foundation for growing positive and motivated work environment and reaching successful goals.

While conducting research to find a current trend that is impacting public law enforcement I noticed a trend taking place on my research. Economy downturn and budget cuts appeared on every search. With the United States economy in a continuous downfall government agency budgets have been shrinking and the ripple effect has law enforcement agencies feeling the pinch more than ever. One way that some counties are dealing with this crisis is to consolidate or merge police and fire departments and to establish a department of safety. Jersey city, New Jersey Mayor, Steven Fulop introduced this measure in 2013 and it is expected to produce savings to the city of $1. 8 million by 2017. Mayor Fulop's plan to generate the expected savings is to cross-train police in both police and fire fighting duties. (Trend alert: Police and fire department mergers, 2013)

According to the article posted on Envisage Technologies web-page, there have been three other major United States cities that have merged their fire and police departments, a move that cut $17 million annually. With the nations failing economy and continued budget cuts being a new trend, future police administrators are looking for ways to relieve the stress of operating below budget. Merging police and fire departments into Department of safety organizations has proven, at least in four United States cities, cut spending tremendously.

As organizational managers in the law enforcement community, learning to recognize and deal with change is paramount. Whether dealing with change, motivational theories, or current trends, managers must be able to improvise, adapt and overcome any and all hurdles in order to succeed as

a leader. In knowing how to deal with change, motivational theories, and trends managers are equipped to lead employees in the right direction and keep the organization functioning without skipping a beat.

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