Fostering and Sustaining Criminal Justice System Reform:

The Potential of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils

By

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The criminal justice system is comprised of various independent agencies and entities that have traditionally operated in a "silo" fashion—focusing predominantly on their individual goals, objectives, and activities.

This approach has, in many respects, left the justice system fragmented and in need of reform. To achieve real, meaningful, and sustained reform in the justice system, strong, coordinated leadership is needed. Effective change management requires effective organizations and effective leaders (Kotter J. P., 1996; Hage & Aiken, 1970). As early as the 1970s, criminal justice coordinating councils (CJCCs) began to emerge with the idea that more effective system change could be instituted through organizations of key justice system stakeholders. These councils, whose membership generally included the heads of the various agencies within the justice system, flourished in the 1980s and early 1990s, but then slowly dissipated overtime. Nonetheless, several still exist today, and increasingly counties are again exploring the possibilities of CJCCs, which offer an opportunity for real and meaningful criminal justice system reform.[1]

The extent to which system reform can be initiated and sustained by CJCCs depends on the overall effectiveness of the councils as organizations and as change agents. Delving into the literature on organizational effectiveness and change management provides a useful mechanism for beginning to assess the potential of criminal justice coordinating councils to foster and sustain justice system reform. Historically, the concept of the CJCC as a mechanism for overall system change has been almost completely overlooked in the literature with the exception of a handful of evaluations of domestic violence coordinating councils (see for example Allen, 2006; Clark *et al*., 1996; and Shepard, 1999). As a result, the ability to define appropriate measures of effectiveness is limited. This paper attempts to address this gap in the literature by exploring models of organizational effectiveness and change as applied to CJCCs. In doing so, it is anticipated that key aspects of organizations and change (such as leadership, goal congruency, influence of stakeholders in the CJCC, the relationship between the CJCC and its external environment, and how change efforts are undertaken) will play an important role in determining whether or not CJCCs can foster and sustain system reform.

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[1] Note that in the context of CJCCs, system reform has two potential but related conceptualizations. The first is a change in how the system operates in terms of distribution of resources and power. The second conceptualization is, in part, a product of the first and is related to achieving better system outcomes in terms of the administration of justice. Both concepts are considered relevant in this discussion.

Prior Research on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Concept

The concept of the criminal justice coordinating council emerged in the early 1970s[2] as a means for administering grant funds. Federal funding from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) to local and state governments spawned the creation of planning groups across the country, which were charged with determining, in a coordinated fashion, how the LEAA funds would be allocated to the various criminal justice system components. After the end of federal funding, many of the planning groups remained intact, becoming the predecessors to what is now known generically as criminal justice coordinating councils. By the 1980s, local governments and justice practitioners began to realize the potential for CJCCs to address systemic issues, and jail crowding in particular (Cushman, 2002). By centralizing local criminal justice planning and coordination in a single entity, counties hoped to gain a better understanding of the problems facing the justice system, to foster increased cooperation among the various agencies within the justice system and with allied stakeholders, to establish clearer priorities for the system, to ensure better uses of system resources, to reduce the costs of the system, and to implement more effective justice initiatives overall (Cushman, 2002).

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[2] Some CJCCs predate the 1970s. The Louisville, Kentucky, Metro Criminal Justice Commission, for example, was formed in 1967, and still operates today.

Although quite varied in membership and structure, CJCCs are generally comprised of the elected or appointed agency directors (and/or their designees) from all local justice agencies.[3] It is quite common for directors and representatives of other agencies and entities that have an interest in the local justice system to be members of the CJCCs as well. Structurally, CJCCs tend to be relatively flat organizations with little hierarchy among the membership. There is an elected or appointed chairperson and generally a vice-chair, but whether or not there is an executive committee depends in large part on the size of the membership. Most CJCCs have some form of committee structure to work on special topics/issues but these subcommittees report to the organization as a whole, rather than the chair person or executive committee. Where subcommittees exist, their purpose tends to be outlined in the council's by-laws; however, it is quite common for ad hoc committees to be formed as the need arises. In addition, many CJCCs have a dedicated staff person, hired by the city or county, to provide continuity to the effort and support the members in their work by collecting and analyzing data, preparing reports, assisting with administrative activities, helping to identify areas in need of improvement, and helping guide the CJCC toward coordinated systemic responses.

CJCCs also vary in the scope of their mandates. For some, vision, mission, and goals are defined legislatively; others define them internally. Activities of the councils can run the gamut from helping to administer/distribute grant funds and setting policy agendas, to preparing coordinated justice system budgets and reporting on local justice system performance.

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[3] Because so little is written or known about criminal justice coordinating councils, the information about structure, mandates, etc. is drawn from applications prepared by local CJCCs for membership in the National Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Network.

Despite the variations among CJCCs, they share some common characteristics that are important for understanding the extent to which they can foster system reform. First, CJCCs are not traditional organizations in the sense that they have managers and employees. Nor is the work of the councils traditional in terms of outputs. CJCC outputs tend to be focused on policy development, resource allocation/distribution, and coordinated change efforts. With very few exceptions, CJCCs represent a separation of justice system management from justice delivery—leaving the actual implementation of change efforts to the individual relevant members of the council.

Very few research studies have explored the concept of coordinating councils. Most of the work in this area focuses on domestic violence coordinating councils that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a means for improving responses to domestic violence. These studies have tended to employ goal and process models as the predominant mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of the domestic violence councils. Allen (2006), for example, explores the types of issues addressed by domestic violence coordinating councils, whether or not the councils attained their goals, and the extent to which the organizational climate and membership influenced goal attainment. Others have explored the different types of coordinated approaches used to respond to domestic violence, the factors that contribute to the success of these approaches, and the context of other policy influences (Clark, Burt, Schulte, & Macguire, 1996).

Past research efforts are useful in providing guidance for factors related to organizational effectiveness and the ability of CJCCs to initiate and sustain system reforms. In particular, effective leadership and shared power in decision making emerged as key factors in the ability of the domestic violence coordinating councils to attain their goals (Allen, 2006). The knowledge, training, and skills of the members of the domestic violence councils were also found to be associated with goal attainment (Allen, 2006). In

addition, Clark et al. (1996) found engagement of all relevant constituents groups to be an important factor in the ability to initiate and sustain change. Despite these findings, these previous studies have limited applicability in assessing overall system reform by focusing on operational goals related to responses to a single type of crime (Shepard, 1999). Outcomes have tended to focus on changes in arrests, prosecution, treatment of victims, and shifts in attitudes and values regarding domestic violence rather than the broader goals related to how the system operates differently or the administration of justice is improved across all entities (Hart, 1995; Shepard, 1999).

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Models of Organization Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is an elusive concept in part because what constitutes effectiveness varies based on the aspect of the organization being examined (e.g., inputs, processes, outputs) and who is defining "effectiveness" (Cameron, 1978). It can nonetheless be a critical element in understanding change efforts because lasting change requires effective organizations. As noted above, CJCCs are not traditional organizations in the sense of employees and managers or hierarchical structures, nor do they have a specific "product" or "service" that they produce in the traditional sense. Rather, they are membership organizations of criminal justice leaders with generally one or two staff members to handle tasks assigned to them by the council. As such, certain models of organizational effectiveness that focus on organizational inputs (resources, legitimacy, etc.) such as internal process models, legitimacy models, and contingency theories have limited applicability for assessing the effectiveness of CJCCs. Rather, their effectiveness is best gauged using models that are focused on the outputs of organizations. Relevant models for assessing organizational effectiveness of CJCCs include the goal model, the strategic constituency model, and the systems resource model.

CJCCs are often formed around a broad mission, or vision, aimed at improving the jurisdictions' justice system through research and collaborative efforts, which is then translated into a set of goals designed to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system. As such, the goal model, which focuses on the extent to which organizations accomplish their stated goals (Whetten & Cameron, 1984; Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008), can provide some insight into the councils' effectiveness. A key element in the design and institutionalization of CJCCs as planning organizations is the articulation of goals for the council itself, and often for the criminal justice system overall. Examples of goal statements from existing CJCCs include:[4]

- **The Council exists to promote the safety of citizens of the [County], the efficient and just treatment of offenders and to work toward prevention of crime and reduction of recidivism.**

- **The Criminal Justice Advisory Group is committed to making a positive difference in the [County] criminal justice system through communication, research, coordination, and planning. The group collaboratively develops programs and policies, and advocates change, in the interest of improving public safety.**

- **The [County] Crime Prevention and Control Commission exists to create and execute an evidence-based, accountable, and efficient public safety strategy to reduce crime and delinquency.**

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[4] The examples provided are actual goal statements taken from various CJCCs by-laws and official documents provided to the author as part of their application to the National Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Network. County names have been omitted to provide anonymity for these CJCCs.

Focusing solely on CJCC goals as a means for judging effectiveness creates several problems because there are several assumptions inherent in the goal model which limit its utility. First, the goal model assumes that an organization's goals are easily identifiable (Simon, 1964) and measurable. Most organizations, including CJCCs, often have many different goals. A review of 10 of the most active CJCCs in the country found that the number of articulated goals ranged from 1 to 23.

A second and related issue with the goal model is understanding exactly what type of goal should be measured. Perrow (1961) defines two types of goals: official and operative. CJCCs tend to express their goals as official goals but may also articulate a combination of official and operative goals. Official goals, such as those articulated in an organization's charter or mission statement, represent broad and often hard to measure concepts of what the outcomes of the organization will be. The examples above provide a good illustration of the broad goal statements of CJCCs. Moreover, because official goals are often vague, they can be misleading and unrepresentative of the operational goals (Katz & Kahn, 2011). Operative goals, on the other hand, are more concretely operationalized, articulating exactly what the organization is supposed to do based on the goals of the primary decision makers in the organization (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008; Connolly, Conlon, & Deutsch, 1980). In organizations like CJCCs, where the core leadership is dynamic and there is shared decision-making, operative goals can be very hard to define.

Third, it is common for organizations to lack consensus on goals or to even have conflicting goals (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). When organizations operate as systems, like CJCCs, the main output is generally a policy or an initiative that is not necessarily in line with the purposes of the individual members (Katz & Kahn, 2011). For example, a common goal of CJCCs is to address issues of jail overcrowding by identifying the causes within the system that have created

the overcrowding situation. Individual members of the CJCC, such as the elected prosecutor, may have different goals, such as ensuring punishment for offenders, which in fact contribute to the jail population problems.

Taking into account the shortcomings of the goal model, systems theories broaden the frame for assessing effectiveness. Lyden (1975), for example, explores Parsons (1960) functional analysis approach to organizational effectiveness, which focuses on goal attainment, adaptation of resources for goal attainment, integration of organizational efforts, and pattern maintenance to solve organizational problems. This type of analysis, when applied to CJCCs, can be very useful in understanding their effectiveness. First, CJCCs must balance the multiple organizational and individual member goals in a way that ensures overall goals are attained. Second, many CJCCs are charged with conducting resource assessments to ensure that both existing and new resources are targeted toward efforts that will help meet the overall system goals. Third, through their membership structure, CJCCs integrate the efforts of all key stakeholder agencies in the justice system.

CJCCs, however, operate in a political, economic, and social environment. These external influences can have a significant impact on their overall effectiveness. Failing to consider the environmental context overlooks a key component of CJCCs. Yuchtman and Seashore (1967) offer the systems resource model as a more comprehensive and robust method for assessing organizational effectiveness that incorporates organizational interaction with the environment into the overall analysis. Based on an open-systems view of organizations (i.e., one that continually interacts with the environment), the systems resource model emphasizes the interconnectedness between input-output transactions and defines an organization's effectiveness "in terms of its bargaining position, as reflected in the ability of the organization, in either absolute or relative terms, to exploit its environment in the acquisition of scarce and

valued resources" (Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967, p. 898). This conceptualization of effectiveness has particular relevance for CJCCs in that their processes for implementing change involve engaging the environment and bargaining to maximize the use of limited criminal justice system resources. Thus, effective CJCCs must continually assess and adapt to their environments in order to realize their system goals.

Like other models of organizational effectiveness, the system resources model has limitations. Among the criticisms of this model is the emphasis on competition for resources, with many theorists suggesting that effectiveness should be defined in terms of how well an organization uses its resources to attain its goals (Steers, 1975; Etzioni, 1960). Certainly with regard to CJCCs, this is an important element of their operations, particularly in mitigating the competition for resources among the individual members of the councils. To the extent that CJCCs are charged with making recommendations regarding resource allocation within the system, an appropriate measure of their effectiveness would also be the extent to which resources are allocated in a manner that is consistent with the overall system goals.

One final difficulty in assessing CJCC organizational effectiveness is the extent to which multiple constituencies (both within the CJCC and outside the CJCC) influence operations and outcomes. Because CJCCs are both comprised of constituent agencies and have external constituents (like county commissioners and the public), the strategic constituency model has relevance for assessing the councils' organizational effectiveness. Under the strategic constituency model, the effectiveness of the organization is assessed by the extent to which the demands of constituents are satisfied and the interests of constituents are met (Whetten & Cameron, 1984). Some suggest that under this model, one measure of effectiveness is the extent to which the organization is able to maintain contributions of constituents to the organization

itself and opportunities for both constituents and the organization to affect each other (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008; Connolly, Conlon, & Deutsch, 1980). Research on domestic violence coordinating councils has demonstrated this type of constituency involvement as being a key factor in goal attainment, particularly in the form of shared decision making (Allen, 2006).

The ability of CJCCs to maintain consistent participation by and contributions from its organizational members is a challenge. Many of the members are elected officials or agency heads appointed by local government. As such there can be frequent turnover. Recognizing the reality of turnover in individuals, CJCC effectiveness on this point may best be measured by longevity of agency representation and contribution to the organization.

In addition to concerns about turnover, members' commitment to the organization can ebb and flow as priorities and the environmental context change. Ensuring continued support and contribution will require strong leadership to help keep members engaged. Like membership in the organization itself, CJCC chairs move in and out of the council leadership position on a regular basis—often being appointed or elected for a 1 or 2 year term. Continuity in the leadership position then should come from the CJCC staff director, generally a city or county employee, hired to run the administrative aspects of the council and to provide support for council initiatives.

Using these models as a means for assessing whether or not CJCCs are effective organizations, several themes emerge. CJCCs that demonstrate organizational effectiveness must be able to balance the multiple and perhaps competing goals within the council and among its membership. Integration of and opportunities for constituent agencies (often the members themselves) to contribute to goal attainment are key to CJCCs' effectiveness. To the extent that CJCCs are empowered to do so in their legislative mandate, processes that ensure resource

allocation consistent with overall system goals is an important measure of effectiveness. Moreover, there must be recognition within CJCCs—among the leaders and members—of the environmental context in which the councils operate. Continuous assessment of the political and social environment will ensure that the CJCCs efforts remain relevant and are meeting the needs of the members. Such on-going assessment will also help CJCCs meet the needs of their external constituents. Finally, continuity in strong leadership, both the chairpersons and staff directors, is an important element to keeping member agencies invested in and contributing to the CJCCs' efforts. In fact, the CJCCs across the country that have been in existence the longest and have engaged in meaningful change efforts, all have at least one full-time staff director to provide this continuity and have demonstrated long average tenure of members.

Management and Sustainment of Change

Assuming that CJCCs have the potential to be effective organizations in terms of goal attainment, etc., the question remains as to how effective they can be in planning and managing change that results in sustained system reform. Hage and Aiken's (1970) research on change readiness found several key characteristics that were related to the effective initiation and sustainment of change. Among these, several are relevant to CJCCs and provide evidence that they can be effective organizations for initiating and sustaining change:

- **Decentralization of power: Although CJCCs have appointed or elected chairpersons, each member of the organization shares in the power and decision making of the council (Allen, 2006)**

- **Low formalization: Although CJCCs generally have some policies and procedures articulated for how the councils will operate; however it is uncommon for these policies and procedures to dictate every aspect of the councils' work as might be seen in a more highly formalized organization (Clark, Burt, Schulte, & Macguire, 1996)**

- **Low stratification in the distribution of rewards: CJCCs are designed to ensure that the entire system benefits from the change, essentially distributing the "rewards" equally among members (Allen, 2006)**

- **Highly trained members: Individuals within the CJCC must have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to adopt the identified reforms (Allen, 2006; Klein & Sorra, 1996)**

- **Greater emphasis on quality as opposed to quantity: CJCCs are intended to ensure comprehensive and systemic approaches to resolving identified justice system issues—success is not measured by the number of problems identified and addressed but rather by the quality of the outcomes achieved**

The process by which CJCCs approach change will also have an impact on whether or not they are successful in creating sustainable system reform. To address this issue, it is important to understand 1) the types of change that CJCCs undertake, 2) the process by which change is initiated and implemented, and 3) the foundation that is laid for sustaining the change.

Change, as a concept, is not as clearly defined as one might think—it can occur at different levels (i.e., macro vs. micro level change); it can take different forms; and it can be initiated for different reasons. At the macro level, Osborne and Brown (2005) define two types of change that CJCCs are most likely to undertake:

- **Transformational change: fundamental, large-scale and radical change that alters existing configurations of power relations, organizational structures, and value sets**

- **Public choice policy: public services should separate management and policy from the delivery of public goods and services to avoid self-interest and "empire building"**

The creation of CJCCs, in and of themselves, represents a form of transformational change initiated by local government to encourage increased collaborative and systemic planning to address justice issues and to distribute the power of the individual agencies more equally to support systemic approaches. For CJCCs, transformational change is most evident in the extent to which existing power relations and value sets are altered. Examples of how CJCCs alter existing configurations of power relations and value sets include adopting performance-based budgeting and budget reviews of members' initiatives prior to submission to county commissions.

As organizational entities though, CJCCs also engage in public choice policy change—mitigating the self-interest of individual group members by moving toward consensus-based decision making about various criminal justice system policies. To the extent that a CJCC has been given, or has adopted, a local

justice management and policy role, separation from the delivery and administration of justice occurs. The CJCCs help to manage the system priorities, define overall system policies and procedures, plan system change initiatives while the individual members of the CJCCs are charged with carrying out the work and delivering the "services" of justice in the community. In doing so, the CJCC works to ensure a shared vision of justice that minimizes opportunity for one portion of the justice system to dominate how the system will work.

The type of change initiated is also driven by need. Although CJCCs may engage in change prompted by unforeseen events (e.g., major disasters, terror attack, new crime trends), purposive and planned change is the more dominant form of change initiated by CJCCs in response to identified problems or issues. Whether the change is passive or active depends in large part on the impetus for the change, which can emanate from external pressures such as changing political environment or public opinion or internal sources such as members' identification of areas for improvement. Passive change represents minimal effort that is intended only to satisfy or pacify the need—it is essentially a "Band-aid approach" (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008). CJCCs, in large part, have been created to avoid the traditional passive approach in favor of more active, comprehensive and systemic change. In fact, a major component of CJCC work is on-going assessment of systemic issues. As such, the need for system change is most often driven by perceived needs for system improvement among members and concerns about efficiencies or effectiveness expressed by external constituents such as victim advocacy groups or county commissions.

To be effective in planning and measuring change, CJCCs must overcome traditional organizational decision making routines such as quick fixes or "pet projects" that fail to address the actual problem identified, avoid confusing the symptoms of the problem with the problem itself, and adopt processes for breaking down individual agencies'

institutional "turf" or boundaries (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008). Organizations must also be able to take into account both the intended and unintended consequences of a change effort by comprehensively assessing the causes of the problem and likely outcomes—the change effort must be forward-looking and not simply an adaptation to immediate pressures (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008). Finally, the organization and the change effort must continually interact with the environment that the system operates in, adopting an "open systems" theory of organization and management (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008).

How CJCCs approach change management is also important. Kotter (1996) identifies several elements of effective planning for change. First, leadership is key. The leadership of an organization must create the momentum for change by leading the organization toward a shared vision about how the problem identified should be addressed (Kotter, 1996). In CJCCs, there are two types of leaders— the elected or appointed chair (selected from the membership) and the lead staff member assigned to oversee the day-to-day operation of the council. Both must possess the characteristics of effective leaders: they must be attuned to the local justice and political culture, be able to influence the members of the council, and embody transformational leadership (Schein, 2004; Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008). Central to the idea of transformational leadership is the extent to which leaders are able to provide vision for the organization, establish clear goals, and encourage members of the organization to be creative in designing approaches that will achieve the goals (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008).

Second, there needs to be consensus among the organization's members and, in the case of CJCCs, the external constituents about the need for change (Kotter, 1996). Building this consensus in an organization like a CJCC, where there are diverse and oftentimes adversarial perspectives, is critical for effective change management. There also needs to be a comprehensive examination of the problem

and decision making that is based on continuous analysis of the problem and intended (and possible unintended) outcomes (Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2008). Third, there must be an examination of previous attempts to address the problem and, if necessary, identification of more innovative alternatives (Hudzik & Cordner, 1983) to avoid the mistakes of past and failed attempts at change.

Once possible solutions have been identified, the implementation process can begin. Implementation includes ensuring that the individuals within the organization and those charged with carrying out the change have been trained or possess the knowledge and skills to move the change effort forward (Klein & Sorra, 1996). Within the context of the CJCC as an organization, implementation is not the operation of the solution on a day-to-day basis. Rather implementation is focused on ensuring that individual agencies and constituents of the CJCC understand what is required, data is available and collected to monitor implementation, and appropriate mechanisms are in place to overcome resistance to the change to ensure that implementation succeeds.

Key Elements of Effective Change Management

- **Transformational Leadership**

- **Consensus of Need for Change**

- **Comprehensive Examination of the Problem**

- **Knowledge and Skills to Implement the Change**

CJCCs and the Sustainment of Change

The key to sustaining the change lies in how well the CJCCs are able to overcome resistance and promote both cultural and values acceptance within the system. This is, by no means, an easy task and perhaps where CJCCs may be most limited in their overall effectiveness. As quasi-political entities, CJCCs will face numerous challenges in sustaining change. Although some have suggested that sustainment of change is as simple as achieving small, quick successes upon which future change can be built (Kotter, 1996), in fact sustaining change is a much more complex endeavor. Leaders within the organization must address a number of forces that create resistance to change. These forces can emanate from the individual CJCC member or from the structure of the organization itself. Individual members may fail to see the need for change or may not understand how they contribute to the problem or the change effort. There is also the political reality that change creates uncertainty for members of the CJCC who rely on the electorate to keep their jobs, and more importantly, the change prescribed may run counter to the "public persona" of the individual member. At the organizational level, resistance to change may include concerns about how the change will impact power relationships, a failure to fully understand how a change will be impacted by the overall system, and prior failed attempts at change.

To be effective, CJCCs must address resistance from individual members, from within the organization, and from the environment in which the council operates (Steers, 1977; French, 1969). Strategies for overcoming resistance include: communication with members about the logic and need for the change, engaging the members in identifying and designing the change, fostering commitment among the members and support for the change, and ensuring that the change is implemented in a way that minimizes impact on any one member agency (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Lines, 2004; Johnson, 1992). In fact, engagement of constituents and shared decision making have been found to be the most significant predictors of sustained change related to domestic violence coordinating councils' goal attainment (Allen, 2006). On the broader scale of organizational resistance and the climate under which the organization operates, strategies include open and frank communication about the problem, fostering trust and support among the members, and considering the personal satisfaction of the members with the change (French, 1969).

> "The key to sustaining the change lies in how well the CJCCs are able to overcome resistance and promote both cultural and values acceptance within the system."

Conclusion

Criminal justice coordinating councils as change agents have received little attention in the academic or professional literature. This paper has attempted to apply some of the organization theoretical concepts to CJCCs as a means for exploring which models of organizational effectiveness have relevance for the study of CJCCs and suggesting some ways in which these models might be applied. In doing this, several themes emerged with regard to what might constitute an effective CJCC. Leadership, goal congruency and balance, resource allocation, engagement of constituents, and adaptation to changing environmental context provide some indication of what conditions are necessary to produce effective CJCCs.

It is not enough, however, to simply understand effectiveness along these different dimensions. The potential for CJCCs to become the driving force that produces justice system reform certainly depends on their effectiveness as organizations, but it also depends on how they identify, plan for, manage, and sustain change in the justice system. Existing research on organizational change provides several key indicators that can be useful in assessing how well CJCCs approach change management and implementation. To the extent that CJCCs attempt change by rigorously identifying the root causes of the issue at hand, overcoming traditional organizational decision making routines, and building consensus about the need for change, the councils are well-positioned for initiating system reform to improve the administration of justice.

A consistent theme, however, both in terms of organizational effectiveness and change is strong, transformational leadership. It is important that the chair of the CJCC, who leads the members in determining a vision, goals, and desired outcomes, exhibit the characteristics of a strong leader. Because the chair's tenure as the council's leader is term-/time-limited, it is also imperative that the continuity for the organization and change efforts come from

the leadership of the CJCC staff director. Without both types of leadership, real system change is unlikely to be sustained because it will be impossible to address forces that are resistant to the change effort. This is the single greatest challenge for CJCCs and the factor most likely to limit their potential for producing justice system reform.

With this caveat, identifying the conditions under which CJCCs can be effective organizations and defining how they approach change creates an opportunity for defining a research agenda for the field on the viability of CJCCs as change agents. Moreover, at the local level, such research can provide greater insight and direction for local governments and CJCCs about how best to gauge their performance toward goal attainment and overall system reform.

MORE INFORMATION...

If you would like more information about CJCCs or JMI's National CJCC Network, please email Aimee Wickman at aimeew@jmijustice.org.

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