Organizational Behavior
The Danish Police Force and the 2007 Police Reform

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Introduction

This paper aims to analyze how organizational behavior influences and shapes the Danish Police Force (henceforth "DP") in the light of the Danish Police Reform in 2007. The reform imposed organizational change, which was met with change management initiatives to facilitate the reform smoothly. Despite the extensive planning, the implementation of the reform mostly failed due to the *"decoupling of the change management initiatives and the distinctive organizational character of the police"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p33). This main issue will be analyzed through three different theories as lenses to understand how it unfolded. Building on the analysis, three recommendations will be made on how to establish a system for enhancing competencies and developing talent.

Question 1

1.0 Bureaucracy

Max Weber defines bureaucracy as *"an organizational form consisting of a hierarchy of differentiated knowledge and expertise in which rules and disciplines are arranged"* (Clegg et al, 2019, p631). In the case of DP, bureaucracy is relevant because: *"In police work, as in other public institutions, the bureaucratic ethos is at the core of the task of the institution"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p186). Thus, showcasing how bureaucracy is the building blocks of DP. This paper considers principles 2, 7, 10, & 15 in order to explain the importance of authority, centralization, and hierarchies, and how the neglection of these structures complicated the implementation of the 2007 reform.

The 2nd principle by Weber encompasses how power relations have a *"distinct authority configuration which is specified by the rules of the organization"* (Clegg et al, 2019, p632). The importance of authority configuration is seen in the organizational structure of DP (Appendix 1) by the distinct levels of the organization. However, it becomes even more evident in times of change, which is outlined by Jens H. Højbjerg, The National Commissioner: *"Managers at all levels need to understand their roles in relation to the ambitions outlined in the strategy"* (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p108). This principle is, however, violated which is displayed in the period where new police commissioners were appointed, while the former chiefs of police still headed the districts. This created *"a locked up situation"* with *"no formal authority over the outgoing chiefs of police and*

therefore could not take action on the situation" (Degnegaard, 2010, p186). This example shows how a lack of distinct authority paralyzed the 'old' chiefs in their work and further sent unfortunate signals throughout the organization since these long-standing employees and their authority was neglected by the office.

Weber describes in principle 15 how *"Communication, coordination and control are centralized in the organization"* (Clegg et al, 2019, p632). Centralization is seen as an important attribute of the bureaucratic organization, which was also emphasized by an expert employed by DP: *"Communication should flow from the top of the organization down through the organization" & "…employees prefer to get information on organizational change from their manager"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p169). The change management strategy therefore employed 'line communication' which was a way of distributing information top-down. This approach seemed viable and was further in line with the rational-legal authority principle, encompassing how the office is the owed homage (Clegg et al, 2019, p631), and therefore should be the ones distributing information. However, the line communication clashed since the change management strategy neglected other principles in doing so, which will be elaborated below.

Weber's 10th principle is not considered in the top-down approach, which comprehends how delegated powers will initially lead to hierarchy (Clegg et al, 2019, p632). Hierarchy is not an issue in bureaucracy, but it can be if the power distance is too great within the hierarchy: *"…the power distance is so great that a police officer does not simply approach a manager with just any question"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p173). In the initiative, it is forgotten how the subordinates would actually hesitate with asking their manager. Therefore, the top-down approach would never get the "drizzle-down" effect since the power distance acts as a barrier.

However, the fact that it turns out how managers do not even have the actual information also poses a problem, which in turn violates principle 7, which is expressed as: *"These rules specify tasks that are specific, distinct and done by different formal categories of personnel who specialize in these tasks and not in others"* (Clegg et al, 2019, p632). During the period of implementation of the reform, the information never reached the managers, making it hard for them to do their entrusted

duties: *"This tends to be a problem partly because managers draw decisions on behalf of the organization and the employees […] should have the relevant information in order to make these decisions"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p171). Thus, they are unable to specialize in their role as managers in this period of change, which was crucial since the managers were meant to distribute the information to their subordinates.

Overall, the private sector inspired change management strategy (Degnegaard, 2010, p187) failed since it overlooked the bureaucratic nature of DP, which can be seen through the violation of the highlighted principles. While Weber's theory is good at understanding the misalignment on an organizational level, it does not explain the how the structures clashed with culture within the organization. To examine this, the organizational environment must be elaborated through theory of culture.

2.0 Culture

Analyzing culture will help draw a broader picture of how the implementation process clashed with the organizational culture due to the conflicting values it proposed. According to Schein, organizational culture comprises of: *"the deep, basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by organizational members"* (Clegg et al, 2019, p280). Culture can be seen as a common sense making within the organization which influences everyday activities. The culture in DP will be analyzed using Schein's three levels of culture (Schein, 1997), where he has identified three levels of culture; artefacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions.

2.1 Artifacts

Being the first level of culture, artifacts constitutes the visible features of the culture (Clegg et al, 2019, p282). What is common for all police officers is how they always wear a police badge and the blue uniform, while driving the indistinguishable blue or white police cars (Danish Police, 2019). These artifacts create homogeneity and underlines how a police officer is an authority. The differentiated embroidery on the shoulder pads of police officers moreover allows for visibility and transparency of the hierarchical structures of the bureaucracy (Danish Police, 2019). Overall, the artifacts make them approachable and recognizable. The uniformity of DP was challenged through the change management initiatives by the communication group and program office, who used

artifacts to facilitate discussions internally. They displayed posters in the stations stating: *"We have a plan. How about you?".* Moreover, they sent information booklets to the employees' home addresses. This singled out the individual officer and thereby went against the uniformity and anonymity which was created through the artifacts.

2.2 Espoused values

The second level of culture is the espoused values, being the norms and consistent beliefs expressed by the employees (Clegg et al, 2019, p282). This paper sees trust and loyalty as the main espoused values in DP. This is further emphasized in the field study showcasing how these values are vital for the patrol officers: *"trust and loyalty go together with certainty and stability which are essential components in police work"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p186). The presence of these values is important between colleagues but also between the officer and the citizens, since apparent trust and loyalty are essential in public organizations, and especially the police who is supposed to protect you (Appendix 2). In the implementation period of the reform the espoused values of DP were being challenged. First, the wish-round, were employees could wish for future positions, created a high amount of uncertainty in the organization since employees did not know where they could be placed in the future. The competition for the jobs further enhanced mistrust and disloyalty between the employees of DP, since your colleague could be applying for your job: *"…it was difficult for managers to tell 'friend from foe'"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p183). All in all, this once again singled out the individual and jeopardized the espoused values within DP.

2.3 Basic assumptions

The deepest level of culture is the basic assumptions which is the most influential level since it works unacknowledged. This level subconsciously shapes the worldviews, beliefs, and norms of organizational members (Clegg et al, 2019, p282). Collectivism is the core basic assumption within DP, and it has been throughout the years: *"Historically the collective has been the primary factor in the police."* (Degnegaard, 2010, p180). The uniformity and collectivism are initiated the instant an officer is recruited since everyone receives the exact same training (Degnegaard, 2010, p180). Thus, all officers are expected to adopt the same traits and capabilities, shifting the focus away from the individual towards the collectivism, which is further enhanced indirectly by the artifacts and espoused values. Consequently, the basic assumptions create a shared focal point of being a part of

DP where you are considered a part of an office which is something bigger than the officeholder itself. However, the initiatives employed failed to consider this as the individual was: *"symbolically excluded from the organization, from the collective."* (Degnegaard, 2010, p180). This created internal rivalry and a 'shivering' organization since the individual was singled out from the collective, which challenged the groundwork of DP: *"The organizational character of the police rests partly on a large power distance and a rigid hierarchy and partly on a very collective culture"* (Degnegaard, 2010, p174). This clash is therefore crucial in understanding how the initiatives were ill fitted with the fundamental cultural base of DP.

2.4 Conclusion of culture

Based on Schein's theory, this paper finds DP initially following a differentiation culture, as subcultures are shaped by the hierarchical segregation of professional groups and occupations in the organization creating *"very strong group formations within the police."* (Degnegaard, 2010, p. 174). Thus, the subcultures groups people of equal interest, habits, and tastes (Clegg et al, 2019, p305). The reform combined with a changing society is, however, making the culture of DP more fluid and changeable thus shifting towards a fragmented culture. Two contributing factors drive this: (i) the shift toward individualism in the force creating mistrust and disloyalty resulting in the members feeling detached from the organization, and (ii) the composition of the force having undergone changes with new types of professionals such as economists and phycologists (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p105). This unstable and temporary culture is hard to manage, and this goes against the principles of the bureaucratic organization thus being a large contributing factor to the misalignment of the implementation.

Like bureaucracy, culture acts as a structure around individual behavior. Culture therefore helps us understand alignments between principles of bureaucracy, and why there is a need for predictability and stability. It does, however, not shed light on the managerial decision of pursuing forms of adaptation and new organizational structures.

3.0 Learning

Pressure from politicians and the general public entailed how DP *"has been subject to requirements to adapt its organization and the way it works"* (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p103). This is what initiated the implementation of a reform and sent DP into a process of organizational learning, which is described as *"the adaptation to the environment an organization is dealing with"* (Levitt & March, 1988). The reform was set to change the frame of reference which normally guided DP's behavior, which is a process described as double-loop learning (Clegg, 2019, p. 487). DP had previously only been engaging in single-loop learning, for instance through the formalizing of procedures and rules to create a more efficient organization (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p104). Therefore, this posed a challenge to the static and bureaucratic organization of DP which was not equipped for this change. Using the example of Google, who embraces a culture of change and learning, it is seen how they contrast DP. The process of double-loop learning that the reform initiated encompassed a learning paradox, which puts forward how learning and organizing are essentially antithetical processes (Clegg et al, 2019, p506). This antithetical process was also true for DP since their organization involved ordering and controlling while the organizational learning process disorganizes existing knowledge and increases variation.

Summing up, the process of double-loop learning was indeed a paradox for the bureaucratic organization, which further explains why the change management initiatives did not go as expected. This paradox helped explain how the process of implementation went wrong, but it falls short on explaining how this 'culture of learning' has been neglected in the organization. This limitation can be overcome by looking at leadership in the recommendations.

4.0 Interim conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis shows how the combination of the bureaucratic structural deviations, cultural shift, and the learning paradox, creates a misalignment between the employed change management initiatives and the structure of DP, thus making these three the main explanations of why the implementation failed.

Question 2

5.0 Recommendation

In 2010, DP shaped an overall strategy to be employed in the organization. In line with this strategy, this paper will draw up three recommendations with a focus on point six, which states: *"Establish a system for enhancing competences and developing talent"* (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p107), which will be done so while drawing from the conclusions in the analysis.

5.1 Private partnerships

A new public management approach was employed when the change management initiatives were planned. The new public management approach uses private sector-resonances by adopting private-sector management techniques (Clegg et al, 2019, p21). Currently, the public is challenging the status quo of DP, and change is therefore needed. Consequently, the idea of shifting more towards the techniques employed by the public was not a bad idea but the change was too radical for the more than 300-year-old, traditional police force (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p104). This paper therefore recommends DP to dive deeper into the already existing private partnerships in order to incrementally co-create new capabilities and work more towards creating a service culture, since this is in high demand by the public (Degnegaard & Waldorff, 2013, p101). The enhanced collaboration would by way of example include company visits for police officers, for them to be able to see 'high-quality service in action' and take in the capabilities employed by the private organization. On a more managerial level, the partnerships would create a community of practice which *"develops when people who have a common interest in a problem, collaborate to share ideas and find solutions"* (Clegg et al, 2019, p496), thus enabling knowledge-transfer within the communities going both ways.

By diving more into private partnerships, DP will gain the needed capabilities to advance their service culture as private organizations tend to be experts with costumer service, since they depend on their customers to survive. Weaknesses of this proposal can be the willingness of the private organizations to include DP in their operations since these can tend to be confidential. Furthermore, there is a possibility that DP will have a hard time incorporating the private sector management techniques since this has already failed once.

5.2 Mentorship program for police cadets

Starting in a new job can be very challenging since you enter a whole new arena of new capabilities, structures, and people. This can especially be overwhelming for a new police cadet straight out of the Danish Police School, who enters a 'shivering' organization with an increasingly fragmented culture. To overcome the issue of not becoming a single-minded individual in an organization but rather a part of something bigger, this paper suggests introducing a mentorship program for police cadets. The mentorship program will consist of informal conversations between a police cadet and a manager or an older police officer. The sessions will be held frequently, and informality is important since this will help overcome the issue of large power distances. During the conversation several topics will be touched upon such as career-advancement, goalsetting, team work etc. The goal is for the mentee to gain new skills and knowledge, learn how to advance, gain a broader network, and learn the workplace routines. However, the mentor will also gain through the sessions by the development of leadership skills and gaining new perspectives from the younger mentee, both in terms of skills but also personally. Furthermore, it is important that the mentors are updated and have a constants flow of information from the top management as addressed in the analysis. Through this, they can act as facilitators of transformational leadership, which is leadership that can aspire chance and unify people, which is especially needed in times of transformation (Clegg et al, 2019, p183). The mentors will then facilitate and enhance transformational leadership all the way down to the low-level employees.

From the mentorship program talents are able to unfold individually but with the support of the organization, keeping its espoused values in mind. Additionally, the power distance will decrease since the low-level employees will get a direct link to higher-level employees, who through the program will enhance motivation and unity between the employees. This will in turn move the organization back to the differentiated culture, and away from the fragmented culture. However, this initiative has two distinct limitations. First, it will require DP to invest money in the program which could meet resistance since it is a public institution with allocated funds. Secondly, it will require willingness both from the mentor but also from the mentee. Both parties will have to engage actively in the mentorship program to gain maximal effect, and especially the mentor must display energy and openness in order to facilitate the transformational leadership.

5.3 Learning and improvising on the job

The highly extensive script book for the change management "*with its project plans, gantt charts, project descriptions etc.*" (Degnegaard, 2010, p. 166) created an undynamic implementation and left no room for trial-error process. It was also seen how feedback systems were neglected, thus not taking the concerns from the employees into consideration (Degnegaard, 2010, p. 164). As a result, the learning paradox was not mitigated. To facilitate better learnings and capabilities within DP, it is proposed how DP should implement regular innovation workshops for all levels of the organization. The purpose of the innovation workshops will be to understand and solve problems and challenges existing or arising within DP, thus creating a more dynamic way of facing challenges. These problems and challenges can range from everyday problems to larger organizational complications on all levels. The workshop will therefore act as an enabler of initiating innovation that aims to solve these problems using a facilitator of discussion and guide specialized in the field combined with the minds and expertise of the members from all levels of the organization. The workshop will involve a process of development and finally an implementation of the reached solution(s). Throughout the development process technology of foolishness is important to incorporate, which states how organizations need to *"act before they think"*, in order to stay innovative (March, 2012). Therefore, the development will involve trial-error processes where a solution to a problem will be tested very early in the process, and evaluation and development will come after. This improvisation is important not only to stay innovative but also to mitigate the learning paradox on a longer term, since improvisation will encourage the employees to play around with everyday patterns and to change them slightly, but not necessarily radical (Clegg et al, 2019, p. 507).

Summing up, the innovation workshops will deal with the tension between organization and learning by employing the technology of foolishness and improvisation. This will create better dynamics and communication across the organizational levels while dealing with problems, both small and large. However, two aspects would limit the effect of the workshops. Firstly, the bureaucratic nature of DP can become problematic, since change has proved to be difficult earlier. Secondly, the resources to implement the solutions could be lacking both in terms of people embracing and facilitating the solutions but also the financial resources.

6.0 Conclusion

By using the theory of bureaucracy, Schein's three levels of culture, and the learning paradox, this paper creates a reasonably full picture of how the change management initiatives did not fit with DP in terms of organizational behavior. DP was shaped by a bureaucratic nature with distinct authorities and hierarchies, which is now challenged due to public pressure. In accommodating these, it is proposed how DP should adopt practices from the private sector through partnerships. Additionally, DP was starting to move towards a fragmented and individualistic culture, which is a process that should be reversed by deploying a mentorship program, thus facilitating a more transformational leadership approach while also developing talent. Lastly, the suggestion of innovation workshops would mitigate the learning paradox, and thereby enable the organization to create a foundation for developing competencies and talent.

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Appendix 1: The organizational structure of the Ministry of Justice

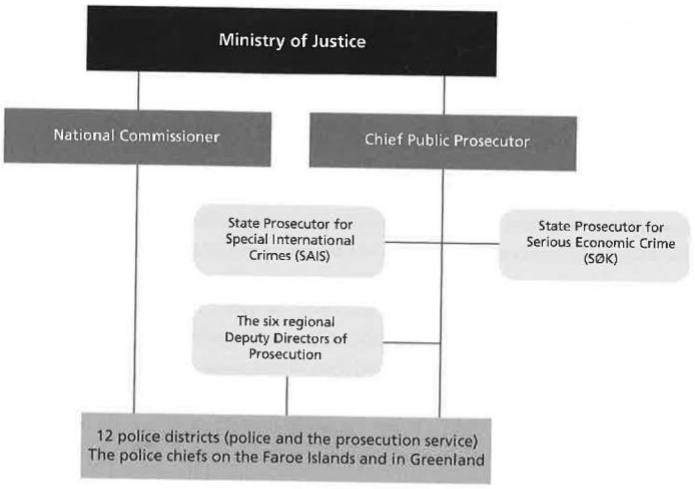
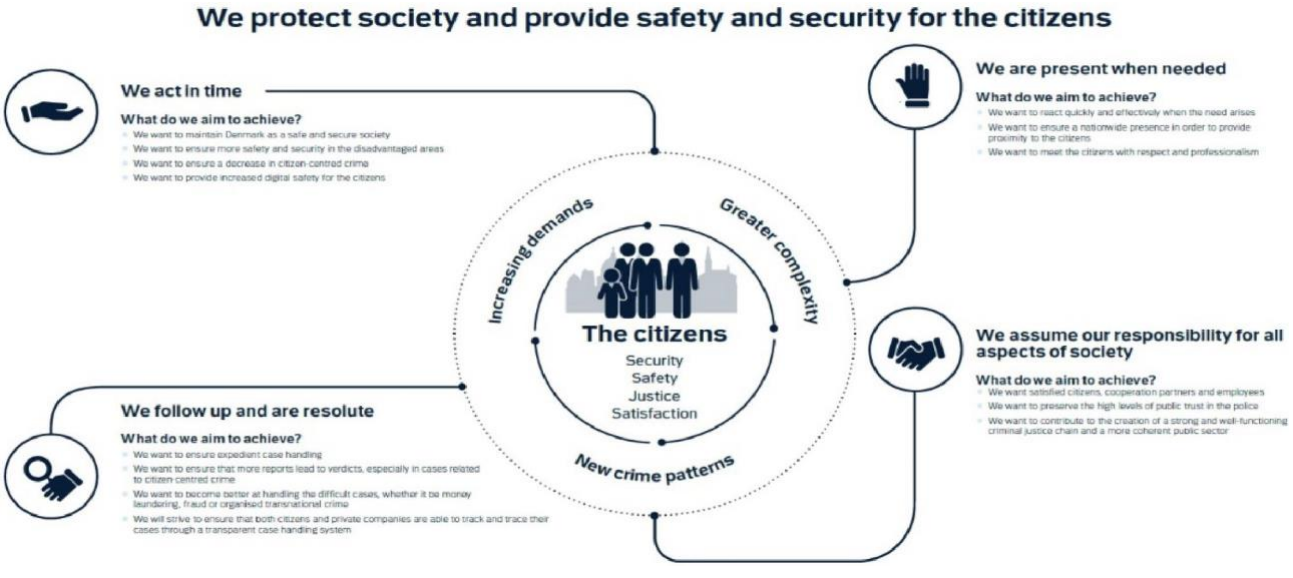


Figure 6.1. From the Annual Report by the Police and Prosecution Service 2010.[2]

Source: Degnegaard, Rex & Boch Waldorff, Susanne (2013). The Police. In: Lise Justensen & Susanne Boch Waldorff (eds.) Strategies in Action – A Case Collection (p. 100-119). Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.

Appendix 2: The public function of the police



Source: Power point from guest lecturer Simon Toft Kristjansen