A Classification of Agents and Entities Influencing Law Enforcement Agencies in the United States

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ABSTRACT

This work introduces a typology for classifying the entities and groups that influence law enforcement agencies in the United States. The purpose here is to begin the process of creating a more formal taxonomy to better understand the types of influences that bear upon law enforcement agencies. Through that work we will better understand policy and decision making in this distinct arena and improve law enforcement operations. Using a soft systems approach this initial work involved a broad search of entities that may influence law enforcement agencies. The search involved extensive internet keyword searches, reviews of paper publications and field observation. In consultation with other researchers the list was reviewed and analyzed for classification. Seven distinctive categories were identified; Law Enforcement, Government, Quasi-Government, Associations, Vendors, Media and People. The resulting typology may be used as a basis for further research in the area of law enforcement organizational behavior, policy development and program implementation. This work will lead to a more formal taxonomy for understanding these relationships.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.1.0 [Information Systems] Models and Principles - General
K.4.1 [Computers and Society] Public Policy Issues – Use.
K.6.1 [Management of Computing and Information Systems] Project and People Management – Strategic Information Systems Planning.

General Terms

Human Factors, Standardization, Theory.

Keywords

Influence, Classification, Stakeholders, Typology, Law Enforcement, Collaboration, Organization.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Policing in most societies exists in a state of 'dynamic tension' between forces that tend to isolate it and those that tend to integrate its functioning with other social structures" (Clark, 1965). In truth law enforcement agencies engage with an extensive network of formal and informal contacts both on and off the job. It is important to understand these contacts and their potential influence in agency operations and activity yet little work has been done in this particular area (McKelvey, 1975; Mills & Newton Margulies, 1980; Pugh, Hickson, & Hinings, 1969; Reiss, 1992). Our interest is in improving the way law enforcement agencies fulfill their individual missions by creating a better understanding of the factors that influence their decision making and operation and the environment they work in.

2. PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

We wish to improve law enforcement operations. Here we try for the first time to comprehensively identify and classify stakeholders that influence law enforcement agencies. Having such a typology will stimulate thinking and serve as a basis for theory development in this area. Using a soft systems methodology we introduce a comprehensive schema for categorizing law enforcement stakeholders. Law enforcement organizations have distinct member non-member identification; a minimum requirement for formal organizations (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Through this work we will identify significant actors or entities that have influence within and across the boundaries in this environment and assess their relative impacts.

For our purposes law enforcement agency is defined as one whose mission involves the enforcement of laws and whose personnel are authorized to make arrests and carry firearms. There are many agencies who are involved in investigations that do not make arrests or carry firearms and these agencies are not included here so that we may proceed with an identifiable group consistently across federal and local levels. These agencies will be listed where they interact with or influence law enforcement agencies. An example is the case of the Child Protective Service in New York State; these investigators of child abuse have investigative responsibility but do not carry firearms and they interact routinely with law enforcement. Some federal or other law enforcement agencies may not have the granted authority to carry firearms in all states. In these cases the agency qualifies as a law enforcement agency if the agency has arrest power and authority to carry firearms in even one location or jurisdiction.

3. PROBLEMS

There is significant overlap in areas of jurisdiction and responsibility and there are a variety of ways in which individual agencies choose to organize themselves. We identify agencies and entities that influence or impact law enforcement decision making and activity at the organizational level. Influencers include those that interact internationally, nationally, by state, regionally or

locally. Influencing entities or agencies may have influence on agencies that do not follow geographical or political boundaries. Products or services may be used by agencies in a variety of jurisdictions without geographic or political linkage. There are cases where personal contact or affiliation will have a strong impact, such as the case where an executive member has a close relative in some service industry and this relationship causes that company to have closer ties to the police agency than they may have if there were no outside connection. For this part of the study we include the vendor agency as having influence or being a stakeholder to that law enforcement agency because there is some interest being served at the agency level. If it were the case that the close family relative had a business that had nothing to do with the law enforcement agency interest it is unlikely that even with the familial tie that there would be any collaboration or influence. This is to say that it is valid to investigate agencies and entities which influence or are stakeholders to law enforcement even where there may be outside influences or interests that exist.

4. METHODOLOGY

Data collection for law enforcement agencies and entities that may be associated with them came through a variety of sources. Sources included formal publications, web searches and article reviews such as in the following table:

Table 2: Sources

Source	Retrieved from
Federal Bureau of Investigation Publications - FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. (n.d.).	August 24, 2009, from http://fbi.gov/publications/leb/leb.htm
NAPO : National Association of Police Organizations.	August 24, 2009, from http://www.napo.org/
Open Directory - Society: Law: Law Enforcement: Organizations.	August 24, 2009, from http://www.dmoz.org/Society/Law/Law_Enforcement/Organizations/
Police & Law Enforcement - Officer.com: Police News, Forums, Links & More for Police Officers, Law Enforcement, Corrections, Sheriffs & More.	August 24, 2009, from http://www.officer.com/
Police Magazines and Publications.	August 24, 2009, from http://mainesecurity.com/Police_Magazines_and_Publications.htm
Police: Organization and Management - The American System Of Policing, Variation In Style And Structure, Managing Police Organizations, Information Technologies And The	August 24, 2009, from http://law.jrank.org/pages/1675/Police-Organization-Management.html

Police.	
U.S. Government Bookstore: Law Enforcement Publications from the Federal Government.	August 24, 2009, from http://bookstore.gpo.gov/collections/crime-prevention.jsp

Sources including Law Enforcement Online (LEO), Google and DMOZ, the online open directory project at http://dmoz.org, and Wikipedia were used to identify agencies, businesses, stakeholders and associates. Results from these searches resulted in more than 6,000 separate entries of varying types. A review of the results was done to identity a schema for organizing the results into the most limited number of categories that would place them into logical categories with exclusivity. In consultation with two other researchers the list was reviewed and analyzed for classification. Through this continuing work we intend to refine and formalize the identified categories that make up this schema for understanding agents and entities influencing law enforcement agencies in the United States.

5. RESULTING TYPOLOGY

The typology proposed includes the major categories of: Law enforcement, Government, Quasi-Government, Media, Associations, Vendors, and People. These identified categories are described in the following table:

Table 1: Categories of Agents and Entities

Category	Description or included entities
Law Enforcement	Outside US Agencies, Special Jurisdiction, Federal, Tribal, State, County, City, Town, Village
Media	Local News Media, National News Media, Entertainment Media - News Like, Entertainment Media - Shows, Broadcast TV, Blogs, Online News Media, Online - i.e. YouTube, Web Sites
Government	Village Government, Town Government, City Government, County Level Government, State Level Government, Federal Level Government, Tribal Governance, School District, Fire District, Other Special Government Unit
Quasi-Government	Power Company, Water Authority, Telecommunications Providers, Postal Service, Rail Service
Associations	Police Benevolent Associations, Unions, Professional Associations Agency, Professional Associations Individual, Collaborative Partnership Associations, Supportive , Lobbies Citizen Advocacy groups, Religious, Political
Vendors	General Businesses & Service Providers: Training and Research, Equipment and Tools, Hardware Providers Communications , Software Providers Data and Communication, Supportive Services Health, Maintenance and Contract Services, Consultants, Insurance, Retirement
People	Citizens, Family, Friends, Bad Guys - Criminal Element

5. CONCLUSION

The greater goal is to improve the functioning of law enforcement operations in this country. Seven distinctive categories are identified as a format for analysis and discussion. The typology may be used as a basis for further research in the area of law enforcement organizational behavior, policy development and program implementation. This work should lead to a more formal taxonomy for understanding these relationships, aid in theory development and stimulate thinking in this area.

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