Creating a learning organization in law enforcement:

Maturity levels for police oversight agencies

Cathrine Filstad and Petter Gottschalk
BI Norwegian School of Management

This is the authors' final, accepted and refereed manuscript to the article published in

The Learning Organization, vol 17, No.5, 2010, pp. 404 - 418
DOI 10.1108/09696471011059804

Creating a learning organization in law enforcement: maturity levels for police oversight agencies

Cathrine Filstad
Norwegian School of Management
cathrine.filstad@bi.no
Tel.+47 46 41 07 15

Petter Gottschalk
Norwegian School of Management
petter.gottschalk@bi.no
Tel. +47 46 41 07 16

Norwegian School of Management
Nydalsveien
0484 Oslo
Norway

Revised research paper submitted to
The Learning Organization
August 16, 2009

Cathrine Filstad is Associate Professor in Organizational Learning and Knowledge in the Department of Leadership and Organization at the Norwegian School of Management. She publishes and teaches organizational learning, knowledge sharing and leadership in organizations and the police force. She also have written several books on these topics.

Petter Gottschalk is Professor of knowledge management in the Department of Leadership and Organization at the Norwegian School of Management. He teaches knowledge management in the Norwegian Police University College. Nova Science Publishers in New York has published his book "Policing the Police", which has inspired this paper.

Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize a stage model for maturity levels for police oversight agencies.

Design/methodology/approach - The paper is based on a literature review covering police oversight organizations and stages of growth models.

Findings - As a conceptual paper, the main findings are related to the appropriateness of the stage model, each identified stage, as well as characteristics of each stage.

Research limitations/implications - Only empirical study of police oversight agencies all over the world might enable verification or falsification of the proposed stage model.

Practical implications - Management in police oversight agencies can apply the model in three ways. First, they can identify the current status. Next, they can identify future direction. Finally, the can evaluate the past progression.

Originality/value - Until this paper, knowledge transfer from police misconduct cases has not been conceptualized as a learning process in police districts and general law enforcement.

Keywords Stage model, Knowledge management, Police misconduct, Public administration, Learning organization

Paper type Conceptual research paper

Introduction

The great majority of individuals involved in policing is committed to honorable and competent public service and is demonstrating high standards of personal and procedural integrity in performing their duties. This calls for high competent knowledge workers within an occupation that is higly stressful and demanding (Richardsen et al. 2006). For instance, Tong (2007) constructed the following profile of an effective detective after analyzing the academic literature relating to detective skills and abilities; Personal qualities, legal knowledge, practical knowledge, generic knowledge, theoretical knowledge, management skills, inestigative skills and interpersonal skills. Thus, knowledge must be applied in practical situations as knowing how to perform (Gherardi, 2006). Therefore, necessary skills and experience is crucial for the learning of knowledgeable police.

However, in every police organization, elements of dishonesty, lack of professionalism and criminal behavior occurs (UNODC, 2006). This can be related to a weak learning culture within the police force, or informal groups of policemen going bad. To meet these challenges of unwanted police behavior, police oversight agencies are watchdog bodies designed to ensure that the police are operating with integrity and accountability (OPI, 2008; Prenzler and Lewis, 2005). Based on internal whistle blowing in the police as well as complaints from the public, police oversight agencies are to prosecute criminal police employees as well as transfer knowledge from the cases to operational police forces for learning. This is important for the positioning the police force has in a society. A position that is based on trust from the public they are suppose to serve. Police oversight agencies are therefore designed to ensure that police are operating with integrity and accountability (Prenzler and Lewis, 2005).

The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize the development of police oversight agencies in terms of stages of growth for organizational maturity, and discuss how the concept of organizational learning can contribute to an understanding of these stages and its highest level of becoming a learning organization.

Police oversight organizations

An example of a police oversight organization is the Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs (Spesialenheten, 2009). The Norwegian Bureau prosecutes police officers in court. The Norwegian Bureau is similar to police oversight agencies found in other countries, such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission in the UK, the Police Department for Internal Investigations in Germany, the Inspectorate General of the Internal Administration in Portugal, the Standing Police Monitoring Committee in Belgium, the Garda Siochána

Ombudsman Commission in Ireland, Federal Bureau for Internal Affairs in Austria, and the Ministry of the Interior, Police and Security Directorate in Slovenia.

Since 1988, Norway has a separate system to handle allegations against police officers for misconduct. The system was frequently accused of not being independent of regular police organizations (Thomassen, 2002). In 2003, the Norwegian Parliament decided to establish a separate body to investigate and prosecute cases where employees in the police service or the prosecuting authority are suspected of having committed criminal acts in the police service.

The Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs has been effective since January 2005. The Bureau is mandated to investigate and prosecute cases where employees in the police service or the prosecuting authority are accused of having committed criminal acts in the service. The Norwegian Bureau has both investigating and prosecuting powers and in that way it differs from some comparable European bodies. The Norwegian Bureau does not handle complaints from the public concerning allegations of rude or bad behavior that does not amount to a criminal offence (Presthus, 2009).

Since the operations started at the Norwegian Bureau in January 2005 and until February 2009, a total of 57 police officers were on trial in Norwegian courts. There were 3 prosecuted officers in 2005, 14 in 2006, 16 in 2007, 21 in 2008, and 3 so far in 2009.

Stages of growth models in learning organizations

Many police oversight agencies all over the world try to initiate learning processes based on court cases where police officers were prosecuted. For example, the Office of Police Integrity in Australia is trying to improve Victorian policing services through effective complaint handling. Refocusing complaint resolution processes in Victoria Police implies to encourage police involved to learn from the process or from any mistake, to take the opportunity of improving police policies or practices, and to develop imaginative and innovative ways to address issues before they become problematic (OPI, 2008).

That means that the police oversight agencies, not only prosecute negative behavior in the police force. They also need to transfer knowledge back to the police force as knowledge learned as a result from practice and its consequences. Knowledge sharing between police force and the police oversight agency is necessary in order to obtain a learning organization.

Maturity levels in terms of stages of growth models have been used widely in both organizational research and information technology management research. According to King and Teo (1997), these models describe a wide variety of phenomena – the organizational life cycle, product life cycle, biological growth, and so forth. These models assume that predictable patterns (conceptualized in terms of stages) exist in the growth of organizations, the sales levels of products, the diffusion of information technology, and the growth of living organisms. These stages are (1) sequential in nature, (2) occur as a hierarchical progression that is not easily reversed, and (3) involve a broad range of organizational activities and structures.

Embodying stage characteristics, organizational learning and innovation diffusion theory can be applied to explain stages of growth models. Organizational learning as innovations means

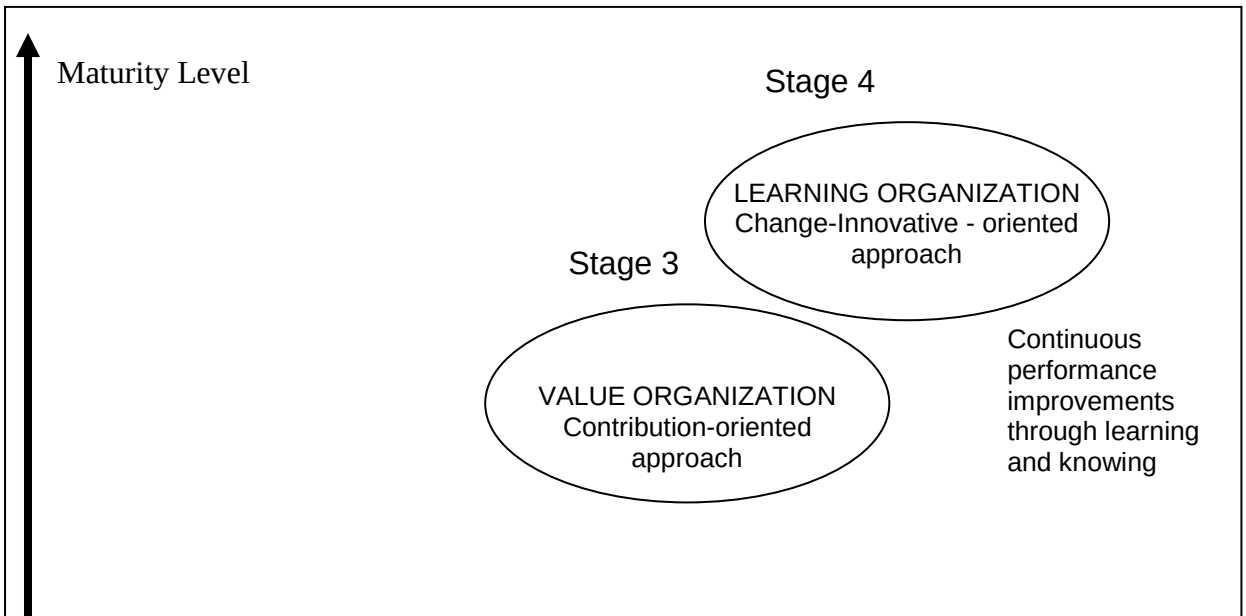
recognizing the process of invention, diffusion and implementation of innovations (Newell et al., 2009). Organizational learning is sometimes placed at the center of innovation diffusion theory through a focus on institutional mechanisms that lower the burden of organizational learning related to IT adoption. Organizations may be viewed, at any given moment, as possessing some bundle of competence related to their current operational and managerial processes. In order to successfully implement and assimilate a new innovation, an organization must somehow reach a state where its bundle of competence encompasses those needed to use for instance the new technology (Fichman and Kemerer, 1997).

Innovations through stages of growth can be understood in terms of product or process innovation acceptance over time. Technology acceptance has been studied for several decades in information systems research. Technology acceptance models explain perceived usefulness and usage intentions in terms of social influence and cognitive instrumental processes. For example, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) found that social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntary, and image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability, and perceived ease of use) significantly influenced user acceptance. Similarly, Venkatesh (2000) identified determinants of perceived ease of use, a key driver of technology acceptance, adoption, and usage behavior. Recognizing the need for both product and process innovations. To implement innovative products must involve process innovation. That means development of new management work or organizational practice.

Stages of growth in knowledge organizations

A knowledge organization is defined as an organization where the end product of work processes in the organization is knowledge. If the end product of an organization is not knowledge while most or all work processes require advanced knowledge, such an organization is defined as a knowledge-intensive organization. While a knowledge-intensive organization might deliver goods and services such as food and transportation, a knowledge organization delivers knowledge, which is an intangible product.

Knowledge must be understood and combined with interpretation, reflection and a social context. In cybernetics, knowledge is defined as a reducer of complexity or as a relation to predict and to select those actions that are necessary in establishing a competitive advantage for organizational survival. That is, knowledge is the capability to draw distinctions, within a domain of actions (Laise et al., 2005). According to the knowledge-based view of the organization, the uniqueness of an organization's knowledge plays a fundamental role in its sustained ability to perform and succeed (Turner and Makhija, 2006).



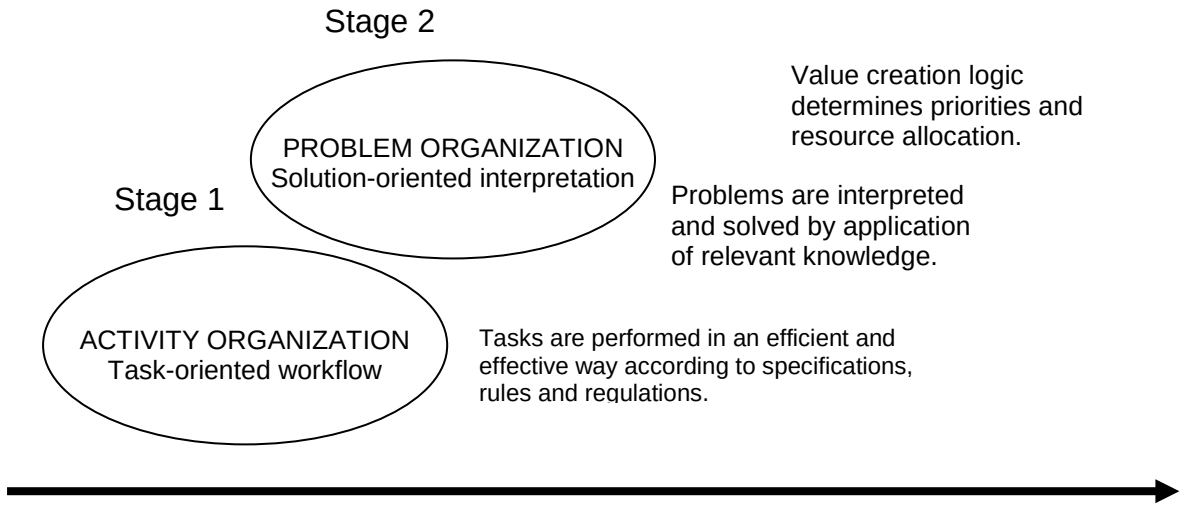


Figure 1. Stages of growth in knowledge organizations

According to the knowledge-based theory of the firm, knowledge is the main resource for a firm's competitive advantage. Knowledge is the primary driver of a firm's value. Performance differences across firms can be attributed to the variance in the firms' strategic knowledge. Strategic knowledge is characterized by being valuable, unique, rare, non-imitable, non-substitutable, non-transferable, combinable, and exploitable. Unlike other inert organizational resources, the application of existing knowledge has the potential to generate new knowledge (Garud and Kumaraswamy, 2005).

Inherently, however, knowledge in the context of work, understood as knowing, enables us to investigate knowledge more fruitfully, in collaboration, and as situated in professional work (Brown and Duguid 1991; Lave and Wenger 1991; Blackler 2004). Knowledge applied as knowing, has a special meaning in solving practical work as knowing emphasizes the context-specific, the unique and different requirements in collaboration across boundaries (Tsoukas 2005; Gherardi and Nicolini 2000). As such it is a communication process of creating trustworthiness (Kasper-Fuehrer, et al 2001: 239); an interactive process that affects, monitors, and guides members' actions and attitudes in their interactions with one another. The movement of knowledge across individual and organizational boundaries is dependent on employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors (Liebowitz, 2004). Bock et al. (2005) found that extensive knowledge sharing within organizations still appears to be the exception rather than the rule. But within an learning organization, knowledge sharing has to be the rule. Within a learning organization, learning and knowing is continuing processes, as two sides of the same coin (Alegre and Chiva, 2005).

The knowledge organization is very different from the bureaucratic organization. For example, the knowledge organization's focus on flexibility and customer response is very different from the bureaucracy's focus on organizational stability and the accuracy and repetitiveness of internal processes. In the knowledge organization, current practices emphasize using the ideas and capabilities of employees to improve decision-making and organizational effectiveness. In contrast, bureaucracies utilize autocratic decision-making by senior leadership with unquestioned execution by the workforce (Bennet and Bennet, 2005b).

Figure 1 illustrates a potential stage model for knowledge organizations:

- Stage 1. *Activity Organization*. Tasks are performed and completed in workflows according to specifications, rules and regulations. It is important to avoid mistakes and delays in the workflows. Activity repetition and completion is measured and monitored. Management is concerned with resource allocation and utilization according to tasks to be completed. The organization structure is broken down into work groups according to devision of labour.
- Stage 2. *Problem Organization*. Each new assignment is perceived more as a problem to be solved than as a task to be completed. Problems are interpreted and solved by application of relevant knowledge. The quality of problem solution is more important than workflow performance or resource utilization. Management is concerned with quality control so that the solution really solves the problem. Interoperability is important at this stage in terms of technical as well as semantic interoperability, where technical interoperability among knowledge workers ensures access to each other and semantic interoperability ensures shared understanding.
- Stage 3. *Value Organization*. Value creation logic determines priorities and resource allocation. The value that might be created by working on and solving a problem determines how each problem is perceived and understood. A value organization makes strategic decisions about the role of the organization as it relates to the spectre of problems with which is is confronted. Performance goals are important at this stage, where goal setting is part of the strategy process, while goal achievement is part of the management process.
- Stage 4. *Learning Organization*. Continuous improvements are to be achieved based on experience. Change in resources, activities and approaches occur in the organization on a continuous basis. Communication channels are expanded internally (intra-organization) as well as externally (inter-organization). An organizational strong learning culture of knowledge sharing, transparency and contribution is stimulated. At this stage, supply-side knowledge management is replaced by demand-side knowledge management, where knowledge sources are familiar to everyone and knowledge sharing occurs continously through ongoing practice.

In knowledge organizations at Stage 4, transformational and charismatic leadership is an influential mode of leadership that is associated with high levels of individual and organizational performance. Leadership effectiveness is critically contingent on, and often defined in terms of, leaders' ability to motivate followers toward collective goals or a collective mission or vision (Kark and Dijk, 2007).Thus, leaders must be characterized as facilitators and supervisors.

The learning organization

Uretsky (2001) argues that the real knowledge organization is the learning organization. A learning organization is one that changes as a result of its experiences. Under the best of circumstances, these changes result in performance improvements. The phrases knowledge organization and learning organization is used to describe service organizations. In these organizations, professionals learn from the environment, diagnose problems, and then work with clients or customers to improve their situations. The problems with which they work are frequently ambiguous and unstructured. The information, skills, and experience needed to address these problems vary with work cases. Thus, the need for learning and obtaining new knowledge is recognized. A typical example is detectives in police investigations.

Similarly, Bennet and Bennet (2005b) argue that learning and knowledge will have become two of the three most important emergent characteristics of the future world-class organization. Learning will be continuous and widespread, utilizing mentoring, classroom, and distance learning and will likely be self-managed with strong infrastructure support. The creation, storage, transfer, and application of knowledge will have been refined and developed such that it becomes a major resource of the organization as it satisfies customers and adapts to environmental competitive forces and opportunities.

The learning organization is concept of the ideal organization with its own capacity to learn and therefore be able to change. The concept rely on normative assumptions where learning is a mean to reach a goal, not the goal in it self. That is why central constributions within the learning organization, such as Argyris and Schön (1978), Senge (1991) and Pedler et al. (1991), focus on change leading to learning. While more recent contributions within organizational learning are more concern about learning as ongoing processes of change(Antonacopoulou, 2006), where learning is both the goal and the mean.

Discussions

A stage model theory

The concept of stages of growth has created a number of skeptics. Some argue that the concept of an organization progressing unidirectional through a series of predictable stages is overly simplistic. For example, organizations may evolve through periods of convergence and divergence related more to shifts in information technology than to issues of growth for specific IT. According to Kazanjian and Drazin (1989), it can be argued that firms do not necessarily demonstrate any inexorable momentum to progress through a linear sequence of stages, but rather that observed configurations of problems, strategies, structures and processes will determine firms' progress.

Kazanjian and Drazin (1989) addressed the need for further data based research to empirically examine whether organizations in a growth environment shift according to a hypothesized stage of growth model, or whether they follow a more random pattern of change associated with shifts in configurations that do not follow such a progression. Based on a sample of 71 firms they found support for the stage hypothesis.

The argument that there is some universal model of the way in which something should develop is much easier to sustain when you are dealing with something inanimate, like an information system, rather than something composed of human beings such as an organization. Although even with information systems, as noted here, this viewpoint is not without its critics. There is a point of view that suggests that regular and predictable patterns in the growth of complex organizations such as the police force will in fact never be found, as they are an inherently 'emergent' phenomena that change and morph over time. This was already pointed out by Kazanjian and Drazin (1989).

Weick (1995) argued that the process of theorizing consists of activities like abstracting, generalizing, relating, selecting, explaining, synthesizing, and idealizing. These ongoing products summarize progress, give direction, and serve as place makers. It is in this sense of theorizing as suggested by Weick (1995) we develop our stages of growth theory in this article.

A theory might be a prediction or explanation, a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena. The systematic view might be an argument, a discussion, or a rationale, and it helps to explain or predict phenomenon. Some define theory in terms of relationships between independent and dependent variables, where theory is a collection of assertions, both verbal and symbolic, that identifies what variables are important and for what reasons, and that specifies how they are interrelated and why. It identifies the conditions under which variables should be related or not related.

Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) introduced a taxonomy that reflects the theoretical contribution of empirical articles along two dimensions: theory building and theory testing. An attempt towards theory testing for an IT outsourcing maturity model was carried out by Solli-Sæther and Gottschalk (2008), where limited empirical support was found for hypotheses. As authors of an empirical article, they followed the hypothetical-deductive approach to theory by formulating hypotheses before testing those hypotheses with observations.

Consequently, we suggest four core topics emerge when theorizing stages of growth modeling:

1. *Number of Stages*. Typically, stage models for empirical testing have four to eight stages. More importantly, the classification and identification of stages have to satisfy several criteria. First, all stages have to be conceptualized and theoretically defined as significantly different from each other. Second, no overlap in contents should be found between stages. Third, no stage should be perceived as a subcategory of another stage. Finally, each stage must be transferable to an empirical setting. These criteria determine which and how many stages are appropriate for a specific stage model.
2. *DominantProblems*. At each stage, a set of dominant problems is to be identified. Dominant problems imply that there is a pattern of primary concerns that organizations face for each theorized stage. In the area of IT outsourcing maturity, dominant problems can shift from lack of skills to lack of resources to lack of strategy associated with different stages of growth. How dominant problems change from one stage to another stage has to be conceptualized as well.
3. *Benchmark Variables*. Benchmark variables in stages of growth models indicate the theoretical characteristics in each stage of growth. While dominant problems change from stage to stage, benchmark variables do not change. Only the attributes of benchmark variables change from stage to stage. For example, the role of management might be a benchmark variable, where the attributes change from entrepreneur via resource allocator to spokesman.
4. *Paths of Evolution*. The most obvious path is from the initial stage via intermediary stages to the final stage. However, other paths are possible. For example, some stages may be bypassed and skipped. Also, a temporary return to an earlier stage might be possible as well.

Based on these four topics in theorizing stages of growth, four corresponding research propositions can be formulated as the core of a stage of growth theory:

> *Proposition 1. Organizational phenomena undergo transformations in their design characteristics that can be defined in terms of discrete stages of growth.*

Proposition 2. Dominant problems at each stage of growth will statistically correspond with the conceptual formulations given for that stage.
Proposition 3. Values of benchmark variables for each stage of growth will statistically correspond with the conceptual formulations given for that stage.
Proposition 4: An organizational phenomenon shows a predictable pattern of development from fist stage to second stage, and so on, until it reaches the final stage, either directly or via bypassed or revisited stages.

Stages of growth in police oversight agencies

We find it fruitful to use and organize maturity levels leading to the learning organization. Four levels of learning and theorizing stages of growth is recognized in police oversight agencies:

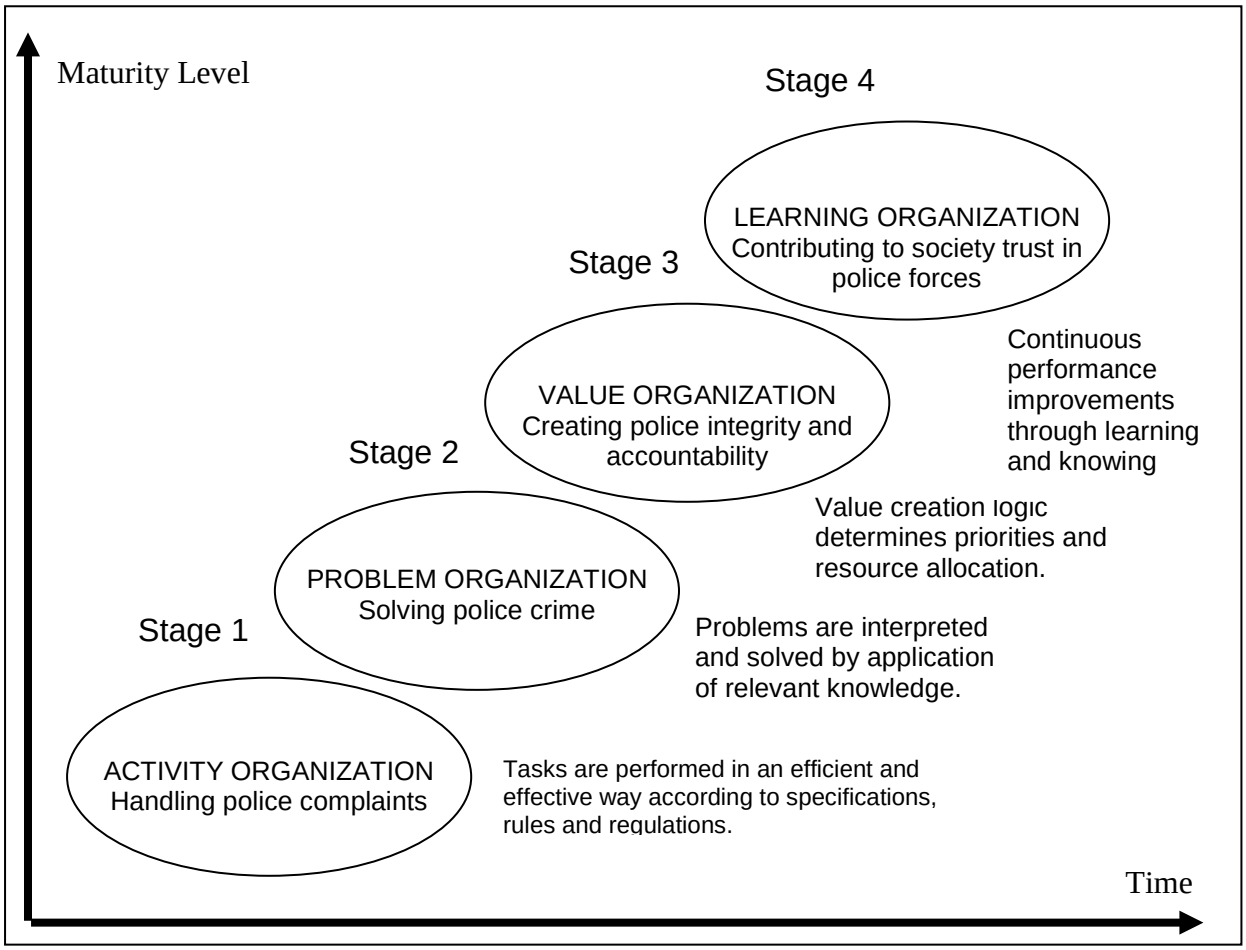


Figure 2. Stages of growth in police oversight agencies

Figure 2 illustrates a potential stage model for police oversight agencies:

- Stage 1. *Activity Organization: Handling police complaints*. Tasks are performed and completed in workflows according to specifications, rules and regulations. It is important to avoid mistakes and delays in the workflows. Activity repetition and completion is measured and monitored. Management is concerned with resource

allocation and utilization according to tasks to be completed. The organization structure is broken down into work groups according to division of labor.

- Stage 2. *Problem Organization: Solving police crime*. Each new assignment is perceived more as a problem to be solved than as a task to be completed. Problems are interpreted and solved by application of relevant knowledge. The quality of problem solution is more important than workflow performance or resource utilization. Management is concerned with quality control so that the solution really solves the problem. Interoperability is important at this stage in terms of technical as well as semantic interoperability, where technical interoperability among knowledge workers ensures access to each other and semantic interoperability ensures shared understanding.
- Stage 3. *Value Organization: Creating police integrity and accountability*. Value creation logic determines priorities and resource allocation. The value that might be created by working on and solving a problem determines how each problem is perceived and understood. A value organization makes strategic decisions about the role of the organization as it relates to the spectre of problems with which is is confronted. Performance goals are important at this stage, where goal setting is part of the strategy process, while goal achievement is part of the management process.
- Stage 4. *Learning Organization: Contributing to society trust in police forces*. Continuous improvements are to be achieved based on experience. Change in resources, activities and approaches occur in the organization on a continuous basis. Communication channels are expanded internally (intra-organization) as well as externally (inter-organization). An organizational learning culture of knowledge sharing, transparency and contribution is stimulated.

Innovative solutions at Stage 4 in the knowledge organization arise from diverse knowledge, processes that allow for creativity, and tasks directed toward creative solutions. Creativity requires application of deep knowledge because knowledge workers must understand the knowledge domain to push its boundaries. Team creativity likewise relies on tapping into the diverse knowledge of a team's members (Taylor and Greve, 2006). A linear innovation process of knowledge created, knowledge diffused and knowledge implemented is recognized. However, innovation is an interactive process (Newell et al., 2009) Meaning that managing knowledge is about creating contexts for learning new combinations of knowledge and practice. I.e., creating a learning organization.

Benchmark variables are often used to indicate characteristics in each stage of growth. A one-dimensional continuum is established for each benchmark variable. The measurement of benchmark variables can be carried out using Guttman scales (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2002). Guttman scaling is a cumulative scaling technique based on ordering theory that suggests a linear relationship between the elements of a domain and the items on a test. Accordingly, each stage can be assigned labels for benchmark variables as suggested in Table 1.

Benchmark variables that have different characteristics depending on	ACTIVITY ORGANIZATION *Handling police complaints* Task-oriented	PROBLEM ORGANIZATION *Solving police crime* Solution-oriented interpretation	VALUE ORGANIZATION *Creating police integrity and accountability* Contribution-	LEARNING ORGANIZATION *Contributing to society trust in police forces* Change-oriented

stage	workflow		oriented approach	approach
Management role	Division of labor	Allocation of resources	Strategy development and implementation	Coordination of knowledge workers and knowledge work
Communication	Division of knowledge	Sharing of knowledge in communities of practice	Supply-based knowledge sharing in organization	Demand-based knowledge sharing in organization
Interoperability	Among work tasks	Among task workers	Intra-organization	Inter-organization
Organizational structure	Hierarchical	Project	Hybrid	Network
Organizational culture	Competition	Cooperation	Identification	Change
Performance indicator	Conviction rate from complaints charges	Complaints completion process and time	Quantity and quality of received complaints	Learning and advice for police agencies Confidence in police oversight agency

Table 1. Benchmark variables for stages of growth in police oversight agencies

Last benchmark variable in Table 1 is derived from performance evaluation of police oversight agencies. When evaluating the Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs (Spesialenheten, 2009), we found that the bureau achieves an acceptable conviction rate of 60%. The quantity and quality of received complaints was considered to be bad, and so was also the case with the remaining items for performance indicator.

Therefore, only based on the performance indicator, our preliminary result is that the Norwegian Bureau is at Stage 1 as an activity police oversight organization. Based on anecdotal evidence, it seems that the Bureau management role is allocation of resources, thus at Stage 2. In terms of communication, there seems to be sharing of knowledge in communities of practice and therefore Stage 2. Interoperability seems limited and focused among work tasks as indicated by Stage 1. The organizational structure is characterized by projects (Stage 2), and the organizational culture is characterized by cooperation (Stage 2).

Based on this intuitive procedure for determining stage of growth for the Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs, there are two benchmark variables at Stage 1 and four benchmark variables at Stage 2. Therefore on average, the Norwegian police oversight agency is a problem organization for police oversight at Stage 2.

Within knowledge organizations at Stage 4, we often find communities of practice. While some investigators may specialize in for-profit police crime, others may specialize in not-for-profit crime and form two different communities of practice. Brown and Duguid (2001) argue that for a variety of reasons, communities of practice seem a useful organizational subset for examining organizational knowledge as well as identity. First, such communities are privileged sites for a tight, effective loop of insight, problem identification, learning, and knowledge production. Second, they are significant repositories for the development, maintenance, and reproduction of knowledge. Third, community knowledge is more than the sum of its parts. Fourth, organizational ability to adapt to environmental change is often determined by communities of practice.

The police oversight agencies as learning organizations

To create a learning organization, the agency must have necessary and continuing focus on learning and knowledge in the police oversight agencies, but also in relations to police forces they are controlling and the public they are serving. We can talk about creating a strong learning culture in order to become a learning organization. Looking at important characteristic for creating a strong learning culture, knowledge sharing in accordance with knowledge goals, leaders as facilitators and trust is key factors to create a culture based on learning (where change is integrated as part of the learning processes). That means going through all stages of handling police complaints, solving police crime, creating police integrity and accountability and contribute to society trust to police forces.

Consequently, it means going through stages of activities, problem solving, changing values and creating new knowledge through learning and innovation. In knowledge terms, innvations through organizational learning and in learning organizations combines both purposes of exploration (i.e. inventing new knowledge) and exploitation (i.e. reusing existing knowledge in new contexts (March, 1991). Stages of growth models have the potential of creating new knowledge and insights into organizational phenomena. Such models represent theory building tools that conceptualize evolution over time in a variety of areas. For researchers, a stage model represents a theory to be explored and empirically validated. For practitioners, a stage model represents a picture of evolution, where the current stage can be understood in terms of history and future.

Conclusion

For several decades, there has been a need to validate the stage model hypothesis both theoretically and empirically. Furthermore, there is a need for benchmark variables that will have different content for different stages. The alternative is to apply dominant problems and identify how they change from one stage to the next. Also, pros (strengths) and cons (weaknesses) to suggested models have to be taken into account. There is definitely a need to provide a more critical analysis of a stage models and solve some of the basic issues that are long overdue.

This is a valuable effort. Rather than thinking of knowledge management technology or other efforts in terms of alternative strategies, the stage thinking suggests an evolutionary approach where the future is building on the past, rather than the future being a divergent path from the past. Rather than thinking that what was done in the past is wrong, past actions are the only available foundation for future actions. If past actions are not on the path to success, direction is changed without history being reversed. I.e. understanding the stage model, means recognizing the relationship between exploration and exploitation of knowledge (March, 1991) in creating learning organizations. The stages also identify different challenges depending upon an organizations potential for creating a learning organization. That includes what it takes to be innovate and changeable in manageable processes of learning and knowing.

The statement that knowledge transfer from police misconduct cases has not been conceptualized as a learning process in police districts and general law enforcement clearly takes the research into the realms of this journal. Future research should address the learning

process in police districts and law enforcement in the case of stages of growth in police oversight agencies .Consequently, they will create a learning organization that continuously improve performance of the police and contribute to a trusting police force.

References

Argyris, Chris og Argyris Scön (1978) *Organizational Learning*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley

Benbasat, I., Dexter, A. S., Drury, D. H., & Goldstein, R. H. (1984). A Critique of the Stage Hypothesis: Theory and Empirical Evidence. *Communications of the ACM, 27*(5), 476-485

Bennet, A. and Bennet, D. (2005a). Designing the Knowledge Organization of the Future: The Intelligent Complex Adaptive System, In: Holsapple, C.W. (editor), *Handbook of Knowledge Management*, Springer Science & Business Media, Netherlands, Volume 2, 623-638.

Bennet, D. and Bennet, A. (2005b). The Rise of the Knowledge Organization. In: Holsapple, C.W. (editor), *Handbook of Knowledge Management*, Springer Science & Business Media, Netherlands, Volume 1, 5-20.

Blackler, Frank (2004) "Knowledge, knowledge work and organizations: An overview and interpretation." In *How organizations learn. Managing the search for knowledge*, edited by Ken Starkey, Sue Tempest og Alan McKinlay: Thomson Learning.

Bock, G.W., Zmud, R.W. and Kim, Y.G. (2005). Behavioral intention formation in knowledge sharing: examining the roles of extrinsic motivators, social-psychological forces, and organizational climate, *MIS Quarterly*, 29 (1), 87-111.

Brown, John S. og Paul Duguid (1991) "Organizational Learning and Communities of Practive: Toward a Unified View of Working, Learning, and Innovating." *Organization Science: A Journal of the Institute of Management Sciences* 2 (1):40.

Brown, J.S. and Duguid, P. (2001). Knowledge and Organization: A Social-Practice Perspective, *Organization Science*, 12 (2), 198-213.

Colquitt, J.A. and Zapata-Phelan, C.P. (2007). Trends in theory building and theory testing: A five-decade study of the Academy of Management Journal, *Academy of Management Journal*, 50 (6), 1281-1303.

Fichman, R. G. and Kemerer, C. F. (1997). The Assimilation of Software Process Innovations: An Organizational Learning Perspective. *Management Science*, *43*(10), 1345-1363.

Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and Nachmias, D. (2002). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (Fifth ed.). London, UK: Arnold.

Garud, R. and Kumaraswamy, A. (2005). Vicious and virtuous circles in the management of knowledge: the case of Infosys Technologies, *MIS Quarterly*, 29 (1), 9-33.

Gherardi, S. and Nicolini, D. (2000) The Organizational Learning Of Safety In Community of Practices. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9 (1):7-18.

Gherardi, S. (2006). *Organizational Knowledge: The Texture of Workplace Learning*: Blackwell Publishing.

Kasper-Fuehrer, E.C., Ashkanasy, N.M. (2001), "Communicating trustworthiness and building trust in interorganizational virtual organizations", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 27 pp.235-54.

Kark, R. and Dijk, D.van (2007). Motivation to lead, motivation to follow: the role of the self-regulatory focus in leadership processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 32 (2), 500-528.

Kazanjian, R. K. and Drazin, R. (1989). An empirical test of a stage of growth progression model. *Management Science, 35*(12), 1489-1503.

King, W. R., & Teo, T. S. H. (1997). Integration Between Business Planning and Information Systems Planning: Validating a Stage Hypothesis. *Decision Science, 28*(2), 279-308.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Laise, D., Migliarese, P., and Verteremo, S. (2005). Knowledge Organization design: A diagnostic tool. *Human Systems Management*, 24, 121-131.

Liebowitz, J. (2004). Will knowledge management work in the government? *Electronic Government: An International Journal*, 1 (1), 1-7.

Liu, C.C. and Chen, S.Y. (2005). Determinants of knowledge sharing of e-learners, *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, 2 (4), 434-445.

March, J.G. (1991). Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning. *Organization Science* 2 (1):71-87.

Newell, S.,Robertson, M., Scarbrough, H. and J. Swan, J.(2009). *Managing Knowledge work and innovation*: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nolan, R. L. (1979). Managing the crisis in data processing. *Harvard Business Review, 57*(2), 115-126.

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (Third ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

OPI (2008). *Improving Victorian policing services through effective complaint handling*, Office of Police Integrity, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, www.opi.vic.gov.au.

Pedler, M., Buoydell, T. and Burgoyne, J. (1991) Towards the learning company. *Management Education & Development* 21 (1):1-8.

Peredo, A.M. and Chrisman, J.J. (2006). Toward a theory of community-based enterprise, *Academy of Management Review*, 31 (2), 309-328.

Prenzler, T. and Lewis, C. (2005). Performance Indicators for Police Oversight, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 64 (2), 77-83.

Presthus, J.E. (2009). Foreword, in: Gottschalk, P., *Policing the Police - Knowledge Management in Law Enforcement*, Nova Science Publishers, New York, NY.

Richardsen, A.M., Burke, R.J. and Martinussen, M. (2006). Work and Health Outcomes Among Police Officers: The Mediating Role of Police Cynicism and Engagement. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 13 (4), 555-574.

Senge, Peter M. (1991) *The Fifth Discipline: The art & practice of the learning organisation*. New South Wales: Random House Australia.

Solli-Sæther, H. and Gottschalk, P. (2008). Maturity in IT outsourcing relationships: An exploratory study of client companies, *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 108 (5), 635-649.

Spesialenheten (2009). *Årsrapport 2008 (Annual Report 2008)*, Spesialenheten for politisaker (Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs), Hamar, Norway, www.spesialenheten.no.

Taylor, A. and Greve, H.R. (2006). Superman or the fantastic four? Knowledge combination and experience in innovative teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49 (4), 723-740.

Thomassen, G. (2002). Investigating Complaints against the Police in Norway: An Empirical Evaluation, *Policing and Society*, 12 (3), 201-210.

Tong, S. (2007). *Training the Effective Detective: Report of Recommendations*, University of Cambridge. Author contact details: Dr Stephen Tong, Senior Lecturer in Policing, Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent, UK.

Tsoukas, H. (2005) *Complex knowledge: Studies in organizational epistemology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Turner, K.L. and Makhija, M.V. (2006). The role of organizational controls in managing knowledge, *Academy of Management Review*, 31 (1), 197-217.

UNODC (2006). *The Integrity and Accountability of the Police: Criminal justice assessment toolkit*, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Vienna International Center, Vienna, Austria, www.unodc.org.

Uretsky, M. (2001). Preparing for the Real Knowledge Organization. *Journal of Organizational Excellence*, 21 (1), 87-93.

Venkatesh, V. (2000). Determinants of Perceived Ease of use: Integrating Control, Intrinsic Motivation, and Emotion into Technology Acceptance Model. *Information Systems Research, 11*(4), 342-365.

Venkatesh, V. and Davis, F. D. (2000). A Theoretical Extension of the technology Acceptance Model: Four Longitudinal Field Studies. *Management Science*, *46*(2), 186-204.

Weick, K.E. (1995). What theory is not, theorizing is, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 385-390.