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ment centre. Later it is hoped that the complex will include residential accommodation of the single bedsitter type for between 10, and 20 people. The nonresidential section of the centre will eventually open from early in the morning until late at night, every day of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays, and cater for 100 people who will attend voluntarily and not because they are compelled to do so. Probation officers and other specialist workers at the centre will attend on a shift basis. This is a completely new dimension of work for the probation service and consideration has been given as to the kind of activities likely to be followed and the resources needed, bearing in mind that the centre is for the most damaged and inadequate of offenders. There will be a recreation room, a meals service, sheltered workshops, remedial educational programmes, and self-help groups. In these activities it is hoped to be able to make use of carefully selected ex-offenders in both a voluntary and paid capacity.

Those who accept that for certain categories of offenders prison can be at worst a damaging experience and at best a useless waste of scarce resources must welcome legislation that aims at keeping such men and women out of penal institutions. However, it must be recognised that these new provisions will increase the workload and range of duties undertaken by the probation service. The Government have accepted this and it is

their policy to expand the service in England and Wales by approximately 25 percent during the next four years. It is not possible to know whether this is a realistic target or if it will provide sufficient staff. The Government gave high priority to the passage of the Criminal Justice Bill through Parliament and it is a matter of concern that the provision of adequate staff will be an equally high priority so that the service is not overwhelmed by its additional tasks before the necessary personnel is available.

Recruitment and training of personnel for the probation service is a key consideration if the Government's hopes and expectations are to be fulfilled. If the manpower target is not achieved then the Government and the Home Office will have to accept the consequences. Inevitably there would be a loss of morale, a dilution in the quality of work performed and a wastage of officers from the service. But having sounded that warning note the probation service is about to enter what could be the most exciting and challenging period in its history. The focus will be on the provision of adequate facilities and services for a variety of experimental community-based treatment programmes. If this challenge is accepted, probation officers will be offered a unique opportunity for an exploration of new ideas, new concepts, and new techniques in the field of the treatment of offenders.

Systems Approach to Correctional Institutions

BY RONALD J. WALDRON, C.J.D.

Researcher, Division of Research and Development, Texas Department of Corrections, Huntsville

THE OPERATION and administration of today's correctional institutions require the application of contemporary management and administration techniques. The correctional administrator cannot expect to keep abreast of the complex correctional problems unless he has the capability and is willing to apply contemporary management and administrative techniques to correctional problems. Among the management and administrative techniques in use today the "systems approach" offers some possible solutions to correctional problems.

What Is a System?

A system has been defined as, "An organized or complex whole; an assemblage or combination of things or parts forming a complex or unitary whole" (Schoderbek, 1968, p. 113). Using this definition one would look at a correctional organization as a whole rather than looking at certain subsystems or parts of a correctional organization. The systems approach to corrections involves the elementary idea that a correctional system is composed of many interrelated parts operating together to accomplish the correctional goals.

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Applying the systems approach requires systems analysis. Essentially systems analysis is a technique that applies general-systems theories to systems, whether they be business systems, government systems, hospital systems, or correctional systems. To be more specific it is the systematic analysis of alternative courses of action which might be taken to achieve specified objectives. This includes the clarifying of objectives and the development of additional alternatives by the utilization of general-systems theories (Cleland, 1969, p. 207).

System Characteristics

Common to all dynamic systems are certain characteristics that operate according to general-systems theories. Among the most basic characteristics that shall be dealt with here, as they relate to a correctional system, are inputs, outputs, feedback, noise, and controls. This basic systems approach is commonly referred to as a "black box" approach.

In the systems approach to correctional institutions one must first develop the "whole system" perspective. Each subsystem, assembly, subassembly, component, and part of the correctional system must operate together toward a common goal. Furthermore, they must operate together in such a manner so that one subsystem does not conflict with another or with the overall goals of the correctional system. For example, from the whole systems perspective one would not concentrate on improving the diagnostic or classification function without due consideration of the consequences to the entire correctional system. It would make little sense to employ an elaborate and expensive diagnostic program if there were no treatment programs for the inmates. It would make little sense to classify all inmates if the facilities for different classifications were not available. The degree of the diagnostic or classification function must be compatible with the entire correctional system.

Inputs.—Characteristic or common to most systems are inputs—inputs being those things that move into a system. Food and drink are inputs to the human system. Raw materials are inputs to the industrial system. Inmates are one of the inputs into the correctional system.

A systems approach to any system must consider the nature of the inputs into the system. Poor quality food means a weak human system. Inferior raw materials or high quality raw ma-

terials affect the quality of an industrial product. The nature of the inmate inputs will affect the correctional system.

Drug or narcotic offenders currently represent a change in correctional inputs. Unlike past correctional inputs drug offenders are more likely to come from middle-class families or have a higher intelligence level. The nature and cause of their offenses are considerably different from other inmates. The correctional system must recognize this change in inputs and develop programs suitable for the drug offender inmates.

Inmates are not the only inputs into a correctional system that must be considered. Correctional administrators must also consider employees, material, and money. In terms of inputs, all are as important to the correctional system as are the inmates. Each input can contribute to the effective operation of the correctional system or it can contribute to the ultimate failure of the correctional system. Every input should be managed in such a way that it contributes to the correctional system goals.

Outputs.—As most systems have outputs so also does the correctional system. Outputs being those things that move out of a system. Products are the outputs of a business or industrial system. Ex-inmates are one of the outputs of a correctional system.

Outputs are as important to a system as are its inputs. Without maintaining outputs of some quantity or quality most systems would cease to function. The business system must maintain product outputs to stay in business. The product outputs must also be of a certain quantity and quality. The correctional system must also maintain outputs in order to meet its goals. Quantity of outputs must be maintained in order to keep the correctional facilities from becoming overcrowded. Quality of outputs must be maintained in order to fulfill rehabilitational goals of the correctional system. Optimal balance between quality and quantity of outputs must also be considered.

Feedback.—Systems generally monitor their outputs in order to maintain effective control of the system. Business enterprises utilize quality control to insure that their outputs are measuring up to their standards. Field evaluations of business products are conducted to insure that products perform as desired. Product performance characteristics are evaluated and improvements are made back at the factory so as to improve future products. Correctional systems must moni-

tor their outputs in order to insure that the correctional system is meeting its goals.

In monitoring of outputs of systems another system characteristic is called feedback. Usually the data that are gathered from measuring the outputs are fed back to a control point somewhere in the system. This transmission of outputs information back to a control point is the feedback (Wiener, 1961, pp. 96-97).

Proper feedback is necessary in order to insure the control point that the outputs are of the quantity and quality necessary for the system to meet its goals. With this feedback information the control point, the correctional administrator, can make proper adjustments to the correctional system in order to insure that system goals will be met in the future.

When outputs are to be maintained outside of the system over a long period of time feedback is needed so that the system can, while it has control over a potential output, take measures to insure the maintainability of the output. Business industries run lengthy testing programs to test their outputs maintainability. They also survey their outputs after they have been in the field for a while. Businesses use this feedback information to adjust the business system so as to improve the product output maintainability. They also use this information to insure that they are putting out the type of output the public wants. Correctional systems should also evaluate their outputs after they have been in the field for a while. The correctional administrator may learn from the evaluation of the ex-inmate what adjustments to the correctional system (types of programs) must be made in order to improve the maintainability of the correctional system output. Perhaps monies input into educational programs stressing the humanities result in less defective outputs (less recidivism) than monies input into vocational education programs. The correctional system administrator will never know or learn this information until he goes out into the field and gets the feedback information that is necessary for successful system operation.

Noise.—Occasionally when feedback information is being gathered another system characteristic called "noise" develops. If at the control point of a system more information than can be effectively used is obtained, the relevant information tends to be lost in the mountains of irrelevant information—the noise. A correctional administrator must insure that the feedback informa-

tion is relevant and useful. The correctional administrator who is buried in mundane and irrelevant informational reports cannot make an effective control decision. Data must be sifted to insure that only relevant information reaches control points. Too much feedback or irrelevant feedback creates a noise problem and the control point cannot function.

Systems management personnel have attempted to solve this noise problem in a system by the creation of the "management by exception" concept. Under this concept the control point sets standards. When standards are met there is no requirement for feedback information to the control point. When there are exceptions to the standards the control point is immediately notified. Such an approach in a correctional system would remove from the correctional administrator the constant reading of "all is well" reports. Instead of being a rubber stamp for routine reports the correctional administrator can devote more of his time to solving problems of the correctional system.

Control Points.—Overseeing the operation of the system are the control points. The controls are those basic steps which are put into a system to make sure all the data get processed correctly; and those aspects of a system which are designed to insure the proper functioning of a system (Lott, 1971, pp. 116-117).

At the main control point of the business system one usually finds the company president. In the correctional system the main control point is usually the director or warden.

Effective and efficient control points are of primary importance to all systems. In the correctional system the director must provide proper direction for the correctional system. He must be capable of evaluating feedback information in order to provide proper direction for the correctional system. Without proper direction the system may deteriorate and become less effective in accomplishing the system goals. In fact, the system may even cease to function. Considering this, it is extremely important that those individuals appointed to control points in the correctional system be competent.

Summary

At this point we have discussed inputs, outputs, feedback, noise, and control points. This is a simplistic approach to systems analysis. The administrator merely looks at the whole system as if

it only consisted of the above characteristics and attempts to solve some of the problems of the system. Sometimes this simple approach can provide some insight and answers to the problems of the system. However, this simple approach is not the total approach of systems analysis.

Usually the complete system is broken down into its various subsystems, assemblies, subassemblies, components, and parts. Each aspect of the system is examined as an element of the whole system. The relationship of each unit to the next is studied. The contribution of each unit toward system goals is evaluated. Models of all dimensions of the system are constructed. Mathematical models are developed and tested. Simulation runs are made with the models to determine the weak points of the model. Job description and job requirements are studied for their contribution to the system. Goals themselves are evaluated to see if they are realistic. Network analysis and flow charts of organizational functions are constructed.

Other system characteristics such as negative and positive feedback, compensators, effectors, and sensors are applied to the system under study. Cost/benefit analysis is conducted to determine if the costs for a particular benefit are realistic in terms of the system goals and in terms of the cost of other methods of obtaining the same benefit.

In short, the systems approach to corrections involves looking at the total picture. Every aspect of the correctional system is considered. The liabilities and assets of each unit of the correctional system are weighed against one another. From this the systems analysis technician attempts to create a balanced system, free of interdepartmental conflict and homogeneous in goal pursuits.

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A Vote for the Jail Ombudsman

BY PAUL F. CROMWELL, JR.

U.S. Probation Officer, Western District of Texas, San Antonio

DESPITE state laws and standards for operation of local and county jails, enormous discretion is left to administrators in defining the conditions of incarceration. They have far-reaching and exceptional powers in the day-to-day operation of the institution and in control over the activities of the inmate. This power is exercised in relative privacy behind institutional walls and away from the eyes of the public. It is exercised over persons whose individual power and means of redress is weak and over a group whose collective power is fragmented or completely atomized.

This discretionary power determines how the jail inmate will live during the term of his confinement; how he is fed and clothed; whether he sleeps in a cell or a dormitory; whether he spends

his days in a cell or in relative freedom; whether he has access to mailing or visiting privileges. They define rules of conduct and penalties for violation of such rules.¹

Traditionally, few external controls have been imposed on decisions in these areas. Legislation sets outside limitations but seldom provides guidelines for exercise of the vast discretion which remains. Courts have traditionally denied inmates petitions involving grievances on the grounds that institutional policy is generally beyond their jurisdiction.

But in recent years courts have been more ready to intervene.² The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice reports:

They have been more willing to consider on the merits claims that prison authorities have denied prisoners decent medical care, or have imposed cruel and unusual punishment, or have violated prisoners' First Amendment Rights.³

However, there are limits to the extent to which courts alone can guarantee fair and hu-

¹ President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, *Task Force Report: Corrections*, p. 84.

² See Barkin, "The Emergence of Correctional Law and the Awareness of the Rights of the Convicted," 45 Neb. L.R., 699 (1966); Note, "Constitutional Rights of Prisoners: The Developing Law," 110 U. Pa. L. Rev. 985 (1962).

³ President's Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 84.