

**Bureaucracy is one of the oldest systems of organization and control that is based, on legitimate authority. This description is based on Max Weber's ideal structure of an effective and efficient organization, emphasizing hierarchical authority, job specialization and limited roles. Review relevant management and organizational behavior theories and practices of current Government organizations and explore relationships between the management structure and selected strategies addressing organizational behavior.**

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## Introduction

In a persistently evolving global competitive environment, organizations are becoming increasingly holistic in nature, and more environmentally aware. They also have recently begun to move toward publicly conscious management practices. As result, the current organizational system is slowly becoming less hierarchical and more akin to fluid networks reinforced by core values of empowerment and learning. In spite of these general and gradual shifts in ideology, many government agencies particularly steeped in historical tradition continue to operate in isolated, mechanistic, and emotionless ways (Greenberg).

While, managing the public and private organization of today is much more complicated than it was ten or twenty years ago, private organizations have managed to meet the challenge. Government, however, continues to follow similar ineffective, bureaucratic principles (Cohen, Steven, Eimicke, and William). Internal and external factors affecting the organization's behavior must become the new focus of leaders. Effective leaders should focus on exploring the relationship between human conduct and organizational performance.

At one time private organizations behaved and operated in similar ways as their counterparts in the government sector. But now they are changing at a faster rate to meet time sensitive challenges. (Greenberg, J.). Contrarily, public organizations operating under more protected and strict internal guidelines have resisted change for years. Practices, procedures, and regulations, which are based on classic theories have been routinely passed down through generations of bureaucrats and continue to signify "the way things are done. Although, government organizations have undergone a number of superficial organizational changes over the past few decades, they generally have been or cosmetic (Pasmore). Despite minor attempts to embrace change, the basic principles of bureaucratic management have remained constant.

## Approaches to Organization Theory

Organization theory deals with three essentials; organization design (e.g., formal structure), internal process factors (e.g., decision-making, tasks, and human dynamics), and external factors or environment (e.g., markets, constituencies, and boundary spanning) (Drucker, P.; Hatch, M. J.). In addition, the field of organization theory is inherently interdisciplinary. As such, it incorporates a variety of fields, ranging from psychology, sociology, and economics to political science and business administration (Argyris; Golembiewski; Mintzberg).

# C4SEM Exclusive Article



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From the time of Fredrick Taylor's scientific management approach, the earliest attempt to study behavior and productivity in the workplace, to Elton Mayo's and Douglas McGregor's organizational profiling efforts of the 60's, the majority of organizations did not acknowledge the importance of employee behavior in the workplace. Mayo and McGregor cautioned against the theory X management style of viewing employees as lazy, irresponsible, and only willing to work when forced to do so. In opposition, theory Y stated that people have a need to work and an internal desire to seek responsibility and rewards. Yet, neither theory pays much attention to other human factors such as motivation, personality, cultural diversity, and so on. Moreover, each merely dealt with the input of structure on behavior and focused on ways to maximize productivity.

Max Weber's theory introduced the organizational principles of mission, process, authority, chain of command, and unity of command (Schermerhorn; Collins & Porras). Both Max Weber's theory and Taylor's Scientific Management practices remain pervasive within many government agencies as a whole. The mechanistic approach of common strengths in turn is based on favorable conditions. Of course, the theory is more salient when tasks are clear and straightforward. For example, when consistency in results and mass volume production are major factors, as might be seen in low-tech operational environments such as McDonald's, human capital is a primary component. This follows Taylor's principle; the objective of management is to secure the maximum profit for the employer. Efficiency is achieved only when workers have reached maximum capacity; that is, with the largest possible daily output (Durkheim; Durkheim & Jones).

Max Weber argued that a bureaucratic scheme is the most logical and rational way of operating within larger organizations. Indeed, bu-



reocracies are founded on legal or rational authority, procedures, and rules. Weber's theory suggesting positional authority of a superior over a subordinate stems from legal authority. Charismatic authority stems from the personal qualities of an individual. Efficiency in bureaucracies comes from: (1.) clearly defined and specialized functions; (2.) use of legal authority; (3.) hierarchical form; (4.) written rules and procedures; (5.) technically trained bureaucrats; (6.) appointment to positions based on technical expertise; (7.) promotions based on competence; (8.) clearly defined career paths. In short, practices derived from Weber's theory coupled with Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management practices remain the dominant leadership and management style within the current system of government.

## Leadership

Leadership is a major focal point of organizational behavior in both public and private organizations. Leaders are assigned superior status, commensurate salaries, and principal responsibilities across all organizational levels. When an organization is deemed successful, the achievement is attributed to the quality of leadership (Kouzes & Posner). If it fails, such a breakdown is typically attributed to leadership practices. For example, a book documenting the economic troubles from which the International Business Machine Corporation (IBM) has only recently recovered cites a failure of leadership at various levels of the corporation. Specifically, IBM went from earnings in excess of \$6 billion to reported losses of 5 billion in less than three years. Among the remarkable failures of leadership, was the missed opportunity by IBM's executive management to purchase the MS-DOS operating system from Microsoft. The failure of IBM's leadership to buy, when offered, all or part of Intel and Microsoft and to take advantage of the reduced instruction set computing (RISC) microprocessor which IBM itself invented in the 1970s was a decision made to compete with its mainframe business. This decision allowed for competition in the PC market but took valuable market share from IBM. The final failure of leadership was the lack of vision of IBM's executives, expressed in their consistent failure to understand and act upon the fact that the microcomputer and not the mainframe were going to be the future of computing.

The shortfall of IBM represents a failure of leadership but also of organizational collaboration. It takes patience and realistic views, reasonable expectations and appropriate time commitment, money, and sufficient staff to sustain the effort needed to function successfully. Leaders who work in isolation, seeking solitary power and distinction often exercise authority without acknowledging the corresponding responsibility, become obsessed with protocol and administrative rituals, and behave in ways that limit organizational effectiveness and purpose (Dessler, G).

## Governments as Leaders

Governments are important because they maintain control, make the rules by which organizations operate, and retain the monopoly of legitimate coercive power. Often, they are the stable guarantors of open and fair dealing, when bumbling and inept entities are unable to control their own operation (Pinchot, G., Pellman, R., & NetLibrary Inc.). Governments facilitate the establishment and enforcement of the fundamental understandings necessary for action: who is entitled to what uses (use rights); who may legitimately sell products, land, and equipment (ownership rights); and what actions are acceptable (contract law). Governing bodies and individuals widely vary in type, ranging from century-old, traditional, encrusted institutions to the bandit in control of a small region, and every imaginable variation in between (Drucker & Peter).

## Role Behavior: Individuals and Groups

Employee behaviors are influenced by both the formal and the informal organization. The formal organization is visually depicted in the organizational chart, which reflects the choices made by the organization concerning the way in which tasks are formally divided, grouped, and subsequently coordinated (Pinchot and Pinchot). The organizational chart, also, outlines the essential structure of organizational communication and work specialization. The formal organization represents choices made about the division of labor (who does what), chain of command (who reports to whom), and span of control (how many people report to a given person). In addition, organizational charts reflect the agencies' preference for various aspects of organizational design (Pasmore). Finally, the formal organization also establishes a hierarchy of authority by assigning formal roles to individuals within organizations. The informal organization is a "parallel organization". It exists in every organizational setting. It is the interpersonal organization that workers create amongst themselves. Informal roles subsist within the informal organization as well (Pasmore; Morgan, G.). One such role is that of "opinion leader." Roles are behaviors expected of people occupying a given position in an organizational setting. Behaviors become routine over a period of time, allowing them to be anticipated by the manager and other organizational members (Dessler). Such established behavior patterns are positively or negatively reinforced by sanctions imposed by managers or informal work groups. Organizational roles create expectations for employees and they define how others shall respond to each other and the organization.

## Can Organizations Learn to Learn?

"Can organizations learn to learn?" Creating a learning environment in an organization, where knowledge, skills, and competency are developed, is key to building an organization that learns, promotes, and rewards learning (Thompson; Pinchot & Pellman). Because individual learning is not disparate to the learning that occurs within the context of group or team environment, we can assume that all learning occurs within specific cultures and environments (Thompson; Pinchot & Pellman).

In order to develop such a culture of learning, an organization must in turn create a foundation, develop boundaries, and set ground rules designed to differentiate learning. The more people become involved in creating ground rules, the stronger the foundation. There cannot be exceptions to the rules at the foundation level. It is here where the true leadership in modeling the behavior or "walking the talk" is tested (Thompson, A. A., & Strickland, A. J.).

Only when ground rules are clear and well established can a culture that promotes learning be created. Indeed, it is the culture that either empowers or weakens people. Empowerment creates information sharing and nurturing environments that result in increased productivity and self worth. By creating an learning environment based upon principles and commonly shared ground rules, people become empowered and are free to express individual values, are more open to trusting others, willing to listen and share, and frequently are risk-takers.

## Organizational Strategies and Authorities

Changes in management practices, adjustments in leadership styles, and modifications to cultural routines, impact on building a dynamic workforce. Although not a concern of organizational behavior until the early part of the industrialized era, organizations have increasingly begun

to focus on exploring the relationship between human behavior and organizational performance (Greenburg & Jarald).

The United States maintains a strong set of national core values, beautifully articulated in Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address. The critical questions being asked at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 were not "who should be the president? Who should lead us? Who is the wisest among us? Who should be the best king?" Instead, the founders of the country concentrated on such a questions as "What processes can we create that will give us good presidents long after we are dead and gone? How should it operate? What guidelines and mechanism should we construct that will give us the kind of country we envision?" (Collins, and Porras).

Jefferson, Madison, and Adams were not charismatic visionary leaders in the "it all depends on me" mode but rather organizational visionaries. They created a constitution to which all leaders would be subservient. They focused on building a country by an architectural approach rather than using the "good king model." They were clock builders" (Hatch; Collins & Porras).

Government leadership is based on three legitimate authorities: rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic. Each one contributes to the characteristics of the management environment. They are mission driven, established under a statue based on a single great idea, and depend on timeless core values. These organizations have a purpose beyond making profits as it is for private organizations. Government organizations are established with the specific mission to service the demands or needs of citizens. These organizations continuously have to pass the test of time.

The political nature of government organizations is related to programmatic changes in the Executive Administration. Internal issues such as diversity, socialization, and human relation factors are often fragmented and decentralized. Communicating with employees has been vastly improved and is viewed as an important concept to meet changes in the organizational culture. However, the bureaucratic structure allows for very little innovation or tolerance for errors. When employees know what is expected of them and motivated to succeed, they will strive to meet those expectations and expect the best of themselves (Cohen; S. & Eimicke, W.).

In his March 2000 speech to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) managers and supervisors, Morley Winograd, Senior Policy Advisor to the Vice President of the United States and Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR), concluded, "The biggest human resources challenge we face in Government is changing its culture. The current culture is hierarchical, process-driven, internally focused, and 'stove piped.' We need to create a culture that is more empowering, results-oriented, integrated across boundaries, and, above all else, externally focused....At NPR, we're interested in changing the culture of Government by changing its conversation—when you change what people talk about, you change the culture."

In recent years, managers have been encouraged to actively participate in numerous managerial skills training ranging from communication to building a collation by listening and involving employees in the decision-making process, thus allowing them to take ownership of change.

As more and more baby boomers are retiring, a greater emphasis is being placed on selecting and training new managers to address managerial vacancies. In addition, managers are currently asked to make a personal effort to ensure that all employees are trained, and future training and education tools are available to those with a determination to excel. They must maintain a well-trained staff to increase productivity, and match skills with career goals to motivate and retain highly qualified employees.

Many Americans feel that government organizations should lead by example, practice what is preached, and walk the talk. Commanding respect and loyalty from employees addresses only one facet that must be included in the dynamics of the organization (Drucker, Peter; Schermerhorn J, Hunt J, & Osborn R.). In this respect, the organization's employee relations determine the philosophy and echo the image of its existence. Integrity and fairness should serve as the foundation, fostering a merit system that links what the organization says with what it does. The goal is to enrich the organization by improving work environments through the incentive programs that acknowledged global setting and cultural diversity (Drucker, Peter; [www.humanities.edu](http://www.humanities.edu)).

## Conclusion

The structure of the departments of the Executive Branch of The United States Government is based on a bureaucratic model, which offers very little flexibility. This model was designed to foster command and control and insure longevity and stability. In its simplest form, it is a centralized discipline that focuses on broad authority with the mission at the core. In the absence of individualism, it fosters a cult-like culture based on patriotic and bureaucratic values.

Many leaders in the private sector believe that such a model is obsolete and that new business models with broad spectrums of consideration for liberty, innovation, and methods of communication threaten the bureaucratic ways of doing business. Understandably so, since the Government has traditionally regulated and enforced roles to insure that labor and human rights are protected, but has been slow to adopt innovative business models and new communication techniques. Frequent changes in leadership have also been responsible for slow progress in dealing with changes and the rate of production. Some people believe that the Government can remain highly efficient and can provide a better service without the deficit if it reforms its structure, is cost consciences, and shifts the motivation for following a bureaucratic system (Golembiewski, R. T.; Kouzes J. M and Posner B. Z.).

Weber's organizational model fails to build upon the human factor and its direct correlation with productivity, allowing little room for changes along the way (Golembiewski, R. T.; [www.humanities.edu](http://www.humanities.edu)). Current concerns with productivity and process have shed light on the reasons government has traditionally lagged behind in progress (Hatch). Theorists such as Maslow, Herzberg, Fayol, and authors such as James Collins, Jerry Porras, and Jerald Greenberg recognize that human factors on the job are directly correlated to productivity (Collins J & Porras J). Each organizational model and ideology determines what makes a dynamic organization or what internal and external forces will increase the level of productivity. For instance, by increasing the level of job satisfaction and recognizing the value of inclusion in the decision making process, communication improves and more flexible strategies are developed in embracing change and meeting new challenges (Argyris, C.; Kouzes J. M and Posner B. Z.).

Organizational behavior helps determine what makes a leader a visionary and what internal and external forces will help the organization to become a more holistic, environmentally aware, and publicly conscious. By becoming less hierarchical organizations may become more akin to

fluid networks reinforced by core values of empowerment and learning.

Currently, many incentive programs backed by Congress and the Administration are in place to select, recruit, and train a new generation of managers and leaders. The Government reform act and initiatives such as the Government Performance and Results Act, 1993 and The Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998, are being promulgated through the Bureau of the Budget Bulletins. In recognition of this principle, it has been and continues to be the general policies of the Government to increase accountability and empower Federal Executives have to keep an equal balance between the needs of the organization and the needs of people that work within the organization. (www.dol.gov; www.whitehouse.gov/)

Finally, it remains clear that large organizations need to work harder in creating new cultures of learning in order to build boundary-less foundation with clear ground rules designed to differentiate new organization structures from the ones preceding them. In this global environment, only organizational cultures that promote lifelong learning and empowerment of its people can achieve such goals.

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### **About C4SEM**

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- Develop Security and Emergency Management Strategies

***Define Mission, Clear Objective, Creative Solution***