

## CHAPTER 1

# ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AS A WAY OF THINKING AND ACTING

This book is about human behavior in public and nonprofit organizations. Its purpose is to provide information and perspectives that enhance our understanding of our own behavior and our ability to influence the behavior of others. It concerns how public servants interact with others in their organizations and with the public, how they view their work and its importance to their communities, and how they choose to serve their cities, states, and nation. These are people doing extremely important work. They are charged with making our communities and our society better by fostering citizenship, making cities safer, educating youth, healing the sick, protecting the vulnerable, and keeping the country and the world clean, safe, and prosperous. Public servants, of course, do not bear this responsibility alone. Instead, they seek to accomplish these and other critical public goals in collaboration with elected officials, business leaders, citizens, world leaders, and many others. Each and every public employee, from the top of the organization to the front line, bears a responsibility as well as a deeply satisfying opportunity to serve the public interest.

To be effective, public administrators—from police chiefs to policy analysts, from agency executives to child protective services workers—must lead and motivate others within and outside of their organizations, function effectively in groups, communicate clearly, think creatively, navigate change successfully, and manage conflict. They must cope with their own and their employees' stress, be self-reflective and open to growth and learning, and renew and reinvigorate their commitment to public service in spite of some-

times unreachable goals, limited resources, and an often hostile public. Thankfully and remarkably, given the challenges they face, thousands of public servants succeed in meeting these challenges every day.

Our intent in this book to provide information, enhance skills, and broaden perspectives in support of efforts to manage organizational behavior in the public interest. The book builds on the knowledge and skills acquired by successful public administrators, draws from the research and observations of social scientists, and provides opportunities for students to acquire habits of mind that will allow them to reflect on and learn from their own experiences in public organizations. Accordingly, the goals of this book are as follows:

1. To examine what is known about the factors that affect human behavior in public organizations and how these ideas inform the practice of public administration
2. To develop an appreciation of the value of analyzing management problems from the standpoint of individual behavior and how that perspective can augment action and analysis at the organizational level
3. To explore some of the most contemporary approaches to management and leadership
4. To increase understanding of the core behavioral principles on which personal, interpersonal, and public leadership skills are based
5. To foster competency in critical management and leadership skills, that is, to develop the capacity to act effectively and responsibly under the stress, complexity, and uncertainty of the "real world" of public administration
6. To provide cases, exercises, simulations, and evaluative instruments that will enable students to learn both cognitively and experientially

In this book, we examine organizational behavior as a field of study. But we want to make clear at the outset that organizational behavior is not *just* a field of study. It is a way of thinking and acting that is of critical importance and value to people who work in public organizations.

Consider the following scenario. In your 10 years with the state social services department, you have earned a reputation as a problem solver. Because of this reputation, you have just been appointed as the head of a division charged with finding and securing payments from individuals who are not paying their required child support. The previous administrator left in a storm of controversy following a legislative study showing an abysmal track record in payment and widespread dissatisfaction on the part of the parents—both those who were owed money and those who owed money. These citizens complained that they were treated discourteously and that their cases were mishandled. The study was initiated after a popular weekly

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“newsmagazine” show on television highlighted how much more effective the growing number of private companies were in finding the parents who owed money and securing payments from them.

Understandably, the workers in your division are disheartened. Turnover and absenteeism are high. Workers report feeling unfairly criticized and point to the lack of necessary resources to effectively do their jobs. Yet, as you talk with these individuals, you find that they are bright, committed, and hard-working. The truth is, resources *are* extremely limited, and some of the criticism does seem unwarranted. You believe that you can work with these people to build a stronger, more service-oriented division.

How are you going to handle this challenge? What information will you collect? What decisions will you make? What actions will you take? What will you do first?

There are many important perspectives from which situations such as this can be analyzed and approached. Certainly, those in public agencies deal with personnel issues, technical problems, systems failures, budgetary or policy issues, and performance measurement. But much of what happens in public organizations can best be seen as problems of human behavior in organizations. The ways in which individuals act make a huge difference in the outcomes of public programs. But even here there are different levels of analysis. Look again at the case of the child support collection division. What are the important issues here? Are they concerns that should be framed in terms of individual behavior, group functioning, organizational operations, community considerations, or society at large? Will you respond by dealing with one person at a time, or will you seek some systemwide intervention? Each of these levels of analysis gives us a different perspective on the ways in which our organizations and the people in them work. In turn, each perspective becomes a lens through which we see, interpret, and attempt to respond to the specific organizational circumstances that we confront.

As we change the lenses through which we see a given situation, our definition of the problems that the situation entails and the possible solutions to those problems also will change. For example, if we focus on individual behavior, then we might think of the problem as one of employee motivation, the failure of employees to communicate effectively with citizens, or employees’ lack of understanding the broader purposes and goals of the organization. As a result, we might meet and talk with employees; try to understand their needs, desires, and motivations; work with them to set individual and group goals, and seek their input on policy and operational changes that would improve outcomes. Are supervisors managing their units in a manner that supports employee development and performance? Do workers understand the underlying values of the mission of the unit, and are they empowered to serve the public consistent with these values? Helping individuals to redirect their behavior toward meeting organizational and community goals would be the purpose of our efforts.

At the group level, we might ask whether existing work groups are functioning effectively. Do employees feel like a part of a team, or do they feel

alienated from their co-workers and supervisors? Is the culture of existing groups or teams conducive to or counter to division goals? We might form task forces of employees to address particular problems, or we might reconfigure work teams to address certain types of cases. We might work with staff to improve their group process and leadership skills. Our objective in undertaking these activities would be to strengthen work teams, enhance worker commitment and involvement, and provide the skills and support needed for the employees to achieve their goals.

At the organizational level, we might ask whether the division is structured appropriately to accomplish its tasks. Are management systems, such as goal setting and performance measurement, in place? Is there a strategic plan? Is management information available to guide decision making? Are resources tracked and allocated to areas of high need? Are organizational communications clear, and are policies documented and disseminated? Are the appropriate equipment, technology, and supplies available? Are personnel guidelines for hiring appropriate regarding the skills needed for the job? Is training adequate?

At the systems level, we might question whether the unit is receiving adequate funding and central agency support. How can we work with key legislators as we attempt to implement organizational improvements? We also might consider the problem to be the manifestation of a larger societal issue—perhaps a generally hostile attitude toward government workers that leads to inadequate funding or, alternatively, a lack of cooperation by clients as the employees try to gather information that will help in tracking down nonpaying parents. How then can we improve public relations and our interactions with other groups so that we can demonstrate that an important service is being provided to the public?

Each of these perspectives provides important insights and tools for public administrators as they work to manage their organizations in the public interest. The field of organizational behavior speaks to most of these issues, at least so far as the human dimension is concerned. As will be explored more fully in the sections that follow, organizational behavior is the study of individual and group behavior in organizational settings. Accordingly, the field provides critically important and highly useful perspectives on motivation, leadership, groups, power and politics, culture, and other matters that directly concern individual and group behavior. It also speaks to organizational issues and community issues, but it does so through the lens of individual and group behavior. For example, it is concerned with the following:

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- Being an effective team member
- Leading and inspiring others
- Communicating effectively within and outside of the organization
- Making effective decisions

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- Using power and politics constructively and ethically
- Creating and securing commitment to shared values
- Managing conflict productively
- Using diversity to enhance organizational performance
- Helping people to become more innovative and creative

So, organizational behavior provides the tools, skills, ideas, and strategies for managing human behavior in organizations. But it should be recognized that as the study of organizational behavior spotlights individual and group behavior, it leaves other important concerns and issues at least partially in the dark. Models of organizational behavior cannot tell a manager what type of computer system to buy, nor can they directly address outcome measurement systems and other organizational issues—except in terms of their implications for human behavior. But given the undeniable importance of humans in the public sector, the perspective of organizational behavior offers a particularly important way of thinking and acting that can help public servants to achieve organizational goals more effectively and to serve the public more responsibly. In other words, people in public service are the key ingredient in determining how well government serves its citizens.

Perhaps the easiest, and in some ways the most useful, way of defining organizational behavior in the public sector is to say that it is the study of how people behave in public organizations. Organizational behavior is concerned with how people act, their motivations, and how they interact with others. As we noted earlier, it is concerned with human behavior and social systems. But there are differences of opinion as to where the boundaries of the field actually lie. In particular, the distinction between the studies of organizational behavior and organizational theory can become blurred. Some suggest that organizational behavior is one perspective within the larger field of organizational theory, whereas others conceive of organizational behavior as having a distinct identity as a separate field of study.

This confusion arises because organizational behavior typically is defined as concerned not only with the behavior of the individual and groups but also with the influence of the individual on the organization and the influence of organizational structure, culture, and other factors on the individual. As we have seen, it deals with at least three levels of analysis: the individual, the group, and the organization. If it deals with organizational matters, then how is it different from organizational theory? More important, why does it matter?

We would argue that the distinctiveness and value of organizational behavior as a field of study and as a way of thinking and acting lie in what one chooses as the starting point. Organizational behavior has a different orientation from that of other organizational management perspectives because it has a different focus. In organizational behavior, the starting point is the person. Accordingly, the questions that we consider in this book focus on indi-

vidual and group behavior, needs, and perceptions. Is the organization meeting the needs of its people so as to allow them to work effectively? Are individual creativity and responsibility being fostered? Are there opportunities for learning and change? Is the "fit" between individuals and the organization a good one? By starting with people concerns, values such as human dignity, growth, fairness, and participation become paramount.

If we were to begin instead with the organization as the starting point of our analysis, then we would tend to define problems as organizational and seek solutions at that level. We would be most likely to think first about changing the organizational structure and systems so as to make them more rational and consistent with generally accepted models of organization. We also might ask about the role that the organization plays in the larger society and in the governance system. The underlying values at the organizational level might be to achieve rationality, consistency, performance, responsiveness, and efficiency.

So, although organizational behavior concerns topics that it holds in common with organizational theory perspectives, it has a different analytic starting point. Organizational behavior emphasizes human behavior and individual values rather than organizational structures and organizational values. Accordingly, it leads us to take actions that are aimed at understanding and influencing individual human behavior. In other words, organizational behavior deals with virtually all aspects of organizations and management, but it does so from the perspective of *people*.

In this book, we go a step further. We assert that the management of organizational behavior *in the public sector* must, in fact, consider a fourth level of analysis—that which concerns governance in the public interest. In public service, we must be concerned not only with leading and motivating others but also with doing so in a manner that is consistent with democratic values and the public interest. In the public sector, it is not enough to simply be successful in influencing people to behave in a particular way. Public servants have a responsibility to manage organizational behavior so as to meet public objectives and community needs—and these values are, in fact, more important than the personal needs and desires of managers or workers and/or organizational values such as stability and structure. Therefore, organizational behavior in the context of public management encompasses both the values inherent in a "people" perspective on organizations and the values that guide public service in democratic government (Figure 1.1).

Organizational behavior in the public sector can be seen as resulting from the interactions and influences among these levels. It is the product of the complex interactions among individuals, groups, organizational factors, and the public environment in which all of this takes place. In part because of the complexity of these interactions, the management of behavior in organizations always will be complex, somewhat unpredictable, and challenging. We cannot control the thinking, much less the behavior, of others. But we can positively influence others, and we can be more successful in working with people to accomplish shared objectives. By gaining a better understanding of



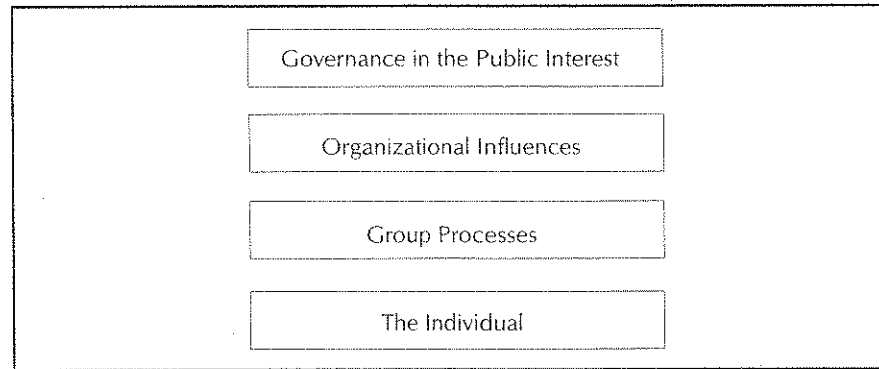
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**Figure 1.1.** Levels of Analysis in Organizational Behavior in the Public Sector

our own behavior, the behavior of people and groups in organizations, and the influence of organizational and other environmental factors, our ability to successfully accomplish public objectives will be enhanced.

Perhaps it would be helpful to think about these issues from the perspective of the knowledge and skills needed by successful public servants. That is, what do we need to know, and what do we need to be able to do, so as to act effectively and responsibly in a public organization? These questions were addressed in a fairly recent study conducted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that sought to identify the skills that are critical to managerial success in government. Based on information collected from a large number of highly effective governmental managers and executives, the researchers developed two categories of competencies: one focusing on management functions (or the “what” of government) and one focusing on effectiveness (or the “how” of government). Those competencies are summarized and paraphrased in Figure 1.2.

The first thing we notice when we look at the list in Figure 1.2 is how many of these competencies require a working knowledge of, and effective skills in, organizational behavior. Certainly, interpreting and communicating, guiding and leading, supervising and promoting performance, and flexibility are all organizational behavior skill areas. But a second look reveals how integral the skills in organizational behavior are to virtually every aspect of managerial competence. Look at the list and see whether you see any elements that do not require, or at least could not be strengthened by, an ability to effectively influence, manage, motivate, and lead people.

The need for competencies and skills at multiple levels is reinforced by the diagram in Figure 1.3, again drawn from the OPM study. The OPM framework highlights the need for management competencies at all levels of the organization. For example, it suggests that successful first-line managers must be not only technically competent but also effective communicators who demonstrate personal sensitivity. Their actions also must be consistent with those competencies emphasized at the next level, while having an action orientation and being focused on results, these managers must demon-

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**The "What" of Management: Functions**

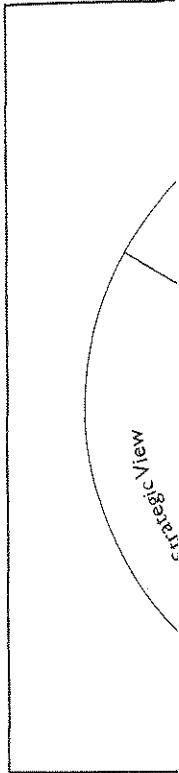
1. *External awareness:* Identifying key agency politics and priorities and/or external issues and trends likely to affect the work unit
2. *Interpretation:* Keeping subordinates informed about key agency and work unit policies, priorities, issues, and trends and about how these are to be incorporated into the unit
3. *Representation:* Presenting, explaining, selling, and defending the work unit's activities to the supervisor in the agency and to persons and groups outside of the agency
4. *Coordination:* Performing liaison functions and integrating the work of various units within the organization and interacting with other organizations
5. *Planning:* Developing long-term goals, objectives, and priorities and deciding on actions
6. *Guidance:* Converting plans to action by establishing schedules and standards
7. *Budgeting:* Preparing, justifying, and administering the budget
8. *Managing materials:* Making sure that the needed supplies, equipment, and facilities are available
9. *Personnel management:* Projecting needs and recruiting, selecting, appraising, and retaining employees
10. *Supervision:* Providing guidance and oversight while working to promote and recognize performance
11. *Monitoring:* Staying up-to-date on the status of activities, identifying problems, and taking corrective action
12. *Evaluation:* Assessing how well program goals are met and identifying ways in which to improve

**The "How" of Management: Effectiveness Characteristics**

1. *Broad perspective:* Ability to see the big picture and to balance long- and short-term considerations
2. *Strategic view:* Ability to collect and analyze information and to anticipate and make judgments
3. *Environmental sensitivity:* Awareness of agency in relation to its environment
4. *Leadership:* Individual and group leadership and willingness to lead, manage, and accept responsibility
5. *Flexibility:* Openness to new information, change, and innovation as well as to tolerance for stress and ambiguity
6. *Action orientation:* Independence, proactivity, calculated risk taking, problem solving, and decisiveness
7. *Results focus:* Concern with goal achievement
8. *Communication:* Effective speaking, writing, and listening
9. *Interpersonal sensitivity:* Self-knowledge and awareness of impact on others—sensitivity to their needs, strengths, and weaknesses; negotiation and conflict resolution skills and ability to persuade
10. *Technical competence:* Specialized expertise in agency programs and operations

**Figure 1.2.** Office of Personnel Management Inventory of Management Skills  
SOURCE: Flanders and Utterback (1985).

strate leadership and flexibility. At this level, successful middle-level managers must demonstrate all of these skills and competencies and also work to acquire the characteristics of those at the outer ring—a broad perspective, a

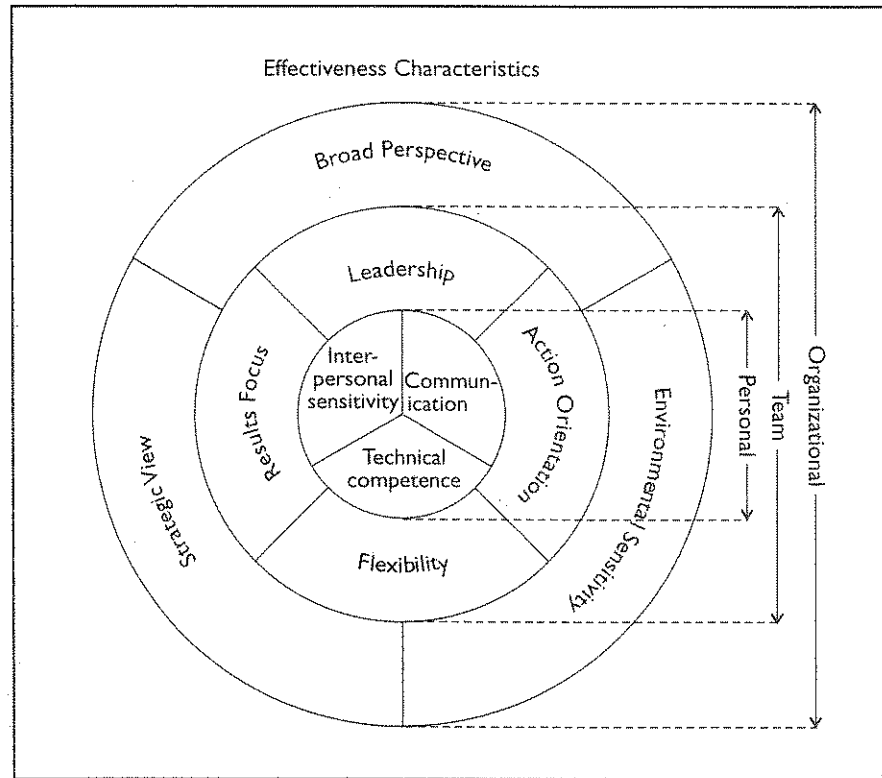


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**Figure 1.3.** Management Excellence Framework  
 SOURCE: Flanders and Utterback (1985). *The Management Excellence Inventory*. *Public Administration Review* 45(3): 403-410. Used by permission of Blackwell.

strategic view, and environmental sensitivity. If executives at the top levels of government are to be successful, then they must demonstrate the full range of effectiveness characteristics and be especially attentive to their interactions with the organization's environment. Clearly, a wide variety of skills, most notably their ability to work with and through people, will be essential to their success as public managers.

## THE ROOTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR ■■■

The field of organizational behavior is fairly young. Although we have been interested in the behavior of people in organizations for a long time, most early approaches focused on simply controlling workers and manipulating their environment so as to maximize predictability and productivity. Given the importance of employee behavior to organizational success, it might seem somewhat surprising that this topic was not a matter of significant managerial concern until at least the 1940s.

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## SOME EARLY HISTORY

From the perspective of early management theorists, people were primarily viewed as extensions of their tools and machines. For example, employee motivation, if it was considered at all, was based on the fear of physical or economic punishment. It was assumed that workers found work to be unpleasant and, therefore, had to be motivated (or bribed) by money to contribute to the organization. It also was assumed that workers would do what they were told because they would be punished or fired if they did not.

Frederick Taylor, best known as the father of scientific management, is representative of these traditional perspectives on human behavior (Taylor 1911). He, like other management thinkers of his time period, assumed that workers would do what they were told if they were paid to do so. In testimony before Congress in 1912, Taylor boasted, "Under scientific management, the initiative of the workmen—that is, their hard work, their goodwill, their ingenuity—is obtained practically with absolute regularity" (1912/1997, 30). Taylor believed that if managers studied the best ways for tasks to be performed and then scientifically selected and trained workers to perform those tasks, then workers would be induced to perform as expected by paying them a "piece rate"—a set amount of money for each task performed or product produced.

But it is important to point out that Taylor did not see this as exploiting employees. To the contrary, his writing made it clear that the design of work and production was the responsibility of management and that if management employed scientific approaches to the study of work tasks, then both employers and employees would benefit. Taylor suggested that "only one-tenth of our trouble has come on the workmen's side" and that instead, "we find very great opposition on the part of those on the management's side to do their new duties and comparatively little opposition on the part of the workmen to cooperate in doing their new duties" (1912/1997, 31). The point is that motivation per se was simply not a concern.

Taylor's overall purpose was to make people, whom he assumed to be naturally lazy and stupid, more productive. Referring to his efforts to secure greater productivity from men hauling pig iron, Taylor is quoted as saying that "[it is] possible to train an intelligent gorilla" to do their job (1911, 40). Moreover, despite employees' natural tendencies toward laziness, he expected them to obey their superiors without question. Using the analogy of a baseball team, Taylor stated that it is obvious and necessary to recognize the "utter impossibility of winning . . . unless every man on the team obeys the signals or orders of the coach and obeys them at once when the coach give those orders" (1912/1997, 32).

There were a few early voices who were more humanistic, people such as Hugo Munsterberg, who urged greater attention to the psychology of workers (Munsterberg 1913), and Mary Parker Follett, who argued that dynamic administration must be grounded in "a recognition of the motivating desires of the individual and of the group" (Metcalf and Urwick 1940, 9). But such

work was largely studies, published in 1939]. In 1927, Roethlisberger found that productivity in the Hawthorne plant. The project began in 1927 between the company and the university. The data on this matter was not turned out until 1932, from 1927

Although the Hawthorne studies from this research on employee behavior surprised the researchers, the effects of lighting on worker efficiency could not be seen, and the increase in productivity was apparently a matter of chance. That "the attention was not given because the Hawthorne effect had not been controlled for" is one of several reasons why the next phase of the research on many variables was not as comprehensive as the first.

After observing the Hawthorne effect for five years, the researchers concluded that the Hawthorne effect was a relationship between the Hawthorne effect and the Hawthorne effect. The Hawthorne effect is complex, but the Hawthorne effect is a human solution to the Hawthorne effect about worker efficiency.

Research on the Hawthorne findings

work was largely considered outside the mainstream until the Hawthorne studies, published during the 1930s, pointed the way toward a greater acceptance of the importance of social factors at work (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939). In 1927, a group of researchers led by Elton Mayo and F. J. Roethlisberger from Harvard University embarked on a study of worker productivity in the Hawthorne Works of Western Electric Company in Chicago. The project began as a relatively straightforward examination of "the relation between conditions of work and the incidence of fatigue and monotony among employees" (1939, 3). The researchers anticipated that definitive data on this matter could be collected and analyzed within a year. But things did not turn out as the researchers had planned. As they put it, "the inquiry developed in an unexpected fashion" and, as a result, continued for five years, from 1927 to 1932 (1939, 3).

Although the Hawthorne studies took longer than expected, the findings from this research ultimately would signal a fundamental shift in how employee behavior was to be understood. The Hawthorne findings actually surprised the researchers. In fact, a series of initial experiments to measure the effects of lighting on efficiency were deemed failures. Basically, the researchers could find no direct relationship between changes in illumination and worker efficiency. In fact, short of literally making it so dark that the workers could not see, every change that the researchers implemented seemed to increase productivity. The researchers concluded that "light is only one, and apparently a minor, factor among many which affect employee output" and that "the attempt to measure the effect of one variable had not been successful because the various factors affecting the performance of the operators had not been controlled, and hence, the results could have been influenced by any one of several variables" (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939, 19). So, in the next phase of the research, the researchers attempted to control for these many variables by isolating a group of workers and systematically and comprehensively studying their behavior and attitudes.

After observing, consulting, and interviewing this group of employees for five years, the researchers arrived at two conclusions that would profoundly change research on worker behavior. First, they found that people change their behavior when they know they are being observed (the so-called "Hawthorne effect"). Second, they concluded that human relationships (including a relationship with the researchers) influenced the behavior of workers and, consequently, that new hypotheses were needed to explain worker behavior. The Hawthorne experiments showed that human behavior and motivation is complex, being influenced by attitudes, feelings, and the meaning that people assign to their work and their relationships at work. As the researchers stated succinctly, "It is [our] simple thesis that a human problem requires a human solution" (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939, 35). This was a far cry from the types of assumptions that Taylor and his contemporaries had made about worker motivation.

Research conducted over the subsequent few decades confirmed the Hawthorne findings and resulted in a more sophisticated understanding of the re-

relationship between people and organizations. The importance of human cooperation in organizations was emphasized in Chester Barnard's definition of a formal organization as "a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons" (Barnard 1948, 81). For Barnard, the participation of the individual was necessary for cooperation, and indeed, he viewed the need to build cooperation among organizational sub-units as the crucial function of the manager. The rationale for including workers in problem-solving and decision-making teams was established later as a result of collaboration between social psychologist Kurt Lewin and anthropologist Margaret Mead in experiments concerning the reduction of civilian consumption of rationed food. Through Lewin's research in this setting, he established a core principle: "We are likely to modify our own behavior when we participate in problem analysis and solution, and [we are] more likely to carry out decisions we have helped make" (Weisbord 1987, 89).

In 1946, Lewin and Douglas McGregor started the Research Center for Group Dynamics with the mission of training leaders to become skilled in improving group relations and managing change. McGregor's research on group norms and personal needs underlined the importance of developing the morale of the workforce and encouraging cooperative efforts so as to increase efficiency (Knickerbocker and McGregor 1942). In *The Human Side of the Enterprise*, McGregor (1960) discussed a highly effective management team studied by researchers. He concluded that "unity of purpose" is the main distinguishing characteristic of the successful unit. Even more important, McGregor discussed the now familiar "Theory X" and "Theory Y," arguing that traditional command-and-control approaches (Theory X)—based on assumptions of people as lazy, uninvolved, and motivated solely by money—actually caused people to behave in a manner consistent with those expectations. His alternative, Theory Y, suggested a much more optimistic and humanistic view of people, emphasizing the inherent worth of individuals in organizations.

In related work, Likert (1961), in *New Patterns of Management*, developed the notion of organizations as a series of interlocking groups and the manager as a "linking pin." Argyris (1964) focused his attention on the personal development of the individual in the context of the organization; organizational effectiveness was a function of the interpersonal competence of team members and the extent to which the organization supported positive norms. Blake and Mouton (1964) provided a model of team excellence and a set of styles useful in understanding team members' contributions through their managerial grid, which may be used to diagnose the team's culture. Through contributions such as these, a particular approach to management and human behavior gained increasing acceptance during the 1960s and 1970s. It is this perspective, and the models and theories that have been built from it over the subsequent decades, that forms the foundation of the field of organizational behavior as explored in this book.

During the past few decades, the field of organizational behavior has benefited from work in a variety of disciplines. Because of its emphasis on indi-

vidual behavior, the field of psychology has drawn our knowledge of small-group or within psychology. For example, psychoanalysis (Freud) assumes that young age. Not adults in organizations with its emphasis on power, and conflict. Sociology also studies behavior. Sociology studies the structure and function of the environment. Particularly, anthropology provides important insights into our understanding of leadership, strategies, values and governance.

The influence of these insights into a particular example, our understanding explored from a different standpoint. Each of the causes, sources, and role in managing, and lenses we can likely our action

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*Management*, developing groups and the attention on the performance organization; organizational competence of team supported positive team excellence and a contributions through the team's culture. approach to management during the 1960s and theories that have been the foundation of the work.

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behavior, contemporary organizational behavior draws heavily from the field of psychology. Psychological theories and models form the basis of our knowledge about perception and learning, human motivation, and small-group or one-on-one interactions. But not all schools of thought within psychology play an equal role in the study of organizational behavior. For example, psychological theories such as those espoused by Sigmund Freud assume that human personality and behavior are largely fixed at a young age. Not surprisingly, such perspectives are not particularly useful to adults in organizational settings. On the other hand, behavioral psychology, with its emphasis on learning and behavior change, is quite useful and important. Likewise, social psychology offers insights into group behavior, conflict, power, and leadership.

Sociology also is an important source of insights into organizational behavior. Sociologists help us to understand organizations and how their structure and function affect individuals. Conflict, adaptation, and the influence of the environment all are issues addressed in the field of sociology. Similarly, anthropology, with its exploration of the role of culture in society, offers important insights into organizational life. Finally, political science contributes to our understanding of organizational behavior by focusing on power, leadership, strategy, and (most important for our purposes here) democratic values and governance.

The influence of these fields is not singular; each of them may provide insights into a particular topic within the field of organizational behavior. For example, our understanding of conflict and power in organizations may be explored from a psychological, sociological, anthropological, or political standpoint. Each of these perspectives may emphasize different aspects of the causes, sources, and manifestations of these phenomena as well as our role in managing and responding to them. In fact, the more different angles and lenses we can use to look at human behavior in organizations, the more likely our actions will be effective.

## VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR ■■

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There are a number of underlying assumptions and values that underlie the study of organizational behavior and that will guide our examination of the field in the context of public service. In other words, the field of organizational behavior is fundamentally based on certain assumptions about the nature of people and behavior. These assumptions are just that; they are simply things we assume or assert about human behavior that allow us to interpret what people do and why they do it and then to act accordingly ourselves. To the extent that these assumptions do not hold true in a given circumstance,

the tools of organizational behavior might be less than completely effective. But in any case, recognizing these assumptions and the values they imply is important in understanding how the perspective of organizational behavior can inform our actions.

The first such assumption is that human behavior is purposeful. That means that a great deal of what we do involves behavior that is intended to accomplish some purpose. That does not mean that *all* behavior is goal oriented, at least not in the conscious sense. Some actions or behavior may be involuntary, and certainly the consequences of our behavior can be unintended. But in terms of organizational behavior, voluntary goal-directed behavior is seen as critical to achieving organizational effectiveness. The field of organizational behavior, in turn, assumes that voluntary and purposeful behavior can be influenced by the behavior of others and through the practices of management.

The second assumption is that behavior is not random—that it is caused. The study of organizational behavior looks for the antecedents and causes of human behavior. It assumes that, by studying behavior and patterns of interaction, we can gain insights into ways of thinking about and influencing the behavior of others.

The third assumption is that behavior can be changed through learning. When people change how they think, they frequently change how they act. Although human learning is not directly observable (because it takes place within the mind of the individual), organizational behavior is based in part on the idea that people will change their behavior in response to their experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, behavior that has favorable consequences or is otherwise reinforced probably will be repeated.

The fourth assumption is that people should be valued simply as humans aside from their contributions to organizational goal attainment. Treating humans with respect and dignity is an important value in its own right. Organizational behavior is fundamentally grounded in the idea that improvements to organizational processes, structure, and performance require “managing through people.” Although approaches that ignore or disrespect people may get results in the short term, they do not build responsible, engaged, and civic-minded employees or citizens. And in the long term, they are unlikely to be all that effective anyway.

The final assumption that guides our exploration of organizational behavior in the public sector is that public service is about serving others. There is nothing wrong with meeting our own needs and priorities at work, but in the public service, the needs of others take precedence. We are in the public service to serve others—our country, our community, our fellow citizens (including our employees and co-workers)—and not ourselves. Public servants are people whose motivations and rewards are more than simply a matter of pay or security. They want to make a difference in the lives of others and to serve the public. To be both effective and responsible, organizational behavior in the public sector always must be attentive to the special calling of public service.

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## THEMES AND PURPOSES OF THIS BOOK ■

Building on the assumptions described in the preceding section, this book is organized around three themes: (1) the importance of understanding the behavior, motivations, and actions of individuals in the public service; (2) a focus on the distinctiveness of management and leadership in *public* organizations; and (3) an emphasis on students learning not only from reading but also from experience. We can examine each of these points in greater detail.

First, in our view, public administration courses in management and organizational behavior should focus on the individual. We assume that a key to success in public administration is the ability to understand and influence the behavior of individuals and groups. Moreover, we assert that public managers must learn to manage, change, and reflect on their *own* behavior and motivations in developing the capacity to manage others. For this reason, this book focuses on *the individual public servant*—how and why individuals behave as they do, how students can act with greater probability of success in influencing the behavior of others, and how (over time) they can improve their own capacity to act as individual managers and public servants. In other words, the effective and responsible management of organizational behavior requires that public managers understand and develop a capacity to manage their own behavior, influence the behavior of others at the interpersonal and group levels, and act as individual public leaders in their interactions with the public and its representatives.

To manage others, we must start with ourselves; we must learn to manage our own behavior and understand our motivations and perceptions of ourselves. We must know ourselves—our style, our strengths, and our limitations. We must learn to distinguish our motivations, preferences, and worldviews from those of others. We must have a sense of direction, a willingness to explore and take risks, and a good understanding of how we can learn from our administrative experiences over time.

Beyond the personal level, public managers are involved with other people in the organization—bosses, co-workers, and subordinates. To interact effectively with these people, public managers need to develop strong *interpersonal* skills in areas such as communicating with and motivating others, working with and facilitating groups and teams, and understanding and employing power and influence.

Finally, building on personal and interpersonal skills, effective public managers also must assume the skills of *public* leadership. Public leadership involves not only internal management issues but also the management of critical interactions between organizational representatives and individuals and groups outside of the public organization. Particularly important are skills involved in managing change processes and in effectively representing the organization to the public, to the legislative body, to the media, and to those in other organizations. Again, individual interactions are critical; the

way in which individual public servants, whether executives or line-level employees, deal with citizens, reporters, and/or clients ultimately defines the relationship between the organization and the public it serves.

This issue of “publicness” leads to the second major perspective of the book. We believe that public management is made distinctive by the compelling nature of the political environment and the nature of public service. Specifically, it is our firm belief that organizational behavior in the public sector is different—that public administration is, in many cases, significantly affected both by the particular requirements of public sector work and by the important traditions of democratic participation and a commitment to the public values that underlie work in public organizations. Public managers must be fully attentive to the public service motive that draws people to work in public organizations. For these reasons, leadership and management in public organizations must be understood in the context of public values and public service.

Third, to develop the capacity for action, a different style of learning is necessary. Learning the skills to support effective and responsible action requires not only reading and discussing ideas but also improving people’s capacity to act in pursuit of their ideas. For this reason, we try to present a solid foundation of ideas on which you can act, but we also provide opportunities and aids that you can use in developing your own personal, interpersonal, and institutional skills in areas such as creativity, decision making, communication, and group dynamics.

In public administration, as in other skill-based disciplines, practice is required for improvement to occur. So, rather than just talking about organizational behavior, we draw on two types of experiences: (1) those that can be created in the classroom using cases, exercises, and simulations that we provide and (2) those drawn from real life, meaning your own work in public organizations (including internships) or other ongoing groups of which you are a part.

In each chapter, we seek not merely to present a review of the relevant literature related to each of the topics but also to present some specific and immediate ideas and tools that are intended to be of practical assistance. We also develop some long-term strategies or behavioral guidelines that you can use to learn from your own experiences as well as from the experiences of others. And we provide a set of learning tools—cases, simulations, assessment tools—that you can use to develop and practice your emerging skills in management and leadership.

In so doing, we hope to provide information as well as opportunities to enhance your skills and broaden your perspectives in support of efforts to manage organizational behavior in the public interest. Our goal is to provide perspectives and insights that will allow men and women in the public service to do their jobs better, to feel more competent and confident in their interactions with people, to lead others in their work to achieve a better world, and to gain greater satisfaction and joy from the careers they have chosen—all to the benefit of the public they serve.

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