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# **Human Services Management**

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# The End of Management and the Rise of Organizational Democracy

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## Chapter Two

# A Brief History of Management

*This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed, but a storm is blowing in from paradise. It has got caught in its wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. . . .*

*The storm is what we call progress.*

WALTER BENJAMIN, in  
*Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics*

The study of history is not for those who have chosen to repeat it but for those who seek to interrupt its retrograde tendencies and encourage it to spiral around a center of higher human values. Before moving forward into analysis and prescription regarding organizational design, it is useful to look backward, like Benjamin's angel of history, to locate the strategic decisions, identify the transcendent ideas, and discover how to disarm the capacity of the past to plot our present and future direction.

When we consider where, when, and why management began, how it evolved over centuries and shaped the organizations that house and reproduce it, we will more easily understand how management as a *system* is dysfunctional, and in the process we will learn

how to halt the repetitive behaviors that daily recreate it. By studying the origins of management structures, systems, processes, and roles, we reveal their cryptic hidden meanings and make rational what may otherwise appear confusing, mystical, or unchanging.

History is largely invisible to those who live it. By blindly living it, the strategies and roles that made perfect sense in previous periods get repeated out of habit, fear, or the dead weight of tradition. By making history explicit and presenting it not as fact but as interpretation through the lens of the present, it becomes possible to rethink the way events are understood, organized, and enacted and to make choices.

Through history, we become conscious of our organizational inheritance and able to select what we need or want to create according to our nature and vision of the future. What follows is our selection from the infinite number of facts of the past those that can clarify the roles currently played by management, help us understand how the present came to be, and allow us to imagine an altogether different future.

## Slavery and the Birth of Management

Management emerged as a profession as a direct consequence of the rise of slavery. Wherever management appeared, its rise was linked with slavery and the use of compulsory agricultural labor. As the numbers of slaves and indentured servants increased, owners created a privileged class of overseers drawn from the ranks of slaves to control them and to make certain they worked hard or did not run away. Managers were widely used in the first Babylonian Empire and were referenced in Hammurabi's code of laws. Key elements in the modern system of management can be found in early Egypt, Greece, and Rome, where it rapidly became an expedient in the organization of obligatory work.

Managers became increasingly indispensable as slave plantations grew in size, empires expanded, and captured peoples were pressed into military and domestic service. They encouraged the expansion of slavery by disciplining and controlling the workforce, often on behalf of absent owners, and were needed to combat the slaves' lack of motivation to work hard, take responsibility for safeguarding the owner's property, or protect the power and status of slave owners against their far more numerous slaves. Owners had

to hire managers because without their vigilant oversight, no one would have chosen to remain a slave or voluntarily submit to arduous labor simply in order to magnify their owner's profit.

Aristotle made reference to the need for men to be managers not only in agriculture to control slaves, but also in households to control women, children, domestic servants, and animals. For Athenian democracy to have eliminated management would have spelled the end of slavery, the loss of slaveholder wealth, power, and status, and reduced time for artistic and philosophical pursuits.

Along with slavery came not only a need for managers but a steady decline in the motivation and loyalty of slaves. Slaves became increasingly alienated, as periodic revolts, such as the one led by Spartacus, reveal. At no time in history have slaves been successfully motivated to work hard for their masters other than through fear, brutality, dreams of upward mobility, or identification with their owners. Yet they rarely identified with the products of their labor or the process of producing it and routinely shunned responsibility for protecting their master's property.

For these reasons, as we read in ancient narratives, slaves were often hated, feared and demeaned by their managers, and vice versa. A slave was considered a thing to be manipulated, a tool to be handled, an ox to be yoked, a disobedient child to be punished. This attitude, though diminished, is alive and well in many organizations today. From this perspective, the very existence of the system of management can be seen as an expression of the continuation of involuntary work and partial enslavement.

From these beginnings, it is clear that the fundamental assumptions on which managerial roles are based were deeply and irremediably flawed from the outset. At its roots, management became inseparable from coercion, inequality, and domination over productivity and skill by ownership and power. Without these, there would be little need for management, and to end the system of management, it is necessary to end these as well.

### From Slavery to Serfdom

As the Roman Empire fell into decline, slavery began to evolve into serfdom, which allowed slaves a greater degree of freedom to manage their labor. Serfs, or villeins, were required to work the lord's

land but were permitted some independence in exchange for services and products. Instead of being bound to the person of their owner, slaves were bound to the land and the lord who owned it.

Serfs in France, for example, were obligated to perform manual work for their lord, generally three days each week; pay taxes and fees for the use of the lord's land; bequeath to the lord their best work animals; pay a sum if their daughter married outside the manor; perform military service from six to eight years; and tithed a tenth of their income to the church. Prior to the French Revolution, it has been estimated that as much as 81 percent of the average serf's income went to the lord or the church.

No longer obligated to pay for the upkeep of slaves, feudal lords were able to transfer that responsibility to their serfs and reap a higher profit. To enforce these duties, lords appointed managers in the form of stewards, bailiffs, and reeves, backed up by knights, squires, men-at-arms, and watchmen. These feudal managers tracked and enforced the fulfillment of every obligation, supervised work on the lord's lands, collected rents and taxes, enforced obedience, and suppressed rebellion and dissent.

These responsibilities required labor supervisors for field hands and auditor-managers to collect taxes, keep ledgers, and develop accounting methods, leading to the growth of feudal bureaucracy. In addition to bookkeeping, feudal managers had the right to discipline serfs physically and administer punishments and fines.

Managerial roles also steadily increased within military ranks, as fixed armies replaced citizens' militias and people were involuntarily pressed into military service. Sergeant-managers were used to supervise the lower ranks and coerce military obedience from Europe to Asia and the Mayan and Incan civilizations of the new world.

Following the Black Death and loss of over a third of the workforce, serfs were prevented in several European countries from leaving their places of employment under compulsion of law. The Statute of Labourers in England, for example, made it a crime for serfs to leave the land to which they were entailed without their lord's express permission. In this way, managers came to play the role of jailer, while many serfs became prisoners under "manor arrest."

The passage from slavery to serfdom gave workers limited new freedoms and minor rights to direct or control their work. They

still had little experience with simple rights such as freedom of speech, religion, and association, equality or electoral franchise, let alone self-management. With the gradual rise of a money economy, due partly to expansion in trade and technological innovations that improved productivity and reduced transportation time, came the demise of feudal tenure, the rise of commercial centers in cities, and the development of a capitalist model of management in the form of the factory system.

### The Dickensian Factory

As productivity and craft specialization increased with the rise of feudal city-states, so did internal and external trade and the initially unmanaged tasks of mercantile exchange. These exchanges led slowly but directly from skilled craftsmen who sold their products in local markets, to merchant traders who bought and sold surpluses in distant markets, to capitalists who produced commodities for sale in markets locally and internationally.

Skilled craftsmen and feudal traders did not initially require dedicated managers, but the need for administration, coordination, and oversight increased as their activities expanded and became more integrated and successful. With the rise of capitalism, wage labor, the factory system, and market-oriented production, the scale, complexity, and profitability of work mushroomed, making management cost-effective and essential.

Consider, for example, a craft such as shoemaking. Under feudalism, a single skilled shoemaker worked out of his home to satisfy the needs of a small, relatively stable population, performing other subsistence tasks as well. With increasing population and demand, he was able to concentrate, specialize, and develop his craft. He could travel or send a seller to distant markets in search of higher prices. These traders became professionals, touring local communities and buying items for trade elsewhere. This provided a regular source of demand and increased income for shoemakers, compensating for times when local demand was weak.

For traders, however, trips to and from local shoemakers extended the time required to get their goods to market, increased costs, decreased the ability to compete with shoes produced locally, and reduced profits. Once the shoemaker became dependent on

the trader to purchase shoes made for distant consumers, he could not refuse when the trader required that his shoes be delivered to a central location. From there, it was a short step to moving the entire operation to a factory, reducing the costs of production through assembly line organization and machine tools and lowering wages and costs through managerially controlled production.

In the process, skilled craftsmen who owned their tools were reduced to unskilled employees working for a merchant-capitalist who owned the machinery, factories, and raw materials required to mass-produce shoes at competitive prices. The capitalist had a natural interest in intensifying the work process, lengthening the workday, reducing the time required to create craftsmanship quality, and keeping wages and raw materials prices down so as to lower costs, succeed against competitors, and turn a profit for investors. In miniature, this is how industrial capitalism began. With it came a degradation in the lives of employees and a demand for managers to get them to work at maximum efficiency.

Although the factory system of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries freed serfs from feudal tenure, it required brutal work even from small children for twelve to sixteen hours a day, six days a week. There were no legal protections against management abuses, and employees had no right to organize collectively to improve their working conditions. Those who did so were spied on, fired, beaten, prevented from finding new jobs, and arrested. For this reason, indentured servants formed a large percentage of those who left Europe for the American colonies seeking new opportunities.

Like the slaves and serfs who preceded them, early factory workers had no right to manage their own labor, have their grievances heard, or keep their jobs if they became sick or pregnant or wanted time off. They were not compensated for workplace injuries or permitted to retire. The legal system forged by feudal aristocrats and factory owners permitted managers, for example under the Statute of Labourers, to terminate employees at will, for "a good reason, a bad reason, or no reason at all." Managers enforced factory discipline, and weeded out potential trouble makers. Alexis de Tocqueville, observing this process during a trip from France to the United States in the early nineteenth century, commented:

When a workman is unceasingly and exclusively engaged in the fabrication of one thing, he ultimately does his work with singular dexterity; but, at the same time, he loses the general faculty of applying his mind to the direction of the work. He every day becomes more adroit and less industrious; so that it may be said of him, that, in proportion as the workman improves, the man is degraded.

In reaction, militant labor battles repeatedly brought production to a standstill. These battles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often brutally repressed. In reaction, powerful labor unions were organized to halt strikebreaking, resulting in a new use for managers as substitute workers and strikebreakers. In the United States from Coeur d'Alene to Homestead, Pullman, and the Great Steel Strike of 1919, unions used strikes to win support for workers' rights and reduce the power of owners, while robber baron companies used managers to control, punish, and defeat them. Strikes often succeeded where employers were unable to find strikebreakers who could replace skilled craftsmen, or when managers were unable to perform the complex, multidimensional tasks jealously defended by craft unions. These conditions led to "scientific management" as a way of reducing the power of skilled organized labor.

### Taylorism and Scientific Management

Frederick Winslow Taylor, the founder of modern management, was the leading promoter of the idea that managers should design and control the work process scientifically in order to guarantee maximum efficiency. Taylor's central idea, presented in his book *Principles of Scientific Management*, was that time and motion studies could maximize the efficiency of work by eliminating unnecessary or duplicative steps, reducing what he considered laziness and featherbedding by labor.

Taylor advocated creating multiple layers of management to supervise the work process so that productivity targets were met. He believed in controlling the workforce rigidly and the work process in minute detail. His idea was openly and explicitly to stop skilled employees from making decisions about and controlling the work process. Taylorism was a way of reducing the power of or-

ganized labor and getting extra work out of employees without increasing their wages.

Taylor argued that "scientific management makes collective bargaining and trade unionism unnecessary" because it substitutes external managerial authority and discipline for employee self-management. He advocated isolating individuals from teams, transferring control over the work process to managers, breaking each task down into a sequence of precisely timed components, and paying workers only for the products they produced.

Taylor recommended that managers specify the precise way each task and body movement was to be executed by each worker. Industrial managers coerced workers into accepting these instructions and trained them by rote and drill to do exactly as they were told. In Taylor's model, managers did all the thinking, planning, and directing; workers did only prescribed hands-on implementing.

Scientific management coincided with a dramatic rise in mass production for an urban consumer market, technical improvements in assembly lines, and an enormous increase in immigration that provided a seemingly unending supply of unskilled, low-paid, nonunionized labor. With increasing prosperity, wages could be lifted, leading many "bread and butter" unions to accept Taylor's ideas in exchange for higher pay. It seemed possible to many to apply the principles of scientific efficiency to every aspect of production.

Taylor's theories justified managerial control over the production process and removed decision making from employees and from owners as well. The increasingly authoritative operational role of management diminished the direct involvement of owners in day-to-day decision making. Managers saw this as an opportunity to solidify their power and adopted Taylor's ideas wholesale. In the process, they affirmed efficiency over collaboration, quantity over quality, and cost controls over customer service.

Taylor's voice did not go unchallenged. Industrial engineer Henry Gantt wrote in the same period advocating that workers be allowed to ignore managerial instructions and improve the work process in their own ways. "Whatever we do," he wrote, "must be in accord with human nature. We cannot drive people; we must direct their development." Gantt believed in rewarding learning with gain-sharing, and argued that autocratic management threatened

democracy. Mary Parker Follett also advocated increasing employee self-management:

The first disadvantage [of giving orders] is that we lose what we might learn from the man actually on the job if we do not invite his co-operation in deciding what the rules of the task shall be. . . . The arbitrary command ignores one of the most fundamental facts of human nature, namely, the wish to govern one's own life. . . . Probably more industrial trouble has been caused by the manner in which orders have been given than in any other way. . . . If a worker is asked to do something in a way which he thinks is not the best way, he will often lose all interest in the result, he will be sure beforehand that his work is going to turn out badly. . . . It is one of the things we should be most careful about—never to interfere with the workers' pride in his work.

Follett was a member of the Taylor Society and agreed that production had to be more efficient, but she disagreed with the strict division of labor, external controls, and managerial supervision of every task.

### Managing During the Depression and World War II

The need for managers grew exponentially during the early twentieth century with the growth of international markets, semi-monopolies, Taylor's scientific methods, deskilled assembly lines, improvements in technology, reduced time required for long-distance transportation and communication, and large-scale, integrated industrial factories. Nonetheless, in 1929, the economy collapsed, placing large numbers of employees and managers out of work.

The Great Depression made it clear that private industry and market principles alone could not solve the economic crisis and that government intervention was needed to encourage a more humane, respectful, socially constructive approach to factory management. In order to protect employee rights against the arbitrary power of owners and managers, the system now known as labor-management relations was created. Through the legislative process, government assumed an active role in regulating work life

in the interest of fairness to employees and consumers and providing work that private industry was unable to offer.

Through the Works Progress Administration, Social Security Administration, National Labor Relations Board, and similar federal and state agencies, the ancient prerogatives of management to control the workplace were systematically eroded, and objective legal standards were put in their place. For nearly the first time in history, it became illegal to fire employees for organizing a union, grieving over working conditions, or bargaining collectively to improve their pay. Workers' compensation, wage and hour legislation, and similar laws allowed government to intervene in private industry and force managers to meet with employee representatives rather than unilaterally impose their will.

At the end of World War II, the Taft-Hartley Act withdrew government from active support for the rights of labor, yet the practice of curbing harmful managerial practices continued. It became accepted that employees were entitled to elemental standards of dignity and respect, to be free from flagrant forms of harassment and discrimination, and that government was needed to protect employee rights from managerial incursion. Managers were gradually banned from discriminating on the basis of union affiliation, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, and physical disability, and, where union contracts prevailed, were prohibited from disciplining employees without just cause.

As each of these protections was legislated, managerial roles expanded to include supervising and monitoring adherence to governmental regulations. The intervention of government in preventing and reporting on managerial abuses paradoxically encouraged a rapid growth in managerial bureaucracy in order to monitor violations, which still hampers organizations today.


### The More Things Change . . .

For most of its history, management directed and controlled work without governmental or employee limits. Indeed, it is possible to see slavery and serfdom merely as extreme early forms of autocratic management, in which employees had no voice whatsoever in the work process and were viewed not as human beings but as alienated



forms of individual wealth. Slavery, in this sense, did not die; it continues in modern dress in contemporary organizations wherever managers exercise autocratic power, unequal status, or arbitrary privileges, no matter how scientific the terminology or postmodern the image.

It was not until widespread opposition to fascism following World War II that the authoritarian tradition of management in all its historical guises was powerfully called into question, as the emergence of a powerful new theory of organizational self-management pointed the way toward a different future.



# 4

CHAPTER

# ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY FOR HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

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#### **References**

Kurt Lewin, one of the great thinkers in the field of organizational behavior, said, "There's nothing so practical as a good theory" (Weisbord, 1987, p. 70). We all have theories about how things work and which variables affect other variables. Some are ones we have been taught (behaviorism, psychoanalysis, family systems theory); others guide our behavior although they have not been clearly articulated (for example, which intervention will work at a given time with a given client). This chapter is intended to provide a core of knowledge of organizational theories currently being articulated and used, so that a manager and those working with managers can consciously and thoughtfully choose an appropriate theory to enhance their effectiveness in an organizational context. Organizational theories have changed over time, so this chapter begins with a historical overview going back over the past century.

Few human service workers maintain clear awareness of the practical differences dividing organizational theorists. Although all thinkers in the field of organizational theory seek the "best" answers to the basic questions, they seldom agree about what those best answers really are. The designers of an organization are faced with a myriad of choices. They can build structures that are highly centralized and specialized or systems based on widespread decision-making responsibility and participation. They can departmentalize the organization's activities by joining all the people who perform a specific function, or they can build teams of people with differing but complementary skills. They can use traditional, hierarchical designs or experiment with task forces, committees, or even leaderless groups. The organization's form has major implications for the way its functions will be performed.

## CLASSICAL THEORIES

Three prominent classical theories of organization originated in the nineteenth century. Sociologist Max Weber articulated theoretical principles of the ideal bureaucracy. Industrial engineer Frederick Taylor developed scientific management guidelines for the "best way" to supervise workers in a factory. Henri Fayol developed a set of management principles that are still influential today.

### BUREAUCRACY

The earliest major thinker to formulate the concept of an ideal organization was Max Weber, who saw the "rational legal bureaucracy" as the efficient organization in its pure form (Gerth & Mills, 1958). Weber's ideal structure included high degrees of specialization and impersonality, authority based on comprehensive rules rather than on social relationships, clear and centralized hierarchies of authority and responsibility, prescribed systems of rules and procedures, hiring and promotion based solely on technical ability, and extensive use of written documentation.

Weber saw this pure system as a historical trend that would meet the needs posed by the increasing size of organizations and at the same time replace

unfairness and uncertainty with rationality and clarity. Perrow (1986) summarizes the key elements of the rational legal bureaucracy this way:

1. Equal treatment for all employees.
2. Reliance on expertise, skills, and experience relevant to the position.
3. No extra organizational prerogatives of the position; that is, the position is seen as belonging to the organization, not the person. The employee cannot use it for personal ends.
4. Specific standards of work and output.
5. Extensive record keeping dealing with the work and output.
6. Establishment and enforcement of rules and regulations that serve the interests of the organization.
7. Recognition that rules and regulations bind managers as well as employees; thus, employees can hold management to the terms of the employment contract. (p. 3)

Speed, precision, and reduction of friction were associated with the ideal bureaucracy because in this organization everyone would have a clear awareness of both his or her and others' functions. All aspects of the organization's work would be regulated. The repetitiveness of the work would bring with it both steadiness and high quality. Personal enmity and constant questioning would be replaced by rationality and regularity.

One of the most common criticisms of an organization, unit, procedure, or manager is that it or he or she is "too bureaucratic." On the other hand, Perrow (1986) asserts that "many of the 'sins' of bureaucracy really reveal the failure to bureaucratize sufficiently" (p. 5). Other complaints regarding a bureaucracy are that a person (usually a manager) is not qualified or that someone is receiving preferential treatment—both violations of the principles of bureaucracy. Clearly, one of the failures of modern human service organizations, particularly public sector ones, is that they have sometimes enthusiastically and single-mindedly misapplied bureaucratic thinking, and even Weber was "extremely critical of the way bureaucracy destroys spontaneity" (Gortner, Mahler, & Nicholson, 1997, p. 5).

Ultimately, most would admit that bureaucracy, as it was first articulated by Weber, might provide some useful principles. It is also true that bureaucracy alone is insufficient to fully guide modern managerial behavior, and the subsequent movements discussed later, starting with the human relations movement, do not replace bureaucracy but add to it. Bureaucratic thinking provides a foundation for personnel practices that many workers appreciate: clear job roles and performance expectations, fair treatment, and due process; but later models would need to add principles recognizing that individuals and situations also must be addressed with appreciation for their differences.

Although Weber's approach was philosophical, the ideals of clearly defined objectives, specialization, hierarchical chains of command, and responsibility commensurate with authority are also basic to the thinking of early management scientists such as Taylor (1911) and practitioners such as Fayol (1949). Taylor in particular has been vilified as much as bureaucracy has, but he also provided principles that are still useful.

## SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT

Frederick Taylor, the founder of the scientific management school of organizational theory, focused on the assembly line: the core work processes of the organization. As an industrial engineer, Taylor mainly consulted in the steel industry at the turn of the twentieth century. He believed that engineers could study a work process such as loading steel onto railway cars and determine the “one best method” for the task to be done. Workers were then trained on exactly how to do their job and repeated the same task over and over through their shift. He used time and motion studies to observe workers and identify wasteful steps or movements.

Perhaps his best-known quote describes job requirements for one who loads pig iron (a ninety-two-pound piece of steel): “One of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig-iron . . . is that he shall be so stupid . . . that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type” (1912 hearings, cited in Sashkin, 1981, p. 208). “Taylorism” has come to refer to managers who assume their employees are stupid and need to be told what to do in excruciating detail, assuming that the manager is always right. In fact, Taylor was a complex person who believed that bosses should be “servants of the workmen” (Weisbord, 1987, p. 34) and that workers should share in the profits of the organization.

Taylor’s main legacies today are work analysis methods used by industrial engineers (sometimes in human service settings) and profit-sharing plans for workers in industry. As was the case with bureaucracy, some principles such as scientifically analyzing the work to be performed and rewarding workers based on their performance are valuable and can be seen today in the quality movement and organizational reward systems.

## UNIVERSAL MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The final theorist of the classical school is Henri Fayol, a French contemporary of Weber and Taylor whose views became known as the universal principles school. He conceptualized the five basic functions of management (planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling) and developed a set of principles for the design of an organization (Bowditch & Buono, 2005, pp. 8–9):

1. Division of work—Specialization of tasks and control of the number of people under each worker or manager improves effectiveness and efficiency.
2. Authority and responsibility—The person in authority has the right to give orders and the power to obtain obedience; responsibility emerges directly from authority.
3. Unity of command—No person should have more than one boss.
4. Remuneration—Pay should be fair and satisfactory to the employer and employee; no one should be under- or over-rewarded.
5. Esprit de corps—Morale and good feelings about the organization are enhanced by effective face-to-face communication and group cohesiveness.

Fayol also talked about the *gangplank*, a figurative bridge that enabled individuals at the same level but in different units or departments to talk directly to each other rather than using the chain of command (Sashkin, 1981). The term *gangplank* is, of course, pejorative in current language usage, but the concept of making connections across units or departments is valued today, possibly more than it ever has before. Effective managers are aware that having separate, unconnected *units* for each department bodes poorly for organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

### CLASSICAL THEORIES IN TODAY'S HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

With classical management theories still prevalent in so many settings, we need to ask how relevant or useful they are for human service programs and agencies. A human service agency designed on the basis of classical principles would be organized so that all employees, including professionals, paraprofessionals, and clerical workers, would perform regular, specialized tasks. A counselor assigned to perform individual counseling with adolescents might spend all of his or her time in this activity, while other specialists might conduct group sessions or work with parents. Although the degree of specialization would depend on the agency's size and resources, each task would be related to the basic goals of the program as a whole. The activities to be performed in the interests of meeting these goals would have been identified first, and then competent individuals would have been selected and trained to carry them out. It would be understood that the resources and jobs involved in the program would belong not to individuals but to the agency, with replacement of individual workers being possible without disrupting the flow of work. (Agency activities would not change, for example, because a behaviorist was replaced by an Adlerian or because a social worker was replaced by a psychologist.) Each worker would report to one supervisor or director, who would have the authority and responsibility to carry out policies chosen by the ultimate authority (in the case of a human service agency, the ultimate authority is usually delegated to an executive director by a board of directors). Each human service professional—like every other worker—would understand the precise limits of his or her function. All similar clients would receive similar services.

The major contribution that classical theories offer to human service programs is in the area of unity of effort, with the idea that all of an organization's activities should relate to its general goals. Human service organizations could benefit from increased rationality in the planning process because one of the weaknesses of human service programs has been the tendency of professionals to perform the functions that are comfortable for them rather than those that can best meet the client-oriented goals of the agency or institution. The idea that a program or agency should have a clearly defined set of objectives that should be met through the coordinated efforts of all workers is one that could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of helping professionals. Even the bureaucratic ideal of "impersonality" could have something to offer because, as Perrow (1986) points out, it involves the purging of "particularism" and discrimination or favoritism in hiring and service delivery.

The strengths of the classical approach are counteracted by its weaknesses, at least in human service programs. The major problems in applying classical management principles to the helping services lie in the insistence on specialization and centralized hierarchies of authority. Human service professionals tend to see themselves as having responsibility not just to their agencies or institutions but to their clients and professional colleagues as well. They are not easily able to conform to a system that expects them to obey orders that may conflict with their professional standards or their views of their clients' best interests. The use of very specialized, routine work patterns may be of little value in dealing with humans and their unique problems. The worker who gains a "habitual and virtuoso-like mastery" of his or her subject may overlook the differing needs of individuals being served, with the result that agency rules gain in ascendancy while consumer rights are lost.

Human service agencies are beginning to come to grips with the fact that creative approaches are needed to deal with the problem of increasing client needs coinciding with decreasing agency resources. Unfortunately, what bureaucracies may offer in terms of rationality is lost in terms of creativity. Some of these weaknesses are addressed by the proponents of the human relations approach.

## HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACHES

The origins of the human relations approach to organization are usually traced to Elton Mayo. Mayo and his colleagues were involved in Western Electric's Hawthorne plant experiments in the 1920s and 1930s. These studies were undertaken to determine whether changes in the physical work environment affected worker productivity. In essence, they were designed to test some of the postulates of scientific management, specifically those having to do with the effects of illumination, fatigue, and production quotas on worker performance. The underlying purpose of the Hawthorne studies was to find means of increasing organizational efficiency. Small experimental and control groups of workers were identified and placed in separate rooms, where their work was closely observed and recorded by members of the research team. Environmental conditions for the experimental group were altered in both a positive and a negative direction; that is, the lights were turned up and down, rest periods were increased and decreased, and quotas were raised and lowered. Yet the group's productivity continued to increase steadily until it leveled off at a rate unaffected by environmental manipulations (Perrow, 1986).

Finding little support for the hypothesis that variations in environmental conditions (except for the extremely negative, such as almost total darkness) affect productivity, the researchers attributed major experimental results to social phenomena theretofore given slight importance by theorists. Mayo's conclusions included the following (Accel-Team, 2005a):

- Work is a group activity.
- The social world of the adult is primarily patterned about work activity.

- The need for recognition, security and sense of belonging is more important in determining a worker's morale and productivity than the physical conditions under which he works.
- A complaint is not necessarily an objective recital of facts; it is commonly a symptom manifesting disturbance of an individual's status position.
- The worker is a person whose attitudes and effectiveness are conditioned by social demands from both inside and outside the work plant.
- Informal groups within the workplace exercise strong social controls over the work habits and attitudes of the individual worker.
- Group collaboration does not occur by accident; it must be planned and developed. If group collaboration is achieved, the human relations within a work plant may reach a cohesion which resists disruption (that might otherwise be brought about through technological change).

At least two of these factors continue to have an impact on today's organizational practices: (a) the existence and influence of the informal group within the formal organization and (b) what later became known as the "Hawthorne effect." Both of these findings have implications for today's human service manager. The first has to do with issues of control; the second, with coordination—two important elements of organizational structure.

With respect to the informal group, the Hawthorne researchers found that the relationships formed among the members of the test groups appeared to meet certain social and psychological needs for affiliation that in turn led to enhanced group productivity. Moreover, findings indicated that informal group members established their own production rates based on their collective perception of survival within the organization rather than on quotas imposed by management. That is, the informal group determined at what point under-productivity might lead to being fired and over-productivity might lead to being laid off. Fortunately, and perhaps coincidentally, the Hawthorne subjects established a production rate that was within their managers' zone of acceptance (Perrow, 1986).

The Hawthorne experiments served more to illuminate the importance of the human element in organizational life than to demonstrate the importance of illumination on organizational productivity. Dimensions of worker motivation beyond fear and greed were introduced as valid managerial areas of concern and study.

The human relations approach to organization assumes that the bureaucratic view of human beings is too narrow to be useful in real-life organizations, and it has added immeasurably to views of organizational behavior and management practice. Nevertheless, the human relations school as developed following the Hawthorne studies was later seen to be incomplete as well. This conclusion required further thinking about how to address the human dimension to make organizations more effective.

Before we leave the human relations school, we will visit yet another contemporary of both the classical theorists and the Hawthorne experimenters. Mary Parker Follett was a hugely influential consultant to industry until her



death in 1933 and subsequently in her writings (Graham, 1995). Of interest to human service managers, Follett had a twenty-five-year career as a social work manager in Boston before becoming famous as a speaker and writer focusing on the business sector (Syers, 1995, p. 2585). Her thinking predated and influenced such current concepts as participatory management and empowerment, total quality management, conflict management, and leadership (Selber & Austin, 1997). Some of these concepts will be discussed later, but one of her insights is particularly relevant to the transition from the human relations movement begun in the 1920s to a more advanced view articulated by writers including Argyris, McGregor, and Likert.

According to Child (1995), the human relations approach articulated by Mayo and others in fact supported the classical notion of managerial control, whereas Follett believed in substantive worker participation in decision making. In his words, the human relations view "ascribed a privileged rationality to managers that legitimated their authority and was naturally attractive to members of the management movement working on their behalf" (p. 88). The later developments in the human relations school are, in fact, substantively different from the earlier version, and this distinction was made by Miles (1965, 1975) as he assessed different types of employee participation in decision making. He defined his approach as the human resources model, which implied more fully using the skills and talents of workers than the human relations model of the Hawthorne studies, which has been derisively referred to as "cow sociology": keep the workers contented/happy and they will produce more milk/work.

## THE HUMAN RESOURCES MODEL

An early humanistic psychologist, Argyris (1957) pointed out that workers are motivated by many factors other than economics, including desires for growth and independence. To Argyris, the organizational forms mandated by the classical theorists make for immature, dependent, and passive employees with little control over their work and thwart more mature employees capable of autonomy and independence. The purpose of the human resources approach is to develop organizational forms that build on the worker's strength and motivation.

McGregor (1960) distinguished between managers adhering to Theory X and those adhering to Theory Y. He did not say that either of these theories is correct. He did say that each is based on assumptions that, if recognized, would have major implications for organizing activities.

McGregor's Theory X manager assumes that people dislike work, lack interest in organizational objectives, and want to avoid responsibility. The natural result of this situation is that managers must base their organizations on the need to control; to supervise closely; and to use reward, punishment, and active persuasion to force employees to do their jobs. In contrast, the manager who adheres to Theory Y assumes that people enjoy working, desire responsibility, have innate capacities for creativity, and have the potential to

work toward organizational objectives with a minimum of direction. The implication of these assumptions is that work can be organized in such a way that personnel at all levels have the opportunity to do creative, self-directed, and responsible jobs.

The organizational implications of McGregor's model are clear. Theory X managers would use high degrees of specialization, clear lines of authority, narrow spans of control, and centralized decision making. Theory Y managers would use less specialization, less control, and more delegation of decision making and responsibility. The organization would be decentralized so that workers' natural creativity could be channeled effectively.

Likert (1967) examined a number of specific organizational variables, including leadership, motivation, communication, decision making, goal setting, and control. He divided organizations into four basic types, based on how they deal with these organizational variables: System 1 (exploitive authoritative), System 2 (benevolent authoritative), System 3 (consultative), and System 4 (participative group). Likert's System 1 organizations are characterized by leaders who distrust their subordinates, decision-making processes that are concentrated at the top of the organizational hierarchy, and communication that is almost exclusively downward, from supervisor to supervisees. Control and power are centralized in top management so that others feel little concern for the organization's overall goals. System 2 organizations also centralize power in the hands of the few at the top of the hierarchy but add an increased degree of communication. More trust is placed in subordinates, but it is condescending in nature. System 3 increases communication; employees have the opportunity to give input, although all major decisions are still made at the top of the management hierarchy. System 4, the opposite of System 1, is characterized by leaders who have complete confidence in workers, motivation that is based on responsibility and participation as well as on economic rewards, communication among all organization members, extensive interaction, decentralized decision making, wide acceptance of organizational goals, and widespread responsibility for control.

Likert (1967, p. 46) said that most managers recognize System 4 as theoretically superior to the others. He pointed out that if clear plans, high goals, and technical competence are present in an organization, System 4 will be superior. The key to its superiority lies in a structure based on group decision making and on the relationship of each group in an organization to every other group through common members or linking pins.

How would an organization based on the thinking of Mayo, Follett, Argyris, McGregor, and Likert differ from a bureaucratic agency? If a human service program were organized in accordance with a human relations or human resources approach, it would be characterized by greater freedom of action, both for human service professionals and for their coworkers. Instead of departmentalizing the agency by function, the organization might divide work according to purpose or population being served. An interdisciplinary task force, including various helping professionals, paraprofessionals, community

members, and consumers, might work together to solve a specific problem. Such a group might design a program to improve the agency's services to court-referred juveniles or troubled families. It might provide outreach services to displaced homemakers or school-age drug users. It might educate the community concerning mental health or stress management.

The task force itself might be permanent or ad hoc, but this organizational structure would allow each person to participate actively in planning and decision making while decreasing the prevalence of routine, specialized activities. Less attention would be directed toward authority and control, and greater emphasis would be placed on the flow of information from person to person and group to group. In the case of a large agency, people would identify with their own projects and feel responsible for their success. In the case of a small agency or a program within a larger institution, all staff members would participate in setting objectives and choosing evaluation methods for the program as a whole. Although a hierarchy of authority might exist, decision-making powers would not be limited to those at the highest levels, and the boundaries between jobs and specializations would not be clear-cut. Structure would be seen as a changing force rather than a constant factor.

A strength of the human resources school for human service agencies is its consistency with the approach of helping professionals. Human service workers tend to favor increasing self-responsibility and options for their clients, and they generally prefer that their supervisors give them high levels of autonomy, as the human resources school prescribes.

The human resources-based organization also has a greater allowance for change than does the bureaucratic structure. Although bureaucracies are efficient for dealing with routine tasks, they do not allow for the creative responses to change that a more fluid environment can make. The human service field needs new approaches to help clients deal with a continually changing world. Professionals who have the opportunity to create and the freedom to innovate might provide better service than their highly specialized colleagues.

Of course, the human resources theories do not provide easy answers. Creating an organization based on concepts of democracy and independence is, if anything, a more complex task than developing a more traditional structure. Although people might have innate capacities for growth and creativity, they have not necessarily had the chance to develop these capacities in schools and work settings that still tend toward Theory X. The Theory Y manager must carefully create structures that can encourage workers to learn how to function without close supervision and at the same time provide effective training and leadership.

A final note is that human service organizations are often closely related to larger systems, and a structure that differs greatly from those used by others is often misunderstood. A System 4 counseling department, for example, within a System 1 school or a System 4 community agency attempting to deal with a System 1 city government would face conflicts that might seem surprising.

## OPEN SYSTEMS THEORY

Systems can be thought of as sets of elements that interact with one another so that a change in any one of those elements brings about a corresponding alteration in other elements. Open systems take in and export energy through interfaces with the environment so that units within the system are also affected by changes in other systems. Open systems theorists recognize that rationality within organizations is limited by both internal factors, such as organization members' characteristics, and external factors, such as changes in the supply of available people and materials.

What are the characteristics of a system? As defined by Accel-Team (2005b, p. 6):

- A system is defined by its properties.
- A system is a physical and/or conceptual entity composed of interrelated and interacting parts existing in an environment with which it may also interact.
- The system has a preferred state.
- The parts of the system may in turn be systems themselves.

Theoretically, there could be *closed systems* that do not interact with their environments. In fact, however, all systems are affected by their environments. An *open system* has a two-way interaction with the environment, affecting the environment and being affected by it in return. Any organization, as a system, would fall somewhere on the continuum between a closed and an open system.

The fact that the system has a preferred state means that it tries to maintain itself in a stable, steady state, or *homeostasis*. The system reacts to change by making adaptations in ways that bring it back to its homeostasis without changing its essential character. Systems vary in their ability to carry out these adaptations.

An adaptive system is one that is capable of responding to changes in the condition of the environment or to contingencies imposed by the environment. A non-adaptive system does not react to its environment.

- A perfectly adaptive system can respond to any change or contingency in the environment.
- All systems lie somewhere between non-adaptive and perfectly adaptive systems.
- In order to continue existing, any open system in a dynamic environment must adapt. (Accel-Team, 2005b, p. 8)

Managers who view their organizations from the systems perspective tend to see the organization more as a process than as a structure. They know that structural changes both affect and are affected by changes in all the other components of the organization. They know, too, that the goals and activities they choose will be influenced by environmental factors that are often beyond their control.

The ideas offered by systems theory might well be more important to human service agencies than to private-sector firms because environmental

effects on both the program as a whole and individual clients must be considered. Human service professionals using these ideas would develop structures indicating the relationships between the agency and other systems as well as those within the agency. Methods of coordination with community groups, funding sources, government agencies, other helping agencies, educational institutions, professional organizations, and a variety of other systems would need to be identified. In addition, organizational strategies would take into account the progress of individual clients through the system. Methods would be developed for linking clients with various services, following up on clients as they move into other systems, and communicating with referring agencies as new clients are accepted. These methods would be built into the organizational structure, with communication to outside agencies planned as carefully as communication within the program itself.

A major strength of the systems approach is the encouragement it gives to human service professionals to think of themselves as part of a network that, as a totality, can serve the individual client in a coordinated way. This does not mean that human service administrators should allow their programs to be buffeted about by external systems, all making conflicting demands. The other organizational approaches, including the classical management approach, provide some benefits as well, for they can help agencies in their attempts to clarify basic program goals and to find ways to develop unity of effort in reaching those goals.

Most of the organizational theories and principles that have emerged over the last half-century operate under the assumption that all formal organizations are in fact open systems that respond to the environments around them. Organizations have to devise new ways of addressing emerging community needs and goals, competition from other organizations, and a workforce with changing expectations regarding the quality of working life.

## CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

Since the last major historical period of organizational theory in the 1960s, new practice models and major movements have proliferated, including the quality movement, the excellence movement, and, in the human services, the advent of community-based organizations. While it may seem odd to refer to the past half-century as “contemporary,” these trends are in fact still considered to be recent and continue to evolve as they are applied in different ways in different settings. All have relevance for human service organizations.

## PROFESSIONAL BUREAUCRACIES

Two particular characteristics of bureaucracy, centralization (“the degree to which decision making authority is confined to the top echelons of the bureau or assigned to the lower echelon offices and officials” [Gortner et al., 1997, p. 95]) and formalization (“the extent to which expectations concerning job activities are standardized and explicit” [Bowditch & Buono, 2005, p. 270]),

have caused problems in organizations doing nonroutine work, including human service organizations. Professional employees want decision making to be decentralized and formal rules to be lessened, giving them more autonomy. Employees who have professional training can make all the decisions covered by their professional codes, but they do not necessarily take agency goals, or even changing client needs, into account. On the other hand, a centralized bureaucracy cannot be successfully implemented because the presence of a large number of professionals confounds the hierarchy and eliminates unquestioning subservience to agency-wide objectives.

An adaptation of bureaucracy has emerged to deal with these problems: the “professional bureaucracy” (Mintzberg, 1979, 1992). Like the traditional bureaucracy, this type of organization depends on the regularity of the tasks to be performed, standardization, and stability. The tasks to be performed in the professional bureaucracy, however, are too technical and complex to be dictated by managers. Instead, authority is based on professional expertise, so the regularity of the bureaucracy is combined with a high degree of decentralization. Each professional worker controls his or her own technology in terms of professional standards and training, even though some of the skills used may be repetitive. “The professional bureaucracy emphasizes authority of a professional nature—the power of expertise”:

Change in the professional bureaucracy does not sweep in from new administrators taking office to announce major reforms. Rather, change seeps in by the slow process of changing the Professionals: changing who can enter the profession, what they learn in its professional schools (norms as well as skills and knowledge), and thereafter how willing they are to upgrade their skills. (12manage, 2005, p. 2)

In a professional bureaucracy, conflict can occur between professional judgments and agency policies, especially in a public-sector agency with many rules, some of which may originate outside the organization and are based on federal or state laws and regulations. As a principle of organization design, professionals in such settings sometimes need to advocate for the use of decision-making models such as the human resources approach to enable them to use their professional judgment with individual cases. A complication of this model occurs when multiple professions operate within the same organization, such as a hospital, where there may be disagreements among various professionals involved with a case.

## COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

Another reaction to bureaucracies emerged in the human service field in the 1960s with the advent of small, nonbureaucratic, not-for-profit organizations originally known as “street” or “alternative” agencies (Perlmutter, 1988). These agencies developed as an alternative to traditional bureaucracies, which were seen as ignoring or oppressing particular people in need, such as run-aways and drug addicts. They were usually started by small groups of

committed individuals who ran their programs on very small budgets, initially with little or no government funding and often using donated facilities, furniture, and equipment. According to Perlmutter (1995, pp. 204–205), these programs typically had the following characteristics:

- They were deeply committed to social change.
- They were reluctant to acknowledge the reality and legitimacy of formal authority and power.
- They were designed to meet the needs of special populations not being served by existing agencies.
- Their services were often exploratory or innovative.
- Staff were deeply committed ideologically to clients, were closely identified with them, or were former clients.
- Small size of the agency was valued.
- Agencies were usually in a marginal economic position.

Alternative agency staff believed that runaways and substance abusers, for example, should not be treated as criminals but should be given appropriate social services. They ran their agencies using democratic or consensus decision making, eschewing an all-powerful director.

Over the course of the 1970s, these programs grew, often by becoming more “mainstream” and acquiring government funding, or in some cases remained small and true to their original philosophies, or died. During this period, Holleb and Abrams (1975) suggested that such programs would eventually become bureaucratic, like the agencies they originally reacted against, or would be able to hold onto their original values and principles, a stage they called “consensual democracy.” This would involve developing organizational forms in line with these values while somehow accommodating the inevitabilities of growth and becoming more formalized in operations.

Today, it is sometimes hard to see these philosophical origins of community-based organizations with multimillion-dollar budgets, professional staffs, and mainstream facilities. While some agencies are comfortable with their status as more traditional service providers, others work hard to maintain what is special about their original values while adapting to the world of purchase-of-service contracting. Feminist organizations in fields such as domestic violence have demonstrated some success at maintaining their original ideologies (Gilson, 1997).

Perlmutter (1995) has suggested that administrators of such programs who want to avoid becoming traditional and bureaucratic need to hold firmly to their values and ideology and be comfortable with risk taking, difference and diversity, and periods of economic uncertainty. She adds that such organizations need to be constantly vigilant, focusing on their missions, being alert to environmental challenges, and attending to fund-raising. Administrators need to use nonauthoritarian management styles, develop effective interpersonal skills, and be sensitive to staff issues including possible burnout. Similar practice principles are advocated by those practicing progressive social work (Bombyk, 1995).

## JAPANESE MANAGEMENT

By now many Americans are familiar with the story of the advent of the quality movement, traced to the importation from Japan of quality circles in the 1980s as the United States had to recognize the dominance of Japan in manufacturing high-quality products at low cost. Ironically, the methods that changed Japan's reputation as a manufacturer of cheap goods to that of a world leader came originally from America, largely through statistician W. E. Deming and others who provided training to Japanese industry after World War II (Schmidt & Finnegan, 1992). With the subsequent problems in the Japanese economy becoming public in the 1990s, many began to question the value of Japanese management methods. Regardless of the state of the Japanese economy, the principles of quality that became popular there are still relevant and important in American organizations, including the human services. Ouchi's (1982) Theory Z provided a good summary of this movement into the early 1980s.

Ouchi developed Theory Z through his study of Japanese corporations. His findings were that Japanese organizations were characterized by lifetime employment, slow evaluation and promotion, nonspecialized career paths, collective decision-making styles, collective responsibility, and an integration of work and social lives. In the increasingly global economy of the 1990s, many of these principles evolved significantly; in fact, some of the weaknesses associated with these principles, such as the encouragement of workaholic behavior, have since become evident. Lifetime employment, never a reality for the majority of Japanese companies, became much less common in the economic crisis of the 1990s. The common policy of not laying off employees has changed radically recently, with increasing reports of companies "bullying" employees into quitting so that they will not have to be paid severance pay and retirement benefits (Mangier, 1999).

While the term *Theory Z* is rarely used today, its most valuable principles have been incorporated in other ways in many American organizations. Principles of Japanese management have been summarized for use in the human services by Keys (1995a), who studied their use in Japanese social welfare agencies. These include flexible job descriptions; informal decision-making processes to build consensus before formal decisions are made; training and team building to foster shared values, consensus, and high morale; job reassignment and rotation, in which staff have temporary assignments in other departments or agencies, to foster teamwork and collaboration; and total quality management.

Of these processes and principles, total quality management has received the most attention in American organizations. We will now look at how it has been applied in the human services in the United States.

## TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

In an organization using total quality management (TQM), "the organization's culture is defined by and supports the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through an integrated system of tools, techniques, and training"



(Sashkin & Kiser, cited in Keys, 1995b, p. 2019). The seven primary tenets of TQM have been summarized by Swiss (in Keys, 1995b) this way:

1. First and foremost, the customer is the ultimate determiner of quality.
2. Quality should be built into the product [or service] early in the production (upstream) rather than being added on at the end (downstream).
3. Preventing variability is the key to producing high quality.
4. Quality results from people working within systems, not individual efforts.
5. Quality requires continuous improvement of inputs and processes.
6. Quality improvement requires strong worker participation.
7. Quality requires total organizational commitment. (p. 2020)

Keys (1995b) notes that teams (cross-functional improvement teams, quality circles, and process improvement teams) are an “essential component of TQM” (p. 2021). Other basic TQM tools are used for data collection and analysis of work processes, including statistical process charts and flow charts, Pareto charts, and cause-effect diagrams. Another term that has become part of the process improvement vernacular is *benchmarking*, which involves surveys of other organizations to identify the best practices for accomplishing a particular procedure and setting these as standards (Ammons, 1998). TQM techniques are described in more detail by Hawkins and Gunther (1998) and Gummer and McCallion (1995).

## THE EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT

With their publication of *In Search of Excellence*, Peters and Waterman (1982) called attention to the ingredients of successful megacorporations in our society. In almost evangelical tones, they summarize their studies of excelling organizations as follows:

The findings from the excellent companies amount to an upbeat message. There is good news from America. Good management today is not resident only in Japan. But, more important, the good news comes from treating people decently and asking them to shine, and from producing things that work. Scale efficiencies give way to small units with turned-on people. Precisely planned R & D efforts aimed at big bang products are replaced by armies of dedicated champions. A numbing focus on cost gives way to an enhancing focus on quality. Hierarchy and three-piece suits give way to first names, shirt sleeves, hoopla, and project-based flexibility. Working according to fat rule books is replaced by everyone’s contributing. (p. xxv)

Structure, Peters and Waterman conclude, is only “a small part of the total issue of management effectiveness” (p. 9). Among the several other variables identified by these authors in their examination of organizational achievement is “shared values,” or organizational culture. This focus has been adopted by several other studies on organizational culture, including those by Cooke and Rousseau (1988), Schein (1992), and Trice and Beyer (1993). (Findings and implications from the “cultural school” of organizational theory are more fully discussed in Chapter 11, which deals with organizational change.)

The research of Peters and Waterman was criticized shortly after their book was published, as it was noted that some of the companies they profiled did not do well in subsequent years (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 1997, pp. 14–15). However, their general principles have continued to be relevant, if not treated as universal prescriptions. These have been adapted to governmental organizations by Bryson (1995, p. 294):

Local Government Excellence Criteria	Peters and Waterman Criteria
Action orientation: quickly identify and fix problems	A bias for action
Listen to citizens and strive to meet their needs	Close to the customer
Encourage autonomy and entrepreneurship through innovation and risk taking	Autonomy and entrepreneurship
Employee orientation: trust and respect them	Productivity through people
Articulate and act based on values	Hands-on, value driven
Focus on the organization's unique mission, goals, and competence	Stick to the "knitting" (that is, do not provide services outside the organization's distinctive areas of competence)
Simplify structures	Simple form, lean staff
Maintain supportive and effective political relationships	Simultaneous loose-tight properties

There have also been some applications of excellence principles in human service agencies specifically (Harvey, 1998; National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, 1989).

Peters and Waterman each published subsequent books, and Peters in particular has become even more evangelical in showcasing additional "excellent" organizations and leaders. Since he uses case studies and generally has not clearly outlined his research methods, it is difficult to isolate specifically the key success factors of the organizations that he profiles. The complexity and contradictions in his work have been profiled by Micklethwait and Wooldridge (1997), who give him premier "management guru" status. The greatest value of Peters and other "paradigm busters" may be not in the substance of their recommendations but the way they encourage managers to question their assumptions and try to do better.

## BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

Quality improvement processes began to be applied at an organization-wide level with the advent of business process reengineering (BPR) (Hammer & Champy, 1993), also known as business process improvement. BPR has been

defined as “a fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality service, and speed” (Hammer & Champy, 1993, p. 32). Whereas TQM focuses on the line-level organizational processes, reengineering focuses on the whole organization, with particular attention to the “silo mentality” in which different functions operate in separate silos without communicating with each other, and on eliminating all organizational processes that do not add value to the product or service for the customer. It quickly became known as a rationale or excuse for downsizing (euphemistically known as “rightsizing”) and other cost-cutting initiatives.

Managers and stockholders became so infatuated with these developments that a new term, corporate anorexia, entered the management vocabulary: organizations had cut so many staff that they no longer had the institutional memory and brain power to respond effectively to subsequent environmental changes. Rehiring began as the economy improved, although in many cases new hires were contract or temporary employees. Reengineering also received a more critical look at this time when studies showed that 70 to 85 percent of reengineering efforts failed (Zell, 1997, p. 23). In the scientific management tradition, BPR focused on the technical and rational aspects of the organization, ignoring everything that had been learned about human resources approaches. Micklethwait and Wooldridge (1997), who devote a whole chapter to BPR as the “fad in progress” in their critique of management gurus, document its weaknesses and failures, concluding that it does have appropriate, if limited, uses and that it is most effective when used in a “holistic” way, with attention to human factors and employee involvement. Useful design criteria that are based on reengineering principles and are relevant to human service organizations will be reviewed in the next chapter.

## EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND THE QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE

Employee involvement as a management technology was based on human resources theories and the model of quality circles developed in Japan. It was refined and recontextualized through the quality of working life (QWL) movement, which reached prominence in the 1970s and is most fundamentally concerned with more fully involving subordinates in key organizational decisions. Its applications in the human services, most commonly referred to as participative decision making, will be covered in Chapter 7 as part of the supervision process. It is mentioned here at the organizational level because it has implications for the macrolevel design of the organization.

The QWL movement was important because it went beyond earlier conceptions of human relations and job satisfaction, on the one hand, and analytical approaches such as scientific management, on the other, by looking holistically at both technical processes such as how the work got done and social processes such as how decisions were made. According to Taylor and Felten (1993):

Quality of working life is more than merely wages, hours, and working conditions; it is more than dignity and respect, social support, prospects for advancement, and

challenging work. Employees (management and nonmanagement alike) have an opportunity to experience higher QWL through (a) a sense of importance or relevance of their product to the larger community, (b) through the understanding of their place or direct role in creating the product, and (c) through the opportunity to become competent in dealing with those activities most central to the effective creation of the product. (p. 127)

In an old but still relevant overview, Walton (1975) groups QWL factors into eight areas: adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities (such as autonomy and multiple skills), opportunity for continued growth and security, social integration in the work organization (egalitarianism, freedom from prejudice), constitutionalism in the work organization, work and the total life space (a balanced role of work: time for family and leisure), and the social relevance of work life (the organization's social responsibility).

QWL principles align well with the expectations that typical professionals would have for human service work, but because of bureaucratic processes and other conditions, they are not always present. QWL "programs" were popular in the 1970s, but more recently QWL is used as a set of underlying principles for employee involvement to enhance organizational effectiveness, most prominently in sociotechnical systems design, which will be covered in Chapter 5 as a model for organization redesign. The concept is also used for assessing organizational conditions in need of change. This is often done using employee attitude surveys, an organizational change strategy reviewed in Chapter 12. QWL principles, as given here or as developed for a particular organization, can be very useful as design criteria for changing an organization's structure and processes.

## REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

In a groundbreaking book, Osborne and Gaebler (1992) profile dynamic governmental organizations that exemplify a new "entrepreneurial spirit" in government bureaucracies. Reinvention is defined as "the fundamental transformation of public systems and organizations to create dramatic increases in their effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability, and capacity to innovate" (Osborne & Plastrik, 1997, p. 13). As summarized by Bryson (1995), Osborne and Gaebler suggest that governments should have the following qualities:

- Catalytic—They should focus on steering rather than rowing. Government should decide what should be done but does not have to do it itself.
- Community-owned—The programs that work best are the ones that are community owned, capacity building, and empowering rather than delivered by bureaucracies to clients.
- Competitive—Competition is to be preferred to monopoly provision of service since competition is more likely to lead to better, more innovative, and less expensive service.
- Mission-driven—Government should be animated by mission and vision rather than driven by rules.

- Results-oriented—Funding should be based on outcomes, not inputs.
- Customer-driven—Government should meet the needs of the customer and citizen, not the bureaucracy.
- Enterprising—Entrepreneurship and earning money should be rewarded more than spending money.
- Anticipatory—The focus of attention should be on preventing rather than curing problems.
- Decentralized—Participation and teamwork should be emphasized more than hierarchy.
- Market-oriented—Governments should think creatively about how to use markets to achieve public purposes. (p. 295)

Micklethwait and Wooldridge (1997), who earlier offered thoughtful criticism of reengineering, encourage government managers to be guarded in their adoption of management “fads” such as reinvention. They conclude, however, that “management theory has clearly brought more good than harm to the public sector” (p. 316) and suggest that managers take thoughtful reforms even further. As was the case for the study of excellent organizations, reinventing government principles should not be taken as models to apply exactly but as guidelines for creative thinking and selective adoption based on unique organizational circumstances.

## LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

In 1990, Peter Senge published *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. It became a modern classic and was followed by two guidebooks (Senge et al., 1999; Senge et al., 1994) that describe how to create and nurture learning organizations. The five disciplines discussed by Senge are personal mastery (personal growth and learning), mental models (deeply held images about how the world works), shared vision (alignment of personal visions), team learning (using dialogue to address difficult issues), and systems thinking (a conceptual framework for observing patterns and seeing how to change them).

Becoming a learning organization in the sense described by Senge is a very difficult and time-consuming process that, if approached with energy and diligence, can be very rewarding. Reports of learning organization applications in the human services have been rare (Cohen & Austin, 1994; Kurtz, 1998), which perhaps indicates the difficulty of applying such principles. Learning organization concepts seem compatible with human service principles such as the use of teams and dialogue, and they represent opportunities for growth in human service organizations.

## CONTINGENCY THEORIES

The preceding review of classic and current theories and models offers a rich menu from which to choose promising innovations for management practice. No one form of organization is appropriate for all types of settings. In fact, principles from many or all of the theories discussed here may be useful in a

given human service organization. Several researchers have indicated that organizational technologies (tasks), environments, and even sizes affect strategy, which should help determine structure. Different organizations bring with them the need for different structures. Determination of the most efficient and productive type of structure in a given situation depends on the specific contingencies being faced.

The contingency theories—unlike the traditional, human relations, and human resources approaches—recognize that there is no “one best way” to structure all organizations. Rather, a number of “contingency” factors have differential effects on organizations and should be considered in designing structure.

Contingency theories are, in effect, systems theories in the sense that they recognize the effect of the organization’s external environment on its internal structure. The contingency perspective, in other words, accounts for the importance of the interaction between the organization and the outside world—a world that provides it with the sanctions (legitimacy, societal acceptance, political support), energy (money, technological advances, human resources and raw materials (microchips, steel, human beings) to meet its goals. Just as individuals are affected by their environment—its climatic fluctuations, the quality of its atmosphere—so are organizations subject to their environments. Adaptation to new environmental conditions is accomplished, as was reviewed in Chapter 3, through the design and implementation of new programs. Organizational adaptation at a larger scale is accomplished through designing or, more typically, redesigning the organization. This reflects Chandler’s (1962) principle that structure follows strategy: once members of the organization decide where they want to go, the best structure and organizational processes are developed to enable the organization as a system to implement its programs and thrive in a complex environment.

The work of Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) provides particular insight into organizational needs in varying situations. Lawrence and Lorsch identify four organizational features that vary with the degree of environmental certainty: (1) reliance on formal rules and communication, (2) time horizon, (3) diffuse or concentrated goals, and (4) relationship- or task-oriented interpersonal styles. They stress that effective organizations have a good “fit” with their environment. An organization with a stable environment can use formal rules, a short time horizon, traditional communication channels, and task-oriented management. An organization with an unstable environment needs more points of contact with the external world so that changes can be recognized promptly. Such an organization also requires a longer time orientation and a more complex communication pattern. Formal rules and hierarchies would interfere with the needed information flow, so it would be inappropriate to rely on them.

Burns and Stalker (1994) distinguish between what they term mechanistic and organic forms of organization. The mechanistic form, comparable to the classical type of structure, depends on formal authority, specialization, and structured channels of communication. The organic form is highly flexible and informal, with communication channels based not on the hierarchical chain of command but on the need to solve immediate problems by consulting the person with the needed data. In studying a number of British firms, Burns and

Stalker found that the organic style seems most appropriate for firms such as electronics companies facing rapid technological change and the need to solve novel problems. The mechanistic form is productive for firms needing efficiency in dealing with very stable conditions.

The contingency theorists make clear that an effective organization can run the gamut from a traditional bureaucracy to a highly organic, constantly changing structure. Which structure is appropriate depends on the organization's needs. At its most basic level the contingency approach offers administrators a method for clarifying their ideas about organization.

If human service professionals were to use contingency theory to determine the best ways to structure the work of their programs or agencies, they would, as a first step, identify the most salient characteristics of their services and settings. Human service workers who view themselves as technicians offering consistent services to a wide range of clients might be able to use mechanistic organizational structures, but such designs would be inappropriate for professionals attempting to deliver multifaceted services based on community needs assessments. Helpers would also need to determine whether their environments were characterized more by rapid change or by stability over time, recognizing that agencies dealing with shifting populations or subject to changes in funding could not afford to use slow-moving, unwieldy organizational structures.

## SUMMARY

A rich history of theory of organizations has guided organizational behavior in a wide range of settings. The classical models of bureaucracy, scientific management, and human relations as well as more current approaches such as the human resources models of Likert, McGregor, and Argyris and systems theory all have relevance today. New developments such as Japanese management, the excellence movement, and reinventing government initiatives have all affected the human services. Human service managers do use theory, consciously or unconsciously, and

they are likely to be more effective if they consciously apply appropriate theories: the contingency theory approach. Being aware of a variety of theoretical frameworks helps human service professionals know that, as they seek to organize their programs, they do have choices. The theories discussed here should offer guidance to those who are designing or redesigning an agency so that all the various components will work effectively and efficiently together. We will now look at how organizations may be designed, based on thoughtful use of organizational theories.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 4 discussed several approaches to organizational design, including (1) classical, bureaucratic theories, (2) human resources approaches, (3) contingency theories, (4) open systems theory, (5) Japanese management, and (6) newer models including excellence and reengineering.

Do you find some of these theories more helpful than others?

2. What theories do you see being used, explicitly or implicitly, in an organization with which you are familiar? Are these the appropriate theories to be used? If not, which ones would be better?
3. If you were designing a human service organization, which theories would you be most likely to use?

## Case 4

## THE COMMUNITY CAREER CENTER

The Community Career Center (CCC) had been initiated several years ago by a group of professionals who became impatient with the impersonality and red tape that overwhelmed their work in public agencies. All four of the center's founders had previously worked for departments of human resources or vocational rehabilitation, and their experiences had led them to think that there must be better ways to deal with clients' career development needs.

A few basic concepts had been part of the center's orientation since it had first begun operation under Department of Labor and fee-based funding. First, the founders felt that one counselor should work with the total scope of a client's career needs, linking him or her with training programs, with educational institutions, with other needed services, and, finally, with jobs. They also believed in using training formats to deal with the kinds of needs many clients shared. From its unassuming start, the center had provided training programs dealing with midlife career change, retirement planning, job-hunting skills, self-assessment, and a variety of other topics. These programs were offered to members of the general public, such as women reentering the job market, and to local institutions and businesses.

At first, the founders of the center provided most of the services themselves. If they felt that a particular training format had exciting possibilities or if they were invited to design something special for a local group, they would provide workshops and group sessions. In the meantime, each of the four also carried a caseload of clients to whom they were dedicated. They saw themselves as counselors, advocates, and placement specialists for their own clients, and their success exceeded even their own idealistic expectations.

Last year, the center's management had begun to get out of hand. Its size had mushroomed, and so had its funding. Local businesses had proven so supportive, especially in contracting training programs, that the initial Department of Labor contract provided only a small percentage of the agency's total funding. Each training program was self-supporting, and the number of individual clients kept growing. To keep pace, the center had had to hire additional staff members to provide services, so there were now a number of trainers and counselors who had not been in on the original planning. Little by little, the original four founders had

become frustrated. Instead of spending all their time with clients and trainees, they were becoming involved in keeping books, planning repetitive services, and supervising staff members. This supervision especially bothered them. New staff members somehow did not understand the concept of being dedicated to the clients. These counselors did their work, but they were not bubbling over with creativity. They were not seeing new challenges, coming up with new ideas, making that extra effort that made the difference. The original founders, who did have that urge for creativity, were unable to use it. They had become managers, a role they did not like it.

The solution they had found last year was to bring in a business manager, a recent MBA, who knew how to organize and control a growing firm. The center founders breathed a collective sigh of relief when management concerns were taken out of their hands. They gave their new manager a free hand and were pleased with the way he took control of the budgets and financial reports. The new organizational structure that he created also seemed to make sense. He divided the center into departments, including the training department, where programs were designed and implemented; the marketing department, which had responsibility for selling the training programs to industry and other organizations; the counseling department, which provided direct services to clients; the job development department, which canvassed the community for placement possibilities for clients; and the business department, which took care of administrative concerns, including personnel.

This approach seemed to work for a while. The newer staff members, in particular, seemed pleased with the increased clarity of their job descriptions. They were no longer badgered with instructions to "be creative." They knew what their responsibilities were and could carry them out. The center's founders—still the board directors of the agency—were pleased to have management responsibilities taken out of their hands. Now they could be creative again.

Yet that sense of renewed creativity had not taken hold. Somehow the agency's new organization did not allow for it. Now in its fifth year of existence, the Community Career Center was in jeopardy, not because it had failed but because it had succeeded. Two of the four board members wanted to resign and



spin off a new smaller, more responsive agency. Monica Shannon and Paul Ramirez did not really want to make this move, but they could see no way to carry out what they believed to be their mission through an organization as unwieldy as the CCC had become.

At the most volatile meeting ever held at the center, the board of directors cleared the air. Shannon, one of the two original members who had decided to leave, spoke first.

"Look," she exclaimed, "our original idea was to have an agency that would be responsive to our clients' career needs. We would stick with an individual, be an ombudsman, help meet all this one client's needs. Now we have a department for counseling and another department for finding jobs. What happened to the idea that got us started in the first place?"

"And what about the training component?" Ramirez chimed in. "The idea was to meet community needs by designing special sessions, not to keep repeating the same program all the time to make it easier for the marketing department. Everything we do lately is to please the marketers, to make it easier for them to sell. But what have they got to sell? We've got the tail wagging the dog."

"Now, wait a minute," Mark Morgenstein responded. "We've got a big organization here. We

can't expect everything to be the same as it was. Growth and change was supposed to be one of our big aims, too."

"And you were the ones who got the most excited about bringing in a manager to take the business responsibilities out of your hands," Colleen Morgan pointed out. "You can't have everything."

"I'll tell you one thing," Shannon said. "We may be a large organization now, but we accomplished more in a day when the four of us began than that whole gang of bureaucrats we've got here now accomplishes in a month. That's what we've got here now: a bureaucracy. Why did we ever bother leaving the Department of Human Resources? We've got a duplication right here."

1. Would you describe the Community Career Center's current organization as a bureaucracy? How does it compare with the structure that the agency had at first?
2. The agency grew in size over the years. What organizational theories should guide the organization at this stage?
3. At this point, do you think Monica Shannon and Paul Ramirez are right in wanting to leave the organization? What options do they have?

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## CHAPTER 5

# DECISION MAKING

*If you properly identify the problem and respond as the situation demands, you are not making a decision. You are only making a decision when a paucity of data ensures you have a good chance of being wrong; rationally, you ought to seek every opportunity to avoid making a decision. Therefore, you must spend lots of energy determining the characteristics of the problem, the physical, bureaucratic, economic, and political environments in which it exists, and the level of performance required for the response to achieve an acceptable resolution. Through this mechanism, you avoid making a decision and instead just execute a rational response to the known situation. To do otherwise is to chance your professional life—and sometimes more.*

—Captain John R. Paron, U.S. Navy fighter pilot (retired)

**P**ublic administrators face numerous responsibilities and choices. Some of their decisions have limited impact, primarily within their organizations. But others may affect the lives of thousands of people (or more) on a daily basis, and they are decisions that just seem to cascade on one another. Imagine the situation faced by transportation officials in the Northeast Corridor when they discovered that a major section of Interstate 95 (I-95) between Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware, had been undermined and that repairs would require completely shutting down a 10-mile section of the highway for several months. The decision to do so was itself a major move, affecting not only the incredibly high volume of traffic between New York and Washington, D.C. (and between New York and Baltimore, Maryland) but also those who commute from Wilmington to Philadelphia to work every day. And think of the decisions that flow from that. How do they re-route traffic? In so doing, what impact will the action have on businesses and residential neighborhoods adjacent to the detour? How can they minimize the

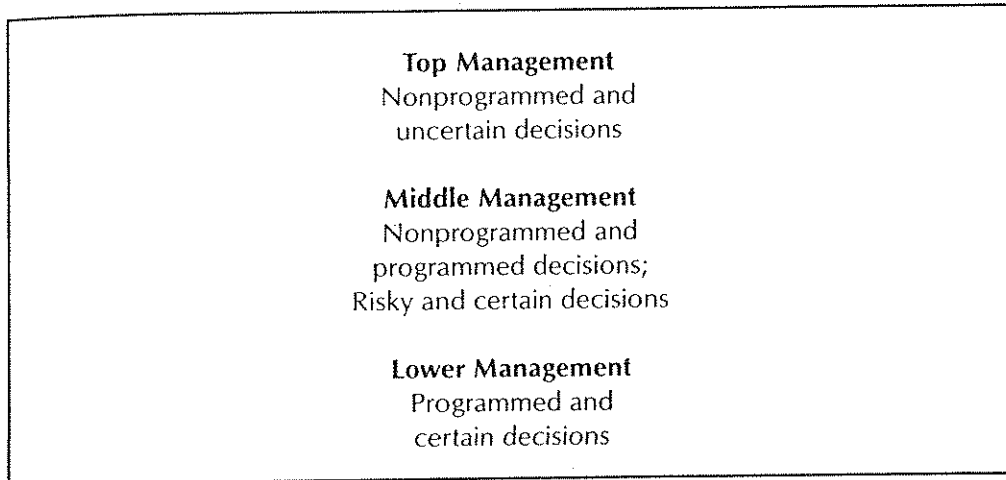
difficulty? Can they encourage alternative modes of transportation, perhaps working with Amtrak to add additional commuter trains? What do they do with the cars that people would now want to park at the train station? And after all that, they discover that the parking lot nearest to the station has just been converted to long-term parking only.

Of course, not all decisions are, or should be, treated alike. Some require quick action, whereas others allow more time to decide. Imagine the difference in the I-95 example if, instead of being able to plan several months for the shutdown, transportation officials were awakened in the middle of the night to learn that the highway was closed by a sudden gas explosion and needed to be shut down immediately and for the next several months. Of course, as we saw in Chapter 4, adding time pressures to already difficult situations makes them even more difficult. And as we know, in an increasingly complex world with high-speed information systems, decision makers must respond to events of enormous complexity within minutes or even seconds. Whatever the size and shape of the required decision, it is naive to think that time always is available for decision making to undergo a calculated process. By the same token, it also is a mistake to think of decision making as simply a random process (Hall 1999).

There are several ways of thinking about the different types of decisions that public administrators must make. Some researchers have divided decisions into two types: (1) programmed decisions (which are repetitive and routine and for which a procedure or decision rule has been established or may be easily specified) and (2) nonprogrammed decisions (which occur infrequently and are poorly structured). For nonprogrammed decisions, there is no apparent decision rule, and administrators are required to engage in difficult problem solving (Simon 1977).

Interestingly, these different types of decisions are found more frequently at different levels of the organization, leading to another way of characterizing decisions. Decisions that take place at the top of the organization typically are labeled strategic or high-risk decisions. Strategic decisions may involve gathering intelligence, setting directions, uncovering alternatives, assessing these alternatives to choose a plan of action, and/or implementing the plan (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki 1992; Harrison and Phillips 1991; March 1994). In a public or nonprofit organization, these decisions might involve starting a new program (e.g., community policing) or a new service (e.g., an immunization program). High levels of uncertainty and even the possibility of conflict often characterize these decisions, and choices often are shaped by external events.

On the other hand, low-risk decisions involve less uncertainty and occasionally permit a degree of delegation. For example, imagine that a change in an organization's benefits package seems advantageous. Such a change might come about by asking the human resources department to research available benefits and provide a recommendation to be approved by top management. Or there might even be more delegation. The human resources department might gather information from representatives of vari-



**Figure 5.1.** Types of Decisions Made at Different Levels of Organizations

SOURCE: Barney, Jay B. and Ricky W. Griffin. *The Management of Organizations*. Copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Used with permission.

ous stakeholder groups (including employees) invited to serve on a “benefits committee.” The final recommendation might even be left to the consensus reached by the committee. Figure 5.1 shows the types of decisions that we might expect to be made at different levels of the organization. From this figure, we may conclude that the more uncertain the conditions surrounding the required decision, the higher up in the organization the decision making is likely to take place. Or, to put it differently, nonprogrammed decisions are more likely to be found at the higher levels of the organization, and programmed decisions are more likely to be found at the lower levels.

Another issue is the relationship between decision making and problem solving. As we were reminded by Captain Paron’s quote at the beginning of this chapter, decisions often can be avoided if problems are solved. In support of Paron’s point, Starling provided the following illustration:

Effective decision makers know that very few problems or events are unique. Most are manifestations of underlying problems. Therefore, before attempting a quick fix on Problems A, B, C, [and] D, they will try to find the basic problem, E. Once E is solved, A, B, C, D, and any future problems stemming from E are eliminated. Thus, effective decision makers make few decisions. (1993, 245)

Indeed, Starling indicated that administrators often make more decisions than they need to make. Because the underlying causes of problems is not always obvious, problems are treated as unique. This results in administrators treating symptoms rather than identifying and treating the root causes (Morehead and Griffin 1992). It is important to remember that all problems require decisions, but not all decisions will require problem solving.

Finally, we should note that public managers face a particular difficulty in that their decisions often are (necessarily) made in clear public view. Certainly, the prospect of scrutiny increases as decision making moves from pri-

vate to public organizations (Millett 1966; Stahl 1971; Nutt 1999). "Sunshine" laws often force the conduct of the public's business into the open, requiring such organizations to make decisions in front of interest groups, stakeholders, and the media. "Even when sunshine laws do not apply, mechanisms of accountability and oversight make all actions in public organizations, even contingency plans or hypothetical scenarios, subject to review and interpretation by outsiders" (Nutt 1999, 313). Blumenthal (1983) used the term "fish bowl management" to refer to the way in which public organizations must make strategic decisions.

## ■ ■ ■ WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

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### GENERATING ALTERNATIVES

Think of a situation that you currently are experiencing at work, at home, or at school. Or just use the following example. You have been offered a data entry job in a local bank. The job pays well; in fact, it might pay better than the social service job you have been planning on for the past three years. You have been working hard to complete your degree so as to pursue a career in social services. Going to work at the bank would mean at least postponing graduation.

Why is a choice necessary? Needing to choose implies that a gap exists between what is happening and what you would like to see occur. What alternatives exist in the situation that you are experiencing? The variations to the decision gap might look something like this:

Something is wrong and needs to be corrected.

Something is threatening and needs to be prevented.

Something is inviting and needs to be accepted.

Something is missing and needs to be provided.

Were you able to come up with an action that would close the gap? For example, were you able to justify taking or not taking the job? Through this process, we can say that the decision-making process begins with the perception of a gap and ends with the action that will close or narrow the gap (adapted from Arnold 1978).

### THE HORSE GROOMING CASE

The City of Rochester recently created a mounted police unit within the city's police department. The mounted police were to be used to patrol large gatherings, particularly in downtown areas. The city purchased the horses,

trained the police officers to patrol on the horses, and rented the stables in which to keep the three newly acquired animals. One issue remained—how to groom the horses.

Andrea Alvarez, a management analyst from the police department's budget office, was asked to look into the situation. She had no idea as to the type of care the horses needed, and she knew that she must begin by learning what was required. She visited stables where horses were kept and talked to their owners, who referred her to the horse groomers. Horses require daily grooming, with several benefits (including the horses' health). Preferably, the grooming would take place in the stables where the horses were housed. Andrea learned that horse groomers could be hired full-time, part-time, or on an hourly basis, depending on the needs of the city.

Andrea was asked by the chief of police, Chief Lewis, for a recommendation to help him make the hiring decision. He was concerned about the cost of these horses and did not want to add to it, but at the same time he understood the need for care of the animals. After interviewing members of the mounted police, horse owners, and horse groomers, learning the costs and benefits of horse grooming, and reviewing the needs of the horses in the city, Andrea determined that there were four options available:

1. Hire a full-time horse groomer to care for the horses. This person would be fully trained to meet the grooming needs of the horses and also would be able to identify health needs when they arose. Of course, this would involve the highest cost, as this person would be a full-time city employee with city benefits.
2. Hire a part-time horse groomer to care for the horses. There currently were only three horses on the force. The horse groomer could be hired for four hours a day to come in and groom the three horses. Additional grooming would need to be done by the police officers, who also would be responsible for identifying health needs. The cost of a part-time horse groomer would be lower, but the officers might be taken away from patrol to groom the horses.
3. Contract a horse groomer on an hourly basis to care only for the city's horses. This person would require an hourly rate but would not receive city benefits. The availability of the horse groomer would have to be negotiated at the time of the contract negotiations.
4. The horses were in rented stables with groomers available, and the groomers could be added to the rent of the stables. Because some of the other horse owners who used the stables had experience with the groomers, the quality of the groomers' work could be checked. The cost would be expected to be less than that of using a separately contracted horse groomer because these people already were in the stables.



You are the management analyst who needs to make recommendations on the alternatives to the chief of police. Based on your knowledge, which option would you recommend? Why?

## ■■ WAYS OF THINKING

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An effective public manager is one who is able to identify which problems are within the scope of managerial decision making and then make an effective and responsible decision. A good decision in terms of effectiveness is one that is high in quality, is timely, and is both understandable and acceptable to those whose support is needed for implementation (Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn 1994). A good decision in terms of responsibility is one that is consistent with the public interest and offers the greatest value for the public's money. In the public sector, good decision making must meet both criteria.

As a public or nonprofit manager, you must be aware of two initial steps in the decision-making process. First, you must identify the problem and its elements. In the problem identification phase, you might ask question such as the following. Is the problem easy to deal with? Might the problem resolve itself? Is this your decision to make? Is this a solvable problem within the context of the organization? In this process, you probably will want to keep in mind some appropriate models of decision making. Second, you will need to manage the involvement of others in the decision-making process, taking into account trade-offs between quality and speed. If quality is most important and you are seeking a decision that is accurate, creative, and likely to be accepted by others, then you probably will want to engage various individuals and groups in the decision-making process. In this way, you will be able to have more people contributing ideas, you can divide up complex tasks, you can conduct a more thorough search for alternatives, and you probably can generate more alternatives and stimulate greater interests. But if efficiency is paramount and defined in terms of how quickly the decision is made, then you probably will have to resort to making the decision on your own. In the following subsections, we examine three aspects of the decision process: models of decision making, who should be involved, and what techniques are available.

### 9 MODELS OF DECISION MAKING

In 1971, Graham Allison published *The Essence of Decision*, in which he analyzed the Cuban missile crisis that President Kennedy faced during the early 1960s. Although Allison's (1971) specific example today is somewhat

dated, the categories he developed to understand the decision process in this case remain extremely helpful and can be applied to other situations. Essentially, Allison suggested that there are three perspectives that one might use to analyze a major governmental decision: the rational model, the organizational process model, and the governmental politics model. (These sometimes are identified as Model I, Model II, and Model III, respectively.) Allison's basic argument was that, depending on which model or perspective you employ to understand the decision process, you see different things.

As an illustration, Allison described someone watching a chess match. Initially, most observers would assume that the chess players are moving the pieces in a strategic fashion toward the goal of winning the match. This way of understanding the situation—focusing on goals as well as strategies and tactics to reach that goal—is consistent with the rational model. But someone else might look at the same match and conclude that the players were not single individuals and that, instead, the game was being carried out by a loose alliance of semi-independent "organizations," each moving its pieces (e.g., rooks, bishops, pawns) according to some standard operating procedures. This view would be consistent with the assumptions of the organizational process model. Finally, still another observer might watch the chess match and assume that the game was the result of a number of distinct players, with separate objectives but with shared power over the individual pieces, operating through a process of collegial bargaining (Allison 1971, 7). This view would be consistent with the governmental politics model. In any case, Allison described the three models as conceptual lenses that magnify, highlight, and reveal but that also distort or blur our vision. He called for greater awareness of our choices among the three approaches.

In the following subsections, we organize our discussion around these three perspectives of decision making: the rational model, the organizational process model, and the governmental politics model. In each case, we examine the basic premises of Allison's approach as well as some of the prior thinking that led to Allison's formulation. Then we note some more recent interpretations of decision making that at least loosely correspond to Allison's three models.

### *The Rational Model*

We begin with a general and familiar description of how decision making takes place, either in organizations or for individuals. Within the organizational context, decision making is the process by which "courses of action are chosen (from among alternatives) in pursuit of organizational goals" (Murray 1986, 10). From an individual perspective, decision making can be expressed as a course of action chosen from among alternatives in pursuit of personal goals. Basically, when we think of decision making, we tend to think of a process involving the following five phases (Elbing 1970; Harrison 1975; Murray 1986; Pressman 1973):

*Preanalysis phase:* Situations are defined.

*Analytic phase:* Situations that affect goals are perceived, and information about them is gathered.

*Design phase:* Options are crystallized to deal with the situation.

*Choice phase:* Alternatives are evaluated, and the optimal choice is selected.

*Implementation phase:* The alternative that is chosen to meet the specific situation is implemented.

In the rational model, these phases for decision making are performed deliberately and consciously, relying on the rationality of the decision maker's thoughts and behaviors. Allison proposed the rational model as the classical and dominant orientation to decision making. This model assumes "human purposeness both in individual behavior and in the broader scope issues such as foreign policy" (Allison 1971, 30). Moreover, it assumes that individuals and groups behave rationally in decision making and when they take other actions. And to behave rationally generally is understood to mean that people try to maximize the value they receive in any situation. That is, they make value-maximizing choices.

There actually are several variations of the theme of rationality. The classic "economic man" argument suggests that people consider all available alternatives and then make choices that maximize the values they receive. For example, if you are buying a car, then you get complete information on all cars that meet certain minimum criteria and then make the choice that provides the best value—the best combination of price, features, and quality that you desire. But Herbert Simon, in his classic *Administrative Behavior*, argued that real people cannot quite handle all of the information that is available and that they do not have the decision-making prowess required to fit the assumptions of economic man (Simon 1976).

Instead, Simon suggested that, as humans, we have cognitive limits. Because we cannot deal with all of the possible aspects of a problem or process all of the information that might be available, we do the next best thing; we choose to tackle meaningful subsets thereof and make decisions that might not maximize value but are at least satisfactory. As Simon put it, we "satisfice." In the example of buying a car, instead of searching out all of the information available and making a purely rational decision, you are more likely to look at different cars until you find one that meets your minimum criteria. Then you buy that car. But note that you still are seeking a rational decision; you just are limited in your capacity to achieve such a decision in all cases. Although what Simon called "administrative man" cannot attain the same degree of rationality as can economic man, administrative man does the best with what he has.

Allison also equated the "rational man" with the classical economic man or at least with its variant, administrative man. In either case, our goal is to

make value-maximizing choices to the extent that we can. Other assumptions in the rational model include that decisions are orderly (not disorderly), intentional (not unintentional), purposeful (not random), deliberate (not chaotic), consistent (not inconsistent), responsible (not irresponsible), accountable (not unaccountable), explainable (not unexplainable), and rational (not irrational). The result is a decision model characterized by rational calculation of the costs and benefits of various alternatives. Both Allison and Lindblom provided similar interpretations of the rational decision-making model. Allison (1971, 29-30) viewed the process as having the following four steps:

1. Translate goals and objectives into payoffs and utility.
2. Choose among alternatives.
3. Consider the consequences.
4. Select the alternative whose consequences have the greatest utility.

Similarly, Lindblom (1959, 1979) suggested that the rational decision-making process involves the following:

1. All related values are prioritized (e.g., full employment, healthy children, adults with health insurance).
2. Then all possible policy outcomes are rated as more or less efficient in achieving these goals.
3. All possible alternatives are outlined and require a systematic comparison to determine which one would result in the greatest value.
4. The choice that maximizes values is chosen.

Regardless of whether the assumptions of the rational model actually are carried out in practice, the model is attractive as a way of thinking about problems. Indeed, because it is so useful for explaining and predicting behavior, it is the model most familiar to us. Allison and Zelikow (1999) illustrated the pervasiveness of the model by asking individuals to react to another nation's unexpected behavior. They specified three occasions: the expansion into Eastern Europe by Hitler, the transfer of missiles into Cuba by the Soviet Union, and the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. The overwhelming response of those questioned was to make sense of what happened, to develop reasons and motivations, to explore the intentions of various actors, and to assume a careful and deliberate calculation of the consequences of various outcomes. In other words, they tried to fit these aggressive and risky situations into the rational model and assumed that the government action was primarily the result of a single actor behaving under the assumptions of rational behavior. So, even when other models might be more appropriate for explanation and

prediction, we tend to rely on the rational model to make sense out of decisions.

The modern rational choice models introduce the element of self-interest, which seeks to explain the inconsistencies between the rational goal of the organization and the individual interests of the actor (Glaser, Aristigueta, and Payton 2000). The notion of self-interest acknowledges that rationality is just one of the many potential influences on the decision-making process. Think back to the 2000 presidential election. A very close race left the final count of votes in the state of Florida critical to the election of Al Gore or George W. Bush as president of the United States. Early accusations of self-interest were made by both the Democrats and the Republicans. The Democrats blamed the Republican secretary of state, Katherine Harris, for acting out of self-interest in certifying the election before all avenues had been contested. The Republicans blamed the Democrats for not wanting to bring the election to closure, which they considered to be in the best interest of the American people (in this case, it also would be in the Republican candidate's favor). The secretary of state, by imposing deadlines and requirements in the counties, believed that she was acting rationally in ruling that the votes could be certified. Was the secretary of state acting out of self-interest, or was she being rational? Or should we say that rationality and self-interest coexist?

There is a growing wave of criticism of the rational model. One part of this criticism is the recognition that values and feelings also play an important role in decision making (Etzioni 1988). In addition, habits, moral feelings, and values that have nothing to do with rationality may guide our behavior (Camic 1985). Finally, Janis and Mann (1977) criticized the rational approach for its disregard of a holistic picture of human nature. Assuming consistency, intentionality, purposefulness, and rationality on the part of individuals invariably leads to misunderstanding and possibly false assumptions. Choosing other models as alternative conceptual lenses avoids this trap and can offer different insights by highlighting different aspects of the decision process.

### *The Organizational Process Model*

An alternative to the rational model sees government as composed of many loosely allied organizations, each with its own set of leaders. One individual leader rarely can control the behavior of so many different organizations. To accomplish the necessary complex tasks, the behavior of a large number of individuals must be coordinated (Allison and Zelikow 1999). According to Allison and Zelikow, Model I (the rational model) "examines the logic of consequences," whereas Model II (the organizational behavior model) "explains the logic of the action" (1999, 146). The latter model includes the possibility of multiple agents in the decision-making process. But under this model, decision makers are constrained by standard operating procedures that tend to make decision outcomes somewhat predictable.

We can think of an organization as the pattern of communication and relationships in a group that provides each member with information and assumptions, goals, and attitudes that enter into his or her decisions. These patterns mean that individual members develop standard ways of reacting to situations they confront. "A sales manager reacts like a sales manager because he [*sic*] occupies a particular organizational position, receives particular kinds of communications, is responsible for particular sub-goals, and experiences particular kinds of pressure" (Simon 1976, xix). More generally, an organization's influence on decision making is exercised by (1) dividing tasks among its members, (2) establishing standard practices, (3) transmitting objectives throughout the organization, (4) providing channels of communication that run in all directions, and (5) training and indoctrinating its members with the knowledge, skill, and values of the organization (Beach 1990).

Allison and Zelikow (1999, 145) outlined five characteristics of the organizational behavior model:

1. Individuals must be organized in a structured way to achieve an objective.
2. Organizations create capabilities for performing tasks that otherwise would be impossible.
3. Existing organizations and programs constrain behavior.
4. An organizational culture emerges that shapes the behavior of individuals within organizations.
5. Organizations form a sort of technology in which groups of individuals work together in developing procedures to complete designated tasks.

Incrementalism, an alternative to the rational model offered by Lindblom, is the key to the organizational process model. Lindblom rejected the notion that most decisions are made by rational processes. Instead, he found that decisions are dependent on small incremental choices made in response to short-term conditions. His theory suggests that decision making is "controlled infinitely more by events and circumstances than by the will of those in policy-making positions" (Shafritz and Russell 2000, 52). According to Lindblom, the bargaining process characteristic of government produces incremental "muddling through" that is quite different from the comprehensive choices of a centralized authority acting according to the dictates of rationality. Inevitably, the analysis of alternatives for action and the choice of values and goals that inform the decision become so intertwined that they are indistinguishable.

Criticisms of the organizational process model include the fact that decision makers are prevented from forecasting the future and acting on the basis of a predetermined vision. Decision makers are forced to make incremental changes based on standard operating procedures. Critics also point out that

organizations create their own institutionalized rationality (Fligstein 1992). A study of hospitals and their use of cesarean sections illustrates this point. In an empirical study, Goodrich and Salancik (1996) found that the rates of cesarean sections for childbirth in hospitals were not related to best medical practice but rather were based on organizational standards of procedure. This case provides a vivid illustration of the concerns presented by using standard operating procedures instead of what is in the best interest of the mother's health.

A related model emphasizes the legal aspects of decision making. In its most simple and direct form, law is concerned with the conduct of individuals in the context of the social, political, and economic order (Murray 1986). The legal model consists of the sum total of principles and procedures that a society has adopted and relies on to function properly. In using this model for decision making, the law is used as a guiding principle, requiring reasoned decisions and fundamental fairness. Legal models are viewed as administrative tools in that "they aid in decision making, enhance efficiency, reduce arbitrariness, improve morale, and provide defenses when agencies' actions are challenged" (Cooper 1996, 134). The legal model looks to the Constitution, laws, courts, and/or contractual obligations for specificity on procedures, requirements, and responsibilities. Under this model, the law is an essential device for accomplishing the responsibilities entrusted to public and nonprofit administrators.

### *The Governmental Politics Model*

This model acknowledges that decisions in government (and other institutions) are made through a collaborative process that, in reality, bears little resemblance to a single executive making a rational choice. Under the governmental politics model, decisions are group efforts that involve bargaining among players with different and competing interests. According to Allison, "To explain why a particular formal governmental process was made, or why one pattern of governmental behavior emerged, it is necessary to identify the games and players; to display the coalitions, bargains, and compromises; and to convey some feel for the confusion" (1971, 146). Similarly, Wilson emphasized the important role that constituents play in government, referring to them as "the principal source of power" (1989, 204).

The governmental politics model is most readily understood by defining what it is not. First, it is not a model with a single unitary decision maker; rather, it involves a number of actors with their own agendas, priorities, and timetables. Second, this model does not focus on single strategic issues at stake in a decision but rather recognizes complex multilevel issues being considered by groups of actors with multiple interests and agendas and operating in different social spheres simultaneously. For example, a cabinet secretary in a state department is responsible to the governor, departmental staff, the various interests served by the department, the public, and the secretary's own profession and career. The decisions and actions that the secre-

tary makes will affect and be affected by multiple stakeholders. Third, this model does not describe a single rational choice; instead, it offers “the pulling and hauling that is politics” (Allison 1971, 144). Bargaining actually is a collection of decisions that often is assembled more haphazardly than logically. As Allison and Zelikow observed,

Most issues, e.g., the Asian economic meltdown, or the proliferation of nuclear weapons, or trade with China, emerge piecemeal over time, one lump in one context, a second in another. Hundreds of issues compete for players’ attention every day. Each player is forced to fix upon his [*sic*] issues for that day, deal with them on their own terms, and rush on to the next. Thus, the character of emerging issues and the pace at which the game is played converge to yield government “decisions” and “actions” as collages. (1999, 257)

The major contribution of the governmental politics model is that it places the actor within a context. Each person is influenced by his or her position, perceptions, practices, and priorities. How problems are defined and how agendas are set are critical considerations in explaining decisions and their results. Issues originate from a variety of sources, ranging from pragmatic considerations to strategic goals and values. For example, a potential increase in tuition at a state university involves various actors—the board of regents, state legislators, perhaps even the governor. How the potential increase is received will vary among the many actors affected by it—the parents or students paying tuition, employers covering employees’ educational expenses, the faculty and administration of the university. What would be the reaction of these actors? Can you think of additional actors on both the decision-making and receiving ends of the decision process?

A more contemporary approach to decision making bearing some resemblance to the governmental politics model is what has been called the “garbage can model.” The garbage can model was developed by Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), whose original work focused on universities as a form of “organized anarchy.” “These organizations could then be viewed as having a collection of choice opportunities, solutions looking for problems, and participants looking for work” (Takahashi 1997, 92). *Choice opportunities* are occasions when organizations are expected to produce decisions. For example, in the university setting, a university program might be asked by the administration to decide whether it would like to implement a Ph.D. program in the School of Public Administration. *Participants* are characterized in terms of the energy they have available for problem solving. The school director would determine which faculty members would be available to work on the issue and interested in doing so. The faculty members would be asked to participate in the decision-making process. *Problems* are characterized by how much energy will be required to make a choice. After selecting the faculty members, a committee chair would be assigned. The committee would decide on the issues that must be addressed, such as the curriculum, addi-



tional faculty, recruiting of students, and the energy required to supervise doctoral students. *Solutions* recognize the potential energy that is necessary to solve a problem. The committee would then make a decision, given to the department head, on whether or not to consider adding a doctoral program based on the resources that are available.

Under this model, decision processes are affected by the timing of problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities, all of which are assumed to be independent. The choice opportunity is viewed as the garbage can in which problems, solutions, and energy are dumped by the participants. Once the garbage can is full, or once all of the alternatives associated with it have been exhausted, it is removed from the decision-making process. Each of the following three scenarios would lead to a full garbage can in that a decision could be made (Takahashi 1997, 92).

*Decision making by resolution.* The choice resolves problems after some period of time working on them. In the university example just cited, we could say that the decision was reached by resolution. The committee wrote an action plan to address the proposal for the Ph.D. program.

*Decision making by flight.* When the choice resolves no problems after some period of time working on them, the decision can be made if the problems leave the choice opportunity. The decision could have been made by flight if the committee had not been able to reach consensus on the need or interest for a Ph.D. program in public administration.

*Decision making by oversight.* If there is effective energy available to make the new decision before problems become activated, then the decision will be made with minimal energy. On the other hand, the decision could have been made by oversight if the school director, after consulting with faculty, had decided that it was in the best interest of the school to develop a proposal for a Ph.D. program and took it upon himself or herself to do so.

Takahashi's empirical research revealed that "decision making by flight is a regular feature of the usual decision processes of white-collar workers in Japanese firms" (1997, 106). Takahashi found that an increase in workload increases the use of flight when an organization has a high degree of anarchy. He was not surprised by his findings and did not find the high flight ratio to mean failure in an organization with competent organizational workers. "In fact, it is directly [the] responsible managers for efficiency who have the high flight ratio in comparison with the others in Japanese firms" (1997, 106). This is attributed to bounded rationality, where the heavy workload makes it difficult for the organization to operate smoothly and satisfactorily (March and Simon 1958; Simon 1976).

In addition, critics have noted that because, in this model, managers make decisions in small increments that make sense to them, they may simply generate actions that will make them look good (Starbuck 1983) or pro-

tect them from looking bad. In fact, an analysis of decision making during the Cuban missile crisis led to the conclusion that decisions were made to avoid failure rather than to achieve success (Anderson 1983). Perhaps a similar statement could be made of political decisions during the war in Vietnam.

Finally, how people actually choose from among alternatives was studied by Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret (1976), who developed a content analysis of 25 strategic decisions. They found that judgmental, bargaining, and analytical approaches were used to evaluate alternatives. *Judgment* was evidenced by decision makers in applying their intuition to select among courses of action without explaining their reasoning or rationale. *Bargaining* was said to occur when parties to the decision negotiated to reach an agreement. *Analysis* was used to produce factual evaluation. Mintzberg and colleagues found that judgment was the method used most frequently and that analysis was the method applied least frequently. Bargaining was used when opposition arose.

## ② WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

A second major area of decision making addresses the question of who should be involved in the decision process. In this regard, there are three basic methods of decision making. *Authoritative* decisions are those made by an individual alone or on behalf of the group. *Consultative* decisions also are decisions made by an individual, but in this case they are made after seeking input from or consulting with members of the group. *Group* decisions are those made by all members of the group, ideally through consensus. Naturally, there are advantages and disadvantages of each approach. As we noted earlier, involving many people in the process may result in a better decision because many will have had the opportunity to think of the pros and cons and, therefore, will be more likely to support a decision in which they have been involved. On the other hand, involving many also may sacrifice efficiency given that the more people who are involved, the more time-consuming the decision-making process becomes. In group decision making, the process is slower than if an individual were to make the decision.

Moreover, there is the possibility of "groupthink," a mode of thinking that occurs when people are deeply involved in a cohesive group and their desire for unanimity offsets their motivation to appraise alternative courses of action. Janis wrote, "My belief is that we can best understand the various symptoms of groupthink as a mental effort among group members to maintain . . . emotional equanimity by providing social support to each other" (1971, 174). For example, imagine a college classroom near the end of the period. A couple of students still have questions, but as they look around the room, they see their classmates packing to leave. Rather than ask their questions, they conform to the class standard and head for the door. The goal of learning has been displaced by the power of the group. Figure 5.2 provides a prescription for the prevention of groupthink. That prescription requires

Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign everyone the role of critical evaluator</li> <li>Be impartial; do not state preferences</li> <li>Assign the devil's advocate role to at least one of the group members</li> </ul>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up several independent groups to study the same issue</li> <li>Train managers and group leaders in groupthink prevention techniques</li> </ul>
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a critical thinker</li> <li>Discuss group deliberations with a trusted outsider; report back to the group</li> </ul>
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodically break the group into subgroups to discuss the issues</li> <li>Take time to study external factors</li> <li>Hold second-chance meetings to rethink issues before making a commitment</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.2.** Prescriptions for Prevention of Groupthink

SOURCE: Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2nd ed. Copyright © 1982 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Adapted with permission.

critical thinking on the part of individuals and groups to avoid contamination of the process or goal displacement. Contamination of the process or goal displacement is encountered when the cohesion of the group overcomes the process for decision making or the goal for the assignment.

An extremely detailed formulation of the issue of participation was put forward by Vroom and Yetton (1973) and further developed by Vroom and Jago (1988). The Vroom-Yetton model focuses on the question of when or under what circumstances managers should involve others in decision making. In this model, the matter of participation is viewed as more complex than simply having subordinates participate or not. Rather, there are five different levels of participation that are included in the model and listed in Figure 5.3. This leads to the question: Which of these levels of participation is appropriate in any given situation? (Note that for some situations, two or more participation levels are likely to produce decisions that lead to successful results.)

To answer this question, the leader is advised to work through the decision tree presented in Figure 5.4. The decision tree initially appears complex but, in fact, is easy to use. One begins under Point A by asking Question A (All questions must be answered with a *yes* or *no*. No answers of *maybe* or *sometimes* are allowed.) Depending on the answer, one proceeds to either Question B (for a *yes* response to Question A) or Question D (for a *no* response to Question A). One continues answering questions as indicated on the decision tree until reaching an end point. Each end point is numbered and is followed by a listed set of participation levels. (These refer to the participation levels listed in Figure 5.3.) This is a "feasible set," meaning that each of the levels listed in the set is likely to result in a successful outcome

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Definition</i>
AI	You solve the problem or make the decision yourself using the information available to you at the time.
All	You obtain any necessary information from subordinates and then decide on a solution to the problem yourself. You may or may not tell subordinates the purpose of your questions or give information about the problem or decision on which you are working. The input provided by them clearly is in response to your request for specific information. They do not play a role in the definition of the problem or in generating or evaluating alternative solutions.
CI	You share the problem with the relevant subordinates individually, getting their ideas and suggestions without bringing them together as a group. Then you make the decision. The decision may or may not reflect your subordinates' influence.
CII	You share the problem with your subordinates in a group meeting. In this meeting, you obtain their ideas and suggestions. Then you make the decision, which may or may not reflect your subordinates' influence.
GII	You share the problem with your subordinates as a group. Together you generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on a solution. Your role is much like that of a chairperson—coordinating the discussion, keeping it focused on the problem, and making sure that the critical issues are discussed. You can then provide the group with information or ideas that you have. But you do not try to "press" group members to adopt "your" solutions, and you are willing to accept and implement any solution that has the support of the entire group.

**Figure 5.3.** Levels of Participation in Decision Making

SOURCE: Reprinted from *Leadership and Decision-Making*, by Victor H. Vroom and Philip W. Yetton, © 1973. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

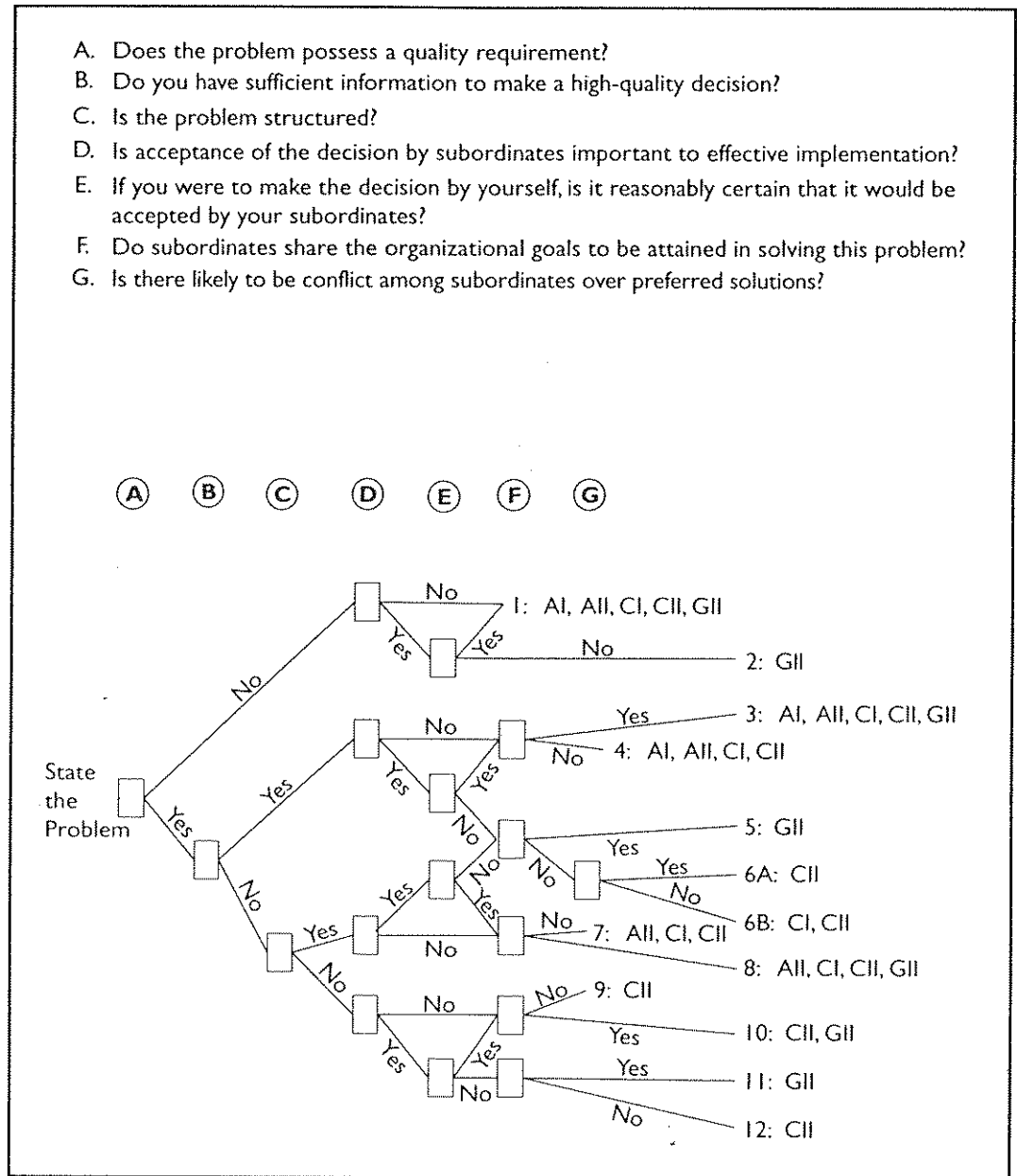
But this does not mean that there is no reason to pick one style over another within the set, for the styles are ordered in terms of the amount of time it will take to reach a decision. The fastest approach is listed first, the next fastest is listed second, and so on. Again, the model takes into account the type of decision being made (a process aided by the decision tree) and then offers a level of participation that is most likely to be successful.

## WHAT TECHNIQUES ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST YOU?

There are a variety of techniques to assist you in various aspects of the decision process. In this section, we examine two popular techniques for securing more information and then discuss several others for choosing from among alternatives.

### *Focus Groups*

Focus groups are a popular method for receiving input from a large number of individuals to facilitate the decision-making process. Morgan referred



**Figure 5.4.** Decision Tree for Determining Levels of Participation

SOURCE: Adapted and reprinted from *Leadership and Decision-Making*, by Victor H. Vroom and Philip W. Yetton, Copyright © 1973. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

to focus groups as “group interviews” (1997, 1). A typical focus group consists of 10 to 12 people brought together to discuss a particular topic, usually with the help of a trained facilitator. Focus groups may be used for problem identification, planning, implementation, and/or assessment. The data gathered from these meetings are then used by managers to make decisions.

Focus groups require careful planning. Indeed, Morgan (1998) recommended that the planning occur throughout the whole project. He described the focus group process as consisting of four basic steps:

*Planning:* This step requires the anticipation of major decisions that will need to be made.

*Recruiting:* Having well-targeted participants is as important as asking good questions or using a skilled facilitator. "Problems with recruitment are the single most common reason why things go wrong in focus group projects" (Morgan 1998, 4).

*Moderating:* Effective recruiting and good questions will greatly aid the facilitator or moderator in the focus group endeavor.

*Analysis and reporting:* The information gathered during the focus group is finally analyzed and reported so that it can be used in the decision-making process.

Focus groups can be used in many ways (Morgan 1997, 3). For example, a federal agency wanted to learn why its national health promotion campaign was having little effect. Focus groups indicated that the message in the existing advertising was too complex and then considered simpler ways of expressing the same ideas. A large nonprofit organization wanted to increase its activities in the African American community. Through a nationwide series of focus groups, the organization learned that it was virtually unknown, despite an advertising campaign that it thought was geared to African Americans. A state agency that was facing major cutbacks wanted to provide a job counseling program that would be of practical use to its former employees. Focus groups revealed the need for different programs for those who wanted jobs that were similar to their old ones as opposed to those who wanted to pursue new careers.

### *Brainstorming*

Originally developed during the 1930s in the advertising industry, brainstorming is a method of generating a large number of ideas in a short period of time (Rawlinson 1981). More specifically, brainstorming typically is used to create ideas and generate alternatives. Brainstorming is one of the most widely used and, unfortunately, misused techniques for fostering creativity. The key concept behind brainstorming is to increase creative thinking and generation of solutions by prohibiting criticism. Its misuse most commonly takes the form of participants failing to understand or adhere to its ground rules. Brainstorming works best when the following guidelines are followed:

1. State the problem clearly and neutrally. It can be helpful to restate the problem using the phrase "How can I/we . . .?" Post the restated problem where it can be easily seen.
2. Generate ideas using these ground rules: There is no judgment made about the ideas as they are being generated, the objective is to generate the greatest quantity (not quality) of ideas, all ideas (even wild ones) are welcomed, and it is appropriate to embellish or "piggyback" on ideas.

Group brainstorming sessions tend to work best when someone takes on the role of facilitator. The facilitator reminds the group of the ground rules and helps the group to enforce them, for example, by stopping participants who might begin evaluating other people's ideas. Rawlinson (1981) suggested that these ground rules are so important to successful brainstorming that they always should be put on display during the brainstorming session. Wycoff (1995, 130) suggested a number of additional ways of enhancing group brainstorming sessions:

1. *Allow time for individual idea generation.* Allow three to five minutes of silent individual brainstorming before beginning the group brainstorming session. This can reduce anxiety and prevent a "follow the leader" type of thought process.
2. *Alternate between small groups and large groups.* Groups of three or four can make it easier for people who are too shy or reticent to participate in larger groups. Larger groups can provide greater diversity and generate more laughter, which can serve as a catalyst to creativity.
3. *Realign groups frequently.* This can help groups to equalize participation and avoid the development of rigid roles.
4. *Use activities and humor.* Movement, participation, and humor can help to break down barriers to communication and creativity.

When used appropriately, brainstorming can be a highly useful technique for generating a large volume of ideas and triggering creative solutions to problems. Brainstorming also can be used effectively in conjunction with other techniques such as focus groups.

### *Cost-Benefit and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis*

After gathering facts and suggestions, the decision maker should begin assessing the various alternatives. A variety of analytical tools are available for decisions that require this level of analysis. Because the cost of public programs usually is an issue of major concern to the public administrator, here we provide a quick overview of cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness techniques.

*Cost-benefit analysis.* This technique is used by government agencies to plan programs, allocate resources, evaluate outcomes, and assess the efficiency of organizational processes. "The general approach is to identify and quantify both negative impacts (costs) and positive impacts (benefits) of a proposed project and then to subtract one from the other to determine the net benefit" (Sylvia, Sylvia, and Gunn 1997, 145). All costs and benefits must be expressed in monetary terms, so this technique is useful if we are interested in the efficiency of a program. However, we also can consider tangible and intangible items as well as direct and indirect benefits and costs.

These sometimes are fuzzy, requiring the analyst to pass judgment. Starling provided an example of an indirect cost: "A frequent indirect cost in government programs is compliance costs or simply red tape. For example, a new federal law designed to safeguard employee pension rights can cause small firms to terminate their plans because of paperwork requirements" (1993, 253). An example of an intangible benefit is the prestige that a neighborhood might gain by the addition of a new city park. To measure the effectiveness of a program that includes nonmonetary items, the analyst must use cost-effectiveness analysis.

*Cost-effectiveness analysis.* This technique is used to compare the program's output to the costs encountered. Costs consist of expenditures of money and other resources (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment) to maintain a program. (Again, some of the "cost" measures might be qualitative.) The costs are then compared to how the program is meeting the goals and objectives that have been established. The steps for cost-effectiveness analysis include the following (Hatry et al. 1987, 94):

1. Identify the objectives of the work activity and corresponding criteria to assess whether the objectives are being met.
2. Examine the current cost and level of quality of the service activity.
3. Based on this evidence and on observations of the way in which the current activity is performed, identify alternative ways of doing the activity. Consider ways of eliminating unnecessary tasks and new procedures.
4. Assess the cost and service quality effects of each alternative.

### *Nominal Group Technique*

This technique was developed to ensure that every group member has equal input in the process (Guzzo 1982, 95-126). The process for the nominal group technique is as follows. First, each participant, working alone, writes down his or her ideas on the problem to be discussed. These ideas usually are suggestions for a solution. Second, the group conducts a round-robin in which each group member presents his or her ideas to the group. The ideas are written down on a blackboard for all of the participants to see. No discussion of the ideas occurs until every person's ideas have been presented and written down for general viewing. Third, after all ideas have been presented, there is an open discussion of the ideas for the purpose of clarification only; evaluative comments are not allowed. This part of the discussion tends to be spontaneous and unstructured. Fourth, after the discussion, a secret ballot is taken in which each group member votes for preferred solutions. This results in a rank-ordering of alternatives in terms of priority. As desired, the third and fourth steps can be repeated to add further clarification to the process.



### *Logic Models*

Increasingly, what are called “logic models” are being constructed and used to explain program logic and assist with evaluation and decision making. Logic models require systematic thinking yet allow decision makers the flexibility to run through many possible alternatives before determining what is best. The most basic logic model is a picture of how the program is anticipated to work from initial inputs through end outcomes.

It typically consists of inputs and activities, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes. Hatry (1999) suggested that users of logic models should consider beginning from the desired outcome and work backward, something that he believes will expand the decision makers’ creativity and innovative thinking. Hatry suggested that moving in the other direction—starting from existing activities and identifying outcomes that flow from those activities—might limit the user to the existing activities.

To illustrate how a logic model might be used in decision making, consider the problem of children’s access to health care, with the end outcome of healthy children. Intermediate outcomes may include immunization of children, medical treatment when necessary, and education for a healthier lifestyle. Activities may include making sure that children have access to health insurance, health centers, and health education. A logic model for this issue is illustrated in Figure 5.5. Additional alternatives to address the same problem could be generated and depicted through an extension of this model or through the development of alternative models. Once the problem is depicted in this way, decision makers might have a clearer picture of the relationship among various elements of the problem and be able to arrive at a more well-thought-out position.

### *Summary*

To summarize, we can think in terms of building blocks for effective decision making (Arnold 1978). Building Block No. 1 is to *smoke out the issue*. Ask yourself *why* a decision is necessary. Recognizing and defining a problem is an important first step in problem solving and decision making. The answer to this first step not only provides you with a definition for the problem at hand but also clarifies whether there is a problem at all. If there is a problem, then keep asking why until the real issues have been determined. It is possible to deceive yourself with superficial answers. By asking why repeatedly and verifying the answers, you are able to expose the real issue, which will aid in making the correct decision.

What *is* or *is not* the problem? This question helps to define the problem as precisely as possible by separating the mere symptoms from the root cause. Asking what the problem is not, through the process of elimination, might help to uncover a truth or eliminate barriers to a problem. For example, Bryson (1995), in reviewing mandates for public and nonprofit organizations, recommended that the strategic planner consider what is not limited

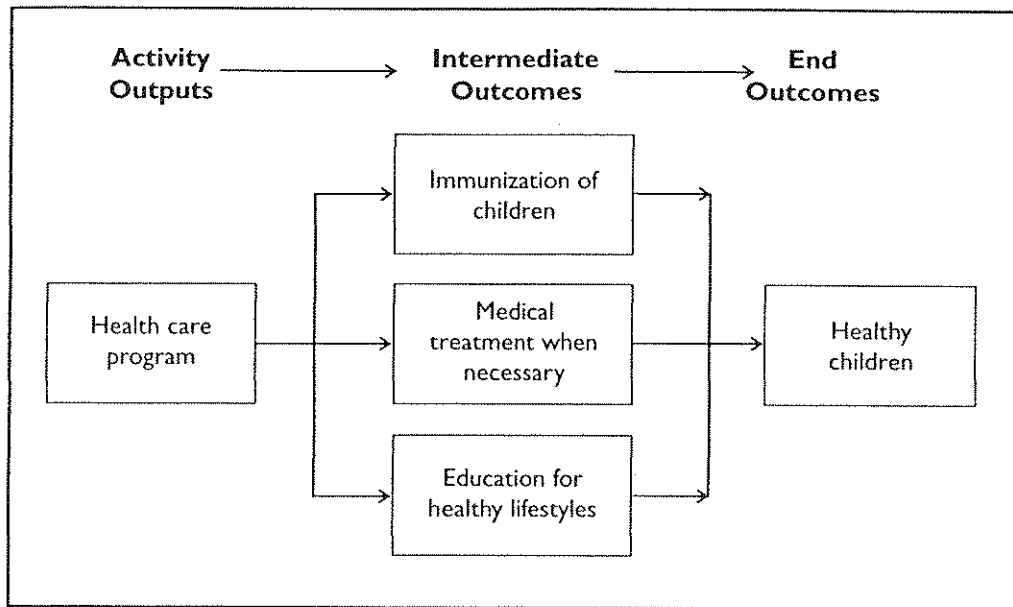


Figure 5.5. A Logic Model

by the mandates. Sometimes we believe that the restraints are greater than they really are.

What is, should be, or could be happening? This question is a supplement or may serve as a substitute to what is or is not the problem. Asking what is, what should be, or what could be requires that we examine the differences among reality, expectation, and desire or conceivability.

Building Block No. 2 is to *state your purpose*. The statement of purpose is the most critical step in the decision-making process, yet it is a step that often is neglected. The neglect comes from not wanting to waste time on examining purpose when time could be spent on solutions. Unexamined statements of purpose frequently mask the real problems. For example, a new assistant professor at a research institution might enjoy teaching so much that she neglects her requirements to contribute to knowledge through research and publication. Examining her purpose at these institutions, she might learn not only that research is a requirement of the position but that it would enhance her teaching as well.

Building Block No. 3 is to *set your criteria*. Setting criteria requires answers to the following three questions that will be used to judge possible solutions. What do you want to *achieve* by any decision you make? What do you want to *preserve* by any decision you make? What do you want to *avoid* by any decision you make? To illustrate the point using the example discussed in the preceding paragraph, we could say that the assistant professor wants to achieve the following: to provide the best education possible to students, to contribute to knowledge so as to meet the tenure and promotion requirements, and to provide service to the community. She wants to preserve a job at a university she really likes and to remain in a field for which she has prepared. And she wants to avoid having to look for another position.

Building Block No. 4 is to *establish your priorities*. This step requires that you refine your criteria by setting your priorities. In most decisions, not all criteria are of equal importance. Starting with the list of things you want to achieve, preserve, and avoid, you begin by separating the items into categories of relative importance (e.g., very high, high, medium, and low). This will help you to decide which ones are absolute requirements and which ones are desirable objectives. Assigning the values to the criteria is not easy. Some of the criteria might not be as important to you as you originally had thought, or you might discover that you have not stated them correctly or completely. Now is the time to restate, refine, and/or reevaluate the criteria. When restating the criteria, be as specific as possible.

Building Block No. 5 is to *search for solutions*. After determining your purpose and defining your criteria and priorities, you begin your search for solutions by asking the following questions. How can you meet the criteria you have set? What are the possible courses of action? Answering these questions requires brainstorming. You do not want to limit yourself to the obvious alternatives. Let your criteria generate your alternatives; this will facilitate fresh solutions and provide several alternatives. The alternatives might then need to be combined or modified to fit your criteria and priorities.

Building Block No. 6 is to *test the alternatives*. Testing the alternatives requires answering the question: How well do the alternatives meet each criterion? Each alternative is matched against the criteria, and a choice is made.

Building Block No. 7 is to *troubleshoot your decision*. This final building block is perhaps the most critical and the least practiced. This step helps you to take action to prevent, minimize, or overcome the possible adverse consequences by asking the question: What could go wrong with the solution that I have chosen? Make a list of all the possible problems, and then make a rough calculation of the likelihood of each problem occurring and the likely impact if it did occur. Finally, take preventive action to cope with each potential problem.

## ■■ WAYS OF ACTING

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In this chapter, we learned that there are different types of decisions that we will be faced with in the workplace and that different decisions call for different strategies and actors. We also discussed the difference between decision making and problem solving and learned that there are times when we can rely on previous patterns for decision making and other times when the problem requires new and perhaps innovative solutions. In addition, we learned several models that may be used to help us frame the problems, develop alternatives, and ultimately formulate solutions. We also looked at the question of who should be involved in organizational decisions. Finally, we discussed techniques that are available to the decision maker in examining

alternatives. The following behavioral guidelines might help in implementing these various methods correctly.

1. *Define and verify the problem fully and accurately.* You must overcome the temptation as a group or an individual to try to define the problem too quickly. Problem definition is difficult. Problems are not always clear. For example, you might initially attribute turnover in the workplace to a lack of opportunity for promotion. Interviews with those who have left the organization, and with those who have remained, might suggest instead that turnover is due to the lack of resources available to complete the work required.
2. *Use the problem to generate solutions.* You might find that well-defined problems have implied solutions. For example, if the problem is dissatisfaction in the workplace and the problem includes inadequate facilities, then the alternative solutions will begin with how to improve the inadequate facilities.
3. *Prevent premature evaluations of solutions.* Continue brainstorming until all possible alternatives have been generated. When alternatives are evaluated, the idea generation for possible solutions typically ceases.
4. *Provide a climate that values disagreement.* As we will see in Chapter 11, healthy conflict is helpful in generating ideas. Make sure that you seek input from those who disagree with you as well as those who agree with you. Consider all alternatives equally.
5. *When possible, gain consensus from all of those affected.* Solutions will be much more likely to be accepted if all of those affected have been involved in the decision-making process. For example, you might find that the solution to the facilities problem requires moving to a new location. Employees will be more satisfied with the move if they have been kept informed of the options and have contributed to the decision.

## THINKING IN ACTION ■■

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### A DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

Using a community service project, an internship, or a work experience, use the following framework adapted from Philip (1985, 84-91) to analyze the process of decision making.

1. Clarify your objectives.
  - Describe the situation on which you are working. State your precise objective.
2. Consider the factors that will influence your choice of action.
  - List the factors that are important to you and to those affected by the decision.
  - Extend the factors into statements that specify the results expected, resources available, or constraints that might exist.
  - Classify the statements that will have to be regarded as essential.
  - Assess the importance of the remaining factors and list them in descending order of importance.
  - Generate the options that could be compared to your specifications. Do not forget to include the status quo and inaction as options.
  - Compare your options to your essential factors.
3. Collect information with regard to the benefit and risk factors for the remaining options and assess the degree of satisfaction that each option provides.
  - Identify the benefit-risk area for each option to be considered.
  - Describe your best balanced choice.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS

Ann Wilson-James is the new executive director of a recently inaugurated community health center. She has many challenges ahead of her, given that she is working in a community with many needs. Her board has given her a series of priorities to implement during her first year, and she has promised to make a difference in the lives of as many people as possible. Her first priority is to address the health needs of the children in her community. Because she has limited funds, she would like to maximize her resources by addressing the most critical and prevalent needs of the children. She has decided to go to the community and ask what the critical needs are before making decisions on programs to implement. Through a variety of sources, she is able to identify 20 individuals who would serve as a starting point for the discussion. She likes the idea of using focus groups to generate ideas with the community groups. She has asked you for advice. What recommendations would you give her in setting up the focus groups?

## USING THE DECISION TREE FOR LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Max Herbert heads a unit of the state transportation department charged with developing a new traffic flow design for the busiest intersection in the largest city in the state. Max earned an M.P.A. and had several years' experience in the state's budget office before moving to the transportation department, where he has worked for a year and a half. His staff consists primarily of traffic engineers and planners, most of whom are considerably older than Max and have far more experience in transportation than he does. Max recognizes their expertise, although he believes that his staff members have become a bit tradition bound, tending toward "safe" solutions to traffic problems. He recognizes that different staff members are likely to have different approaches to solving the problem they face, although he also believes that in the end they will arrive at an acceptable compromise and probably one that is "safe."

Delays and bottlenecks caused by the current traffic pattern have made the issue of a new design a fairly high-profile issue, so Max is concerned about his group producing a high-quality product, one that will be technically sound as well as politically acceptable. Although he is not a traffic engineer, Max has done his homework and learned a lot about transportation issues during his time in the department. Following a recent conference in London, Max went on a study tour of several European cities, during which he developed some ideas that he considers forward looking and certainly workable in this particular city. Although he is not prepared to do the technical details and drawings necessary to support his idea, he has a concept in mind that he thinks will work. At the same time, he is concerned that if he forces his idea on his staff, they will "rebel" and not do as good a job as they might otherwise do in completing the follow-up details and drawings.

Using the Vroom-Yetton diagram in Figure 5.4, discuss how Max should approach the question of developing the overall concept for the city's new traffic pattern.

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# The End of Management and the Rise of Organizational Democracy

Kenneth Cloke

Joan Goldsmith

*Foreword by Warren Bennis*



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We have all belonged to teams and felt or sensed the synergy Russell eloquently describes—the seamless connections that meld our skills, link us intuitively, and allow us to surpass our expectations. And we have all experienced the frustrations, conflicts, disappointments, failed expectations, and pressures to conform or suppress our individuality that can occur on teams. These contradictory experiences with teamwork pose challenges for team-based, democratic, self-managing organizations.

## Build Innovative Self-Managing Teams

### Chapter Twelve

*Every so often a Celtic game would heat up so that it became more than a physical or even mental game, and would be magical. When it happened, I could feel my play rise to a new level. It would surround not only me and the other Celtics, but also the players on the other team, and even the referees. At that special level, all sorts of odd things happened. The game would be in a white heat of competition, and yet somehow I wouldn't feel competitive—which is a miracle in itself. I'd be putting out the maximum effort, straining, coughing up parts of my lungs as we ran, and yet I never felt the pain. During those spells, I could almost sense how the next play would develop and where the next shot would be taken. My premonitions would be consistently correct, and I always felt then that I not only knew all the Celtics by heart, but also all the opposing players, and that they all knew me. There have been many times in my career when I felt moved or joyful, but these were the moments when I had chills pulsing up and down my spine. Sometimes the feeling would last all the way to the end of the game, and when that happened I never cared who won, I don't mean that I was a good sport about it—that I'd played my best and had nothing to be ashamed of. On the few or ten occasions when the game ended at that special level, I literally did not care who had won. If we lost, I'd be as free and high as a sky hawk.*

BILL RUSSELL, Second Wind

### What Are Teams?

To understand the strength and potential of teams and why they are the fundamental work units of all successful organizations, we need to start with a question: How do teams differ from groups? The answer can be found by posing another set of questions: How is a home different from a house? How is a community different from a city? How is a neighborhood different from a block?

Teams, communities, neighborhoods, and homes all describe relationships—intimate human connections in which the whole emerges as greater than the sum of its parts. Each provides something extra—an energy or synergy that springs from the quality of interactions between the people who create them. By contrast, groups, cities, blocks, and houses represent mere collections, composites, or conglomerates of fragmented, individual parts that have not yet been integrated into a whole but remain sums of parts, however much they may strive to achieve a common purpose.

Teams are affective, emotional relationships and personal connections between people. They mix diversity and unity, openness and acceptance, honesty and empathy, criticism and acknowledgment, trust and risk taking, to create something larger than would be possible by simply adding individual pieces together.

In groups, power is usually distributed hierarchically, and decisions are made by a small circle of individuals to whom others surrender their power and responsibility. A single primary person in charge has the capacity to pressure, coerce, and manipulate others into adopting a single direction. Groups have only a shadowy existence apart from their leaders and a few stalwarts who can be

counted on to follow them. For this reason, unquestioning loyalty is in high demand, and disloyalty is punished in overt and covert ways.

Teams have no need to coerce people or require loyalty. A common direction flows automatically from the act of identifying and integrating vision, goals, and strategies. Teams do not seek subordination, fear, or deference. They rely instead on independence, self-confidence, and critical feedback. They do not value uniformity or obedience to the leader's will but rely on diversity, dialogue, and negotiation to achieve consensus and a common direction.

Groups are most successful when there is an external threat requiring quick, coordinated, decisive action. In the absence of a clear threat, they rely on fear and coercion to produce a transient unity. Followers are often poorly motivated, lack creativity, and take only piecemeal initiative and responsibility. They relate to those at the top as children do to surrogate parents, in hopes that, through fealty, their personal needs will be satisfied more thoroughly than would be possible on their own.

Teams do not obey leaders as children do surrogate parents. Each member accepts responsibility and behaves like an adult. Teams are ultimately defined by the clarity of their cohesion; their collective, task-oriented spirit; the vulnerability and affection members manifest in their relationships; and the quality of their enjoyment of the work process. It is this quality of acting together that gives teams power. As Hannah Arendt wrote, "While strength is the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation, power springs up between men when they act together, and vanishes the moment they disperse."

As teams increasingly constitute the fundamental units of organizational energy, values, and strategy, the capacity of individual team members to think and behave as responsible members of a collaborative, strategically integrated network becomes crucial. This requires each team member to abandon excessively competitive, individualistic, egocentric, self-aggrandizing behaviors that regard freedom as the absence of social restraint rather than the presence of social synergy.

Successful democratic organizations require a context of values, ethics, and integrity, living, evolving webs of association, innovative self-managing teams, streamlined, open collaborative processes, and complex self-correcting systems, and each of these requires linking

leadership. Showtime Networks CFO, Jerry Scro, reflected in an interview on his experiences in creating self-managing teams:

In working together as teams, everyone really has to be able to trust each other. They have to be able to break down political barriers, organizational barriers, and barriers of competition. What we did here created competition in a different way. Competition is very good, but it is not self-competition. It is a competition of "we all want to be the best we can and succeed and if we all work together we'll all succeed together." It requires a lot of work, nurturing, continuous involvement, and evolving, and it is not easy. It seems easy to say "I don't have to tell anyone to do anything anymore." On the other hand, everyone has to make sure the work gets done. The role of the senior-level manager in this organization is a lot different than it was in the past—it's obvious, it's a radical change. From a person who directs and tells people what to do and how to do it, to a person who facilitates, leads, guides, sets the tone, helps the environment, and culture—it's an entirely different style, an entirely different demeanor, an entirely different attitude. And the leaders really have to believe that this is the right way to do it, because if a leader doesn't, it gets picked up very quickly by the rest of the organization and they feel, well, this is just not real.

Without a clear recognition that committed leaders are needed throughout the organization regardless of title or position, without a commitment to linking people in creative collaborative ways, democracy will remain imperfect, and possibilities for improvement will be lost.

Team membership does not mean abandoning individuality or surrendering the critical insights that can improve a team's products, processes, and relationships. It means being willing to invest that individuality and critical insight in the team, combine them with similar investments by others, and allow the mixture to turn into something new and qualitatively different.

### How Teams Produce Quality Results

Teams form the fundamental units of interconnected action that lie at the core of all democratic, self-managing organizations and provide them with strength, flexibility, creativity, and endurance.

Teams are where values are translated into action. They are the hearts of webs of association. In addition to correcting the mistakes and difficulties created by hierarchical, bureaucratic, autocratic management, teams help organizations provide higher-quality and more responsive, accessible service to internal and external clients. How do they do so?

Teams create a feeling of ownership that increases competitive advantage and a collaborative environment in which members cross-train and back one another up, increasing their efficiency and effectiveness. Teams improve turnaround time and responsiveness in solving customer problems. They develop leadership qualities among all their members, resulting in broader responsibility for achieving goals, greater buy-in, and higher retention rates.

Teams increase flexibility and speed in decision making and responding to changing conditions. They reduce unnecessary conflict, distrust, and miscommunication, and improve working relationships through consensus and collaboration. They encourage employees to continue developing their skills by accepting new challenges and improving morale.

Research cited in earlier chapters supports these assertions, demonstrating that teams are more rapid, creative, accurate, and productive than individuals working alone or in hierarchical work units. Teams eliminate the need for most managerial functions by making everyone responsible for results; reducing disharmony, passivity, and resistance; improving the quality of products, processes, and relationships; encouraging creativity; and correcting errors before they become costly to fix.

Teams take pleasure from overcoming their obstacles, solving problems, and acquiring new skills. The affection team members often develop for one another contributes to the intuitive, unspoken quality of their communications. In team environments, people behave more naturally in nonhierarchical team environments, with less pretension and show. They feel less need to conform to universal standards that ignore their individuality or create rules without consensus. Relationships on teams are more grounded in respect and appreciation for contributions than in hierarchical organizations.

Teams encourage ubiquitous leadership and allow everyone to participate in setting direction. Leadership in teams is floating, situational, and diverse rather than fixed. Leaders are not predeter-

mined or selected from above but promoted by peers based on ability. A leader in one task may be a follower in the next. The natural desire to learn and the team's need for internal backup combine to encourage the development of improved individual and team skills through cross-training, feedback, and mentoring. This makes leadership a shared responsibility that can be exercised without ego aggrandizement or self-promotion.

In quality improvement processes, teams make more accurate decisions using consensus than do hierarchies using directives. They ensure that actions are synchronous, resistance is minimized, and results are sustained. When disputes emerge during the consensus-building process, they are less likely to be accompanied by personalization, polarization, fear, defensiveness, or distrust. Instead, objections and disagreements are turned into dialogue and mined for alternative perspectives, creative solutions, expressions of paradox, challenges, and complex insights.

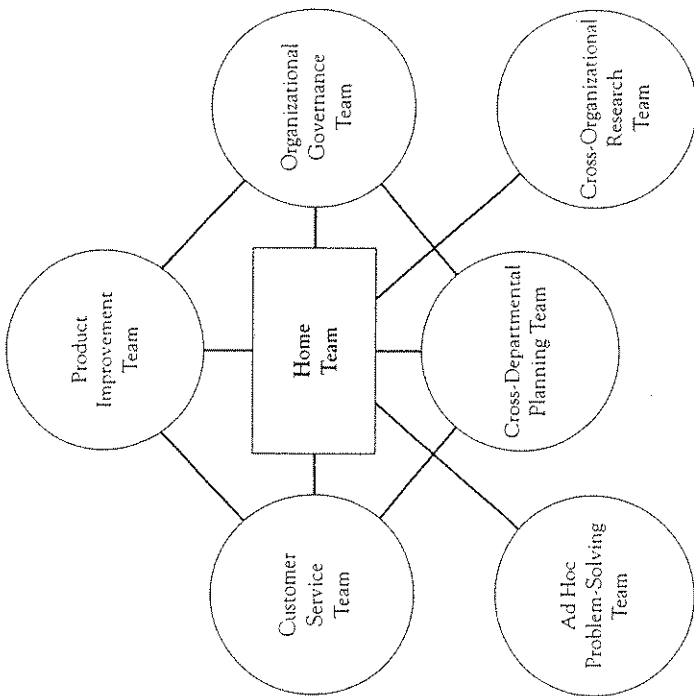
### From Organizational Teams to Team Organizations

Teams naturally arrange themselves into webs of association, which are the crucibles in which strategic integration takes place, where all the elements in the productive process are creatively combined to produce something new. Webs form a matrixed environment in which activity flows between diverse teams yet is centered in a home team. One way of picturing this relationship is given in Figure 12.1.

While not all employees may work on all these teams at the same time, the four teams in the diamond represent primary sources of ongoing organizational learning and development that are critical for collaborative, democratic, self-managing organizations. They allow every team member to feel connected and responsible for the life and direction of the organization as a whole.

For teams to be fully self-managing, they need to communicate with one another, integrate across organizational lines, and think strategically. For these reasons, leadership, facilitation, and coordination skills are essential. As employees increasingly participate in making important organizational decisions, their experience and skill in handling a wide range of organizational issues improve rapidly, helping organizational teams transform themselves into team organizations.

Figure 12.1. Team Matrix.



At the beginning of the team-building process, there is often a period in which team members go through the motions, giving only lip-service to participation and responsibility. This can make the entire process seem fraudulent, producing cynicism and a desire to return to managerial control. Yet as old habits of obedience and anonymity are broken down, team members accept responsibility for making increasingly crucial organizational decisions. As they do, their responsibilities expand until they gradually become team-based organizations.

To understand how this process works, it is necessary to answer some fundamental questions about the limits of team decision making. How far can employees go in managing themselves? How

can typical managerial functions be improved through teamwork? What would a fully self-managing, team-based organization look like? The following ten questions drawn from our book, *Thank God It's Monday: Fourteen Values to Humanize the Way We Work*, highlight the principal categories of decisions commonly made by managers in hierarchical organizations, together with ideas and suggestions for how they might be handled better in team-based organizations.

1. *Who makes the decision to hire?* Hiring has traditionally been a unilateral activity engaged in by managers based on criteria they alone select. Yet better results can be achieved when hiring becomes a collaborative, peer-based responsibility of self-managing teams, for these reasons:
  - Teams are usually much better qualified to choose coworkers than are managers who do not actually perform the daily work of the team.
  - Employees who are hired by a team feel an obligation to support their peers and perform at higher levels than when they work to satisfy a manager.
  - Errors are corrected more quickly, and poor performers are disciplined or replaced with less opposition from other employees.
2. *Who allocates work and assigns tasks?* Self-management and task selection by self-managing teams can dramatically increase productivity by improving motivation, limiting unproductive behavior, and reducing managerial expenses through reverse economies of scale. Teamwork makes assignment flexible and dynamic rather than bureaucratic and static, and oversight becomes a responsibility of everyone on the team, bringing the following benefits:
  - Task-oriented self-assigning teams can counter the negative effects of isolation due to the separation and division of labor. Self-assignment can also improve motivation by increasing task and product identity.
  - Self-managing teams can allocate work more cheaply, more quickly, with a finer sense of priorities than managers, and an increased ability to change rapidly to meet new demands.

- Teams are more capable of knowing what is required at any given moment in the workday than managers, who are one step removed from problems. Even centralized tasks can be handled more efficiently by team members representing diverse departments.

3. *How is work evaluated and improved?* Feedback, evaluation, self-correction, learning, and improvement ought to be the responsibility of all team members. Contributions to personal and organizational improvement become far more powerful when feedback is received from everyone affected by the work. The benefits of team-based peer evaluation include:

- 360-degree evaluations based on self, upward, peer, downward, and client feedback, together with analysis of differences between assessments, encourage more open, honest, meaningful evaluations.
- Quicker, more supportive, and useful feedback can be tailored by teams to help each person learn and change. This means regular, honest, open, timely discussions of difficult issues, starting from the top. The most powerful and effective feedback always emanates from clients, team members, and ourselves.
- For feedback to be effective, judgments need to be separated from evaluation. Feedback in a team environment has only one purpose: improvement. Whatever does not actually improve individual and team performance is either useless or counterproductive and should be eliminated.

4. *Who selects leaders?* Management is a title, a set of involuntary roles assigned to people selected from above; leadership is a voluntary relationship informed by vision and maintained by skill with people who freely choose to follow. To establish a mandate, leaders should be selected and elected by those they lead. Leadership requires different skills than management does, for several reasons:

- Leadership is a universal job description for team members, who need to be able to facilitate team meetings, track projects,

relate well to customers, solve problems, mediate conflicts, make certain nothing falls through the cracks, and perform countless diverse assignments.

- Leadership on teams is situational and shared, based on whatever task needs to be performed, together with individual skills and desires. Leaders who are chosen by their teams can ask for and receive efforts far beyond what is required.
- Traditional managerial tasks can easily be computerized or rotated among team members, allowing managers to move into roles as facilitators, coordinators, supporters, mentors, mediators, or team members with specialized administrative skills.

5. *Who gets promoted, how, and by what criteria?* In hierarchical organizations, promotions are often based on having done a lower-level job well, that is, on technical ability; some guessed-at capacity to succeed in meeting a set of abstract, objective criteria; or purely subjective, intuitive feelings about the personality of the candidate. In a team environment, there are alternative ways of promoting:

- Eliminating grandiose titles, enormous wage discrepancies, autocratic power, hierarchical privileges, and compensation based on title or status. Instead, a flexible matrix of skills, contributions, knowledge, seniority, difficulty of assignment, willingness to perform low-status work, voluntary efforts that benefit the team as a whole, and similar criteria can be used. Applying genuine market principles to employment means that those who perform the least desirable tasks might receive the highest wages.
- Rather than promote people out of jobs they do well into managerial positions they do poorly, teams can create a broad array of rewards, including acknowledgment, job rotation, free time for creative projects, and opportunities to develop natural abilities, leading to leadership roles and career development.
- Allowing teams to select and promote their own leaders encourages teamwork and leadership development. Internal career counseling, aptitude testing, attitude surveys, and team selection can help teams eliminate burnout, elitism, tyrannical management, and the Peter Principle.

6. *Who gets trained in what?* Training should be organized from the bottom up rather than the top down, and focus on team skills rather than those of individual managers. It should improve practical skills in leading, facilitating, coaching, communicating, negotiating, building ownership, giving honest feedback, building better relationships, resolving interpersonal conflicts, and negotiating collaboratively. Expanding training, education, and development, orienting each to teams, and covering the full range of skills required for self-management can:

- Turn every organization into a university in miniature, providing mandatory and voluntary, free and paid education for all employees.
- Create learning organizations that strongly encourage employees to teach those with less experience, knowledge, or skill and become lifelong learners. Enormous skills and knowledge can be recaptured by transforming master-employees into mentor-teachers as they develop and before they retire.
- Design a comprehensive team-based internal training, education and development program focused on training team trainers and on leadership, self-management, teamwork, and change.

7. *Who determines and enforces rules?* Every employee in a team environment has a vested interest in increasing productivity and client satisfaction and is capable of setting rules that advance common interests and result in shared responsibility for preventing future violations. Employee-generated rules counteract the dynamics created by externally imposed rules, which lead to blind obedience rather than creativity and result in resistance, unequal enforcement, cynicism, coercion, and duress. Democratically generated rules improve results for a number of reasons:

- Value-based decisions in self-managing organizations are reached by consensus, with regard to how resources are allocated, money is spent, people are paid, and individuals interact with each other. When team members genuinely agree, enforcement and coercion become less necessary.

- Team members who are included in decision making regarding rules and values naturally develop the cognitive and communication skills that allow them to assume increased responsibility for results.
- Fairness, justice, and democracy mean that teams decide what rules they need, the consequences for breaking them, and how to enforce them without becoming responsible for other people's choices.

8. *Who resolves conflicts and how?* Conflicts provide teams with rich opportunities to reveal the inconsistencies between expressed values and actual behaviors. They offer openings for growth, personal improvement, and increased team effectiveness. When teams own their conflicts and become responsible for resolving them, the entire paradigm of conflict shifts from one of avoidance or confrontation to one of learning. Conflict resolution is far more effective in team-based environments for the following reasons:

- Teams can pinpoint the sources of chronic conflict, design conflict resolution systems, identify early warning signs, create safety nets, develop techniques for prevention and early resolution, and support low-cost procedures such as peer review and coaching as backups.
- Peer mediation can provide a highly effective, voluntary, consensus-based process for resolving conflicts in which team members learn to negotiate differences and resolve conflicts themselves.
- Team-based conflict resolution increases organizational efficiency by improving morale, providing an outlet for emotional venting, reducing resistance, encouraging listening, and making it acceptable to talk openly and honestly about problems. This allows compassion, empathy, forgiveness, transformation, and ethical behavior to moderate differences and the chaos generated by rapid change.

9. *How is compensation determined?* When employees make compensation decisions, productivity increases enormously. Several studies have shown that when employees are permitted to decide

what to pay themselves, they not only set aside adequate sums for investment but make their products and services more competitive. Experience in employee-owned firms demonstrates that pay cuts and reductions in benefits are more readily agreed to in employee-owned firms than in hierarchies. Team-based organizations can restructure compensation in several ways:

- Leadership can train employees in accounting principles and budgets, and encourage broad participation in budgetary decision making, or create an overall budget and let teams decide how to divide it.
- Team members who receive equity or stock, or become partners and co-owners, benefit directly from reduced waste, noninflationary wages, and increased productivity.
- By correlating investments in organizational expansion with future income and reduced investment with lower income, teams can participate in deciding which path to take and accept the financial consequences for their decisions.

10. *How are profits and losses divided?* As self-managing teams become adept at making strategic financial decisions, dividing profits, covering losses, budgeting, allocating resources, and making investments, they should share in the profits and losses that flow from their energy and commitment. In making decisions regarding profit and loss, teams can be more successful than shareholders and CEOs, for several reasons:

- Changes in employee responsibility and self-management are more successful when compensation is redesigned to reward extra effort, including pay-for-learning, pay-for-skills, bonuses, stock options, gain sharing, and outright employee ownership, which stimulate an ongoing interest in the financial success of the organization.
- The success of employee-owned organizations and cooperatives is based on the long-term interests of employees in sustainable growth and customer service. The greater their responsibility is for profits and losses, the more employees want to make it succeed.

- Employees have a natural long-term interest in sustainable growth, environmental protection, and employee safety, and are likely to be better at making decisions regarding socially responsible investments than shareholders who are focused on quarterly dividends, since their lives depend on their choices.

When organizations address these questions from a context of collaboration, democracy, and self-management, their ability and willingness to give team members responsibility for making intelligent choices regarding organizational direction shifts enormously. Team members increasingly regard organizations as collaborative and interdependent, managerial process as learnable, and themselves as capable of the full range of responsibilities traditionally reserved for management. Success in any of the areas described above makes it easier to succeed in each of the others. As these successes accumulate, it becomes difficult to identify a single managerial function that could not be performed at reduced cost and increased effectiveness by combining self-managing teams with leadership and automated technology.

### What Makes Teams Succeed and Fail?

Studies of highly effective teams have identified a number of characteristics that make them successful: a strong and compelling performance challenge; clear goals and objectives; a customer orientation; participative leadership shared by all team members; good communication; a high level of trust, respect, and honesty; a willingness to work through and resolve conflicts; respect for diversity; consensus-based decision making; strong organizational support; adequate resources, especially training; adequate authority and empowerment to achieve goals; and individual and team responsibility for results.

Despite the simplicity and apparent effortlessness required to implement these characteristics, they are often arduous to achieve, and their absence causes teams to fail. A number of research studies have identified the most common reasons for team failure:



- Lack of adequate training, resources, and internal support
- Management interference and micromanagement
- Inadequate empowerment and permission to make decisions
- Inadequate skills in conflict resolution
- Lack of vision, goals, strategies, timelines, and action plans
- Making the team too large or too small
- Repeatedly changing team members or assignments
- Absence of a critical mass of dedicated team members
- Lack of a powerful customer, client, or citizen focus
- Traditional managers being assigned as team leaders
- Managers assigning too much work to the team and bogging it down
- Lack of effective communications from management about the team process
- Lack of support from other departments
- Lack of internal feedback and evaluation
- Lack of team-based compensation, rewards, acknowledgments, and promotions

Each of these sources of team failure can be corrected with increased organizational support, commitment, and understanding of the team process, and with increased empowerment of teams to solve their own problems, starting with the problems of composition, leadership, goals, and decision making.

### Questions to Consider in Building Successful Teams

How can organizations maximize their opportunities for successful team building and minimize their risks of failure? In spite of innumerable books written on the subject, there are no models or recipes for successful teamwork. Team building cannot be done by designing ideal models and prototypes or outlining seven or ten steps to apply in cookie-cutter fashion.

Successful team formation is an intricate, complex, always unique process. So instead of providing generic models and uniform answers, we prefer to ask a set of questions team members can answer for themselves and return to throughout the team building process. Employees often coalesce into a team simply by

having to grapple with difficult questions and take responsibility for shaping the quality of their own experiences:

- *Who are we? (identification of the team).* What individual and team efforts are required to do the job? How should the teams be structured? Who should be on each team? How should they be selected? How should the teams interact? Has everyone's role been collectively considered and negotiated? Have training needs been self-defined? Are external trainers, consultants, facilitators, or mediators necessary? If so, how and by whom will they be hired?
- *Why are we here? (orientation to team mission).* What is the mission of the team? Does everyone agree with it? Is it clear? Is there adequate support, motivation, and commitment? Has covert resistance been recognized, surfaced, and resolved? What alternatives are available for those who chose not to join the team?
- *Where are we headed? (creation of a vision).* What is the team's vision of its direction for the next three to five years? Is it daring enough? What does the team need to do to imagine its future? What are the needs of internal and external customers, and how can they be incorporated into the vision? What are the needs of team members? Have all the possibilities been considered? Have everyone's ideas been heard? Are there opportunities to fine-tune the vision over time? How can the vision be effectively communicated to others?
- *What do we need to do? (clarification of goals and objectives).* What is needed for the vision to become real? What are the top five or six team goals and objectives? Are they measurable? Are they achievable within a year? Are they realistic? What are some stretch goals that will take the team beyond what it thinks it can achieve but that it will nonetheless strive for?
- *What's in the way? (acceptance of the challenge).* What are the obstacles, barriers, or challenges to achieving the team's goals? Has everyone identified the same obstacles? Does everyone agree to work to overcome them? Has the team analyzed, categorized, prioritized, and understood the challenges? Is the problem part of a larger system that also requires change? Are the challenges internal as well as external?
- *How will we do it? (identification of strategy).* What are the criteria for success in achieving the vision, goals, and objectives? What

strategies will help the team overcome the barriers and challenges? Has the team identified a strategy for each barrier and challenge? Have tactics been distinguished from strategies? Has each team member taken responsibility for tracking and reporting on the progress of a particular strategy? What will the team do if the strategy does not work? How will they know?

- *Who will do it and by when? (creation of a plan of action).* What actions need to be taken to implement the strategy? By whom? By when? What else needs to change for the plan to work? What resources will be required for it to work? What communications will be needed? Is everyone on the team committed to doing their part?
- *How will we continue to learn? (feedback for self-correction).* What methods will be used to encourage individual and team feedback and organizational learning? How should team successes and failures be measured? How should oversight, monitoring, reporting, and fine-tuning be accomplished? Does the process encourage risk taking, collaborative responsibility, and honesty? What can be done to communicate the team's discoveries to encourage broader organizational learning?

- *What worked, what did not, and why? (evaluation of process).* What worked? What did not? What parts of the organization's structure, systems, processes, and relationships supported the team's effort? What parts undermined it? How was conflict handled within and between the teams? Why was this method chosen? What changes might prevent conflicts from arising in the future? What should change in the organization as a whole? What needs to shift for this to happen?

- *Good work! What's next? (celebration and renewal).* Have individual and team efforts been generously rewarded? Were people who gave critical feedback affirmed and supported? Has everyone's contribution been acknowledged? Have successes been celebrated? Have failures been understood without blaming? Has the team identified its next challenges? Is it ready to revisit and find new answers to these questions?

As team members discuss and answer these questions, they develop in miniature the attitudes, concerns, skills, processes, and relationships needed to create successful teams. Typically, teams focus their attention on completing a set of practical tasks, on

"what" needs to be achieved, without sufficient attention to "how" to achieve it. Through these questions, team members work on "how" issues and discover "why" they are on teams in the first place.

## Skills for Teamwork

Special skills are required for successful teamwork. Articulating these skills can help teams clarify what they do and how they do it. All of these skills are interrelated, mutually reinforcing, and dependent on each of the others. Here are ten skills team members can develop.

### 1. The Skill of Self-Management

Teams are flexible structures that evolve and increase their managerial skills with every obstacle they overcome. Team self-management simply means overcoming obstacles together and in the process building a sense of ownership, responsibility, commitment, and efficiency within every team member. It means sparking passion, merging wills, envisioning the future, and cultivating the flow of individual and collective energy within the organization. It means encouraging full participation and collective self-criticism, and actively improving working conditions. Organizations encourage skills in self-management by asking employees to be responsible for what is important to them and by supporting them with leadership, resources, training, coaching, and feedback while they are doing it.

### 2. The Skill of Communication

Skilled communications in teams means eliminating the facade of politeness and the concealment and duplicity that trivialize hierarchical, bureaucratic, and authoritarian communications. Teams need to collaboratively develop their skills in becoming better listeners, commiserating with others, reframing communications so they can be heard, and communicating honestly about things that really matter.

When we encourage open, honest, empathetic communications, we change the way people relate and work. At the heart of

team communications is effective listening. Team members need to develop a full complement of listening skills to keep collaboration and synergy moving. Listening is fundamentally a matter of intention, and when people intend to listen effectively, they can do so in a variety of ways, such as:

- *Contextual listening*, when we listen for background information or unspoken assumptions and expectations, as for example, when we are feeling uncomfortable and someone senses it and welcomes us warmly
- *Active listening*, when we genuinely care about what the other person is telling us
- *Responsive listening*, when we are engaged in a conversation or dialogue that is moving back and forth between us and our colleagues
- *Creative listening*, when we are searching for as yet unidentified solutions or trying out a new approach to understanding a problem
- *Empathetic listening*, when we are listening to another as though we were the person who is speaking
- *Undivided listening*, when we are no longer aware of our own existence as a listener but are completely in sync with the speaker and the story
- *Committed listening*, when we listen as though our lives depend on understanding what is being said
- *Listening with the heart*, when we listen with, by, and through our love or affection for the person who is speaking

### 3. The Skill of Leadership

Leadership *adores* a vacuum. For this reason, team leadership means creating opportunities for each member to serve as a leader. To create leadership in teams, employees need to be skilled in linking, organizing, coordinating, collaborating, planning, facilitating, coaching, and mentoring. These acts become the responsibility not of managers or individuals but of self-managing teams acting in concert with empowering leaders.

Team leaders continually raise standards, empower others to accept responsibility for their work, shift old paradigms, set new

directions, and improve the quality of products, processes, and relationships. They help teams set and harmonize priorities, negotiate differences, resolve conflicts, improve motivation and morale, coach and mentor individuals, give and receive constructive feedback, acknowledge real effort, take risks, and take responsibility for failures. They make sure details do not fall through the cracks, advertise and celebrate other people's successes, and model the values, ethics, and integrity they seek from others. They help teams coalesce as a synergistic whole by:

- Relating team tasks, problems, and responsibilities to a larger vision or context, including organizational, social, and environmental concerns
- Articulating and modeling shared values that underlie team actions and inform team decisions
- Perceiving the needs and skills of individual team members and integrating them to solve individual and team problems
- Creating opportunities and experiences for all team members to expand their latent leadership abilities

In short, leaders create wholes out of the sum of their parts.

### 4. The Skill of Responsibility

Teamwork means there is no one left to blame. It means everyone is personally responsible not only for their own work but the work of every other member of the team. Employees in hierarchical organizations often find it frightening to make decisions and manage themselves. Team members have to exercise responsibility in order to become self-managing and cease being spectators in their own work lives. Team members encourage a greater sense of shared responsibility by:

- Including everyone in all projects from the beginning and discussing commitments and how they will be met
- Jointly and collaboratively establishing goals and timetables with benchmarks, deliverables, and dates
- Summarizing areas of agreement about what will be done, by whom, and by when

- Making agreements, expectations, timetables, deliverables, and outcomes public
- Having each person declare his or her commitments and asking early on in the process whether anyone needs assistance in meeting them
- Incentivizing commitments through rewards, acknowledgment, and other forms of support
- Jointly clarifying priorities
- Publicly reviewing whether commitments are being met
- Identifying what will happen if commitments are not met or continue to be unmet
- Asking what support is needed to ensure that future commitments will be met
- Using 360-degree evaluation to identify strategies that result in improved responsibility
- Asking each team member to identify what remains to be done and what has not been done but should have been
- Asking each person to say directly how it feels when commitments are not met and what happened to the team as a result
- Providing training in time and project management skills and a way of reminding people of their commitments
- Examining expectations critically to see if they are realistic and have been communicated effectively
- Trying to discover the real, underlying reasons the team member cannot meet his or her commitments and address those directly
- Linking pay to improved performance and asking the person to leave if he or she cannot meet personal commitments

## 5. The Skill of Supporting Diversity

Valuing and celebrating diversity substantially increases a team's ability to respond successfully and imagine novel solutions for problems. Collaborative experiences allow team members to overcome prejudices and biases and not create winners and losers, reject outsiders, or mistrust people who are different. New ideas, different opinions, contrasting points of view, and diverse experiences, interests, and goals enrich teams and make them vital, living organisms that are able to flourish.

Support for the richness of diversity can be undermined by pressure to become a "team player" or not "rock the boat" in order to preserve harmony, or "go along to get along" in one's career. The first rule of team behavior is that everyone agrees to say what they think, whether the rest of the team likes it or not. Groupthink and the suppression of criticism do not create a capacity for self-management.

Prejudices and stereotypes that arise in the workplace undermine effective teamwork. Prejudice, simply defined, is prejudice—the devaluation of people who are different based not on who they are but on prior assumptions about who they are. Prejudice justifies acting selfishly based on assumptions about the other person's inferiority. It produces hostility, closed-mindedness, loss of the ability to learn or become close to the other person, and isolation from parts of oneself. People stereotype others by picking a characteristic; blowing it out of proportion; collapsing the whole person into that characteristic; ignoring differences, subtleties, complexities, and commonalities; making it match their own worst fears; and making it cruel.

Teams in which stereotyping and prejudice are discouraged are able to create environments where differences are valued and harnessed to solve problems and increase learning. Teams can reduce prejudice and stereotyping by:

- Asking individuals or teams to identify the stereotypes they think others have of them, present or act these out in a skit, identify what they actually do, respond to questions, and clarify the support they need to be successful
- Asking each person to take a close look at what he or she has done to encourage stereotyping, responded to stereotyping by others, and modeled respect for diversity
- Meeting privately with individuals holding prejudices, asking permission to speak with them, being low-key and nonaggressive, and telling the truth about how it makes others feel
- Assuming good intentions, not shaming or blaming, asking what the other person intended, and trying to understand where it came from without excusing it
- Sharing perceptions, making "I" statements, giving examples from personal experience, and suggesting alternatives

- Strategizing with others on how to reduce stereotyping, telling humanizing stories, and relaying empathy-inducing information
- Asking whether the stereotyper ever felt stereotyped, discriminated against, or harassed for any reason and requesting details
- Telling stories about times when each person felt stereotyped, discriminated against, or harassed for any reason
- Bringing in a third party to mediate or facilitate a dialogue about prejudice and stereotyping

## 6. The Skills of Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback and evaluation are essential to improving learning, team communication, and the quality of products, processes, and relationships. They can be positive experiences and actually enjoyed if they are delivered empathetically without judgment and offer supportive criticisms that promote growth and change rather than defensiveness and resistance.

In a true team environment, self-critical perspectives are expected, welcomed, acknowledged, and rewarded. Teams recognize that without challenges, they grow stale, and without honest feedback and generous acknowledgment, they become apathetic and cynical.

Feedback is most successful when it is reciprocal, opened with a self-assessment by the person giving it, after requesting permission from the person receiving it. It is best when it is constructive; framed as an "I" statement; specific, detailed, balanced, and fair; and communicated soon afterwards without anger or judgment.

## 7. The Skill of Strategic Planning

Effective teams transcend reactive forms of crisis management and administration and develop the ability to act strategically. Rather than respond to problems through isolated responses, teams use strategic planning to identify challenges and opportunities collaboratively and influence the environment in which problems emerge. They create visions, define goals (including stretch goals), analyze barriers, select strategies, and generate action plans that commit team members to implementation.

Strategic planning encourages employees to think long term, be proactive and preventative rather than reactive and responsive, and focus on solutions rather than problems. It promotes continuous improvement and consensus decision making, focuses on quality rather than quantity, reduces apathy and cynicism, and increases engagement and commitment. It promotes collaboration over competition, transforms negative personal judgments into useful feedback, and shifts private conversations into public dialogue.

## 8. The Skill of Shaping Successful Meetings

The most common complaint we hear from employees in self-managing teams is that they spend too much time in useless meetings. Team meetings can be streamlined and made shorter, more satisfying, and more productive, and result in expanded consensus. Team members can rotate facilitating, recording key ideas, keeping time, and observing processes in order to improve the next meeting. Through participation, observation, and correction, team members develop skills in self-management, collaboration, and democracy.

## 9. The Skill of Resolving Conflicts

It is impossible to belong to a team without experiencing conflict. This reality encourages team members to improve skills in problem solving, collaborative negotiation, responding to difficult behaviors, and conflict resolution by:

- Stopping pointless arguments and sitting down together to talk about the problem
- Taking turns summarizing and listening without interruption
- Summarizing, clarifying, and acknowledging what the other person says and feels
- Saying what they think the other person is saying, asking if they are correct, and if not, listening again
- Assuming good intentions and focusing on effects, as in saying: "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_ because . . ."
- Focusing on the future rather than the past

- Focusing on problems and behaviors rather than personalities
- Focusing on interests rather than positions, as by asking, "Why do you want that?"
- Breaking the problem down into smaller parts and starting with the easiest
- Searching for creative answers and brainstorming solutions
- Agreeing on criteria that will make an agreement successful for all sides
- Identifying what each person wants and what each is willing to do to end the conflict
- Splitting the difference and looking for trade-offs
- Saying what will happen if the dispute is not resolved
- Writing down agreements
- Using team or outside mediators to help resolve the dispute

## 10. The Skill of Enjoyment

Being able to bring our entire selves to work, stretch to our limits, take pleasure in our work relationships, and know we have made a difference lies at the heart of the team experience. Most team members enjoy working together to accomplish difficult tasks. Their pleasure derives from meeting high-performance challenges and producing results that benefit themselves and their teams, organizations, and communities.

Even when teams work hard, it rarely feels like drudgery, because work is seen as a challenge and problems are not addressed alone or in isolation but by people who are working together. Hard-driving, time-obsessed, control-oriented managerial cultures undervalue pleasure or believe it does not belong in the workplace. Yet play stimulates creative problem solving and improves employee morale and should be integrated into the work process.

There is a clear connection between learning, achievement, and play. Sociologist Johann Huizinga wrote in *Homo Ludens* that when we are at play, there is a sense of tension or uncertainty about what will happen next that magnifies enjoyment, levity, and risk taking. Play involves multiple free, unstructured choices within a tightly structured process and an apparent absence of objective purpose, even though outcomes are subjectively highly important. In play, success and leadership vary widely from task to task. Skill

or chance, low levels of internal competition, and high levels of cooperation are characteristic features of play.

Organizations can encourage a sense of play by shifting people's attitudes toward mistakes, problems, and obstacles; encouraging intuition; treating projects as contests; hearing conflict stories as myths; and designing organizational culture with an aesthetic orientation. Play occurs spontaneously when people take time to enjoy being with each other. While it is obvious that a commitment to certainty, accuracy, timeliness, and integrity are central to work, team members can also increase productivity and improve the quality of work life by:

- Encouraging curiosity and creating abundant opportunities for learning
- Embracing paradox, enigma, ambiguity, doubt, contradiction, and uncertainty
- Setting aside time for personal networking and social interaction across organizational lines
- Acknowledging, celebrating, and rewarding personal and team achievements
- Encouraging participation, collaboration, democracy, and self-management
- Sharing failures as well as successes
- Assigning unusual, even impossible tasks to small, independent, self-managing teams
- Violating expectations and creating pleasant surprises
- Introducing totally different perspectives from outside the group's work, field, culture, and experience
- Providing training and classes in enjoyable, non-work-related topics
- Consciously inventing myths, stories, and legends and publicizing them broadly
- Inventing rituals, ceremonies, jokes, songs, plays, poems, and stories
- Poking fun at themselves, especially in public
- Rewarding playful, creative, risk-taking behavior
- Using periodic retreats, off-site meetings, and games to relax and enjoy each other's company
- Creating an enjoyable, amusing atmosphere every day

Mastering team skills is a lifelong process, one that requires and contributes to self-discovery, reflection and reinvention. Teams generate opportunities for self-actualization by creating learning environments in which the development of each is dependent on the development of others. This requires teams and organization to implement streamlined, open, collaborative processes.

# Organization Practice

## A Social Worker's Guide to Understanding Human Services

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2002



# 3 Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Self-Awareness in Organization Practice

Chapter 1 defined organizations, examined different types of agencies that deliver human services, and ended with a brief overview of policies and politics across sectors and agencies. We continued that broad perspective in Chapter 2, as we reviewed ways organizations have been defined. In this chapter, we take a more “micro” focus by looking at individuals as leaders within the complex array of organizations that advocate for, plan, fund, and deliver human services. The primary message in this chapter is the importance of critical thinking and self-awareness for being an effective organization-based practitioner. We are assuming that when social workers enter an organization with knowledge of their own assumptions and the ability to think critically, they are better able to be a valuable member of organizations where persons from many different cultures and backgrounds come together. Being a *valuable member* does not mean that everyone will be grateful for your contributions. Others may not be aware of their own assumptions and may not always appreciate critical thinking skills that bring into question long-held beliefs, values, and practices. On the other hand, we do not think social workers have a choice of remaining passive, noncritical participants in organizational life if they are operating from the value base of the profession.

Since we are intent on creating not *just* organizational leaders, but *social work* organizational leaders, this chapter will also focus on social work core values and ethical principles that can be used to guide organization practice. If one is fully self-aware within an organizational context, one will discover that applying social work principles is a thought-provoking, and sometimes even paradoxical, challenge—possible only with the aid of well-developed critical thinking skills. Our concern is that social workers thoroughly recognize the implications of embracing certain values, and that they be able to identify those situations in which organizational theory and behavior comply with or contradict these values.

## Leadership in Complex Organizations

For those readers who just relaxed because they do not plan to be an organizational leader and who think the contents of this book do not apply to them, we have a clear message to convey. We assume that every social worker has leadership responsibilities within any organization in which they work because leadership is not just a

title or position like manager, administrator, or something only full-time macro-practitioners do. **Leadership** is an attitude about responsibilities in an organization based on professional skills and a set of values that compel an individual to act. Leadership may come from any organizational member, regardless of the formal authority and power structure in that organization. The clinician who knows what happens to clients on a daily basis has a responsibility to provide that information to others for targeting further service development. These actions demonstrate leadership skills. The line worker who visits clients in their home environments will know more about what really happens to the agency's clientele than will managers who may have ultimate programmatic decision-making responsibility. Sharing the information will shape the program. The line worker demonstrates leadership skills by carefully documenting what she or he is learning and is responsible for clearly conveying this information to others who have ultimate program or legal responsibility. The program director who is aware of low staff morale and who needs to find ways to promote teamwork will be a leader for his or her staff team even if it is primarily the agency director's responsibility to establish the staff tenor for the whole agency.

Leadership means having vision about what information is important to share and when to share it so that change can happen in organizations. Leaders do not just identify and assess a problem, but plan for and facilitate successful problem resolution. Problem identification and solution are skills and responsibilities of all social workers. This means that organizational leadership is a professional responsibility of every social worker, no matter what position one holds.

This approach to leadership and the change that can result is not new to social work. In 1978, Brager and Holloway wrote *Changing Human Service Organizations: Politics and Practice* in which they recognize that organizational problem solving and change had been relegated to two groups: top-level administrators and managers, and third-party consultants. They contend that their approach to change "inverts the usual lens by focusing on the ways in which organizational actors with less formal power can influence those with more formal power" (p. ix). Their book was designed to provide direction for human service professionals at all ranks to contribute to change that would benefit consumers. Concerned that too much of the previous literature had focused on theory without tying theory to practice, Brager and Holloway specifically discuss ways in which staff can influence change within human service organizations. They begin by focusing on conflicting ideologies in which organizations are products of larger societal values and beliefs and the tendencies of different groups within organizations to hold contradictory values. They use three sets of tactics introduced by previous writers (Brager & Specht, 1973; Warren, 1971)—collaborative, campaign, and contest—that may be used to approach change from within. **Collaborative tactics** are characterized by open communication in which people are willing to engage in problem solving for change. **Campaign tactics**, seen as a midpoint along a continuum between collaborative and contest, include "hard persuasion, political maneuvering, bargaining and negotiation, and mild coercion designed to educate and persuade others that change needs to occur" (p. 133). **Contest tactics** engage participants in conflict and pressure, in

which the violation of social and legal norms may occur. Brager and focus is on collaborative and campaign tactics, acknowledging that "contests are rarely used in practice related to internal organizational change" (Table 3.1 for an overview of tactical approaches to change).

Two years later, Resnick and Patti (1980) published *Change: Humanizing Social Welfare Organizations*, an edited volume designed to guide about how to approach change within organizations "initiated by power persons in formal organizations" (p. vii). Similar to Brager and earlier assertions, Resnick and Patti also recognize that little scholarship had at that time been directed toward how to go about making change. They comment, "Practitioners have been forced to rely on assumptive tools, and intervention techniques drawn largely from their clinical more commonly, from personal judgment and experience. Reliance on ally implicit sources of expertise has often resulted in practitioners viewing problems as the collective expression of individual personalities, rather than organization phenomena per se" (pp. vii-viii).

Resnick and Patti go on to explain their rationale for organizational change. First, they explain that as organizations grow and develop, they become about maintenance and survival, with the potential for displacing it toward goals. **Goal displacement** occurs when an organization moves in directions from its original purpose. For example, the leaders of an alternative could become so concerned over being able to survive financially that they apply for any available funds, even if receiving the grant will mean agency in a different direction from its original cause or purpose. Organizational change activities, then, would involve staff in attempting to refocus their efforts, to align activities with original goals. Second, Resnick and Patti are concerned about increasing organizational size—as agencies become larger, it often becomes more difficult to achieve, and staff at all levels and the clients they serve often become more hierarchical. Good communication in larger agencies is often difficult to achieve, and staff at all levels and the clients they serve are often heard by administrators. Third, they argue that staff who view the change agents, whose voices can be heard, will be more engaged staff.

TABLE 3.1 Approaches to Change

Type of Tactics	Characteristics of Situation
Collaborative tactics	High communication among participants and a willingness to work together
Campaign tactics	Need to educate or inform participants so that they are willing to cooperate
Contest tactics	Communication has broken down and there are participants who are openly opposed to the change and unwilling to compromise

mitment to the important work of human service planning or provision will be stronger if they feel valued in their participation. "Involvement in change from below is the crucible on which organizational citizenship is forged" (p. 5).

Since these words were written, there has been an explosion of literature on organizational change, leadership, and culture. Some of this literature can be found in social work books and journals. For example, Kettner, Daley, and Nichols (1985) built on previous work and defined *planned change* as distinctive from *unplanned change* by four characteristics: "it is limited in scope, is directed toward enhancing the quality of life of clients, includes a role for consumers, and is guided by a professional practitioner who acts as a change agent" (p. 7). In their view, "the responsibility for initiating change in organizations and communities rests with every human service professional at any level who comes in contact with or has knowledge of a situation where the need for change is indicated" (p. 8).

Other social work texts continue to reinforce this theme that leadership within organizations is the responsibility of all social workers, regardless of organizational role. Netting, Kettner, and McMurtry (1998, p. 10) state that the person who calls herself or himself a social worker, but who is not willing to participate in organizational or community change, is not really doing social work. Social work, by definition, means working with people in context.

We are committed to this long-established tradition that every social worker can be a leader in initiating change, regardless of their organizational role. Our hope is that the reader will see the importance of both direct practice skills, accompanying understandings of human behavior, and the specifics of organizational skills from which to develop successful leadership for change. Our message in this book goes beyond what has been provided: students of human service organizations in the past. Instead of just straightforward concrete planning and administration skills, social work leaders must develop the skills necessary to flourish in the chaos that accrues with multiple perspectives that produce different ways of doing the work of delivering human services in a multicultural environment. As agencies become more diverse in populations served, in approaches to service delivery, and in addressing political, economic, and cultural challenges, there may be no resolutions or "real" answers. Consider, instead, that there may just be informed ways of acting without the expectation of closure, definitive analysis, and guarantees. Social work leaders must therefore be open to considering multiple perspectives in which possibilities and opportunities can emerge.

From this standpoint, working in multicultural environments in ways that are socially "just" may mean that chaos and uncertainty will be the norm. We are giving you permission, as a future organizational leader, to stop fighting the chaos and, instead, to relish the challenges it offers to use your best critical thinking skills to work toward needed change. We hope that the approach offered in this chapter will begin to equip you to practice in complexity and ambiguity, recognizing possibilities, accepting challenges, and overcoming obstacles.

For direct practice or clinical students among our readers, serious effort will be given throughout the text to identifying the practice skills that a well-trained clinician can bring to leadership in organization practice. Much of what you have

learned in direct practice—such as conducting multidimensional assessments, identifying problems, planning change, and managing barriers to change—will be handy when translated into an organizational context, but we offer a warning. As Resnick and Patti (1980) made clear, organizations are not just collections of personalities; they are much more complex phenomena. We will not just how complex they are.

## Critical Thinking and Self-Awareness Skills in Organization Practice

The importance of critical thinking in social work and other professions has been emphasized over the last decades. The difficulties have been exactly what critical thinking means and then applying the concept of critical thinking entails sophisticated data collection and data analysis. Critical thinking entails sophisticated data collection and data analysis. It requires complicated judgments in the face of uncertainty because all the data are never available for certain judgment. This lack of complete information becomes an accepted norm when speaking of critical thinking within a profession; it is discussed as *clinical judgment* (Miller, 2001). However, within organization practice, often the goal is to find an unambiguous *right* answer. This is unfortunate and actually counterintuitive, since organizations by design are more complicated than individuals, families, or group systems, making a *right* answer even more impossible to achieve.

How one deals with the environment created as a result of critical thinking depends on one's consciousness about self and personal expectations. Organization practice, like clinical practice, is actually a process of negotiation (Falck, 1988). In fact, according to Falck, most administrative problems can be attributed to an inability to separate personal issues from professional ones. One's ability to choose an appropriate solution strategy in the face of a problem is largely based on being able to separate one's personal needs from higher-order needs of the clients and the organization. This requires a developed sense of self and awareness of one's own strengths and vulnerabilities. In sum, the critical analysis will fall short of its potential. In sum, critical thinking based on self-awareness in organization practice is not for the faint of heart; then social work isn't either.

### The Role of Critical Thinking in Organizations

Critical thinking involves the ability to think in complex ways. Kroeger (1988) gives some specific hints about this type of thinking. They are: (1) identify several hierarchies that take one from simple to complex; (2) identify the hierarchy of particular interest in organizational practice; (3) relate this to management and is summarized in Figure 3.1. With information, one starts with the simplest form of data management, and moves to comparing, compiling, analyzing, coordinating, and, finally, to the most complex of

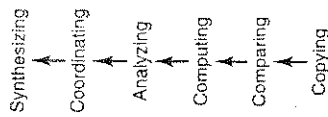


FIGURE 3.1 Simple to Complex Thinking Hierarchy: Information Management (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988)

thesizing. Examples of this hierarchy in organizations would include, as the simplest form, copying a report. The second level might include comparing that report to a similar report from last year. If the comparison shows that the reports cover similar items, then results could be tabulated and then compiled or organized. The next step would be drawing conclusions from the comparison of last year to this year. Coordinating would include providing this information to decision makers so that a focus could be determined for future action. The last, and most complicated, process includes synthesizing.

The determination of future action would not just be based on the data and the perspectives of those decision makers involved, but would also include an assessment of such aspects as the strengths and challenges in the particular context, including resources and other demands. When all that information is brought together, appropriately considered, and reduced for manageability, then synthesis or decision making has occurred. The ability to move from concrete descriptions to synthesis is at the core of critical thinking in organizations.

Gibbs and Gambrill say, "Critical thinking involves a careful appraisal of claims, a fair-minded consideration of alternative views, and a willingness to change your mind in light of evidence that refutes a cherished position" (1996, p. 13). The words *cherished position* should not be taken lightly. In thinking critically, assumptions held by oneself or others are examined carefully and could be changed, based on new or alternative information. The process is not an easy one if these assumptions are cherished, or tightly held, almost as immutable truths. Groups within organizations, even entire organizations, can cherish assumptions. You may recall from Chapter 2 that Schein (1992) calls this pattern of shared basic assumptions the basis of organizational culture. When consensus is so great as to create a perspective resembling a culture, the assumptions of that consensus are enaciously held. Basic assumptions in organizations can come to be so taken for granted that one finds little variation in thinking or performance within a cultural unit. In fact, if a basic assumption is strongly held in a group, members will find

behavior based on any other premise inconceivable. If, for example, the foster care unit is one of blaming biological parents, it is unlikely that within the unit would actively consider the parents' strengths. Regard it would not be part of the assessment considerations because it would require anyone to even think about strengths.

Such basic assumptions become like theories-in-use, which tend to be confronted not debated and thus are extremely difficult to change. To bring something new that might allow change in this realm requires practitioners to reexamine, and possibly change some of the more stable portions of the structures. Such learning is intrinsically difficult because the reexamination of assumptions temporarily destabilizes one's cognitive and interpersonal relationships, which can release large quantities of basic anxiety (Schein, 1992, p. 22).

People in organizations, as well as individuals and groups, may find their cherished assumptions are not congruent with what they are observing. Recognizing this discrepancy poses a dilemma—suffer the anxiety of another assumption or hang on tenaciously to avoid the pain that accompanies change. Either choice is uncomfortable in its own way.

### The Role of Self-Awareness in Organizations

Attending to this basic anxiety and understanding the destabilizing effect of thinking is central to self-awareness. Just as in direct practice, self-awareness within an organizational context requires an honest appraisal of oneself and many worthwhile discussions of self-awareness in relation to direct work with clients, but few speak specifically to the need for this same level of self-awareness within the organizational setting. We agree with Falck (1988) and believe that personal patterns and perceptions within an organization are key to understanding organizational behavior.

The same level of scrutiny to reactions within the organization is as important as it is with an individual client. The organizational leader must be aware of personal biases, habitual distortions, and personal behavior that might compromise the organization problem being addressed. These personal or internal patterns may be contributing to the problem assessment or its solution.

Another area requiring honest scrutiny is personal style. It is not always known that the style in use is the appropriate style for the selected problem or strategy. If the organizational leader is naturally domineering, it must be recognized that this dominance will produce the desired results. If one's style is naturally more passive, will that type of communication pattern create the level of a desired defensiveness, or a withdrawn pattern of communication warranted? This assessment is the realization that what is natural in one's style may not be the best style in each situation. With consciousness of the preferred style, and critical reflection regarding what is necessary with the people involved, the social work change can strategically choose a style that is more likely to succeed. If no change is possible, a discussion is necessary in order to be heard, even if a more quiet a

referred, the more effective strategy can be implemented because of introspection, critical thinking, and appropriate skill development.

In addition, the organizational leader cannot assume that anyone's life experiences have been left at the door of the agency. A frank assessment of how one's life experiences may influence perceptions and judgments is essential for drawing valid conclusions regarding personal reactions to organizational experiences. The goal is to achieve personal reaction and reality congruence, but this is not possible until and unless the people involved are clear about how personal history shapes the lens with which they attempt to understand a situation. For example, experience of personal pain from abuse or neglect as a child may cause overidentification with a client or colleague in pain, to the degree that accurate appraisal of a situation is impossible. If a worker has had a history with controlling and critical parents, then critical feedback from those whose role it is to evaluate may not be received in the spirit it is intended. Similarly, if a worker has had a bad care-giving experience with an older relative, the employee might have difficulty working with older persons who remind him or her of that relative. An active effort to disentangle personal reactions from the current reality is essential not only for sensemaking in the organization but also for effectiveness.

According to Kondrat (1999), there are at least five types of self-awareness involving successively higher orders of consciousness skills and complex thinking skills. Though her work is linked to direct practice, it is also very relevant for organizational practice. Our students suggest that there may actually be seven types of awareness, including preconscious and contextual types. Therefore, we combine these two types with the five identified by Kondrat.

*Preconscious self-awareness* is a transitional phase in which a person may recognize that he or she is not self-aware. This preconscious type is important because it is the beginning of the insight that something needs to happen differently. It is a triggering stage in which one accepts the possibility that something needs to change in the way one looks at himself or herself. One recognizes that self-awareness is not present.

To be self-aware in an organization, a social worker must first clearly experience awareness, and this is what Kondrat (1999, p. 459) calls *simple conscious awareness*. This type of self-awareness is when a lightbulb goes on in the worker's head. *Reflective awareness*, a third type, requires distancing from the contents of an experience for observation and critique. It involves getting beyond the lightbulb experience and beginning to analyze why one has felt a certain way or acted in certain ways. A fourth type, *reflexive awareness*, requires attention to and understanding of how personal history and the actual personhood of the practitioner impacts the situation under consideration. The fifth type, a more social constructivist version of reflexivity, is called *social constructive awareness*, and requires awareness of the mutual shaping that goes into meaning making within the organizational setting.

The sixth level, essential for organizational leadership, is *critical reflexivity*. This requires asking reflective questions about bias and intolerance. For example, one might examine the biases that "center on the relationship between seemingly unproblematic, everyday behavior and racially structured outcomes" (Kondrat,

1999, p. 468). The idea in this type of self-awareness is to accept the reality and the power to act to change the structures that support and sustain awareness in vulnerable groups inside and outside the organization. Awareness accepts the notion that organizational participants are not recipients upon whom the organization acts but they are also active responsibilities to challenge the status quo. This sounds remarkably similar to visions of social work leadership within organizations (Brager & 1978; Kettner, Daley, & Nichols, 1985; Resnick & Patti, 1980).

This critical reflexivity is essential in assessing not only personal attitudes but also how the social/structural environment of the organization can be continuing or extending majority power and privilege to the detriment of the vulnerable. Therefore, there is likely a seventh type of self-awareness which the full implications of one's reflective questions and actions are. We call this *contextual awareness*, where self-awareness meets the reality, and consequences of change, understanding and accepting results of articulation of individual consciousness. Table 3.2 summarizes types of self-awareness.

TABLE 3.2 Types of Self-Awareness

Level of Self-Awareness	Characteristics
1. Preconscious awareness	The person begins to recognize that he or she is not self-aware.
2. Simple conscious awareness	The person clearly experiences awareness.
3. Reflective awareness	The person is reflective, taking distance from the experience so that he or she can observe and critique.
4. Reflexive awareness	The person must pay attention to and understand how personal history and the actual personhood of the practitioner impacts the situation.
5. Social constructive awareness	The person must be aware of the mutual shaping that goes into meaning making within the organization.
6. Critical reflexivity	The person must ask reflective questions about bias and intolerance, accept responsibility and the power to challenge oppressive organizational structures.
7. Contextual awareness	The person recognizes the consequences of change, understanding and accepting results of articulation of individual consciousness.

### The Practice of Critical Thinking

Some of the challenges to self-awareness can be overcome through clear, critical assessment. In writing this book, we hold numerous *cherished* assumptions. We assume that social workers have no choice but to think critically; otherwise, clients will not receive the best services one can provide. We assume that social work practice will be fraught with conflicts, some intentional and others totally unexpected. We know disagreements occur when different cherished assumptions collide. Depending on one's personality and style, conflicts may be tempered or ignited, but they will not be avoided. We also assume that organizations are arenas in which the potential for assumptions to clash will be accentuated by the sheer number of people who interact. But we also assume that this sets the stage for the social worker to engage in a challenging and stimulating work environment that will stretch one's ability to use professional judgment based on well-reasoned thought. In addition, we assume that all this stretching and reasoning is based on one's desire to do the best possible work one can offer clients. This may mean struggling with (and possibly even changing) some cherished assumptions along the way. We know this is not easy, but see if you can begin to address the questions in Figure 3.2.

According to Falck (1988), "The emotional, intellectual, and technical aspects of social work are subject to the conscious, rational, and playful use of oneself as a social worker" (p. 120). No critical thinking process will produce effective results without the self-discipline necessary to achieve a consciousness about how one uses oneself in the organizational context. Once conscious use of self is part of a practice vocabulary, then real critical thinking can begin. Gibbs and Gambrill (1996) contend that "critical thinking and self-awareness go hand in hand" (p. 9). They have identified a list of elements to consider in order to think critically (see Figure 3.3). We will briefly look at each in relationship to organization practice in order to aid in the development of a commitment to "reflect on the soundness of reasoning and a respect for the views of others" (Gibbs & Gambrill, 1999, p. 9).

*Evaluate the Accuracy of the Claims.* In this book and in the classroom, students will be overwhelmed at times with claims from professors and experienced practitioners about what one should and should not do. It will be important to evaluate the accuracy of these claims by assessing whether they are accompanied by

FIGURE 3.2 Beginning Questions about Assumptions

1. What are your assumptions about organizations and organizational behavior?
2. When, where, and how did you develop these assumptions?
3. If you think about an organization with which you are familiar, do all your assumptions hold up? If not, which ones don't and why?
4. Think about an organization with which you are familiar. What basic assumptions do you think drive this organization's culture?

FIGURE 3.3 Gibbs and Gambrill's (1996) List of Critical Thinking Elements

- Evaluate the accuracy of the claims.
- Evaluate arguments.
- Recognize informal fallacies.
- Recognize propaganda stratagems.
- Recognize pseudoscience, fraud, and quackery.
- Use language thoughtfully.
- Recognize affective influences.
- Avoid cognitive biases.
- Increase self-awareness.

clear arguments. It will be necessary to determine what criteria one assesses claims and when to ask whether the criteria have been tested. For example, a social work manager might say, "It is best to diversify our base and have multiple revenue streams, rather than depend too heavily on one source." A social worker hearing this statement would want to ask whether the claim should be embraced and whether that evidence indicates that this claim should be embraced. It certainly applies to the type of agency to which the claim is being applied. It certainly applies to the manager's experience, but would this principle apply to every situation about small, specialized, or alternative organizations that have only one and only one source of funding? Is diversification of funding important and only one source of funding? Do different revenue sources exist?

*Evaluate Arguments.* Evaluating arguments requires identifying the reasons stated for reaching a conclusion. Arguments may be unfounded if they are not logical, contain fallacies, or do not move in an identifiable direction (Gibbs & Gambrill, 1996, p. 9). Evaluation does not have to be linear, but the direction must be identifiable and follow its own logic.

*Recognize Informal Fallacies.* Fallacies are actually mistakes in reasoning that take skill to spot. Fallacies may occur when

- the premises do not support the conclusion
- broad generalizations are applied too liberally
- facts and positions are misrepresented
- emotional appeals are not grounded in facts

"Begging the question," "sweeping generalizations," and "straw man arguments" are all examples of fallacies. They work because they create

communication. For example, in a unit meeting, a situation regarding clients is explained in such a way as to suggest that there is no service available to serve the clients' needs. When probed, the worker fails to understand the clarifying questions when the supervisor is trying to be very clear. A series of informal fallacies could be at work. The worker may be generalizing too broadly. The supervisor may be using excessive wordiness that obscures her or his message that lack of service is no excuse. The worker, who is adamantly sticking with the idea that a specific service unavailable in the agency is the only option, feigns lack of understanding in order to avoid scrutiny of his or her position. The result is lack of clarity and inability to really assess what is happening.

**Recognize Propaganda Stratagems.** Fallacies may actually be promoted in propaganda strategies in which someone tries to persuade or convince another person to come over to his or her way of thinking. Propaganda is used like a sales pitch. For example, consider this statement: "Programs under the auspices of nonprofit organizations, as opposed to those under for profits, will be more sensitive to clients because they are mission driven rather than revenue driven." This is an example of a broad generalization applied to an entire sector—nonprofit organizations—and one with tremendous emotional appeal. It is a misrepresentation of a situation by deceptively using part truths. The communication, though couched in informal language, is really meant to persuade, because no self-respecting social worker wants to be accused of defending a revenue-driven organization. A profit motive sounds so crass and unfeeling! Here, fallacies such as oversimplification and assumptions that mission and revenue are mutually exclusive opposites, and that all nonprofits (or for profits) conform to certain stereotypes are tactics. These tactics are used to persuade those receiving the communication that nonprofits aren't interested in making profits and that agencies that are interested in profits cannot be good for clients.

**Recognize Pseudoscience, Fraud, and Quackery.** Spotting pseudoscience, fraud, and quackery also involves critical thinking. Pseudoscience occurs when claims are couched in scientific language, but these claims are not substantiated by word or number data. Quackery pertains to the promotion of unproven, even harmful, claims, whereas fraud is intentional deception and misrepresentation. Organizational life is fraught with opportunities to spot these type claims. For example, public relations materials are often couched in language that sounds scientific, such as, "The staff in this agency have over 100 years of combined professional experience in working with adolescents, and this organization has been a pillar in the community network of services for over 60 years." This may sound impressive until one realizes that "combined years of professional experience" doesn't say anything about quality and whether these professionals have continued to keep up to date. What if there are 100 professionals in the agency, and each one had only one year of experience? And the agency may have lasted in the community for 60 years, but what data support, much less define, its "pillar" status?

**Use Language Thoughtfully.** Gibbs and Gambrill (1996) emphasize the importance of thoughtful language. Not only do we agree with their emphasis but we experienced firsthand, while writing this book, the awesome responsibility of thoughtful language, because we know that no matter what words we use the potential to be misunderstood. We have provided a glossary of terms for this book because we found ourselves needing to define meanings for collaboration, and we see the advantage of sharing those definitions with others.

The writer of a popular book titled *Why Didn't You Say That in the First Place? How to Be Understood at Work* (Heyman, 1994) contends that one should be particularly true in multicultural and multidisciplinary environments with the misunderstanding assumption, one does not have to struggle with the surprise of finding out that colleagues didn't understand what you said or misunderstood as well. One just expects to be misunderstood, and then s trying to clarify what is meant. This removes the pressure to be understood when by some stroke of fortune one is understood the first time around, it a bonus or cherished surprise that occasionally happens in one's working without the expectation of full understanding, approaching communication learning/teaching cycle meant to move toward further and deeper clarity; establish the carefulness that effective communication requires.

**Recognize Affective Influences.** Even when thoughtful communication exchanged within an organizational context, Gibbs and Gambrill (1996) the importance of recognizing affective influences. Sometimes workers another so much that they are reluctant to disagree or just want to support person's perspective. The context in which communication occurs and decisions that affect clients' lives are made is rife with affective influences be as subtle as a knowing glance between colleagues or as obvious as the age, race, gender, and ethnicity influences shape how people speak, understand, and the complexity of this affective dimension of communication becomes clear.

**Avoid Cognitive Biases.** Avoiding cognitive biases means recognizing biases "to accept initial assumptions without question, to think that causes a to their effects, and to underestimate the frequency of coincidences (chances)" (Gibbs & Gambrill, 1996, p. 9).<sup>3</sup> Biases do exist regardless of one's view on science and reality. Recognizing what biases one brings to one's beginning to critical thinking, which leads to increased self-awareness. I aware means asking why you believe what you do and considering if you port the claims that you make. "Critical thinking encourages you to ask about your beliefs, values, claims and arguments. . . . It encourages you to of what you know and don't know and to reflect on why you act in certain and what the consequences may be" (Gibbs & Gambrill, 1996, p. 10).

**Increase Self-Awareness.** Although many of our readers are convinced that self-awareness and its accompanying critical thinking skills are a necessary component of one's professional repertory, we recognize that others may be less convinced, if convinced at all. Why might this be? First, it may be easier not to look honestly and thoroughly at oneself in order to be clear about strengths and challenges, needs and areas of personal risk within organizational life. Sometimes it is easier to go along with the status quo. In addition, in "ideal situations," critical thinking skills may work quite nicely, but we have encountered few *ideal* organizations. Raising more questions in already uncertain situations is not always an easy or a welcomed thing to do. Perhaps this is why you are in a social work program—you recognize that it takes a great deal of skill, and the support of other organizational members, to fully realize one's leadership potential in organization practice. See Figure 3.4 for questions to ponder about critical thinking and organization practice.

Critical thinking is useful in many aspects of professional life. The next section addresses another arena where critical thinking will be helpful. Critical thinking is particularly important when addressing what are essentially the moral underpinnings of the social work profession. When considering the core values of the profession, one immediately thinks of achieving what is *right*. But what is *right* may depend on navigating and critically thinking about many contexts, a very important context being the organizations in which social workers practice.

### The Relationship of Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Self-Awareness

So what is the relationship between leadership, critical thinking, and self-awareness? Leadership is an attitude of responsibility that requires some type of action. It may be verbal action, such as speaking up. It may be mobilizing others to do something that needs to be done. It may be modeling action that exemplifies certain values and brings them to life. Whatever the type action performed, leadership requires other persons to observe or participate in that action. Leadership occurs in a context. It is not something that one keeps in one's head. It is not solitary.

However, effective leadership requires a grounding in self-awareness and critical thinking. Informed leadership is not action just because one wants to act;

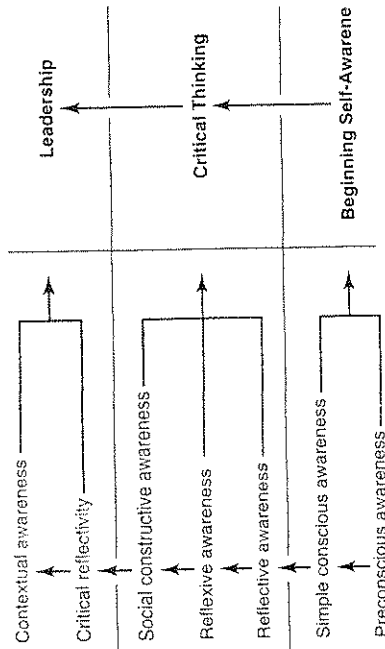


FIGURE 3.5 Self-Awareness, Critical Thinking, and Leadership

rather, it is action that has been carefully considered and that is resp on information gathered. This does not mean that leadership cannot on, but self-awareness will assist a leader in knowing when to ac when to wait. Leaders must assess when it is appropriate and nec which cannot be consistently accomplished without critical analysis.

Figure 3.5 illustrates the relationship between leadership, cri and self-awareness. Note that self-awareness leads to critical thinki ng beyond a beginning level of self-awareness, a person cannot thin one moves to the more complex levels of self-awareness, critical thi a natural by-product. Critical thinking is the basis of productive le self-aware leader is armed with critical consciousness that resulti thinking. This goes beyond personal needs to a larger awareness and needed to facilitate change. Notice that this relationship of self-aware ing and action is very similar to clinical role in individual family an

### Social Work Core Values in Organizational Context

Much has been made of the moral values inherent in human servi cially professional social work. We pointed out in Chapter 2 that Hi views people work as moral work. It is moral work from two persp is moral work because it is the right thing to do—helping people work has also been seen to be moral work because societal expecta good and right tend to be operationalized in the types of social wor are supported at a given time in history. For example, society expect

FIGURE 3.4 Beginning Questions about Critical Thinking

1. What are the characteristics of critical thinking?
2. How might you practice thinking more critically?
3. Can you think of instances in which you recognized informal fallacies, propaganda strategies, pseudoscience, fraud, or quackery?
4. Think of an organization with which you are familiar. What are the *affective influences* that make a difference in how you relate to others in this organization and why?



ers to be intrusive when the larger society envisioned its right to act for clients' own good. Morality, as with all values, shifts as cultures and societies shift. Since social work typically is acting at the border between the individual and society, what is seen as professionally appropriate is a reflection of the interaction between the individual (including those in the profession) and society in general. Human service organizations, such as the social work profession, are expected to be a reflection of societal expectations about work with persons in need.

Some readers will argue that basic principles do not change and that there are overriding universal values that will withstand the test of time and are in fact "God given." These persons are **absolutists**. Others will argue that there is no one "Truth" with a capital T; instead, there are multiple truths because "ethical standards depend on cultural practices, political climate, contemporary norms and moral standards, and other contextual considerations" (Reamer, 1995, p. 48). These persons are **relativists**. You will have to determine which of these terms applies to you. These different ways of looking at values are based on different assumptions. When absolutists and relativists meet, they will likely encounter points over which they disagree (see Table 3.3). Understanding where you "naturally" fall on what might be called the relativist to absolutist continuum is another important aspect of self-awareness. What you do with this knowledge, then, becomes a part of the complex thinking challenge central to critical thinking. No matter what is written about ethics and ethical professional behavior, determining what is ethical depends as much on your perspective as an absolutist or as a relativist as it does on the content of any professional code.

Generally speaking, societal expectations of the social work profession are expressed in the ethical principles of the profession. The principles are the basis of societal sanction but they also have value implications for social workers working in organizations that provide human service programs and services. We use the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics as a starting point for our discussion, even though we recognize that not all social workers are NASW members. We also know that many social workers follow the principles of specific constituency groups either concurrently with or before that of NASW. See, for example, the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), the Clinical Social Work Federation (CSWF), and the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

TABLE 3.3 Beliefs of Absolutists and Relativists

Absolutists	Relativists
Basic principles do not change.	Principles change.
There are overriding "universal" values that stand the test of time.	Values change with time and context.
There is a Truth.	There are multiple truths.
There is one best way.	There are multiple ways.

In addition, regulations established for state licensing boards and agency standards also set ethical standards for practice (Reamer, 1995).

Any look at the history of the social work profession will show ethics, regulations, and standards governing practice have been amended as times change. Standards develop within an ever-shifting context. Expectations change as the context changes. The current where the social work profession is in this historical moment. The goes a long way in explicating the current **social work perspective** that recognizes the worth of the individual and the individual and potentialities within the context of community rights and respect has been said that social work has a "simultaneous dual focus" on the individual and the social context within which the individual finds himself or herself and the social context that serves as a lens through which organization practice and analyzed.

Regardless of how one views a code of ethics—as reflecting principles or as emerging and ever-changing—it is helpful to know what is currently espoused. The NASW Code of Ethics lists six core values, six of the profession held in high esteem, that are linked to six ethical standards for action related to the value. Table 3.4 lists these values and standards.

Now, assume you are a social worker in an organization that provides services. First, you must be clear about your own personal, moral, and professional position vis-à-vis the values of the profession. You must hold your personal practice congruent with the NASW Code. Remembering that almost always organizationally based, congruence with the code must be maintained in the organization where you practice. We suggest if you use these core values

TABLE 3.4 NASW Code of Ethics: Values and Principles (1996)

Value	Principle
1. Service	Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address their problems.
2. Social justice	Social workers challenge social and economic injustices and work for the well-being and worth of the person.
3. Dignity and worth of the person	Social workers recognize the importance of human relationships and the worth of the person.
4. Importance of human relationships	Social workers recognize the importance of human relationships and the worth of the person.
5. Integrity	Social workers behave in a truthful and honest manner.
6. Competence	Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and maintain professional expertise.

or purposes. Think about how the group and subgroup cultures will in an organizational culture to create their own set of values and assume that we have not even mentioned the clients one serves and how this multicultural interaction, though it is for the purpose of serving the organizational culture is established in the first place. Even if the team within this organization work well together and share certain values, clients will bring their own values and assumptions to the interaction (1993) refers to the concept of **cultural fit** as "the degree of alignment or more cultural configurations" (p. 170). Social workers have to be assessing cultural fit in order to work toward organizational change diversity is not compatible with established organizational culture.

Self-awareness is essential in working with the complexities of a different from oneself, an organizational member may be deceived that those biases and stereotypes are absent. The worker in a multicultural environment should have the honesty and humility to admit the limits in his or her ability to understand. With this admission comes the recognition of the need for necessary in communication and judgments so that personal prejudices are not clouded the picture or alienate those with whom solutions must be found. Awareness is a key to moving away from prejudices and stereotypes but until full liberation from discrimination and oppression is possible, a major tool for managing diversity.

The multicultural competency for which self-aware practice has been labeled in the direct practice literature as *ethnic-sensitivity* (Schlesinger, 1991; Lum, 2000) or *cross-cultural* (Harper & Lantz, 1999) provides helpful guidance for practice with the multiple cultures within an organization can be found in this literature. However, even more practice is provided regarding direct practice. Lum defines this practice as "the art and science of developing a helping relationship with a family, group, and/or community whose distinctive physical or cultural characteristics and discriminatory experiences require approaches that are sensitive and culturally appropriate" (p. 6). For direct practice, most of the practice must be shaped with a sensitivity to experiences of racism and discrimination as well as attention to the specific cultural beliefs and behaviors that might influence individuals' views of themselves, their families, and their communities. This same sensitivity is important to organizational change.

Many more details about competent multicultural practice throughout the rest of this book. For now, it is important to develop a sensitivity to the type of respect that comprises effective multicultural practice. Communication central to respect, it is necessary to feel good about the work of respect to respect others until people respect themselves. The sensitivity of respect comes through dialogue. Real understanding is impossible without communication. One can move through misunderstanding and anger through dialogue. Dialogue is only possible if all parties are fully present in the

cal principles as a template to assess your organization's performance, you might find there are some values and principles that hold up well in the organization and others that do not. If you looked at the theories that guide management in your agency, you might find that the values and principles derived from the theoretical perspective do not mesh well with those articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics. We would be foolish to suggest that incompatibility between these core values and organizational behavior means that you can no longer work for this organization, or few social workers might be formally employed! However, we do believe that it is the professional social worker's responsibility to recognize when professional principles (whatever they are) are being violated and to assess just how egregious the violation is. In other words, the social worker who has critical thinking skills will be able to assess the fit of social work values and ethical principles with organizational behavior and then to determine what action is needed for a better fit. This is organizational leadership.

Social workers bring to their work a particular perspective of respect for the individual in the context of their own experience. This respect of the individual also shapes how a social worker engages in the enactment of change as a regular, ongoing process within all organizations. Conscious use of self is an essential element of this perspective. The social work frame of reference demands that designing programs and services that are placed within organizational contexts demonstrate sensitivity to the populations served. In human service organizations, social work attitudes, values, and skills are needed for contemporary organizational practice that assures appropriate sensitivity to people in need. To assure the presence of the social work perspective, self-awareness and critical thinking are essential. Figure 3.6 provides some beginning questions to consider.

### awareness and Multiculturalism organizations

Imagine, then, that one enters an organization in which persons from diverse groups with different values and assumptions come together to achieve a purpose

FIGURE 3.6 Questions about Values and Ethics

1. Consider the six core values and ethical principles in the NASW Code of Ethics. How might you prioritize these values and principles? What is your rationale?
2. Think of an organization or a human service program with which you are familiar. How do the assumptions and values that guide this program fit with the NASW core values and principles? Do you think that it is important for programs to always fit? How do you think someone of a different age, gender, or ethnicity would respond?
3. Do you think that there are universal principles that pertain to all situations? Why or why not? Give examples.

Attention to the conversation is essential. This attention sometimes will require vigorous conversation, sometimes called *dialectical conversation*. At other times, respect occurs through silently bearing witness to the personal narrative of a colleague or client. A third important element of respect is curiosity and being humble about one's knowledge. Multicultural practice requires genuine interest in the stories, experiences, and perceptions of others. Genuine respect is only possible when one knows people's real thoughts, feelings, and fears. The real communication of these basic aspects of human experience comes through a fourth element—sense of safety. Safety is created when one communicates a sense of the other's worthiness, which is the fifth element. Figure 3.7 lists the elements of competent multicultural practice.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999) says that from these expressions of respect comes empowerment. Crossing the borders of difference through genuine understanding and respect allows everyone involved to gain more knowledge. This knowledge can be used to make decisions that will nurture self-confidence and self-reliance in organizations and social environments.

### VISION

Social work leaders with the power and skills to effect needed changes in human service organizations must critically think about their own and others' assumptions about organizations and organizational behavior. Critical thinking in an organizational context will inevitably lead to conflict because no two people will hold the exact same assumptions. Being aware of the potential for assumptions to clash and clarifying one's own perspectives are key to organization practice, particularly as one works in increasingly multicultural organizations.

Social work core values and ethical principles reveal that organizational or program values and premises may or may not fit well with codes of ethics, professional standards, or even personal moral values. The effective social worker must examine fit between organizational and professional values and look for ways to link the two. This responsibility is equally important for the line worker and the manager. Micro- and macropractice are either impeded or enhanced by the capacity for reflexive, complex, critically analytical thinking in the organizational con-

FIGURE 3.7 Elements of Competent Multicultural Practice

1. Self-respect
2. Dialogue
3. Curiosity
4. Sense of safety
5. Recognition of worthiness

text. In addition, as programs are designed and redesigned to meet workers will need skills in multicultural practice to engage the chaotic activity, and maintain and construct effective and just organizations.

We now turn to Chapter 4, which will demonstrate that there are valid ways of understanding organizations and the behavior within standing multiple approaches to organizations and the people who are needed for effective organization practice to occur.

### ENDNOTES

1. See, for example, Hepworth, Rooney, and Larsen (1997).
2. As you will see later, this is a rather narrow version of what constitutes a bias scores a certain set of assumptions about cause and effects that are not held about what constitutes acceptable knowledge. It also assumes that what is culturally is not necessarily real.

*Fourth Edition*

# LEADERSHIP

THEORY AND PRACTICE

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# Culture and Leadership

13

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## DESCRIPTION

As the title suggests, this chapter is about culture *and* leadership. Like the previous chapter, this one is multifaceted and focuses on a collection of related ideas rather than a single unified theory. Because there are no established theories of cultural leadership, our discussion in this chapter will focus on research that describes culture, its dimensions, and the effects of culture on the leadership process.

Since World War II, globalization has been advancing throughout the world. Globalization is the increased interdependence (economic, social, technical, and political) between nations. People are becoming more interconnected. There is more international trade, cultural exchange, and use of worldwide telecommunication systems. In the last 10 years, our schools, organizations, and communities have become far more global than in the past. Increased globalization has created many challenges, including the need to design effective multinational organizations, to identify and select appropriate leaders for these entities, and to manage organizations with culturally diverse employees (House & Javidan, 2004). Globalization has created a need to understand how cultural differences affect leadership performance.

Globalization has also created the need for leaders to become competent in cross-cultural awareness and practice. Adler and Bartholomew (1992) contend that global leaders need to develop five cross-cultural competencies. First, leaders need to understand business, political, and cultural environments worldwide. Second, they need to learn the perspectives, tastes, trends, and technologies of many other cultures. Third, they need to be able to work simultaneously with people from many cultures. Fourth, leaders must be able to adapt to living and communicating in other cultures. Fifth, they need to learn to relate to people from other cultures from a position of equality rather than cultural superiority (p. 53). Additionally, Ting-Toomey (1999) believes that global leaders need to be skilled in creating trans-cultural visions. They need to develop communication competencies that will enable them to articulate and implement their vision in a diverse workplace. In sum, today's leaders need to acquire a challenging set of competencies if they intend to be effective in present-day global societies.

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of how culture influences the leadership process. The chapter begins by defining culture and describing two concepts related to our understanding of culture. Next, we describe dimensions of culture, clusters of world cultures, and the characteristics of these clusters. We then learn how leadership varies across cultures and which specific leadership attributes cultures universally endorse as desirable and undesirable. Finally, we discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this body of research.

## CULTURE DEFINED

Anthropologists, sociologists, and many others have debated the meaning of the word *culture*. Because it is an abstract term, it is hard to define, and different people often define it in dissimilar ways. For our purposes, *culture* is defined as the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people. It is these *shared* qualities of a group that make them unique. Culture is dynamic and transmitted to others. In short, culture is the way of life, customs, and script of a group of people (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988).<sup>\*</sup>

Related to culture are the terms *multicultural* and *diversity*. *Multicultural* implies an approach or system that takes more than one culture into account. It refers to the existence of multiple cultures such as African, American, Asian, European, and Middle Eastern. *Multicultural* can also

refer to a set of subcultures defined by race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age. *Diversity* refers to the existence of different cultures or ethnicities within a group or organization. Throughout this chapter we will be addressing issues related to leadership and multiculturalism.

## RELATED CONCEPTS

Before beginning our discussion of the various facets of culture, this section describes two concepts that are closely related to culture and leadership: ethnocentrism and prejudice. Both of these tendencies can have an impact on how leaders influence others.

### Ethnocentrism

As the word suggests, *ethnocentrism* is the tendency for individuals to place their own group (ethnic, racial, or cultural) at the center of their observations of others and the world. People tend to give priority and value to their own beliefs, attitudes, and values, over and above those of other groups. Ethnocentrism is the perception that one's own culture is better or more natural than the culture of others. It may include the failure to recognize the unique perspectives of others. Ethnocentrism is a universal tendency, and each of us is ethnocentric to some degree.

Ethnocentrism is like a perceptual window through which people from one culture make subjective or critical evaluations of people from another culture (Porter & Samovar, 1997). For example, some people think that the democratic principles of the United States are superior to the political beliefs of other cultures, and they often fail to understand the complexities of these cultures. Ethnocentrism accounts for our tendency to think our own cultural values and ways of doing things are right and natural (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997).

Ethnocentrism can be a major obstacle to effective leadership because it prevents people from fully understanding or respecting the world of others. For example, if one person's culture values individual achievement, it may be difficult for that person to understand another person whose culture emphasizes collectivity (i.e., people working together as a whole). Similarly, if one person believes strongly in respecting authority, he or she may find it difficult to understand a person who challenges authority or

does not easily defer to authority figures. The more ethnocentric we are, the less open or tolerant we are of other people's cultural traditions or practices.

A skilled leader cannot avoid issues related to ethnocentrism. While recognizing his or her own ethnocentrism, a leader also needs to understand and to a degree tolerate the ethnocentrism of others. In reality, it is a balancing act for leaders. On one hand, they need to promote and be confident in their own ways of doing things, but at the same time they need to be sensitive to the legitimacy of the ways of other cultures. Skilled leaders are able to negotiate the fine line between trying to overcome ethnocentrism and knowing when to remain grounded in their own cultural values.

### Prejudice

Closely related to ethnocentrism is prejudice. *Prejudice* is a largely fixed attitude, belief, or emotion held by an individual about another individual or group that is based on faulty or unsubstantiated data. It refers to judgments about others based on previous decisions or experiences. Prejudice involves inflexible generalizations that are resistant to change or evidence to the contrary (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). Prejudice often is thought of in the context of race (e.g., European American versus African American), but it also applies in areas such as sexism, ageism, homophobia, and other independent prejudices. Although prejudice can be positive (e.g., thinking highly of another culture without sufficient evidence), it is usually negative.

As with ethnocentrism, we all hold prejudices to some degree. Sometimes our prejudices allow us to keep our partially fixed attitudes undisturbed and constant. In addition, prejudice can reduce our anxiety because it gives us a familiar way to structure our observations of others. One of the main problems with prejudice is that it is self-oriented rather than other-oriented. It helps us to achieve balance for ourselves at the expense of others. Moreover, attitudes of prejudice inhibit understanding by creating a screen that filters and limits our ability to see multiple aspects and qualities of other people. Prejudice often shows itself in crude or demeaning comments that people make about others. Both ethnocentrism and prejudice interfere with our ability to understand and appreciate the human experience of others.

In addition to fighting their own prejudice, leaders also face the challenge of dealing with the prejudice of followers. These prejudices can be toward the leader or the leader's culture. Furthermore, it is not uncommon

for the leader to face followers who represent culturally different groups, and these groups have their own prejudices toward each other. A skilled leader needs to find ways to negotiate with followers from various cultural backgrounds.

## DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

Culture has been the focus of many studies across a variety of disciplines. In the past 30 years, a substantial number of studies have focused specifically on ways to identify and classify the various *dimensions* of culture. Determining the basic dimensions or characteristics of different cultures is the first step in being able to understand the relationships between them.

Several well-known studies have addressed the question of how to characterize cultures. For example, Hall (1976) reported that a primary characteristic of cultures is the degree to which they are focused on the individual (individualistic cultures) or on the group (collectivistic cultures). Taking a different approach, Trompenaars (1994) surveyed more than 15,000 people in 47 different countries and determined that organizational cultures could be classified effectively into two dimensions: egalitarian versus hierarchical and person versus task orientation. The egalitarian-hierarchical dimension refers to the degree to which cultures exhibit shared power as opposed to hierarchical power. Person-task orientation refers to the extent to which cultures emphasize human interaction as opposed to focusing on tasks to accomplish.

Of all the research on *dimensions of culture*, perhaps the most referenced is the research of Hofstede (1980, 2001). Based on an analysis of questionnaires obtained from more than 100,000 respondents in more than 50 countries, Hofstede identified five major dimensions on which cultures differ: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term-short-term orientation. Hofstede's work has been the benchmark for much of the research on world cultures.

In the specific area of *culture and leadership*, the studies by House et al. (2004) offer the strongest body of findings to date, published in the 800-page *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. These studies are called the GLOBE studies, named for the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program. The GLOBE studies have generated a very large number of findings on the relationship between culture and leadership.

The GLOBE research program, which was initiated by Robert House in 1991, is an ongoing program that has involved more than 160 investigators. The primary purpose of the project is to increase our understanding of cross-cultural interactions and the impact of culture on leadership effectiveness. GLOBE researchers have used quantitative methods to study the responses of 17,000 managers in more than 950 organizations representing 62 different cultures throughout the world. GLOBE researchers have collected data in a variety of ways including questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and content analysis of printed media. The findings of the GLOBE studies will be provided in more detail throughout this chapter.

As a part of their study of culture and leadership, GLOBE researchers developed their own classification of cultural dimensions. Based on their own research and the work of others (e.g., Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; McClelland, 1961; Triandis, 1995), GLOBE researchers identified nine cultural dimensions: *uncertainty avoidance*, *power distance*, *institutional collectivism*, *in-group collectivism*, *gender egalitarianism*, *assertiveness*, *future orientation*, *performance orientation*, and *humane orientation*. In the following section, each of the dimensions is described.

### **Uncertainty Avoidance**

This dimension refers to the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on established social norms, rituals, and procedures to avoid uncertainty. Uncertainty avoidance is concerned with the way cultures use rules, structures, and laws to make things predictable and less uncertain.

### **Power Distance**

This dimension refers to the degree to which members of a group expect and agree that power should be shared unequally. Power distance is concerned with the way cultures are stratified, thus creating levels between people based on power, authority, prestige, status, wealth, and material possessions.

### **Institutional Collectivism**

This dimension describes the degree to which an organization or society encourages institutional or societal collective action. Institutional

collectivism is concerned with whether cultures identify with broader societal interests rather than individual goals and accomplishments.

### **In-Group Collectivism**

This dimension refers to the degree to which people express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. In-group collectivism is concerned with the extent to which people are devoted to their organizations or families.

### **Gender Egalitarianism**

This dimension measures the degree to which an organization or society minimizes gender role differences and promotes gender equality. Gender egalitarianism is concerned with how much societies de-emphasize members' biological sex in determining the roles that members play in their homes, organizations, and communities.

### **Assertiveness**

This dimension refers to the degree to which people in a culture are determined, assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their social relationships. Assertiveness is concerned with how much a culture or society encourages people to be forceful, aggressive, and tough, as opposed to timid, submissive, and tender in social relationships.

### **Future Orientation**

This concept refers to the extent to which people engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification. Future orientation emphasizes that people in a culture prepare for the future as opposed to enjoying the present and being spontaneous.

### **Performance Orientation**

This dimension describes the extent to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for improved performance and



excellence. Performance orientation is concerned with whether people in a culture are rewarded for setting challenging goals and meeting them.

### Humane Orientation

The ninth dimension refers to the degree to which a culture encourages and rewards people for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others. Humane orientation is concerned with how much a society or organization emphasizes sensitivity to others, social support, and community values.

GLOBE researchers used these nine cultural dimensions to analyze the attributes of the 62 different countries in the study. These cultural dimensions formed the basis for studying how the countries varied in their approach to leadership.

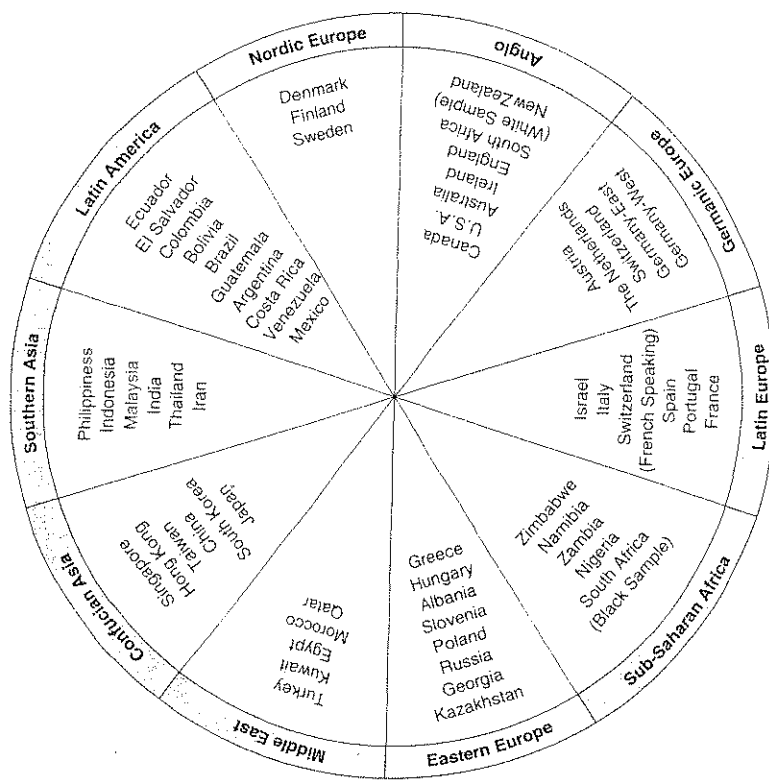
## CLUSTERS OF WORLD CULTURES

GLOBE researchers divided the data from the 62 countries they studied into regional clusters.<sup>1</sup> These clusters provided a convenient way to analyze the similarities and differences between cultural groups (clusters) and to make meaningful generalizations about culture and leadership.

To create regional clusters, GLOBE researchers used prior research (e.g., Ronen & Shenkar, 1985), common language, geography, religion, and historical accounts. Based on these factors, they grouped countries into 10 distinct clusters: *Anglo*, *Latin Europe*, *Nordic Europe*, *Germanic Europe*, *Eastern Europe*, *Latin America*, *Middle East*, *Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Southern Asia*, and *Confucian Asia* (Figure 13.1). These 10 regional clusters were the groupings that were used in all of the GLOBE studies.

To test whether the clusters, or groups of countries, were valid, researchers did a statistical analysis of questionnaire data collected from individuals in each of the clusters. Their results indicated that the scores of respondents *within a cluster* correlated with one another but were unrelated to the scores of respondents in *different clusters*. From these findings they concluded that each cluster was unique. In sum, these regional clusters represented a valid and reliable way to differentiate countries of the world into 10 distinct groups.

Figure 13.1 Country Clusters According to GLOBE



SOURCE: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.), *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, copyright © 2004, Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF CLUSTERS

In an effort to characterize the regional clusters, GLOBE researchers analyzed data from each of the regions using the dimensions of culture described earlier. Table 13.1 provides a classification of the cultural clusters in regard to how they scored on each cultural dimension. In the table, the nine cultural dimensions are listed in the left-hand column, and the

high-score and low-score regional clusters are provided in the next two columns. These are the regional clusters that were significantly higher or lower on particular dimensions than other regions. From these data, several observations can be made about the characteristics of these regional cultures.

### Anglo

The Anglo cluster consists of Canada, the United States, Australia, Ireland, England, South Africa (white sample), and New Zealand. These countries were *high* in performance orientation and *low* in in-group collectivism. This means it is characteristic of these countries to be competitive and result-oriented but less attached to their families or similar groups than other countries.

### Confucian Asia

This cluster, which includes Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, South Korea, and Japan, exhibited *high* scores in performance orientation, institutional collectivism, and in-group collectivism. These countries are result-driven, and they encourage the group working together over individual goals. People in these countries are devoted and loyal to their families.

### Eastern Europe

Included in this cluster are Greece, Hungary, Albania, Slovenia, Poland, Russia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan. These countries scored *high* on assertiveness, in-group collectivism, and gender egalitarianism. They scored *low* on performance orientation, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance. People in this cluster tend to be forceful and supportive of their coworkers and to treat women with greater equality. They are less likely to be achievement driven, to emphasize strategic planning, and to stress rules and laws as a way to maintain order.

### Germanic Europe

The Germanic Europe countries, which include Austria, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany, were *high* in performance orientation, assertiveness, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance. They were *low* in humane orientation, institutional collectivism, and in-group collectivism. These countries value competition and aggressiveness and are more result-oriented than people-oriented. They enjoy planning and

Table 13.1 Cultural Clusters Classified on Cultural Dimensions

CULTURAL DIMENSION	HIGH-SCORE CLUSTERS	LOW-SCORE CLUSTERS
Assertiveness Orientation	Eastern Europe Germanic Europe	Nordic Europe
Future Orientation	Germanic Europe Nordic Europe	Eastern Europe Latin America Middle East
Gender Egalitarianism	Eastern Europe Nordic Europe	Middle East
Humane Orientation	Southern Asia Sub-Saharan Africa	Germanic Europe Latin Europe
In-Group Collectivism	Confucian Asia Eastern Europe Latin America Middle East Southern Asia	Anglo Germanic Europe Nordic Europe
Institutional Collectivism	Nordic Europe Confucian Asia	Germanic Europe Latin America Latin Europe
Performance Orientation	Anglo Confucian Asia Germanic Europe	Eastern Europe Latin America
Power Distance	No clusters	Nordic Europe
Uncertainty Avoidance	Germanic Europe Nordic Europe	Eastern Europe Latin America Middle East

SOURCE: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.), *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, copyright © 2004, Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

investing in the future and using rules and laws to give them control over their environment. At the same time, these countries are more likely to be individualistic and less group oriented. They tend not to emphasize broad societal groups.

### Latin America

The Latin America cluster is made up of Ecuador, El Salvador, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Mexico. People in these countries scored *high* on in-group collectivism and *low* on performance orientation, future orientation, institutional collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. People in these countries tend to be loyal and devoted to their families and similar groups but less interested in overall institutional and societal groups.

### Latin Europe

Comprised of France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland (French speaking), Italy, and Israel, the Latin Europe cluster exhibited *more moderate* and *fewer high scores* on any of the cultural dimensions, but they scored *low* on humane orientation and institutional collectivism. It is characteristic of these countries to value individual autonomy and to place less value on the greater societal collective. Individuals are encouraged to watch out for themselves and to pursue individual goals rather than societal goals.

### Middle East

This cluster was made up of Qatar, Morocco, Egypt, Kuwait, and Turkey. These countries scored *high* on in-group collectivism and *low* on future orientation, gender egalitarianism, and uncertainty avoidance. People in these countries tend to show great pride in their families and organizations. They are devoted and loyal to their own people. Furthermore, it is common for these countries to treat people of different genders in distinctly different ways. Women often are afforded less status than men, and fewer women are in positions of authority than men. In the Middle East, orderliness and consistency are not stressed, and people do not place heavy reliance on policies and procedures. There is a tendency to focus on current issues as opposed to attempting to control the future.

### Nordic Europe

The Nordic Europe cluster, which includes Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, exhibited several distinctive characteristics. This cluster scored *high* on future orientation, gender egalitarianism, institutional collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance, and *low* on assertiveness, in-group collectivism, and power distance. The Nordic people place a high priority on long-term

success. Women are treated with greater equality. The Nordic people identify with the broader society and far less with family groups. In Nordic Europe, rules, orderliness, and consistency are stressed. Assertiveness is downplayed in favor of modesty and tenderness, and power is shared equally among people at all levels of society. Cooperation and societal level group identity are highly valued by the Nordic people.

### Southern Asia

The Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Thailand form the Southern Asia cluster. These countries exhibited *high* scores on humane orientation and in-group collectivism. Southern Asia could be characterized as countries that demonstrate strong family loyalty and deep concern for their communities.

### Sub-Saharan Africa

The Sub-Saharan Africa cluster consisted of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, Nigeria, and South Africa (Black sample). These countries expressed *high* scores on humane orientation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, people generally are very concerned and sensitive to others. Concern for family and friends is more important than concern for self.

## LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND CULTURE CLUSTERS

The overall purpose of the GLOBE project was to determine how people from different cultures viewed leadership. In addition, researchers wanted to determine the ways in which cultural characteristics were related to culturally endorsed leadership behaviors. In short, they wanted to find out how differences in cultures were related to differences in approaches to leadership.

The conceptualization of leadership used by GLOBE researchers was derived in part from the work of Lord and Maher (1991) on implicit leadership theory. According to implicit leadership theory, individuals have implicit beliefs and convictions about the attributes and beliefs that distinguish leaders from nonleaders and effective leaders from ineffective leaders. From the perspective of this theory, leadership is in the eye of the beholder (Dorfman, Hanges, & Brodbeck, 2004). Leadership refers to what people see in others when they are exhibiting leadership behaviors.

To describe how different cultures view leadership behaviors in others, GLOBE researchers identified six global leadership behaviors: charismatic/value based, team oriented, participative, humane oriented, autonomous, and self-protective (House & Javidan, 2004). These global leadership behaviors were defined in these studies as follows:

*Charismatic/value-based leadership* reflects the ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance from others based on strongly held core values. This kind of leadership includes being visionary, inspirational, self-sacrificing, trustworthy, decisive, and performance oriented.

*Team-oriented leadership* emphasizes team building and a common purpose among team members. This kind of leadership includes being collaborative, integrative, diplomatic, nonmalevolent, and administratively competent.

*Participative leadership* reflects the degree to which leaders involve others in making and implementing decisions. It includes being participative and nonautocratic.

*Humane-oriented leadership* emphasizes being supportive, considerate, compassionate, and generous. This type of leadership includes modesty and sensitivity to people.

*Autonomous leadership* refers to independent and individualistic leadership, which includes being autonomous and unique.

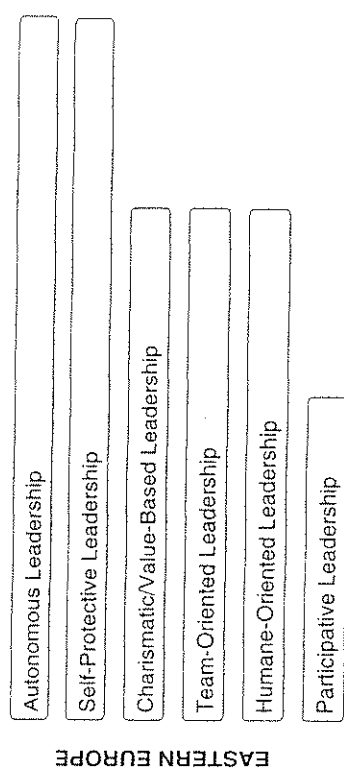
*Self-protective leadership* reflects behaviors that ensure the safety and security of the leader and the group. It includes leadership that is self-centered, status conscious, conflict inducing, face saving, and procedural.

These six global leadership behaviors emerged from the GLOBE research and were used to assess the different ways in which various cultural clusters viewed leadership. From this analysis they were able to identify a leadership profile for each cluster. Each profile describes the relative importance and desirability that different cultures ascribe to different leadership behaviors. The leadership profiles for each of the 10 culture clusters follow.

### Eastern Europe Leadership Profile

For the Eastern European countries, an ideal example of a leader would be a person who was first and foremost independent while maintaining a strong interest in protecting his or her position as a leader (Figure 13.2). In addition, the leader would be moderately charismatic/value-based,

Figure 13.2 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Eastern Europe



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

team-oriented, and people-oriented yet largely uninterested in involving others in the decision-making process. To sum up, this culture describes a leader as one who is highly autonomous, makes decisions independently, and is to a certain degree inspiring, team-oriented, and attentive to human needs.

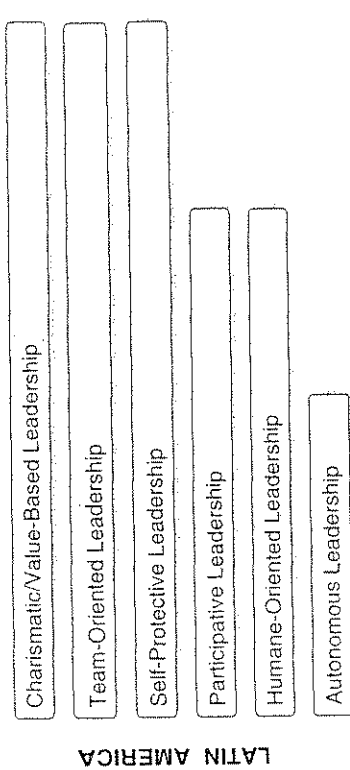
### Latin America Leadership Profile

Quite different from the Eastern European countries, the Latin American countries place the most importance on team-oriented, charismatic/value-based, and self-protective leadership and the least importance on autonomous leadership (Figure 13.3). In addition, this cluster is moderately interested in leadership that is participative and people-oriented. The profile for the Latin America cluster is of a leader who is charismatic/value-based but somewhat self-serving, collaborative, and inspiring. These leaders tend to be moderately interested in people and their participation in decision making.

### Latin Europe Leadership Profile

The Latin Europe cluster values leadership that is charismatic/value-based, team-oriented, participative, and self-protective (Figure 13.4). Independent leadership and the human side of leadership are downplayed in this cluster. In short, the profile of the Latin Europe cluster centers on

**Figure 13.3 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Latin America**



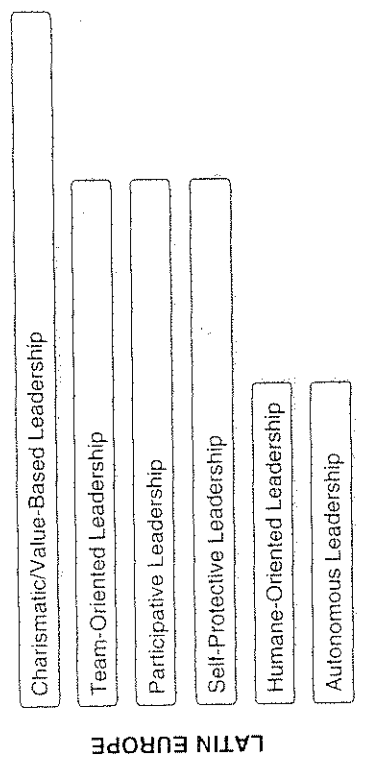
SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

leadership that is inspiring, collaborative, participative, and self-oriented, but at the same time not highly compassionate.

### **Confucian Asia Leadership Profile**

The leadership profile of the Confucian Asia countries describes a leader who is protective of his or her own leadership, team-oriented, and

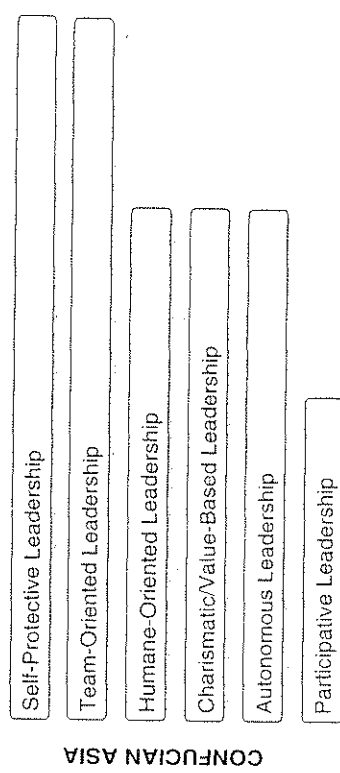
**Figure 13.4 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Latin Europe**



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

people-oriented (Figure 13.5). Though independent and to some extent inspiring, this type of leader typically does not invite others to be involved in goal setting or decision making. In sum, the Confucian Asia profile describes a leader who works and cares about others but who uses status and position to make independent decisions without the input of others.

**Figure 13.5 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Confucian Asia**



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

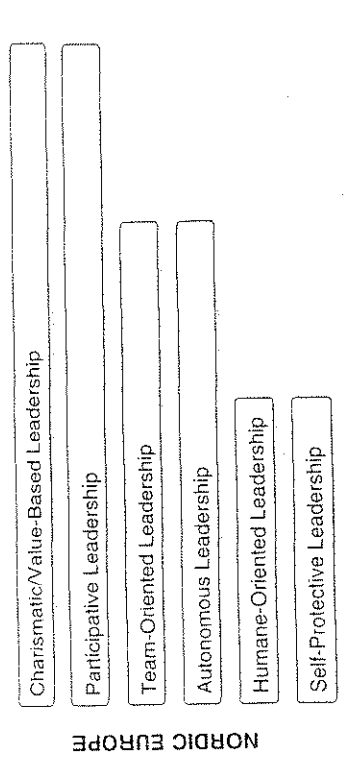
### **Nordic Europe Leadership Profile**

An ideal example of leadership for the Nordic European countries is leadership that is highly visionary and participative while being somewhat independent and diplomatic (Figure 13.6). For these countries, it is of less importance that their leaders be people oriented or protective of their office. Nordic Europeans prefer leaders who are inspiring and involve others in decision making. They do not expect their leaders to be exceedingly compassionate, nor do they expect them to be concerned with status and other self-centered attributes.

### **Anglo Leadership Profile**

The profile of leadership for the Anglo countries emphasizes that leaders are especially charismatic/value-based, participative, and sensitive to people (Figure 13.7). Stated another way, Anglo countries want leaders to be exceedingly motivating and visionary, not autocratic, and considerate of others. Furthermore, they report that leaders should be team oriented and

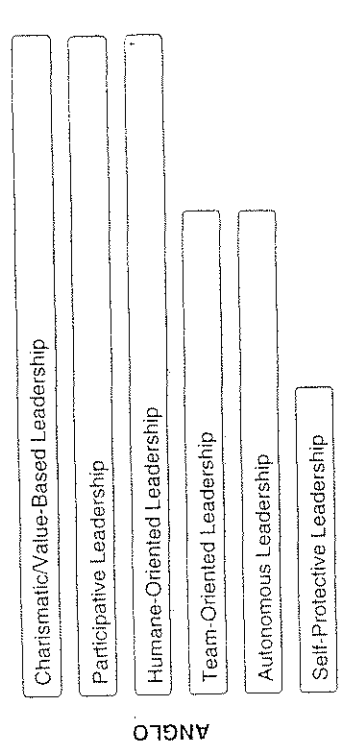
**Figure 13.6 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Nordic Europe**



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

autonomous. The least important characteristic for Anglo countries is self-protective leadership. They believe it is ineffective if leaders are status conscious or prone to face saving.

**Figure 13.7 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Anglo**

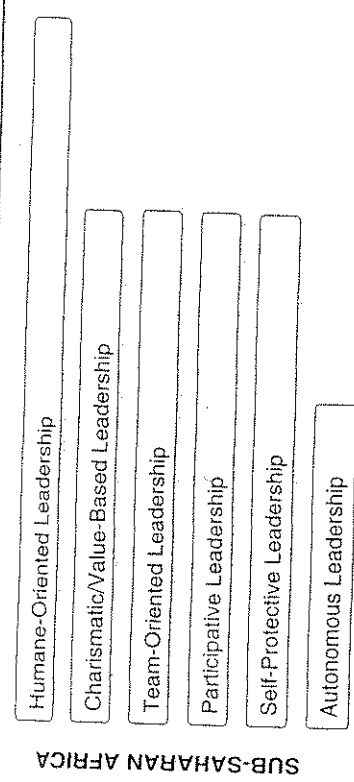


SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

### **Sub-Saharan Africa Leadership Profile**

For countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, an ideal leader is modest, compassionate, and sensitive to the people (Figure 13.8). In addition, they believe

**Figure 13.8 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Sub-Saharan Africa**



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

a leader should be relatively charismatic/value-based, team oriented, participative, and self-protective. Leaders who act independently or act alone are viewed as less effective in these countries. In short, the Sub-Saharan Africa profile characterizes effective leadership as caring leadership. Like many other countries, these countries believe leaders should be inspirational, collaborative, and not excessively self-centered. Leaders who act autonomously are seen as ineffective in Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

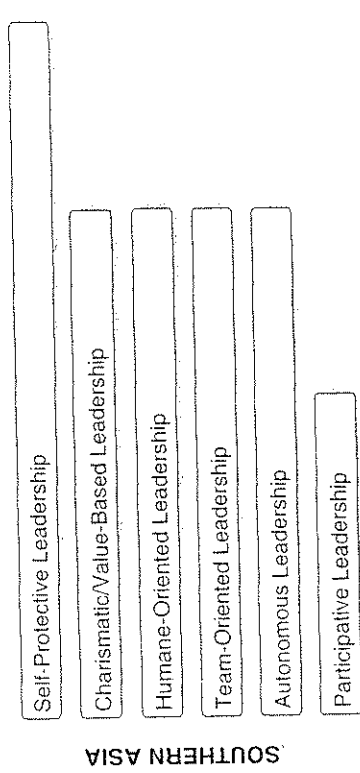
### **Southern Asia Leadership Profile**

The Southern Asia leadership profile is similar to the profile of Confucian Asia. They both place importance on self-protective, humane-oriented, and team-oriented leadership, and they both find participative leadership ineffective (Figure 13.9). Southern Asia countries differ from Confucian Asia countries in believing that charisma is an important leader attribute. The Southern Asia countries characterize effective leadership as especially collaborative, inspirational, sensitive to people's needs, and concerned with status and face saving. Furthermore, they believe leaders who tend to be autocratic are more effective than those who lead by inviting others into the decision-making process.

### **Germanic Europe Leadership Profile**

The ideal leader in the Germanic Europe cluster has a style that is very participative while also being inspirational and independent (Figure 13.10).

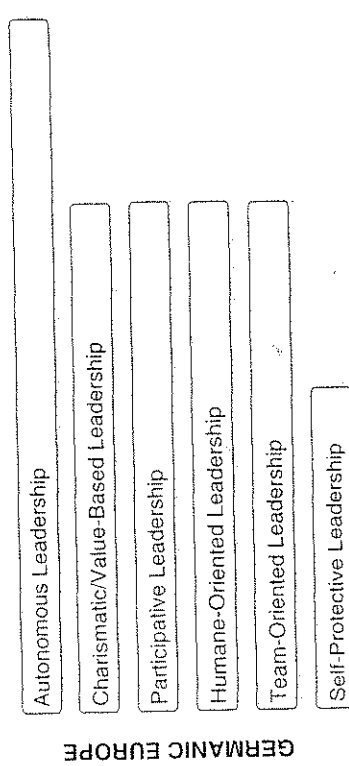
**Figure 13.9 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Southern Asia**



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

The ideal leader would be a unique, visionary person who is team oriented but not status conscious or concerned with face saving. In short, the Germanic European countries think effective leadership is based on participation, charisma, and autonomy but not on face saving and other self-centered attributes.

**Figure 13.10 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Germanic Europe**

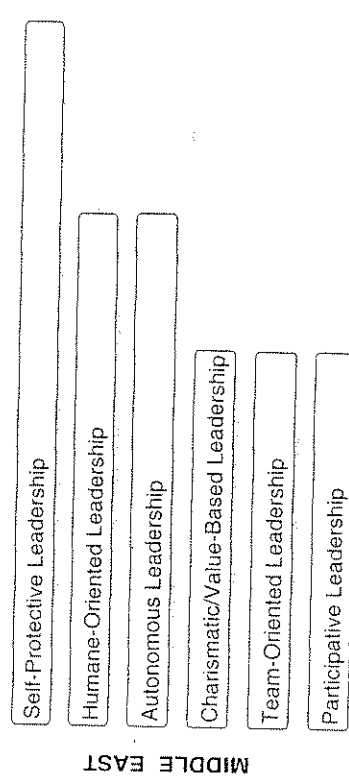


SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

**Middle East Leadership Profile**

The leadership profile for the Middle Eastern countries differs significantly from the profiles of the other cultural clusters (Figure 13.11). Middle Eastern countries find self-attributes such as face saving and status are important characteristics of effective leadership. They also value being independent and familial. However, they find charisma, collaboration, and participative decision making less essential for effective leadership. To sum up, the Middle Eastern profile of leadership emphasizes status and face saving and de-emphasizes charismatic/value-based and group-oriented leadership.

**Figure 13.11 Culture Clusters and Desired Leadership Behaviors: Middle East**



SOURCE: Adapted from House, et al. (2004).

**UNIVERSALLY DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES**

One of the most interesting outcomes of the GLOBE project was the identification of a list of leadership attributes that were universally endorsed by 17,000 people in 62 countries as positive aspects of effective leadership. Respondents in the GLOBE study identified 22 *valued* leadership attributes (Table 13.2). These attributes were universally endorsed as characteristics that facilitate outstanding leadership.

Table 13.2 Universally Desirable Leadership Attributes

POSITIVE LEADER ATTRIBUTES	
Trustworthy	Honest
Foresight	Encouraging
Positive	Motive arouser
Confidence builder	Dependable
Intelligent	Effective bargainer
Win-win problem solver	Informed
Administrative skilled	Team builder
Excellence oriented	

SOURCE: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.), *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, copyright © 2004, Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Based on the list of endorsed attributes, a portrait can be drawn of a leader whom almost everyone would see as exceptional. That portrait is of a leader who is high in integrity, is charismatic/value-based, and has interpersonal skills (Dorfman et al., 2004).

The GLOBE project also identified a list of leadership attributes that were universally viewed as *obstacles* to effective leadership (Table 13.3). These characteristics suggest that the portrait of an ineffective leader is someone who is asocial, malevolent, and self-focused. Clearly, people from all cultures find these characteristics to hinder effective leadership.

## STRENGTHS

Although this chapter on culture and leadership does not represent a single unified theory of leadership, it does present findings that have several strengths. First, the GLOBE study is a major study and, to date, the only

Table 13.3 Universally Undesirable Leadership Attributes

NEGATIVE LEADER ATTRIBUTES		
Loner	Asocial	Noncooperative
Irritable	Nonexplicit	Egocentric
Ruthless	Dictatorial	

SOURCE: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.), *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, copyright © 2004, Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

study to analyze how leadership is viewed by cultures in all parts of the world. The scope of this study is a major strength. For this study, data were collected by 170 social scientists, representing 62 countries from all regions of the world, and included responses from 17,300 managers in 951 organizations. The GLOBE project has been a massive undertaking, and the findings that have emerged from this work make a powerful statement about how cultures around the world view leadership.

Second, the findings from GLOBE are valuable because they emerge from a well-developed quantitative research design. In the leadership literature, there are many qualitative studies that focus more narrowly on how people in certain countries view a small number of leadership concepts. Although these studies have contributed to our understanding of culture and leadership, they are limited in scope and generalizability. In contrast, the strength of the GLOBE project is that researchers used a quantitative design and administered standardized instruments to assess leadership and cultural dimensions in 62 countries. Thus, the results from GLOBE study about leadership are generalizable between cultures and within cultures around the world.

Third, the GLOBE studies provide a classification of cultural dimensions that is more expansive than the commonly used Hofstede classification system. Whereas Hofstede distinguishes between cultures based on five dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance,



individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term-short-term orientation), the GLOBE studies identify nine cultural dimensions (uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation, and humane orientation). Although the seven of the nine dimensions identified in the GLOBE studies have their origins in the dimensions identified by Hofstede, by expanding the classification system the GLOBE studies provide a broader and more elaborate way of describing dimensions of culture.

Fourth, the GLOBE studies provide useful information about what is universally accepted as good and bad leadership. Clearly, people from most cultures view good leadership as based on integrity, charisma, and interpersonal ability. Conversely, they see bad leadership emerging from leaders who are self-focused, dictatorial, and asocial. These lists of positive and negative attributes provide a useful portrait of how people around the world conceptualize leadership.

Last, the study of culture and leadership underscores the complexity of the leadership process and how it is influenced by culture. Data from the GLOBE study highlight the need for each of us to expand our ethnocentric tendencies to view leadership from only our own perspective and instead to "open our window" to the diverse ways in which leadership is viewed by people from different regions around the world. There are many ways to view leadership and the integration of culture, and studies of leadership help us to expand and develop a richer understanding of the leadership process.

## CRITICISMS

The body of research on culture and leadership also has several weaknesses. First, although the GLOBE research has resulted in a multitude of findings about perceptions of leadership in different cultures, this research does not provide a clear set of assumptions and propositions that can form a single theory about the way culture relates to leadership or influences the leadership process.

A second criticism, more narrow in scope, concerns the way researchers have labeled and defined certain cultural dimensions and

leadership behaviors. For example, it is not easy to understand what "power distance" means, nor is the meaning of "self-protective leadership" clear. Because the meanings of these terms are somewhat vague, it is difficult at times to interpret or fully comprehend the findings about culture and leadership.

Another criticism concerns the way in which leadership was conceptualized in the GLOBE studies. In these studies, researchers used a conceptualization of leadership that was based on the ideas set forth by Lord and Maher (1991) in their work on implicit leadership theory. This approach frames leadership from an information-processing perspective as the implicit beliefs and convictions that individuals have about leaders. In other words, according to this theory, leadership is the process of being perceived by others as a leader. However, conceptualizing leadership in this way is limited because it focuses on what people perceive to be leadership and ignores a large body of research that frames leadership in terms of what leaders do (e.g., transformational leadership, path-goal theory, skills approach). Research on how people from different cultures view leadership is valuable, but there is a need for further research on how leadership functions in different cultures.<sup>2</sup>

A related criticism concerns the way in which researchers in the GLOBE study measured leadership. They selected six global leadership behaviors (i.e., charismatic/value-based, team-oriented, participative, humane-oriented, autonomous, and self-protective leadership) that were derived from an analysis of subjects' responses to hundreds of other attributes believed to be related to outstanding leadership. Each of the six global leadership behaviors was measured by a series of subscales. However, the subscales represented a very broad range of behaviors and as a result compromised the precision and validity of the leadership measures.

Finally, the GLOBE studies provide a provocative list of universally endorsed desirable and undesirable leadership attributes. The attributes identified in the GLOBE studies are comparable to the list of traits we discussed in Chapter 2. However, as with the trait approach, it is difficult to identify a set of universal attributes in isolation from the context in which the leadership occurs. The GLOBE studies tend to isolate a set of attributes that are characteristic of effective leaders without considering the influence of the situational effects.

## APPLICATION

Training programs about culture and diversity have been popular for many years. For example, in the training and development field, a wide variety of programs teach cultural sensitivity and address issues related to cultural differences. At the core of these programs, people are taught about the nuances and characteristics of different cultures and how to be sensitive to people in other countries and cultures.

The findings in this chapter have implications for leadership training. Understanding issues about culture is useful in several ways (Bing, 2004). First, the findings about culture can help leaders understand their own cultural biases and preferences. Understanding their own preferences is the first step in understanding that other people in other cultures have different preferences. Second, the findings help leaders to understand what it means to be a good leader. Different cultures have different ideas about what they want from their leaders, and these findings help our leaders adapt their style to be more effective in different cultural settings. Third, this chapter's findings can help global leaders communicate more effectively across cultural and geographic boundaries. By understanding cultural differences, leaders can become more empathic and accurate in their communication with others.

Information on culture and leadership has also been applied in very practical ways (Bing, 2004). It has been used to build culturally sensitive Web sites, design new employee orientation programs, conduct programs in relocation training, improve global team effectiveness, and facilitate multinational merger implementation, to name a few. These examples clearly indicate the wide range of applications for research on culture and leadership in the workplace.

## CASE STUDIES

This section provides three case studies (Cases 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3) that describe leadership in various cultural contexts. The first case is about a college student who takes an internship at a Japanese-based automotive company. The second case describes how a small midwestern bank developed a unique Islamic financing program. The final case describes how two board members from a nonprofit organization developed a capital campaign to renovate a fire station for a Hispanic community. After each of the cases, questions are provided to help you think about how cultural issues are related to the leadership process.

### CASE 13.1

#### A Challenging Workplace

As a leader in campus organizations, Samira often led projects and took deadlines very seriously. Her strong work ethic led to an internship offer at a Japanese-based automotive company.

At orientation Samira learned that Japanese companies historically had little diversity in terms of race and gender. Women in Japan were not as prevalent in the workforce as in North America. In an effort to adapt to North American norms, Japanese subsidiaries had well-developed diversity policies. For example, Samira tracked the usage of minority-owned businesses in the company's supply base. This ensured that the company invested in local businesses that operated in traditionally economically disadvantaged areas. Investing in the local community was already an important business value in Japan, so this was a simple adaptation for Samira's company.

The company culture was a unique blend of Japanese and North American work styles. The employees in North America worked fewer hours than the employees in Japan. Around the office, it was common for employees to hear Japanese and English. However, management still had some internal conflict. Japanese advisers were perceived as focusing on the creation of consensus in teams, often leading to slow decision making. North American workers were seen as rushing into projects without enough planning. Feedback was indirect from both Japanese and North American managers.

Samira successfully completed two rotations and was about to graduate. Her new manager often asked her to follow up with other team members to complete late tasks. As taught in school, she was proactive with team members about completing their work. Samira thought she was great at consistently inviting others to participate in the decision-making process. She always offered her opinion on how things could be done better and sometimes even initiated tasks to improve processes on her own. Although she saw herself as an emerging take-charge leader, Samira always downplayed her ambitions. In school she was often stereotyped in negative ways for being an assertive female leader, and she didn't want to be seen in that way at work.

Some of her peers at work advised her that it was important to consider working at a plant near her hometown because it would be closer to her family. However, she was not interested. Samira thought it was more exciting to work near a large city or in a job that involved a lot more

The survey revealed some interesting and culturally relevant information. Muslims represented a sizable minority in the community, making up about 8% of the overall population. However, a review of the bank registry revealed that few Muslims, if any, banked at Central Bank. The results of the survey were puzzling. Given the large numbers of Muslims in the community, the management wondered why there were no Muslim customers at Central Bank.

To answer this question, Central Bank invited a group of local Muslims to meet and discuss their thoughts about financing and how their ideas related to the financial services offered by the bank. The meeting was a real eye-opener for the bank management. The Muslims' ideas about banking were very different from the traditional Western beliefs about banking.

During the discussion, the management learned that the principles of Islam strongly influence the banking attitudes and behaviors of Muslims. The principles of Islamic finance were set forth in the Koran more than 14 centuries ago. Koranic law forbids paying or receiving interest. These principles stress that money is only a medium of exchange and should not be used to make more money. From the Islamic point of view, the *human element* in a business venture is more important than the money used to finance the venture. Furthermore, according to Islamic finance, the provider of capital and the user of capital should share equally in the risk of a business venture.

These ideas about finance were different from the way Central Bank thought about them. Central Bank was not accustomed to the way Muslims viewed money as a medium of exchange. Having been enlightened through these discussions, the management at Central Bank felt challenged to develop a financing program that was more in line with the attitudes and values of Islamic finance principles.

In order to attract the business of Muslim customers, Central Bank created and began offering two new types of mortgage financing, called *ijara* and *murabaha*. *Ijara* is a finance plan in which the bank buys a home for a customer and leases it to the customer, who pays rent plus a portion of the property purchase. *Murabaha* is a transaction in which the bank buys the home and sells it to the customer at an agreed-upon markup, and the customer pays for the home in installments over 15 to 30 years. Both *ijara* and *murabaha* are consistent with Islamic beliefs that prohibit Muslims from paying or receiving interest. In these two types of transactions, money is used to purchase something tangible, but money is not used to make money. Central Bank received favorable legal rulings (*fatawa*) from some of the leading Islamic legal scholars in the United States and the world to validate these types of financing.

travel. She didn't think it was appropriate to discuss her family concerns in relation to her future job needs.

Toward the end of her internship Samira received a performance evaluation from a senior manager. She was praised as being very dependable, as planning deadlines well, and as very competent at her tasks overall. However, he also told her she was increasingly perceived as too pushy, not a team player, and often speaking out of turn. This often irritated her peers.

Samira had never seen herself this way at work and did not understand why she was not seen as aligning with the company's core value of working with others. Good grades and campus leadership activities had gotten her this far, but this evaluation led her to question whether she could work for this company after graduation.

Samira ultimately realized that her workplace was different from the campus atmosphere she was used to. If she wanted to be an emerging leader here, she had to better adapt to her new environment.

**Questions**

1. What similarities and differences can you identify between North American and Japanese working styles?
2. In what way did this company reflect the characteristics of other Confucian Asia countries?
3. Why do you think Samira was not seen as a team player?
4. What universal leadership attributes did Samira exhibit?
5. What other suggestions would you have for Samira in this situation?



**Case 13.2**

**A Special Kind of Financing**

Central Bank is a small midwestern savings and loan institution that manages \$3 billion in assets. It competes for customers with 16 other financial institutions, most of which have substantially larger holdings. To better serve its customers and attract a larger customer base, Central Bank conducted a financial-need survey of the people who lived in the area.

Central Bank's Islamic finance plans have become quite popular. Although Central Bank has been successful with these plans, it has also met resistance. Some people have expressed strong disapproval of special finance programs specifically geared to the Muslim population. Others are against it because it mixes issues of church and state. However, the resistance has not stopped Central Bank. Central Bank is very proud to be the only bank in the country to serve the needs of the Muslim community in this way.

### Questions

1. Why do you think banks in the United States have been slow to offer financing expressly for Muslims?
2. Do you think it is fair to offer one minority group a special banking opportunity?
3. How does ethnocentrism come into play in this case?
4. How does in-group collectivism relate to Central Bank's finance plans?
5. How do you think the other banks in the community will react to Central Bank?



### Case 13-3

#### Whose Hispanic Center is It?

River City is a rapidly growing city in the Midwest with a population of 200,000 people. It is a diverse community with a racial composition that is 65% White, 20% African American, 13% Hispanic, and 2% Native American. The Hispanic population in River City is one of the fastest growing of all segments.

The Hispanic community is represented by the Hispanic Center, a non-profit organization that serves the needs of the Hispanic community and broader River City community through a variety of programs and services. A board of directors and an executive director manage the Hispanic Center. Two newly appointed board members have led a transformation of the center, including renovating the physical facilities and shifting the focus of program services. The new members were Mary Davis, who had

experience in neighborhood development, and José Reyna, who had experience in city government. The board of directors is made up of 15 people, 10 Hispanic and 5 non-Hispanic.

The Hispanic Center owned an old building that was slated for renovation so that the center could have more space for offices and community programs (e.g., educational programming, cultural competence and leadership training, and legal services). The need for the building was validated by what people expressed at a series of community forums. The building was an old fire station that had been mothballed for 15 years, and the Hispanic Center bought the building from River City for \$1. Although the fire station needed a lot of renovation, it was located in a perfect place, at the center of the Hispanic community. However, a complete renovation of the building was needed.

To raise funds for the renovation, the board of directors initiated a citywide capital campaign. The goal of the campaign was to raise \$1.4 million, the estimated amount for a complete, first-class renovation of the building.

Along with their regular jobs, Mary and José tackled the fund-raising campaign with a full head of steam. In just 6 months, using their wide array of skills, they successfully raised \$1.3 million for the project (most of which came from private foundations and corporations). With just \$100,000 left to be raised, the leaders and some board members were getting excited about the possibility of the new community center. This excitement was heightened because the renovated building was going to be constructed using the latest green building techniques. These techniques were environmentally sound and incorporated healthful and highly efficient models of construction.

In order to raise the final \$100,000, Mary and José proposed a new series of fund-raising initiatives that would focus on smaller donors (e.g., \$10, \$20, or \$30 donors), primarily from the Hispanic community. To kick off a series of events, a formal event at a local hotel was proposed, with tickets costing \$75 per person. Just before this event, Mary and José encountered some resistance and found out that their excitement about the renovation needed to be tempered.

During a scheduled board meeting, several members of the board expressed concern with the latest fund-raising efforts. Some board members questioned the wisdom of targeting the fund-raising to the Hispanic community, believing that Hispanic people tended to give to their churches rather than to public not-for-profit organizations. Others

questioned the price of the tickets to fund-raising events that was being sought from small donors, \$75. These members argued for a smaller admission fee (e.g., \$20) that would allow more members of the community to attend. As the discussion proceeded, other board members expressed discontent with the fancy plans for the new green building. They argued that the renovation was becoming a special interest project and a pet project of a few ambitious visionaries.

Board members also started to question the transformation of the Hispanic Center under Mary and José's leadership. Board members expressed frustrations about the new goals of the center and about how things were proceeding. There was a sense that the request for community-based support was unreasonable and in conflict with cultural norms. In the past, the center moved slowly toward change, keeping the focus on one goal: to provide emergency services to the local community. When change came in the past, it was incremental. People were not aggressive, and they did not make trouble.

Under the leadership of Mary and José, there was a perception that the new center and programs were too grand and refined for the community they were intended to serve. The vision for the new center seemed to take things to a new sophisticated level that was not grounded in the common work or the people-oriented values of the center.

### Questions

1. How would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of Mary's and José's leadership on this project?
2. Do you see any problem in targeting part of the fund-raising campaign directly toward the Hispanic community?
3. The Latin America leadership profile stresses the importance of team-oriented leadership and de-emphasizes individualistic leadership. How does the leadership of Mary and José compare with the Latin America profile?
4. How do Hispanic cultural dimensions help explain the resistance some people felt and expressed toward the renovation project?
5. If you were Mary or José, how would you temper your excitement about the new fire station?

## LEADERSHIP INSTRUMENT

Culture and leadership are different concepts, and when they are measured they are measured in separate ways using different questionnaires. Currently, there are no measures that assess culture and leadership simultaneously, nor are there measures of cultural leadership. There are questionnaires that measure culture, and, as shown throughout the book, there are many measures of leadership.

Perhaps the best-known measure of culture is Hofstede's Culture in the Workplace™ questionnaire. This questionnaire measures a person's cultural preferences on four dimensions: individualism, power distance, certainty, and achievement. People can use their profiles on these dimensions to learn about themselves and to compare themselves with the profiles of people in other cultures.

The Dimensions of Culture questionnaire that follows is an abbreviated version of the original culture questionnaire used in the GLOBE studies. This questionnaire is included in the chapter for illustrative purposes only and should not be used for research. The scores you receive on the questionnaire are individual-level scores rather than societal or organization-level scores. People who are interested in using the GLOBE scales for research should use the complete questionnaire, as referenced in House et al. (2004).

The Dimensions of Culture questionnaire will help you examine your perceptions about various characteristics of your culture. This questionnaire is not a personality measure (e.g., the Myers-Briggs instrument) but rather a measure of your attitudes and perceptions about culture.

## DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

*Instructions:* Using the following scales, circle the number that most accurately reflects your response to each of the 18 statements. There are no right or wrong answers, so provide your immediate impressions. (The items on this questionnaire are adapted from the items used in the GLOBE studies to assess the dimensions of culture, but the GLOBE study used five items to analyze each of the cultural dimensions).

### Uncertainty Avoidance

- In this society, orderliness and consistency are stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
- In this society, societal requirements and instructions are spelled out in detail so citizens know what they are expected to do.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

### Power Distance

- In this society, followers are expected to:  
Question their leaders when in disagreement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Obey their leaders without question

- In this society, power is:  
Shared throughout the society 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Concentrated at the top

### Institutional Collectivism

- In this society, leaders encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

- The economic system in this society is designed to maximize:  
Individual interests 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Collective interests

### In-Group Collectivism

- In this society, children take pride in the individual accomplishments of their parents:  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree
- In this society, parents take pride in the individual accomplishments of their children:  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

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### Gender Egalitarianism

- In this society, boys are encouraged more than girls to attain a higher education:  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

- In this society, who is more likely to serve in a position of high office?  
Men 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Women

### Assertiveness

- In this society, people are generally:  
Nonassertive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Assertive

- In this society, people are generally:  
Tender 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Tough

### Future Orientation

- In this society the accepted norm is to:  
Accept the status quo 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Plan for the future

- In this society, people place more emphasis on:  
Solving current problems 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Planning for the future

### Performance Orientation

- In this society, students are encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

- In this society, people are rewarded for excellent performance.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

### Humane Orientation

- In this society, people are generally:  
Not at all concerned about others 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very concerned about others

- In this society, people are generally:  
Not at all sensitive to others 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very sensitive toward others

SOURCE: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, copyright © 2004, Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

### Scoring

The Dimensions of Culture questionnaire is designed to measure your perceptions of the different dimensions of your culture. Score the questionnaire by doing the following. First, sum the two responses you gave for each of the items on each of the dimensions. Second, divide the sum of the responses by two. This is your mean score for the dimension.

*Example.* If for power distance you circled 3 in response to question 1 and 4 in response to question 2, you would score the dimension as follows.

$$3 + 4 = 7$$

$$7 \div 2 = 3.5$$

Power distance mean score = 3.5

When you are finished scoring, you should have nine mean scores. After you have scored the questionnaire, place your mean scores for each of the dimensions in the table in the following section.

### Scoring Interpretation

Your scores on the Dimensions of Culture questionnaire provide data on how you see the culture in which you live and work. Table 13.4 provides information from the GLOBE project about how subjects from different cultures describe the dimensions of those cultures. The table also provides an *overall* mean for how these dimensions were viewed by people from all of the cultures.

By entering your scores in the last column in Table 13.4, you can get a better understanding of how your perception of your own culture compares to that of others. You can also compare your scores to other specific cultures (e.g., Middle East or Latin America). Do you see your culture as more or less egalitarian than others? Do you think from your culture emphasizes the future more than others? Do people from other cultures stress performance less or more than your own culture? Like these questions, the table and your scores can be used to bring to the surface the ways in which your culture and the cultures of others are compatible or incompatible with each other. Understanding how your culture relates to other cultures is the first step to improved understanding between you and people from other cultures.

**Table 13.4** Cultural Dimensions and Mean Scores for Selected Cultural Clusters

GLOBE Cultural Dimensions	Mean Scores* of Selected Cultural Clusters								
	Anglo	Latin America	Middle East	Southern Asia	Latin Europe	GLOBE Overall	Your Score		
Uncertainty avoidance	4.42	3.62	3.91	4.10	4.18	4.16			
Power distance	na	na	na	na	na	5.17			
Institutional collectivism	4.46	3.86	4.28	4.35	4.01	4.25			
In-group collectivism	4.30	5.52	5.58	5.87	4.80	5.13			
Gender egalitarianism	3.40	3.41	2.95	3.28	3.36	3.37			
Assertiveness	4.14	4.15	4.14	3.86	3.99	4.14			
Future orientation	4.08	3.54	3.58	3.98	3.68	3.85			
Performance orientation	4.37	3.85	3.90	4.33	3.94	4.10			
Humane orientation	4.20	4.03	4.36	4.71	3.71	4.09			

SOURCE: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, copyright © 2004, Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

\*The mean scores in this table represent societal practice scores for selected cultures on each of the nine cultural dimensions. In the GLOBE study, mean scores were derived from subjects' responses to five questions for each of the dimensions. na = not available.



### SUMMARY

Since World War II there has been a dramatic increase in globalization throughout the world. Globalization has created a need for leaders with greater understanding of cultural differences and increased competencies in cross-cultural communication and practice. This chapter discusses research on culture, its dimensions, and the effects of culture on the leadership process.

Culture is defined as the commonly shared beliefs, values, and norms of a group of people. Two factors that can inhibit cultural awareness are ethnocentrism and prejudice. Ethnocentrism is the human tendency to place one's own group at the center of one's observations of others and the world. It is problematic for leaders because it prevents them from fully understanding the world of others. Similarly, prejudice consists of judgments about others based on fixed attitudes and unsubstantiated data. Prejudice has a negative impact because it is self-oriented and inhibits leaders from seeing the many facets and qualities of others.

In the past 30 years, many studies have focused on identifying various dimensions of culture. The best known is the work of Hofstede (1980, 2001), who identified five major dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term-short-term orientation. Expanding on Hofstede's work, House and his colleagues (2004) delineated additional dimensions of culture such as in-group collectivism, institutional collectivism, future orientation, assertiveness, performance orientation, and humane orientation.

The GLOBE studies offer the strongest body of findings to date on culture and leadership. Using established quantitative research methods, GLOBE researchers studied how 17,000 managers from 62 different countries viewed leadership. They analyzed the similarities and differences between regional clusters of cultural groups by grouping countries into 10 distinct clusters: Anglo, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, and Confucian Asia. An analysis of each of the 10 clusters revealed the particular dimensions on which each region was strong or weak and unique from other regions.

In addition, GLOBE researchers identified six global leadership behaviors that could be used to characterize how different cultural groups view leadership: charismatic/value-based, team-oriented, participative, humane-oriented, autonomous, and self-protective leadership. Based on these behaviors, researchers created leadership profiles for each of the 10 cultural clusters that delineate the relative importance and desirability of different cultures ascribe to different attributes and characteristics of leadership.

One outcome of the GLOBE project was the identification of a list of leadership attributes that were universally endorsed as positive and

negative attributes of leadership. From this list it appears that the universally endorsed portrait of an exceptional leader has a high degree of integrity, charisma, and interpersonal skill. The portrait of an ineffective leader is someone who is asocial, malevolent, self-focused, and autocratic.

The scope of the GLOBE project is its main strength. The findings from this project make a major statement about how cultures around the world view leadership. Other strengths are its quantitative research design, an expanded classification of cultural dimensions, a list of universally accepted leadership attributes, and the contribution it makes to a richer understanding of the leadership process. On the negative side, the GLOBE studies do not provide findings that form a single theory about the way culture relates to leadership. Furthermore, the definitions of the core cultural dimensions are unclear, the conceptualization of leadership used in the studies is limiting, the leadership measures are not exact, and the list of universally endorsed leadership attributes does not account for the various situations in which leaders operate. Regardless of these limitations, the GLOBE studies stand out because they offer so much valuable information about the unique ways culture influences the leadership process.

## NOTES

1. The Czech Republic was excluded from the analysis because of problems in the data.
2. Researchers from the GLOBE studies (Phase 3) are collecting data from 40 CEOs in 20 countries, and these findings may address how the behaviors of leaders (what they do) conform to the beliefs about leadership in various cultures.

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*Fourth Edition*

# LEADERSHIP

## THEORY AND PRACTICE

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## Skills Approach

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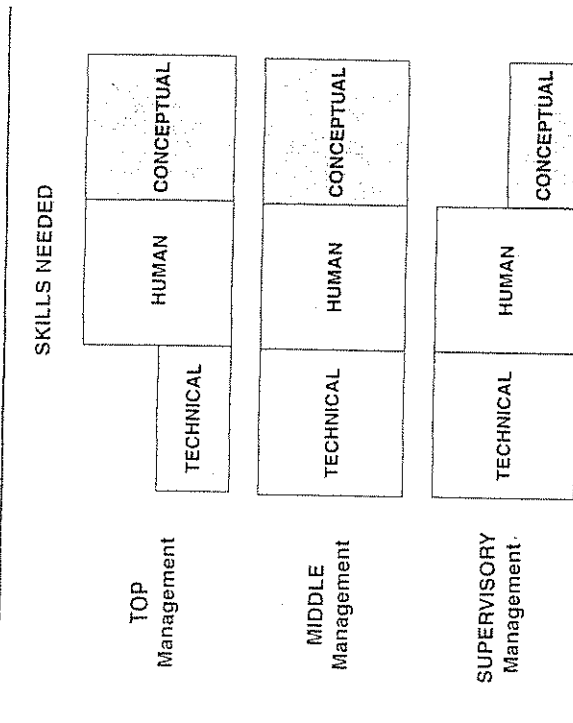
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### DESCRIPTION

Like the trait approach, which we discussed in Chapter 2, the skills approach takes a leader-centered perspective on leadership. However, in the skills approach we shift our thinking from a focus on personality characteristics, which usually are viewed as innate and largely fixed, to an emphasis on skills and abilities that can be learned and developed. Although personality certainly plays an integral role in leadership, the skills approach suggests that knowledge and abilities are needed for effective leadership.

Researchers have studied leadership skills directly or indirectly for a number of years (see Bass, 1990, pp. 97–109). However, the impetus for research on skills was a classic article published by Robert Katz in the *Harvard Business Review* in 1955, titled “Skills of an Effective Administrator.” Katz’s article appeared at a time when researchers were trying to identify a definitive set of leadership traits. Katz’s approach was an attempt to transcend the trait problem by addressing leadership as a set of developable *skills*. More recently, a renewed interest in the skills approach has emerged. Beginning in the early 1990s, a multitude of studies have been published that contend that a leader’s effectiveness depends on the leader’s ability to solve complex organizational problems. This research has resulted in a comprehensive skill-based model of leadership that was advanced by Mumford and his colleagues (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000; Yammarino, 2000).

Figure 3.1 Management Skills Necessary at Various Levels of an Organization



SOURCE: Adapted from "Skills of an Effective Administrator," by R. L. Katz, 1955. *Harvard Business Review*, 33(1), pp. 33-42.

#### Human Skill

Human skill is knowledge about and ability to work with people. It is quite different from technical skill, which has to do with working with things (Katz, 1955). Human skills are "people skills." They are the abilities that help a leader to work effectively with subordinates, peers, and superiors to help the organization's goals. Human skills allow a leader to assist group members in working cooperatively as a group to achieve common goals. For Katz, it means being aware of one's own perspective on issues and, at the same time, being aware of the perspective of others. Leaders with human skills adapt their own ideas to those of others. Furthermore, they create an atmosphere of trust where employees can feel comfortable and secure and where they can feel encouraged to become involved in the planning of things that will affect them. Being a leader with human skills means being sensitive

In this chapter, our discussion of the skills approach is divided into two parts. First, we discuss the general ideas set forth by Katz regarding three basic administrative skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Second, we discuss the recent work of Mumford and colleagues that has resulted in a new skills-based model of organizational leadership.

### THREE-SKILL APPROACH

Based on field research in administration and his own firsthand observations of executives in the workplace, Katz (1955, p. 34) suggested that effective administration (i.e., leadership) depends on three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Katz argued that these skills are quite different from traits or qualities of leaders. *Skills* are what leaders can accomplish, whereas traits are who leaders are (i.e., their innate characteristics). Leadership skills are defined in this chapter as the ability to use one's knowledge and competencies to accomplish a set of goals or objectives. This chapter shows that these leadership skills can be acquired and leaders can be trained to develop them.

#### Technical Skill

Technical skill is knowledge about and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity. It includes competencies in a specialized area, analytical ability, and the ability to use appropriate tools and techniques (Katz, 1955). For example, in a computer software company, technical skill might include knowing software language and programming, the company's software products, and how to make these products function for clients. Similarly, in an accounting firm, technical skill might include understanding and having the ability to apply generally accepted accounting principles to a client's audit. In both of these examples, technical skills involve a hands-on activity with a basic product or process within an organization. Technical skills play an essential role in producing the actual products a company is designed to produce.

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, technical skill is most important at lower and middle levels of management and less important in upper management. For leaders at the highest level, such as chief executive officers (CEOs), presidents, and senior officers, technical competencies are not as essential. Individuals at the top level depend on skilled subordinates to handle technical issues of the physical operation.

to the needs and motivations of others and taking into account others' needs in one's decision making. In short, human skill is the capacity to get along with others as you go about your work.

In Figure 3.1, human skills are important in all three levels of management. Although managers at lower levels may communicate with a far greater number of employees, human skills are equally important at middle and upper levels.

### Conceptual Skill

Broadly speaking, conceptual skills are abilities to work with ideas and concepts. Whereas technical skills deal with *things* and human skills deal with *people*, conceptual skills involve the ability to work with *ideas*. A leader with conceptual skills is comfortable talking about the ideas that shape an organization and the intricacies involved. He or she is good at putting the company's goals into words and can understand and express the economic principles that affect the company. A leader with conceptual skills works easily with abstractions and hypothetical notions.

Conceptual skills are central to creating a vision and strategic plan for an organization. For example, it would take conceptual skills for a CEO in a struggling manufacturing company to articulate a vision for a line of new products that would steer the company into profitability. Similarly, it would take conceptual skill for the director of a nonprofit health organization to create a strategic plan that could compete successfully with for-profit health organizations in a market with scarce resources. The point of these examples is that conceptual skill has to do with the mental work of shaping the meaning of organizational or policy issues—understanding what a company stands for and where it is or should be going.

In Figure 3.1, conceptual skill is most important at the top management levels. In fact, when upper-level managers do not have strong conceptual skills, they can jeopardize the whole organization. Conceptual skills are also important in middle management, but as you move down to lower management levels, conceptual skills become less important.

### Summary of the Three-Skill Approach

To summarize, the three-skill approach includes technical, human, and conceptual skills. It is important for leaders to have all three skills, but

depending on where they are in the management structure, some skills are more important than others.

Katz's work in the mid-1950s set the stage for conceptualizing leadership in terms of skills, but it was not until the mid-1990s that an empirically based skills approach received recognition in leadership research. In the next section, the comprehensive skill-based model of leadership is presented.

### SKILLS MODEL

Beginning in the early 1990s, a group of researchers, with funding from the U.S. Army and Department of Defense, set out to test and develop a comprehensive theory of leadership based on problem-solving skills in organizations. The studies were conducted over a number of years using a sample of more than 1,800 Army officers, representing six grade levels, from second lieutenant to colonel. The project used a variety of new measures and tools to assess the skills of these officers, their experiences, and the situations in which they worked.

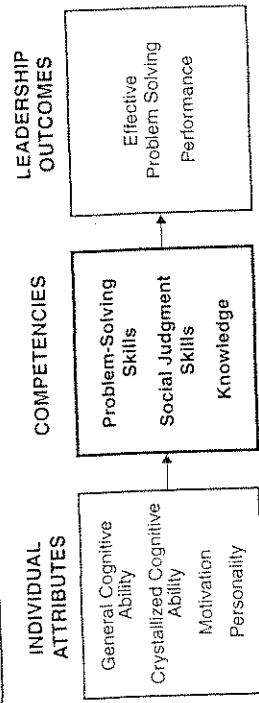
The researchers' main goal was to explain the underlying elements of effective performance. They addressed questions such as these: What accounts for why some leaders are good problem solvers and others are not? What specific skills do high-performing leaders exhibit? How do leaders' individual characteristics, career experiences, and environmental influences affect their job performance? As a whole, researchers wanted to identify the leadership factors that create exemplary job performance in an actual organization.

Based on the extensive findings from the project, Mumford and colleagues formulated a skill-based model of leadership (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000). The model is characterized as a *capability* model because it examines the relationship between a leader's knowledge and skills (i.e., capabilities) and the leader's performance (p. 12). Leadership capabilities can be developed over time through education and experience. Unlike the "great person" approach (discussed in Chapter 2), which implies that leadership is reserved only for the gifted few, the skills approach suggests that many people have the potential for leadership. If people are capable of learning from their experiences, they can acquire leadership. The skills approach can also be distinguished from the leadership approaches we will discuss in subsequent chapters, which focus on behavioral patterns of leaders (e.g., the style approach, transformational leadership, or leader-member exchange theory). Rather than emphasizing *what leaders*

do, the skills approach frames leadership as *the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that make effective leadership possible* (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000, p. 12).

Mumford's group's skill-based model has five components: competencies, individual attributes, leadership outcomes, career experiences, and environmental influences. A portion of the model, illustrating three of these components, appears in Figure 3.2. This portion of the model is essential to understanding the overall skill-based leadership model.

Figure 3.2 Three Components of the Skills Model



SOURCE: Adapted from "Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Social Problems," by M. D. Mumford, S. J. Zaccaro, F. D. Harding, T. O. Jacobs, and E. A. Fleischman, 2000, *Leadership Quarterly*, 11(1), 23.

### Competencies

As can be observed in the middle box in Figure 3.2, problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge are at the heart of the skills model. These three competencies are the key factors that account for effective performance.

#### Problem-Solving Skills

What are problem-solving skills? According to Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al. (2000), problem-solving skills are a leader's creative ability to solve new and unusual, ill-defined organizational problems. The skills include being able to define significant problems, gather problem

#### Skills Approach

information, formulate new understandings about the problem, and generate prototype plans for problem solutions. These skills do not function in a vacuum but are carried out in an organizational context. Problem-solving skills demand that leaders understand their own leadership capacities as they apply possible solutions to the unique problems in their organization (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000).

Being able to construct solutions plays a special role in problem solving. In considering solutions to organizational problems, skilled leaders need to attend to the time frame for constructing and implementing a solution, short-term and long-term goals, career goals and organizational goals, and external issues, all of which could influence the solution (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000, p. 15).

To clarify what is meant by problem-solving skills, consider the following hypothetical situation. Imagine that you are the director of human resources for a medium-sized company and you have been informed by the president that you have to develop a plan to reduce the company's health care costs. In deciding what you will do, you could demonstrate problem-solving skills in the following ways. First, you identify the full ramifications for employees of changing their health insurance coverage. What is the impact going to be? Second, you need to gather information about how benefits can be scaled back. What other companies have attempted a similar change, and what were their results? Third, you need to find a way to teach and inform the employees about the needed change. How can you frame the change in such a way that it is clearly understood? Fourth, you need to create possible scenarios for how the changes will be instituted. How will the plan be described? Fifth, you will need to look closely at the solution itself. How will implementing this change affect the company's mission and your own career? Last, are there issues in the organization (e.g., union rules) that may affect the implementation of these changes?

As illustrated by this example, the process of dealing with novel, ill-defined organizational problems is complex and demanding for leaders. In many ways, it is like a puzzle to be solved. For leaders to solve such puzzles, the skill-based model suggests that problem-solving skills are essential.

#### Social Judgment Skills

In addition to problem-solving skills, effective leadership performance also requires social judgment skills (see Figure 3.2). In general, social judgment skills are the capacity to understand people and social systems

(Zaccaro, Mumford, Connelly, Marks, & Gilbert, 2000, p. 46). They enable leaders to *work with others* to solve problems and to marshal support to implement change within an organization. Social judgment skills are the people skills that are necessary to solve unique organizational problems.

Conceptually, social judgment skills are similar to Katz's (1955) early work on the role of human skills in management. In contrast to Katz's work, Mumford and colleagues have delineated social judgment skills into the following: perspective taking, social perceptiveness, behavioral flexibility, and social performance.

*Perspective taking* means understanding the attitudes that *others* have toward a particular problem or solution. It is empathy applied to problem solving. *Perspective taking* means being sensitive to other people's perspectives and goals—being able to understand their point of view on different issues. Included in perspective taking is knowing how other constituents in an organization view a problem and its possible solutions. According to Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, and Mumford (1991), perspective-taking skills can be likened to *social intelligence*. They are concerned with knowledge about people, the social fabric of organizations, and the interrelatedness of each of them.

*Social perceptiveness* is insight and awareness into how others in the organization function. What is important to others? What motivates them? What problems do they face, and how do they react to change? *Social perceptiveness* means understanding the unique needs, goals, and demands of different organizational constituencies (Zaccaro et al., 1991). A leader with social perceptiveness has a keen sense of how employees will respond to any proposed change in the organization. In a sense, you could say it allows the leader to take the pulse of employees on any issue at any time.

In addition to understanding others accurately, social judgment skills also involve reacting to others with flexibility. *Behavioral flexibility* is the capacity to change and adapt one's behavior in light of an understanding of others' perspectives in the organization. Being flexible means one is not locked into a singular approach to a problem. One is not dogmatic but rather maintains an openness and willingness to change. As the circumstances of a situation change, a flexible leader changes to meet the new demands.

*Social performance* includes a wide range of leadership competencies. Based on an understanding of employees' perspectives, leaders need to be

### Skills Approach

able to communicate their own vision to others. Skill in persuasion and communicating change is essential to do this. When there is resistance to change or interpersonal conflict about change, leaders need to function as mediators. To this end, skill in conflict resolution is an important aspect of social performance competency. In addition, social performance sometime requires that leaders coach subordinates, giving them direction and support as they move toward selected organizational goals. In all, social performance includes many related skills that may come under the umbrella of communication.

To review, social judgment skills are about being sensitive to how you ideas fit in with others. Can you understand others and their unique need and motivations? Are you flexible, and can you adapt your own ideas to others? Can you work with others even when there are resistance and conflict? Social judgment skills are the people skills needed to advance change in an organization.

### Knowledge

As shown in the model (see Figure 3.2), the third aspect of competencies is knowledge. Knowledge is inextricably related to the application and implementation of problem-solving skills in organizations. It directly influences a leader's capacity to define complex organizational problems and to attempt to solve them (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000). *Knowledge* is the accumulation of information and the mental structures used to organize that information. Such a mental structure is called a *schema* (a summary, a diagrammatic representation, or an outline). Knowledge results from having developed an assortment of complex schemata for learning and organizing data.

For example, all of us take various kinds of facts and information into our minds. As we organize that information into categories or schemata, the information becomes more meaningful. Knowledge emerges from the facts and the organizational structures we apply to them. People with a lot of knowledge have more complex organizing structures than those with less knowledge. These knowledgeable people are called experts.

Consider the following baseball example. A baseball expert knows a lot of facts about the game; he or she knows the rules, strategies, equipment, players, and much, much more. The expert's knowledge about baseball

Sometimes described as fluid intelligence, it is a type of intelligence that usually grows and expands up through early adulthood and then begins to decline with age. In the skills model, intelligence is described as having a positive impact on the leader's acquisition of complex problem-solving skills and the leader's knowledge.

#### *Crystallized Cognitive Ability*

Crystallized cognitive ability is intellectual ability that is learned or acquired over time. It is the store of knowledge we get through experience. We learn more and increase our capacities over a lifetime, increasing our leadership potential (e.g., problem-solving skills, conceptual ability, and social judgment skills). In normally functioning adults, this type of cognitive ability grows continuously and typically does not fall off in adulthood. It includes being able to comprehend complex information and learn new skills and information, as well as being able to communicate to others in oral and written forms (Connelly et al., 2000, p. 71). Stated another way, crystallized cognitive ability is acquired intelligence: the ideas and mental abilities people learn through experience. Because it stays fairly stable over time, this type of intelligence is not diminished as people get older.

#### *Motivation*

Motivation is listed as the third attribute in the model. Although the model does not purport to explain the many ways in which motivation may affect leadership, it does suggest three aspects of motivation that are essential to developing leadership skills (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000, p. 22). First, leaders must be willing and motivated to tackle complex organizational problems. It is the critical first step. For leadership to occur, a person wants to lead. Second, leaders must be willing to express dominance—to exert their influence, as we discussed in Chapter 2. In influencing others, the leader must take on the responsibility of dominance because the influence component of leadership is inextricably bound to dominance. Third, leaders must be committed to the social good of the organization. *The social good* is a broad term that can refer to a host of outcomes. However, in the skills model it refers to the leader's willingness to take on the responsibility of trying to advance the overall human good and value of the organization. Taken together, these three aspects of motivation (willingness, dominance, and social good) prepare people to become leaders.

includes the facts, but it also includes the complex mental structures used in organizing and structuring those facts. That person knows not only the season and lifetime statistics for each player but also his quirks, his injuries, the personality of the manager, the strengths and weaknesses of available substitutes, and so on. The expert knows baseball because she or he comprehends the complexities and nuances of the game. The same is true for leadership in organizations. Leaders with knowledge know much about the products, the tasks, people, organization, and all the different ways these elements are related to each other. A knowledgeable leader has many mental structures with which to organize the facts of organizational life.

Knowledge has a positive impact on how leaders engage in problem solving. It is knowledge and expertise that make it possible for people to think about complex system issues and identify possible strategies for appropriate change. Furthermore, this capacity allows people to use prior cases and incidents in order to plan for needed change. It is knowledge that allows people to use the past to constructively confront the future.

To summarize, the skills model consists of three competencies: problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. Collectively, these three components are positively related to effective leadership performance (see Figure 3.2).

#### *Individual Attributes*

Returning to Figure 3.2, the box on the left identifies four individual attributes that have an impact on leadership skills and knowledge: general cognitive ability, crystallized cognitive ability, motivation, and personality.

These attributes play an important role in the skills model. Complex problem solving is a very difficult process and becomes more difficult as people move up in the organization. The following attributes support people as they apply their leadership competencies.

#### *General Cognitive Ability*

General cognitive ability can be thought of as a person's intelligence. It includes perceptual processing, information processing, general reasoning skills, creative and divergent thinking capacities, and memory skills. General cognitive ability is linked to biology, not to experience.



### Personality

Personality is the fourth individual attribute in the skills model. Placed where it is in the model, this attribute reminds us that our personality has an impact on the development of our leadership skills. For example, openness, tolerance for ambiguity, and curiosity may affect a leader's motivation to try to solve some organizational problem. Or, in conflict situations, traits such as confidence and adaptability may be beneficial to a leader's performance. The skills model hypothesizes that any personality characteristic that helps people to cope with complex organizational situations probably is related to leader performance (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000).

### Leadership Outcomes

In the box on the right in Figure 3.2, effective problem solving and performance are the outcomes of leadership. These outcomes are strongly influenced by the leader's competencies (i.e., problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge). When leaders exhibit these competencies, they increase their chances of problem solving and overall performance.

### Effective Problem Solving

As we discussed earlier, the skills model is a *capability model*, designed to explain why some leaders are good problem solvers and others are not. Problem solving is the keystone in the skills approach. In the model (see Figure 3.2), problem-solving skills, as competencies, lead to effective problem solving as a leadership outcome. The criteria for good problem solving are determined by the originality and the quality of expressed solutions to problems. Good problem solving involves creating solutions that are logical, effective, and unique and that go beyond given information (Zaccaro et al., 2000).

### Performance

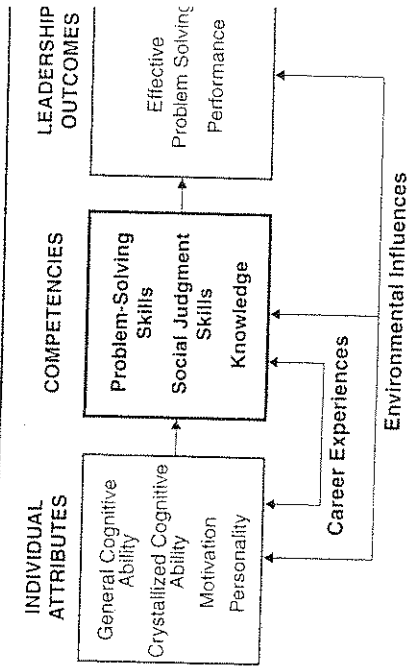
In the model, performance outcomes reflect how well the leader has done her or his job. To measure performance, standard external criteria are used. If the leader has done well and been successful, the leader's evaluations will be positive. Leaders who are effective receive good annual performance reviews, get merit raises, and are recognized by superiors and

### Skills Approach

subordinates as competent leaders. In the end, performance is the degree which a leader has successfully performed the duties to which he or she has been assigned.

Taken together, effective problem solving and performance are the ways to assess leadership effectiveness using the skills model. Further, good problem solving and good performance go hand in hand. A full consideration of the comprehensive skills model appears in Figure 3.3. It contains two other components, not depicted in Figure 3.2, that contribute to leadership performance: career experiences and environmental influences.

Figure 3.3 Skills Model of Leadership



SOURCE: Adapted from "Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Social Problems," by M. D. Mumford, S. J. Zaccaro, F. D. Harding, T. O. Jacobs, E. A. Fleischman, 2000, *Leadership Quarterly*, 11(1), 23.

### Career Experiences

As you can see in Figure 3.3, career experiences have an impact on the characteristics and competencies of leaders. The skills model suggests that the experiences acquired in the course of leaders' careers influence their knowledge and skills to solve complex problems. Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al. (2000, p. 24) point out that leaders can be helped

challenging job assignments, mentoring, appropriate training, and hands-on experience in solving new and unusual problems. In addition, the authors think that career experiences can positively affect the individual characteristics of leaders. For example, certain on-the-job assignments could enhance a leader's motivation or intellectual ability.

In the first section of this chapter, we discussed Katz's (1955) work, which notes that conceptual skills are essential for upper-level administrators. This is consistent with Mumford, Zaccaro, Hardings, et al.'s (2000) skills model, which contends that leaders develop competencies over time. Career experience helps leaders to improve their skills and knowledge over time. Leaders learn and develop higher levels of conceptual capacity if the kinds of problems they confront are progressively more complex and long term as they ascend the organizational hierarchy (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000). Similarly, upper-level leaders, as opposed to first-line supervisors, develop new competencies because they are required to address problems that are more novel and more poorly defined and that demand more human interaction. As these people move through their careers, higher levels of problem-solving and social judgment skills become increasingly important (Mumford & Connelly, 1991).

So the skills and knowledge of leaders are shaped by their career experiences as they address increasingly complex problems in the organization. This notion of developing leadership skills is unique and quite different from other leadership perspectives. If we say, "Leaders are shaped by their experiences," then it means leaders are not born to be leaders (Mumford, Zaccaro, Hardings, et al., 2000). Leaders can develop their abilities through experience, according to the skills model.

### *Environmental Influences*

The final component of the skills model is environmental influences, which is illustrated at the bottom of Figure 3.3. Environmental influences represent factors that lie outside the leader's competencies, characteristics, and experiences. For example, an aging factory or one lacking in high-speed technology could have a major impact on the nature of problem-solving activities. Another example might be the skill levels of subordinates. If a leader's subordinates are highly competent, they will definitely improve the group's problem solving and performance. Similarly, if a task is particularly complex or a group's communication is poor, the leader's performance will be affected.

### Skills Approach

The skills model does not provide an inventory of specific environmental influences. Instead, it acknowledges the existence of these factors and recognizes that they are indeed influences that can affect a leader's performance. In other words, environmental influences are a part of the skills model but not usually under the control of the leader.

### *Summary of the Skills Model*

In summary, the skills model frames leadership by describing five components of leader performance. At the heart of the model are three competencies: *problem-solving skills*, *social judgment skills*, and *knowledge*. These three competencies are the central determinants of effective problem solving and performance, although individual attributes, career experiences, and environmental influences all have an impact on leader competencies. Through job experience and training, leaders can become better problem solvers and more effective leaders.

## HOW DOES THE SKILLS APPROACH WORK?

The skills approach is primarily descriptive: It *describes* leadership from a skills perspective. Rather than providing prescriptions for success in leadership, the skills approach provides a structure for understanding the nature of effective leadership. In the previous section, we discussed the skill perspective based on the work of Katz (1955) and Mumford, Zaccaro, Hardings, et al. (2000). What does each of these bodies of work suggest about the structure and functions of leadership?

The three-skill approach of Katz suggests that the importance of certain leadership skills varies depending on where leaders are in a management hierarchy. For leaders operating at lower levels of management, technical and human skills are most important. When leaders move into middle management, it becomes important that they have all three skills: technical, human, and conceptual. At the upper management levels, it is paramount for leaders to exhibit conceptual and human skills. Although the various skill requirements change across management levels, the one skill that is needed at each level is effective human or interpersonal skills.

Mumford and colleagues provide a similar but far more complex picture of how skills relate to the manifestation of effective leadership. Their skills

model contends that leadership outcomes are the direct result of a leader's competencies in problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. Each of these competencies includes a large repertoire of abilities, and each can be learned and developed. In addition, the model illustrates how individual attributes such as general cognitive ability, crystallized cognitive ability, motivation, and personality influence the leader's competencies. And finally, the model describes how career experiences and environmental influences play a direct or indirect role in leadership performance.

The skills approach works by providing a *map* for how to reach effective leadership in an organization: Leaders need to have problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. Workers can improve their capabilities in these areas through training and experience. Although each leader's personal attributes affect his or her skills, it is the leader's *skills* themselves that are most important in addressing organizational problems.

## STRENGTHS

The skills approach contributes positively to our understanding about leadership in several ways. First, it is a leader-centered model that stresses the importance of developing particular leadership skills. It is the first approach to conceptualize and create a structure of the process of leadership around *skills*. Whereas the early research on skills highlighted the importance of skills and the value of skills across different management levels, the later work placed learned skills at the center of effective leadership performance at *all* management levels.

Second, the skills approach is intuitively appealing. To describe leadership in terms of skills makes leadership available to everyone. Unlike personality traits, skills are competencies that people can learn or develop. It is like playing a sport such as tennis or golf. Even without natural ability in these sports, people can improve their games with practice and instruction. The same is true with leadership. When leadership is framed as a set of skills, it becomes a process that people can study and practice to become better at performing their jobs.

Third, the skills approach provides an expansive view of leadership that incorporates a wide variety of components, including problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, knowledge, individual attributes, career experiences, and environmental influences. Each of these components can further be subdivided into several subcomponents. The result is a

picture of leadership that encompasses a multitude of factors. Because it includes so many variables, the skills approach can capture many of the intricacies and complexities of leadership not found in other models.

Last, the skills approach provides a structure that is very consistent with the curricula of most leadership education programs. Leadership education programs throughout the country have traditionally taught classes in creative problem solving, conflict resolution, listening, and teamwork, to name a few. The content of these classes closely mirrors many of the components in the skills model. Clearly, the skills approach provides a structure that helps to frame the curricula of leadership education and development programs.

## CRITICISMS

Like all other approaches to leadership, the skills approach also has certain weaknesses. First, the breadth of the skills approach seems to extend beyond the boundaries of leadership. For example, by including motivation, critical thinking, personality, and conflict resolution, the skills approach addresses more than just leadership. Another example of the model's breadth is its inclusion of two types of intelligence (i.e., general cognitive ability and crystallized cognitive ability). Although both areas are studied widely in the field of cognitive psychology, they are seldom addressed in leadership research. By including so many components, the skills model of Mumford and others becomes more general and less precise in explaining leadership performance.

Second, related to the first criticism, the skills model is weak in predictive value. It does not explain specifically how variations in social judgment skills and problem-solving skills affect performance. The model suggests that these components are related, but it does not describe just how that works, with any precision. In short, the model can be faulted because it does not explain *how* skills lead to effective leadership performance.

In addition, the skills approach can be criticized for claiming *not* to be a trait model when in fact a major component in the model includes individual attributes, which are traitlike. Although Mumford and colleagues describe cognitive abilities, motivation, and personality variables as factors contributing to competencies, these are also factors that are typically considered to be trait variables. The point is that the individual attributes component of the skills model is trait driven, and that shifts the model away from being strictly a skills approach to leadership.

The final criticism of the skills approach is that it may not be suitably or appropriately applied to other contexts of leadership. The skills model was constructed by using a large sample of military personnel and observing their performance in the armed services. This raises an obvious question: Can the results be generalized to other populations or organizational settings? Although some research suggests that these Army findings can be generalized to other groups (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000), more research is needed to address this criticism.

## APPLICATION

Because the skills approach is a new theoretical formulation, it has not been widely used in applied leadership settings. For example, there are no training packages designed specifically to teach people leadership skills from this approach. Although many programs have been designed to teach leadership skills from a general self-help orientation, few of these programs are based on the conceptual frameworks set forth in this chapter.

Despite the lack of formal training programs, the skills approach offers valuable information about leadership. The approach provides a way to delineate the skills of the leader, and leaders at all levels in an organization can use it. In addition, this approach helps us to identify our strengths and weaknesses in regard to these technical, human, and conceptual skills. By taking a skills inventory such as the one provided at the end of this chapter, people can gain further insight into their own leadership competencies. Their scores allow them to learn about areas in which they may want to seek further training to enhance their overall contributions to their organization.

From a wider perspective, the skills approach may be used in the future as a template for the design of extensive leadership development programs. This approach provides the evidence for teaching leaders the important aspects of listening, creative problem solving, conflict resolution skills, and much more.

## CASE STUDIES

The following three case studies (Cases 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3) describe leadership situations that can be analyzed and evaluated from the skills perspective.

### Skills Approach

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The first case involves the principal investigator of a federally funded research grant. The second case takes place in a military setting, and describes how a lieutenant colonel handles the downsizing of a military base. In the third case, we learn about how the owner of an Italian restaurant has created his own recipe for success.

As you read each case, try to apply the principles of the skills approach to the leaders and their situations. At the end of each case are questions that will assist you in analyzing the case.

### CASE 3.1

#### A Strained Research Team

Dr. Adam Wood is the principal investigator on a 3-year, \$1-million federally funded research grant to study health education programs for older populations, called the Elder Care Project. Unlike previous projects, in which Dr. Wood worked alone or with one or two other investigators, on this project Dr. Wood has 11 colleagues. His project team is made up of two coinvestigators (with Ph.D.s), four intervention staff (with M.A.s), and five general staff members (with B.A.s).

One year into the project, it became apparent to Dr. Wood and the team that the project is underbudgeted and has too few resources. Team members are spending 20–30% more time on the project than has been budgeted to pay them. Regardless of the resource strain, all team members are committed to the project; they believe in its goals and the importance of its outcomes.

Dr. Wood is known throughout the country as the foremost scholar in this area of health education research. He is often asked to serve on national review and advisory boards. His publication record is second to none. In addition, his colleagues in the university know Dr. Wood as a very competent researcher. People come to Dr. Wood for advice on research design and methodology questions. They also come to him for questions about theoretical formulations. He has a reputation as someone who can see the big picture on research projects.

Despite his research competence, there are problems on Dr. Wood's research team. Dr. Wood worries there is a great deal of work to be done but that the members of the team are not devoting sufficient time to the

Elder Care Project. He is frustrated because many of the day-to-day research tasks of the project are falling in his lap. He entered a recent research meeting, threw his notebook down on the table, and said, "I wish I'd never taken this project on. It's taking way too much of my time. The rest of you aren't pulling your fair share." Team members felt exasperated at Dr. Wood's comments. Although they respect his competence, they find his leadership style frustrating. His negative comments at staff meetings are having a demoralizing effect on the research team. Despite their hard work and devotion to the project, Dr. Wood seldom compliments or praises their efforts. Team members believe that they have spent more time than anticipated on the project and have received less pay or credit than expected. The project is sucking away a lot of staff energy, yet Dr. Wood does not seem to understand it or acknowledge it. The research staff is starting to feel burned out, but members realize that they need to keep trying because they are under time constraints from the federal government to do the work promised.

Recently, the team needed to develop a pamphlet for the participants in the Elder Care Project, but the pamphlet costs were significantly more than was budgeted in the grant. Dr. Wood was very adept at finding out where they might find small pockets of money to help cover those costs. Although team members were pleased that he was able to obtain the money, they were sure he would use this as just another example of how he was the one doing most of the work on the project.

### Questions

1. Based on the skills approach, how would you assess Dr. Wood's leadership and his relationship to the members of the Elder Care Project team? Will the project be successful?
2. Does Dr. Wood have the skills necessary to be an effective leader of this research team?
3. The skills model describes three important competencies for leaders: problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. If you were to coach Dr. Wood using this model, what type of things would you address with him?



### CASE 3.2

#### A Shift for Lieutenant Colonel Adams

Lieutenant Colonel Adams was an aeronautical engineer in the Air Force who was recognized as an accomplished officer and rose quickly through the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and major. In addition, he successfully completed a number of professional development courses in the Air Force and received a master's degree in engineering. In the earlier part of his service, his career assignments required overseeing 15- to 20-person shifts that were responsible for routine maintenance schedules for squadron and base aircraft. As he progressed in rank, he moved to engineering projects, which were supported by small technical staffs.

Based on his strong performance, Major Adams was promoted to lieutenant colonel earlier than his peers. Instead of moving him into another engineering position, the personnel bureau and his assignment officer decided that Lt. Col. Adams would benefit from a tour in which he could expand his professional background and experience. Consequently, he was assigned to Base X as the commanding officer of the administration branch. Base X was an airbase with approximately 5,000 military and civilian personnel.

As the administration officer, Lt. Col. Adams was the senior human resource officer and the principal adviser to the base commander on all human resource issues. Lt. Col. Adams and his staff of 135 civilian and military personnel were responsible for personnel issues, food services, recreation, family support, and medical services. In addition, Lt. Col. Adams was assigned to chair the Labor-Management Relations Committee for the base.

At the end of the Cold War, as part of the declared peace dividend, the government decided to reduce the defense budget. In February, barely 6 months after taking over command of the administration branch, the federal government announced a significant reduction in the size of the military and the closure of many bases. Base X was to be closed as an air base and reassigned to the Army. The closure was to take place within 1 year, and the base was to be prepared for the arrival of the first Army troops in 2 years. As part of the reduction program, the federal government initiated voluntary retirement programs for civilian and military personnel. Those wanting to retire had until April 1 to decide.

Orders for the conversion of the airbase included the following:

- The base will continue normal operations for 6 months.
- The squadrons—complete with aircrews, equipment, and families (1,000)—must be relocated to their new bases and operational by August 1.
- The remaining base personnel strength, both civilian and military, must be reduced by 30%.
- The base must continue to provide personnel for operational missions.
- The reduction of personnel must be consistent with federal voluntary early-retirement programs.
- The base must be prepared with a support structure to accept 2,000 new soldiers expected to arrive in 2 years.

Lt. Col. Adams was assigned to develop a human resource plan that would meet the imposed staff levels for the entire base while ensuring that the base was still able to perform the operational tasks it had been given. Faced with this daunting task, Adams conducted an extensive review of all of the relevant orders concerning the base transformation, and he familiarized himself with all of the rules concerning the early-retirement program. After a series of initial meetings with the other base branch chiefs, he laid out a plan that could be accomplished by the established deadlines. At the same time, he chaired a number of meetings with his own staff about how to meet the mandated reductions within his own branch.

After considering the target figures for the early-retirement program, it was clear that the mandated numbers could not be reached. Simply allowing everyone who had applied for early retirement to leave was not considered an option because doing so would devastate entire sections of the base. More job cuts were required, and choices had to be made as to who would stay, why, and in what areas. Lt. Col. Adams met stiff resistance in the meetings to determine what sections would bear the brunt of the additional cutbacks.

Lt. Col. Adams conducted his own independent analysis of his own branch before consulting with his staff. Based on his thorough examination of the data, he mandated further reductions in his sections. Specifically targeted were personnel in the base housing, single-person accommodation, family services, and recreational sections. He also mandated a further 10% cut of military positions in his sections.

After meeting the mandated reduction targets, Lt. Col. Adams was informed that the federal government would accept all personnel who applied for early retirement, which was an unexpected decision. When

superimposed on the already mandated reductions, this move caused critical shortages in key areas. Within weeks of implementation of the plan, the base commander was receiving mounting complaints from both civilian and military members over the implementation of the plan.

Incidents of stress, frustration, and discontent rose dramatically. Families trying to move found support services cut back or nonexistent. The transition staff was forced to work evenings and weekends. Family support services were swamped and were asking for additional help.

Despite spending a large amount of overtime trying to address the diverse issues both base-wide and in his branch, Lt. Col. Adams found himself struggling to keep his head above water. To make matters worse, the base was having difficulty meeting its operational mission, and vital sections were critically understaffed. The base commander wanted answers. When pressed, Lt. Col. Adams stated that his plan met all of the required deadlines and targets, and the plan conformed to all of the guidelines of the early retirement programs. "Maybe so," replied the base commander, "but you forgot about the bigger picture."

### Questions

1. Based on the skills model, how would you assess Lt. Col. Adams's ability to meet the challenges of the base administration position?
2. How would you assess his ability to meet the additional tasks he faced regarding the conversion of the base?
3. If you were to coach Lt. Col. Adams on how he could improve his leadership, what would you tell him?



### CASE 3.3

#### Andy's Recipe

Andy Garafallo owns an Italian restaurant that sits in the middle of a cornfield near a large midwestern city. On the restaurant's far wall is an elaborate mural of the canals of Venice. A gondola hangs on the opposite

wall, up by the ceiling. Along another wall is a row of real potted lemon trees. "My ancestors are from Sicily," says Andy. "In fact, I can remember seeing my grandfather take a bite out of a lemon, just like the ones hanging on those trees."

Andy is very confident about his approach to this restaurant, and he should be, because the restaurant is celebrating its 25th anniversary. "I'm darned sure of what I want to do. I'm not trying different fads to get people to come here. People come here because they know they will get great food. They also want to support someone with whom they can connect. This is my approach. Nothing more, nothing less." While other restaurants have folded, Andy seems to have found a recipe for success.

Since opening his restaurant, Andy has had a number of managers. Currently, he has three: Kelly, Danielle, and Patrick. Kelly is a kitchen (food prep) manager who is known as very honest and dependable. She loves her work, and she is efficient, good with ordering, and good with preparation. Andy really likes Kelly but is frustrated with her because she has such difficulty getting along with the salespeople, delivery people, and wait staff.

Danielle, who works out front in the restaurant, has been with Andy the longest, 6 years. Danielle likes working at Garafallo's—she lives and breathes the place. She fully buys into Andy's approach of putting customers first. In fact, Andy says she has a knack for knowing what customers need before they even ask. Although she is very hospitable, Andy says she is lousy with numbers. She just doesn't seem to catch on to that side of the business.

Patrick, who has been with Andy for 4 years, usually works out front but can work in the kitchen as well. Although Patrick has a strong work ethic and is great with numbers, he is weak on the people side. For some reason, Patrick treats customers as if they are faceless, coming across as very unemotional. In addition, Patrick tends to approach problems with an either-or perspective. This has gotten him into trouble on more than one occasion. Andy wishes that Patrick would learn to lighten up. "He's a good manager, but he needs to recognize that some things just aren't that important," says Andy.

Andy's approach to his managers is that of a teacher and coach. He is always trying to help them improve. He sees part of his responsibility as teaching them every aspect of the restaurant business. Andy's stated goal is that he wants his managers to be "A" players when they leave his business to take on new jobs elsewhere. Helping people to become the best they can be is Andy's goal for his restaurant employees.

Although Andy works 12 hours a day, he spends little time analyzing the numbers. He does not think about ways to improve his profit margin by cutting corners, raising an item price here, or cutting quality there. Andy says, "It's like this: The other night I got a call from someone who said they wanted to come in with a group and wondered if they could bring along a cake. I said 'yes' with one stipulation . . . I get a piece! Well the people came and spent a lot of money. Then they told me that they had actually wanted to go to another restaurant but the other place would not allow them to bring in their own cake." Andy believes very strongly in his approach. "You get business by being what you should be." Compared with other restaurants, his restaurant is doing quite well. Although many places are happy to net 5–7% profit, Andy's Italian restaurant nets 30% profit, year in and year out.

### Questions

1. What accounts for Andy Garafallo's success in the restaurant business?
2. From a skills perspective, how would you describe the three managers: Kelly, Danielle, and Patrick? What does each of them need to do to improve his or her skills?
3. How would you describe Andy's competencies? Does Andy's leadership suggest that one does not need all three skills in order to be effective?

## LEADERSHIP INSTRUMENT

There are many questionnaires that assess an individual's skills for leadership. A quick search of the Internet provides a host of these questionnaires. Almost all of them are designed to be used in training and development to give people a feel for their leadership abilities. Surveys have been used for years to help people understand and improve their leadership style, but most questionnaires are not used in research because they have not been tested for reliability and validity. Nevertheless, they are useful as self-help instruments because they provide specific information to people about their leadership skills.

In this chapter, we present a comprehensive skills model that is based on many empirical studies of leaders' skills. Although the questionnaires used

in these studies are highly reliable and valid instruments, they are not suitable for our more pragmatic discussion of leadership in this text. In essence, they are too complex and involved. For example, Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al. (2000) used measures that included open-ended responses and very sophisticated scoring procedures. Though critically important for validating the model, these complicated measures are less valuable as self-instruction questionnaires.

A skills inventory is provided in the next section to assist you in understanding how leadership skills are measured and what your own skills might be. Your scores on the inventory will give you a sense of your own leadership competencies. You may be strong in all three skills or stronger in some skills than in others. The questionnaire will give you a sense of your own skills profile. If you are stronger in one skill and weaker in another, this may help you determine where you want to improve in the future.

## SKILLS INVENTORY

*Instructions:* Read each item carefully and decide whether the item describes you as a person. Indicate your response to each item by circling one of the five numbers to the right of each item.

- Key: 1 = Not true    2 = Seldom true    3 = Occasionally true    4 = Somewhat true    5 = Very true
1. I enjoy getting into the details of how things work.    1 2 3 4 5
  2. As a rule, adapting ideas to people's needs is easy for me.    1 2 3 4 5
  3. I enjoy working with abstract ideas.    1 2 3 4 5
  4. Technical things fascinate me.    1 2 3 4 5
  5. Being able to understand others is the most important part of my work.    1 2 3 4 5
  6. Seeing the big picture comes easy for me.    1 2 3 4 5
  7. One of my skills is being good at making things work.    1 2 3 4 5
  8. My main concern is to have a supportive communication climate.    1 2 3 4 5
  9. I am intrigued by complex organizational problems.    1 2 3 4 5
  10. Following directions and filling out forms comes easily for me.    1 2 3 4 5
  11. Understanding the social fabric of the organization is important to me.    1 2 3 4 5
  12. I would enjoy working out strategies for my organization's growth.    1 2 3 4 5
  13. I am good at completing the things I've been assigned to do.    1 2 3 4 5
  14. Getting all parties to work together is a challenge I enjoy.    1 2 3 4 5
  15. Creating a mission statement is rewarding work.    1 2 3 4 5
  16. I understand how to do the basic things required of me.    1 2 3 4 5
  17. I am concerned with how my decisions affect the lives of others.    1 2 3 4 5
  18. Thinking about organizational values and philosophy appeals to me.    1 2 3 4 5



In the 1990s, the skills model was developed to explain the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that make effective leadership possible. Far more complex than Katz's paradigm, this model delineated five components of effective leader performance: competencies, individual attributes, leadership outcomes, career experiences, and environmental influences. The leader competencies at the heart of the model are problem-solving skills, social judgment skills, and knowledge. These competencies are directly affected by the leader's individual attributes, which include the leader's general cognitive ability, crystallized cognitive ability, motivation, and personality. The leader's competencies are also affected by his or her career experiences and the environment. The model postulates that effective problem solving and performance can be explained by the leader's basic competencies and that these competencies are in turn affected by the leader's attributes, experience, and the environment.

There are several strengths in conceptualizing leadership from a skills perspective. First, it is a leader-centered model that stresses the importance of the leader's abilities, and it places learned skills at the center of effective leadership performance. Second, the skills approach describes leadership in such a way that it makes it available to everyone. Skills are competencies that we all can learn to develop and improve. Third, the skills approach provides a sophisticated map that explains how effective leadership performance can be achieved. Based on the model, researchers can develop complex plans for studying the leadership process. Last, this approach provides a structure for leadership education and development programs that include creative problem solving, conflict resolution, listening, and teamwork.

In addition to the positive features, there are also some negative aspects to the skills approach. First, the breadth of the model seems to extend beyond the boundaries of leadership, including, for example, conflict management, critical thinking, motivation theory, and personality theory. Second, the skills model is weak in predictive value. It does not explain how a person's competencies lead to effective leadership performance.

Third, the skills model claims not to be a trait approach, but individual traits such as cognitive abilities, motivation, and personality play a large role in the model. Finally, the skills model is weak in general application because it was constructed using only data from military personnel. Until the model has been tested with other populations, such as small and large organizations and businesses, its basic tenets must still be questioned.

## Scoring

The skills inventory is designed to measure three broad types of leadership skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Score the questionnaire by doing the following: First, sum the responses on items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16. This is your technical skill score. Second, sum the responses on items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17. This is your human skill score. Third, sum the responses on items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18. This is your conceptual skill score.

Total scores: Technical skill \_\_\_\_\_ Human skill \_\_\_\_\_ Conceptual skill \_\_\_\_\_

## Scoring Interpretation

The scores you received on the skills inventory provide information about your leadership skills in three areas. By comparing the differences between your scores, you can determine where you have leadership strengths and where you have leadership weaknesses. Your scores also point toward the level of management for which you might be most suited.



## SUMMARY

The skills approach is a leader-centered perspective that emphasizes the competencies of leaders. It is best represented in the early work of Katz (1955) on the *three-skill approach* and the more recent work of Mumford and his colleagues (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., 2000), who initiated the development of a comprehensive *skills model of leadership*.

In the three-skill approach, effective leadership depends on three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Although all three skills are important for leaders, the importance of each skill varies between management levels. At lower management levels, technical and human skills are most important. For middle managers, the three different skills are equally important. At upper management levels, conceptual and human skills are most important, and technical skills become less important. Leaders are more effective when their skills match their management level.

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*Fourth Edition*

# LEADERSHIP

## THEORY AND PRACTICE

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## Style Approach

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### DESCRIPTION

The style approach emphasizes the behavior of the leader. This distinguishes it from the trait approach (Chapter 2), which emphasizes the personality characteristics of the leader, and the skills approach (Chapter 3), which emphasizes the leader's capabilities. The style approach focuses exclusively on what leaders do and how they act. In shifting the study of leadership to leader style or behaviors, the style approach expanded the study of leadership to include the actions of leaders toward subordinates in various contexts.

Researchers studying the style approach determined that leadership is composed of two general kinds of behaviors: *task behaviors* and *relationship behaviors*. Task behaviors facilitate goal accomplishment: They help group members to achieve their objectives. Relationship behaviors help subordinates feel comfortable with themselves, with each other, and with the situation in which they find themselves. The central purpose of the style approach is to explain how leaders combine these two kinds of behaviors to influence subordinates in their efforts to reach a goal.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the style approach. Some of the first studies to be done were conducted at Ohio State University in the late 1940s, based on the findings of Stogdill's (1948) work, which pointed to the importance of considering more than leaders' traits in

leadership research. At about the same time, another group of researchers at the University of Michigan was conducting a series of studies that explored how leadership functioned in small groups. A third line of research was begun by Blake and Mouton in the early 1960s; it explored how managers used task and relationship behaviors in the organizational setting.

Although many research studies could be categorized under the heading of the style approach, the Ohio State studies, the Michigan studies, and the studies by Blake and Mouton (1964, 1978, and 1985) are strongly representative of the ideas in this approach. By looking closely at each of these groups of studies, we can draw a clearer picture of the underpinnings and implications of the style approach.

### *The Ohio State Studies*

Because the results of studying leadership as a personality trait appeared fruitless, a group of researchers at Ohio State began to analyze how individuals acted when they were leading a group or organization. This analysis was conducted by having subordinates complete questionnaires about their leaders. On the questionnaires, subordinates had to identify the number of times their leaders engaged in certain types of behaviors.

The original questionnaire used in these studies was constructed from a list of more than 1,800 items describing different aspects of leader behavior. From this long list of items, a questionnaire composed of 150 questions was formulated, and it was called the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). (Hemphill & Coons, 1957). The LBDQ was given to hundreds of people in educational, military, and industrial settings, and the results showed that certain clusters of behaviors were typical of leaders. Six years later, Stogdill (1963) published a shortened version of the LBDQ. The new form, which was called the LBDQ-XII, became the most widely used in research. A style questionnaire similar to the LBDQ appears later in this chapter. You can use this questionnaire to assess your own leadership behavior.

Researchers found that subordinates' responses on the questionnaire clustered around two general types of leader behaviors: *initiating structure* and *consideration* (Stogdill, 1974). Initiating structure behaviors were essentially task behaviors, including such acts as organizing work, giving structure to the work context, defining role responsibilities, and scheduling

### Style Approach

work activities. Consideration behaviors were essentially relationship behaviors and included building camaraderie, respect, trust, and liking between leaders and followers.

The two types of behaviors identified by the LBDQ-XII represent core of the style approach and are central to what leaders do: Leader provide structure for subordinates, and they nurture them. The Ohio State studies viewed these two behaviors as distinct and independent. They thought of not as two points along a single continuum but as two different continua. For example, a leader could be high in initiating structure high or low in task behavior. Similarly, a leader could be low in set structure and low or high in consideration behavior. The degree to which leader exhibited one behavior was not related to the degree to which she exhibited the other behavior.

Many studies have been done to determine which style of leadership is most effective in a particular situation. In some contexts high consideration has been found to be most effective, but in other situations high initiating structure has been found most effective. Some research has shown being high on both behaviors is the best form of leadership. Determining how a leader optimally mixes task and relationship behaviors has been the central task for researchers from the style approach. The path—approach, which is discussed in Chapter 7, exemplifies a leadership theory that attempts to explain how leaders should integrate consideration structure into the leader's style.

### *The University of Michigan Studies*

While researchers at Ohio State were developing the LBDQ, researchers at the University of Michigan were also exploring leadership behavior, giving special attention to the impact of leaders' behaviors on the performance of small groups (Cartwright & Zander, 1960; Katz & Kahn, 1951; Lippitt, 1961, 1967).

The program of research at Michigan identified two types of leadership behaviors: *employee orientation* and *production orientation*. Employee orientation is the behavior of leaders who approach subordinates with strong human relations emphasis. They take an interest in workers as human beings, value their individuality, and give special attention to their personal needs (Bowers & Seashore, 1966). Employee orientation is very similar to the cluster of behaviors identified in the Ohio State studies as consideration

Production orientation consists of leadership behaviors that stress the technical and production aspects of a job. From this orientation, workers are viewed as a means for getting work accomplished (Bowers & Seashore, 1966). Production orientation parallels the initiating structure cluster found in the Ohio State studies.

Unlike the Ohio State researchers, the Michigan researchers, in their initial studies, conceptualized employee and production orientations as opposite ends of a single continuum. This suggested that leaders who were oriented toward production were less oriented toward employees, and those who were employee oriented were less production oriented. As more studies were completed, however, the researchers reconceptualized the two constructs, as in the Ohio State studies, as two independent leadership orientations (Kahn, 1956). When the two behaviors were treated as independent orientations, leaders were seen as being able to be oriented toward both production and employees at the same time.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a multitude of studies were conducted by researchers from both Ohio State and the University of Michigan to determine how leaders could best combine their task and relationship behaviors so as to maximize the impact of these behaviors on the satisfaction and performance of followers. In essence, the researchers were looking for a universal theory of leadership that would explain leadership effectiveness in every situation. The results that emerged from this large body of literature were contradictory and unclear (Yukl, 1994). Although some of the findings pointed to the value of a leader being both highly task oriented and highly relationship oriented in all situations (Misumi, 1985), the preponderance of research in this area was inconclusive.

### **Blake and Mouton's Managerial (Leadership) Grid**

Perhaps the best-known model of managerial behavior is the Managerial Grid®, which first appeared in the early 1960s and has been refined and revised several times (Blake & McCanse, 1991; Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1978, 1985). It is a model that has been used extensively in organizational training and development. The Managerial Grid, which has been renamed the Leadership Grid®, was designed to explain how leaders help organizations to reach their purposes through two factors: *concern for production* and *concern for people*. Although these factors are described as leadership orientations in the model, they closely parallel the task and relationship leadership behaviors we have been discussing throughout this chapter.

### **Style Approach**

Concern for production refers to how a leader is concerned with achieving organizational tasks. It involves a wide range of activities, including attention to policy decisions, new product development, process issues, workload, and sales volume, to name a few. Not limited to things, concern for production can refer to whatever the organization is seeking to accomplish (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

Concern for people refers to how a leader attends to the people in the organization who are trying to achieve its goals. This concern includes building organizational commitment and trust, promoting the personal worth of employees, providing good working conditions, maintaining a fair salary structure, and promoting good social relations (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

The Leadership (Managerial) Grid joins concern for production and concern for people in a model that has two intersecting axes (Figure 4.1). The horizontal axis represents the leader's concern for results, and the vertical axis represents the leader's concern for people. Each of the axes is drawn as a 9-point scale on which a score of 1 represents *minimum concern* and 9 represents *maximum concern*. By plotting scores from each of the axes, various leadership styles can be illustrated. The Leadership Grid portrays five major leadership styles: authority-compliance (9,1), country club management (1,9), impoverished management (1,1), middle-of-the-road management (5,5), and team management (9,9).

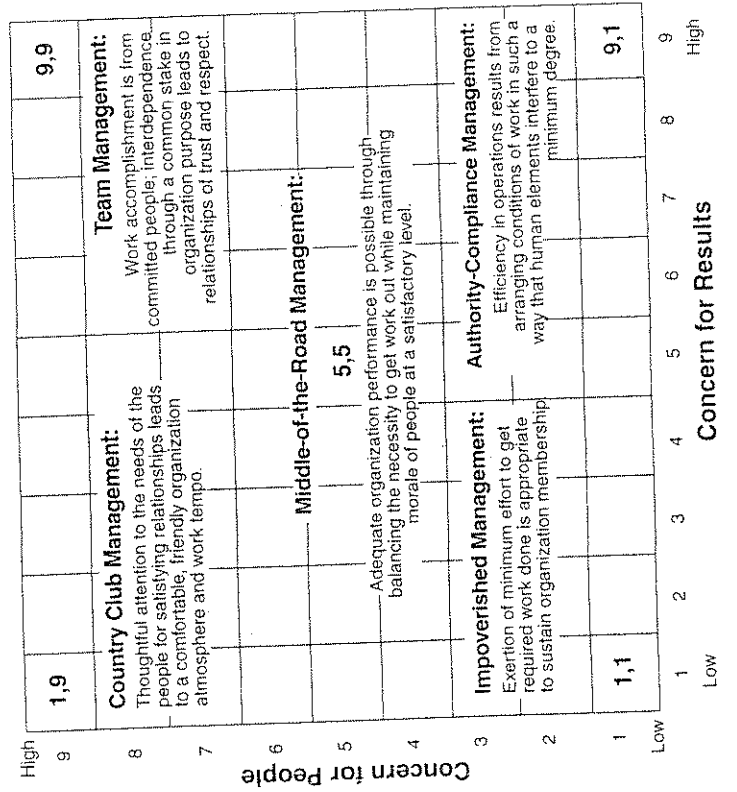
### **Authority-Compliance (9, 1)**

The 9,1 style of leadership places heavy emphasis on task and job requirements and less emphasis on people, except to the extent that people are tools for getting the job done. Communicating with subordinates is not emphasized except for the purpose of giving instructions about the task. This style is result driven, and people are regarded as tools to that end. The 9,1 leader is often seen as controlling, demanding, hard driving, and overpowering.

### **Country Club Management (1,9)**

The 1,9 style represents a low concern for task accomplishment coupled with a high concern for interpersonal relationships. De-emphasizing production, 1,9 leaders stress the attitudes and feelings of people, making sure the personal and social needs of followers are met. They try to create

Figure 4.1 The Leadership Grid®



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a positive climate by being agreeable, eager to help, comforting, and uncontroverial.

*Impoverished Management (1, 1)*

The 1,1 style is representative of a leader who is unconcerned with both the task and interpersonal relationships. This type of leader goes through the motions of being a leader but acts uninvolved and withdrawn. The 1,1 leader often has little contact with followers and could be described as indifferent, noncommittal, resigned, and apathetic.

*Middle-of-the-Road Management (5,5)*

The 5,5 style describes leaders who are compromisers, who have an intermediate concern for the task and an intermediate concern for the people who do the task. They find a balance between taking people into account and still emphasizing the work requirements. Their compromising style gives up some of the push for production and some of the attention to employee needs. To arrive at an equilibrium, the 5,5 leader avoids conflict and emphasizes moderate levels of production and interpersonal relationships. This type of leader often is described as one who is expedient, prefers the middle ground, soft-pedals disagreement, and swallows convictions in the interest of "progress."

*Team Management (9,9)*

The 9,9 style places a strong emphasis on both tasks and interpersonal relationships. It promotes a high degree of participation and teamwork in the organization and satisfies a basic need in employees to be involved and committed to their work. The following are some of the phrases that could be used to describe the 9,9 leader: stimulates participation, acts determined, gets issues into the open, makes priorities clear, follows through, behaves open-mindedly, and enjoys working.

In addition to the five major styles described in the Leadership Grid, Blake and his colleagues have identified two other styles that incorporate multiple aspects of the grid.

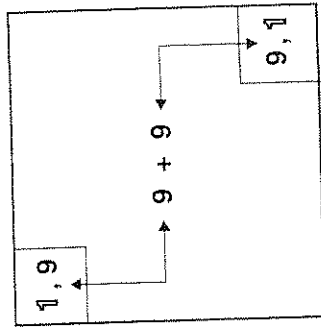
*Paternalism/Maternalism*

Paternalism/maternalism refers to a leader who uses both 1,9 and 9,1 styles but does not integrate the two (Figure 4.2). This is the "benevolent dictator" who acts graciously but does so for the purpose of goal accomplishment. In essence the paternalistic/maternalistic style treats people as if they were dissociated from the task.

*Opportunism*

Opportunism refers to a leader who uses any combination of the basic five styles for the purpose of personal advancement (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.2** *Paternalism/Maternalism: Reward and approval are bestowed on people in return for loyalty and obedience; failure to comply leads to punishment.*



SOURCE: From *Grid Solutions* by Robert R. Blake and Anne Adams McCaense. (Formerly *The Managerial Grid* by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton.) Copyright © 1991. Reprinted with permission of Grid International, Inc.

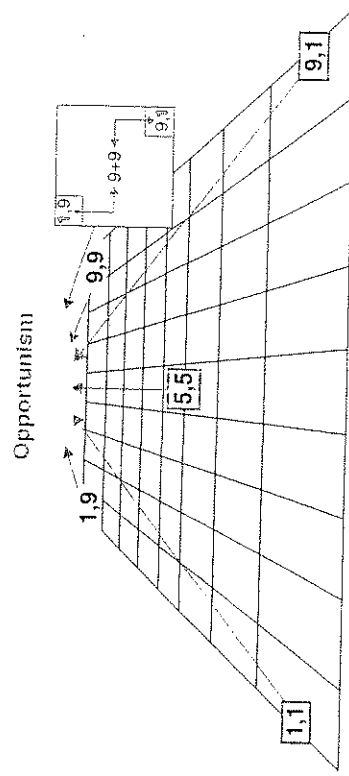
Blake and Mouton (1985) indicate that a person usually has a dominant grid style, which he or she uses in most situations, and a backup style. The backup style is what the leader reverts to when under pressure, when the usual way of accomplishing things does not work.

In summary, the Leadership Grid is an example of a practical model of leadership that is based on the two major leadership behaviors: task and relationship. It closely parallels the ideas and findings that emerged in the Ohio State and University of Michigan studies. It is used in consulting for organizational development throughout the world.

## HOW DOES THE STYLE APPROACH WORK?

Unlike many of the other approaches discussed in the book, the style approach is not a refined theory that provides a neatly organized set of prescriptions for effective leadership behavior. Rather, the style approach provides a framework for assessing leadership in a broad way, as behavior with a task and relationship dimension. The style approach works not by telling

**Figure 4.3** *Opportunism: In opportunistic management, people adapt and shift to any grid to gain the maximum advantage. Performance occurs according to a system of selfish gain. Effort is made only for an advantage for personal gain.*



SOURCE: From *Grid Solutions* by Robert R. Blake and Anne Adams McCaense. (Formerly *The Managerial Grid* by Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton.) Copyright © 1991. Reprinted with permission of Grid International, Inc.

leaders how to behave but by describing the major components of their behavior.

The style approach reminds leaders that their actions toward others occur on a task level and a relationship level. In some situations, leaders need to be more task oriented, whereas in others, they need to be more relationship oriented. Similarly, some subordinates need leaders who provide a lot of direction, whereas others need leaders who can show them a great deal of nurturance and support. The style approach gives the leader a way to look at his or her own behavior by subdividing it into two dimensions.

An example may help explain how the style approach works. Imagine two college classrooms on the first day of class and two professors with entirely different styles. Professor Smith comes to class, introduces herself, takes attendance, goes over the syllabus, explains the first assignment, and dismisses the class. Professor Jones comes to class and, after introducing herself and handing out the syllabus, tries to help the students to get to know one another by having each of the students describe a little about



themselves, their majors, and their favorite nonacademic activities. The leadership styles of professors Smith and Jones are quite different. The preponderance of what Professor Smith does could be labeled task behavior, and the majority of what Professor Jones does is relationship behavior. The style approach provides a way to inform the professors about the differences in their behaviors. Depending on the response of the students to their style, the professors may want to change their behavior to improve their teaching on the first day of class.

Overall, the style approach offers a means of assessing in a general way the behaviors of leaders. It reminds leaders that their impact on others occurs through the tasks they perform as well as in the relationships they create.

## STRENGTHS

The style approach makes several positive contributions to our understanding of the leadership process. First, the style approach marked a major shift in the general focus of leadership research. Before the inception of the style approach, researchers treated leadership exclusively as a personality trait (see Chapter 2). The style approach broadened the scope of leadership research to include the behaviors of leaders and what they do in various situations. No longer was the focus of leadership on the personal characteristics of leaders; it was expanded to include what leaders did and how they acted.

Second, a wide range of studies on leadership style validates and gives credibility to the basic tenets of the approach. First formulated and reported by researchers from Ohio State University and the University of Michigan and subsequently in the work of Blake and Mouton (1964, 1978, 1985) and Blake and McCaense (1991), the style approach is substantiated by a multitude of research studies that offer a viable approach to understanding the leadership process.

Third, on a conceptual level, researchers from the style approach have ascertained that a leader's style consists primarily of two major types of behaviors: task and relationship. The significance of this idea is not to be understated. Whenever leadership occurs, the leader is acting out both task and relationship behaviors; the key to being an effective leader often rests on how the leader balances these two behaviors. Together they form the core of the leadership process.

Fourth, the style approach is heuristic. It provides us with a broad conceptual map that is worthwhile to use in our attempts to understand the complexities of leadership. Leaders can learn a lot about themselves and how they come across to others by trying to see their behaviors in light of the task and relationship dimensions. Based on the style approach, leaders can assess their actions and determine how they may want to change to improve their leadership style.

## CRITICISMS

Along with its strengths, the style approach also has several weaknesses. First, the research on styles has not adequately shown how leaders' styles are associated with performance outcomes (Bryman, 1992; Yukl, 1994). Researchers have not been able to establish a consistent link between task and relationship behaviors and outcomes such as morale, job satisfaction, and productivity. According to Yukl (1994, p. 75), the "results from this massive research effort have been mostly contradictory and inconclusive." He further points out that the only strong finding about leadership styles is that leaders who are considerate have followers who are more satisfied.

Another criticism is that this approach has failed to find a universal style of leadership that could be effective in almost every situation. The overarching goal for researchers studying the style approach appeared to be the identification of a universal set of leadership behaviors that would consistently result in effective outcomes. Because of inconsistencies in the research findings, this goal was never reached. Similar to the trait approach, which was unable to identify the definitive personal characteristics of leaders, the style approach has been unable to identify the universal behaviors that are associated with effective leadership.

A final criticism of the style approach is that it implies that the most effective leadership style is the high-high style (i.e., high task and high relationship). Although some researchers (e.g., Blake & McCaense, 1991; Misumi, 1985) suggest that high-high managers are most effective, that may not be the case in all situations. In fact, the full range of research findings provides only limited support for a universal high-high style (Yukl, 1994). Certain situations may require different leadership styles; some may be complex and require high-task behavior, and others may be simple and require supportive behavior. At this point in the development of research on the style approach, it remains unclear whether the high-high style is the best style of leadership.

## APPLICATION

The style approach can be applied easily in ongoing leadership settings. At all levels in all types of organizations, managers are continually engaged in task and relationship behaviors. By assessing their own style, managers can determine how they are coming across to others and how they could change their behaviors to be more effective. In essence, the style approach provides a mirror for managers that is helpful in answering the frequently asked question, "How am I doing as a leader?"

In training and development for leadership, many programs throughout the country are structured along the lines of the style approach. Almost all of them are designed similarly and include giving managers questionnaires that assess in some way their task and relationship behaviors toward subordinates. Participants use these assessments to improve their overall leadership styles.

An example of a training and development program that deals exclusively with leader styles is Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid (formerly Managerial Grid) seminar. Grid seminars are about increasing productivity, improving morale, and gaining employee commitment. They are offered by Scientific Methods, an international organization development company (<http://www.gridinternational.com>). At grid seminars, through self-assessments, small-group experiences, and candid critiques, managers learn how to define effective leadership, how to manage for optimal results, and how to identify and change ineffective leadership behaviors. The conceptual framework around which the grid seminars are structured is the style approach to leadership.

In short, the style approach applies to nearly everything a leader does. It is an approach that is used as a model by many training and development companies to teach managers how to improve their effectiveness and organizational productivity.

## CASE STUDIES

In this section, you will find case studies (Cases 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) that describe the leadership styles of three different managers, each of whom is working in a different organizational setting. The first case is about a

maintenance director in a large hospital, the second deals with a supervisor in a small sporting goods store, and the third is concerned with the director of a design department in a large manufacturing company. At the end of each case are questions that will help you to analyze the case from the perspective of the style approach.

### CASE 4.1

#### A Drill Sergeant at First

Mark Young is the head of the painting department in a large hospital, and 20 union employees report to him. Before coming onboard at the hospital, he had worked as an independent contractor. At the hospital, he took a position that was newly created because the hospital believed change was needed in how painting services were provided.

Upon beginning his job, Mark did a 4-month analysis of the direct and indirect costs of painting services. His findings supported the perceptions of his administrators that painting services were inefficient and costly. As a result, Mark completely reorganized the department, designed a new scheduling procedure, and redefined the expected standards of performance.

Mark says that when he started out in his new job he was "all task," like a drill sergeant who didn't seek any input from his subordinates. From Mark's point of view, the hospital environment did not leave much room for errors, so he needed to be strict about getting painters to do a good job within the constraints of the hospital environment.

As time went along, Mark relaxed his style and was less demanding. He delegated some responsibilities to two crew leaders who reported to him, but he always stayed in close touch with each of the employees. On a weekly basis, Mark was known to take small groups of workers to the local sports bar for burgers on the house. He loved to banter with the employees and could dish it out as well as take it.

Mark is very proud of his department. He says he always wanted to be a coach, and that's how he feels about running his department. He enjoys working with people, and in particular he says he likes to see the glint in their eyes when they realize that they've done a good job and they have done it on their own.

about how organized and efficient the store is when she is in charge. Susan makes the tasks and goals for everyone very clear. She keeps everyone busy, and when they go home at night they feel as if they have accomplished something. They like to work for Susan because she knows what she is doing. Those who do not like her style complain that she is too driven. It seems that her sole purpose for being at the store is to get the job done. She seldom, if ever, takes a break or just hangs out with the staff. These people say Susan is pretty hard to relate to, and as a result it is not much fun working at Marathon Sports.

Susan is beginning to sense that employees have a mixed reaction to her leadership style. This bothers her, but she does not know what to do about it. In addition to her work at the store, Susan struggles hard to be a good spouse and mother of three children.

### Questions

1. According to the style approach, how would you describe Susan Parks's leadership?
2. Why does it create such a pronounced reaction from her subordinates?
3. Do you think she should change her style?
4. Would she be effective if she changed?

### CASE 4.3

#### Enhancing the Department's Culture

Douglas Ludwig is the director of design services at a large office furniture manufacturing company that employs about 1,200 people. The design department is made up of 80 people who are divided into eight working teams, all of which report to Mr. Ludwig. Douglas is new to the company, having been hired away from a smaller competitor where he was vice president for research and development. His reputation as a leader at the previous company was generally favorable.

Because of Mark's leadership, the painting department improved substantially and is now seen by workers in other departments as the most productive department in hospital maintenance. Painting services received a customer rating of 92%, which was the highest of any service in the hospital.

### Questions

1. From the style perspective, how would you describe Mark Young's leadership?
2. How did his style change over time?
3. In general, do you think he is more task oriented or more relationship oriented?
4. What score do you think he would get on Blake and Mouton's grid?

### CASE 4.2

#### Eating Lunch Standing Up

Susan Parks is the part-owner and manager of Marathon Sports, an athletic store that specializes in running shoes and accessories. The store employs about 10 people, most of whom are college students who work part-time during the week and full-time on weekends. Marathon Sports is the only store of its kind in a college town with a population of 125,000. The annual sales figures for the store have shown 15% growth for each of the past 7 years.

Ms. Parks has a lot invested in the store, and she works very hard to make sure the store continues to maintain its reputation and pattern of growth. She works 50 hours a week at the store, where she wears many hats, including those of buyer, scheduler, trainer, planner, and salesperson. There is never a moment when Susan is not doing something. Rumor has it that she eats her lunch standing up.

Employees' reactions to Ms. Parks are strong and quite varied. Some people like her style and others do not. Those who like her style talk

During his first year, Douglas has spent a lot of time trying to enhance the culture in his department. Unlike the previous director, who had spent a good portion of his time monitoring projects and emphasizing company goals, Douglas has involved himself with the mood, climate, and tenor of the department. To that end, Douglas has instituted a new department meeting schedule for the purpose of allowing everyone to share his or her ideas and concerns, while continuing to do the "nuts-and-bolts" things; Douglas has tried to promote greater esprit de corps in the department by having brown-bag lunches on Fridays. Each week, Douglas meets informally with the team leaders to get a feel for what they need and how they are doing.

Douglas is also a strong supporter of social events outside of work. In the summer, the design department held an outdoor family barbecue—the first ever for some of the older employees in the company. Over the holidays, Douglas held an open house at his home that was catered by the company. Employees thought it was "first class" and talked about it for many months. Douglas was also instrumental in getting the company to sponsor a coed indoor soccer team, made up completely of employees from the design department.

Most people in the department give Douglas Ludwig positive reviews for his first year as director. Designers and staffers alike are impressed by what a nice guy Mr. Ludwig seems to be. For years, the mood in the design department had been somewhat stale, but with Douglas's arrival some life came back into the place. People began to enjoy the new vitality in the department, and they found themselves chatting more and complaining less.

### Questions

Douglas Ludwig's leadership clearly is one of the major types in the style approach.

1. What style is it?
2. Does it sound as if it is effective in the context of a design department at a furniture company?
3. Would you or would you not like to work for Douglas Ludwig?
4. Is there a downside to this style of leadership? If so, describe it.



## LEADERSHIP INSTRUMENT

Researchers and practitioners alike have used many different instruments to assess the styles of leaders. The two most commonly used measures have been the LBDQ (Stogdill, 1963) and the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCaense, 1991). Both of these measures provide information about the degree to which a leader acts task directed and people directed. The LBDQ was designed primarily for research and has been used extensively since the 1960s. The Leadership Grid was designed primarily for training and development, and it continues to be used today for training managers and supervisors in the leadership process.

To assist you in developing a better understanding of how leadership style is measured and what your own style might be, a leadership style questionnaire is included in this section. This questionnaire is made up of 20 items that assess two orientations: *task* and *relationship*. By scoring the style questionnaire, you can obtain a general profile of your leadership behavior.

The score you receive for task refers to the degree to which you help others by defining their roles and letting them know what is expected of them. This factor describes your tendencies to be task directed toward others when you are in a leadership position. The score you receive for relationship is a measure of the degree to which you try to make subordinates feel comfortable with themselves, each other, and the group itself. It represents a measure of how people oriented you are.

Your results on the style questionnaire give you data about your task orientation and people orientation. What do your scores suggest about your leadership style? Are you more likely to lead with an emphasis on task or with an emphasis on relationship? As you interpret your responses to the style questionnaire, are there ways you could change your style to shift the emphasis you give to tasks and relationships? To gain more information about your style, you may want to have four or five of your coworkers fill out the questionnaire based on their perceptions of you as a leader. This will give you additional data to compare and contrast to your own scores about yourself.

## STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

*Instructions:* Read each item carefully and think about how often you (or the person you are evaluating) engage in the described behavior. Indicate your response to each item by circling one of the five numbers to the right of each item.

Key: 1 = Never    2 = Seldom    3 = Occasionally    4 = Often    5 = Always

1. Tells group members what they are supposed to do. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Acts friendly with members of the group. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Sets standards of performance for group members. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Helps others feel comfortable in the group. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Makes suggestions about how to solve problems. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Responds favorably to suggestions made by others. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Makes his or her perspective clear to others. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Treats others fairly. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Develops a plan of action for the group. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Behaves in a predictable manner toward group members. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Defines role responsibilities for each group member. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Communicates actively with group members. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Clarifies his or her own role within the group. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Shows concern for the well-being of others. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Provides a plan for how the work is to be done. 1 2 3 4 5
16. Shows flexibility in making decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
17. Provides criteria for what is expected of the group. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Discloses thoughts and feelings to group members. 1 2 3 4 5
19. Encourages group members to do high-quality work. 1 2 3 4 5
20. Helps group members get along. 1 2 3 4 5

### Scoring

The style questionnaire is designed to measure two major types of leadership behaviors: task and relationship. Score the questionnaire by doing the following. First, sum the responses on the odd-numbered items. This is your task score. Second, sum the responses on the even-numbered items. This is your relationship score.

Total scores: Task \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

### Scoring Interpretation

45–50 Very high range                      30–34 Moderately low range  
 40–44 High range                              25–29 Low range  
 35–39 Moderately high range              10–24 Very low range

### SUMMARY

The style approach is strikingly different from the trait approach and skills approach to leadership because the style approach focuses on what leaders do rather than who leaders are. It suggests that leaders engage in two primary types of behaviors: task behaviors and relationship behaviors. How leaders combine these two types of behaviors to influence others is the central focus of the style approach.

The style approach originated from three different lines of research: the Ohio State University studies, the University of Michigan studies, and the work of Blake and Mouton on the Managerial Grid.

Researchers at Ohio State developed a leadership questionnaire called the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), which identified *initiation of structure* and *consideration* as the core leadership behaviors. The Michigan studies provided similar findings but called the leader behaviors *production orientation* and *employee orientation*.

Using the Ohio State and Michigan studies as a basis, much research has been carried out to find the best way for leaders to combine task and

relationship behaviors. The goal has been to find a universal set of leadership behaviors capable of explaining leadership effectiveness in every situation; however, the results from these efforts have not been conclusive. Researchers have had difficulty identifying one best style of leadership.

Blake and Mouton developed a practical model for training managers that described leadership behaviors along a grid with two axes: concern for results and concern for people. How leaders combine these orientations results in five major leadership styles: authority-compliance (9,1), country club management (1,9), impoverished management (1,1), middle-of-the-road management (5,5), and team management (9,9).

The style approach has several strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, it has broadened the scope of leadership research to include the study of the behaviors of leaders rather than only their personal traits or characteristics. Second, it is a reliable approach because it is supported by a wide range of studies. Third, the style approach is valuable because it underscores the importance of the two core dimensions of leadership behavior: task and relationship. Fourth, it has heuristic value in that it provides us with a broad conceptual map that is useful in gaining an understanding of our own leadership behaviors. On the negative side, researchers have not been able to associate the behaviors of leaders (task and relationship) with outcomes such as morale, job satisfaction, and productivity. In addition, researchers from the style approach have not been able to identify a universal set of leadership behaviors that would consistently result in effective leadership. Last, the style approach implies but fails to support fully the idea that the most effective leadership style is a high-high style (i.e., high task and high relationship).

Overall, the style approach is not a refined theory that provides a neatly organized set of prescriptions for effective leadership behavior. Rather, the style approach provides a valuable framework for assessing leadership in a broad way as assessing behavior with task and relationship dimensions. Finally, the style approach reminds leaders that their impact on others occurs along both dimensions.

## REFERENCES

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## Style Approach

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