Core Knowledge Area Module Number VI:
Organizational Leadership and Change

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ABSTRACT

Breadth

Introduction to Bureaucracy compares, contrasts, analyzes, evaluates, and synthesizes seminal bureaucracy literature in terms of its key conceptual concepts, key models, historical evolution, and theoretical foundations. Based on this context, the concepts of bureaucratic growth, rule evasion and discretion, forces of integration and fragmentation, and bureaucracy’s relationship with democracy are analyzed. The paper concludes that additional research is needed to reconcile the bureaucratic theory’s presumption of rational action. This section will enhance social change by critically evaluating traditional notions of bureaucratic research.
ABSTRACT

Depth

Bureaucracy Revisited analyzes the present state of bureaucracy literature thematically through an annotated bibliography and analysis. The paper concludes that recent bureaucracy literature directly challenges the traditional literature on many levels. However, this difficulty can be reconciled through an interdisciplinary and adaptive view of bureaucracy. This section will enhance social change by challenging current bureaucratic literature and inspiring efficient, effective, and humane bureaucracies.
ABSTRACT

Application

A Graduate Course on Bureaucracy constructs a 12-week course on bureaucracy. The purpose of the course is to affect positive social change by inspiring a new generation of researchers to revisit traditional bureaucratic paradigms based on a broad conception of bureaucracy under an adaptive paradigm. This section will select course materials, present a schedule of readings and discussion questions, and supplement the reading materials with information from the breadth and depth section in order to provide students with a comprehensive and diverse understanding of the topic.
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Learning Agreement
Knowledge Area Module (KAM) VI

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PPPA Learning Agreement for Specialized KAM VI: 
Organizational Leadership and Change: Bureaucracy
Walden University

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Approved Learning Agreement, KAM VI: Bureaucracy

Overall Purpose

The purpose of KAM VI (Organizational Leadership and Change) is to compare, contrast, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the rationale, historical development, and models of bureaucracy (breadth component); to present the major current issues relating to bureaucracy (depth component); and to demonstrate, within the context of bureaucracy, mastery of the materials through the integration and application of motivation theory with bureaucratic theory. Bureaucracy fundamentally defines the typical internal organizational context in which managers and administrators function as well as the boundary conditions in which they perform their duties. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of bureaucracy is a prerequisite for leadership effectiveness and the management of organizational change. However, mere descriptions and models of bureaucracy, while necessary, are insufficient in and of themselves to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the duties inherent in leadership and management. What is missing is a more practical approach that can only be achieved by the integration of human motivation theory within the context of bureaucracy. The purpose of this KAM is to complete this integration. The breadth and depth components will focus on the more esoteric aspects of bureaucracy whereas the application component will focus on theoretical and practical integration.

The Breadth Component

A. Learning Objective

The learning objective of the breadth section of this KAM is to compare, contrast, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the following:

1. The rationale or basis of bureaucracy (see Cohen, 1965).
2. Principal-agent theory (see Meier, 2006).

3. Description and definition of bureaucracy (see Beetham, 1996; Myer, Stevenson, & Webster, 1985; Gortner, Mahler, and Nicholson, 1987; and Whyte, 1969).

4. The historical evolution of bureaucracy via the classic works of organizational theory and public administration (such as Smith, Fayol, Taylor, Weber, Gulick, Simon, Wilson, Selznick, Follet, Maslow, McGregor, Merton, Ouchi, Zuboff, etc.). See also Tosi, 1984.

5. Models of bureaucracy, such as Weber and Marx (see Beetham, 1996).

6. Arguments for and against bureaucracy (see Goodsell, 2004; Myer, Stevenson, & Webster, 1985; and Bozeman, 2000).


8. Models and theories of bureaucratic growth (see Myer, Stevenson, & Webster, 1985; and Whyte, 1969) such as:
   a. Social constructionists.
   b. Group dynamicists.
   c. Psychological analysts.

9. Theories of bureaucratic power (Beetham, 1996).


12. Bureaucracy’s relationship with democracy [see Meier and O’Toole, 2006 (political control verses bureaucratic values); and Gormley, 1989 (due process)].

B. Learning Resources

The following resources will be used to complete the breadth portion of KAM VI:


C. Demonstration of Mastery

Mastery of the material will be demonstrated by the completion of a 25-30 page annotated bibliography which shall compare, contrast, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize
bureaucracy literature and theory.

The Depth Component

A. Learning Objective

The learning objective of the depth component of KAM VI is to thematically compare, contrast, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the present state of the literature by means of a literature review and subsequent analysis of 15 peer-reviewed academic articles.

B. Learning Resources

The following resources will be used to complete the depth portion of KAM VI:


Kalu, K. N. (2003). Entrepreneurs or conservators?: Contractarian principles of bureaucratic


C. Demonstration of Mastery

Mastery of the material will be demonstrated by the completion of a 25-30 page paper which thematically compare, contrast, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the present state of the literature by means of a literature review of at least fifteen recent peer-reviewed academic articles.

*The Application Component*

A. Learning Objective

The learning objective of the application component of KAM V is to apply the principles learned in the breadth and depth sections on the topic of bureaucracy and integrate them with motivation theory. A preliminary review of the material indicates the following general areas of concentration:


2. Whyte’s (1969) summary of interactions, sentiments and symbols, transaction
theory, group relations, individual and groups in organizations, vertical relations, lateral relations, diagonal relations, and change.

3. Schien’s (1980) theories of leadership and participation such as:
   a. Fielder’s leader-match theory,
   b. Vroom’s contingency theory,
   c. Hersey and Blanchard’s situational leadership theory,
   d. Argyris’s model I and model II.

4. Salaman’s (1979) processes of control and knowledge.


8. Doise’s (1978) intergroup relations.

B. Learning Resources

The learning resources for the application component of KAM VI will consist of the resources previously identified within the breadth and depth sections of KAM VI with the addition of the following resources:


C. Demonstration of Mastery

Mastery of the application component of KAM V will be demonstrated by a 25-30 page evaluation and critical analysis of the major elements of motivation theory as applied to bureaucracy. The goal of the application section is to provide future leaders with special insight on the topic of motivating employees. For example, the application section will provide the analytic framework and tools for future managers to more effectively understand, apply, and (with practice) control the closely related concepts of bureaucratic discretion, bureaucratic resistance, and bureaucratic compliance in the name of organizational change.
Core Knowledge Area Module Number VI:
Organizational Leadership and Change

BREADTH COMPONENT: INTRODUCTION TO BUREUACRACY

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Introduction to Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy describes the organizational structures and interactional dynamics that people use to achieve complex tasks. Bureaucracy, in its simplest form, is a mechanism or tool in the sense that is both a product of and subject to purposive and theoretically rational choices. Consequently, bureaucratic structures are diverse yet similar in form. For example, while many features of bureaucracy such as hierarchy are permanent fixtures, these fixtures suffer from an infinite variety based on many factors such as varied organizational sizes or varied cultural influences. Therefore, complexity is an inherent characteristic of bureaucracy. Complexity makes the analysis of bureaucratic theories problematic. Yet, at the same time, complexity is what makes bureaucracy so adaptable. Despite its dominance as an organizational form, bureaucracy is frequently misunderstood. The cold, obsessive, impersonal, and rule-bound bureaucrat obsessed with red tape to the exclusion of rationality is just one many examples of negative stereotypes and connotations that bureaucracy brings to mind—in this case, the stereotype represents impersonal treatment, the death of personality, and chronic inefficiency. A more thoughtful analysis reveals that the truth about bureaucracy—that it is a positive force for human development and social change. This is especially true in terms of equity of treatment. Indeed, while bureaucracy appears to be as imperfect as its creators are, its creators seem to be getting some things right by employing it.

In light of bureaucracy’s obvious successes and limitations, Scholars have a fiduciary duty to ask a fundamental question: What is bureaucracy and what is its function in society? Cohen (1965, p. 10), for example, described bureaucracy in functional terms and asked, “Could we really run our society without it?” In Cohen’s view, bureaucracy resulted from the evolution of society itself. From its basis in kinship, bureaucracy progressed with increasing complexity
through the feudal order into its modern iteration. For Cohen, the function of bureaucracy is to answer the “problem of keeping track of the heterogeneous mass of the people, their accomplishments, obligations, privileges, and complaints. (Cohen, p. 5)” If one accepts Cohen’s thesis, technology becomes a fundamental determinant of bureaucratic forms. Indeed, according to Cardwell (1973, p. 358), society required a certain level of pre-development before it was capable of developing technology (see also Weber, 1992, p. 153). If Cardwell was correct, then bureaucracy evolved as man moved beyond oral tradition; bureaucracy was the development that jumpstarted human technological progress—in other words, social change began with bureaucracy.

Economic development and religion also played an important part in the historical development of bureaucracy. Religious orders—the first bureaucracies—predated the emergence of the feudal system and the modern nation state. These structures continue to have strong cultural influence today. Cardwell described the development of bureaucracy in terms of technological development, asserting that “It is only by imitating, by copying and adapting, that a class of technicians can be built up; and it is mainly from such a class that one may expect original inventors to emerge in due course (p. 358).” However, the most important development with respect to bureaucracy was the development of monetary systems needed to foster transactions beyond mere barter. So, it seems very likely that the notion of progress owes its existence to bureaucracy. Even so, the relationship goes both ways. That is to say, in a utilitarian sense, progress affects bureaucracy just as much as bureaucracy affects progress. For example, the enlightenment rediscovery of science inspired the popular notion of progress. The industrial revolution embodied those philosophies and strongly influenced the development of bureaucracy. On the other hand, bureaucracy was the major factor that contributed to both
science and progress—through more effective and efficient mechanisms of industrialization. In short, bureaucracy is a decision-making mechanism analogous to a rational and precise machine designed to improve the human condition. Even if this analogy is correct, the assumption of rationality is subject to challenge. Passmore (1973, p. 473) put it this way:

A presumption still remains. Granted that it is possible by mathematical means to determine what is best for men to do, and that it is possible, also, to express the conclusions thus derived a language so clear that all man can understand them, they may still prefer to do something else, preferring the satisfaction of their own desires to the perfecting of mankind.

For a more detailed analysis of the modern historical evolution of bureaucracy, see the appendix to the application section. The important point here is that bureaucracy continues to evolve, change, and adapt. For example, the impact of information technology on the evolution of bureaucracy is a particularly interesting and unanswered question.

Organization of this Paper

This paper consists of three major sections: (a) breadth section, (b) depth section, and (c) application section. The breadth section will introduce the topic of bureaucracy from the perspective of seminal authors. The depth section will critically assess the state of bureaucracy research based on an analysis of fifteen peer-reviewed articles from recent academic literature. Finally, the application will use the information from the breadth and depth section to create a graduate-level class on bureaucracy. The purpose of the totality of these three sections is to integrate the information presented into a coherent framework that is conducive to advancement of bureaucracy research and social change.

The following breadth section will examine some concepts that are critical to analyze, compare, contrast, evaluate, synthesize, and integrate bureaucratic theory such as rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent theory.
Based on that foundation, the section will explore the definition and models of bureaucracy. After a brief summation of the cases for and against bureaucracy, this section will examine the concepts of bureaucratic growth, rule evasion and discretion, forces of integration and fragmentation, and finally, bureaucracy’s unique relationship with democracy. The purpose of the breadth section is to introduce fundamental aspects of bureaucracy.

Key Concepts

Bureaucratic theory is based on rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent theory. Yet, when applied to bureaucracy, popular or connotative meanings tend to distort their application in the literature and the public at large. Each of these concepts has a unique base literature that renders them in all their complexity. An informed discussion of bureaucracy begins with and requires a discussion of these fundamental concepts.

Rules.

Society has always had rules. At first, all rules were informal. Then, the world changed—the written word made the world larger and allowed for greater diversity of early bureaucratic structures. As a result, many rules became formal rules and evolved into early judicial codes. These rules could be promulgated in advance and easily enforced—for either the good of society or the good of the powerful. Rules, to be efficient, predictable, impersonal, and fast (see Cohen’s advantages of bureaucracy, pp. 7-8.) must be formal and written. So, in some ways, law (as a system of rational control) represented a major form of bureaucratic expression (see also Weber, 1992, p. 155). Even so, law alone is insufficient to describe bureaucracy because not all actions and purposes are public actions and purposes; some are private. Bureaucracy is a rule-based, semi-automatic and rational decision-making structure for achieving a particular purpose or goal;
it can apply to any organization (Weber even equated bureaucratic results with rationality, see Weber, 1992, p. 170). Therefore, bureaucracy is foremost a system of decision-making; it is a codifying mechanism that is used to determine accomplishments, obligations, privileges, and resolve complaints in pursuit of some particular purpose. Bureaucracy is rule-based.

**Motivation**

As society became more complex, people learned that practice and repetition increased the efficiency and effectiveness of achieving particular purposes. Practice and repetition, in turn became specialization. For example, war as an institution was one of bureaucracy’s first adherents (see Weber, 1992, p. 152). Specialization increased the chance for group and individual survival—the true objectives of society. Survival, in turn, related to the critical question of motivation. That is to say, once survival was taken for granted, what motivated people to achieve particular goals? What motivated people to participate in bureaucracies? Did they really have a choice? Could these motives be used to explain individual behavior within such bureaucracies? Did such knowledge enhance the probability that the principal bureaucratic purposes were achieved? Who decided which purposes to achieve? Could individual freedom be maintained within such a structure or was it necessary to give up freedom in exchange for participation? Finally, could bureaucracy relate to democracy itself? In short, motivation—both on an institutional and individual level—are critical to understanding the complexity of bureaucracy. The central problem of bureaucracy is motivation. Motivation, in turn, is framed by two related principles. The first is the principle of authority that is based on coercive power and the second is the principle of hierarchy that is based on rank within some social order.
Authority and power

Authority is a dichotomous concept (see Krieger, 1973, p. 141). Indeed, the dichotomy itself makes the concept of authority problematic in the study of bureaucracy. One view of authority is based on an analytical view—the social function—that authority is defined in terms of domination. This popular conception of authority frequently comes to mind in the context of bureaucracy. Alternatively, the mechanistic view of authority is defined in terms of state power and sovereignty. Under the mechanistic view, the voluntary submission to authority is based on the principal of sovereignty. This dual nature of authority explains why bureaucratic resistance, for example, is such an important feature of bureaucracy—especially within a democratic context. This is probably why Weber narrowly defined authority as something distinct from power. The concept of authority, in turn, is fundamental to bureaucracy through principal-agent theory, which will be described later. Kreiger characterized Weber’s view of power as “any probability of imposing one’s will within a social relationship even against resistance” and authority as “the probability of securing obedience to definite commands from a relevant group of men” (p. 157). Within the context of bureaucracy, this distinction limits authority to a specific purpose. Indeed, Krieger went even further, asserting that authority was traditionally limited to “interpersonal rather than intrapersonal relations” (p. 162). Despite these esoteric modifications to the theory of authority, the negative connotation that authority is coercive in nature remains strongly embedded in popular psychology—justified both historically and practically via popular experience. Indeed, the current literature on bureaucracy is concerned with power and authority under the auspices of the control imperative, a point that the depth section will develop in detail later. The point here is that viewing bureaucracies as sovereign entities can explain both bureaucratic power and bureaucratic authority.
Hierarchy and order

Hierarchy is an intrinsic part of the nature of man. This is also true for bureaucracy. For this reason, Patrides (1973) described the evolution of the ideas of hierarchy and order in universal terms—usually closely associated with religion. Indeed, modern research indicates that such a need for order may in fact be physiologically based. Even so, there is one potential problem with respect to bureaucracy. Patrides (1973, p. 448) warned, “For hierarchy is only a brief sentence within the larger paragraph which is man’s constant search for Order, indeed his refusal to concede that he resides in a universe of chance.” If Patrides was correct, then new forms of bureaucracy—such as systems theories—may have resulted from this consequence. In any case, the implications are enormous for any theory of bureaucracy and it is ripe for future research. Patrides’ notion of order relates roughly to Gajduschek’s (2003) concept of uncertainty reduction that the depth section will develop later.

Efficiency

Efficiency is a complex phenomenon. Yet, bureaucratic theory assumes that it is the most efficient form of organization. Weber called efficiency “technical superiority” and stated that it was the “decisive reason” for bureaucracy (Weber, p. 153). The terms that Weber used to describe bureaucracy’s technical superiority were particularly important, namely “precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs” (Weber, p. 153). Beetham (1996, p. 11) went further, stating that “Weber believed that the defining characteristic of bureaucracy were also necessary conditions for administrative or organizational efficiency.” The concept of bureaucracy and efficiency are so closely related that even in modern textbooks terms such as efficiency go undefined. For example, in Shafritz and Russell’s Introducing Public
Administration, efficiency and effectiveness are only described as evaluation criteria (2005, p. 59). Fundamentally, efficiency and effectiveness are economic terms that derive from Weber’s precondition for bureaucracy—money. Recall that economic efficiency is:

The relationship between the input of scarce resources and the resulting output of a good or service; production of an output with a specific dollar-and-cents value with the smallest total expenditure for resources; obtaining the largest total production of a good or service with resources of a specific dollar-and-cents value. (McConnell, C. R. & Brue, S. L., 1996, p. G-80)

So, in terms of efficiency, bureaucracy theoretically maximizes scarce resources to produce some good or service.

Principal-agent theory

Principal-agent theory, derived from contract law, defines the principal as the source of authority and the agent as one who acts on the behalf of that authority by the consent of such authority. Principal-agent theory defines power in the context of bureaucracy on two levels. The first level is within the bureaucracy—where the bureaucracy itself is the principal and the workers (or public servants) are the agents. The second level relates to the bureaucracy’s environment—where the owner or stakeholder (or the government) is the principal and the bureaucracy is the agent. The internal view of principal agent theory tends to focus on compliance and enforcement issues, whereas the environmental view tends to focus on power relationships and political control.

Definition of Bureaucracy

There are many definitions for bureaucracy and most of them describe its characteristics rather than its function. For example, Black (1990, p. 197) defined bureaucracy as:

An organization, such as an administrative agency or the army, with the following general traits: a chain of command with fewer people at the top than at the bottom; well
defined positions and responsibilities, fairly inflexible rules and procedures; ‘red tape’; many forms to be filled out; and delegation of authority downward from level to level.

However, the definition of bureaucracy is more complex. John Stuart Mill (in *On Liberty*, trans. 1992a, p. 321; and *Representative Government*, trans. 1992b, p. 342) conceived bureaucracy specifically in terms of political control. For Mill, bureaucracy was directly associated with authoritarian forms of government and it contrasted with representative government (Beetham, 1996, p. 3). Mill was concerned with the evil of state power. Mill (1992, p. 320) stated, “And the evil [of state power] would be greater, the more efficiently and scientifically the administrative machinery was constructed—the more skillful the arrangements for obtaining the best qualified hands and heads with which to work it.” Given the history of the feudal system, with its masters and vassals, this association with state power was understandable. The main point here is that the purpose of Mill’s definition was simply to contrast political systems.

Weber, in contrast to Mill, described bureaucracy as merely a system of administration. For Weber, bureaucracy was a mechanistic type of social organization used to achieve particular purposes. In short, Weber defined bureaucracy by focusing its role as the ideal (i.e., rational) organizational form in contrast with the historical focus on its role in terms of power. The purpose of Weber’s definition was to describe a social form of organization. Weber’s model applied equally to the private sector.

Public Administration, seeing itself as a unique form of management, later redefined bureaucracy solely in terms of governmental forms. At the same time, however, the private sector focused on contrasting public and private bureaucracies. As a result, managerial conceptualizations (i.e., how bureaucracies should be ordered, how they should function, and best practices) and economic conceptualizations (i.e., markets) emerged and competed with the
public administration perspective. The competition has resulted in unfortunate situation—the major schools of bureaucracy—namely, political science, public administration, management, and political economy schools—have remained compartmentalized into academic silos.

The major consequence of this separation is that the generally accepted foci of bureaucracy—such as efficiency, effectiveness, social constructs, or rules—varies considerably. Each school of bureaucracy focuses on bureaucracy within its own particular set of values and concerns. In its most general terms, Meyer, Stevenson, and Webster (1985, p. 1) noted that bureaucracy has been transformed into an ideological debate. On one hand, bureaucracy is a negative concept that usurps the will of the people because of its inherent self-serving nature. On the other hand, bureaucracy is a positive mechanism in terms of correcting market failures and enhancing equity.

The future of bureaucratic research, however, requires a multidisciplinary approach to re-conceptualize bureaucracy into a more coherent and unified theory (see Meier and O’Toole, 2006). Gortner, Mahler, and Nicholson (1987), for example, described the exclusionary nature of public verses private organizational theory research. They stated, “Existing theory is not as inclusive as one would reasonably expect for a universal theory” (p. 17). Betham (1996, p. 5) addressed this concern using a historical sociology that focused on the theoretical contexts of Weber and Marx to anchor the schools of thought within their historical contexts. Additionally, the current literature on bureaucracy critically assesses and challenges the traditional definitions of bureaucracy—as described in the models of bureaucracy section that follows. The depth section will develop this point as well.
Models of Bureaucracy

Two generally accepted models describe bureaucratic theory: Weber’s rational model and Marx’s class conflict model. Of the two models, Weber’s rational model dominates. This section will describe the models in general terms—leaving it to the reader to reconcile the two approaches. This reconciliation is part of a larger trend in the current academic literature that challenges traditional theories. The depth section will develop this point in later in this paper.

*Rational Model*

Max Weber (1864-1920) was a professor of political economy with socialist leanings (see biographical note, p. 76, in Weber, 1992) whom is best known for his works in sociology, religion, and bureaucracy. Weber’s background placed his conception of bureaucracy within the specific contexts of power: state power (imperialism), social power (class and ethnic struggles), and economic power (capitalism). Weber did not define bureaucracy—his analysis was primarily descriptive and normative. Weber clearly contrasted several aspects of bureaucracy—such as authority, hierarchy, and written files—within both private organizations and ecclesiastical structures. Beetham (1996, p. 12) noted that Weber’s bureaucracy was an ideal form associated with expansive and vague assumptions of efficiency. Weber (1992, pp. 143-145) described bureaucracy by the following six characteristics:

- Fixed (i.e., stable) and official jurisdictions (i.e., specific public policies) ordered by rules (laws and administrative regulations) that were manned by qualified (i.e., merit) officials with specific duties with authority to accomplish those duties using predetermined (i.e., rules) coercive means.
• Hierarchical supervision (but not necessarily monocratic) with graduated authority levels needed to regulate the appeal of subordinate levels of decision-making without the superior levels assuming the duties of those subordinate levels.

• Permanent file-based (i.e., written), publicly created work (i.e., not carried out from a personal residence). Weber’s rationale was to avoid conflicts of interests and the comingling of money.

• Specialized, expertly trained office management.

• Full-time positions with specific work hours.

• Management was rule-based—learnable, relatively stable, legally (i.e., politically) authorized, and comprehensive.

After describing bureaucracy, Weber indicated several areas of concern (please keep these areas of concern in mind when reading the advantages and disadvantages of bureaucracy section later in this paper). First, Weber believed that official positions should be independent and duty-based careers. Bureaucrats accepted appointments or positions in exchange for prestige and regular monetary compensation with some expectation of lifetime tenure. Second, Weber noted that the extent of bureaucracy changed in accordance with demand as well as political necessity; and yet, it had a permanent nature. As a result, bureaucracy had its own particular stages of development that resulted from self-interested “collegial bodies” of experts (p. 166). Even so, democracies feared the merit system because such ability could evolve into a new caste (Weber, p. 168).

Third, Weber pointed out that bureaucracy brought equity concerns relating to the concentration of wealth (Weber’s “material means”, see p. 157) in capitalist economies and that this had social consequences. Fourth, Weber viewed special interests as a counter-bureaucracy force (p. 163). Finally, Weber believed that bureaucracy itself destroyed historically based charismatic
authority. As a result, Weber developed the idea of charisma as a distinct sociology of authority (see p. 170) as well as sociology of discipline (see p. 174). Based on this short review, Weber’s model can be viewed as a sociologically stabilizing force as well as a rational-economic means to achieve a particular ends. The depth section will develop this point later.

Class Conflict Model

As the previous section indicated, Weber saw bureaucracy as a rational means to a particular ends—efficient production of some product or service. However, Weber did not address the issue of who profits from the exchange between the principal and the agent. Carl Marx (1818-1883), in contrast, was concerned with bureaucracy’s role in resolving or perpetuating class conflict and the nature of equity within the exchange. Beetham (1996, p. 67) described Marx’s view of the role of bureaucracy as “a class-regulating function as well as purely a technical or administrative one.” So, although bureaucracy had a coordinating as well as class function, the class function determined the features of bureaucracy according to Marxist theory. Beetham described two additional differences between Weberian bureaucracy and Marxist bureaucracy. First, Marxist bureaucracy was concerned with balancing the power of a bureaucracy to exploit class differences with the power to work in the public interest, whereas Weberian bureaucracy was not. Second, Marxist bureaucracy questioned the “preoccupation over organizational sociology and efficiency, as if this were a neutral concept presupposing community of interest within an organization, when the question must be: efficiency for whom and at what expense?” (p. 68). So, in Marx’s view, efficiency may not always be the dominant concern: If labor is exploited, then efficiency may not be the appropriate goal of the bureaucracy. According to Beetham (p. 78), although Marxian bureaucracy concludes that bureaucracy is “unworkable and politically oppressive,” one could also conclude that for the Marxian ideal of
bureaucracy to work, democratic accountability is necessary to limit class exploitation. Perhaps this is why the present literature works so hard to synthesize democratic accountability and democratic control. As this paper has demonstrated, Marxist theory is still relevant to the study of bureaucracy. Despite this relevance, few attempts have been made to reconcile these two perspectives (Weberian and Marxian) on bureaucracy and as a result, it is an area that needs additional research. However, there is hope that researchers can solve this weakness: current researchers are now critically assessing bureaucracy in fundamental terms. For example, works such as Meier and O’Toole’s (2006) governance model (described later) have started this process by attempting to reconcile democracy with bureaucracy. This paper will expand on this line of reasoning in greater detail in the depth section. The point here is that a great deal of work remains in this area—despite the generally accepted dominance of Weber’s model of bureaucracy.

Arguments for and against Bureaucracy

Researchers generally agree that bureaucracy has a popularly based negative connotation despite its utility (see Bozeman, 2000; Goodsell, 2004; and Meier and O’Toole, 2006). This trend appears to be historically related to a given set of socio-economic conditions. This is a key finding of Meier and O’Toole’s (2006, pp. 14-15) governance approach as well as a component of their conclusion that bureaucracy has a contextually distinct role in representative-type governments. New bureaucracy movements, such as Total Quality Management or New Public Management, have emerged in response to the popular perception that excessive bureaucratic characteristics have caused a perceived lack of value in bureaucracies generally. Typically, bureaucracy’s excesses, such as control, are popularly perceived to be cause problems such as inefficiency, impersonalization, or a lack of competitiveness. To put it in different terms,
bureaucratic market failures result in a dialectical re-examination of a bureaucracies ideal characteristics, which in turn result in a new synthesis—a new ideal bureaucracy. Such changes in perception are more likely during periods of high social change or economic fluctuations. As a result, most of the debate regarding bureaucracy revolves around the dominance or excessive use of one or more of bureaucracy’s characteristics, such as hierarchy or rule-based decision-making. The point here is not what defines the debate, but what function the debate has with respect to bureaucracy. The debate itself is a mechanism for bureaucratic adaptation.

Critics of bureaucracy

While the variety and sources of criticisms of bureaucracy are unlimited, one model was excessively effective. Goodsell (2004, p. 11) defined the arguments against bureaucracy in three major areas: poor performance, excessive power, and the oppression of the individual. According to Goodsell, performance problems in bureaucracy were based on economic arguments. For example, market economists’ criticisms of bureaucratic inefficiency usually related to monopolistic governmental behavior or non-market behavior. Public choice economists, on the other hand, argued instead that bureaucracies tended to expand due to internal forces, such as political power or desire for increased compensation. The major assertion was that a lack of competition generated these pressures because of governmental monopoly. This expansion or budget maximizing behavior resulted in inefficiency, excess capacity, and bureaucratic drift. The problem with this economic approach was that it failed to relate performance problems to distorted or inaccurate public perceptions. Under Goodsell’s model, excessive power—in particular the abuse of power—was particularly problematic in governmental bureaucracies simply because the state had literally the power of life and death over its citizens. However, protecting citizens from abuses of power is one of the fundamental reasons for establishing
public bureaucracies. Political control and judicial review constrains bureaucratic power and instills a sense of equity of treatment for all citizens. To put it another way, rules were historically developed to constrain bureaucratic action. However, these same rules complicate bureaucratic structures and in many ways predetermine responses. Even so, not all abuses of power can be prevented—they can only be mitigated. Usually, this is done by the creation of new rules. However, the historical bureaucratic response was to develop codes of conduct enforced through professional sanctions. Sanctions could be formal, as in the case of legal prosecution or informal, as in the case of simple counseling. Ironically, the quest for limiting bureaucratic power itself has an unintended consequence; it sometimes makes individuals feel oppressed. The depth section will expand on the relationship between power and individual motivation later.

Goodsell argued that procedural rules had a similar effect on individuals as it limited their actions or discretion. In short, the ideal bureaucrat was analogous to a perfect machine—following the rules exactly as predetermined by a necessary “death” of individualism, autonomy, and personality. However, people could only give up so much of their individualism, autonomy, or personality—at some point, they feel psychologically and sociologically estranged. This dehumanization often resulted in active or passive resistance—called bureaucratic resistance.

Proponents of bureaucracy

Some topics, like bureaucracy, are easier to denounce than to support. As a result, criticism of bureaucracy abounds despite the fact that as a form, bureaucracy dominates human society despite the veracity and quantity of such criticisms. The fact is, bureaucracy works and it is everywhere. As Bozeman (2000, p. 1) so eloquently stated, “Bureaucracy is the cod liver oil of social institutions: It smells bad and leaves a nasty aftertaste, but sometimes it is just what you
need.” This is a perfect analogy for bureaucracy. Within the context of the dominant Weberian model of bureaucracy previously discussed, Bozeman (2000, p. 21) added:

Those who view bureaucracy as acceptable only so long as it is humanistic, socially proactive, and self-actualizing of both bureaucrat and client are quite likely to view the Weberian model as a normative model for government gone crazy. Those who feel the role of bureaucracy is disinterested executing of the will of the people as expressed by their elected delegates may view the Weberian model in a more positive light.

Recall also that Weber’s model of bureaucracy expressly viewed bureaucracy as a superior form of organization. For Weber, the efficiency and effectiveness of bureaucracy was due to rule-based rational decision-making made within clear hierarchies of full-time meritorious civil servants whom used expertise to achieve particular ends. In sum, proponents point out the dominance of bureaucratic forms as a measure of its success, whereas opponents point out negative consequences—in particular the social costs—of accepting the dominance of bureaucratic forms.

As this paper has noted, while criticisms of bureaucracy are rampant and boisterous, the proponents of bureaucracy have the upper hand in the debate; that is to say that there really are no alternatives to bureaucracy. New forms, such as New Public Management, are still bureaucratic forms. As such, unless technology trumps bureaucracy—in which case one must consider the question of whether or not technology itself is a bureaucracy—in the future, bureaucratic forms will remain the dominant form. Since bureaucracy dominates human activity, the question becomes, why does it do so? For Weber the answer is simply that it is a superior form. Researchers generally accept this assertion today.

However, Weber contrasted bureaucratic forms with feudal forms that do not exist today. If one accepts this paper’s expansive definition of bureaucracy, however, then even the feudal order was still, more or less, bureaucratic—especially as they became larger and more complex.
This is a necessary consequence of principal-agent theory. What changed was the nature of the principal-agent relationship—from ad hoc support of a de facto ruler in exchange for some benefit such as power or money, to a more stable and predictable relationship that mitigated the power relationships between the de facto rulers (upper classes) and the emerging middle and lower classes. In essence, popular sovereignty changed the nature of bureaucracy. This change, in turn, is what increased the complexity of society in real economic, social, and political terms.

So, bureaucracy has not really changed: In historic terms the complexity and loci of power has been what has changed. If one extends this argument to the present date, then again, one could argue that there is no real alternative to bureaucracy. Just as the it was the changing loci of power that forged bureaucracy into more developed and professional forms, today, once again it is the changing loci of power—geopolitical power. This change is driving the emergence of new bureaucratic forms. In short, this paper argues that there are no alternatives to bureaucracy and that opponents simply misunderstand it conceptually and practically. The only true alternative would be anarchy. To put it another way, bureaucracy does not fit into a small box. Given that bureaucracy dominates as an uncontested master and that it emerged as this dominant form due to historical forces, what causes its growth in modern and more specific contexts?

**Bureaucratic Growth**

Meyer, Stevenson, and Webster (1985, p. 2) pointed out three factors affecting bureaucratic growth: workloads, aging of organizations, and political and economic changes. Logically, bureaucracy must grow simply due to its success as a rational means of achieving goals. However, there are several additional theories (see Meyer, Stevenson, and Webster, pp. 109-112). First, the task determination model asserts that bureaucratic growth is a function of
specific task demands required by a specific external organizational environment. For example, niches and competitive environments can determine the size of a bureaucracy. Second, the inertia model of bureaucratic growth asserts that while both the internal and the external environment acts on the bureaucracy to determine size, the bureaucracy itself acts upon its environment in order to perpetuate. When a bureaucracy fails to meet the demands of the environment, new bureaucracies are created. Third, the bureaucratic growth as a function of preferences for organization model asserts that the organization itself is both the source of the drive, ideas, and the means to expand. In testing these three models, Meyer, Stevenson, and Webster concluded that the models were inconsistent, inconclusive, or suffered from a “liability of newness” (p. 145). Instead, Meyer, Stevenson, and Webster concluded that the “presence and extensiveness of subunits preserves organizations” (p. 162). In short, despite a great deal of theoretical development, more research is needed on the question of bureaucratic growth. Such research should address three questions. First, is there a limit to the types, sizes, and complexity of problems that bureaucracy can address? Second, is there a point where bureaucratic growth becomes self-defeating of the bureaucracy’s purpose? Finally, what role will technology play in mitigating these forces? Several concepts appear to be a good place to begin such an analysis: rule evasion, discretion, and the forces of integration and fragmentation. These concepts, in turn, relate to the imperative of control.

Rule Evasion and Discretion

Rule Evasion

Rulemaking defines bureaucracy and yet, rulemaking is an imperfect process at best. The results of rulemaking are often problematic and difficult to anticipate. Traditionally, policymakers create rules under the assumption that they will be perfectly obeyed. This
assumption is clearly false; neither such perfect rulemaking procedures nor outcomes (i.e., rules) exist and there is no way to predetermine all of the consequences and reactions to such rules. For example, under the perversity rule (see Leitzel, 2003), rulemaking sometimes leads to the opposite of anticipated consequences. Leitzel stated, “As the Prohibition example suggests, disobedience in a policy context connects ‘exit’ with the anti-reform arguments identified by Hirschman. The typical impact of rule avoidance and evasion is to weaken a policy’s desired effect” (2003, p. 6).

Leitzel went even farther—theorizing that widespread rule evasion and rule avoidance were mechanisms of change. Under this view, rule evasion should be tolerated to some point (the problem for managers is to decide where this point is) and should not be preempted or destroyed without good cause. Even so, rulemaking and enforcement are intricately interrelated; indeed, Leitzel suggested that rules are defined by their capacity to be enforced. This separates formal rules from informal rules. The general form of a rule is “In circumstances from the set A, an action from the set B is required” (2003, p. 9). Rules clearly become problematic when the circumstances that make up set A are unclear, conflicting with other rules, or unbounded. Since the probability of compliance with a given rule depends in large part on the probability of punishment, surveillance strategies and enforcement regimes are usually required. One of the frustrations with bureaucracy is that outcomes are not always socially desirable. As Leitzel frequently suggested, sometimes the rules must be broken—civil disobedience, if you will. While rules are generally obeyed in the name of enlightened self-interests, enforcement complications frequently lead to more rules. This is especially true with respect to unclear rules. According to Leitzel, ideal rules should be clear under the “bright line” analogy (p. 14) and obeyed. Under Lietzel’s model, there are two major ways to circumvent rules: rule evasion and
rule avoidance. Rule evasion is overt and intentional, whereas rule avoidance only violates the spirit, not the letter of the rule.

**Discretion**

One could view discretion as either problematic or conducive to change under Leitzel’s (2003) model. Bureaucratic discretion is particularly problematic in the case of rule avoidance due to vagueness. However, there is often “virtue in murkiness.” Leitzel stated, “…imprecision might be useful to build political support to get a rule passed; the discretion that a lack of clarity provides for enforcers might provide good outcomes; or vague language can be intentionally employed ‘as a hedge against an uncertain future” (p. 17). Since rules are always incomplete, some degree of discretion is always required. However, Leitzel asserted that rules were better for long-term decisionmaking whereas discretion was better for short-term decisionmaking (p. 51). In deciding whether rulemaking or discretion is best for a given situation, Leitzel (p. 51) noted that rule evasion tended to bring these alternatives closer together. On the other hand, according to Leitzel, while zero-tolerance policies eliminated discretion, they also were expensive, produced variable enforcement efforts, and destroyed credibility.

Good rules do not necessarily mean good outcomes because of the problem of imperfect information. Similarly, more rules do not increase control or lead to better outcomes (Leitzel, 2003, p. 107). To complicate matters, rule evasion makes measuring outcomes problematic. While small-scale rule evasion is an “experiment worth running” (p. 23), large-scale rule evasion can lead to a spillover effect: “snowballing” into the evasion of other rules (see p. 29). Since the magnitude of expected punishment equals the chance of being caught times the magnitude of the punishment (see p. 29), many attempts to enforce rules focus on increasing the magnitude of the
punishment simply because this does not increase enforcement costs. This explains the tendency for bureaucracies to adopt punitive approaches to control rule evasion.

Leitzel (2003) asserted that there were three typical responses to pervasive rule evasion: toleration (rhetorical enforcement), closing the loopholes, or delineating exceptions (p. 36, also p. 39). However, in many cases the rules were not changed due to minor cases of rule evasion. Leitzel gave seven main reasons for not changing rules: (a) measurement problems, (b) reputation consequences, (c) continual toleration of rule evasion makes future enforcement problematic, (d) allowing the evasion makes a moral statement, (e) allowing the rule evasion is a substitute for policy reform, (f) changing the rules leads to unpredictability or instability, and (g) finally, because codified exceptions would undermine the remaining rules. So according to Leitzel, major rule evasion leads to policy reform when there are high social benefits and little harm with respect to the distribution of other benefits (p. 40).

In sum, Leitzel stated, “Public policy is as much about the breaking of rules as it is about the making of rules. The two are intertwined in a complex web” (p. 156). The typical responses to rule evasion ranged from changing the rules, changing enforcement, liberalizing the rules, or closing the loopholes in rules. The most important implication and consequence of Leitzel’s work with respect to bureaucracy is that questions of rule making and rule evasion must be taken into account from the bureaucracy’s inception. Particularly, questions of enforcement, discretion, corruption (a special case of rule evasion), incentives, and transparency must be addressed.

Rule evasion and bureaucratic discretion are key themes in the academic literature on bureaucracy. The notions of rule invasion and discretion, in turn, relate to another subject of concern to current bureaucracy scholars—human motivation theory—a concept that will be developed in the depth section. Indeed, some authors, such as Meier and O’Toole (2006, p. 3),
criticized the academic literature on bureaucracy because it was abstract and portrayed a distorted (simplistic) view of reality. Answering this question is one of the major challenges to bureaucracy research. While this criticism is valid for a great deal of the literature, some authors have based their research on specific institutions and specific contexts (Meier and O’Toole, 2006, p. 13). By far the best example of a seminal work on bureaucracy that incorporates this approach is Kaufman’s (1960) work entitled *The Forest Ranger: a Study in Human Behavior.*

**Forces of Integration and Fragmentation**

Kaufman’s case study (1960) examined the dynamics of the U. S. Forest Service’s rangers. Kaufman refined the themes of bureaucratic discretion and rule evasion and distilled it into a different context. In Kaufman’s view, bureaucratic control was expressed by rules and agency norms that could be interpreted in different ways by experts in the field under a variety of conditions. Kaufman’s model described this process in terms of the competing forces of integration and fragmentation. This relates to the imperative of control in current academic literature, a point that will be developed in the depth section. In the U. S. Forest Service, rules were necessarily broad in order to be widely applicable. These rules reflected politically construed federal policy preferences. However, rangers in the field responded to local political contexts and as a result, the geographical diversity of the United States—which Kaufman called “distance”—combined with other fragmenting forces to necessitate discretion. For example, rangers were responsible for compliance with a wide variety of state and local laws applicable to their particular jurisdictions and were subject to state and local appeals. In short, rangers’ positions were diverse by their very nature. Rangers often interpreted conflicting rules using values based on small group norms. These norms, in turn, formed under various social (and
physical) distances. Kaufman (p. 70) stated, “Attitudinal barriers appear when people have totally different frames of reference.” Fragmentation was the necessary result of these forces.

Kaufman concluded that the U. S. Forest Service successfully used various forces of integration to counteract these natural tendencies. Integration was the responsibility of supervisors in the ranger’s direct chain of command. Rules were promulgated in terms of advance categorical decisions expressed by authorizations, directions, and prohibitions. Kaufman asserted that compliance with these rules—which were highly elaborate and complex—was not due to fear; they were followed because of the public spiritedness that was used to indoctrinate members into the U. S. Forest Service during the hiring and training processes. Various plans, manuals, field guides, handbooks, memoranda, amendments, supplements, and other directives resulted in uniformity of treatment of many U. S. Forest Service functions.

In addition to the formal communication mechanisms described above, three additional mechanisms were used to integrate ranger actions. First, rangers were sometimes required to gain pre-approval or clearance for certain actions. This was usually required due to legal requirements that resulted from litigation. Second, rangers could bring their cases to higher levels of authority under formal dispute settlement. Kaufman noted that many policy changes resulted from the settlements of these disputes. Third, rangers engaged in workload and financial planning. The importance of these activities cannot be overemphasized. Kaufman states, “What rangers do, and the level of quality at which they do it, are predetermined to a large extent by the way funds are furnished” (p. 107). Within the general context of bureaucratic literature, money equates simply with power. This point, in effect, supports the assertion made earlier that changing loci of power was the source of bureaucratic evolution.
When control was an imperative, reporting mechanisms were required. For example, rangers were required to gather statistics, maintain logs, complete activity diaries, and create formal and informal reports of various types. These activities were simply mechanisms used to detect deviations from certain policy or legal requirements. Kaufman described the flow of information as “steady, massive, detailed, and comprehensive” (p. 129). Indeed, Kaufman noted that clerical work interfered with ranger duties to such an extent that computers and various “services,” such as motor pools and supplies were utilized, in effect contracting out the work to other agencies or businesses. In addition to reporting mechanisms, inspections were also used as control mechanisms. These were systemic and the inspectors were told to be critical. The regular transfer of personnel was specifically used as an additional control mechanism. However, sanctions, such as reprimands, demotions, suspensions, discharges, and even criminal prosecution were sometimes also utilized. In sum, there was no shortage of effective control mechanisms. These mechanisms, in turn, led to increased bureaucratic growth.

Kaufman concluded his study with several important themes. In general, integration was achieved despite the forces of fragmentation. That is to say, control was achieved despite the various types of resistance to such control. Rangers achieved their performance goals with little sabotage, and responded to leadership directions. Even so, Kaufman noted (p. 207) that was a “continuous battle” that resulted from several forces. Specifically, the forces of specialization, control and communication mechanisms, the neutralization of localisms via transfers, the intentional manipulation of personal preferences and perspectives (using shame and guilt to induce conformity), and the exploitation of fortuitous factors (such as history and propaganda) all worked towards successful integration in the U. S. Forest Service.
While Kaufman’s work may not be generalizable to all organizations, clearly it is to a great many of them—including private organizations. As such, the fragmentation and integration model is useful. It demonstrates how an apparently centralized hierarchy can in effect be decentralized. It also demonstrates how effectively rangers’ actions can be manipulated through hiring and promotion practices, training practices, and effective propaganda. However, Kaufman’s contribution to the literature is even more important than the study itself. The most important aspect of the research was Kaufman’s identification of compliance-based promotions as the primary promotion mechanism in the U. S. Forest Service. The second most important aspect of Kaufman’s work related to human behavior in the context of supervision. Kaufman stated:

In fact, each staff officer at every level, since his energies and attention are concentrated on one segment of the total spectrum of Forest Service policy, displays an inclination to feel more can be done in his function than is usually done by the men in the field. Some of them gradually, and probably inadvertently edge over from exerting pressure to see that their work is adequately done to commanding line officers precisely what ought to be done. (p. 103)

This observation added a new dynamic to the primal sources of bureaucratic control. It is an assertion that is ripe for future research. Indeed, the current research on bureaucracy is concerned with this basic question—a point that will be developed in the depth section.

Arguments for bureaucratic control and the degree of bureaucratic discretion essentially revolve around the concept of sovereignty and the appropriate loci for decisionmaking. Within the public context, is bureaucratic decisionmaking rational? Is bureaucratic decisionmaking something done by bureaucrats using their discretion? Alternatively, is bureaucratic decisionmaking an innately political process? In the private sector, is bureaucratic decisionmaking the purview of owner’s or stakeholders? Or is it more related to what workers do
or will do? The answer, in all probability is a mixture of both depending on the specific contexts. Within the public sector, the answer to these questions relates to the form of government. It is to the bureaucracy’s relationship with democracy that this paper will now turn.

Bureaucracy and Democracy

Meier and O’Toole (2006) noted that bureaucratic forms depend heavily on the form of government as well as historical and cultural contexts. The relationship between bureaucracy and democracy in particular is the single most prominent element of the academic literature (see Meier and O’Toole, 2006; Beetham, 1996; see also federalism, Gormley, 1989). It in fact defines the political model of bureaucracy and contrasts it with the economic, social, and even the public administration models, although to the latter model, it is intimately related and perhaps inseparable. Meier and O’Toole (2006) described the generally accepted relationship between bureaucracy and democracy as inherently hostile, calling it the bureaucracy-democracy problematic. Their exemplary analyses of the major views of bureaucracy paralleled its historical development—early power analysis, econometric analysis, sociological analysis, political analysis, and public administration analysis.

Meier and O’Toole’s (2006, p. 9) greatest contribution to the analysis of these perspectives was the delineation of two logics that define bureaucracy’s relationship with democracy. The “top-down” approach emphasized the formal powers of the government to create and control the bureaucracy. The “bottom up” approach emphasized bureaucratic control from sources other than the government such as interest groups or other mechanism of popular control. Meier and O’Toole were careful in their description of the latter loci of control, stating, “The reference is not to some naïve version of grass-roots or democracy, nor to an injunction to maximize discretion in the hands of the administrative ‘bottom,’ the legions of street-level
bureaucrats” (p. 10). According to Meier and O’Toole’s analysis, the top-down approach focused on coercion, socialization, incentives, and principle-agent theory whereas the bottom-up approach focused on quasi-markets, full disclosure, and popular participation mechanisms such as popular control or interest group influence. Meier and O’Toole contended that New Public Management was born of the need to reconcile both of these perspectives. However, Meier and O’Toole saw three fundamental flaws in this approach: researchers tended to present biased views by ignoring the alternative views, tended to ignore the negative consequences of presenting such views, and used models or approaches that are overly broad and simplistic. Meier and O’Toole concluded in their governance perspective solution to this problem that the top-down approach to controlling bureaucracy has only a modest impact and that bureaucracy generally was “highly sensitive to the needs and desires of citizens” (p. 19). Their conclusion followed from challenging two assumptions: that elected officials are responsive to public and that public influences on bureaucracy are minimal. Kaufman’s (1960) work on the U. S. Forest Service, for example, tended to support Meier and O’Toole’s thesis. Indeed, criticisms of New Public Management are a primary concern in current bureaucracy research, a point that the depth section will develop later.

In contrast to Meier and O’Toole’s conclusion that public bureaucracies were responsive to the public, Goodsell (2004), in his defense of bureaucracy, pointed out the contrary and popular presumption; that bureaucracies are conservative in nature—preserving their own interests and elite biases through the monopoly of technical information. This notion, in effect, hints of Marx’s influence with respect to class conflict. Under this view, bureaucracy was equated with oppression, greed, and the abuse of power. In short, bureaucracy was a pathology or illness to be controlled. This argument—that bureaucracy is a pathology—has been
popularized by the negative idea that equates bureaucracy with the concept of red tape. This view also supports Meier and O’Toole’s proposition that governmental form matters with respect to bureaucracy. Goodsell expended great effort in challenging this popular and negative view of bureaucracy, arguing that bureaucracy is “indispensable to a free society, a democratic polity, and a capitalist society” and that as a result, “it must be properly tended” (p. 157). Even so, Hartman (2007) argued convincingly that while elites do perpetuate power via superior educational opportunities and elite recruitment, elite composition changes over time. Hartman argued that elites had an important role to play—for good or ill—an argument that mirrors the debate on merit and the principles of natural selection. Given the importance of bureaucracy in a democratic society, three issues require additional development: the idea of bureaucratic red tape, due process and equity requirements, and the balance between political control verses autonomy.

**Red Tape**

A critical and yet usually neglected component of the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy is the notion of bureaucratic red tape as described by Bozeman (2000). In Bozeman’s view, red tape was simply rules without a clear purpose. How does this relate to democracy? Since bureaucracies themselves and the rules under which they operate are politically determined, they are frequently imprecise, vague, and difficult to implement. Outcomes are sometimes difficult to measure and funding may be sporadic and subject to change. An important consequence of Bozeman’s work is that governmental form and structure are fundamental determinants of bureaucratic action. Democracy and its need for political responsiveness (democratic control), restraints on governmental powers and actions (checks and balances), and the need for compromise (legislative process and interest group participation)
necessitates a complex bureaucracy. The successes of bureaucratic outputs within a democracy, then, ultimately flowed from assumptions of full disclosure, public participation, and the freedom of information. The result was a large and complex bureaucracy that was risk averse and protective of its own interests to such a degree that red tape frequently resulted. Goodsell (2004) refined Bozeman’s view of red tape by pointing out that red tape resulted from the political process itself. Contrary goals and competing expectations, in Goodsell’s view, were also a source of red tape. Goodsell stated, “Thus, in the legal-political world in which they operate, bureaucracies lie snugly fixed between a rock and a hard place” (2004, p. 61). In either case, democratic accountability—in particular the mechanisms of control—are fundamental to understanding bureaucracy. Indeed, the control imperative is a major concern to current bureaucracy researchers—a point that will be developed in the depth section.

Due process

Recall that governmental form and structure matters with respect to bureaucracy generally and bureaucratic power in particular. Fundamentally, the U. S. Constitution requires due process through the law. Due process, in turn, both defines and limits bureaucratic power. Researchers frequently omit this point. The legal standard has traditionally been one of invalidating “arbitrary or capricious” bureaucratic procedural actions (see Gormley, 1989, p. 92). In terms of substantive compliance, government bureaucracies must comply with the law and can be held to account for breeches—particularly for negligence or failing to act with due diligence. As a result, compliance costs are imposed on all government bureaucracies and agents acting under color of state authority (derived from principal-agent theory). Additionally, compliance costs are imposed on all private bureaucracies because they must comply with the law. In short, due process requirements impose compliance costs on bureaucracy and necessitate valid
administrative burdens. For more information on due process requirements, such as procedural and substantive due process requirements, refer to any administrative law textbook (for example, Hall, 2006, pp. 49-50). This argument lends support to Bozeman’s view that there are two kinds of red tape—good red tape that derives from valid requirements, and bad red tape that serves no purpose. In short, due process requirements—both procedural and substantive—add to the complexity and costs of bureaucracies in the United States—both public and private. The law is the prime mechanism of government action and it rules most private actions. Because the law is politically determined and defined through the legislative process, it necessarily follows that democracy uses due process requirements as a mechanism to both restrain and require government actions. In short, the law links bureaucracy with democratic accountability.

*Political control verses autonomy*

Recall that democratic accountability is actualized through due-process requirements that include the requirement to obey the law and, in the case of government action, the government’s own rules. There are two fundamental problems with this approach. First, not all laws or rules are clear—some are even ambiguous and conflicting (see Bozeman, 2000; Kaufman, 1960; and Leitzel, 2003). This is especially the case in democracy in general and federalism in particular. Second, laws and rules are sometimes inappropriate, or harmful to bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, actions on ambiguous or harmful laws and rules are necessarily subject to discretion. While Bozeman (2000) would state that this is one of the sources of red tape—where, for example, managers and front line supervisors are likely to desire control, Kaufman (1960) would state that under these circumstances, rule avoidance would be problematic.

Despite these two problems, political control is an ideal; on a practical level, large bureaucracies implement political decisions. To put it another way, just as all politics is local all
implementation is also local. This is a key theme and necessary consequence of Meier and O’Toole’s (2006) governance model. Hence, a struggle emerges for autonomy and discretion based on practical bureaucratic requirements and the need for political responsiveness. Responsiveness, in turn can be viewed under Meier and O’Toole’s (2006, p. 9) twin rubrics of democracy from above and from below. On one hand, politicians are theoretically accountable to the electorate and bureaucrats are accountable to those politicians. On the other hand, bureaucrats are accountable to a host of special interests, the public at large, market forces, and even enlightened self-interests. In short, bureaucrats stand between two worlds—autonomy is the only way to reconcile this problem.

Therefore, political control as an ideal is problematic in a democratic society where rules are often vague, ill-considered, conflicting, and ultimately the result of negotiation. Additionally, federalism and public accountability—such as public notice and comment hearings and administrative law appeals—all converge to force bureaucracies to be highly complex and difficult to manage in a democratic society. Discretion, based on superior knowledge and practical experience is a necessary component of such bureaucracies. This skill or ability called discretion, in turn, is the true basis of the re-invention movement (see, for example, Osborne and Gaebler’s 1993 seminal work called Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector). Again, the themes of bureaucratic control, discretion, and the critique of New Public Management, are themes that will be developed further in the depth section.

Conclusion

This section of bureaucracy has examined key concepts of bureaucratic theory such as rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent
theory. It has explored and critically assessed the definition of bureaucracy and models of bureaucracy. Based on that assessment, this paper has also examined the concepts of bureaucratic growth, rule evasion and discretion, forces of integration and fragmentation, and bureaucracy’s relationship with democracy.

Economic theory (efficiency), political science (power), and public administration (democratic governance) traditionally define bureaucracy. However, these definitions limit bureaucracy to small portion of its appropriate domain: all human coordinated actions. The principles that apply to governments also apply to business, meetings, and even social gatherings. Bureaucracy is not simply a form of organization or a type of decision-making—it is the structural mechanism used by humans to coordinate action. As a result, bureaucracies are part rational and yet, part irrational. The bureaucracy base literature fails to reconcile these two seemingly incompatible forces, favoring rational action. Consequently, bureaucratic theory’s presumption of rational action needs additional research. An interdisciplinary approach is required to achieve this reconciliation.

The depth section that follows will build on this foundation by examining bureaucratic rationality in terms of human motivation, re-conceptualizing bureaucracy, challenging the traditional notions of control, and criticizing the post-bureaucratic forms of bureaucracy. The analysis will result in a more complete understanding of bureaucratic theory. This knowledge will be used in the application section, which will develop a 12-week graduate level course on bureaucracy.
Core Knowledge Area Module Number VI:
Organizational Leadership and Change

DEPTH SECTION: REVISITING BUREAUCRACY

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Revisiting Bureaucracy

The breadth section concluded that an interdisciplinary approach to bureaucratic research is the key to reconciling apparent inconsistencies in bureaucratic theory. In the depth section that follows, the current research on bureaucracy will be examined within this context by means of an annotated bibliography and subsequent thematic analysis. The articles were discovered by searching the term “bureaucracy” in the Walden University Library database, reading the abstracts of the results, and choosing fifteen articles that appeared to be most directly relevant to bureaucratic research. Most omissions were made because the research was off topic. The researcher did not attempt to pre-judge the articles; the only criterion was that each article appeared relevant. The themes were identified by examining each article in depth and listing the most important themes in no particular order. Based on a consolidated count of all fifteen articles, the top four themes were chosen for detailed analysis. While this methodology is not perfectly scientific because the selections of articles was not random and possibly was influenced by selection bias, it is useful for determining a snapshot of the current academic debate regarding bureaucracy. The themes identified were: (a) human motivation with 7/15 articles, (b) re-conceptualization of bureaucracy with 5/15 articles, (c) control imperative with 5/15 articles, and (d) a critique of post-bureaucratic forms with 5/15 articles. With this methodological discussion in mind, this paper will proceed with an annotated bibliography and thematic analysis.

Annotated Bibliography


Bertelli and Feldman (2006) construct a constrained bargaining model of structural reform (process) litigation and conclude that because courts allow negotiation between agencies
and interest groups, such litigation causes bureaucratic drift. The authors contend that bureaucratic drift benefits agencies and interest groups at the expense of legislative control. Agencies use litigation to design remedies that maximize agency resources whereas interest groups use litigation to obtain favorable policy outcomes for their clients. An important consequence of the model is that litigation costs also affect policy process outcomes. The purpose of this paper is the theoretical development of structural reform litigation using a Nash Bargaining Solution, the major outcome of which is bureaucratic drift. Since litigation results are subject to judicial approval, bargaining outcomes define the scope and nature of judicial control. The authors’ state, “judicial power over agency resources is crucial to the incentives discussed in this article” (Bertelli & Feldman, p. 162). The authors assume that an agency’s process preferences are independent from their resources and that interest group’s process preferences exceed that of the agency. While these assumptions may be challenged, they are useful for the purposes of simplifying the models. The authors also assume that an initial non-negotiated judicially proposed level of services would leave an agency worse off, resulting in requests for emergency appropriations and the negotiation process. This assumption, however, fails to take into consideration the possibility that agencies may desire litigation simply to clarify policy. The authors present two models: the first views additional resources as a private good for the agency whereas the second views additional resources as a public good that benefits the interest group’s clients. Under both models, the authors conclude that interest groups and agencies “collude” against legislative interests (p. 174). The judicial approval requirement mitigates the effectiveness of this tendency. The model’s main value is that it relates policy process to agency resources and, most importantly, it demonstrates that agencies can increase resources by violating a process mandates and then litigating the outcomes. The major weakness of the paper
is the overly broad literature review. Despite this weakness, the authors achieve their purpose. The theoretical models are ripe for future quantitative analysis.


Farrell and Morris (2003) criticize the post-bureaucracy movement because many of these new governance forms increase bureaucratic tendencies even though they decrease hierarchy. The author’s examine three groups in the United Kingdom: healthcare, education, and social services. The authors postulate that public choice theory and new public management models have been overstated based on the scale of public service provision. The authors argue instead that the terms “neo-bureaucracy” or “bureaucratized market form” are more appropriate because these new forms are fundamentally dependent upon bureaucracy. The primary value of this article is the critical assessment of the impact of neo-bureaucracy (both theoretical and empirical) based on an exploration of the practical implications for professional and public service managers. The literature review provides an excellent description and re-conceptualization of bureaucracy as a fundamental structure whose practical limits are expressed by the new public management and public choice theory literature. In particular, the authors argue that the functional-rational bureaucratic model was distorted and attacked by both Populists and radicals in the name of “diversity, plurality, uncertainty, and fragmentation” that evolved into an anti-bureaucratic tradition (Farrell & Morris, p. 132). As a result, the fundamental objective of the new public management and public choice theory movements became hierarchy reduction, which evolved into the creation of flatter multilevel hierarchies using market mechanisms. The authors critically assess the state of the literature with respect to
health care, education, and social services and describe the specific enabling legislation for changes in service delivery requirements that resulted from the new public management movement. As a result, the literature review is a must-read for any serious researcher. The central thesis of the article is that neo-bureaucracy results in increased delegation, increased political and managerial control, and increasingly fragmented service delivery by autonomous agencies. The authors use preexisting survey and semi-structured interviews to reach this conclusion. The major implication of this research is that the decision to use more hierarchic verses market mechanisms is not an exclusive proposition—it is a best-fit model based on a continuum. In any case, bureaucracy as a fundamental form remains. The only weakness of the work was its lack of a clear research question and weak explanation regarding methodology. Despite this weakness, the authors achieve their purpose of theoretical development and the work is a solid source of future research possibilities.


Based on motivation theory, Frank and Lewis (2004) examine data from the General Social Science Survey from 1989 to 1998 to examine differences in reported work efforts between the public service sector and the private sector and conclude that public service employees report slightly higher work effort than private sector employees do. The authors provide a detailed yet concise literature review on work motivation, motivational differences, and work effort research; this is by far one of the studies greatest strengths. The purpose of the study is to determine first, if public sector employees work as hard as public sector employees work, and second if any difference is due to motivational factors: differences between what public and private employees want, differences between what public and private employers offer,
or differences in individual employee characteristics. Using a logit analysis with worker characteristics and motivators as the independent variables and self-reported work effort as the dependent variable, the authors derive 12 hypotheses. The major weakness of the study is that many of these hypotheses contain multiple nested sub-hypotheses. The authors conclude that, “Private-sector employees valued high income and advancement opportunities more—and interesting work, helping others, and being useful to society less—than public-sector employees generally, but both assigned quite similar importance to job security” (p. 43). Both groups were equally likely to exhibit the Protestant work ethic, however public-sector workers were better educated and more likely to be black females than private-sector workers. Several characteristics are positively correlated with self-reported work effort: Protestant (8.6%), age (6.6% per 10 years), marriage (10%), and race (11.1% Caucasian versus Black and 14.9% Caucasian versus other). Other correlations are too numerous to list here. Based on their results, the authors conclude that public-sector employees self-report working harder than private sector employees do by 6.5%. However, the authors admit that once teachers are distinguished from other public professions, the difference reduces to 3.2% and becomes insignificant. The major problem with the study is that the conclusions that public-sector workers work harder than private-sector workers do and that the public sector is better educated are problematic, if only in light of the special consideration given to teachers. Additionally, self-report motives may vary from sector to sector. Clearly more research is required; replication using different data sets would be a good place to start. In short, the authors’ conclusions do not follow from their research; the study may not be generalizable. The authors’ major contribution is the attempt to distil a large body of statistical information into simpler forms. While the authors overreached, the major implication of the study is that the relationship between work effort and various intrinsic and extrinsic
rewards appears to be similar in both sectors—the authors admit that the measures may be too crude to capture the effects. This suggests that future research comparing work effort could be based on job typologies rather than by sector.


Giaugue (2003) investigates the impact of new public management (NPM) reforms on regulatory structures in federal administrative departments in Canada and Switzerland to test a new model of regulation. Under the model, regulation is the result of the conflict between the status quo and the forces of organizational change and represents five interrelated dimensions: administration and management, power, legitimization, symbolic, and institutional. Giaugue defines a public organization by six dimensions: strategy, culture, structure, political character, legal character, and particular culture—the latter three elements relate specifically to public organizations and embody the author’s notion of regulation. The new regulatory structures that result from this transformation of regulatory structures are called liberal bureaucracy, “which combines liberty and constraints, neoliberalism and bureaucracy, decentralization and the concentration of power” (p. 568). Giaugue uses four surveys of public agencies in both Canada and Switzerland (two in each) and 45 interviews (18 in Canada and 27 in Switzerland) to test the theoretical model using the multi-case comparison investigation method. The dependent variable is regulation and the independent variable is NPM tools and principles. The results compare both Canada and Switzerland against the liberal bureaucracy model. The main strength of the study is the incorporation of the contextual legal narration with the description of its findings, which essentially holds that both Canadian and Swiss administrative regulation is converging on the liberal bureaucracy model. The tabular comparison and data summary of the dimensions of
regulation between Canada and Switzerland simplifies complex data and adds the quality of the work. The major implication of the study is that organizational change, as expressed by regulatory structures of public agencies in Canada and Switzerland has incorporated NPM principles. However, while such change represents new regulatory possibilities, new constraining and disciplinary mechanisms are evolving. The author warns that bureaucratic resistance to these mechanisms may threaten future performance. In short, the author’s model of liberal bureaucracy is useful and has practical and substantial consequences.


Gajduschek (2003) argues that Max Weber was mistranslated into English and that as a result, scholars have substituted the idea of efficiency for the intended meaning of rationality, which emphasizes law and capitalism as a system generally and the reduction of uncertainty in particular. Gajduschek points out that Weber never used the word “efficiency” in his works—he only used the terms “rationality,” “formal rationality,” “purposive-rationality,” “value rationality,” or “substantive-rationality” (p. 710). As a result, uncertainty reduction—the author’s key conceptualization relative to bureaucracy—has been divorced from efficiency, which is typically defined solely in terms of inputs and outputs. In essence, Gajduschek argues that uncertainty reduction is one of the major benefits of bureaucracy—one that is at least as important as efficiency. After a considerable explication on the meaning of bureaucracy within the different scholarly traditions, the author concludes that the only common denominator is the concept of efficiency. However, the author points out that many scholars generally reject the idea that bureaucracy is the most efficient form of organization. Indeed, even efficiency itself often
goes undefined. As a result, Gajduschek asks, “What is the secret in bureaucratic structures and mechanism, which, in spite of all its drawbacks, keeps bureaucratic organizations alive?” (p. 708). The author’s theory is that bureaucracy does not mean simply specialization, the division of labor, expertise, rules, or hierarchy—it means rationality as expressed by uncertainty reduction. This has vast implications. The first implication of this re-conceptualization of bureaucracy is that the addition of uncertainty reduction clearly distinguishes public and private forms of bureaucracy based on the inclusion of social utility maximization and aggregate measures of efficiency. The second implication is that the equity of treatment and the reduction of arbitrariness that characterizes uncertainty reduction in bureaucratic organizations enhance egalitarianism. The third implication is that this new notion of bureaucracy explains that bureaucracy relates only indirectly to efficiency to the degree that efficiency correlates with uncertainty reduction. Under the author’s re-conceptualization, bureaucracy is a social tool that developed concurrently with the capitalism and democracy. Gajduschek makes a substantial contribution to the academic literature by challenging the foundations of modern bureaucratic theory in a manner that simplifies present theory and reduces theoretical incongruence. In short, the author has created a seminal work that deserves consideration, promulgation, and empirical research.


Building on existing research, Henderson, Hulme, Jalilian, and Phillips (2007) examine the relationship between governmental “Weberianness” and poverty reduction. Under the model, neo-liberal scholarship’s focus on the efficiency of markets and “trickle-down” economics neglects the role of government action beyond market facilitation. Under the literature review,
Weberianness is defined in terms of merit and longevity of service. This is the major weakness of the study because the definition is narrow and longevity of service itself does not necessarily relate to bureaucracy. Merit and longevity correspond with experience and in turn, experience corresponds with effectiveness. The authors operationalize poverty as material deprivation (income as expressed by growth of GDP) and choose to ignore the theory of capability deprivation for the purpose of their research. The authors’ reduce the pre-existing data from 35 to 29 countries due to a lack of data and calculate Weberianness Scales based on a twenty-year average between 1970 and 1990. After examining multiple correlations such as ethnicity, initial human capital, investment share, and initial GDP, the authors conclude, “there is a strong relationship between that (unexplained) income and the given countries position on the Weberianness Scale” (p. 527). The primary conclusion of this research is that there is a relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction. Given the model’s weak measure of Weberianness and the demonstrated relationships between other factors and poverty reduction, the authors’ conclusion is clearly overstated. However, the authors admit that an important issue remains unanswered by this study: just how direct is the relationship between Weberianness and poverty reduction? A more sophisticated model of “Weberianness” would enhance the quality of this research and could answer this question. However, the main value of the study with respect to bureaucracy was the attempt to quantify “Weberianness.”


Hodgson (2004) uses a nine-month ethnographic study of an English telephone bank to criticize the implementation of post-bureaucratic organizational forms by project managers. The author claims that post-bureaucratic controls are a hybrid form consisting of traditional
bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic logics. In the author’s view, managers sell “rebureaucratization” as “debureaucratization” using discursive tactics. Hodgson questions the degree to which a project-based work project can reconcile traditional bureaucracy with new post-bureaucratic forms. This criticism stems from a literature review that characterizes post-bureaucratic forms as not taken seriously (p. 84). Hodgson follows the literature and asserts that hybrid forms are appropriate. Within this hybrid form, “the key effect of the application of project management models and techniques is enhanced control over the conduct of employees, based on close surveillance and the limited delegation of discretion to those subjects involved in project work” (Hodgson, p. 86). Therefore, project management’s focus on “technocratic, comprehensive planning” undermines expert authority. Hodgson’s non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews demonstrated that opposition to new mechanisms of control evolved when a formal strategic plan was introduced to spread post-bureaucratic practices. This plan corrupted the spirit of the post-bureaucratic organization and represents either rebureaucratization or a new hybrid form. The major contribution of Hodgson’s work is the recognition that post-bureaucracy, as an ideal organizational form, is substantially rhetorical. As a result, implementation of such forms is problematic. Equally important, however, is the authors identification of the intentional use of deception to sell post-bureaucratic forms to workers. Additional research is clearly needed to replicate the results of this study under different contexts and different organization. A comparison of public and private forms would be particularly significant.

Jewell and Glaser (2006) use a cross-case analysis of California welfare and Welfare-to-Work to investigate how “organizational setting mediates between policy goals and frontline behavior” (p. 335). According to the literature, bureaucratic discretion leads to simplifying procedures and goal displacement, which in turn inhibits policy reform. Based on this foundation, the authors used 128 semi-structured interviews, 78 observations of staff to client interviews, and program documents in 26 welfare offices between 1996 and 1997 and some follow-up interviews in 2000 to construct a theoretical framework. The authors find that six factors affect bureaucratic behavior: positional authority; workers role expectations; workload; frequency, time, and quality of client contact; knowledge and expertise; and formal and informal incentives and disincentives. The authors use this framework to analyze welfare services pre and post-TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). Prior to the implementation of TANF, positional authority was punitive and undermined the ability to develop rapport, workers role expectations excluded the promotion of work, workloads required excessive information gathering and results were frequently overturned, client contact was infrequent and concentrated on documentation, knowledge and expertise was inhibited by poor training and low educational requirements, and the work itself was a disincentive to encourage clients to find work because more work was required for working clients. After TANF implementation, authority remained punitive, caseworker role-expectations included the promotion of work, workloads increased substantially, client contact remained problematic, knowledge and experience continued to be problematic, and incentives remained problematic. The main weakness of the article is the failure of the authors to connect the attitudes and implementation problems of bureaucrats to their source—the public policy itself. Even so, the major contribution of this research is the implicit
lesson that public policy must consider aspects of implementation, such as positional authority, role expectations, etc., during policy formulation.


Kallinikos (2004) uses theoretical development to criticize emergent forms of bureaucratic organizations such as entrepreneurial or network-shaped organizations based on the assertion that bureaucracy is a political as opposed to a psychological phenomenon that is necessary to manage change. Kallinikos states, “…bureaucracy is the first and perhaps *sole organizational form* [original emphasis] capable of addressing the demands that incessant social, economic and technological change entails” (p. 23). In the author’s view, bureaucracy is most importantly a role to be played based on rules. Under the rules, which form the basis of standardization, individualism is completely disassociated from the role that is played. Indeed, Kallinikos’s assertion implies that under a bureaucracy, men are machines to be controlled and not free-agents. Workers are only free with respect to selectivity, mobility, and reversibility of their bureaucratic situation. In Kallinikos’s view, when workers deviate from their appropriate role, bureaucracies are less able to adapt, which is the fundamental strength of bureaucracy. Even so, many individuals do not respect this separation of personal and professional actions. Indeed, many of the features of new bureaucratic forms derive from this fact. The adaptive view of bureaucracy is the critical component that is missed by new theoretical bureaucratic forms. For this reason, new forms of bureaucracy have not replaced traditional bureaucracy as described in the academic literature. In Kallinikos’s view, new criticisms of bureaucracy overemphasize secondary characteristics and are “astonishingly naïve functionalism devoid of any historical awareness” (p. 14). Kallinikos’s purpose is to re-conceptualize the concept of bureaucracy. The
main strength of this work is the integration of current literature with the proposed re-conceptualization and the theories explanatory power. The work is theoretically significant; however, the view that bureaucracy is fundamentally rule-based behavior is overly simplistic and mechanical. The main weakness of the work is that the author misses the main purpose of bureaucracy—to achieve a particular purpose.


Kalu’s (2003) work of theoretical development pursues bureaucratic accountability and proposes, “Rather than conservators or entrepreneurs, bureaucrats are ‘contracted’ custodians of our administrative values but not the repository of those values” (p. 539). After a substantial literature review and critique, the author dismisses Wilson's administration dichotomy and instead focuses on principle-agent theory in balancing administrative outcomes and political values. Kalu’s purpose is to use the framework to enhance the debate on “the administrative and constitutional viability of public-private partnerships (p. 541). Accepting Kalu’s thesis leads one to conclude that bureaucrats should not be considered public entrepreneurs. In short, the author rejects the arguments of the reinvention movement based on the assumption that the public and private sectors desire different policy goals, primarily described in terms of equity. Kalu asserts that Osborne and Gaeblers entrepreneurial thesis represents an ideological crisis, however the argument is unpersuasive and reaching. Kalu does however have a particularly good point in that it is not the role of bureaucrats to determine acceptable risks. Indeed, the reinvention movement constrains congressional oversight and control by negating the ideal of negotiated political policies and leading to goal displacement. The author, in this instance, fails to consider that any system of privatization must be politically approved. The main weakness of the paper is the
author’s one-sided argument against the reinvention movement generally and markets in particular. Indeed, the contractarian approach treats public administrators as mere contracted employees. Ironically, this is exactly what the author argues against in the first place. The main strength of the paper is that despite this weakness, a contractarian approach to accountability is useful and is in need of additional theoretical development.


Matheson (2007) uses a case study methodology to examine how bureaucracy causes worker alienation in the Australian Public Service based on six features of bureaucracy (variables): clerical work, control imperative, organizational structures, impersonality, instrumental rationality, and language. The brief literature review of bureaucratic alienation is superbly concise and the author develops an operational definition of alienation as “the absence of personal involvement in and fulfillment from work, or what Marx called ‘self-estrangement’” (p. 235). For the purpose of the study, data collection consists of personal observation; 20 incidental and snowball sampled in-depth, semi-structured interviews; pre-existing survey data; and other secondary sources such as government reports and prior research. The main weakness of the data collected is that the personal experience of the author appears to bias the research. Despite this weakness, the varieties of data mitigates this bias to some degree. The author constructs a narrative of the job environment and concludes that employees were showing symptoms of alienation. However, the author never really analyzes this additional data—data is used only to support the narrative in causal terms or to corroborate the author’s conclusions. Supporting literature frequently explains the narrative and the author concludes that the determinants are structural in nature. Specifically, skill variety (problem of clerical work), task
identity (ownership of work), task significance (sense of achievement), autonomy (monitoring and surveillance), job feedback (transactional leadership causes alienation) are hypothesized to be the independent variables. From these five major variables, the author rather hastily concludes that a second list of 22 derivative factors causes alienation and that the six features of bureaucracy as described above are the root causes. The mechanism the author uses to describe the psychological basis is “flow.” Matheson concludes that bureaucracy is a two-edged sword—essential to democracy, yet harmful to personal autonomy and mental well-being. Although this relationship could be viewed as a zero-sum gain, the author suggests that de-bureaucratization is possible via the institution of New Public Management principles. However, this assertion clearly is not supported by the totality of the work. Clarifying or duplicative research is needed on this theoretical structure to determine its validity. The major value of this study with respect to bureaucracy is the literature review of worker alienation.


Tsoukalas (2007) develops a theoretical model of group ideology (or group consciousness) based on the cognitive theory (social cohesion), mind-body theory, and network theory. The author theorizes that two modes of encoding have different social effects: a doctrinal mode relates to formal group behavior and an imagistic mode relates to informal group behavior. The author’s purpose is to create a better model of group consciousness that bridges the gap between the traditional descriptive and explanatory models, which tend to negate the “interplay of biological, psychological and social factors that codetermine its basic qualities” (p. 40). Tsoukalas argues that the psychological theory of cohesion lacks explanatory power and as a
result, research results are contradictory. This is because cohesion theory is over simplistic, inappropriate for application to large groups, and ignorant of individual psychology. The author describes social cohesion by analyzing various mind-body theories, namely: Benedict’s Dionysian groups (creative and individualistic) verses Apolloan groups (controlled and collectivist), Weber’s institutional verses charismatic leadership, Jung’s introvert versus extrovert, and Cellner’s literal versus symbolic language. The thesis of the article is that these theories should be distilled by Whitehouse’s cognitive theory of religiosity. This integration results in two cognitive schemas: verbal and nonverbal codification. Verbal codification of cognitive schemas is controlled by the semantic memory. This type of memory lacks emotional abstractions and imprints by conscious repetition. Nonverbal codification of cognitive schemas is controlled by the subconscious episodic memory. This type of memory is reinforced and recalled within environmental contexts and are imprinted via sensations. Verbal schemas tend to be weaker than nonverbal schemas. Even though Whitehouse’s theory explains a great deal, the author points out that it is lacking in its social aspects. Here, the author turns to Granovetter’s cognitive-network theory, which poses that strong emotional ties between people has an isolating social effect, whereas weak emotional ties between people have an integrating effect. Tsoukalas analyzes organizational structure, change patterns, leadership styles, degrees of centralization, and institutional practice within the context of the combined theory. The result is a must-read work of theoretical integration. The author concludes, “Unless we want to reengineer a group radically, which can be rather traumatic, we have to find measures that are functionally consonant with the group’s established and dominant interaction patterns” (p. 71). This is the most important implication of the work. The work implies that group consciousness, through individual and collectively based cognitive schemas, are physiologically based. As a result, this
work has profound implications for bureaucracy. If Tsoukalas thesis is correct, then bureaucracy may be the necessary result of processing cognitive schemas.


Economic development literature argues that successful economic development requires a cohesive bureaucracy to act as a nodal agency that coordinates and controls the use of and distribution of scarce resources. Tsui-Auch (2004) amends the economic development literature to suggest that such a nodal agency can maintain an interlocking directorship by externalizing its culture rather than using power and coercion. In the author’s view, bureaucratic rationality is problematic in an agency that uses power and coercion. The author critically assesses development theory using the Singapore Economic Development Board, a nodal agency in the biotech industry, as a case study. The methodology uses several data collection methods: in-depth personal interviews, phone interviews, firm / institute records, site visits, and documentary research. The data were transcribed for content analysis and rigorously validated using background checks, internally consistent interviewing techniques, multiple interviews of the same subject, interviewing more than one respondent in each organization, and triangulation of the data with other sources. From the data, the author creates a historical narrative that describes the evolution of the biotech industry in Singapore as well as the development of a powerful nodal agency within the context of the Asian currency crisis. Tsui-Auch concludes, “Frequent changes in policy and a lack of continuity in leadership can often lead to a breach of psychological contracts between employers and employees (the scientists) and render it difficult to cultivate organizational citizenship” (p. 472). As a result, many of the scientists in Singapore’s biotech
industry left to find better jobs and recruitment became problematic. Based on the narrative, the author concludes that the case study of Singapore’s Economic Development Board vindicates the economic development literature with two addendums. First, bureaucratic power is not the only mechanism that is necessary. Instead, a more flexible structure such as a horizontal matrix organization or the creation of a new bureaucratic culture can also be successful based on differences in political history and culture. Second, such bureaucratic power is problematic because while it is efficient, it is in the case of Singapore, also is also short-sighted and risk averse. Tsui-Auch states:

The homogenization of thinking among members of the like-minded elite has perpetuated the use of foreign capital-dependent model and technocratic management based on economic cost-benefit analysis, hard measurement and performance targets that might inhibit the development of the biomedical industry (p. 473).

The main implication of Tsui-Auch’s work with respect to bureaucracy is that traditional hierarchal bureaucracies can be barriers to economic development when leaders inappropriately use their expertise or exhibit short-term thinking. The work implies that alternative methods of bureaucracy—such as New Public Management, etc.—can and should be used to address these problems within the biotech industry in Singapore. The greatest weakness of the study is that the narrative itself became the study and as such, its conclusions may not be duplicable or applicable to other situations. The study’s conclusions, based on the narrative provided, appear appropriate. However, more baseline research is clearly needed—particularly with respect to development programs in other countries.


Walton (2005) conducts a meta-analysis on the relationships between formal structural characteristics of bureaucracy—differentiation (task, vertical, and horizontal specializations),
standardization, decentralization, and formalization—to test Weber’s model of bureaucratic control. The purpose of the study is to test for the strength of structural variable relationships; in effect, testing some fundamental aspects of structural contingency theory. The author hypothesizes that these relationships weaken over time because of the implementation of new bureaucratic structures. After a brief literature review, the author calculates the appropriate correlations, corrects the results for the effects of statistical artifacts and moderators, and then uses moderator analysis to test for the effects of time on the corrected results. Data collection consists of 68 previous research studies dated between 1960 and 1999 that contained the descriptive data as well as correlation analyses. The year of data collection in each study was used to estimate the effects of time on the variables, but in some instances, these are estimated. The result consists of 275 correlations for the variables. The author clearly explains and documents the methodology used for the meta-analysis. The results indicated that the “six structural variables are positively interrelated, with an average correlation of .54” (p. 583). However, the data did not support the time hypothesis. Due to the strength of the relationships between the variables over time, the author concludes that bureaucracy—in particular, its newer forms—is more adaptable than previously suggested in terms of bureaucratic control theory. In short, the findings support Weber’s model of bureaucratic control—even considering the emergence of new bureaucratic forms. As a result, this study has vast implications for the emergence and acceptance of new bureaucratic forms such as new public management, etc. Specifically, bureaucratic structures remain strongly correlated with each other. The main strength of the article is the discussion of the study’s limitations. Additionally, the appendix contains a useful listing of previous research on relationships between bureaucratic structures. Even so, one weakness remains. That is to say that the variables under consideration are
descriptive in nature and as a result, the positive correlations reported may be illusory (i.e., not causal).


Whitford (2007) hypothesizes that three bureaucratic preference theories—organizational capacity and constraints theory (rules, regulations, and rewards determine bureaucratic preferences), overhead political control theory (external forces determine bureaucratic preferences), and task environment theory (situational imperatives determine bureaucratic preferences)—control bureaucratic preferences. The author concludes that these theories are complex because they are not easily reducible to simple indicators and non-nested because each theory contributes something unique. The author uses survey data from 50 state environmental protection agency leaders who rank certain types of environmental disasters for cleanup priority to complete the analysis, which uses Likelihood Dominance Criterion and ordered probit methodologies. The author uses proxy variables to indicate measures for each theory and then conducts an analysis that ranks the power of each theory in explaining the variance of survey data. The use of proxy variables is the weakest part of the study in terms of reliability and validity. The study concludes that the theory of organizational capacity and constraints best explains the variance in survey responses, followed by the overhead political control model and then the task environment theories. The study is creative and worthy of future research. However, due to the technical nature of the decisions made by head administrators (as opposed to politicians or interest groups), the conclusions reached may not be generalizable. The most important implication of the study is that future efforts to increase political control over toxic waste remediation will be problematic (see p. 243). In terms of bureaucracy, Whitford’s results
may indicate that more attention must be paid with respect to organizational capacity and constraints during the creation of public agencies. Failure to do so may result in less political control as well as less responsiveness to environmental concerns (i.e., interests groups, etc.). Although this conclusion may apply to bureaucratic organizations generally, more research is needed to clarify this relationship under different circumstances and under different bureaucratic arrangements.

The present state of recent academic literature on bureaucracy focuses on the conceptualization of bureaucracy as well as its emergent forms. As a result, a great deal of analysis remains to be completed. The following section will provide a thematic framework for such an analysis.

Analysis

Introduction

Recent academic literature on bureaucracy questions the essential foundations of bureaucracy as well as its more modern iterations. The resulting re-conceptualizations and critical evaluations have vast implications for bureaucracy generally, and on the questions of human motivation and the control imperative in particular. This section will analyze and synthesize the recent bureaucracy literature within the context of the more general state of the bureaucracy literature as described in the breadth section. Four areas of concern emerge from a thematic analysis of the recent literature: the relationship between human motivation and bureaucracy, the conceptual foundations of bureaucracy, the implications of the control imperative, and a critical assessment of emergent forms of bureaucracy. Of the four major themes, the dominant concern was human motivation.
Human Motivation and Bureaucracy

Since bureaucratic action is essentially human action, human motivation has always been a critical determinant of the effectiveness and efficiency of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy was born of the human need for survival; it manifested primarily in terms of war fighting capacity. As society became more complex, bureaucracy became more complex to meet the needs of increasingly demanding environments and task requirements. However, early bureaucratic literature focused on leadership and management at the expense of the workers generally. For example, the machine analogy that was inspired by the industrial revolution relegated workers to insignificant cogs in a large and impersonal machine. Early films such as Fritz Lang’s Metropolis in 1927 popularized such themes. However, Populism and the evolution of the social sciences changed bureaucracy in fundamental ways during the behavioral period of bureaucratic development (see application appendix). This trend continues today as the recent literature suggests. An analysis of the annotated bibliography above suggests five major themes that will be examined in turn: bureaucratic preferences and reactions to control, sociological aspects of bureaucracy, bureaucracy as a role to be played, psychological aspects of bureaucracy, and the role of experience in bureaucracy. Recall the key concepts of bureaucracy described in the breadth section: rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent theory. These concepts are critical to the analyses that follow.

Bureaucratic preferences and reactions to control.

The general consensus that derives from the seminal bureaucratic literature sees bureaucrats from a market perspective in two ways. On one hand, bureaucrats as individuals are self-interested and risk averse utility maximizers that need to be forced to do their work using
some type of coercion. On the other hand, bureaucrats as a group seek to maximize their budgets (see Goodsell, 2004, pp. 101-106).

Whitford (2007) argues that bureaucratic preferences, in terms of reactions to regulatory problems, are determined by three distinct theories. The first theory suggests that bureaucratic action preferences are constrained by the organizations internal features such as the organizational capacity (such as the number of workers, etc.) and other factors such as organizational beliefs, organizational culture, incentives, and specific rules. This theory is called the organizational capacity and constraints theory. The second theory suggests that executives, politicians, and interests groups control bureaucratic action preferences. This theory, called the overhead or political control theory, is difficult to quantify in federal systems. The third theory suggests that task environment (job at hand) determines bureaucratic action preferences. This theory is called the task environment theory. According to Whitford’s analysis, these three theories are all appropriate predictors of bureaucratic action preferences when interpreting regulations. Whitford ranks these theories in order of impact: the organizational capacity and constraints theory is preferred to the overhead or political control theory, which is preferred to the task environment theory.

It is possible that Whitford’s conclusions are not generalizable to agencies different than environmental control. As a result, the order of importance for these competing theory may vary accordingly under different contexts. Secondarily, the theories are broad—especially the organizational capacity and constraints theory. What seems clear, however, is that despite these challenges, the theories require additional research. The three theories could be narrowed to achieve more useful results. For example, executive control could be considered separately from political control, rules, incentives, and culture, etc. This view contrasts with Whitford’s view (see
p. 242), which asserts that the fundamental problem is to test the broad theories and not the theoretical components.

Kalu (2003) takes a different approach to bureaucratic preferences by refining principal-agent theory into a model of contractual obligations. Under Kalu’s model, the agent does not define the terms of the agreement—it can only be accepted or rejected. So, since the principal defines bureaucratic preferences in advance, the only recourse of an agent is to comply or exit the organization. Where Kalu’s theory makes the most sense is with respect to equity of treatment issues. Where Kalu’s theory makes the greatest contribution is the explicit definition of the agent as a “custodian,” which implies the important principle of fiduciary duty. This is especially relevant with respect to public bureaucracies that operate under color of state authority. Kalu asserts that government is fundamentally different than the private sector—a point generally conceded by the bureaucratic literature. However, Kalu’s assaults on emergent forms of bureaucracy are misplaced because the advocated contractarian approach could be used to assert firm political control of such approaches. In short, the contractarian approach is an accountability mechanism that controls or mitigates bureaucratic preferences. Kalu’s approach is consistent with the political control literature.

Jewell and Glaser (2006) examine bureaucratic behavior in clear motivational terms. While Whitford (2007) and Kalu (2003) examine bureaucratic preferences from a position of overhead control, Jewell and Glaser examine bureaucratic preferences in terms of individual bureaucrats. Under Jewell and Glaser’s model, bureaucratic preferences have several factors: positional authority; workers role expectations; workload; frequency, time, and quality of client contact; knowledge and expertise; and formal and informal incentives. Jewell and Glaser’s conception helps clarify how Whitford’s three models work on an individual level. Jewell and
Glaser’s work is also consistent with research on street-level bureaucrats. Indeed, Jewel and Glaser’s work could be used to better operationalize bureaucratic preference theory. Since the major weakness of Jewell and Glaser’s work was the failure to relate operational problems to their source—the policy creators—the rules aspect ascribed to organizational capacity and constraints theory could be incorporated to increase the explanatory power of the model. The true significance of Jewell and Glaser’s work is that it addresses bureaucracy on an operational as well as an individual level. One insight is particularly important for bureaucratic research and mirrors current brain research: bureaucrats use simplifying procedures (see Jewell and Glaser, 2006, p. 338) to “complete and cope with the demands placed on them…” which in turn leads to goal displacement. So, Jewell and Glaser’s research is utilitarian in its applicability—especially in terms of program conception and implementation.

Hodgson (2004) provided two additional insights with respect to bureaucratic preferences—how strongly bureaucrats hold on to them. First, bureaucrats have “fierce attachments” to their values to such an extent that changes in the organization are frequently resisted (p. 93). Second, and more importantly, deception on the part of management inspires even higher quantities of bureaucratic resistance. These points taken together imply that there may be a strong ethical component relating to bureaucratic resistance—that such resistance may not be as nefarious as presumed. While some early research has pointed to the possibility that superior knowledge and technical skills may be particularly effective for bureaucrats to use either actively or passively, clearly more research is required to determine the conditions that justify bureaucratic resistance, if in fact bureaucratic can be justified. Secondarily, bureaucratic resistance may be a counter-reaction to excessive attempts at bureaucratic control. The commonly held belief that bureaucracy is impersonal may relate to both individual psychology
and the perception of excessive or unfair control attempts. Since it is clear that bureaucrats have their preferences, it is also probable that there are sociological factors involved in the process.

*Sociological aspects of bureaucracy.*

Tsoukalas (2007) explored the sociology of group consciousness in a manner that has vast implications for bureaucratic research. Tsoukalas approached the problem from a unique perspective: microfoundations. That is to say, Tsoukalas asked the basic questions of how group dynamics worked and why group dynamics works the way that it does. Tsoukalas work parallels research on formal and informal groups in organizations, but goes into greater depth. For example, concepts of groupthink and groupmind form the basis of Tsoukalas’s work. Tsoukalas calls this social cohesion, adding, “…social cohesion directly and indirectly impacts the life of groups, influencing various aspects of group consciousness, group decision-making, group attributions and social conformity” (p. 41). In short, Tsoukalas’s work is at the heart of bureaucracy, particularly because social cohesiveness relates to productivity, and therefore addresses questions of both efficiency and effectiveness. According to Tsoukalas, Weber used the mind-body dichotomy (which is the foundation of Tsoukalas’s theory) to describe leadership as either institutional or charismatic. Jung later refined the dichotomy in terms of introverted and extroverted personalities. The common element, according to Tsoukalas, is that “they all point to the organic interrelationship between human thought and human behavior” (p. 48). Using Whitehouse’s cognitive theory of religiosity as a basis, Tsoukalas theorizes that there are two major ways that groups encode their group’s ideology: a doctrinal mode that is encoded verbally (including writing) and an imagistic mode that is encoded emotionally. The impact on bureaucracy is profound because the method of encoding cognitive schemas strongly affects group cohesiveness. Doctrinal modes are logically based and require repetition in order to
encode in the semantic memory; this mode leads to universalistic thinking based on membership. Recall can be problematic, however, with errors contributing to logical inconsistencies. Imagistic modes require analogies and metaphors and are encoded emotionally or sensually through pleasure or pain into the episodic memory. As a result, imagistic encoding tends to be stronger than doctrinal modes. Imagistic modes lead to particularistic thinking. As a result, it is difficult for group members to influence group activities because the metaphors and ritual tend to dominate. There is a host of consequences for these theories. Group solidarity in doctrinal groups is “diffuse and shallow” (see p. 52) whereas group solidarity in imagistic modes is “intensive” (see p. 53). Doctrinal modes tend to tolerate less change, whereas imagistic modes tend to tolerate more change (see p. 63). Imagistic groups, therefore, tend to deal better with opposition or failure (p. 63). Doctrinal modes tend to be formal whereas imagistic modes tend to be informal. Doctrinal groups are easier to control (p. 63). It is important to note that these forms are not mutually exclusive—a point Tsoukalas explicitly makes (p. 66). The most important implication of Tsoukalas’s work for bureaucracy is that different encoding methods explain the apparently contradictory bureaucratic research. Bureaucracies are social structures and to the extent that they inspire either doctrinal or imagistic thinking, the consequences may be predictable with respect to group cohesion. As Tsoukalas points out, quantitative research is needed (p. 74). Indeed, such research would benefit the study of bureaucracy.

Gajduschek (2003) re-conceptualized Weber’s conception of bureaucracy in sociological terms; this point will be developed in greater detail later in this paper. However, Gajduschek’s theme needs to be addressed in basic terms at this point because the consequences for bureaucracy in sociological terms is immense and new. Recall that in the breadth section, the conception of bureaucracy was developed in anthropological, sociological, and economic terms.
Gajduschek’s theory proposes that the notion of uncertainty reduction is even more fundamental to bureaucracy than the concepts of rationality or efficiency. According to Gajduschek, this omission was the result of Weber’s work being mistranslated into English. Gajduschek’s arguments can be extended as follows. First, uncertainty reduction is the reason that bureaucracy is efficient—indeed, it is a basic requirement for civil society. Second, uncertainty reduction, in the political sense provided society with some sense of stability in terms of survival. Third, uncertainty reduction, in the private or civil sense provided individuals with a sense of certainty of treatment. Finally, uncertainty reduction, in general terms provided society with a viable economic system—capitalism—that contrasted with the barter system. As a result, Gajduschek’s re-conceptualization support the arguments in the breadth section. The major consequence of this re-conceptualization of bureaucracy is that the stability that has provided the fertilizer for human activities should not be assumed. To put it another way, researchers miss the most important aspect of bureaucracy—that it provides a foundation of stability that is required for all aspects of human development—anthropological, social, and economic. This conception goes farther than Gajduschek’s argument that uncertainty reduction is a prerequisite for democracy (see p. 719). Tsoukalas (2007) conceptualization of group behavior in imagistic or doctrinal terms compliments Gajduschek’s theory. While Tsoukalas’s theory provides the mechanism for encoding group norms and behaviors, Gajduschek’s theory provides the interactional context that allows group behaviors to develop.

Hodgson (2004) examined bureaucratic control and bureaucratic behavior in an English telephone bank classified as a post-bureaucratic organization. Hodgson’s work essentially held that post-bureaucratic reforms were substantially rhetorical. However, the most important implication of Hodgson’s work is sociological. Essentially, Hodgson indentified deceptive
managerial practices that resulted in bureaucratic resistance and worker apathy. In short, deception represented a breach of trust in the eyes of many bureaucrats. Hodgson’s description could be re-conceptualized in terms of Tsui-Auch’s (2004) breach of the psychological contract between the principal and the agent, a point that will be developed in greater detail later. The important implication for bureaucratic research is that that group behaviors have generally accepted norms and, in a sense, these can be viewed as part of a sociologically based psychological contract. Bureaucratic resistance as well as compliance may be related to the terms of this contract. More research is needed to correlate bureaucratic resistance with breaches of group norms and values. However, the roles people take on also impact group norms and values.

*Bureaucracy as a role.*

One argument against bureaucracy is that it is impersonal and can result in the figurative death of an individual’s personality. Recall that the machine analogy supports this theme. However, as the breadth section pointed out, the equality of treatment is a fundamental characteristic of bureaucracy. While reconciling these competing requirements is difficult, doing so is a fundamental function of bureaucracy. Kallinikos (2004) explains the social foundations of bureaucratic order in terms of roles. While roles are commonly examined in sociology and psychology, and to a lesser degree in the management literature, bureaucratic research is generally silent on this topic. Yet, the assumption of roles and the duties implied by those roles are usually clearly defined in terms of job descriptions, etc. It is the assumption of a role that assures equality of treatment and reduces the chances of breaches of fiduciary duties within the public sector. However, when bureaucracies are conceived, little attention is paid to the degree that bureaucrats will accept such duties at the expense of their own personal conceptions and values. That is to say, perfect acceptance is assumed but not guaranteed. Kallinikos goes even
farther however, postulating that if bureaucrats are not allowed to deviate from their official role expectations, the bureaucracy in general terms is less likely to adapt to changing environments. In short, discretion in terms of role expectations, in Kallinikos’s view, is a fundamental mechanism for bureaucratic change. This suggests that there is an aspect of give and take in the relationships between bureaucracies and individual bureaucrats. This view contrasts with the classic view of bureaucratic resistance. The implication for bureaucratic research is that implementation problems may be the result of a conflict between formal and informal bureaucratic values or role expectations. Role conflicts, however, may also be examined in terms of individual psychology.

*Psychological aspects of bureaucracy.*

Whereas Kallinikos’s (2004) conception of role expectations applies on a group level, Matheson (2007) applies it on an individual psychological level. Matheson describes the incongruence of role expectations in terms of alienation. Matheson’s literature review concludes that skill variety, task identity (roles), task significance, lack of autonomy, and lack of feedback are the major factors of worker alienation (see pp. 243-250). Based on a case study, Matheson identifies six specific factors that cause alienation: work tasks, control imperative, structural attributes, impersonality, instrumental rationality, and language. While more research is needed to duplicate this research under a variety of conditions, Matheson’s arguments essentially extends Kallinikos’s (2004) arguments on an individual level. Matheson concludes, “Although it is undeniable that governments need to ensure procedural conformity, subordination to authority, and the separation of official and personal business, it is possible to meet such goals and to provide individuals with autonomy” (p. 257).
Recall Tsoukalas’s (2007) imagistic and doctrinal encoding schemas. These schemas apply on an individual basis and are used to reinforce the terms of group membership. While successful encoding may increase group cohesion—and thus enhance procedural conformity to bureaucratic requirements, the failure of such encoding mechanisms may result in psychological alienation and thus a failure to comply with bureaucratic requirements. In extreme circumstances, failure to encode group norms can lead to active resistance including sabotage or exit from the organization. Conflicting formal and informal group norms may also create this sense of conflict. The main challenge for bureaucratic research is to qualify and quantify formal and informal group norms for the sake of measuring cohesion. A lack of cohesion, in turn, may correlate with bureaucratic resistance (or conversely, bureaucratic control).

Recall also that Tsui-Auch (2004) postulates that a psychological contract exists between the principal and the agent. While Tusi-Auch described this contract specifically in terms of frequent changes in policy and leadership, the approach can be equally applied to the concepts of alienation and bureaucratic resistance as described above. Empirical research is needed to test for the existence of such psychological contracts and breaches in the terms of such contracts may be examined in terms of breaches of trust.

*Experience and its role in bureaucracy.*

One of the reasons that researchers claim bureaucracy is efficient is that they assume that experience is a proxy for effectiveness. Indeed, the principles of merit and longevity of service are at the core of Weber’s conception of bureaucracy. This relationship is best stated by Henderson et al.:

The rationale here is that meritocratic recruitment can lead to organizational effectiveness because: (a) it insures that staff have at least a minimal level of task competence; (b) it encourages organizational coherence and an esprit de corps; (c) these two, in turn, help to increase staff morale and identification with colleagues and the organizations; and (d) it
increases shared norms and thus the intangible costs of engaging in deviant behavior like corrupt practices. Bureaucracies that offer rewarding long-term careers are more likely to perform well and this encourages more competent people to join them. A ‘virtuous’ spiral’ is thus created making corrupt practices less likely and the costs of being found out very high. (2007, p. 517)

Accepting Henderson et al.’s argument at face value, one can see that a substantial portion of the assumed efficiency of bureaucracy does not derive from experience per se—it derives from task competence and a commitment to group values and norms. The implication is that workers are more efficient or effective when group cohesion is high; this parallels observations that combat veterans are motivated by personal relationships more than a commitment to a nation or an ideology. As a result, more research is clearly needed to determine the environmental contexts in which this assertion is most likely true, if it is in fact correct. The implication is that group composition (particularly skills) and cohesion are critical determinants of efficiency. A second line of research is needed to determine the environmental contexts in which bureaucratic resistance results from such cohesion. This research could parallel groupthink research.

Jewell and Glaser (2006) assert that simplifying procedures are used by bureaucrats and that such procedures result in bureaucratic drift. In Jewell and Glaser’s view, bureaucratic drift is not necessarily a negative force; it is a positive force for social change. Individual and group experience is thus set within a specific context; it is a source of coping mechanisms. This source is separate from the formal control and decisionmaking structures and it is available to each bureaucracy. However, the legitimacy of individual and group contributions must be thoughtfully acknowledged in order to be obtained. The empowerment literature supports this thesis.
Re-conceptualizing Bureaucracy

This paper has examined human motivation in terms of bureaucratic preferences, sociology, roles, psychology, and experience. One consequence of these emergent themes is that many fundamental concepts in bureaucratic research have been called into question. Specifically, Weber’s model of bureaucracy, principal-agent theory, and efficiency have each been challenged on a theoretical level. Additionally, feelings of anti-bureaucracy have emerged. This paper will now turn towards these issues.

Weber’s conception revisited.

Farrell and Morris (2003) analyze post-bureaucratic forms using Weber’s model of bureaucracy as a context. Essentially, Farrell and Morris contend that while post-bureaucratic forms may reduce some bureaucratic characteristics such as hierarchy, they increase other characteristics such as control. As a result, the differences between Weberian and post-bureaucratic forms are overstated. Indeed, according to the authors post-bureaucratic forms are essentially Weberian forms. Farrell and Morris go even farther than associating post-bureaucratic forms with the rational-functional Weberian model, however. In their view, the Populist movement as well as an anti-bureaucracy movement hijacked the ideal Weberian model and as a result, notions of “diversity, pluralality, uncertainty, and fragmentation” were inserted into the model—distorting its rational-functional basis (p. 132). This insertion however represents the incorporation of democratic values into bureaucratic values and may be fundamentally an artifact of democratic accountability. Farrell and Morris are correct to point out that such insertion can reduce bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness. Setting Farrell and Morris’s theory in the context of the historical evolution of bureaucracy explains a great deal. Farrell and Morris’s major contribution to bureaucratic research is however distinct, they challenge the generally
accepted idea that post-bureaucratic forms are indeed something new. Many base structural
cancepts such as hierarchy—to either good or bad effect—are fundamental and therefore
attempts to divorce them from bureaucracy are flawed. By extension, the post-bureaucratic
movement may flawed—or as Farrell and Morris state, “exaggerated” (p. 132). It is important to
note what Farrell and Morris are not saying—they are not saying that post-bureaucratic
principles are in any way negative; indeed, they agree with them (see p. 130). The implication is
clear and perhaps even more meaningful—bureaucracy is a highly adaptable form of social
organization. This explains Walton’s (2005) assertion that bureaucracies are stable over time
despite control problems and the emergence of new bureaucratic forms. Other researchers, such
as Matheson (2007) and Kallinikos (2004), agree with Farrell and Morris’s that Weber’s model
of bureaucracy is expansive and pervasive.

**Anti-bureaucracy.**

While Farrell and Morris (2003) placed the blame for the evolution of the anti-
bureaucracy movement within the Populist movement generally, the more general assertion that
bureaucracy is inhumane and destructive to individuality, as this paper discussed earlier, is
essentially ignored. Farrell and Morris’s argument narrows down to the assertion that equity
issues correlate with anti-bureaucratic sentiments. Matheson (2007), in contrast, deals directly
with the issue of bureaucrat alienation. In Matheson’s view, many structural aspects of
bureaucracy cause the impersonal characteristics of bureaucracy, which were discussed earlier in
this paper. The weakness of Matheson’s argument is that the issue of customer dissatisfaction
generated by impersonal treatment is not addressed by the research. This is another opportunity
for future research. While Matheson’s work indicates that alienated workers are a source of
bureaucratic resistance, more research in the area of impersonal treatment is needed to correlate
with feelings of anti-bureaucracy by the general public. Additionally, research is needed to
determine what extent that alienated bureaucrats create feelings of anti-bureaucracy in the
populations they serve.

Giaugue (2003, p. 568) extends Matheson’s assertion within a framework called “liberal
bureaucracy.” The importance of Giaugue’s model is that it provides a mechanism for
bureaucracies to control alienation and instill discipline. Giaugue states that the general
assumptions of the model are that:

…the organizational regulation emerging within public organizations is based on new
disciplinary mechanisms, i.e. on threats and shared fears of potential sanctions, as well as
on shared chances where these changes create opportunities for individuals, which results
in acceptance of this regulatory model and its legitimization. (p. 568)

Under Giaugue’s model, anomie and resentment can result from this process. The backlash
against such forces resulted in the anti-bureaucratic movement. Tsui-Auch (2004) would classify
this as a possible breach of the psychological principal-agent contract. Others would classify it as
a necessary element of the control imperative.

*Principal-agent theory—a contractual approach.*

Kalu (2003) argues that bureaucratic accountability can be controlled by imposing a
contractarian approach to principal-agent theory. Kallinikos (2004, p. 31) argues that bureaucrats
can either comply with job requirements or they must change job positions, find a new job, or
ask for more money. This approach supports Kalu’s conception of the principal-agent
relationship as a contractual arrangement. Although bureaucrats can also complain or resist, Kalu
asserts that such actions are unethical because bureaucratic values belong to the organization or
political system—they do not belong to the bureaucrats. Kallinikos would disagree—recall
Kallinikos’s model of bureaucratic actions defined in terms of roles and especially the assertion
that resistance and discretion are necessary elements of social change. The implication is that bureaucracies have the contractual power to coerce bureaucratic actions, but they do so at their peril. This is particularly true if the coercion results in the incapacitation of the organization’s adaptability reservoir. Fundamentally, a contractual relationship is a two-way relationship with terms that are specified in advance. The major problem with this approach is that bureaucracies have a superior bargaining position in most cases. Under this type of circumstance, coercive means are particularly problematic. More research is needed to correlate bureaucratic resistance with various degrees of agency bargaining power. The utility of principal-agent theory rests on the assumption of a balance of power between the two parties.

*Efficiency and uncertainty reduction.*

Two distinct arguments refine the theory of efficiency presented in the breadth section. First, Gajduschek (2003) argues that one of the largest problems with the conception of efficiency is that scholars rarely clearly define it. Indeed, the basis of Gajduschek’s arguments on uncertainty reduction starts by questioning this basic conception. Gajduschek’s arguments result in a fundamental redefinition of bureaucracy. For Gajduschek, efficiency incorporates notions of rationality, which is comprised of both the rule of law and capitalism. The critical consequence of Gajduschek’s conception of efficiency is that the purpose of the rule of law and capitalism is fundamentally to reduce uncertainty. This idea of uncertainty reduction in a global sense goes beyond Gajduschek’s conception of uncertainty reduction in terms of individual bureaucracies. However, accepting this premise provides the intrinsic characteristic of bureaucracy that Gajduschek was looking for to explain the dominance of bureaucracy in society. That is to say that bureaucracies in the aggregate decrease uncertainty reduction in society at large. Consequently, society becomes more stable and, in turn, the ground becomes sufficiently fertile
for more bureaucracies to evolve. Gajduschek hinted at this idea stating, “Uncertainty reduction benefits not only the clients but also the ruler at the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy” (p. 716).

Even so, the purpose of uncertainty reduction, for Gajduschek was to enhance efficiency in terms of Weber’s terms—precision, stability, reliability, calculability, un-ambiguity, and the reduction of friction. Gajduschek states, “The minimization of uncertainty maximizes predictability and calculability of actions, procedures, and outputs” (p. 715). This expansive definition of efficiency, according to Gajduschek, was what Weber intended efficiency to mean—given that Weber never used the term (see p. 713).

Second, Tsui-Auch (2004) adds another important dimension to the idea of efficiency—the idea that an organization could be efficient and yet, near-sighted and risk averse. Indeed, much of the post-bureaucracy movement was formulated to respond to this particular problem. This is especially true with respect to the impact of globalism. Tsui-Auch’s observation necessarily derives from Gajduschek’s definition of efficiency in terms of uncertainty reduction, and yet, it contradicts it in practice and sees it as a distinct bureaucratic weakness. Tsui-Auch’s observation is confirmed by research that suggests that bureaucracy is not always the most efficient form of organization (see Gajduschek, p. 703). It is possible, however, that Tsui-Auch’s research is not generalizable and that similar research may suffer from theoretical problems. More research is clearly needed. As this paper has demonstrated, many fundamental bureaucratic themes have been challenged. There is, however, another level to this critical examination—the level of control.

The Control Imperative

The idea of control seems strait forward. However, since stakes are so high—including basic survival—there are always challenges to the control imperative. In some ways, control has
gone underground—let us calls this stealth or neo-control. That is not to say that control is by any means a passive activity. That is to say, post-bureaucratic forms have increased control while maintaining the façade of a communal or team approach. As a result, the post-bureaucratic movement can be seen as increasing the tendency for control, thus threatening individual autonomy. Indeed, some authors propose that this impersonal and threatening environment can result in the death of individual personality. While this paper will analyze and critique the current academic literature with respect to its challenges to the post-bureaucratic movement later, this paper will first examine the control imperative in four major areas: neo-control, re-bureaucratization, administrative autonomy, and bureaucracy as a role that results in the death of personality.

*Neo-control.*

Recall that Farell and Morris (2003) criticized the post-bureaucratic movement because although hierarchy is reduced and market forms are introduced, a regulatory regime is concurrently instituted that increases bureaucratic control despite the appearance of increasing bureaucratic discretion. While the issue of bureaucratic control is usually discussed within the context of democratic accountability or democratic governance (see Meier and O’Toole, 2006), the concept considers all of the key concepts discussed in the breadth section, namely rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent theory. The concept of control unifies these concepts. However, it is also important to consider that the notion of control has evolved within the context of the historical evolution of bureaucracy, also discussed in the breadth section. In a general sense, that evolution can be viewed as a decreasing tendency away from a coercive view of control to a more realistic and socially informed view of control. That is to say, that control as an imperative has practical limitations. Under the literature,
these limitations are derived from social and psychological processes—including mental
cognition and memory encoding (see Tsoukalas, 2007). Indeed, it appears that Newton’s three
laws of motion, that objects in motion stay in motion until an external force acts upon it, that
force equals mass times acceleration, and that for every action there is an equal and opposite
reaction, all apply to the concept of control. Control is analogous to mass and practical
limitations are represented as acceleration. Together, these represent the force that drives
bureaucracy into action. Neither control, nor counter reactions to it, can be neglected therefore in
any sensible model of control. The metaphor of Newton’s laws explains a great deal of the
present bureaucratic research, particularly the work of Meier and O’Toole (2006). For example,
Meier and O’Toole (p. 132) state, “Decisions taken at lower levels of the organization are not as
nearly important, one by one, than those made near the top, but there are far more of them and
they cumulate to a much larger total.” Force, it seems has additive qualities. This explains Meier
and O’Toole’s conclusion that even under the best of conditions—theoretically ideal control
cases—bureaucratic actions trump political control (p. 93). This is why more research is needed
on the impact of middle managers (Meier and O’Toole, pp. 151-152). Bringing the discourse
back to Farrell and Morris’s observations, since power is concentrated in higher levels of
organizations, and since management has the ability to create the rules; it appears that this
relationship is adversarial in nature. This explains Farrell and Morris’s conclusion that, “…the
impact on professionals is differentiated, mediated, and not entirely negative (p. 150).
Adversarial systems (the adversarial control model) have differentiated, mediated, and not
entirely negative impacts.

Giaugue’s (2003) notion of liberal democracy can be viewed as a consequence of the
adversarial control model. Essentially, Giaugue holds that bureaucrats respond to new
mechanisms of control that have emerged within the context of the post-bureaucratic movement. These new regulatory structures represent the liberal bureaucracy model. These new regulatory structures are however, a product on consensus across Giaugue’s six dimensions: strategy, culture, political character, legal character, and particular culture. The most important implication is that this adversarial relationship is not a passive process—all of the actors actively pursue their perceived best interests. More research is needed to delineate what factors correlate with various degrees of conflict. A balance of power approach may be useful in such an endeavor.

Jewell and Glaser (2006) have established an analytical framework that could be used in this research, although their research related to the conversion of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to Welfare to Work. The authors found that six factors affected bureaucratic behavior: positional authority; worker’s role expectations; workload; frequency, time, and quality of client contact; knowledge and expertise; and formal and informal incentives and disincentives. Much of Jewell and Glaser’s work focused on bureaucratic behavior in terms of bureaucratic resistance, so the idea of control is an important theme in their work. Jewell and Glaser’s work supports a great deal of the work in this paper—particularly with respect to roles and bureaucratic power. Jewell and Glaser however, failed to relate these factors to weaknesses in policy. As such, more research is needed to delineate first, how bureaucrats perceive new public policies, and second, how they react to those perceptions. For example, a Likert-type scale could be developed to measure bureaucratic resistance within different policy categories.

Tsui-Auch (2004) examined bureaucratic rationality in terms of economic development policy in Singapore. One of the most important contributions of Tsui-Auch’s work is that the relationship between principals and agents can be viewed as a psychological contract.
Bureaucratic resistance results if the perception emerges that this contract has been breached. For Tusi-Auch, these breaches manifest in ultimate form when agents leave the organization, or in the case of Singapore, the policy fails to achieve its goals. A second important contribution of Tsui-Auch’s work is the assertion that bureaucratic rationality suffers when principals use coercion. The implication is that the control imperative is not only dynamic—it is critical to bureaucratic success. Indeed, when a bureaucratic environment becomes excessively adversarial—or hostile—the bureaucracy itself may become extinct as a result of mission failure. This means that even more attention must be paid with respect to control during agency formulation—once implementation begins, it may be too late to address such weaknesses. This may be why the bureaucratic research is excessively concerned with implementation. In any case, the control imperative has adapted to the post-bureaucratic movement—some call this process re-bureaucratization.

*Re-bureaucratization.*

Hodgson (2004) argues that bureaucratic control in the post-bureaucratic movement incorporates traditional forms of control and new forms of control that have emerged in response to post-bureaucratic forms. The new forms consist of “…enhanced control over the conduct of employees based on close surveillance and the limited delegation of discretion…” (p. 86). In Hodgson’s view, this has undermined expert authority and has increased bureaucratic resistance. Hodson’s work, therefore, supports the adversarial control model. But, Hodson goes even farther, arguing that these new forms of control corrupt post-bureaucratic forms, defeating their purposes and starting a process called re-bureaucratization. The main implication is that the post-bureaucratic movement is substantially rhetorical. This idea is supported by Walton (2005), whom asserts that bureaucratic control has remained stable over time despite the emergence of
new post-bureaucratic forms. The criticism that bureaucratic control is excessive and that it uses coercion and deception is not new. For example, Carey’s (1967) seminal work entitled “The Hawthorne Studies: A Radical Criticism,” documented clear abuses of power used to purposely manipulate the findings of research. As a result, the generally accepted conclusions of the famous Hawthorne studies may be flawed. This leads to the issue of administrative autonomy.

Administrative autonomy.

One demonstration of how pervasive the control impulse is, and particularly how it is achieved, is how administrative autonomy is achieved through the use of litigation. Bertelli and Feldman (2006) examine this process and conclude that bureaucratic drift results from such litigation and that it is in fact a tool used by both agencies and interest groups to design remedies while maximizing agency resources. The most significant aspect of Bertalli and Feldman’s research is the proposition that agencies and interest groups “collude” against legislative interests (p. 174). In a way, this can be seen as a breach of the principal-agent contract (recall Kalu, 2003). One possibility is that uncertainty reduction is increased (recall Gajduschek, 2003) through this process. Meier and O’Toole (2006, p. 140) would assert that this may be the result of management’s linking role between bureaucracy and democracy.

Whitford (2007) deals with this problem theoretically based on an explanation of bureaucratic preferences. Recall that Whitford ranked the three major theories—organizational capacity and constraints theory, overhead political control theory, and the task environment theory—in descending importance. The most important implication from this research is that although rules and incentives are the dominating force that determine bureaucratic preferences, political control and the environment also are substantial contributors to this dynamic. It is possible that Whitford’s ranking is not generalizable to other types of bureaucracies and clearly
more research is needed. More research is also needed on how bureaucratic preferences are manifested in terms of administrative autonomy. One way these preferences can be made manifest is through the concept of roles.

*Bureaucracy as role that results in the death of personality.*

Recall Kallinikos’s (2004) identification of roles as the critical component of bureaucratic order. In Kallinikos’s view, roles represent rule-based behavior. Adherence to the rules, according to Kallinikos, is necessary in order for bureaucracies to adapt. Kallinikos states:

> Despite its commonsense and, to a certain degree, justified associations with rigid and inflexible behavior, bureaucracy is the first and perhaps the sole organizational form capable of addressing the demands that incessant social, economic and technological change induces... By contrast to persons, roles can be adapted, modified, redesigned, abandoned or reshuffled to address emerging technical, social and economic demands that the organization is facing. (p. 23)

So, in Kallinikos’s view, bureaucracy is based on a non-inclusive view of its members—that is to say they do only exist in terms of their official roles. Accepting Kallinikos’s theses, it is no wonder there is such a strong view of bureaucracy as impersonal and antithetical to human individualism—according to Kallinikos, it is supposed to be. While this can be justified solely on egalitarian grounds, as discussed in the breadth section, it is still problematic given that a complete divorce of personality from roles is never possible. Kallinikos points out, however, that many bureaucrats do not accept this separation. Matheson (2007) asserts that this dilemma causes alienation. But, at what point does this become coercive? The debate should turn to boundaries of where, when, and under what circumstances individualism is necessary. For example, Kalu (2003) points out that it may not be the appropriate role for bureaucrats to determine acceptable risks. Even so, according to Kalu, under the political theory of organizations, bureaucracies can be viewed as collectives (see p. 555). Recall that Jewell and
Glaser (2006) postulates that individualism is a source of bureaucratic adaptability. If this assertion is correct, then Kalu’s assertion that only official roles matter is shortsighted. While more research is clearly needed to resolve this dilemma, it may be irresolvable in a global sense. However, it is important to note that this is one source—perhaps the strongest source—of anti-bureaucratic sentiments. The preceding analysis of the control imperative has strong implications for the post-bureaucratic movement.

**Critique of Post-Bureaucratic Forms**

Post-bureaucratic forms have emerged to challenge many of bureaucracy’s perceived insufficiencies. Their forms are too varied and too numerous to detail here. However, these forms generally seek to empower individuals, introduce market-type mechanisms, and increase efficiency. Globalism is both the context and a major impetus for these movements. However, the present research is actively challenging many of the assertions that these post-bureaucratic forms provide. While the results are mixed and clearly more research is needed, some researchers see these changes as good, some see them as bad, and still others see them as nothing new. This author, falling more into the nothing new camp, simply integrates these approaches under an all-inclusive, broad, and adaptive view of bureaucracy.

*Post-bureaucratic forms as positive forces of social change.*

While many researchers dismiss, marginalize, or explicitly reject post-bureaucratic forms as fads, some researchers embrace them—at least conceptually. Tsui-Auch (2004), for example, contends that under classical bureaucracy the use of power and coercion threatens bureaucratic rationality. Instead, Tsui-Auch suggests that nodal bureaucracies that have a centralizing mission should abandon the power and coercion approach in favor of an approach that expands the bureaucracy’s culture and influence to gain rational compliance. According to Tsui-Auch, this
approach is preferred because it allows for flatter hierarchies and matrix organizational structures and because they more effectively design long-term policies. As a result, the bureaucracy exploits expertise more effectively and rules become more rational. However, it is important to consider that Tsui-Auch’s subject—the biomedical research field in Singapore—is innately more technical and complex than many other types of bureaucracy and as a result, the findings may not be generalizable. Tsui-Auch’s research suggests that post-bureaucratic are able to more effectively exploit technical expertise because they reduce hierarchy, which tends to mitigate the negative effects of excessive control impulses. As a result, post-bureaucratic forms are more cohesive and adaptable. Tsui-Auch did not explicitly advocate for any particular post-bureaucratic forms. However, the author clearly recommended that post-bureaucratic features be implemented in Singapore.

Matheson (2007) approaches the post-bureaucratic movement from a different—individual—perspective. To Matheson, traditional bureaucracy creates worker alienation in the spirit of Marx’s idea of self-estrangement. Although Matheson’s methodology is weak and more research is clearly needed, the relationship between traditional bureaucratic forms and worker alienation is legitimate. Indeed, many of the post-bureaucratic forms attempt to address this problem directly through, for example, participatory mechanisms.

*Post-bureaucratic forms as negative forces of social change.*

In contrast to Tsui-Auch’s positive view of the post-bureaucratic movement, authors such as Kalu (2003) are more skeptical. Kalu, for example, views the post-bureaucratic movement as problematic to the ideal of democratic accountability. Kalu goes even farther, however, by advocating that principal agency theory be replaced by an explicitly contractarian view of the principal-agent relationship. Kalu denies bureaucrats any legitimate role in defining policy goals.
Indeed, to Kalu, failure to comply with politically determined policy goals results in a breach of contract; the bureaucrat can therefore be legitimately dismissed. To Kalu, the post-bureaucratic movement is a “managerial fad” (p. 545) that causes an “ideological crisis” (p. 547) between formal authority—the political system—and informal authority—the bureaucrats. Kalu justifies this perspective based on the assertion that bureaucrats have no legitimate role in determining risks and that both equity and due process requirements require bureaucratic subordination.

Kalu’s work implies that bureaucrats act only in terms of roles. Kalu states, “The real hidden issue behind the entrepreneurial advocacy is what I would call a Herculean problematic. It has more to do with cultural change as opposed to administrative reorientation, the former being more resilient than the latter” (p. 552). Simply put, to Kalu, the post-bureaucratic movement’s real goal is social change and not bureaucratic rationality. The historical development of bureaucracy developed in the breadth section supports this assertion in general terms, however, clearly Kalu’s case is overstated. Social change was only one goal—bureaucratic reform was the second. Since bureaucracy incorporates public values in such a fundamental way, a relationship bureaucracy and democratic values is legitimate. One question remains regarding Kalu’s assertion: does Kalu feel the same way with towards accountability in private bureaucracies?

*Post-bureaucratic movements as standard bureaucracy.*

Regardless of the costs or benefits inspired by the post-bureaucratic movement, an alternative hypothesis, inherent yet so far unstated, that post-bureaucratic forms are nothing new—they are only Weberian bureaucracy in apparently new and culturally derived clothing. Kalu’s (2003) work implies this possibility, although it is not explicitly stated. Farrell and Morris’s (2003) work similarly implies that post-bureaucratic forms are nothing new, although this is more explicitly implied than Kalu. For Farrell and Morris, the fundamental reason that
supports this author’s “nothing new” hypothesis is that although post-bureaucratic forms decrease hierarchy, they increase mechanisms of control. Bureaucracy has not changed in any fundamental way—it only has changed in response to new and more challenging environments. Bureaucracy has evolved to meet new demands—proving that it is a fundamentally sound structure for coordinating human endeavors. Accepting Gajduschek’s (2003) thesis that bureaucracy is based fundamentally on uncertainty reduction adds additional support to the nothing new theory. This is because the post-bureaucratic movement essentially accomplishes this goal—increasing control in compensation for a more humanistic environment—including discretion—while at the same time decreasing social and bureaucratic uncertainty in a global environment. Accepting Kallinkos’s (2004) thesis that bureaucracy is innately a role-playing political exercise that is necessary for bureaucracy to adapt to change also adds additional support to the nothing new theory. This is because Kallinkos criticizes the post-bureaucracy movement for overemphasizing secondary bureaucratic characteristics of bureaucracy with primary characteristics. Even worse, they do so without a proper understanding of their historical development and context. Properly understood, bureaucratic characteristics remain stable over time. This was Walton’s (2005) major point. An improper historical conception of bureaucracy has two consequences: it leads to two new criticisms of the post-bureaucratic movement. First, it demonstrates that what is viewed as reducing bureaucracy is in fact increasing bureaucracy through enhanced control mechanisms. Second, it leads to feelings of anti-bureaucracy.

*Post-bureaucratic movements as a re-bureaucratizing movements.*

Hodgson (2004) argues that while organizations sell post-bureaucracy as a solution to organizational problems, they do so deceptively because what is characterized as increasing participation and discretion is actually re-bureaucratization. In Hodgson’s view, this violates the
spirit of the post-bureaucratic movement and creates worker opposition to management—particularly middle management—because the workers do not perceive the changes as positive ones. As a result, bureaucratic resistance and even sabotage can result. The most important implication for bureaucratic research is that in such bureaucracies trust is problematic. Some researchers, such as Kalu (2003), fail to acknowledge that trust is an element of the principal-agent relationship because the relationship is contractual and one-sided in favor of the principal. Other researchers, such as Hodgson see such extreme conditions as hostile to workers psychological well-being and a violation of the psychological contract between principals and agents. Still other researchers, such as Kallinos (2004, see p. 24) note that the only option for agents is to stick to their roles (selectivity), find a new role (mobility), or alter their role with the cooperation of the bureaucracy (reversibility). Kallinos’s model goes beyond Hirchmans (1970) simple exit or voice model. In any case, it is clear that the post-bureaucratic movement is weakened because increased control tendencies cause re-bureaucratizing effects.

*Anti-bureaucracy.*

Recall that Farrell and Morris’s (2003, p. 132) assert that Populism caused an anti-bureaucratic backlash based on “diversity, plurality, uncertainty, and fragmentation.” Recall also that anti-bureaucratic sentiments evolved in response to perceived excesses of accountability mechanisms and red tape. These forces combined with bureaucratic impersonalization to create the strong and consistent anti-bureaucratic sentiment that is so pervasive today. Some researchers, such as Giaugue (2003) attempt to reconcile anti-bureaucratic sentiments using a balance of power type approach. Recall that Giaugue’s liberal bureaucracy model “…combines liberty and constraints, neoliberalism and bureaucracy, and decentralization and the concentration of power” (p. 568). As such, Giaugue’s approach represents a unique approach to
the problem of anti-bureaucratic sentiments. While the post-bureaucratic movement attempts to deal with many of the perceived problems of bureaucracy, for example by introducing market forces and encouraging participatory structures, the anti-bureaucratic sentiments remain strongly entrenched. This paper is a first step in dispelling the negative connotations associated with bureaucracy. Indeed, bureaucracy has proven to be flexible and highly adaptive.

Adaptive bureaucracy.

Recall Kallinikos’s statement that “…bureaucracy is the first and perhaps sole organizational form [original emphasis] capable of addressing the demands that incessant social, economic and technological change entails” (2004, p. 23). Kallinikos’s statement foreshadowed a major conclusion of this paper—that bureaucracy is a positive force—perhaps even the most important source—for social change. The post-bureaucratic movement itself demonstrates how wonderfully adaptable bureaucratic forms truly are. Given the historical development, it is clear that bureaucracy has evolved to incorporate many different methods and forms suited to a variety of different circumstances. Gajduschek’s (2003) explication on the misinterpretation of the Weberian notion of bureaucracy—that separated the critical element of uncertainty reduction from rationality and efficiency—results in the realization that the present view of bureaucracy is fundamentally flawed. Bureaucracy is as adaptive as its human components.

Conclusion

The breadth section introduced bureaucracy from Marxian, Weberian, economic, political science, and public administration perspectives and examined key concepts of bureaucratic theory such as rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent theory. The depth section conducted a thematic examination of the present academic literature to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, and evaluate four
themes: human motivation and bureaucracy, re-conceptualizations of bureaucracy, the control imperative, and a critique of post-bureaucratic forms. A synthesis of the ideas presented in the breadth and depth sections indicates how complex the notion of bureaucracy really is.

The recent literature has made substantial progress with respect to two particular questions. First, the relationship between motivation theory and bureaucracy is much more complicated than previously indicated. Second, the control imperative of bureaucracy is closely related to both bureaucratic successes (such as its adaptability) as well as bureaucratic weaknesses (which relate primarily to human motivation). Clearly, more work is required with respect to a more comprehensive conceptualization of bureaucracy. In particular, the relationship between bureaucracy, human motivation, and the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness requires rigorous empirical analysis. In any case, current research indicates that bureaucracy is a highly adaptable form of organization. Future research should focus on integrating the fragmented theoretical base under the adaptive paradigm. In short, the recent literature implies that emergent forms of bureaucracy are nothing new at all: This assumption is a good place to start new research. Redefining the boundary conditions of bureaucracy will lead to more coherent and utilitarian theoretical base literature.

With this goal in mind, the application section that follows will create a 12-week graduate-level class on bureaucracy. The purpose of the class is to provide sufficient theoretical development for future researchers to re-conceptualize bureaucracy under the adaptive paradigm. This knowledge, in turn, can be used to identify research gaps and new research problems. The fruits of such future research will have vast implications, particularly with respect to social equity and social change. Stated succinctly, since bureaucratic action is the only mechanism appropriate for coordinating action, bureaucracy is the most important tool of social change.
Core Knowledge Area Module Number VI:
Organizational Leadership and Change

APPLICATION COMPONENT: A GRADUATE COURSE ON BUREAUCRACY

Student: James Lhotak
Program: PhD in Public Policy and Administration
Specialization: General Program
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Walden University
May 5, 2008
A Graduate Course on Bureaucracy

Recall that the breadth section introduced bureaucracy from Marxian, Weberian, economic, political science, and public administration perspectives and examined key concepts of bureaucratic theory such as rules, motivation, authority and power, hierarchy and order, efficiency, and principal-agent theory. Recall also that the depth section conducted a thematic examination of the present academic literature to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, and evaluate four themes: human motivation and bureaucracy, re-conceptualizations of bureaucracy, the control imperative, and a critique of post-bureaucratic forms. As a result of the analyses, the adaptability paradigm was presented as a call to arms for new research on bureaucracy. The purpose of the application section is to popularize the need for theoretical integration and empirical research on bureaucracy. The application section will achieve that objective by preparing a 12-week graduate-level course on bureaucracy. This paper will select course materials, present a schedule of readings and discussion questions, and supplement the reading materials with information from the breadth and depth section in order to gain a more comprehensive and diverse understanding of the topic.

Discussion

From a public policy perspective, why create a graduate level class on bureaucracy? Many of the same concepts are discussed in classes in organizational theory. Why add a new class? The answer is that bureaucracy is a broader topic than organizational theory, which focuses on public agencies. Business schools also teach organizational theory, however these are taught from a purely business or management perspective. In truth, both public administration and business administration miss critical aspects of organizations in their narrow foci. Bureaucracy weaves a more global perspective and a richer level of understanding by
establishing a social context for organizations of all kinds: principal-agent theory. Many popular forms of “new” management necessarily follow from bureaucracy. These new forms simply bridge the gaps between public and private management that never should have existed in the first place. A graduate level class on bureaucracy is needed to unify the academic silo mentality in an effort to bring a host of new (i.e., old) perspectives to bear on social problems.

The greatest challenge to creating this class was textbook selection. While there are a great variety of good books on the subject, there are far less than one would expect for such a dominant form of organization. Popular books tend to disparage bureaucracy. Textbooks however are more diverse. Surprisingly, most textbooks do not focus on popular negative stereotypes of bureaucracy, although most discuss the subject. It is clear that just as bureaucratic research is fragmented and diverse, however, most textbooks choose a distinct approach to the “problem” of bureaucracy. So, no single textbook was sufficient to the task of bringing all of the perspectives together, although many attempts were made. Textbook selection was based on content and availability sufficient to the task of integrating such a diverse body of literature. After reviewing many books, this author decided to chose textbooks that were complimentary in order to fill in the research gaps. Time considerations with respect to reading were also taken seriously, as more is not necessarily better.

Four textbooks were chosen. First, Beetham’s (1996) seminal work entitled *Bureaucracy* was chosen for its theoretical development of bureaucracy as a distinct field. Beetham compared competing models of bureaucracy, theories of power, and the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy. While the book is brief, it is to the point and a good read. However, Beetham’s book only provided a context or background information for studying bureaucracy. The second book chosen was Meier and O’Toole’s (2006) *Bureaucracy in a Democratic State: A
Governance Perspective. While Meier and O’Toole focused on bureaucracy from a public policy perspective, they did so based on a great deal of theoretical integration. The best part of this work was that Meier and O’Toole rejected many generally accepted theories based on current empirical research (including their own). Meier and O’Toole’s book is short but dense read due to use of supporting research. The largest contribution was their discussion of principal-agent theory. Meier and O’Toole’s book was chosen for its academic rigor and detailed critical analysis. The readings logically followed Beetham’s work gives the reader as strong sense of how misunderstood bureaucracy is. The third book chosen was Goodsell’s (2004) *The Case for Bureaucracy: A Public Administration Polemic*. While not as rigorous as Meier and O’Toole’s book, Goodsell’s book did an excellent job of dispelling many of bureaucracy’s popular myths based on actual research. The first three books were strong on theory. The fourth book was chosen mainly for its complementary nature, rigor, and strong sense of practicality. This book, Stillman’s (2004) *The American Bureaucracy: The Core of Modern Government*, filled the gaps missed by the first three books. Stillman’s work is a much longer and detailed explication of structural and environmental aspects and interactional dynamics than the first three books. When taken together, these four books provide an extremely high quality and diverse examination of bureaucracy.

No textbook selection process is perfect however, and tradeoffs were necessary. Four particularly good books that were not chosen based on limited time and decreasing marginal utility, but need to be mentioned here. The first was Wilson’s (1989) classic *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. Wilson’s (Harvard University) book is a thematically organized set of detailed case studies. It was regrettable that this book had to be eliminated based on time constraints for the students because it is a seminal work. However well
written, it was extremely long. Stillman’s (2004) book, however, makes up for the loss because of its strong use of examples to illustrate theoretical points. The second book was not chosen but merits discussion was Osborn and Gaebler’s (1993) book Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector. Originally, this textbook was considered for a class analysis paper because it brings together the public and private literature so well. It would have made up for the textbook selections focus on public policy works. However, the book was eliminated in favor of Stillman’s (2004) book, which covers some of the same materials. The fourth book that needs to be mentioned was Krause and Meier’s (2005) Politics, Policy, and Organizations: Frontiers in the Scientific Study of Bureaucracy. This edited collection of peer-reviewed articles was highly rigorous and consisted of a great number of good works. However, none of the first four books could be eliminated in its place without losing the theoretical integration that represented the true purpose of the class.

The overall strategy chosen to conduct the course was to arrange the weeks and readings to the extent possible thematically while maintaining the author’s original flow. When this was not possible, as was the case in some weeks, subsequent weeks were designed to build upon or challenge the logic of earlier readings. Every effort was made to maintain a consistent and manageable reading workload for the students. Parts of the breadth and depth sections were integrated on this framework as instructor’s class notes to expand upon the points made in the readings and to introduce even more diverse theoretical viewpoints. It is the class notes that bring theoretical integration and coherence to the weekly topics; the class notes also bring the student up to date on the boundary conditions as to where the academic debate is currently centered. The class, as designed, has a logical flow that builds upon earlier readings. The best part of the class is its exceptional coverage and diversity of viewpoints.
The reading and class schedules were developed with great care. However, a tradeoff was necessary in order to keep the reading workload down to manageable proportions. As a result, student research papers were reduced to a single critical assessment of the concept of bureaucracy as presented in the popular film, *Ikiru* (1952). This DVD is available for rental or purchase at a wide variety of sources. The film is a perfect representation of typical bureaucratic stereotypes and realities. Many of the concepts described in the class are applicable for the critique, and additionally, the students should enjoy the process of evaluating the film.

The sections that follow are elements of a class syllabus and schedule. Some general elements, such as the grading rubrics and discussion requirements, were adapted from Lhotak’s (2007) *KAM V: Direct Democracy*. The weekly learning objectives describe the main purpose of the readings in thematic terms with careful attention to allowing the student to arrive at his or her own conclusions. The discussion questions were prepared with that goal in mind, consistent with the reading materials. In some cases, a given weeks reading gives an incomplete picture of the themes discussed. In those particular instances, once the supplementary material is presented in following weeks, the students are asked to critically re-assess their own prior week’s postings in order to see if and how their theoretical constructs have changed in light of the new information.

The grading rubrics were designed to obtain high quality postings from the students. The bulk of the grade is based on the students original response in order to maintain the high quality of these postings. The responses to the original postings of students are designed to inspire debate and to avoid ambiguous postings or postings for postings sake. However, these responses are given less weight than the original postings, so students have some flexibility. Grading is designed to be liberal as long as the students demonstrate that they have read the materials and demonstrate higher-order thinking.
Ethical considerations are marginal beyond plagiarism issues that are addressed by school policies. However, an important theme of the class is that many of the problems associated with bureaucracy are based on ethical questions such as the ethical treatment of employees, equity of treatment for customers or clients, and social equity generally. Bureaucratic theory can be seen as an attempt to reconcile these ethical considerations while maintaining efficiency and effectiveness. A secondary theme of the class is that cultural contexts matter with respect to bureaucratic forms.

Class Introduction and Overview

Bureaucracy as an academic discipline is a quilt made of many different theoretical perspectives. Most of these perspectives, such as public administration, political science, and economics only study specific aspects of bureaucracy at the expense of a unified theory. The problem is that an understanding of bureaucracy requires elements from all of the approaches. Additionally, a large part of the debate regarding bureaucracy is based on ethical considerations. In particular, the balance of power between principals and agents and the implications for efficiency and effectiveness has been a motivating research force. While efficiency and effectiveness are always important considerations, the cost in terms of dehumanization and impersonal treatment has led to a great deal of popular dissatisfaction with bureaucracy in general. Most people simply do not realize that the main reason for such impersonal treatment is to assure social equity. The purpose of this class is to help foster a deeper understanding of bureaucracy in order to dispel some popular stereotypes. Once completed, this class will inspire appreciation and even some respect for bureaucracy. Contrary to popular perceptions, bureaucracy is an important agent of social change.
Textbooks / Supplementary Materials

The following textbooks are available at www.barnesandnoble.com for the prices indicated; the movie *Ikiru* is available for purchase or rent in DVD format from a variety of locations such as Blockbuster Video:


Total approximate cost: $ 145.85

Weekly Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for the course are as follows:

1. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate Beetham’s and Stillman’s approaches to defining bureaucracy into a coherent framework (week 1).

2. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the concept of bureaucracy from a historical perspective (week 2).

3. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate bureaucracy and democratic theory (week 3).

4. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate arguments in favor and opposed to bureaucracy (week 4).
5. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, re-evaluate, and re-integrate the myths and realities of bureaucracy (week 5).

6. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the concepts of bureaucratic growth and stereotypes of bureaucratic behavior (week 6).

7. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the central themes from the post-bureaucratic movement in terms of Meier and O’Toole’s (2006) “top-down” and “bottom-up” democratic accountability models (week 7).

8. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the theme of bureaucratic control in light of bureaucratic realities (week 8).

9. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the influence of structural control barriers such as principals and agent arrays and environmental influences on bureaucracy (week 9).

10. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, re-evaluate, and the theme of bureaucratic control in light of bureaucratic realities (weeks 10).

11. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, and evaluate arguments on the possibility that bureaucracy, democracy, and individualism can be reconciled (week 11).

12. Analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, re-integrate, and re-evaluate arguments on the possibility that bureaucracy and democracy can be reconciled based on Meier and O’Toole’s (2006) conclusions (week 12).

Participation Requirements

Participation is ninety percent of your grade. The primary purpose of class participation is to show that course readings have been understood. This is achieved by through the appropriate application of the principals of bureaucracy in the class discussions. Postings must thoughtfully,
analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, evaluate, and re-conceptualize (when appropriate or necessary) the reading materials. Appropriate citations are required. An example of an inappropriate use of references is the “plugged-in” reference, in which the author uses a reference that is not related or incompatible with his or her purpose. The use of self-identified references and supplementary materials is encouraged. Postings should be professional in appearance and tone. Finally, if you are unable to post as required, inform the instructor.

Initial Student Discussion Question Response (2 points for each discussion question)

Each week will consist of three discussion questions and participation is worth 7 1/2 points. Posting requirements are intended to give you time to complete the reading, while providing the time necessary for thoughtful discussion. The initial response to the first discussion question is due each Thursday and the initial response to the second and third discussion questions is due each Saturday. Earlier postings are encouraged to foster debate, but again, do not post for posting’s sake—be thoughtful and academic at all times. Early postings are especially helpful in resolving scheduling conflicts such as work, vacation and leisure plans, etc.

Peer Response (½ point for each discussion question)

Counter-responses to colleagues are due each Sunday, however earlier posting is recommended. In order to broaden the debate, try to respond to open discussion threads instead of just full ones. Your first response postings should challenge or supplement your colleagues’ propositions thoughtfully. Two separate responses are required for each for each discussion question. Keep in mind that simple agreement or disagreement is not considered thoughtful or constructive. Again, make every effort to respond to colleagues that have not had the benefit of a response first. An equally acceptable counter response is a global integrating response—one that identifies and discusses important themes in the class discussion.
Assignment

The first and only assignment will consist of a 3-5 page critical analysis of the concept of bureaucracy as presented in the movie *Ikiru*. The purpose of the movie analysis / review is for students to demonstrate that the class materials have been successfully analyzed, compared, contrasted, synthesized, integrated, and evaluated by critiquing the specific view of bureaucracy presented in the film. References from the reading and class discussions are required to support the student’s arguments. This assignment is worth ten percent of your grade and is due at the end of week 11.

Grading Policy / Rubrics

Grading Scale

A  90% - 100%
B  80% - 99.9%
C  70% - 79.9%
D  60% - 69.9%
F  Below 60%

Discussion Question Rubric (90 % of grade)

Weekly discussion responses (2 points for each discussion question)

1. Was the posting content well-considered (1 points)?
2. Was the posting completed on time (1/3 point)?
3. Does posting answer the question asked (1/3 point)?
4. Does posting use APA style and references appropriately (1/3 point)?
Weekly peer responses (1/2 point for each discussion question)

Thoughtful and constructive postings are required. Thoughtful and constructive must go beyond mere agreement or disagreement.

Movie Analysis / Review (10 % of grade)

Quality of Analysis (5 points)

Demonstrates higher level thinking (1 point)

Supplemental and supportive references from course readings (2 points)

APA Format and grammar (2 points)

Important Due Dates

Week 11, Day 7 (Sunday): Movie Analysis / Review Due

Class Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate Beetham’s and Stillman’s approaches to defining bureaucracy into a coherent framework. The class notes introduce several key topics that are fundamental to understanding and describing bureaucracy conceptually. Beetham (1996) describes three different types of approaches to definitions as well as the three most common frameworks used in defining bureaucracy—sociology, political economy, and public administration. Stillman (2004) offers a short descriptive definition of bureaucracy and focuses on dispelling popular myths regarding bureaucracy.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 1 Instructors Notes (Breadth, Key Concepts, Definition of Bureaucracy).


**Discussion questions.**

1. Beetham (1996, p. 40) states that the conceptualization of bureaucracy is incomplete. Based on the readings describe a more complete conceptualization of bureaucracy.

2. Critically assess Stillman’s negative ideas regarding bureaucracy based on your own personal experiences and beliefs.

3. Critically assess the concepts discussed in the class notes based on your personal beliefs and conceptions of bureaucracy. How would you modify or adapt them to make them better?

**Week 2: Historical Analysis**

*Statement of purpose.*

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the concept of bureaucracy from a historical perspective in an effort to establish the boundaries of bureaucratic research. The class notes provide a short historical analysis of bureaucracy in terms of classical public administration. Beetham (1996) compares and contrasts Weber and Marx’s models of bureaucracy and analyzes them in terms of power. Stillman (2004) offers a historical analysis of bureaucracy based on the themes of gradualism, experimentalism, majoritarianism, and complexity.
Reading assignment.

1. Week 2 Instructors Notes (*Historical Evolution of Bureaucracy*, see Appendix).


Discussion questions.

1. Based on the readings, critically assess and re-evaluate the conceptualization of bureaucracy you completed in week one, discussion question one.

2. Stillman asserts that bureaucratic growth emerged (see p. 66) gradually through experimentation because of majoritarianism and that its major characteristic is complexity. Critically assess how the information on table 2.2 (Eras of Growth, p. 67) supports this assertion? Are there any alternatives to the political hypotheses?

3. Evaluate the historical evolution of bureaucracy in the class notes and critically assess its explanatory power in contrast with Stillman's political model.

Week 3: Bureaucracy and Democracy

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate bureaucracy and democratic theory in an effort to establish the context for bureaucratic research. The class notes describe the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy in terms of red tape, due process, and political control. Beetham (1996) describes bureaucracy by using democracy and various liberal-democratic principles. Stillman (2004)
offers a historical analysis of bureaucracy based on the themes of gradualism, experimentalism, majoritarianism, and complexity.

**Reading assignment.**

1. Week 3 Instructors Notes (Breadth, *Bureaucracy and Democracy*).


**Discussion questions.**

1. What, in your view, is the most important theme presented by Beetham in Chapter 3? Why is this theme important? How does this theme enhance prospects for social change?

2. Beetham claims that bureaucrats are sometimes blamed for what are in fact political problems (p. 95). Based on Stillman's external forces model (p. 79) and the readings, to what extent are bureaucrats responsible for bureaucratic successes or failures?

3. How does Meier and O’Toole’s "top down" and "bottom up" approach, as described in the class notes, fit in with Wilson's four-fold typology (Stillman, p. 123)?

**Week 4: Bureaucracy—Good or Bad?**

**Statement of purpose.**

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate arguments in favor and opposed to bureaucracy in an effort to identify

Reading assignment.

1. Week 4 Instructors Notes (Breadth, Rule Evasion).


Discussion questions.

1. Based on Goodsell's characterization of the academic debate on bureaucracy, which side has the most persuasive arguments? Which arguments and why? Does typical citizen experience with bureaucracies tend to support one side more than the other? How?

2. Stillman's proposes five subsystems (see list, p. 131). Based on the readings, which subsystem has the most impact on public policy and why?

3. Based on the readings, what are the major implications of rule evasion and discretion on Stillman's bureaucratic subsystems with respect to public policy?

Week 5: Bureaucracy—Myths and realities

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, re-evaluate, and re-integrate the myths and realities of bureaucracy in an effort to identify new
possibilities for bureaucratic research. The class notes describe several re-conceptualizations offered by recent bureaucratic research and argue for a more comprehensive model of bureaucracy. Goodsell (2004) re-examines the pros and cons of bureaucracy in terms of current research and practical applications. Stillman (2004) describes bureaucracy in terms of the internal bureaucratic environment.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 5 Instructors Notes (Depth, Reconceptualizing Bureaucracy).


Discussion questions.

1. Based on this week’s readings, critically re-assess the implications of week 4’s discussions in terms of the pros and cons of bureaucracy. Has your assessment of bureaucracy changed as a result of the readings? How and why?

2. Based on the readings, re-assess your original response to week one, discussion question two.

3. Critically assess the possibility that uncertainty reduction explains many of Goodsell's bureaupathologies (p. 55).

Week 6: Bureaucratic Growth and Bureaucratic Behavior

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the concepts of bureaucratic growth and stereotypes of bureaucratic behavior in an effort to challenge current research. The class notes describe bureaucratic growth
theory in general terms and points out that more research is needed to test the substantial theoretical base. Goodsell (2004) tests the stereotypes of bureaucratic behaviors and bureaucratic growth based on current research.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 6 Instructors Notes (Breadth, *Bureaucratic Growth*).


Discussion questions.

1. Based on Goodsell (chapter 5) arguments, are worker motivations or personality meaningful? Do you concur with Goodsell's assessment? Why or why not?

2. Based on Goodsell (Chapter 6), critically assess the assertion that public bureaucracies are not as "big or as bad" as is often suggested. Do you concur with Goodsell's assessment? Why or why not?

3. Explain how the class notes can be reconciled with Goodsell's arguments.

Week 7: The Problem of Bureaucracy

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and integrate the central themes from the post-bureaucratic movement in terms of Meier and O'Toole’s “top-down” and “bottom-up” democratic accountability models in an effort to challenge current research. The class notes comment on the post-bureaucratic movement in terms of current research concerns. Goodsell (2004) distinguishes fads from core bureaucratic principals in terms of the post-bureaucratic movement. Meier and O'Toole (2006) postulate that
many concerns that inspired the post-bureaucratic movements are in fact side effects of the central problem of bureaucracy—the conflicting impulses for democratic accountability from above (political) and democratic accountability from below (interest groups and individuals).

Reading assignment.

1. Week 7 Instructors Notes (Depth, *Critique of Post-Bureaucratic Forms*).

Discussion questions.

1. Critically assess the utility of Goodsell's gardening metaphor. To what degree does the reform measures discussed achieve those metaphorical goals? How can you personally help in the gardening process? What alternatives are there?
2. Describe and critically assess Meier and O’Toole’s governance perspective and conception of bureaucracy. How does this perspective fit Goodsell's gardening metaphor? In your view, is the source of negative views of bureaucracy misplaced? That is to say, is this negative conception of bureaucracy related to democracy? How?
3. Critically assess the validity and consequences of the current literature's critique of post-bureaucratic forms in terms of Meier and O’Toole’s governance perspective and Goodsell's gardening metaphor. Do you agree or disagree with this criticism? How?
Week 8: Bureaucratic Control and Reality

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and the theme of bureaucratic control in light of bureaucratic realities in an effort to challenge current research. The class notes comment on the control imperative in terms of neo-control, re-bureaucratization, administrative autonomy, and roles. Meier and O’Toole (2006) postulate that bureaucratic research suffers from an incomplete view of governance that distorts research and renders much of it problematic at best. Stillman (2004) describes the dynamics of creating outputs within the American bureaucracy.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 8 Instructor’s Notes (Depth: Control Imperative)

Discussion questions.

1. Meier and O’Toole (p. 22) state, "...empirical studies have misrepresented the policy process and thus encouraged misleading inferences about the forces shaping bureaucratic action." Based on the readings, do you concur with this assessment? How? To what extent does this lead to the problem of bureaucracy (negative view)? How would you empirically evaluate this relationship with public perceptions? What is the implication for Goodsell's gardening approach?
2. The major implication of Stillman's work is that the reality of the bureaucratic environment makes it problematic to implement many traditional best-practices. What are the major implications for bureaucratic discretion based on the readings?

3. Develop your own model of control based on the readings. How would you test your model?

**Week 9: Bureaucratic Structures and Environments**

**Statement of purpose.**

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, evaluate, and structural control barriers such as multiple principals and agents and environmental influences on bureaucracy in an effort to challenge current research. Meier and O’Toole (2006) describe the structural barriers to bureaucratic control in terms of a central problem of principal-agent theory—multiple principals and agents. Stillman (2004) describes major environmental trends that form feedback loops with bureaucracy such as the end of the Cold War and changing demographics.

**Reading assignment.**

1. Week 9 Instructor’s Notes (None)


Discussion questions.

1. Based on the readings, re-assess the model of control that you developed in week eight, discussion question three.

2. To what extent has Stillman's megatrends (p. 273) influenced the post-bureaucratic movement? How?

3. Give an example of a negative experience that you had with a bureaucracy. Evaluate the possibility that the negative experience was a product of some environmental factors.

Week 10: Control Revisited

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, re-evaluate, and the theme of bureaucratic control in light of bureaucratic realities in an effort to challenge current research. The class notes comment on Kaufman’s (1960) conceptualization of the dual forces of fragmentation and integration based on a case study of the U. S. Forest Service’s rangers. Meier and O’Toole (2006) argue that the multiple principals and agents problem is not a problem from an accountability perspective because multiple principals and agents are inherently more democratic than traditional principal-agent theory suggests.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 10 Instructor’s Notes (Breadth, Forces of Fragmentation and Integration)

Discussion questions.

1. Meier and O’Toole conclude (p. 90), "The influence of the bureaucracy overwhelms that of elected political leaders on a wide range of performance measures." Re-assess the model of control that you developed in week nine, discussion question one and week eight, discussion question three based on Meier and O’Toole’s conclusions and the readings.

2. How can Meier and O’Toole’s conclusion that bureaucracy influences overwhelm political influences be reconciled with Kaufman's conclusion that control was successfully integrated into the bureaucracy? How would you empirically re-assess this problem?

3. Give an example of a positive experience that you had with a bureaucracy. Evaluate the possibility that the positive experience was a product of some environmental factors.

Week 11: Reconciling Bureaucracy, Democracy, and Individualism

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, integrate, and evaluate arguments on the possibility that bureaucracy, democracy, and individualism can be reconciled. The class notes comment on the relationship between human motivation and bureaucracy in terms of bureaucratic preferences and reactions to control, sociological aspects, roles, psychological aspects, and the impact of experience on bureaucracy. Meier and O’Toole (2006) test theories of political control based on a case study of a theoretically ideal control scenario and conclude that control is problematic even under ideal circumstances. Stillman (2004) reconciles bureaucracy, democracy, and individualism by
examining three normative historical models of bureaucracy (Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson), historic patterns, and a trade-off approach.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 11 Instructor’s Notes (Depth, *Human Motivation and Bureaucracy*)


Discussion questions.

1. Meier and O’Toole (p. 119) state:

   Bureaucrats are strategic agents, but they are neither an inherently out of control anti-democratic force, as is sometimes claimed in the literature of political science, nor a natural and predictable ally of political principals or the citizenry, as students of public administration argue. Rather, they offer both possibilities...

   How can this conclusion be reconciled with Meier and O’Toole’s conclusion from chapter four that bureaucratic influences overwhelm political influences? How would you empirically test such theories?

2. Based on the readings, how does human motivation theory explain Meier and O’Toole’s conclusions regarding the role of bureaucrats?

3. Describe and critically assess Stillman's central themes in chapter seven.
Week 12: Afterthoughts

Statement of purpose.

The purpose of this week’s readings is to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, re-integrate, and re-evaluate arguments on the possibility that bureaucracy and democracy can be reconciled based on Meier and O’Toole’s (2006) conclusions. The week’s discussion questions will be used to conclude the class, reinforce its central themes, and reflect on the lessons learned.

Reading assignment.

1. Week 11 Instructor’s Notes (None)

Discussion questions.

1. Describe and critically assess Meier and O’Toole’s central conclusions in chapter six.
2. Do the lessons of this class support a broad and adaptive view of bureaucracy? Why or why not?
3. How has your conception of bureaucracy changed as a result of this class? What was the most important lesson that you learned and why is it important? How can you use the lessons that you learned to further equity and social change?

Concluding Thoughts

Bureaucracy research has been fragmented and compartmentalized by various disciplines such as political science, public administration, business management, and economics. This section has integrated the theoretical bases from the breadth section and depth sections into a
coherent graduate-level course on bureaucracy. The purpose of this integration goes beyond mere understanding. For bureaucratic research to fulfill its promise of positive social change, it must be empirically reassessed for validity in order to be of any practical value. Failure to do so may cause social tensions and ethical concerns relating to social equity. Bureaucracy, in many ways determines winners and losers. But, with proper research conceptualizations, perhaps this can be changed to a positive-sum gain: that is to say we may all be winners—winners of our own prosperity and egalitarianism. This paper is a call to arms in that pursuit.
References


Appendix

Week 2 Instructor’s Class Notes—Historical Evolution of Bureaucracy

The development of bureaucracy conceptually parallels the development of both public administration literature as well as organizational theory literature. These two literatures incorporate the political and economic perspectives, as they parallel economic and political development specifically in terms of complexity. This section will describe the general chain of events of bureaucracy’s historical development. This synthesis is will fully develop bureaucratic theory, its assumptions, its concerns, and finally, future prospects for additional research. For the purpose of analysis, this paper will accept Shafritz and Ott’s (1996) nine historically based divisions of various perspectives of organizational theory and will transpose the development of bureaucracy within this framework. While there are limits to the framework, particularly in its presumption of linearity, the framework is useful—particularly in the American context for which it was developed. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that an interdisciplinary theory of bureaucracy is evolving over time.

Early period of bureaucratic development (survival mode).

Before venturing into the modern development of the notion of bureaucracy, it is important to note than many of the developments were reiterations of historically developed themes. For example (see Chronology of Organization Theory, Shafritz and Ott, , 1996, pp. 11-13), delegation of authority was discussed in 1491 B.C.E. in the Bible, hierarchal organizations were discussed in Sun Tzu’s The Art of War in 500 B.C.E., organization and culture were discussed by Aristotle in 360 B.C.E. and by Ibn Khaldun in 1377, unity of command was discussed in The Prince by Machiavelli in 1513, and the division of labor was described by Adam Smith in 1776. The point is that many of our modern concerns regarding bureaucracy are
nothing new—they are merely re-popularized. As a practical matter, much of the early work on bureaucracy and organization related specifically to national defense and war. The early period of bureaucracy focused on “best practices.” What the period lacked was a systematic and comprehensive theory for analysis.

Classical period of bureaucratic development (science mode).

Shafritz and Ott (1996, p. 1) defined an organization as “a social unit with some particular purposes.” This definition closely approximates this paper’s conception of bureaucracy with some differences with respect to the evolution of money and capitalism. According to Shafritz and Ott (1996, p. 31) there are four major tenants of organizational theory in the classical school: organizations have specific production or economic goals, there is “one best way” to achieve those goals and this way can be found scientifically, production is maximized by the division of labor, and organizations act based on rational economic principles. Within the context of the industrial revolution, these tenants apply to the classical theory of bureaucracy and there are many examples. Henry Fayol published General Principles of Management in 1916. This work essentially reviewed management principles such as the division of labor, authority, and unity of command that are fundamental to bureaucracy—especially in terms of its ideal management. Fayol gave hierarchy and order to bureaucracy. Fredrick Taylor published The Principles of Scientific Management in 1916. Taylor gave bureaucracy its rational and scientific basis. Max Weber’s Bureaucracy was developed in 1914 but published after his death in 1922. Weber gave bureaucracy its attributes and its rule-based character and assumptions of scientific rationality. The classical period developed the theoretical base of bureaucratic literature, but this theory was broad and untested within the new economic realities.
Neoclassical period of bureaucratic development (practical mode).

The neoclassical period did not replace the classical period per se—it was a critique of it (see Shafritz and Ott, p. 96). For example, Chester Barnard published *The Economy of Incentives* in 1938, which challenged bureaucracy’s cooperative assumptions via incentives and reiterated its formal and informal social structures (particularly communication). Herbert Simon published *The Proverbs of Administration* in 1946 and challenged the classical beliefs in idealized efficient bureaucracies. Simon essentially stated that there is no “one best way” and “it depends” to bureaucratic theory. Philip Selznick published *Foundations of the Theory of Organization* in 1948 and gave bureaucracy a psychological challenge: How do you deal with individuals who have free will and may not desire to achieve organizational goals? What if they actively work against (i.e., co-opt) the bureaucracy’s purpose? Cyert and March published *A Behavioral Theory of Organization Objectives* in 1959 and gave bureaucracy the idea that organizational objectives may negotiated through a bargaining process between coalitions of individuals. In essence, Cyert and March offered a mechanism to address Selznick’s concerns. While neoclassical bureaucracy identified human motivation as an issue, it failed to identify how bureaucracies could respond to it.

Behavioral period of bureaucratic development (human mode).

The behavioral period put the person back into bureaucracy. Shafritz and Ott (see p. 150) noted that all of the behavioral theories derived from several assumptions: bureaucracy serves human needs; bureaucracies and people are mutually dependent; and goodness of fit between bureaucracies and people matters. Mary Follet published *The Giving of Orders* in 1926 and gave bureaucracy a methodology to change the habit patterns of workers instead of simply gaining intellectual agreement. Abraham Maslow published *A Theory of Human Motivation* in 1943 and
gave bureaucracy a framework for understanding the needs of its individual members as well as a hierarchy of the importance of those needs. Douglas McGregor published *The Human Side of Enterprise* in 1957 and gave bureaucracy a mechanism to maximize its goal attainment—organizing the bureaucracy in such a way that personal and organizational goals align. For example, job enlargement, participatory management, etc. Finally, Irving Janis gave bureaucracy the idea that “groupthink” was a problem of excessive consensus building—essentially holding that excessive participatory management techniques also had limitations. The behavioral period of bureaucratic development established a clear human context for bureaucracies; it developed the theoretical base for modern psychology and sociology in the process. What the period lacked was an easy and rational response to control such tendencies.

*Structural period of bureaucratic development (structure mode).*

The structural period was based on classical bureaucracy, however, it reiterated the importance of the concepts of hierarchy, authority, specialization, the division of labor, and rules within one-best rational (efficient) structure, but did so within the context of human relations and systems theories. Under structural bureaucracy, for the first time hierarchical organizational structures were challenged and new forms of bureaucracy began to emerge. For example, Burns and Stalker published *Mechanistic and Organic Systems* in 1961, which described a less rigidly stratified bureaucratic structure that was more applicable to changing conditions. Burns and Stalker gave bureaucracy a continuum of more flexible yet relative degrees of hierarchical control specifically useful under different environmental conditions. Blau and Scott published *The Concept of Formal Organization* in 1962, placing social theory in the center of bureaucracy with both formal and informal organizations. Blau and Scott state, “Regardless of the time and effort devoted by management to designing a rational organization chart and elaborate procedure
manuals, this official plan can never completely determine the conduct and social relations of the organization’s members” (in Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 216). Mintzberg published *The Five Basic Parts of the Organization* in 1979. Mintzberg transposed five basic parts of an organization—its operating core of workers, middle line supervisors, strategic leadership, and most importantly a technical structure of analysts—that helped bureaucracy adapt. Mintzberg also provided for a support staff that operated outside of the traditional work environment. In short, Mintzberg gave bureaucracy its increasingly complex structure. The structural period of bureaucratic development introduced the idea of complexity, but failed to develop it in depth.

*Systems theory period of bureaucratic development (complexity mode).*

Systems theory extended the human relations and environmental arguments regarding bureaucracy into the venue of social Darwinism (i.e., competition and survival of the fittest) of the various components of an organization as well as for the organization as a whole. Shafritz and Ott (1996, pp. 254-255) characterized the systems theory as an interdependent set of complex elements—inputs, processes, outputs, feedback loops, and the environment—each of which change in response to a change in the other parts. Indeed, in 1966 Katz and Kahn published *Organizations and the Systems Concept*, which first described the nature and consequences of open systems theory. Katz and Kahn expanded the nature and complexity of bureaucracy in a rational framework that used the transfer of energy as an analogy and based its analyses on a state of quasi-equilibrium or homeostasis, which set the basic principle of systems theory as, “the preservation of the character of the system” (Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 281). As a result, two important consequences emerge for bureaucracy. First, open systems tend to become more elaborate and specialized over time. Second, open systems are characterized by equifinality (see Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 283), which means that there is more than one path to reach any
particular outcome. In 1972, Kast and Rosenzweig published *General Systems Theory: Applications for Organization and Management*, which argued that there was a continuum between traditional “closed/stable/mechanistic” organizations and “open/adaptive/organic” organizations (see figure 2, Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 312). Kast and Rosenzweig argued that the main problem with determining organizational effectiveness (for an excellent analysis of effectiveness, see p. 308) is that it requires three levels of analyses: environmental level, organizational or social system level, and subsystems (individual) levels. This point is critical for bureaucracy generally.

*Political power period of bureaucratic development (political mode).*

According to Shafritz and Ott (1996, p. 352) the political power period challenged the view that “the personal preferences of organizational members are restrained by systems of formal rules, authority, and by norms of rational behavior.” Instead, individual and coalitions of individuals had their own interests and as a result, they competed for scarce resources using various forms of formal and informal power and influence. The importance of power and political theory with respect to bureaucracy was that it challenged the primary assumption of rational choice models—that organizations had unified goals and objectives (see Pfeffer, 1996, p. 365). In 1959, French and Raven published *The Basis of Social Power*, which described power and influence in terms of psychological change. As a result, French and Raven describe five bases of power: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power. The implications for bureaucracy were immense. Indeed, power and politics are fundamental aspects of bureaucracy that are frequently overlooked. This is another example of the rediscovery of an age-old concern relating to hierarchy and authority that goes back to the
Old Testament and Moses. The political power period of bureaucratic development developed the theoretical base for power, however, it failed to place it within its proper context.

Cultural sense-making period of bureaucratic development (culture mode).

Cultural sense-making bureaucracy, like power and political bureaucracy had an unconstrained view of bureaucratic preferences that challenged the ideal of rational decisionmaking. In this period, bureaucratic preferences were said to be controlled by cultural norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions (see Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 421). As a result, every organizational culture was distinct. The main implication for this school of bureaucracy was that the bureaucratic culture of organizations was a critical determinant efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, this school focused on qualitative methods and examined, for example, the identification and functions of symbols. The objective of this period was to find ways for management to control organizational culture in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

According to Shafritz and Ott (1996, p. 424), Peters and Waterman’s (1982) work In Search of Excellence and W. E. Deming’s Total Quality Management (TQM) added to the expansion of this movement. In 1985, Schein published Defining Organizational Culture, which essentially held that organizational culture was a dynamic that was a function of leadership. Schein defined organizational culture as,

A pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 433-434)

The major implication of this work for bureaucracy was the belief that bureaucratic culture could be, to some extent, determined and controlled by the organization. In 1980, Louis published
*Surprise and Sense Making: What Newcomers Experience in Entering Unfamiliar Organizational Settings*, which described one way for this control to be established. Louis states,

Socialization practices should be developed that help provide newcomers with insiders’ situation-specific interpretive schemes. The insiders’ view can supplement and balance inadequacies in newcomers’ sense making tendencies and can hasten the development of more adequate long-term self-sufficient functioning (Shafritz and Ott, 1996, p. 453)

In 1993, Trice and Beyer published *Changing Organizational Cultures* that went even farther than Louis and specified six considerations to use when changing culture: capitalizing on propitious moments; combining caution with optimism; understanding resistance to cultural change; changing many elements while maintaining continuity; recognizing the importance of implementation; and selecting, modifying, and creating appropriate cultural forms. The cultural Sense-making period of bureaucratic development not only recognized the importance of organizational culture, it suggested mechanisms to control it. What this period failed to do was to synthesize the ideas in accordance with new economic reality of global competition.

*Reform period of bureaucratic development (reform mode).*

Shafritz and Ott (1996) noted that the reform period concluded that organizational culture was critical to bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness. Under this school, flexibility, responsiveness, empowerment, and customer service were prominent. It was during this period that organizational culture came to its preeminent position. This period had seven major reform movements (see Shafritz and Ott, 1996, pp. 486-487): total quality management (TQM), Japanese management, the search for excellence, quality of work life (QWL), learning organizations, reinventing government, and reengineering. In terms of bureaucracy, the reform school revolved around a central premise—that bureaucracies could be enhanced using organizational culture and other mechanisms in order to adapt more successfully to an
environment that was susceptible to ever-increasing rates of competition and change. In short, the Weberian ideal of a rigid rule-based bureaucracy based on hierarchical control characterized by red tape became the principal problem. The reform period developed the theoretical base for many new (i.e., rediscovered) management principles. However, it failed to integrate these principles based on their practical consequences.

Postmodern period of bureaucratic development (unfettered competition and technology mode).

The reform bureaucratic development began the process of re-evaluating bureaucracy in terms of organizational culture. Postmodern bureaucracy, in contrast, re-evaluated all aspects of bureaucracy—even rationality—based on modern information technology, competition, and in particular, globalism. In terms of bureaucracy, the postmodern school questioned many traditional aspects of bureaucracy under the lens of constructionism, the idea that reality is socially constructed through specific language and symbols and not merely objective and rational. The main implication was that a new and more comprehensive view of bureaucracy was required to make sense of the bureaucratic literature within the contexts of general social change—capitalism, globalism, and information technology. The postmodern period assessed the impact of an emergent unconstrained bureaucratic competition model on particular bureaucracies. The answer to this question remains unclear and it is at the forefront of bureaucratic research. In the future, this line of research may parallel sustainable development literature.

The evolution of bureaucracy was dialectical in that new concepts emerged periodically in response to practical challenges—usually in the form of competition. While the ideas were not necessarily new, what was new was the increasing complexity to which bureaucracies responded.
As a result, bureaucracies became increasingly complex over time; indeed, they continue to evolve today. However, the evolution is limited to the psychological and sociological processes and tolerances of its human masters. As a result, an interdisciplinary approach to bureaucracy has begun to emerge. Future research should focus on the role of technology in bureaucracy. This theme is at the cutting edge of bureaucratic research and requires development.