Lecture goals: Introduce a number of perspectives on how organizations function.

Theory is one of those misunderstood words that have become part of America's anti-intellectual folklore. For many there is reality, and there is 'theory'. Reality is what actually happens, theory is what academics and guv'mint bureaucrats in Washington think happens, or else what those same individuals think should or would happen if a particular stimulus were applied.

However my (old school: hard copy) dictionary offers the following as its first definition of theory: "the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one or other," and this as its third: "the general or abstract principles of a body of fact, a science, or an art."

This is what this lecture means by 'organization theory': the general principles of organizations, derived from factual analysis of their operation. These theories are meant as broad perspectives on how organizations function. Note that this is a bit broader in focus than last week's narrower emphasis on 'paradigms' of public administration, but a lot of people argue that the differences between public, private, and nonprofit management are over-stated.

Some final comments from Raadschelders and Vigoda-Gadot’s discussion of Max Weber and organization theory:

- “It is important to note that Weber never said that bureaucracy was efficient, only that it was more efficient than other known types of organization” (p. 133).
- “It is premodern bureaucratic behavior that is reflected in the stereotypes that people still hold and that is found in novels of administrative fiction” (p. 136).
- “Unfortunately, we will find people in any organization, whether public, nonprofit or private, who pursue their own goals rather than serve the public and organization’s interest and who violate the intent of one or more of the dimensions of Weber’s ideal
type. No type of organization or set of rules can be developed that will constrain the few tempted to abuse the system. We suggest that modern public bureaucracies in Western societies have come closest to constraining the chance that individual interests trump those of the public at large. With regard to bureaucracies in the private sector, it has proven to be more difficult to constrain individual interests and then especially at the higher levels in companies and corporations. Sadly, there are plenty of examples in the United States alone.” (source!)

“It is in the course of the nineteenth century that bureaucracies no longer only serve a ruler or ruling class, but serve a citizenry and their government. Also, government bureaucracies no longer only extract resources from the population, they also provide many services. [Public] bureaucracy today is very different from its historical counterpart” (p. 137).

- While we’re on this pro-reality, pro-public bureaucracy theme:
  “Today, bureaucratic organizations are populated by people we know; they are educated, they are professional, and their interest is that of the public and not only of those who were elected into office…There is no country today that does not have a bureaucratic set of organizations. Bureaucracy is here to stay; Weber was right about that” (p. 155-6).

- Though Raadschelders and Vigoda-Gadot do qualify this. There are public employees who are:
  - *Politicos* – essentially those who work connections to advance their careers. The public interest is secondary.
  - *Conservers* – perhaps the classic public employee who trades a secure job with live-able pension for the chance to get rich. These, again, will do their jobs but without much public service passion.
  - *States(persons)* – “are loyal to government and society as a whole” (p. 154).

**Theories**

*Organizations.* By way of introduction to organizations, Raadschelders and Vigoda-Gadot (p. 132) suggest some basic characteristics of organizations. Organizations feature:

1. continuous administrative activity,
2. formal rules and procedures,
3. clear and specified offices,
4. hierarchal organization of offices,
5. use of written documents,
6. adequate supply of means (desk, paper, office, and so on),
7. nonownership of office (separation of office from officeholder),
8. procedures of rational discipline and control.”

As indicated last week, this ‘bureaucratic’ approach to governance has been highly criticized yet, as I suggest last week, the critics clearly have little experience of life without the benefits of this bureaucratic revolution. To repeat a quote I used to illustrate the ‘pre-modern’ paradigm from lecture two:

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1 …and Raadschelders and Vigoda-Gadot discuss this at length (p. 129-38).
“Relative to the organization form of public administration, and despite the justifiable criticisms of the model and the functioning of bureaucracy, it is necessary to point out that at least in the Portuguese case, one of the reasons for its limited public responsibility and for the limitations in its efficiency and efficacy lie precisely in insufficient bureaucracy. The bureaucratic model of organization, in the sense that the classics of organization theory postulate it – Weber, Fayol, Taylor and more recently Mintzberg and Friedberg –, justly underline that to limit the dysfunctions of an unprofessional and arbitrary administration, the administration should conduct itself through functional specialization and qualification of public servants, hierarchal positions with specific competencies and chains of command, systems of law and procedures for implementation of law, and impartiality of administrative decisions and acts. We now consider that one of the reasons for the evident dysfunctions [in government] result from the non-observance of the so-called bureaucratic model of organization” (Mozzicafreddo 2001, p. 14)

This is from a Portuguese (actually an Argentine of Italian descent who has lived in Portugal for decades) scholar who notes that after Portugal emerged from dictatorship in 1974, shedding literally centuries of un-democratic, Medieval rule, a major problem that the country faced was developing the revolutionary sort of bureaucracy that we moderns pretend to hate. Imagine organizational life without any of those eight characteristics?

They then go on to identify various pathologies associated with each of these characteristics of modern organizations. I’ll summarize them as follows:

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<th>Characteristics of organizations, and potential pathologies</th>
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<td>Characteristics</td>
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<td>1. continuous administrative activity</td>
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<td>8. procedures of rational discipline and control.</td>
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Source: derived from Raadschelders and Vigoda-Gadot, p. 132-3.

*Culture. R & V-G discuss this at some length (pages 138-46). The more accessible model they present is that of Painter and Peters, who identify at least nine broad administrative cultural traditions:*

² As a read the chapter, I was puzzled by R & V-G’s use of the term ‘iron cage’, even though they did not elaborate. A quick google search clarified this: Weber didn’t use the term, not least because he wrote in German. The term ‘iron cage’ was coined by Talcott Parsons, a famous sociologist who first translated Weber into English (click).
• “Anglo-American, Napoleonic, Germanic, Scandinavian, Latin American, Postcolonial South Asian and African, East Asian, Soviet, and Islamic” (p. 138).

R & V-G reject this, though, as ‘a bit of a hodgepodge’ then go on to identify a number of specific cultural features which are much less accessible:

• the nature of time, high versus low context cultures, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualist versus collective, masculine versus feminine cultures, and short-or long-term orientation.

Some of these were developed by Geert Hofstede, a prominent Dutch sociologist, who developed measures for each (we will use his Individualism measure at some point in this class). Yet when one looks at these various indicators, one is left with broad types not dissimilar to Painter and Peters’ ‘hodgepodge’ of national types.

For our purposes, just remember that

• There are particularistic cultural differences in how societies look at governance, and we Americans (along with our fellow English speaking countries) are a clearly identifiable, and successful (but by no means uniquely or exceptionally so) type.

• But universalism is also evident. There is not one way, or even one best way. There are lots of bad ways, though, and many of the successful models have much in common.3

Open and closed models

The closed model. Henry (p. 55-9, in a book I usually use in undergraduate classes) discusses the open and closed models of organizations. The logic of the 'closed' metaphor is that these theories of organization tend to focus only on what happens within the organization. Examples of closed models of organization:

• Bureaucratic theory (Max Weber's model of bureaucracy), based on:
  o hierarchy;
  o promotion based on professional merit and skill;
  o the development of a career civil service;
  o the reliance on and use of rules and regulations;
  o impersonality of relationships among career professionals in the bureaucracy and with the clientele.

• Scientific management (Frederick Taylor)
  o Efficiency (good), but
  o depersonalization (bad, all else equal)

• Administrative management: the focus is on principles of administration, a sort of micro-approach, focusing on fundamental skills, the knowledge of which will make one a better manager. These were awkwardly summed up by Gulick and Urwick as POSDCORB:
  o Planning

3 This has been a keen research interest of mine. While doing research in Brazil for my dissertation, I noticed a) a lot of Brazilian angst about the relevance of ‘the American model’ to Brazil, b) a number of unique characteristics of Brazil were cited as reasons why ‘the American model’ would not apply, c) yet these same characteristics were also identified by Brazilians as problems they needed to fix, and d) ‘the American model’ developed to fix many of those same problems (see Candler 2002). Then a decade later I got to looking at what the Australians, Canadians, Indians and Filipinos had to say for themselves, and discovered pretty much this same dynamic (see Candler 2014).
The open model. The logic of the 'open' metaphor is that these theories of organization recognize that while the internal functions of organizations are important, organizations can not be understood (or effectively managed!) without an appreciation of their broader setting, and influences from that setting. Henry (p. 59-65) identifies as open organizational models:

- The human relations school
  - Hawthorne experiments: motivation matters, people are more complex than machines.
  - Maslow's hierarchy of needs
    - Physiological needs (food, clothing, shelter)
    - Economic security
    - Love or belonging
    - Self-esteem
    - Self-actualization
  - Maslow's point: once basic needs are satisfied, people seek self-esteem (which they can gain in addition to economic security) and self actualization (a sort of higher self esteem).
    - Is this true? To be devil's advocate, these theories were developed by people like us: people pursuing graduate education. Many of us are all about self actualization.
    - Yet when I look at the broader population, even among the rich I see relatively little self actualization, and an awful lot of gross, un-Christian (remember the line about the camel and the eye of the needle?) conspicuous consumption: we are what we own.
    - Among the poor/ middle class, people similarly seem motivated not so much by self actualization, but rather by collective validation, being part of the herd. Hummers are in? Then you gotta have one, so people look at you on the street with awe and envy: you are part of the group, and wealthy enough to afford this expensive item. NASCAR popular?: Then you gotta hang that Dale, Jr. flag outside your house so the neighborhood knows you’re a faithful member of NASCAR nation. Go ‘Gators! I mean seriously, folks: blue and orange?
  - Herzberg's hygienic and motivational factors -- much like Maslow's hierarchy. Again, environment can motivate, people will seek status and self-esteem through work.
    - Public sector motivation -- relative to the private sector, the public sector has traditionally featured
      - more economic security, and
      - potentially more satisfying work (helping – or bossing? -- people can be more fun than machining gears, or selling people a car they don't need).
- Organization development -- "a planned, organization-wide attempt directed from the top that is designed to increase organizational effectiveness and viability through calculated" (p. 66-7) changes. These would include:
  - improve the individual's ability to get along with others;
- legitimate human emotions in the organization;
- increase mutual understanding;
- reduce tensions;
- enhance team management and intergroup cooperation;
- develop more effective techniques for conflict resolution through non-authoritarian and interactive methods, and;
- evolve less structured and more organized organizations.

Blah blah blah: all very touchy-feely! However,
- I’ve been in enough organizations that could have used any number of the above, that I can appreciate their importance!
- I’ve also been in a fair few organizations in which this sort of codswallop was offered as a symbolic, meaningless response to real problems.

- Organization as a unit in its environment -- shifts the focus from sub-units of the organization (and its internal functioning) to the organization as a whole, and its interaction with its environment.

The synthesis. By the way, there is a bit of 'straw-person bashing' going on here, in that the closed model is clearly seen as inferior to the open model, and so the closed model is presented in an unflattering light. This is very unfortunate, in large part for the very reason that I offer a ‘pre-modern’ paradigm as one of my key paradigms of public administration: looking at how administration can be improved by looking outside the organization at its relationships with the rest of society, including its own workers (!) really wasn’t really possible until better management within the organization itself was sorted out.

So Henry offers a synthesis of the two models, "predicated on three very reasonable assumptions" (p. 71).
- Organizations and their environments can and do change.
- Organizations and the people in them act to survive.
- Organizations and the people in them can and do learn from experience, including failures and successes.

Government organization and regulation

Citizens and regulation. Schiavo-Campo and McFerson (the book I used last year) make a number of good points regarding regulation, and citizen responses to these. Key characteristics:
- legitimacy -- do citizens respect their government?
  - Civic responsibility – as you’ll see later in this class, if citizens do not respect their government, a second question then is whether this civic disrespect is legitimate, by which I mean based on reasonable, well-founded concerns. Don’t forget our first lecture (p. 4), with its bold (data supported) claim that: “relative to the size of the United States, government is smaller than in these other large rich countries, and has a relatively light regulatory footprint. Our country is also among the least corrupt, most free and most democratic societies in the history of our species.”
- incentives -- can government provide disincentives to violate regulations, or provide incentives to follow them?
- culture/ habit -- what do informal rules encourage citizens to do?
Conceptual bases of regulation. We covered this to some extent in week one, in terms of ‘why government?’ Key issues:

- Benefits of regulation
- Costs of regulation
  - Put these two together, and we get cost-benefit analysis of regulation (and government policy in general). For an example, click link.
  - Another perspective is that good policy is about weighing the relative costs of market v. government failure, as illustrated in our week one lecture.
- Quality of regulation – does government have the capacity to implement what, on paper, look like reasonable regulations?

On especially these last two points, S-C & McF’s Table 3.3 (at right, from p. 66) provides data regarding the nature of regulation in the US, in comparative context. Despite public criticisms of government in the US, government regulation in the US is consistently less costly and more efficient than that of most of the rest of the world, and even of the other rich countries (the ‘OECD average’ in the table). This effective, economical government is an enormous competitive advantage for US producers, and one which we put at risk if our anti-government attitudes are incorrect. More data on this is provided in Table 2, on the next page.

Types of regulations.

- "Economic regulations that directly affect the market, such as rules of pricing, competition, market entry or exit, employment, contract enforcement, and access to credit;
- “social regulations to protect public interests, such as the environment, health, safety, and so on (e.g. health warnings on cigarettes); and
- “administrative regulations, through which governments collect information on a variety of subjects and intervene in individual cases under specified criteria” (p. 53).
Table 2

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Sources: Transparency International (2007). Higher scores indicate less perception of corruption. Freedom House (2011). Ratings are in terms of civil and political freedom, on a 1 (free) to 7 (unfree) scale. The number presented here is the average of these two scores. Government Effectiveness: Economist Intelligence Unit (2006). Legal System and Property Rights: Fraser (2008). Finally, the ‘public services’ and ‘functional state index’ is simply the Failed State Index of the Fund for Peace (2008) reversed, with higher scores now reflecting well-functioning states and the effective provision of public services, rather than failing ones.

**Deregulation.** As Schiavo-Campo and McFerson discuss, we have seen the world become far more crowded, society become far more complex, and so ‘regulatory inflation’ (p. 59-60). After all, growth in the U.S. federal government includes agencies like the Federal Aviation Administration, which is not specifically listed in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution (any more than our equally un-Constitutional Air Force is). Still, in many societies it is believed that this regulatory inflation has gone beyond that necessary to cope with that greater complexity, and so deregulation has been considered.

So if you’re going to deregulate, how do you do it right? Ingredients of successful regulation (are generally):

- "unequivocal support from the top political leadership;
- no interference during the process;
- tough penalties for officials who do not comply;
- defined time limit for action;
- professional skills of the office in charge; and
o broad credibility with officials and the public." (p. 60)

- Improving the functioning of existing regulations
  o "reviewing each rule to assure maximum clarity;
  o reviewing each rule to simplify it as much as possible while preserving its purpose;
  o reviewing actual enforcement, removing unnecessary bottlenecks, and providing additional resources on a selective basis;
  o making affirmative outreach efforts to disseminate and explain the regulations to the individuals and groups directly affected; and
  o enlisting the public's cooperation in rule enforcement, insofar as possible and as it may be appropriate." (p. 62)

- Streamlining the regulatory framework
  o "As previously stated, a scalpel, not a hatchet is needed. One must consider the original purpose of each rule and anticipate the reasonable consequences of removing it.
  o The review should embody a zero-based mindset, by which the burden-of-proof is placed onto those who argue for retaining a given rule rather than those who favor removing it.
  o A large part of such burden of proof should be to demonstrate that the regulation can be efficiently enforced given the country's administrative and judicial capacity.
  o Maximum feasible feedback from those affected by the rule or its removal is especially necessary when the rule is old or was enacted without sufficient participation and consultation in the first place." (p. 62)

- Streamlining the economic regulatory framework
  o "focus deregulation on competitive markets -- deregulating in uncompetitive markets carries severe risks because an unfettered private monopoly is much worse for society than a well-regulated one.
  o enhance government protection of property rights (including creditors' rights), which lowers the cost of doing business by making in unnecessary for individuals and firms to recur to more expensive defensive strategies.
  o minimize recourse to formal court intervention, as delays and inefficiencies in the judicial system are a constraint to equity and efficiency in most countries; and
  o focus also on the regulators rather than only on the regulations and ascertain whether their function is still necessary." (p. 62)

Policy-making machinery. In their chapter four Schaivo-Campo and McFerson especially focus on the involvement of government officials in policy-making, even though "the job of the administrative apparatus is to implement policy and not to make it" (p. 70).

- Good policy decisions criteria:
  o "Discipline requires policy decisions to be internally consistent, financially realistic, and capable of being implemented. (For example, large new expenditures or large new tax cuts without regard to their affordability violate this principle.)
  o Stability in decision making and avoiding frequent policy reversals have been shown to be important for investment and economic activity.
  o Transparency of policy-making procedures is equally important. While the deliberations themselves should normally be confidential to permit free internal debate, the process by which decisions are taken must be clear, explicit, and public.
  o Selectivity should guide the process of policy making (i.e., the attention of policy makers should be systematically channeled to decisions that warrant such attention, as the
capacity to decide is the scarcest government resource of all and should not be wasted on trivial matters)" (p. 71).
  o Yet this sounds easier than it is. When insoluble policies are brought to the fore because of a shocking event that media hyperventilate about, citizens often demand action. Politicians are happy to respond, being certain to capture the moment with a photo op. Everyone is happy.

- Information! The authors emphasize the importance of information. This was explained well by Bill McGregor, an IU-SPEA (my alma mater) Professor. McGregor's identification of the problem:
  "An extraordinary knowledge disparity exists between public service careerists... and a civitas that wants problems solved. The gap is not only large, it appears to be growing and the effects can only be worrisome. The knowledge gap may well contribute to mistrust of institutions by citizens to know when things are not working but not able to say what the possibilities for successful intervention are. The gap may explain some of the measured contempt public bureaucrats have displayed toward an unknowing and disrespectful public" (1984, p. 127).
Note that, if you accept the logic of expertise (and/or the division of labor that lies at the heart of the productivity of capitalism), then that ‘knowledge disparity’ is largely one of public managers knowing more than citizens, and citizens not accepting that knowledge (or, as some have put it recently, all opinions are not equal).
McGregor's solutions:
  o Relying on professional ethics to give the public administrator the courage to 'educate' the public, in the sense of challenging them with the hard choices that he implies above.
  o Devolving "responsibility for service delivery and production back to the communities where the problems reside" (p. 128).
  o "nurturing a potentially argumentative public... a dominant ethic of public service must be that careerists keep citizens fully informed about the possibilities for public service... The democratic point is that the public need is for intelligently organized information presented so that informed decisions can be made. Stonewalling public scrutiny by dumping masses of unintelligible data into the laps of inquiring citizens is as bad as shredding public records" (p. 128).

The organization of central government. I especially liked Schiavo-Campo and McFerson's discussion of government organization, in terms of ministries (or cabinet level departments -- source). My favourite example of this is that Grenada, a Caribbean country with about 110,000 people (less than Saint Johns County) and a total land area of 133 square miles (smaller than every Florida County), has 14 cabinet level departments. The United States, with 3,500,000 square miles and 321,598,083 people (source) at 3:22:14 p.m., 25 August 2015, up from 318,745,295 people on 26 Aug 2014; has 15 Cabinet departments (source).
- First, note that their focus is on central government: that which sits in the national capital.
  o Despite this, the discussion still applies to other levels of government in a federal system, as states also have these various departments.
- Second, they note that the separation of powers, that we Americans are so proud of, is actually (sacrebleu!) of cheese eating surrender monkey French origin (p. 85 – click for a discussion of Montesquieu)!
Though the contemporary American application of the separation of powers is fairly
unique, the three functions identified within the American system of ‘checks and
balances’ exist in all countries: the executive (implements laws/policies), legislative
(enacts law/policy), and judiciary.

- Third, note again that government in the United States is relatively small. Despite being the
third most populous country in the world, and the largest economy (i.e. most complex
society) by far, the US central government has fewer cabinet level departments than the
world average: fifteen relative to the world average of 16 (though the ‘developed world’
average is 14).

- Principles for allocating government functions (p. 75-7):
  - non-fragmentation
  - homogeneity
  - non-overlap
  - span of control

**Deseve’s new agenda for public administration!**

Finally, a short, pithy practitioner’s six ideas for managing modern public organizations:
1. It’s all about being ethical, stupid – ‘nuff said.
2. Transparency promotes accountability – “the disinfecting power of sunlight!”
3. Budgets are the primary management tool – budgets and management are the same thing.
4. Networks and hierarchies can coexist – networks have led many to crow about the death of
   hierarchy.
5. People want to work in government – though he equivocates a bit. Note, too, that the recent
   pay cuts, layoffs, and negative vibes can only have hurt the supply and quality of labour
   offered to public sector organizations.
6. Think locally, act globally – engage, and learn from, others.

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**Summary:** Organizations take on lives independent of their members, and government
organizations have a reasonably good record of achievement despite our cheese eating surrender
monkey (the most bizarre [cheese-eating surrender monkey clip](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdJ2yWJQb6s) I could find which, not
surprisingly given my stated selection criterion, makes no sense) separation of powers!

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