

1 Organizational Behavior as a Way of Thinking and Acting

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

To be effective, public administrators and nonprofit managers—from police chiefs to policy analysts, from agency executives to child protective services workers, from school superintendents to public health officers—must lead and motivate others within and outside of their organizations, function effectively in groups, communicate clearly, think creatively, navigate change successfully, and manage conflict. They must cope with their own and their employees' stress, be self-reflective and open to growth and learning, and renew and reinvigorate their commitment to public service in spite of sometimes unreachable goals, limited resources, and an often hostile public. Thankfully and remarkably, given the challenges they face, thousands of public and nonprofit servants succeed in meeting these challenges every day.

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

1. To examine what is known about the factors that affect human behavior in public and nonprofit organizations and how these ideas inform the practice of public and nonprofit administration
2. To develop an appreciation of the value of analyzing management problems from the standpoint of individual behavior and how that perspective can augment action and analysis at the organizational level

3. To explore some of the most contemporary approaches to management and leadership
4. To increase understanding of the core behavioral principles on which personal, interpersonal, and public leadership skills are based
5. To foster competency in critical management and leadership skills—that is, to develop the capacity to act effectively and responsibly under the stress, complexity, and uncertainty of the “real world” of public and nonprofit administration
6. To provide cases, exercises, simulations, and evaluative instruments that will enable students to learn both cognitively and experientially

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

Consider the following scenario: In your 10 years with the state social services department, you have earned a reputation as a problem solver. Because of this reputation, you have just been appointed as the head of a division charged with finding and securing payments from individuals who are not paying their required child support. The previous administrator left in a storm of controversy following a legislative study showing an abysmal track record in payment and widespread dissatisfaction on the part of the parents—both those who were owed money and those who owed money. These citizens complained that they were treated discourteously and that their cases were mishandled. The study was initiated after a popular weekly newsmagazine show on television highlighted how much more effective the growing number of private companies were in finding the parents who owed money and securing payments from them. Understandably, the workers in your division are disheartened. Turnover and absenteeism are high. Workers report feeling unfairly criticized and point to the lack of necessary resources to effectively do their jobs. Yet as you talk with these individuals, you find that they are bright, committed, and hardworking. The truth is, resources *are* extremely limited, and some of the criticism does seem unwarranted. You believe that you can work with these people to build a stronger, more service-oriented division.

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

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

which we see, interpret, and attempt to respond to the specific organizational circumstances that we confront.

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

At the group level, we might ask whether existing work groups are functioning effectively. Do employees feel as if they are part of a team, or do they feel alienated from their coworkers and supervisors? Is the culture of existing groups or teams conducive to or counter to division goals? We might form task forces of employees to address particular problems, or we might reconfigure work teams to address certain types of cases. We might work with staff members to improve their group process and leadership skills. Our objective in undertaking these activities would be to strengthen work teams, enhance worker commitment and involvement, and provide the skills and support needed for the employees to achieve their goals.

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

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

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

so through the lens of individual and group behavior. For example, it is concerned with the following:

- Motivating employees
- Being an effective team member
- Leading and inspiring others
- Communicating effectively within and outside of the organization
- Making effective decisions
- Using power and politics constructively and ethically
- Creating and securing commitment to shared values
- Managing conflict productively
- Using diversity to enhance organizational performance
- Helping people to become more innovative and creative

Organizational behavior provides the tools, skills, ideas, and strategies for managing human behavior in organizations. But it should be recognized that as the study of organizational behavior spotlights individual and group behavior, it leaves other important concerns and issues at least partially in the dark. Models of organizational behavior cannot tell a manager what type of computer system to buy, nor can they directly address outcome measurement systems and other organizational issues—except in terms of their implications for human behavior. But given the undeniable importance of human behavior in the public and nonprofit sectors, the perspective of organizational behavior offers a particularly important way of thinking and acting that can help public servants to achieve organizational goals more effectively and to serve the public and their communities more responsibly. In other words, people in public and nonprofit service are the key ingredient in determining how well government serves its citizens and nonprofits serve their stakeholders. (It is important to note here that we are not using the word *citizen* in the legal sense; rather, citizens are those we serve, and citizenship is the engagement of individuals in democratic governance, regardless of legal status.)

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

This confusion arises because organizational behavior typically is defined as concerned not only with the behavior of the individual and groups but also with the influence of the individual on the organization and the influence of organizational structure, culture, and other factors on the individual. As we have seen, it deals with at least three levels of analysis: (1) the individual, (2) the group, and

(3) the organization. If it deals with organizational matters, then how is it different from organizational theory? More important, why does it matter?

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

Organizational behavior has a different orientation from that of other perspectives because it has a different focus. In organizational behavior, the starting point is the person. Accordingly, the questions that we consider in this book focus on individual and group behavior, needs, and perceptions. Is the organization meeting the needs of its people in that it allows them to work effectively? Are individual creativity and responsibility being fostered? Are there opportunities for learning and change? Is the “fit” between individuals and the organization a good one? By starting with “people concerns,” values such as human dignity, growth, fairness, and participation become paramount.

To summarize this point, organizational behavior emphasizes human behavior and individual values rather than organizational structures and organizational values. Accordingly, it leads us to take actions that aim at understanding and influencing individual human behavior. In other words, organizational behavior deals with all aspects of organizations and management, but it does so from the perspective of *people*.

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

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

FIGURE 1.1

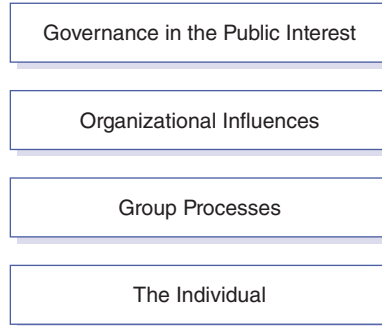
Levels of Analysis in Organizational Behavior in the Public Sector

FIGURE 1.2

U.S. Office of Personnel Management Inventory of Management Skills**The “How” of Management: Effectiveness Characteristics**

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

Source: Flanders & Utterback, 1985.

environmental factors, our ability to successfully accomplish public objectives will be enhanced.

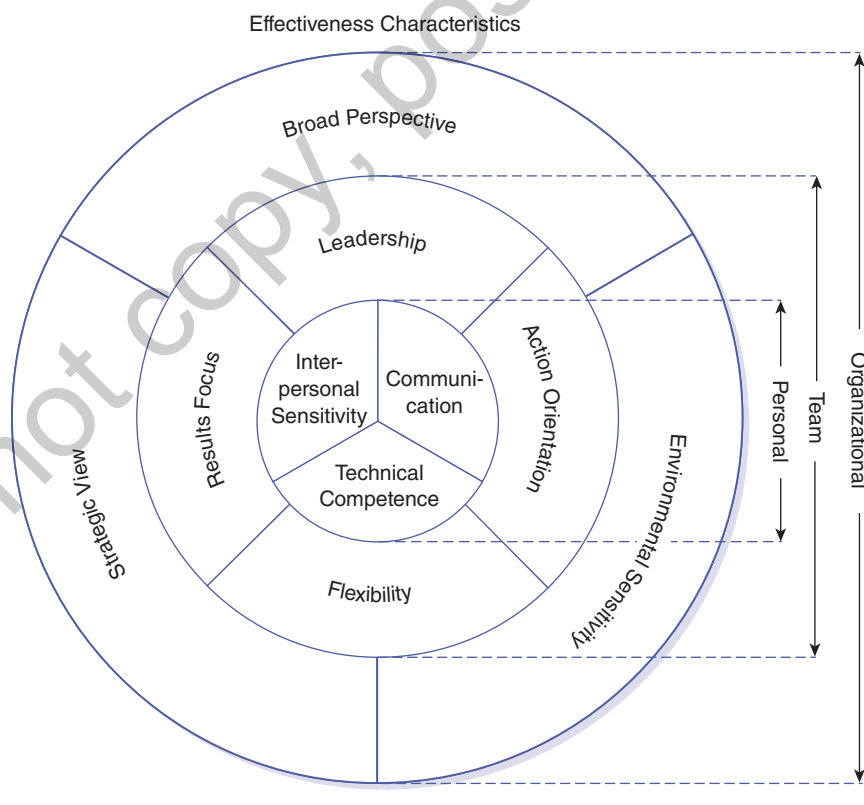
Perhaps it would be helpful to think about these issues from the perspective of the knowledge and skills needed by successful public and nonprofit servants—that

is, what do we need to know and what do we need to be able to do to act effectively and responsibly in a public or nonprofit organization? These questions were addressed in a classic study conducted by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that sought to identify the skills that are critical to managerial success in government. Based on information collected from a large number of highly effective governmental managers and executives, the researchers developed two categories of competencies: one focusing on management functions (or the “what” of government) and one focusing on effectiveness (or the “how” of government). Those competencies are summarized and paraphrased in Figure 1.2.

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

The diagram in Figure 1.3, again drawn from the OPM study, reinforces the need for competencies and skills at multiple levels. The OPM framework highlights the need for management competencies at all levels of an organization. For

FIGURE 1.3 Management Excellence Framework



Source: Flanders & Utterback, 1985.

example, it suggests that successful frontline managers must be not only technically competent but also effective communicators who demonstrate personal sensitivity. Their responses also must be consistent with those competencies emphasized at the next level. Productive mid-level managers, while being action oriented and focused on results, must at the same time demonstrate leadership and flexibility as they work to acquire the characteristics of those at the highest level—specifically, they should display a broad perspective, a strategic view, and environmental sensitivity. If executives at the top levels of a government or nonprofit agency are to flourish, then they must demonstrate the full range of effectiveness characteristics and be especially attentive to their interactions with the organization's environment. Clearly, a wide variety of skills—most notably their ability to work with and through people—will be essential to their success as public or nonprofit managers.

The Roots of Organizational Behavior

The field of organizational behavior is fairly young. Although we have been interested in the behavior of people in organizations for a long time, most early approaches focused on simply controlling workers and manipulating their environment to maximize predictability and productivity. Given the importance of employee behavior to organizational success, it might seem somewhat surprising that individual behavior was not a matter of significant managerial concern until at least the 1930s. From the perspective of early management theorists, people were primarily viewed as extensions of their tools and machines. For example, employee motivation, if it was considered at all, was based on rewards or punishment. It was assumed that workers found work to be unpleasant and therefore had to be motivated (or bribed) by money to contribute to the organization. It also was assumed that workers would do what they were told because they would be punished or fired if they did not.

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

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

Taylor's overall purpose was to make people, whom he assumed to be naturally lazy and stupid, more productive. Referring to his efforts to secure greater

productivity from men hauling pig iron, Taylor (1911) is quoted as saying that it is “possible to train an intelligent gorilla” to do his job (p. 40). Moreover, despite employees’ natural tendencies toward laziness, he expected them to obey their superiors without question. Using the analogy of a baseball team, Taylor (1912/1997) stated that it is obvious and necessary to recognize the “utter impossibility of winning . . . unless every man on the team obeys the signals or orders of the coach and obeys them at once when the coach gives those orders” (p. 32).

There were a few early voices who were more humanistic, people such as Hugo Munsterberg (1913), who urged greater attention to the psychology of workers, and Mary Parker Follett, who argued that dynamic administration must be grounded in “our cognition of the motivating desires of the individual and of the group” (as cited in Metcalf & Urwick, 1940, p. 9). But such work was largely considered outside the mainstream until the Hawthorne studies published during the 1930s pointed the way toward a greater acceptance of the importance of social factors at work (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). In 1927, a group of researchers from Harvard University led by Elton Mayo and F.J. Roethlisberger embarked on a study of worker productivity in the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company in Chicago. The project began as a straightforward examination of “the relation between conditions of work and the incidence of fatigue and monotony among employees” (1939, p. 3). The researchers anticipated that definitive data on this matter could be collected and analyzed within a year. But things did not turn out as they had planned. As they put it, “the inquiry developed in an unexpected fashion” and, as a result, continued for 5 years, from 1927 to 1932 (1939, p. 3).

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

Because of these findings, in the next phase of their study, the researchers attempted to control these different variables by isolating a group of workers and systematically and comprehensively studying their behavior and attitudes. After observing, consulting, and interviewing this group of employees for 5 years, the researchers arrived at two conclusions that would profoundly change research on worker behavior. First, they found that people change their behavior when they know they are being observed (the so-called *Hawthorne effect*). Second, they concluded that human relationships (including a relationship with the researchers) influenced the behavior of workers and, consequently, that new hypotheses were needed to explain worker behavior. The Hawthorne experiments showed that human behavior and motivation are complex, being influenced by attitudes, feelings, and the meanings that people assign to their work and their relationships at work. As the researchers stated succinctly, “It is [our] simple thesis that a human problem requires a human solution” (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939, p. 35). In fact, recent studies have continued to confirm the connection between

relationships and management style on motivation and the overall quality and outcomes of work performance (Jung & Lee, 2015). This is a far cry from the types of assumptions that Taylor and his contemporaries had made about worker motivation.

Research conducted over the subsequent few decades confirmed the Hawthorne findings and resulted in a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between people and organizations. The importance of human cooperation in organizations was emphasized in Chester Barnard's (1948) definition of a *formal organization* as "a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons" (p. 81). For Barnard, the participation of the individual was necessary for cooperation, and indeed, he viewed the need to build cooperation among organizational subunits as the crucial function of the manager. Similarly, public administrationist Herbert Simon (1976) developed a new approach to understanding administrative behavior based on rational decision-making and focusing on the way in which managers secure contributions from their employees by offering appropriate inducements. The rationale for including workers on problem-solving and decision-making teams was established later as a result of collaboration between social psychologist Kurt Lewin and anthropologist Margaret Mead in experiments concerning the reduction of civilian consumption of rationed food. Through Lewin's research in this setting, he established a core principle: "We are likely to modify our own behavior when we participate in problem analysis and solution, and [we are] more likely to carry out decisions we have helped make" (as cited in Weisbord, 1987, p. 89).

In 1946, Kurt Lewin and Douglas McGregor started the Research Center for Group Dynamics with the mission of training leaders to become skilled in improving group relations and managing change. McGregor's research on group norms and personal needs underlined the importance of developing the morale of the workforce and encouraging cooperative efforts to increase efficiency (Knickerbocker & McGregor, 1942). In *The Human Side of the Enterprise*, McGregor (1960) discussed a highly effective management team studied by researchers. He concluded that "unity of purpose" is the main distinguishing characteristic of the successful unit. Even more importantly, McGregor discussed the now familiar Theory X and Theory Y, arguing that traditional command-and-control approaches (Theory X)—based on assumptions of people as lazy, uninvolved, and motivated solely by money—caused people to behave in a manner consistent with those expectations. His alternative, Theory Y, suggested a much more optimistic and humanistic view of people, emphasizing the inherent worth of individuals in organizations. Similarly, Abraham Maslow (1962) proposed his well-known hierarchy of needs as a way of understanding the complexity of human beings' motivations and desires, and Victor Vroom (1964) and Edward Lawler (1973) made important contributions to our understanding of work motivation that we will explore later.

In a related examination, Rensis Likert (1961), in *New Patterns of Management*, developed the notion of organizations as a series of interlocking groups and the manager as a "linking pin." Chris Argyris (1964) focused his attention on the personal development of the individual in the context of the organization; organizational effectiveness was a function of the interpersonal competence of team members and the extent to which the organization supported positive norms. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1964) provided a model of team excellence and a set of styles useful in understanding team members' contributions through their managerial grid, which can be used to diagnose the team's culture.

Throughout its history, the field of organizational behavior has benefited from work in a variety of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and political science. Sociologists help us to understand organizations and how their structure and function affect individuals. Conflict, adaptation, and the influence of the environment all are issues addressed in the field of sociology. For example, the famous German sociologist Max Weber (1947), in writing that originated almost 100 years ago, first laid out the principles that govern hierarchical organizations and the ways in which individuals exercise power and control within those “bureaucratic” structures, whereas more recently sociologist Amatai Etzioni (1988) contributed to the study of group decision-making. Similarly, anthropology, with its exploration of the role of culture in society, offers important insights into organizational life. (We have already noted the contribution of anthropologist Margaret Mead and will return to more contemporary studies of culture throughout the book.) As we will see, behavior in organizations differs significantly from one national culture to another. Also, individual organizations each reveal their own culture and may sometimes find it necessary to change or modify an existing culture. Likewise, political science contributes to our understanding of organizational behavior by focusing on democratic governance, power, leadership, and strategy. We have already noted the contributions of political scientists and public administrationists such as Herbert Simon, but we will also recognize later the significant work of political theorist James Macgregor Burns (1978) in developing the notion of *transformational leadership*, an idea that remains a topic of lively discussion even today.

More Recent Developments

During the past several decades, management and organization theorists, primarily those studying business organizations, have made especially important contributions to our understanding of organizational behavior and management. For example, Peter Drucker (1909–2005), considered by many to be the “Father of Modern Management,” argued the limitations of traditional command-and-control models of organization and instead viewed workers as assets to the organization. Ahead of his time, Drucker introduced the concept of “knowledge workers” and recognized the growing importance of the nonprofit sector and the need for organizations to consider mission, innovation, and social responsibility. Drucker further extended our understanding of management as a discipline and profession with its own unique skills, techniques, and perspectives. Margaret Wheatley (2006) encouraged managers and workers in times of uncertainty and chaos to embrace resilience, adaptation, and creativity, whereas Peter Senge (1990/2006) led the exploration of learning organizations, and Edgar Schein (1985/2017) established the importance of organizational culture. In a related vein, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (1982/2006) established the role of executives in all sectors striving for excellence in a strategic fashion, a theme recently echoed by Jim Collins (2001, 2011) in his books *Good to Great* and *Great by Choice*.

Because of its emphasis on individual behavior, contemporary organizational behavior draws heavily from the field of psychology. Psychological theories and models form the basis of our knowledge about perception and learning, human motivation, and small-group or one-on-one interactions. But not all schools of thought within psychology play an equal role in the study of organizational behavior. For example, psychological theories such as those espoused by Sigmund Freud assume that human personality and behavior are largely fixed at a young age. Not surprisingly, such perspectives are not particularly useful to adults in

organizational settings. On the other hand, behavioral psychology, with its emphasis on learning and behavior change, is quite useful and important. Likewise, social psychology, as explored early on by Karl Weick (1979), offers insights into group behavior, “sensemaking” in organizations, resilience, uncertainty and change, power, and leadership.

A recent and compelling emphasis in the social psychology of organizational behavior is termed *positive organizational scholarship*, the study, or *positive organizational behavior*, the practical outcome. Positive organizational scholarship traces its beginnings to the late 1990s, when Martin Seligman, president of the American Psychological Association, argued that his field had too long focused on illness or pathology and proposed as an alternative what he called “positive psychology” (Seligman, 2002). Instead of focusing on what was wrong with people (i.e., their deficiencies), positive psychology would focus on positive experiences (i.e., happiness, optimism, and resilience) and how human beings could use their talents to create affirming institutions that would, in turn, promote even greater positive circumstances for individuals and groups. The new approach was to emphasize the best in the human condition and model ways in which excellence and high performance could be sustained (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2011; Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

Organizational scholars soon began to explore how this new approach to psychology might be reflected in studies of organizational behavior (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003a; Nelson & Cooper, 2007). Fred Luthans (2002), working with the Gallup organization and noting its emphasis on strengths rather than on weaknesses in the larger population, proposed that confidence, hope, and resiliency should be incorporated into learning about organizational behavior. Similarly, Kim Cameron, Jane Dutton, and Robert Quinn (2003b) further elaborated the notion of positive organizational scholarship, suggesting a greater emphasis on human strength, resilience, and vitality and the creation of settings characterized by appreciation, collaboration, fulfillment, abundance, and human well-being. In reviewing the literature to date, Christina Meyers, Marianne van Woerkom, and Arnold Bakker (2013) found that positive psychology interventions in organizations have had favorable outcomes on employee well-being, creativity, resource development, and productivity.

Cameron and colleagues (2003b) wrote, “Imagine a world in which almost all organizations are typified by greed, selfishness, manipulation, secrecy, and a single-minded focus on winning. Wealth creation is the key indicator of success” (p. 3). Distrust and anxiety would characterize individuals in those organizations, and social relations would be strained. Researchers looking into such organizations would emphasize such topics as problem solving, resistance, and competition. In contrast, “imagine another world in which almost all organizations are typified by appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality, and meaningfulness. Creating abundance and human well-being are key indicators of success” (p. 3). Such features as trustworthiness, humility, and positive energy would characterize individuals in those organizations, and researchers would emphasize excellence and extraordinary performance. Positive organizational behavior does not dismiss the first view, which has a clear basis in reality, but emphasizes the second; it seeks, as the old Johnny Mercer song says, to “accentuate the positive.”

This approach is closely related to what we might call a *strength-based* approach to personal and organizational development (Buckingham, 2011; Rath, 2013). Instead of focusing on deficiencies—either those of the individual or those of the organization—this approach builds on their strengths. (A parallel strength-based

approach is often used in community development—the focus is not on what’s wrong with a community but on what is right and what can be built upon.)

We should note one other contemporary approach to the study of organizational behavior. New developments in the way the brain affects behavior, called “neuroscience,” or more informally *brain science*, suggest that the physiology of the human brain is directly connected to human behavior, including organizational behavior. One emerging theme in brain studies is that human behavior is never purely rational; the emotions play a central role in all aspects of organizational behavior, a theme we will revisit often. Researchers in this emerging field are exploring the connections between cognition, emotion, and behavior and their influence on things like leadership, decision-making, group process, and the role of training and feedback (Waldman, Ward, & Becker, 2017). For example, stress affects everyone, but the structure of the brain means that certain people are less affected by stress than others. Brain science may eventually be able to tell us, from a physical standpoint, which individuals are likely to be most resilient and why. Brain research has also shown that our brains are highly flexible and adaptable, which means that learning can take place not just in our early years but throughout our lives.

A similar argument is developed in a popular and highly readable book by *The New York Times* columnist David Brooks called *The Social Animal* (2012). Drawing on recent work in neuroscience as well as psychology, Brooks contends that our conscious or rational mind often receives credit for thinking through options and guiding our actions, when in fact the unconscious mind—the world of emotions, intuitions, and deep-seated longings—tends to play a much more significant role. Brooks concludes that we are not rational animals but, first and foremost, social animals. Daniel Goleman, writing in *Social Intelligence* (2006), comes to the same conclusion. Basing his work on recent advances in neuroscience, Goleman identifies a human predisposition to be aware of and sensitive to other human beings.

As you can see, the study of organizational behavior draws on work from many disciplines. The influence of these fields is not singular; each of them may provide insights into a particular topic within the field of organizational behavior. For example, our understanding of conflict and power in organizations may be explored from a psychological, managerial, sociological, anthropological, or political standpoint. Each of these perspectives may emphasize different aspects of the causes, sources, and manifestations of these phenomena as well as our role in managing and responding to them. Similarly, we can choose to emphasize the negative forces underlying organizational life, or we can choose to emphasize the more positive and affirming. In fact, utilizing a variety of the different angles and lenses available to us better ensures that our actions will be effective. Our approach in this book is to employ as many tools and perspectives as possible.

Does Good Management Make a Difference?

We know that managers perform many different roles and functions in public and nonprofit organizations, but do these actions make a difference in the productivity of the organization? Certainly, that has been the prevailing wisdom in management and organizational behavior for some time (Pfeffer, 1998; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). However, recently the Gallup organization, better known for its broad social and political public opinion surveys, has been measuring management practices and their effect on productivity through their study on the *State of the Global Workplace* (2017). This research has shown that the growth, disruption,

and instability facing public, private, and nonprofit organizations today necessitates that leaders emphasize developing and empowering their employees and citizens. According to the Gallup research, individuals who are engaged in their work essentially doubled their odds of success when compared with those who are less engaged. Moreover, employee engagement clearly made a difference in terms of productivity, quality, and customer service. The survey investigated how employees become engaged and found that managers using positive leadership behaviors such as a strengths-based approach, maintaining a positive perspective when difficulties arise, and providing frequent recognition, feedback, and opportunities for personal development were a key factor in employee engagement. Another extensive study, this one of school districts, found that managerial quality was related to 10 of 11 performance indicators, covering a wide range of organizational goals from school attendance to student success on standardized tests (Meier & O'Toole, 2002). These findings indicate that good management and good leadership clearly make a difference.

What exactly is a good boss worth? A recent research study by the National Bureau of Economic Research looked at 23,878 workers matched to 1,940 bosses at a very large technology service company between 2006 and 2010 (McGregor, 2012). The study found that removing a poorly performing manager and replacing him or her with a top-performing manager is roughly equal, in terms of productivity, to adding an extra person to the team. The top-performing manager is like the star athlete who makes everyone around him or her look better. Similar findings from studies conducted by Raffaella Sadun, Nicholas Bloom, and John Van Reenan (2017) show that well-managed organizations are associated with increased profitability, faster growth, and higher productivity.

Researchers have also looked at the other side of the coin—how does poor management affect the work of the organization? There's an old adage that people don't quit their jobs; they quit their bosses. Studies have shown that old adage to be true. In study after study, when asked what one factor determines their satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, employees point to the quality of their immediate supervisor. According to a 2005 study, when employees were asked what factor most negatively impacted their productivity, 58% cited poor management, a figure 20 points above the second leading negative impact, lack of motivation (Society for Human Resources Management, 2005). Another study of 2,865 leaders in a large financial services company that used feedback from employees, other managers, and their associates—a method called *360-degree feedback*—shows a direct correlation between levels of employee engagement and the effectiveness of their supervisors (Zenger & Folkman, 2012).

Good management is associated with happy, engaged, and committed employees. Clearly, managers make a difference, and if you have the skills and abilities to manage and lead effectively, you will likely have more productive and satisfied employees. Obviously, this is a compelling reason to learn the ins and outs of organizational behavior.

Themes and Purposes of This Book

There are three themes that cut across all the chapters in this book: (1) the importance of understanding the behaviors, motivations, and actions of individuals in public and nonprofit service; (2) a focus on the distinctiveness of management and leadership in *public* and *nonprofit* organizations; and (3) an emphasis on students

learning not only from reading but also from experience. We can examine each of these points in greater detail.

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

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

Beyond the personal level, public and nonprofit managers are involved with other people in the organization—bosses, coworkers, and subordinates. To interact effectively with these people, public and nonprofit managers need to develop strong *interpersonal* skills in areas such as communicating with and motivating others, working with and facilitating groups and teams, and understanding and employing power and influence. They need to be culturally competent, especially in a multicultural global society, and capitalize on diverse approaches and talents to improve organizational effectiveness (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

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

Second, this issue of “publicness” leads to the next major perspective of the book. We believe that the broader political and social contexts in which these organizations operate and the compelling nature of public service make public and nonprofit management distinctive. Specifically, it is our firm belief that organizational behavior in the public and nonprofit sectors is different. Public and nonprofit administration is, in many cases, significantly affected both by the particular requirements of public and nonprofit sector work and by the important traditions of democratic participation and a commitment to the public values that underlie work in public and nonprofit organizations. Public and nonprofit managers must be fully attentive to the public service motive that draws people to work in public and nonprofit organizations. For these reasons, leadership and management in

public and nonprofit organizations must be understood in the context of public values and public service.

Public leadership involves not only internal management issues but also the management of critical interactions between organizational representatives and individuals and groups outside of the public or nonprofit organization. Particularly important are skills involved in managing change processes and in effectively representing the organization to the public, to the legislative body, to funders, to the media, and to those in other organizations. Again, individual interactions are critical; the ways in which individual public servants, whether executives or line-level employees, deal with citizens, reporters, funders, volunteers, and clients ultimately define the relationship between the organization and the public it serves.

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

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

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

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

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