

Summarize max
webers vision of
bureaucracy, and the
various critiques of
bureaucr...

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Max Weber's Model of Bureaucracy According to Max Weber, bureaucracy refers to organizational form that efficiently coordinates and integrates specialized activities, which take place in a big factory or office (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 225). The model of bureaucracy has become of importance especially in highly mechanical organization. This is witnessed in fordism where assembly-line mass production is integrated with technology to create huge factories, which forms the backbone of industrial capitalism (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 227). Weber identified several elements associated with bureaucracy such as; clear definition of labor and authority, which enhanced employee commitment since it allowed career development. Bureaucracy is also characterized by offices being hierarchically structured (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 225). The line of authority is formal and rules and regulations are designed to enhance obedience and cooperation from employees. According to Weber, workers abide by the rules, and accept existing authority because they believe such authority is impartial and fair (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 226).

As it would seem easy for bureaucratic organizations to achieve productivity, most sociologists have identified weakness and criticized Weber's bureaucratic system. They have indicated that this system is complex in structure and difficult to manage (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 225). It lacks flexibility and hence not adaptable to the changing business environment. The sociologists' point that bureaucracy creates inefficiencies unintentionally and further associate it to the global economic crisis experienced in 2008 (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 226). Robert Merton argues that employees who adhere to rules and regulations implicate bureaucracy since the rules

became end in themselves, and hence, undermining achievement of organization goals (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 226). Peter Blau agrees to this when he reveals that workers behave in accordance to their own unofficial rule, he recognizes the tension between workers, unofficial rules and official rules of the bureaucracy by stating that it leads to inefficiencies (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 226). Alvin Gouldner dismisses Weber's model on the basis that the life of an organization cannot be predicted due to events such as promotions, dismissals, and layoff. According to Gouldner, these events are unpredictable (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 226). He further disputes bureaucratization process by arguing that it exists because of power struggle between managers and workers and not as an explanation for greater productivity. In addition, Robert Reich criticizes the use of bureaucracy in fordism by comparing its success to today's global market. He points out that the reason to its rise was its domination of market through large voluminous productions. This is different in today's market, which requires production and service to work together efficiently (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 227).

The weakness in the Weber's model has led to the development of alternative theories of organizations. These theories comprise of the contingency theory, the organic models, sociotechnical systems, and the strategic choice perspective. The contingency theory proposes that organizational structure and processes are contingent upon the immediate problems posed in the environment (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 230). It explains that there is no single best way to organize or manage work. The organic models suggest that there is need for more open and flexible

structures and management styles in organizations with rapid changes in technology and changing market conditions (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 230).

Sociotechnical system emphasizes on the usefulness of technology as an important variable in the analysis of organization. Technology has a direct impact on organization of work, skills of workers, performance of the organization and quality of the working life (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 231).

The strategic choice perspective provides managers with appropriate decision making given the limitation of technology, markets, labour legislations, and government regulations. The concept of strategic perspective provides guidelines on how to select various strategies regarding structuring of an organization, establishment of work standards and manipulation of the environment (Krahn, Graham & Karen, 231).

Work Cited

Krahn, H. J., Graham, S. L. & Karen. D. H. Work, Industry and Canadian Society. 6th Ed. US: RR Donnelley, 2011. Print.