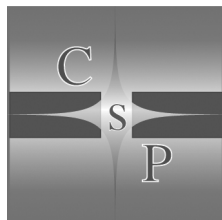


The Future of Post-Human Organization

The Future of
Post-Human Organization
A Preface to a New Theory
of Communication, Decision-Making, and
Leadership

By
Peter Baofu



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To Those Beyond the Craze for Organizational Performance

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FOREWORD

The organizational literature has been replete with studies over the years examining a plethora of issues about people in groups. Dr. Peter Baofu's perspective here lends a clarifying influence by ordering the data in a systematic way. His focus on three aspects of what happens in organizations (i.e., communicating, decision making, and leadership) allows the reader to get a workable handle on the literature by categorizing related issues and topics.

Dr. Baofu next surveys the contributions of leading researchers in three schools of thought—natural, rational and open systems—before suggesting a new way to best transcend their thinking.

The outcome is a lucid approach to making sense of a mind-boggling array of research that may now prompt future researchers to taking some giant steps in this field.

Sylvan Von Burg
School of Business
George Washington University

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is written to question conventional wisdom and, in the process, to offer a new way to understand reality—as this is something that I have done in all my previous books.

Because of this political incorrectness, this book receives no external funding nor help from any formal organization or institution.

My only joy is that wonderful feeling to discover something new which has not been thought by others before.

I also greatly appreciate the foreword by Sylvan von Burg at George Washington University School of Business.

In any event, and as always, I bear the sole responsibility for the ideas presented in this book.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ALD = Peter Baofu. 2007. *The Rise of Authoritarian Liberal Democracy: A Preface to a New Theory of Comparative Political Systems*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- BCIV = Peter Baofu. 2006. *Beyond Civilization to Post-Civilization: Conceiving a Better Model of Life Settlement to Supersede Civilization*. NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- BCPC = Peter Baofu. 2005. *Beyond Capitalism to Post-Capitalism: Conceiving a Better Model of Wealth Acquisition to Supersede Capitalism*. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- BDPD1 = Peter Baofu. 2004. Volume 1. *Beyond Democracy to Post-Democracy: Conceiving a Better Model of Governance to Supersede Democracy*. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- BDPD2 = Peter Baofu. 2004. Volume 2. *Beyond Democracy to Post-Democracy: Conceiving a Better Model of Governance to Supersede Democracy*. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- BNN = Peter Baofu. 2006. *Beyond Nature and Nurture: Conceiving a Better Way to Understand Genes and Memes*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- BWT = Peter Baofu. 2007. *Beyond the World of Titans, and the Renaking of World Order: A Preface to a New Logic of Empire-Building*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FAE = Peter Baofu. 2007. *The Future of Aesthetic Experience: Conceiving a Better Way to Understand Beauty, Ugliness and the Rest*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FC = Peter Baofu. 2007. *The Future of Complexity: Conceiving a Better Way to Understand Order and Chaos*. London, United Kingdom: World Scientific Publishing Co.
- FCD = Peter Baofu. 2002. *The Future of Capitalism and Democracy*. MD: The University Press of America.

- FHC1 = Peter Baofu. 2000. Volume 1. *The Future of Human Civilization*. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- FHC2 = Peter Baofu. 2000. Volume 2. *The Future of Human Civilization*. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- FIA = Peter Baofu. 2008. *The Future of Information Architecture: Conceiving a Better Way to Understand Taxonomy, Network, and Intelligence*. Oxford, England: Chandos Publishing (Oxford) Limited.
- FPHC = Peter Baofu. 2004. *The Future of Post-Human Consciousness*. NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- FPHCT = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Creative Thinking: A Preface to a New Theory of Invention and Innovation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHE = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Engineering: A Preface to a New Theory of Technology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHG = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Geometry: A Preface to a New Theory of Infinity, Symmetry, and Dimensionality*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHK = Peter Baofu. 2008. *The Future of Post-Human Knowledge: A Preface to a New Theory of Methodology and Ontology*. Oxford, England: Chandos Publishing (Oxford) Limited.
- FPHL = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Language: A Preface to a New Theory of Structure, Context, and Learning*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHML = Peter Baofu. 2008. *The Future of Post-Human Mathematical Logic: A Preface to a New Theory of Rationality*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHMM = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Mass Media: A Preface to a New Theory of Technology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHO = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Organization: A Preface to a New Theory of Communication, Decision-Making, and Leadership*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.
- FPHST = Peter Baofu. 2006. *The Future of Post-Human Space-Time: Conceiving a Better Way to Understand Space and Time*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

FPHU = Peter Baofu. 2008. *The Future of Post-Human Unconsciousness: A Preface to a New Theory of Anomalous Experience*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.

FPHUP = Peter Baofu. 2009. *The Future of Post-Human Urban Planning: A Preface to a New Theory of Density, Void, and Sustainability*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Ltd.

• PART ONE •

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION—THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATION

The purpose of organizations is to get results “outside,” that is, to achieve performance....
—P. Drucker (M. Goldsmith 2009)

The Craze for Organizational Performance

What exactly makes the nature of organizations so miraculous that their very purpose is “to achieve performance” and that it is now regarded, in this capitalist age of ours, as the central aim to be both possible and desirable for any organization?

After all, there is simply no lack of organizations which “achieve performance” with questionable means and goals—be they about “greed” and “excess” in the corporate world, or “evil” and “injustice” in the public sphere, just to cite two main examples (although there are others too, of course).

Contrary to the conventional wisdom preciously accepted by many contemporaries, this obsessive craze for organizational performance is fast becoming a seductive trend, such that the dark sides of organizational performance have yet to be systematically understood and that its very purpose is neither possible nor desirable to the extent that its proponents would like us to believe.

Needless to say, this is not to suggest that the purpose of organizations is to reject performance, or that the literature in organizational studies (and other related fields like political science, media studies, and business management, for example) hitherto existing in history are full of scholarly worthlessness.

The aim of this book, however, is to provide an alternative (better) way to understand the nature of organization, in special relation to

communication, decision-making, and leadership—while learning from different views in the literature, without favoring any one of them (nor integrating them), and, in the end, transcending them in a new direction not thought before.

This seminal project, if successful, will radically change the way that we think about the nature of organization, from the combined perspectives of the mind, nature, society, and culture, with enormous implications for the human future and what I originally called its “post-human” fate.

Three Components of Organization

To start, the term “organization” derives from “the Greek word *ὄργανον* [organon]” to mean “tool,” which in turn comes “from the better-known word *ἔργον* [ergon]” to mean “work,” “deed,” etc. (WK 2009)

Thus, in a formal definition, an “organization” is defined as “a social arrangement which pursues collective goals, which controls its own performance, and which has a boundary separating it from its environment.” (WK 2009) This “social arrangement” as embedded in organization can be analyzed in different ways, of course.

A good way is to have a systematic analysis of organization which breaks it down into three different related but distinct components, namely, (a) communication, (b) decision-making, and (c) leadership, as introduced below, in that order.

This conception of the three components of organization will be used for the rest of this book and will be analyzed at multiple levels, be they *micro* (about individuals in organization), *meso* (about groups in organization), or *macro* (about an organization as a whole, in relation to the larger external environment).

Communication

With this clarification about the multiple levels of analyzing the three components of organization in mind—the first component, that is, “communication,” in a formal definition, refers to “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.” (MWD 2009)

In the context of organizational studies, communication means something more precise, in that it is “the glue that holds organizations together.” (M. Matteson 2005: 421)

For instance, communication “assists organizational members to accomplish both individual and organizational goals, implement and respond to organizational change, coordinate organizational activities, and engage in virtually all organizationally relevant behaviors.” (M. Matteson 2005:421)

Yet, communication cannot be taken for granted, since “breakdowns in communication are pervasive.” (M. Matteson 2005: 421)

Decision-Making

Besides communication—another component of organization concerns decision-making.

The term “decision making,” in a formal definition, “can be regarded as an outcome of mental processes (cognitive process) leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives....The output can be an action or an opinion of choice.” (WK 2009a)

In the context of organizational studies, decision-making is a process which involves, for instance, as in the case of management, both “managers” and “non-managers,” or simply, “a *people* process,” in which “people make decisions based on their understanding of individual, group, and organizational goals and objectives.” (M. Matteson 2005: 458)

However, just as there can be bad forms of communication, there are likewise bad kinds of decision-making, to the extent that “just one or two...exceptionally poor decisions can have significant effects on...an organization’s success.” (M. Matteson 2005: 458)

Leadership

Besides communication and decision-making—an organization also requires leadership.

The term “leadership,” in a formal definition, is understood as the “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.” (WK 2009b; M. Chemers 2002)

In the context of organizational studies, leadership makes a major difference and “is a critical variable in shaping organizational effectiveness.” (M. Matteson 2005: 491)

After all, “it has been suggested that when groups, teams, or organizations are successful their leadership receives too much of the credit, and when they fail their leadership gets too much of the blame.” (M. Matteson 2005: 491)

Thus, a good question to follow up is, “Who are the best leaders? What are the attributes of the best leaders?” (M. Matteson 2005:491) Unfortunately, there is no consensus on the answers to these questions.

However, the following two main issues have become the center of attention for researchers in organizational studies, namely, (a) “why some organizational members become leaders while others do not,” and (b) “why some leaders are successful while others are not.” (M. Matteson 2005:491)

The “Big-O” vs. “Big-B” Dispute

These three components of organization thus constitute the core concerns in the field of organizational studies—and will fall into the jurisdiction of the next three chapters of this book.

Yet, as if to make the analysis of the components of organization more complicated, there has been a heated dispute in the literature of organizational studies, namely, about the focus on the “big-B” vs. the focus on the “big-O.” (C. Heath 2001)

Let’s consider them, one by one, hereafter, in that order.

The “Big-B” Focus and Its Limitation

Chip Heath (2001) and Sim Sitkin used the term “big-B” to refer to a way of studying organizational behavior (in the literature) with its focus on the “behavioral” or B (rather than the “organizational” or O) aspects of an organization.

Some scholars, however, like Steven Hartman (1997), would like to treat the “big-B” focus as part of “organizational behavior” and the “big-O” focus as part of “organizational theory”—but this distinction is rather idiosyncratic.

In any event, there are two versions of the “big-B” here, namely, (a) non-contextualized and (b) contextualized.

(a) The first version (that is, the non-contextualized “big-B”) approach to organizational studies is “to emphasize interesting behavior,” which can be about, for example, the “research on stress/strain, goal-setting, or decision-making because these topics represent interesting behavior that is relevant for organizations.” (C. Heath 2001: 49)

The problem with the non-contextualized “big-B” approach, however, is that, when carried far enough, the researchers run “the risk” of “missing what is essential to O [organization]”; therefore, although “topics like these may...represent interesting B [behavior] but they do not tell us much