
BUREAUCRACY AND LEADERSHIP MUST ALIGN WITH CIRCUMSTANCES

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Abstract

The concepts of bureaucracy and leadership must align with the circumstances in the public or private sectors to be optimal in any given situation. This paper will grant readers with a deep dive into this concept. More specifically, this paper will compare bureaucracy, leadership, and groupthink by using author's experiences in two private banking organizations and one public bureau. The purpose of this paper is to persuade readers that these frameworks can be auspicious, but only under the appropriate conditions.

Keywords: Bureaucracy; Leadership; Private and Public Sector; Banking

1. Introduction

There is a mixed reception to bureaucracy in the organizational workplace. Some experts praise this framework as providing set rules, guidelines, and a hierarchy pyramid, while others feel that it is restricting, littered with 'red tape,' or can even be oppressive. My insights are that both viewpoints have validity. Moreover, bureaucracy can be auspicious, but only in the appropriate circumstances. I also believe that leadership can be associated with bureaucracy, as managers in organizations are often granted their positions and powers based on a bureaucratic framework. My feedback on leadership is similar to that of bureaucracy. Having worked in the private and public sectors for years, I have a strong knowledge on these concepts, and it is my desire to share my experiences and thoughts with readers.

This purpose of this paper is to persuade said readers that my viewpoints are accurate. This research is important because many professionals harbour either a positive or negative perspective on bureaucracy, but it should be made clear that this framework can be effective in suitable situations. Though there have been studies and insights on this

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topic which will be referenced throughout this paper, my research is distinctive because it will provide readers with more personal experiences. I have chosen this manner to convey my message because it will assist readers to form a deeper connection with the subject.

This paper will be structured by defining bureaucracy, identifying leadership, offering comments on groupthink, relating these concepts to my experiences at PNC Bank, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), and BB&T Bank, highlighting the aftermath following my tenure at these corporations, granting takeaways on these organizational elements, and offering a conclusion on these matters.

Readers may contrast the bureaucratic elements of hierarchy and command chains, rules and regulations, and leadership and groupthink in each of these organizations. The description of the concepts will be arranged and further recognized for each firm so that they can be easily comparable by readers. Though significant empirical data may be absent from this work due to the subject, the particularities of each company and the deep dive into the bureaucratic and leadership frameworks will serve as the methodology to enhance my main points. Though only a few methodologies will be underscored, their concentration will be vast, and the breadth and depth of my personal experiences will be highly encompassing. The names of higher-ups in each organization will predominantly be omitted to protect their anonymity.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Bureaucracy*

Experts have offered many bureaucratic definitions. Kettl (2018) felt a bureaucratic model is a traditional approach with hierarchy and authority cornerstones. Riggs (1979) believed bureaucracy includes organizations of officials in a practical society. Farazmand (2010) noted democracy was comparable to bureaucracy, as an application of rules promoting equity. Kingdon (2014) highlighted expertise and longevity as pivotal bureaucratic resources. Hummel (1982) perhaps championed and lauded this framework to the strongest capacity. Hummel interviewed citizens leaving various federal offices on their bureaucratic experiences and concluded that most civilians offered positive feedback on their time in these establishments.

Many scholars view bureaucracy in a more adverse fashion, or as a collection of unneeded rules, hindering employees from achieving goals. Bozeman and Anderson (2016) concur via their red tape theory, which asserted that superfluous regulations exist in all sectors. Though Farazmand underscored the progressive aspects of bureaucracy, he also realized the prospective shortcomings of this framework. Farazmand (2009) invested significant text discussing possible bureaucratic pitfalls. For instance, he stated that bureaucracy can become ugly and evil when it devolves into a full-scale repression or genocide. Sanders (1997) offered perhaps the strongest critique of bureaucracy by noting that it dehumanizes citizens.

Wiltse (1941) pointed out that bureaucracy gives regions or firms the ability to grant administrative personnel executive power. I concur with this assertion, as managers are often offered their positions or powers based on a bureaucratic situation. For example, I was the Branch Manager at PNC in East Boca Raton, a position which I was hired for by following the bureaucratic structure of interviewing. Per a second illustration, I worked as an Inspector for the DCA, subsequent to a phone and face-to-face interview. Gobble (2019) echoed this prospective, but further noted that bureaucracy must fit the situation to be effective. Gobble added that bureaucracy is not the enemy but must align with organizational circumstances. I believe that many managers and employees fail to discern this viewpoint, and only look at bureaucracy in a negative fashion. I encourage all readers to keep an open mind in respect to this concept.

2.2. Leadership

Wiltse pinpointed the primary link between bureaucracy and leadership. More specifically, executives or higher-ups make the decision to hire managers, and offer them the authority to oversee organizations. To illustrate, I travelled to Fort Lauderdale and interviewed with PNC's Leadership Team, prior to being asked to be the Branch Manager of East Boca Raton PNC. My power in this role was based on their decision to hire me.

Now that said link has been identified, it is important for readers to know what leadership entails. Ward (2020) noted that leadership is motivating or influencing a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. It is possible that the leader may influence groups to act in a productive or erroneous fashion. There are many different frameworks to leadership, which will later be explored and related to situations in many of the firms in which I have served.

2.3. Groupthink

Prior to discussing groupthink, it is vital for readers to first identify this concept and next realize its link to bureaucracy and leadership. Groupthink states group members may feel pressured into making decisions to appease peers and superiors wishing for swift consensus (Cleary, Lees, & Sayers, 2019). Assuming that agreement is reached, it is very possible members made decisions to pacify others. Groupthink results can be devastating. The most infamous example of groupthink occurred at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration via the US space shuttle Challenger's destruction. Engineers who worked on this enterprise noticed several technical issues associated with the Challenger. Despite their feelings, said engineers predominantly failed to fully articulate this to management because they succumbed to groupthink. The result was that the Challenger was launched into space in 1986, and exploded very shortly following this procedure, claiming the lives of seven professionals on board (Wald, & Schwartz, 2003). The key takeaway is not to be afraid to articulate rational and logical reasons why a course of action is fundamentally flawed.

The link between bureaucracy and leadership is also important to note. Bureaucracy often serves as a fashion in which leaders are granted their powers and said superiors can have

a strong effect on the groupthink which employees may experience in an organization. For example, if the leadership team for the US space shuttle Challenger encouraged the professionals working on this enterprise to be candid about their feelings, it may have had better results.

3. Methodology and research development

3.1. *Circumstances at PNC Bank*

The circumstances at PNC will be underscored by discussing the firm and my experiences in East Boca Raton PNC. PNC was not a routine environment. The main reason was that PNC is an intricate and modern bank, with complexities in the products and services offered to clients. Even the Senior Banker at PNC who was there for 20 years stated that he acquired new knowledge each day. Managers and employees were empowered to make decisions at PNC. For example, no higher-ups had to be consulted for an employee to offer a significant discount on a safebox. Though I always conducted business in this fashion, PNC championed the holistic viewpoint of banking, including considering client services, auditing procedures, and sales or revenue generation. Despite East Boca Raton PNC having affluent clients, this branch was smaller and less busy than analogous establishments.

3.1.1. *Bureaucracy at PNC*

I worked for PNC for almost 2 years following my tenure at BB&T. My time at PNC was overwhelmingly positive. This company worked under a bureaucratic framework, involving a hierarchy, command chains, and rules and regulations. My experiences at PNC will illustrate some of the laudable aspects of bureaucracy.

I was recruited to work for PNC from BB&T, as the banking community in South Florida is relatively small and favourable reputations are known within this sector. Considering that I was the #1 banker in BB&T in terms of sales and service for four consecutive years and earned many accolades in this institution, it was unsurprising that higher-ups at PNC learned about my accomplishments. I received a telephone call from a top PNC recruiter asking if I was interested in a managerial position at East Boca Raton PNC. Though I was not completely content at BB&T, I still had a strong working knowledge of all procedures and a sterling professional track record, so I had to be very well persuaded and compensated to migrate to another financial institution. I initially declined to move forward with any process, but the recruiter stated that he knew who I was, and that it would be worth my time to meet with PNC's Leadership Team. I ultimately decided to see the Florida PNC Banking Leader (FPBL) in Fort Lauderdale. I recall that I expected a full interview, but I was astounded that it was a personally tailored information session. Following this session, the FPBL said that he knew of my achievements in the financial sector, and that he wanted me to be the new manager of East Boca Raton PNC. Though I concealed my emotions, I was touched by these actions. Having been on many interviews, I was aware that it was highly irregular for this process to proceed in said fashion. The FPBL had a contract drafted prior to my arrival and requested that I read the contract and

consider joining his organization. Though the responsibilities superseded those which I harboured at BB&T, the compensation and benefits were significantly more desirable. However, I told the FPBL that I had to deeply consider his offer, prior to making a decision. A few weeks lapsed, and I purposely failed to contact the FPBL, as I was testing him to determine how much he truly wanted me on his team. The FPBL called me back within a few weeks, and I declined his offer, stating that I was comfortable at BB&T. The FPBL phoned me back within a few days and proposed an unprecedented compensation level and perks for this job. At that point, I accepted his package.

Though the aforementioned situation was unique given my reputation, it still served as an initial clue of how PNC conducted business. I was treated with respect, reverence, and as a human resource that could be an asset to the PNC family. This was a very impactful part of my career journey in the financial sector.

Shortly into my employment at PNC, I was further impressed that this financial institution sent all of its managers to trainings on interviewing. A key point which was highlighted in these seminars was empathizing with prospective associates, as the interview process can be stressful. I subscribe to this assertion, and thus spent a great deal of time during the interview process in my branch with my aspiring Tellers and Bankers. Though their experiences did not precisely mirror mine, they all stated that they felt cared for during the procedure.

While working at PNC, hierarchy and command chains played a role in the experience. The banking industry is highly structured, and most elements need to be cleared with higher-ups. Given that my experience at BB&T offered little to no empowerment to employees, I expected PNC to conduct itself in a similar fashion. This thought process was inaccurate. Managers at PNC were given the latitude to run their branches. Specific examples included managers exclusively choosing the employees that worked there pending a background and drug test, being able to allocate various responsibilities to branch associates, having the ability to grant refunds to customers, and auditing their own branches. Supervisors were also supportive to Branch Managers. For instance, I proposed that a raise be given to my most productive banker, and this occurred swiftly. More specifically, her raise of \$3,500 was approved within 4 weeks. Per a second illustration, I asked for my branch to be painted, and this was tended to in a timely fashion. These are signs that PNC's bureaucracy was commendable.

The rules and regulations at PNC felt more like guidelines. Clearly adhering to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and regulations had to be implemented, but a manager was able to run a branch in a fashion that he or she felt was most fruitful. Some examples included that customer could be greeted in any professional way that an associate wished, overtime was acceptable in some circumstances, and there were no scripts when working with a new client.

Higher-ups at PNC looked at two components when evaluating any associate. The first component was client service scores. PNC prided itself on catering to their customers, so this was highly inspected in the firm. PNC felt that hiring and grooming the best and

brightest employees was instrumental to achieving this goal. The second component was sales. Associates had to sell appropriate products to their clients for PNC to be fiscally viable. However, PNC deeply promoted selling products and services that were a fit for clients, as opposed to 'hard selling' customers. This is noteworthy because it displays the priorities of the organization, which can prospectively show why it was managed in the aforementioned fashions.

3.1.2. Leadership at PNC

Leadership at PNC will be evaluated from my experience as the Manager of East Boca Raton PNC. The associates in the branch encompassed employees who already worked there prior to my arrival and some new hires. I took a considerable amount of time in evaluating all employees, and my conclusion was that I had a premium team. From a managerial perspective, there were a few leadership theory frameworks which were applicable to my situation:

- 1) The Ohio State Leadership Studies, Consideration Structure: This refers to the leader listening, considering, and implementing favorable ideas which are presented by subordinates. It involves actively hearing feedback from associates, while keeping their best interest at heart (Rainey, 2014). Since my employees at PNC almost always presented laudable ideas, this framework was favorable. For example, my Lead Teller offered useful feedback to streamline services at the teller line. I utilized this advice, and it improved the branch.
- 2) The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid, Team Management: This encompasses managers taking employee feedback into the highest of considerations and working as a team with subordinates to achieve shared goals (Rainey, 2014). If one trusts their team and feels they are equipped for their roles and harbor the best interest of all clients, employees, and the organization, this framework can be utilized. I trusted my subordinates at PNC, we were all cross trained for each branch role, and I even empowered them to make some managerial decisions.
- 3) Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership, High LPC: This encapsulates a more relationship-orientated leadership style (Rainey, 2014). Similar to the team management or consideration style, this is concerned with strong leader-subordinate and team relations and was thus suitable for my employees in East Boca Raton PNC.
- 4) Path-Goal Theory of Leadership: This notes that effective leaders increase motivation and satisfaction among subordinates when they help them to pursue certain goals (Rainey, 2014). Considering PNC is an organization with intelligent associates, they were able to attain said objectives. My resume includes my sales accomplishments in banking, but a sizable section of it lists circumstances where I championed worthy employees to promotions within PNC. I am more proud of this than any of my sales accolades, as I was helping to cultivate the talent that I believed in the most.

- 5) Life Cycle Theory: This states that one's leadership style must fit the level of maturity in subordinates (Rainey, 2014). My team at PNC was highly intelligent, and I treated them as professionals who can thrive in the company. Helping them to move up in the financial industry was my crowning career achievement.
- 6) Leader-Member Exchange Theory, High Exchange: This involves mutually influential relationships with some employees (Rainey, 2014). Given that my PNC subordinates were smart and reliable, I harbored this approach. My East Boca Raton PNC Branch had the highest customer service scores and revenue in Florida during my tenure as Branch Manager, partially due to executing said approach.
- 7) Operant Conditioning and Social Learning Theory Model: Bandura felt that an aspect of this framework should include forms of learning and behavior change that are not associated with reinforcement. This may encompass working with colleagues and learning from their actions and ways of completing tasks (Rainey, p. 345). This is encouraged if one is serving with accomplished professionals. I learned from everyone at PNC. It is vital to realize that one may garner important lessons for all co-workers.

The key takeaway is that all these frameworks of leadership were a fit for the circumstances surrounding my experiences at PNC. This situation included being empowered by PNC leadership, harbouring true expertise in the field of banking, and having a premium team.

3.1.3. *Groupthink at PNC*

I went to many PNC managerial meetings and can assert that PNC encouraged employees to tell The South Florida Leadership Team how they felt on all topics. This firm harboured the mindset that it did not want 'Yes Men' in these meetings. This further showcased PNC's culture. PNC is a company that deeply cares about its employees and prides itself on hearing and listening to positive and constructive feedback on all issues. Though I was a revered manager at PNC, I recall gatherings where entry level managers expressed their feelings about various practices. To illustrate, there was an instance where a new leader said that it was unnecessary to have meetings twice a month, as it would be preferred for managers to be assisting branches. I was unsurprised when The South Florida Leadership Team implemented his suggestion.

The key takeaway is that PNC was an environment where associates were encouraged to speak their minds. I feel that PNC trusted their employees, because they only hired the best and brightest to serve the organization.

3.2. *Circumstances at the Department of Consumer Affairs*

The mission of the DCA is to protect and enhance the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities (Department of Consumer Affairs Website, 2020). In my role as an Inspector, the circumstances can best be described as steady. The job encompassed working with almost all seasoned law enforcement professionals and

scrutinizing local businesses to enforce the regulations of New York consumer protection. This was well within the 'comfort zone' of nearly all Inspectors. Management recognized these points and presented its bureaucracy and leadership frameworks accordingly.

3.2.1. *Bureaucracy at the Department of Consumer Affairs*

The New York DCA was my only experience in the public sector. I served as an Inspector for over 1 year in this bureau. My duties included ensuring that businesses were adhering to regulations, issuing violations to establishments that failed to follow said guidelines, protecting consumers from unscrupulous practices, and granting improvement feedback to management.

The interview process was very standard. It involved filling out an online application, having a phone interview a few weeks later, and a face-to-face discussion swiftly after this point. I recall going to DCA headquarters in New York and having an informal interview with my potential manager. The interviewer asked some standard questions about my education and job experience. I was the only candidate attending an interview that day. I felt treated with a high level of respect and consideration. It was a positive encounter.

Though the DCA was managed in a bureaucratic fashion with hierarchy, command chains, and rules and regulations, this was not lucid by visiting the office. Most of the employees were retired police officers, and it was an informal and laissez-faire atmosphere. There was not a set time to arrive or exit daily, as the only requirements were for every Inspector to map out their daily stops and to email the Manager a progress report at the end of the day.

The rules at the DCA felt like loose guidelines. Though the legislations for issuing violations to New York clearly had to be followed, there were little guiding principles of how to conduct oneself on the job. The only policies were to complete all stops, act in a professional fashion, and email the Manager a progress report at the end of the day.

Higher-ups at the DCA looked at three components when evaluating any associate. The first component was that all stops were completed, the second component was that progress reports were well written and sent back to management each day, and the third component was that an Inspector acted in a professional fashion. Production and revenue had little to do with how an employee was evaluated in this environment. This personified the difference between the private and public sectors, as the former seeks to earn profits and the latter seeks to service citizens.

3.2.2. *Leadership at the Department of Consumer Affairs*

The leadership in the DCA was laissez-faire orientated. The DCA was made up of mostly retired law enforcers, who did not require much management. The supervisor acted more as a facilitator of reports. In respect to the frameworks, the following could be applied to the DCA:

- 1) The Ohio State Leadership Studies, Consideration Structure: Though the DCA manager was more hands off, he still acted via listening, considering, and

implementing favorable ideas which were presented by Inspectors (Rainey, 2014). For example, I suggested that a cutoff time be enforced to send daily reports, as the manager noted that he was receiving these correspondences late into the evening. The manager took my suggestion, and a rule was put forth that all reports must be emailed to him by 7PM each workday.

- 2) Life Cycle Theory: Recall that this states that one's leadership style must fit the level of maturity in subordinates (Rainey, 2014). My experience at the DCA was interesting, as most of the associates were retired law officers. All Inspectors were treated like seasoned professionals in their field, and this was likely part of the reason why the laissez-faire style of management was implemented.
- 3) Operant Conditioning and Social Learning Theory Model: Recall that this encompasses forms of learning and behavior change that are not associated with reinforcement. This may include working with colleagues and learning from their actions and ways of completing tasks (Rainey, 2014). Being the youngest member of the squad, I garnered a great deal of knowledge from my colleagues. Examples included traveling though New York, writing violations, and communicating adverse news to business owners.

It is noteworthy that some frameworks applicable to PNC were absent from the DCA recommendations. The primary reason is that although the leadership at the DCA was considerate to Inspectors, almost all associates did not harbour the desire to advance within the organization. They were mostly older gentlemen who took the job to stay active in the field of law enforcement and earn a steady paycheck following retiring from the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The takeaway is that though in most organizations employees wish to advance, this is not always the case. If one serves in management for a similar bureau, it is not recommended to cultivate uninterested talent to higher positions. Rather, encouraging said associates to excel in their current roles is preferred.

3.2.3. Groupthink at the Department of Consumer Affairs

Every Monday AM, the DCA squad provided feedback to the manager on various issues. Considering that I spent a significant amount of time with all these associates, I knew their true feelings on almost all matters. There was little evidence of groupthink in this organization, as all my colleagues were very candid to the manager during these meetings. The reason for this were that almost all Inspectors were seasoned professionals, who knew that their insights was taken into consideration. It was inspiring to see my teammates act in this manner.

3.3. Circumstances at BB&T

The circumstances at BB&T will be underscored by discussing the firm and my experiences in Central Boca Raton BB&T. There were many instances in which the Central Boca Raton BB&T Branch was highly akin to chaos theory. Per an identification of chaos theory,

Farazmand (2003) suggested that this framework denotes disorder, crisis, non-equilibrium instability, and rapid change. Morgan (2007) echoed this thought process by asserting that chaos theory encompasses randomness, diversity, and instability. The reason that Central Boca Raton BB&T aligned with chaos theory was because it was by far the busiest branch in Florida. The Manager had little to do with the daily banking desk/platform or teller operations, and it was the obligation of the Senior Banker to oversee all these responsibilities. This generally involved him or her servicing over 20 customers at the platform and teller line each day, acting as a teller, mentoring the entire team, conducting executive decisions, granting dissertations to the team every morning, monitoring the entire branch's productivity and development, tending to 'mystery shops' in which a ten-page script had to be presented and a grade of below 90% was failing, and regularly managing the platform alone. Having served in this position for years, I can attest that it is challenging and hectic. It is noteworthy that all other roles deal with some of these obstacles.

BB&T Central Boca Raton was the most active branch in all of Florida. BB&T's management recognized this and choose to micromanage its employees. For example, higher-ups had to be consulted for a platform employee to offer even a slight discount on a checkbook. BB&T also cared more about sales than any other component in the banking industry, failing to see banking in a holistic fashion.

3.3.1. Bureaucracy at BB&T

Having served BB&T in multiple roles, including as a Personal Banker, Senior Banker, and Manager for over 5 years, I am aware of the bureaucracy in this organization. Though I performed exceptionally well at BB&T, my bureaucratic experience was predominantly adverse.

My journey at BB&T started as a stark contrast to that of PNC. As opposed to being recruited for a position, I found an advertisement for a vacant banker role on FAU's career website. I drove to West Palm Beach for an open interview, with over a dozen candidates waiting to speak to the initial BB&T representative. I waited for over 4 hours for my turn to interview. I did well on the brief first round interview and moved on to two subsequent dialogues with a Branch Manager and Area Manager respectively. I felt that each professional connected with me during these short discussions, and a few weeks later I received a phone call for an entry level job offer of \$35,000/annually plus benefits. Though my level of education warranted a significantly higher salary, I accepted this compensation level as a starting point.

This experience was an early personification of how BB&T conducted commerce. BB&T did not see employees as valuable assets, rather it viewed them as easily dispensable and replaced by new talent. Most of the BB&T branches had very high levels of turnover because this company did not prospect premium associates or promote continuous training for struggling employees.

While working at BB&T, hierarchy, command chains, and rules and regulations were vital elements. BB&T branches were set up in a top-down fashion. The branch organizational pyramid from top to bottom included the Branch Manager, Senior Banker, Personal Banker, and Tellers. However, Branch Managers and associates were not as empowered as most customers believed. For example, overdraft fees were restricted by a system that BB&T implemented which only allowed a client to receive a single fee back on an annual basis, regardless of their banking relationship. I recall one instance where a client had over a million dollars with BB&T, and management refused to grant her a refund exceeding one overdraft fee. As a second illustration, during my third year at BB&T, it was lucid that my sales as a Banker superseded all other associates. Upper management promised me a raise due to my unprecedented level of productivity. It took 4 months to be approved, and the annual salary bump was only \$500.

In respect to the rules and regulations, BB&T harboured a system and a very particular methodology for all client services. For example, upon opening an account for a client, I would greet the client, build rapport while learning what type of account would be a fit for his needs, make a recommendation related to said desires, proceed to open the account, insert his deposit into my teller draw following establishing the account, ask him if there was anything else I could do to provide top tier service, and finally grant him many of my business cards and request referrals. Per a further illustration, employees were not allowed to work over the standard 40-hour week, as this organization had a strict policy on refraining from paying associates overtime. I remember one instance where there was a bank robbery toward the end of the day, and all associates were forced to stay 2 hours late to be interviewed by the police. BB&T initially refused to pay my subordinates overtime for their services. This incident related to Palmer, Crowe, and Greenwood's (2006) insights on wrong paths to right or defining morality with or without a clear red line. Though there is not a definite line to identify morality, it would be challenging to contest that BB&T was acting in an ethical fashion. I called the Florida Banking Group Leader (FBGL) and demanded that my employees be paid for their services. My team was compensated in their following paychecks. It was embarrassing that I had to make this call.

Higher-ups at BB&T looked at two components when evaluating any associate. The first component was sales revenue. BB&T was a more sales-orientated organization, with the goal of making strong profits. A distant second component was customer service scores. This was evaluated via intensely scripted mystery shops. This is significant because it displays BB&T's rigid structure and wayward priorities, which can possibly personify why it was managed in the previously articulated manners.

3.3.2. Leadership at BB&T

During my initial years at BB&T, I served under managers who created dreadful cultures, including harassment, false accusations, slender raises, and even being instructed to omit work hours so that the company avoided properly compensating employees. When I was

promoted to Branch Manager, I treated my subordinates fairly and respectfully, and thus our branch was the most productive in Florida.

During my tenure as Manager of BB&T, leadership frameworks which were favourable to the organization included:

- 1) The Ohio Leadership Studies, Initiating Structure: This framework is more akin on setting standards, assigning roles, and pressing for production. This would be useful via BB&T's culture, as the goal was to produce the maximum revenue (Rainey, 2014). Though it is possible that employees in this environment may be intelligent and can provide serviceable feedback to managers, the general goal of subordinates was to do the work, collect a paycheck, and go home. This style was applicable for many of the associates at BB&T, but this company harbored select employees who were interested in achieving. Though I recommend that said associates are provided higher levels of individual consideration, this methodology overall aligns with BB&T's preferences.
- 2) Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leadership, Low LPC: This encapsulates a more task orientated leadership style (Rainey, 2014). Similar to authority-obedience management, this framework is more concerned with accomplishing production tasks efficiently. Considering that most of the employees at BB&T were not intrinsically motivated, it was preferred to be direct in the tasks that they had to accomplish. However, there were again some associates who wished to achieve, so they deserved specific consideration.

There are two key takeaways from these recommendations. The first takeaway is that BB&T did not generally hire the best and brightest associates. Most employees wanted to simply collect a paycheck and go through the motions of working. I invested considerable time attempting to groom said associates for better positions, but, ultimately, I felt that my energy was better spent working with employees that I deemed to be ambitious. Though in an ideal situation, all employees would harbour lofty aspirations, this is generally not the case. The second takeaway is that as a manager or leader, one must become skilled in diagnosing associates and situations. For example, at BB&T I realized how to identify the employees that I would champion to superior positions, but in PNC, almost all associates wanted to achieve greatness. It is challenging to determine which strategy to implement, but it can be learned with experience.

3.3.3. *Groupthink at BB&T*

I experienced groupthink during BB&T corporate board meetings. I can attest that it is unpleasant, uncomfortable, and should be unacceptable, but it happens regularly. In one particular meeting, the FBGL called all of the managers to BB&T Florida headquarters. The primary reason for said meeting was that subsequent to the discontinuation of incentive-based compensation following to the Wells Fargo scandal, the productivity of almost all Personal Bankers had substantially declined. The FBGL ordered each Branch Manager to

comment on whether he or she felt that BB&T should terminate the bottom 1/3 lowest producing bankers. The first few managers agreed with this notion, and each subsequent manager concurred with this decision. Having been close with said managers and harbouring many private discussions, I was aware that they did not subscribe to this course of action, as they felt that these lower producing bankers were trainable and had potential. My colleagues failed to share these insights with the FBGL, instead adhering to groupthink. I was the last manager to be asked about this decision, and the sole branch leader to tell the FBGL that I did not agree with this action course. I further noted that I used to work with many of these low producing bankers, and I believed in them. I put forth a persuasive case to the FBGL about my feelings, and BB&T chose not to take this action. I instead volunteered to 'train up' the lower tier of bankers, and almost all of them went from being in the bottom 1/3 to the top tier of production.

The key takeaway is that BB&T was not an environment where associates were encouraged to disclose how they truly felt to higher-ups. This organization preferred 'Yes Men,' who would subscribe to its agenda, even when it was the incorrect course of action. This style is highly discouraged if an organization wishes to avoid groupthink.

4. Results of the research

4.1. Results for PNC

PNC's management recognized its semi chaotic environment and took the appropriate steps for said situation. First, PNC hired the best and brightest to manage its organization. Most of its associates harboured at least a Bachelor's Degree. I also believe that PNC employed professionals who it trusted to act in the best interest of the clients and the company. Second, PNC empowered said associates to make decisions. As a manager, I was able to run the branch in the ways that I deemed fit, and the Bankers and Tellers had similar latitude.

The results of this management style and the bureaucracy and leadership frameworks which were executed at PNC were stellar, and the following reasons will showcase this point. First, in the third quarter of 2020, PNC reported a net income of \$1.5 billion and in the second quarter of 2020, PNC brokered a partial sale of its equity investment in BlackRock, netting proceeds of \$14.2 billion (Business Insider, 2020). This is impressive, especially given the current domestic climate. Second, East Boca Raton PNC has been so successful that it is being upgraded to one of the few Business Banking Centres in Florida. Finally, PNC is such an inviting environment that not only is associate retention high, but promotions are regular occurrences within the company. To illustrate, PNC attempted to persuade me to stay with the firm, offering a substantial promotion and attractive compensation package prior to my departure to pursue my doctoral degree from Florida Atlantic University. Most of my former team at East Boca Raton PNC has subsequently been promoted into higher positions.

All figures should be numbered with Arabic numerals. Headings should be placed above figures, and centred. All photographs, schemas, graphs and diagrams are to be referred to as figures. Low-quality figures are not acceptable. Figures must be embedded into the text and not supplied separately. The text should be 10 point Calibri body type. Leave one line space between the heading and the table.

4.2. Results for the DCA

As previously suggested, the DCA's management saw that its Inspectors had experience and expertise in the law enforcement field and adopted a laissez-faire approach. The DCA has been utilizing this framework for years. There are a few points which note that it is effective. First, the DCA has been in existence for over 50 years and administrators continue to finance this agency. Second, there were seldom issues in the DCA squad in which I served. All the Inspectors seemed to have a predisposition to do this job efficiently. Third, most of the Inspectors that I collaborated with were interested in retaining the career for the long-term. Many of them articulated that it was their aim to earn a second pension to supplement their NYPD payout. This is all evidence that the DCA management made the preferred choice via its hands off techniques.

4.3. Results for BB&T

BB&T's management recognized its chaotic environment but took multiple massive missteps for said situation. First, BB&T failed to hire the best and brightest to run its organization. Most of the associates had no formal level of education and a very small minority of them had a Bachelor's Degree. Second, BB&T micromanaged all subordinates. When I was promoted to the manager role, it was challenging to run the branch in the way that I deemed fit, as higher-ups would often dictate how I may or may not conduct business in this role. Finally, BB&T attempted to use systems theory or a framework which is predominately concerned with stability and structure in all circumstances to combat its chaotic atmosphere (Farazmand, 2002). My former example of the rigid procedure to open a checking account displays this point. This framework is not necessarily a natural fit for a hectic and dynamic environment like Central Boca Raton BB&T because being able to swiftly adapt or alter one's behaviour based on any given situation is pivotal to success in this setting type. For instance, if there were multiple clients waiting in the lobby for service and I was the solo Personal Banker to assist said customers, using BB&T's slow method to open a checking account is not preferred. Each situation must be diagnosed by a socially aware employee, and their actions need to be suitable for the circumstances. BB&T failed to realize the importance of this methodology.

The results of this management style and the bureaucracy and leadership frameworks which were executed at BB&T were highly underwhelming. The following reasons will display this point. First, BB&T was non-existent as of 2019, as it was acquired by SunTrust. Second, BB&T has been closing branches for years. For example, the BB&T Branch on FAU campus was shut down years ago due to poor productivity. Finally, BB&T is such an unbecoming environment that turnover is very high in this organization. While working

for BB&T, it was not uncommon for employees to abdicate their positions after a short period.

4.4. *The aftermath at PNC, the DCA, and BB&T*

My original thoughts were that bureaucracy and leadership could be auspicious under the correct circumstances. PNC and the DCA used these frameworks as boons to enhance the experiences of their employees, while BB&T struggled in this endeavour. The aftermath following my departures from each organization supports this insight.

PNC continues to thrive under the previously described bureaucratic and leadership models. For instance, East Boca Raton PNC has become so successful that there are plans to transform it into one of the few PNC Business Banking Centres in Florida. A PNC branch not only needs to have unparalleled customer service scores and profits for this to be a possibility, a member of the Florida PNC Leadership Team must also garner approval from top level management in the corporate headquarters for this to occur. The Florida PNC Leadership Team discerned that the East Boca Raton PNC was thriving under my leadership and requested that I stay on for this undertaking. Though I was content at PNC, I felt a calling to pursue a degree from FAU.

The DCA is still prospering under these frameworks. This bureau was established in 1969, and administrators in New York realize how important it is for citizens. Many of my former colleagues are still employed as Inspectors. Their recent feedback to me reflected that they were pleased with the bureaucratic and leadership models implemented by this organization.

BB&T failed to execute the frameworks of bureaucracy and leadership to reflect its circumstances. As opposed to championing its associates to thrive, the few ambitious employees had to flourish despite BB&T's practices. I recall that it was noted by upper management that less than 10% of Personal Bankers were responsible for 80% of the sales in South Florida. This is additional evidence of the disconnect between how BB&T implemented these frameworks and the responses of associates. There are even more current proceedings at BB&T which strengthen this point. First, BB&T merged with SunTrust in 2019 to become Truist (Chang, 2019). This was intriguing because in most cases, financial institutions acquire other banks, not merge with them to become a new company. This is often a sign that one firm is struggling financially or from a managerial standpoint. My vast experience at BB&T confirms that latter. Second, a recent dialogue with my former partner named Stefany in BB&T Central Boca Raton revealed that many of the mismanagement techniques which I have identified are dissipating, as SunTrust's methods are being underscored. She went on to note that SunTrust's management seems to know how to align bureaucracy cornerstones and leadership with the employees at Truist, and more intelligent associates are being hired. More specifically, harbouring at least a Bachelor's Degree, and preferably a Master's Degree to work in the Personal Banker role is being implemented.

5. Discussion, and Conclusions

5.1. Key takeaways

There are several key takeaways which can be gleaned from this paper:

- 1) No framework is ideal: This idea relates to Waldo's (1961) description of there being multiple frameworks for organizational management. One of the major points in his text is that organizational theory is a highly complex and nuanced subject, which includes administrators, private sector actors, productivity, customers' needs and wants, and employee and client/citizen satisfaction. Though many of these models have fruitful elements embedded within them, no single framework is an all-encompassing answer to the complicated administrative or elephantine problems any given enterprise is facing. This is part of the reasons why many frameworks were recommended for PNC, the DCA, and BB&T. However, despite that no framework is ideal, management of organizations should still attempt to produce a favorable working environment for their employees and utilize a structure which champions the best possible productivity.
- 2) All mitigating factors must be considered: In the previously described situations, all mitigating factors needed to be considered. For instance, both BB&T and PNC worked in a bureaucratic fashion, but the talent and culture at PNC were a better fit for how this company implemented said framework. Per a second illustration, BB&T's oppressive culture led to groupthink, while PNC's customs encouraged employees to be candid with management. As a final example, though most associates at BB&T were uninterested in advancement, there were some employees that deserved high levels of individual consideration. The culture and context of an organization should be explored, as they can be a strong part of the reasons for praiseworthy factors or issues.
- 3) Bureaucracy can be positive: Bureaucracy seems to have a negative connotation, but the bureaucracy and leadership of PNC contributed to this glowing environment. It is not recommended to immediately decipher bureaucracy or leadership to be adverse, without exploring how they affect any given organization.
- 4) Bureaucracy can be negative: My tenure at BB&T was a challenging professional experience, and its bureaucracy and leadership contributed to this environment. Though it is encouraged to retain an open mind on bureaucracy and leadership before entering an organization, it is possible that these frameworks can lead to an unbecoming culture.
- 5) Exit an organization if the culture and leadership is adverse: An experienced professional can determine in a timely manner if the culture or leadership of an enterprise is erroneous, and this can often lead to a toxic working environment.

Though I stayed employed at BB&T for over 5 years, in retrospect it would have been advantageous to leave after a few years. I realized within a relatively short period that it was a negative environment, but I choose to stay due to the pending fear that I would be unable to garner another position. This alarm was unwarranted, as I was ultimately recruited for a much more prestigious job. The point is that once one's surroundings are diagnosed to be unsuitable, adjustment must be conducted.

- 6) Trust your talent: PNC trusted and empowered its talent. This led to many of its branches thriving. In contrast, BB&T did not have faith in or groom its employees. Even with my level of achievement at BB&T, there were instances where I was micromanaged. Organizations should cultivate their talent, as this will lead to happier and productive employees.
- 7) Working in the public or private sector is challenging: Hecló (2008) informed his readers that following his lessons would be challenging. I feel that authors often deem their feedback as easy to implement, but Hecló realized that this is not the case. Hecló noted that functioning in any organizational sector is often an uphill battle. For instance, when I started working at BB&T, almost all associates resented me due to my high level of education, but despite this, I became BB&T's most successful Banker. The lesson from said experience is that even if nearly all associates are pitted against you in a demanding environment, it is possible to still achieve the highest level of success.
- 8) All experiences contribute to personal development: Though during one's career path he or she will have many different experiences, each of them affects personal development. My tenure in PNC, the DCA, and BB&T have helped me to grow as a human being and professional. It would be nearly impossible for all work experiences to be positive, but a great deal can still be learned for all occurrences. It is very possible that one may develop more from adversity. For example, I learned at BB&T that I can achieve greatness, even if nobody believes in me. If it was feasible for me to become BB&T's #1 banker for most of my tenure in this organization, then it is plausible for my readers to accomplish any realistic goal that they wish to reach.

5.2. Conclusion

I have a vast experience in the private and public sectors under the frameworks of bureaucracy and different leadership styles. This paper sought to underscore my experiences with these concepts, and to influence my readers to believe that bureaucracy and leadership must be tailored to professional situations to be preferred. PNC and the DCA successfully utilized the strengths and minimized the weaknesses of the bureaucratic and leadership frameworks which they presented to employees, while BB&T mostly failed in this enterprise. My hope is that readers will retain my takeaways during their career paths, as I feel that understanding said lessons will help them to develop professionally.

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