

Organizations Exam
Spring 2019

Day 1

Answer one question from section A and one question from section B.

A. Bureaucracy

1. According to Weber, what are the important traits that distinguish bureaucracies from other forms of organization? Pick two of these traits and discuss examples of research that show how and why each is important for understanding organizations.
2. Many people have noted the problems associated with bureaucracies. Pick two problems that have been associated with bureaucracy and discuss how and why bureaucracies have these problems. Give examples from research of these problems and their sources.

B. Power

3. Compliance in organizations is always an issue. Discuss at least two different ways in which organizations attempt to obtain compliance, being sure to give specific examples of organizational structures and processes that purportedly increase compliance. Are some forms of compliance more (or less) successful? What factors can impact the success (or failure) of a compliance system?
4. Power is often an important concept in organizations research. Some scholars focus on intra-organizational dynamics and who has power within an organization, while others look at inter-organizational relations and focus on power between organizations. Discuss what you consider to be the important issues raised about power and organizations by both those interested in inter-organizational and intra-organizational power. Finally, discuss the role of each type of power in producing, or hampering, organizational change.

Day 2

Answer one question from section C and one question from section D.

C. Recent developments

1. Institutional approaches have informed organizational research for a long time, but there seems to be some important changes in institutional approaches. First what do you consider to be an institutional approach to understand organizations? How does an institutional approach differ from non-institutional approaches? Second, compare and contrast classical institutional approaches to neo-institutional theories. Why do you think neo-institutional approaches have become more prevalent than classical institutional theorizing? What insights from classical institutional analyses do you think are important enough to deserve preservation?

2. Reply to the accusation sometimes heard that nothing new has emerged out of organizational research since the turn of the 21st century. Indicate major lines of recent research, including both those that extend older traditions and those that strike off on a new direction. Finally, what would you argue is/are the “next frontier(s)” in organizational research?

D. Educational organizations:

3. Explain how organizational scholars have conceived of schools as organizations. What unique issues do schools present for them, and how have they tried to deal with and/or accommodate that uniqueness? What are the major contributions scholars studying schools have made to organizational theories?

4. Much of the classical research on organization focused on work organizations where the employment relation is critical and the focus is on how within organizations work is organized and controlled. Educational organizations such as schools have divisions of labor, tasks, labor-processes and employment relations. However a good deal of contemporary research on schools (e.g. neo-institutional perspective) has tended to focus less on schools as work organizations. What other issues and dynamics do neo-institutional and other contemporary perspectives on organizations focus on when it comes to understanding schools as organizations? Why are these processes important to understanding schools? Are there insights from the work organizations literature which are ignored by neo-institutional approaches, that you think could be helpful in understanding schools?

Organizations Exam
Spring 2019

Day 1

Answer one question from section A and one question from section B.

A. Bureaucracy

1. Compare Weber's highly influential formulation of a theory of formal organizations and reactions to the limits of that theory for explaining real, live organizations by at least three later scholars. How do they view the usefulness of Weber's theory, and its limitations?
2. "Why bureaucracy?" is a perennial question posed by organizational researchers. Compare and contrast three explanations for why (when and where) bureaucracies emerge and empirical evidence supporting each.

B. Power, decisions

3. From time to time the concept of "power" is used by organizational theorists to understand what is going on within and between organizations. How have different organizational theories conceptualized and measured power? What do they take the sources of power to be? Give two examples of organizational research issues where you think the concept of power is critical and discuss how you would go about using the concept to understand organizational dynamics in those two situations.
4. Population ecology approaches are critical of strategic choice and decision making models in organizational research. First, compare and contrast the "bounded rationality" approach and contingency theory approaches to organizational decision making. What do these approaches have in common and how do they differ? Second, what are the critiques of these models developed by population ecology researchers? Given those critiques, when and why do you think it is important to understand how decisions are made in organizations.

Day 2

Answer one question from section C and one question from section D.

C. Recent developments

5. Institutional approaches have informed organizational research for a long time, but there seems to be some important changes in institutional approaches. First, what do you consider to be an institutional approach to understand organizations? How does an institutional approach differ from non-institutional approaches. Second, compare and contrast classical institutional approaches to neo-institutional theories. Why do you think neo-institutional approaches have become more prevalent than classical institutional theorizing? What insights from classical institutional analyses do you think are important and should be taken more into account in more contemporary institutional models of organizational change.

6. Reply to the accusation sometimes heard that nothing new has emerged out of organizational research since the turn of the 21st century. Indicate major lines of recent research, including both those that extend older traditions and those that strike off on a new direction. Finally, what would you argue is/are the “next frontier(s)” in organizational research?

D. Social movements

7. Does field theory help us understand social movements? If not why? If so, how? Be specific and use examples.

8. How have social movement and organizational scholars attempted to bring together their two fields? In what ways do you believe they have made progress, and in what ways do you feel progress is lacking and what would your agenda be for moving it forward?