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A New Perspective of Control in
Organizations: Behavioral Self-Control

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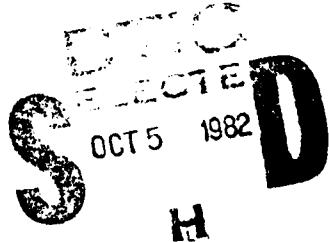
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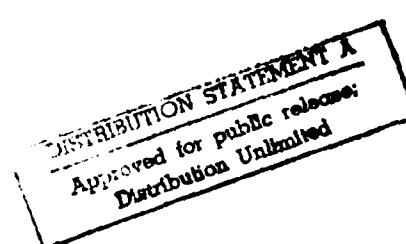
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20. ABSTRACT *(Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)*
A new perspective of control in organizations is presented. Based on a social learning theoretical foundation, the paper argues that self-control is at the core of the organizational control process. Various levels and sources of control are discussed.

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A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF CONTROL IN ORGANIZATIONS:
BEHAVIORAL SELF-CONTROL

The emphasis placed on control in organizations goes back as far as Fayol's original work on the functions of management. He defined control as verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plan adopted, the instructions issued and the principles established. He then went on to emphasize that the control function is both reactive and proactive ("It has for object to point out weaknesses and errors in order to rectify them and prevent recurrence") and stressed that "It operates on everything, things, people, actions" (Fayol, 1949, p. 107).

Over the years, the academic literature and the practice of management have given considerable attention to part of what Fayol advocated: control as a reactive function operating on things. For example, the highly developed accounting, information and operations control systems take a reactive perspective (i.e. provide feedback for control decisions) and deal with things (e.g. inventories or cash flows). Generally ignored has been the proactive perspective of control and the control of people and actions (or behaviors). Yet, in the final analysis, this proactive perspective and the control of people and their behavior may be what one recent article proclaims as "the missing link" in managerial effectiveness (Luthans & Davis, 1979).

Some may argue that, at least implicitly, much of organization structure and design is concerned with the proactive control of people and their behavior. In addition, planning and policy models and goal setting could be thought of as antecedent conditions to proactively control people and their behavior; authority and power could be thought of as causal variables in the proactive cognitive control of people and their behaviors; and reward systems could be considered as consequences used to control people and their behaviors. In other words, many of the existing academic concerns and actual

practices found in today's organizations could be _interpreted_ in terms of control of organization members and their behavior.

Overlooked in theory and practice, however, is the role of self-control in organizations. Both the traditional (accounting, information and operations) and existing behavioral approaches to control (organizational structure/design, goal setting, authority/power, and reward systems) are externally oriented, i.e., what the organization or another person can do to control others. For example, Tannenbaum (1962) describes control as ʼany process which a person or group of persons or organization of persons determines, i.e., intentionally affects, what another person or group or organization will do" (p. 238) and Lawler (1976) cites an often used definition of control as "to direct, to influence, or to determine the behavior of someone else" (p. 1248). The purpose of this paper is to provide a new and expanded perspective of control in organizations by bringing in the self. Importantly, we are not proposing a polarizing alternative to control but instead are integrating a heretofore left out, but seemingly vital dimension of control, the self.

Social learning (Bandura, 1977; Davis & Luthans, 1980) seems to best be able to provide a theoretical framework for this expanded view of control in organizations. A social learning theory (or simply SLT) approach recognizes the _interaction_ between the person, the behavior and the environment (including other persons, organization structure, etc.). From such an SLT framework, control stems from the individual's _interaction_ with both externally- and _self_-imposed constraints, standards, and consequences. Control is not established solely through the fiat of formal organizational control systems or structure or authority or rewards. Yet, by the same token, the individual does not have complete freedom of choice in determining those forces which

ultimately affect his/her own self behavior. In this view, control results
from a blend of both the externally imposed organizational systems whether
from accounting, information, and operations or structure, authority/power,
and rewards and the self.

In this new and expanded perspective of control in organizations, the
"level" and the "source" of control takes on particular importance. After
first expanding on what is exactly meant by the self-control approach, the
discussion will give particular attention to the level and source of control.
This will help to better understand the expanded control process in organiza-
tions and provide suggestions for application to practice.

The Role of Self Control in Organizations

It is interesting to note that the existing approaches to behavioral
control are externally oriented and generally ignore the recipient of the
influence process. In the approach to control taken here, the self is viewed
as exerting as much influence on his/her own actions as that which comes from
external forces. This occurs through the process of self-control. By self-
control we refer to the influence that individuals exert over themselves
through various means, including behavioral, environmental, and personal
cognitive elements. Self-control can be described as including three major
process components: (a) self-set standards and goals, (b) self-evaluations,
and (c) self-administered consequences (Bandura, 1969; Luthans & Davis, 1979;
Manz, 1979). This view of self-control parallels somewhat the more tradition-
al view of behavioral control systems which emphasizes the external influence
(Lawler, 1976; Lawler & Rhode, 1976). The difference is that the dimensions
of self control are self-applied rather than externally-applied as in the
traditional view.

The notion that individuals have standards and goals for their own performance and experience self-reactions and evaluations as a result of their perceptions of success in meeting these self-applied demands falls in line with Fayol's original definition of control, but has largely been ignored by the traditional approach to control in organizations. A self-control approach consists of basic operant principles (e.g. antecedents, behaviors, and conse- quences) and more. From a broader social learning perspective, organization members experience self-imposed antecedents (i.e., self-set standards or goals) and consequences (i.e., self-administered rewards and punishers as a function of self-evaluation of behavior in relation to the standards). In other words, by recognizing covert as well as overt contingencies, and cogni- tive mediating processes as interacting variables, the social learning approach to behavioral self-control goes beyond a strict operant interpreta- tion as well as the more traditional approaches to behavioral control in organizations. It is this view of self control that serves as the point of departure for the discussion of levels and sources of control in organiza- tions.

Levels of Control in Organizations

An important step in analyzing the role of self control in organizations is to recognize the conceptually distinct levels at which the control process may occur. These levels can be delineated along a continuum according to their proximity to the prime locus of behavior initiation which is the self (Brief & Aldag, 1981). Figure 1 presents a graphic model of the different "levels" of behavioral influence that combine to make up overall behavioral control in organizations.

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Three different levels of the control process are identified by the concentric circles in the model. Specific day-to-day behaviors operate within the core of the model. These immediate/short term behaviors are represented by the four term contingency (Davis & Luthans, 1980; Luthans & Davis, 1979) of S (stimulus situation which serves to cue the behavior or set the occasion for the behavior to be emitted), O (which stands for the organism/person's predispositions and cognitive mediating processes), B (the behavior), and C (the consequences that can be self evaluative and includes self administered rewards and punishers). In this S-O-B-C paradigm of self control, the variables can be either overt (observable events) or covert (inner, private events). At this core level, self-control is essentially within the framework suggested by the clinical psychology self-control literature (Bandura, 1969, 1977; Mahoney & Arnkoff, 1978, 1979; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974).

Longer term self-imposed control pictured in the second circle in the model represents the context in which the immediate, short-term self-control process operates. At this broader level, control shifts to longer term notions of self-direction which are likely to entail less specificity. Life and career goals (i.e., longer term goals) and satisfaction and contentment with one's life and career (longer term consequences) resulting from one's long-term evaluations, are examples of this second level of self-control. As indicated in the model, the core self-control process can serve to direct and influence longer term goals and consequences.

External influences such as societal values or organizational factors such as organization structure, policies, and power/authority can combine to establish external standards/goals of control which interact with the levels

of control discussed above. External consequences, such as societal prestige or formal rewards such as salary and promotion can result from external evaluations made within organizations and by society itself. However, this external influence will affect one's self-imposed control only to the extent that these external forces are internalized. Bandura (1969) has suggested that individuals tend to adopt standards for their own behavior based, at least in part, on performance criteria acquired socially (i.e., externally). The filtering of influence from the outer levels of control as one moves toward the core of the model is mediated by the individual's predispositions and cognitions (e.g., learning experience, perception, values, etc.). Weiss (1977, 1978), for example, has found that subordinate imitation of supervisor behavior is moderated by the person's self-esteem.

The model also suggests that the self-control process, at each of the levels identified, can itself be thought of as behavior which is influenced by longer term consequences. An implication is that self-control behavior will only be continued as long as it is supported by reciprocal exchanges with longer term external consequences (Manz & Sims, 1980; Thoresen & Mahoney, 1974). That is, the self-control behavior is eventually grounded in the environment. The circular nature of the model also indicates that the consequences experienced in the self-control process will influence behavioral standards at later time periods. This is consistent with the notion of chained behavior in which consequences can act as future stimuli in the behavioral control process (Luthans & Kreitner, 1975). Finally, the permutable boundaries of the levels indicated by the bi-directional arrows between circles indicate that there exists a reciprocal causal relationship between individuals and their environment. This notion is consistent with social learning theory by suggesting that individuals are both influenced by and

influence their environment (Bandura, 1977; Davis & Luthans, 1980; Mahoney, 1974; Mischel, 1973).

A brief example may help to clarify the model. Imagine a person who has just accepted a position in a large corporation. This individual's unique socialization history will influence personal standards for daily behavior on the job as well as for his/her career. The employee will also experience external influences on personal standards from this organization for which he/she works. Fellow workers, for example, may exert pressure on the new employee to restrict output. Furthermore, externally imposed consequences from the organization and society will exert influence on the new employee's behavior. The operant principles are at work here in that behaviors that result in valued rewards are more likely to be used in the future, but before actual behavior is controlled, externally imposed standards and consequences must be internalized. If external standards are not accepted and external consequences are not valued by the new employee, then the impact that they exert on actual behavior will be minimized. An organizational emphasis on monetary rewards may exert little influence on the behavior of an employee who places little value on money. In this sense an individual can choose the standards and consequences that will ultimately control his/her behavior. Many individuals may not recognize and/or ignore this choice. However, it can be argued (e.g. Irwin, 1971) that not choosing the standards and consequences that will govern one's own behavior reflects a choice in itself.

Control exercised by the employee over his/her own behavior can be separated into the long-term and short-term differences depicted in the model. A long term self-imposed goal may be to achieve a position of influence in upper management. Long term self-imposed consequences could include satisfaction with one's career success and lifestyle if the goal is achieved. Day to day

behavior, on the other hand, could be controlled by a *personal* standard to exceed organization productivity and quality standards on a daily basis. Short-term consequences might include the self-imposed reward of imagining the prestige and status to come from one's high performance, or treating oneself to a snack at the break. A short-term self-imposed punishment, on the other hand, might be guilt or self-criticalness or staying an extra half-hour at work for not reaching production standards.

From the SLT perspective, the new employee, in this example, can exert influence *on his/her* work environment as well as be influenced by it. The employee's behavior resulting *from* a *personal* standard of high productivity may serve as a model (Latham & Saari, 1979; Manz & Sims, 1981) influencing one or more peers to reevaluate their own personal standard. By recognizing and praising peers who increase productivity, further increases may result. In essence the point is that the employee's presence in the organization will exert potential influence on peers and the organization itself, which will in turn exert potential influence on the employee (i.e., reciprocal causation).

Sources of Behavioral Control in Organizations

So far, this analysis of behavioral control in organizations has focused on the different levels of *self* control. Now, the focus is shifted to the sources from which attempts at control are exercised. Attention is first directed toward questions of who <u>sets</u> standards or goals, <u>evaluates</u> performance against these standards or goals, and <u>administers</u> consequences (i.e., rewards or punishments) based on these evaluations. Next, the implications of these control attempts are discussed.

Potential control sources may be delineated along a continuum describing the self's responsibility in or ownership of the control attempt. Three

points of variation along this continuum may be identified: self-control,
participative control, and external control. At one extreme, the initiation
of the control attempt lies entirely with entities other than the self (e.g.,
the society, organization, supervisor, co-worker). Under these circumstances,
behavior may be thought of as being mostly environmentally initiated. Both
the work of operant psychologists (e.g., Skinner, 1953; Verplanck, 1962) and
organizational researchers adopting an operant approach (Luthans & Kreitner,
1975; Sims, 1977) have stressed the ubiquity and utility of external control
sources in affecting employee behavior in organizations.

At the other extreme of the ownership continuum, the source of control is
conceived as originating entirely in the self. Recent work in the management
literature (e.g., Brief & Aldag 1981; Davis & Luthans, 1980; Manz & Sims,
1980) has increasingly emphasized the vital (though often neglected) role that
the self plays in the aggregate control structure of the organization. In
this view, the self is active in the control process both objectively and
subjectively. Objectively, an individual may specify standards, perform
evaluations, and administer consequences. In a subjective sense, individuals
may employ attributional/perceptual mechanisms in attempts to adapt inhospit-
able work environments into manageable situations (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

Between these two extremes is a middle ground, what is labeled here as a
participative control approach. Ownership of control is shared explicitly
since both the individual and external sources initiate control efforts and
carry them through via mutually agreed upon mechanisms. Exemplary of this
approach are management systems that legitimize both the individual and exter-
nal source as parties in behavioral control. Likert's (1967) system four
management and participative strategies such as Management-by-Objectives
(Carroll & Tosi, 1973) are representative of this genre.

These three perspectives regarding control suggest the occasion for choice regarding the source from which control attempts are initiated in organizations. Control efforts can focus on external (environmental) factors at one extreme to self-imposed factors (what Figure 1 suggests is the core of the behavioral control process) at the other. The viewpoint taken here is that focusing exclusively on one source at the expense of the other is a poor control strategy. Indeed there are advantages and disadvantages entailed in each source of control given the requirements of each situation. Most control applications in organizations are more likely to focus on external modes and neglect the importance of self-imposed influence. Such an approach is particularly problematic when one considers the viewpoint that individual behavioral control, even if it originates from an external source, is ultimately self-imposed (Irwin, 1971). The discussion will now turn to an integrated view of "levels" and "sources" of control.

Integrating Level and Source of Control

Figure 2 presents a three-dimensional integrated model of individual behavioral control in organizations. Each major process component of control (i.e., setting standards, evaluating, and administering consequences) is pictured as a separate dimension of the model. The notion is that each of these control functions can originate at a point somewhere along a continuum ranging from external control to self-imposed control. Thus various combinations of control applications result when the functions originate from different sources (e.g., self-set standards, external evaluation and externally administered consequences). The model suggests the occurrence of interactions between control sources (the point of initiation of influence) and control levels including each of the major control elements (standards, evaluations,

and consequences). Obviously there are many complexities brought on by such three dimensional interactions.

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The arrows on each dimension denote the theoretical argument that all control is ultimately self-imposed. That is, once control attempts have been initiated (e.g., from an external source) the ultimate effect on individual behavior and performance is determined by the way these attempts manifest themselves within the individual's self-control system. Thus, control attempts will filter toward and impact on the self-controlled individual at the core of the model.

Some Control Issues

The word "control" and especially "behavioral control" may give rise to images of negative and perhaps even unethical forces at work. Issues such as personal freedom and free choice become particularly relevant. By the same token, the connotation of "self-control" gives rise to more virtuous and desirable images (cf. Mahoney & Arnkoff, 1979; Waterman, 1981`. The position taken here, however, is that control is control, regardless of the source from which it originates. Influence exercised over oneself, as well as that which is externally imposed, can have positive and negative implications. Bandura (1977), for example, suggests that freedom can be defined in terms of the number of options available to an individual and the right to exercise those options. He points out that personal freedom can be limited by self-restraints such as those resulting from unrealistic fears and excessive self-censure.

The following discussion will highlight various issues that are relevant to decisions regarding "appropriate" attempts to exercise control over individuals in organizations (i.e., the source from which control attempts are initiated). The focus is on advantages and disadvantages of different control sources, contingency factors that are relevant to such decisions, and the importance of congruency between external and self modes of control. The intention is not to address every relevant issue that exists, but instead give examples that help shed further light on the major theoretical themes of this paper.

Advantages and Disadvantages of External and Self-Control Sources

Several popular work motivation theories support the notion of self-based control. For example, expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) underscores the importance of individual perceptions of the relation between a person's effort and the outcomes (i.e., expectancies) as well as the value placed on the outcomes (i.e., valence). Unfortunately, external control systems often administer outcomes with little relationship between effort and outcomes and/or provide outcomes of limited value to the organization member being controlled. Goal setting theory (Locke, 1968; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981) places great emphasis on the individual's conscious intentions (in the form of goals) as a prime causal factor in behavior. Goals may be set by external sources; however, unless a sufficient amount of commitment on the part of the individual is present, the motivational impact is attenuated. Finally, in regard to some theories on the construct of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980), there is some evidence (Deci, 1970, 1972), although controversial (Fisher, 1978), that suggest that diminishing personal control over one's behavior tends to reduce intrinsic motivation.

Besides the implications inherent in the motivation theories, the source from which control attempts are initiated poses important implications for outcomes of the control process. For example, it can be argued that self-control poses a number of potential advantages over external modes. External control systems can result in dysfunctional outcomes such as bureaucratic behavior (e.g., attention given only to behaviors that are rewarded by the control system), resistance to control, and the production of invalid information which is fed into management information systems (Lawler, 1976; Lawler & Rhode, 1976). Furthermore, Kerr (1975) has sighted a number of examples where external control systems have actually rewarded undesirable behaviors while desired behaviors were ignored.

Furthermore, one hypothesis derived from attribution theory is that there is a tendency for individuals to explain the behavior of others (e.g., low performance) based on personal characteristics (e.g., bad attitudes) while explaining one's own behavior based on external attributions (e.g., situational constraints). This tendency, which has been referred to as "over attribution" (Jones & Nisbett, 1971), may have far reaching effects on one's behavior toward others by creating interpersonal misunderstandings (Jones, 1976). Again, such a perceptual bias can promote difficulties with external control modes.

A greater reliance on self-control, on the other hand, poses the potential to deal effectively with a number of potential control problems such as those suggested above. For example, greater reliance on self-control can enhance individual performance. When a person has the power to self-administer rewards when performance might be enhanced because of a strongly perceived relation between behaviors emitted and outcomes received. Furthermore, to the extent that rewards are self-administered, the person is less likely to feel

like an externally-controlled "pawn" and thus not experience the decrease in intrinsic motivation that some theorists (DeCharms, 1968; Deci & Ryan, 1980) might-predict would occur if externally-administered control is used.

When the individual acts as the controller (i.e., evaluates his/her own performance against externally specified performance standards), the probability that some important work behaviors will be neglected may be reduced. Moreover, because performance is self-evaluated, the exercising of self-control may tend to reduce feelings that only certain behaviors will produce rewards. Also, resistance to control should be reduced because of a lesser tendency to see self-control as a threat to self attributions. Finally, with self-control, there should exist little perceived need to cover up errors and poor performance by producing invalid data. Similarly, an individual is not likely to attribute a performance problem to a lack of effort if he knows he is working very hard. While an external source of control (i.e., supervisor) might punish this low performance attributing it to a lack of effort, the individual is more likely to try to determine the real problem.

A greater emphasis on self-control, however, also poses a number of concerns and possible disadvantages. An overemphasis on self-control, for example, may increase the likelihood of poor coordination among employees and work units. At the extreme one can imagine the emergence of a kind of anarchy. In addition, the self-administration of certain outcomes is problematic. For example, in difficult times an organization may suffer from pay levels that do not fit the realities of the current environment. Similarly, attribution theory suggests some problems for self-control just as it does for external control. If an employee, for example, perceives low performance as stemming from situational constraints when in fact it is caused by personal factors (e.g., a lack of effort) the basis for performance improvement would

not be established. Perhaps, an overriding problem with the use of self-control in organizations stems from the assumption that most individuals can or will execute self-control effectively. Dunbar (1981), for example, suggests that in many cases perceptions of personal control may be more an illusion than an objective reality. Although most researchers (e.g. Bandura, 1969) would not dispute that all people, in varying degrees, exercise self-control over their own behaviors, there is disagreement over the success of organizational systems based on self-control. Lawler (1976) states that under certain conditions, individuals can use self-control and avoid weaknesses of externally (organizational) originated control systems. Others (e.g., Miner, 1975) assert that despite the potential of effectiveness of self-control, evidence affirming this potential is lacking. Commenting on these opposing viewpoints, Kerr and Slocum (1981) note that "although systems based on self-control have been successful, normally incentives external to people must be present for willingness to perform to be assured" (p. 117).

Contingency Factors

It is apparent that sources of control lying along a continuum of ownership will be more or less effective depending on the context for which control is relevant. A multitude of factors are relevant to the issue of the appropriate source from which to initiate individual behavioral control. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to do justice to even a reasonable portion of these contingency factors, a few examples will help clarify the issue.

One such contingency concerns the type of control attempted: i.e., output vs. behavioral control (Ouchi, 1977; Ouchi & Mcguire, 1975). If an organization is mainly interested in outputs, then an external control mode becomes quite appropriate. Under such circumstances the end is of much greater import than the behavioral means. However, if the attempted control con-

cerns behavior, an external control mode may be less effective. For example,
a sales trainee who must make autonomous sales calls could be externally
evaluated and rewarded based on output. However, it is the selling behavior
that is of primary interest at this stage of the trainee's career. Greater
emphasis on self-monitoring and control (with external guidance) would seem to
be more appropriate in this situation.

In addition, the type of task performed poses implications for the appro-
priate source of control. It is almost unavoidable that external control be
used for routine repetitive tasks. This type of task demands less in the way
of cognitive participation in the performance of the task and will involve few
steps or facets. An individual working at such a task will largely be just
reacting to cues provided by the work flow. In a sense, control originates de
facto from outside the person since some external source is responsible for
setting work standards for task processes; there is little opportunity for the
self to affect the task process. On the other hand, a more creative, non-
routine task (e.g., performing an entrepreneurial function) may be better
suited to a self-control approach (Manz & Sims, 1980). Such tasks demand
greater cognitive involvement on the part of the individual since there are
more task factors to consider. Interactions among these factors are more
likely to occur, requiring more frequent adjustments and greater flexibility
in the standards, evaluation, and/or consequence components of control.

Though somewhat related to the notion of task, the type of technology
employed by the organization is another contingency to consider. Mass produc-
tion or assembly line technologies may be better suited for external control
than custom or continuous process technologies (Woodward, 1965). Mass produc-
tion technological systems tend to be characterized by topdown role-making via
instructions and decisions. Task relevant knowledge is assumed to lie at

higher levels in the organization. The individual is again placed in a position of <u>reacting</u> with few or no alternatives to feedback supplied largely from external sources. Only vestiges of self-control opportunities exist in this technological situation. On the other hand, custom and continuous process production place greater responsibilities on the individual, creating at least the occasion for the self to play an active part in shapng the role of the individual in the process. Similarly, a technology that requires reciprocal or pooled interdependence may be better suited for self-control than technology requiring sequential interdependence (Slocum & Sims, 1980).

Another critical contingency factor concerns the nature of the existing environment surrounding the organization, e.g., a stable vs. a dynamic environment (Duncan, 1972). In a very static environment, control attempts can be more removed from the person being controlled because the need for responsiveness to environmental demands is not as great. In a highly dynamic environment, however, where a much higher level of adaptability is required, there is a need for a higher level of self-control.

Individual difference factors could also be expected to influence the appropriateness of a particular source of control. The controlee's ability level could be a crucial consideration. For example, persons that possess a low dexterity level may require a higher level of external control to assure that performance requirements are adequately fulfilled. Persons high on dexterity, on the other hand, not only enable a higher reliance on self-control but probably possess a strong need for it. Personality factors which are particularly relevant to the issue of behavioral control (e.g., need for achievement, autonomy, dominance; internal vs. external locus of control; self-esteem--global as well as task-related, etc.) may also have an impact on the appropriate sources of control. If past successful experiences with self-

control are part of generalized behavioral response patterns of a person (i.e., personality), that person will tend toward future similar experience.

The above factors have been noted mainly to acknowledge that the source of control ownership will be contingent upon a multiplicity of considerations. It should be apparent that even among the few contingencies illustrated above, complex interactions are possible. Which factors interact and how they interact to affect the efficacy of a particular control source is an issue for empirical research.

Congruency Between External and Self-Control Modes

A crucial consideration for initiating control of individuals in organizations is the congruency between external and self-control modes. That is, since it has been argued here that control is ultimately self-imposed, even when initiated from external sources, discrepencies between external influence attempts and one's self-control will pose difficulties. If an organization emphasizes standards that do not fit with those of the individual, acceptance of and effort toward achieving these standards may be jeopardized. Similarly, if rewards are offered by the external organizational control system that are not valued by the employee, the incentive for desired performance is not provided. In essence, the argument is that external control attempts will influence the individual's behavior based upon the way they impact on that individual's self-control system. If external control attempts are too discrepant with the employee's self-control, then effective influence as intended by external parties is not likely to occur.

One could liken this logic to that of Barnard's (1938) classic notion of "zone of indifference" or Simon's (1961) "area of acceptance." To the extent that external control attempts fit reasonably well with one's self-control system, control congruency and consequently desired influence is made poss-

ible. Significant discrepancies between these two control sources, however,
may result in control problems as external influence permeates the different
control levels and ultimately impacts on self-control processes. From an
organizational perspective this would suggest that control attempts should be
designed to be relatively congruent with the self-control make-up of employ-
ees. An alternative to changing the nature of organizational control would be
to change employees so that they are more consistent with existing organiza-
tional controls (e.g., through socialization or selection and training).

A Final Word

A new perspective of the control process in organizations has been
presented. A major proposition of this new perspective is that behavioral
control is ultimately self-imposed. However, it is recognized that behavior
control, whether originating from the self or an external source, will unfold
within a multi-level context. Thus, an attempt has been made to acknowledge
that alternate control processes occur at different conceptual levels
simultaneously through complex reciprocity relationships. Many of the contin-
gency factors addressed were considered purposely because of their macro
nature even though the primary focus of the paper is at the micro level (i.e.,
individual control). This underscores the importance of cross-level
considerations (e.g. see Roberts, Hulin, & Rousseau, 1978). The picture of
levels or layers of control and their entanglements does not easily lend
itself to the disaggregated study of one part or component of the control
process. Consequently, this view challenges researchers to consider behavior-
al control in organizations within the broad framework in which it transpires.

More immediate implications for research and practice of control in
organizations have been broached by the theoretical perspective of this

paper. In particular, the following needs have emerged: (a) a need for an increased emphasis on the self-control capabilities and practices of organizational members; (b) a need for careful consideration of the appropriate source from which to initiate control attempts given the advantages and disadvantages of each source and the characteristics of each unique situation; and (c) the importance of achieving and maintaining an adequate fit between external and self-control modes. Overall, the analysis suggests the necessity of gaining a fuller understanding of the self control process and the importance of effectively implementing self control toward the attainment of organizational objectives.

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Figure 1

The Self-Control Core of Organizational
Control Within the Context of External Forces

External Control Forces

Longer Term Self Control

Immediate/Short Term
Self-Control

Externally | Longer Term   Longer Term   External
Imposed → Stds/Goals → S ← → O ← → B ← → C ← Consequences Evaluations
Stds/Goals ←   Self   Cog. Med.   Self   and Imposed
                          Stds/ Processes   Eval/   Consequences
                          Goals   Reward
                                             Punish
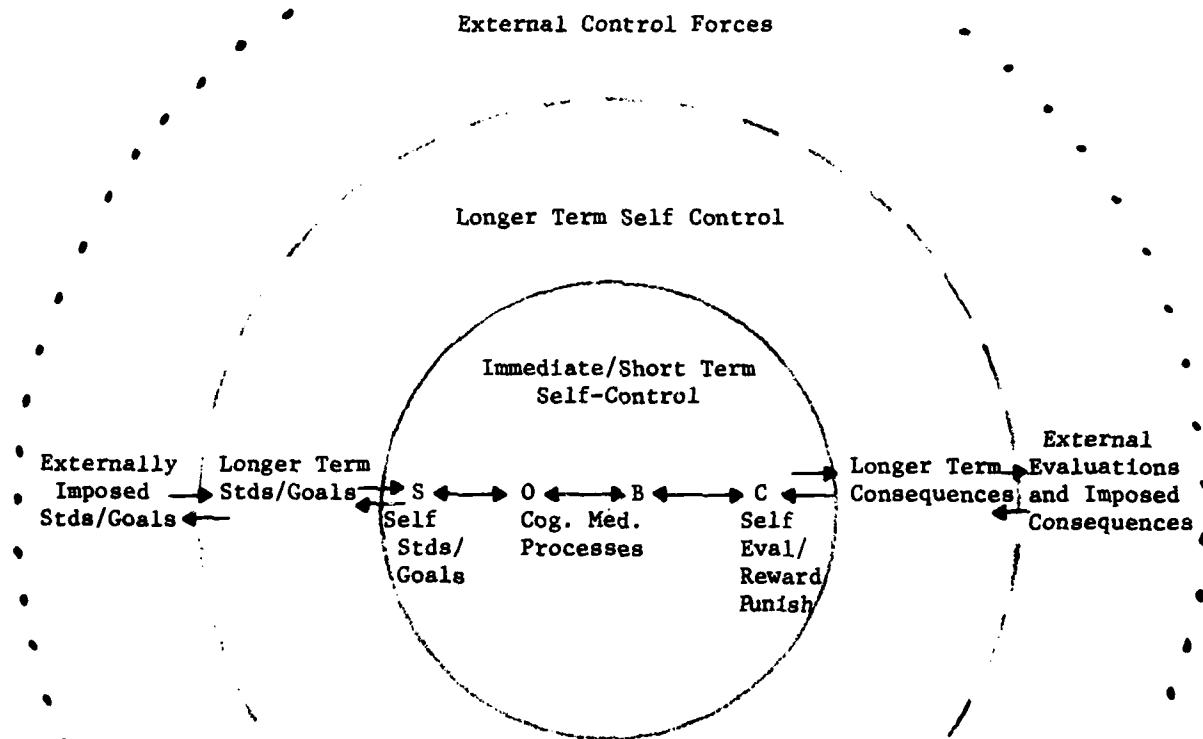
Figure 2

An Integrated Model of Control
in Organizations

External Control

Setting Standards

Self-◯ Imposed
Control

Evaluating

Administering Consequences

External
Control

External
Control
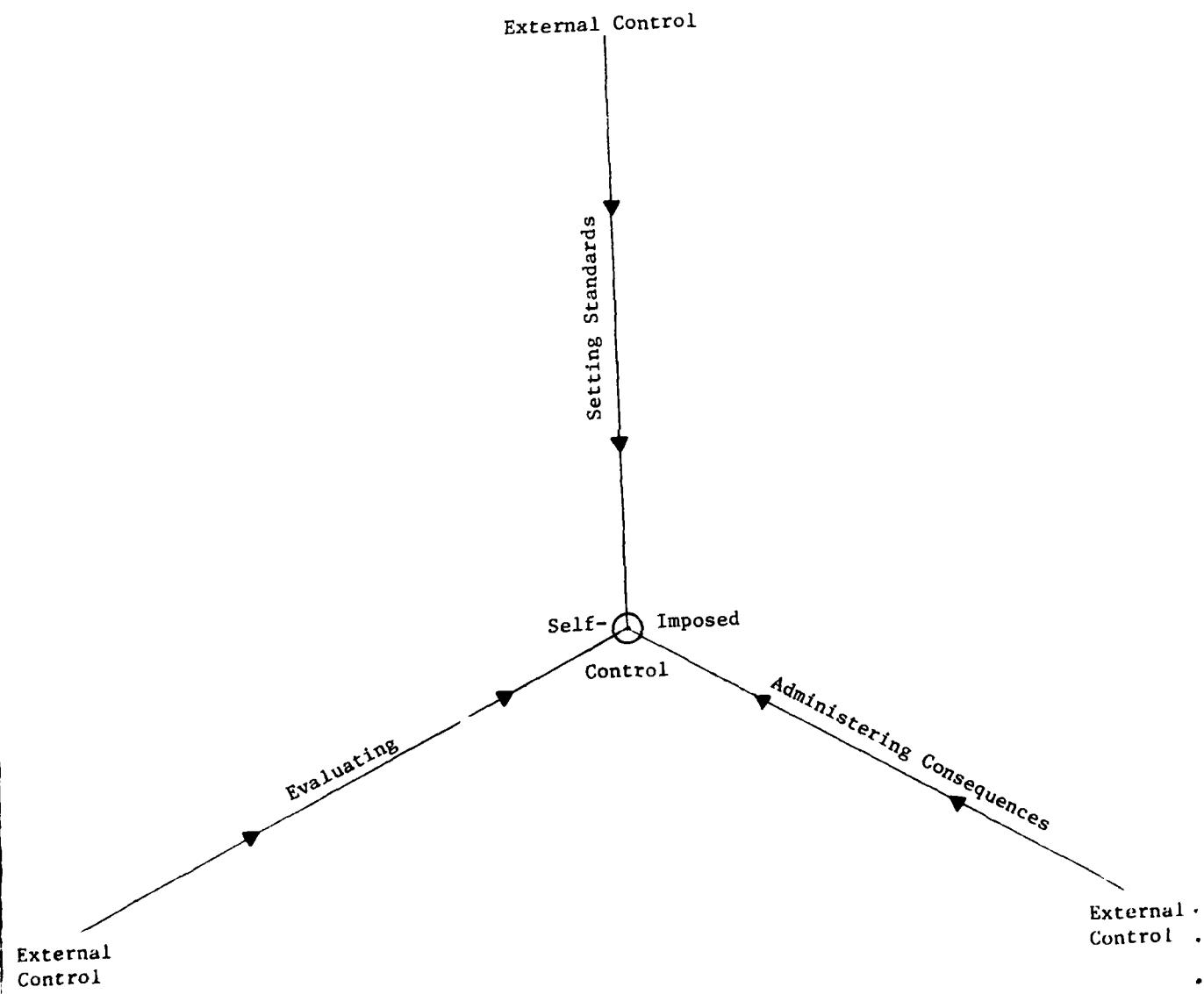
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