The Person/Environment Dynamics of Employee Empowerment: An Organizational Culture Analysis[1]

Pennie G. Foster-Fishman[2]
Michigan State University

Christopher B. Keys
University of Illinois at Chicago

Using an organizational culture framework, this case study examines the critical preconditions necessary for employee empowerment and highlights how the multiple cultures within one public bureaucracy differently impacted their implementation. SERVE, a large human service organization, initiated an employee empowerment program that contradicted and thus collided with many elements of its overall organizational culture. Despite the best intentions of the organizational leaders, upper management support, and opportunities for participatory decision making, the organization could not foster the critical preconditions needed for employee empowerment. Leaders had difficulty expanding the employees' power and promoting member inclusion. Concurrently, most employees rejected these new opportunities for control and distrusted the leader's intentions. Yet, despite the widespread rejection of these empowerment initiatives, most employees described their work lives as empowering. The role the local site subculture played in promoting employee empowerment is examined. We discuss how a localized (vs. system-wide)

empowerment endeavor may be a more appropriate and feasible focus for public bureaucracies seeking to initiate greater staff empowerment. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between individuals and their environments, and how this interaction affects the empowerment process.

KEY WORDS: empowerment; organizational culture; qualitative research; public bureaucracies.

> I'm seeing a more participatory type of management going on. It's better. I feel more comfortable now and more open in being able to voice some of my opinions as an administrator and as a leader. (leader)
>
> I was at a meeting of supervisors and they were joking about the inverted pyramid. They were calling it the inserted pyramid. (middle manager)
>
> Inverted pyramid? There is no inverted pyramid. They never ask how things are going. They always make changes and decisions without us, even though they don't know what is going on. It's as though they don't trust us. (staff member)

SERVE was a large statewide human service agency recognized for its commitment to innovative service delivery. Because SERVE's leaders believed that client empowerment was more likely to occur when staff had more control over their own work lives, they initiated a philosophy to promote the empowerment of frontline staff. This approach—the Inverted Pyramid—sought to turn the traditional pyramidal power structure of a large bureaucracy upside down. Its goals were to strengthen the voice of frontline staff in agency decision making and policy formulation. Top agency administrators embraced this new organizational approach, believing that it would increase employee morale, service innovation, and organizational effectiveness.

Despite this commitment, this well-intended empowerment initiative collided with many cultural features common to public bureaucracies. This collision not only threatened to derail the empowerment effort but also promoted widespread cynicism and distrust among SERVE's employees. The primary purpose of this paper is to examine why, in spite of the numerous encouraging factors, this collision occurred. Such an examination seems particularly salient now, given the recent emphasis on government reform and the identification of employee empowerment as a necessary addition to public bureaucratic life (Ban, 1995; Gore, 1993; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Understanding SERVE's failure may also provide some insight into why few employee empowerment initiatives have achieved the success and employee empowerment initially suggested (e.g., Ledford, Lawler, & Mohrman, 1988; Locke, Schweiger, & Latham, 1986).

The secondary purpose of this paper is to examine how, despite this failure, several islands for employee empowerment existed and even flour-

ished throughout SERVE. Some employees still managed not only to feel empowered but also to experience realized control and influence. Understanding this complexity of organizational life is critical if we wish to understand where and how our empowerment initiatives will be most appropriate and effective.

EMPOWERMENT: DEFINITION AND NECESSARY PRECONDITIONS

Empowerment refers to "the process of gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance to an individual or group" (Fawcett et al., 1994, p. 471). This definition recognizes the primary purpose for adopting this construct: enhancing people's control over their lives (Rappaport, 1981). It recognizes that empowerment endeavors should consider those domains important to a particular individual or group and facilitate a process that eventually leads to *realized* (not simply perceived) control and influence in those domains.

Central to the empowerment process is a person–environment interaction (Rappaport, 1981; Zimmerman, 1995), a dynamic interplay between people's desires/capacities and contextual opportunities. When individual capacities meet environmental demands, when supports and opportunities for control fit with individual desires, then the empowerment process is likely to succeed (e.g., Maton & Salem, 1995). If we ignore this person–environment interaction and the critical role that both individual *and* contextual characteristics play in the empowerment process, we risk implementing ill-fated empowerment initiatives, or worse yet, creating disempowering experiences for the participants (Rich, Edelstein, Hallman, & Wandersman, 1995).

There is substantial empirical evidence for the importance of attending to the ecology—particularly the contextual element—of our empowerment initiatives. Goodstein and Boyer (1972), Gruber and Trickett (1987), and Serrano-Garcia (1984) all found that the power dynamics and role prescriptions in their targeted settings impeded their attempts to promote member empowerment. While these studies underscore the importance of attending to the contextual feasibility of our empowerment initiatives, they do little to consider the other ecological dimension—individual desire and capacity for empowerment—and its interaction with the environment. It is not simply the presence of empowering contextual elements or the presence of motivated, capable individuals that fosters the empowerment process. It is the dynamic interplay between person and environment that creates the infrastructure for empowerment (Fawcett et al., 1994; Zimmerman, 1995).

Although this is a widely accepted assumption in the empowerment litera-
ture, few researchers have examined the interface between individuals and
their settings to understand the empowerment process. The present study
provides one conceptual framework for identifying and evaluating this dy-
namic.

CRITICAL CULTURAL PRECONDITIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

Organization culture provides an excellent framework for under-
standing and assessing the person–environment fit needed for empower-
ment to succeed within an organization. It considers individual attitudes,
employee behavior, and organizational practices as interconnected elements
within organizational life (Martin, 1992). Organizational culture refers to
the shared system of meaning (Smircich, 1983) that guides organizational
members' believing, thinking, perceiving, and feeling, ultimately directing
their behavior (Schein, 1985). These traditions live in and are guided by
the organizational members' interpretative frames and the organizational
practices that emerge from and sustain those perceptions (Bartunek &
Moch, 1987).

Change initiatives are most likely to succeed when they are compat-
ible with the existing organizational culture; or when they are not, signifi-
cant cultural transformation occurs to improve this alignment (Schein,
1985). Thus, an empowerment initiative is more likely to succeed when the
organizational culture contains, or changes to create, the critical conditions
needed for empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). These conditions would include
implications for individual attitudes and behaviors as well as for the con-
current organizational practices.

We take the position that there are two major kinds of critical pre-
conditions for employee empowerment: (a) conditions concerning power
and control, and (b) those concerning inclusion and trust. These categories
both have organizational and individual level implications, suggesting that
favorable conditions for empowerment require organizational practices and
employee attitudes and behaviors consistent with an empowerment philoso-
phy. Through their interaction, these preconditions create, or fail to create,
an environment capable of promoting increased staff control. These cate-
gories well represent the critical dynamics others (e.g., Block, 1987; Bond
& Keys, 1993; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Gruber & Trickett, 1987; Pa-
canowsky, 1988; Zimmerman, 1995) have frequently linked to the empow-
erment process. The rationale for these conditions is presented here; later,

the results demonstrate their particular relevance for public bureaucracies and illustrate their dynamic interplay.

Power and Control

Any empowerment endeavor necessarily includes power and control issues. Lacking influence in a particular domain, individuals seek and acquire power and resources to establish such control. For such processes to occur, organizations must have the ability to change and expand their power structure, and individuals must desire such control.

Organizational Precondition: Ability to Change and Expand the Power Structure. Staff empowerment involves increased staff control in work domains employees deem important. Such control requires more than a perception of self-efficacy (Riger, 1993). It involves having greater access to resources and/or more discretionary choice in the conduct of one's work (cf. Kanter, 1977; Pacanowsky, 1988; Rappaport, 1981; Spreitzer, 1995). It involves more opportunities to exercise these new found prerogatives. Leaders and managers must be willing and able to expand their structuring of power to provide staff greater access to resources and increased discretion (Hollander & Offerman, 1990). These changes in power structure may not only redistribute control but also increase the overall amount of autonomy and influence exerted. Because this restructuring requires significant system and individual change (Bartunek & Moch, 1987), the organization's capacity to affirm such change is important. This affirmation is more likely when risk taking is normative and rewarded, encouraging individuals to pursue new directions and to acquire new knowledge and abilities (Senge, 1990). Ultimately, risk taking helps increase the employees' confidence and capacity, leading them to seek access to power and resources.

Individual Precondition: Desire for Increased Control. Concurrently, organizational members must have a desire for increased control. No matter how supportive the organization, if employees do not desire change then individual transformation is unlikely. In the case of empowerment, desire for gaining more control over one's working life typically precedes gaining such control. Individuals who desire greater control are more likely to engage in new behaviors and pursue empowering opportunities (Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). The individual's willingness to do something different, to stand up and be counted, is at the core of the empowerment process. Individual desire for greater control dovetails with the organization's capacity to expand its power structure.

These organizational and individual conditions can interact positively to increase the likelihood of empowerment.

Inclusion and Trust

Empowerment endeavors strengthen the linkages between employees and their work environments by offering opportunities for influencing organizational operations and decision making (Zimmerman, 1990). Increasing opportunities for influence and control complements the redistribution and expansion of power noted above. These opportunities lead to meaningful staff involvement when an organization promotes such inclusion and employees believe that such inclusion is possible and worthwhile.

Organizational Precondition: Ability to Promote Inclusion. This precondition refers to formal and informal norms that involve people psychologically in the organization. Such involvement promotes a sense of community (Bond & Keys, 1993) and the development of organizational citizenship. Organizational citizens are invested in and are willing to act to achieve organizational successes. Organizations with strong inclusionary norms are more likely to have member commitment and work-group cohesion and less likely to experience personnel problems such as turnover and sabotage (cf. Argyris, 1971). Inclusion can be fostered through effective communication and opportunities to participate in decision making (Kanter, 1977; Pacanowsky, 1988). Participation in decision making, in turn, can provide one medium for influence (Bartunek & Keys, 1979). Although symbolic participation may yield some positive initial outcomes (March & Olsen, 1976), substantive participation that involves meaningful influence on important organizational matters is more likely to promote inclusion and sustain a sense of community over time. Moreover, the critical consciousness of leaders and members can develop as they participate and learn more about how the organization functions in its environment (Freire, 1968).

Individual Precondition: Belief and Trust in the Organization. Positive beliefs and trust help connect individual employees to the larger organization, increasing their willingness to support change (Weick, 1985). Such trust may emerge as a belief in the positive vision of organizational leaders and in the support and cooperation of coworkers and subordinates. In less optimal circumstances, such beliefs may help foster empowerment even if other preconditions are not fully present. Positive experiences with inclusionary organizational practices can lead to greater trust which in turn may strengthen norms for inclusion (cf. Bond & Keys, 1993). In short, when both organizational and both individual preconditions for empowerment coexist, a person–environment congruence necessary for engendering the em-

powerment process emerges. When system offerings and individual desires converge, when legitimate initiatives are perceived as feasible, there is a greater likelihood that we will be successful in our efforts to promote the empowerment of frontline staff and other organizational members.

CULTURAL COMPLEXITY

These proposed critical preconditions provide one framework for assessing how an organization's culture will interact with an empowerment initiative. However, cultural reaction to change is neither unified nor uniform; organizational culture can provide multiple pockets of varying degrees of resistance and support for any change endeavor (Meyerson & Martin, 1987). Subcultural differences often emerge during the change process, especially since different constituencies often perceive the change program differently (Wilkins & Dyer, 1988). When assessing the interaction between culture and empowerment, it seems useful to identify and understand those subcultures that might engender a work environment more or less empowering than the larger organizational system. By seeking these diverse subcultures, we can potentially elicit the unanticipated opportunities for empowerment present within a potentially disempowering, larger organizational context. To do so, we compared and contrasted the subcultures of several organizational sites within one public bureaucracy, specifically attending to the presence (or absence) of the critical preconditions.

In conclusion, this study builds on prior analyses of empowerment processes in the governing committees of much smaller organizations (Bond & Keys, 1993; Gruber & Trickett, 1987). It examines empowerment in employees' work life in the culture and subcultures of a large public bureaucracy. Two focal issues arise that, to our knowledge, have not heretofore been addressed in the empowerment literature: (a) How does consideration of individual factors and individual/organizational interactions add to our knowledge of empowerment in organizations? and (b) What is the contribution of the organizational culture perspective to understanding empowerment processes in organizations?

METHOD

Sponsoring Organization

SERVE is a large statewide organization that provides a range of human services to persons with disabilities. SERVE employs over 2,000 indi-

viduals who are dispersed across several administrative and area offices, over 50 local field sites, and several residential facilities. We targeted the local field sites and their corresponding leadership hierarchy since those local settings were most affected by the empowerment initiatives. To choose field sites, we employed the most similar/most different case study selection technique (Przeworksi & Teune, 1970). We first asked the four organizational leaders most familiar with the sites to independently select the two area administrations they considered to vary most in management style. With 100% agreement, they labeled one as participatory, the other as authoritarian. Then, across these two areas, the four leaders rated the local sites according to their local management styles. The researcher selected the four sites that varied most in their management practices. One site was eventually dropped from this study due to internal political concerns. Of the remaining three sites, Sites A and C were located in the area managed by the more authoritarian administrator and Site B was located in the area directed by the more participatory administrator.

Forty-nine informants (98% of the sample) representing three local sites, two area offices, two administrative headquarters, and six levels of hierarchy volunteered to participate. The informants represented eight positions including secretary, direct service provider, community liaison, supervisor, area administrator, program manager, associate director, and executive director.

The Inverted Pyramid Model of Decision Making

At the time of this study, SERVE was involved in an extensive empowerment initiative. Using a participatory, strategic planning process, the top leaders of SERVE adopted an empowerment philosophy as the guiding vision in the 1990s. This vision included increasing workers' influence over the decision-making process, leading administrators to adopt an inverted pyramid model of decision making approximately 1 year prior to this study. Through the creation of decision-making teams, this initiative was designed to have lower level employees involved in the decision-making process at SERVE. Each team, consisting of staff volunteers, addressed a particular organizational issue. For example, one team discussed how to increase consumer involvement, another addressed how to improve the quality of service provision. Top leaders also encouraged all managers to adopt a more participatory management style, providing autonomy and delegating decision-making responsibility to their employees. Selected sites that proposed innovations were also given more autonomy and fewer reporting requirements in order to implement new approaches to providing services.

Procedures

Interviews. To understand the interaction between empowerment and organizational culture, our interviews primarily targeted members' experiences with and reactions to the empowerment endeavors. We used five central questions to gather information about empowerment in relation to the core elements of organizational culture life, for example, descriptive, prescriptive, and connotative (see Sackman, 1991, for further information on this method): What does empowerment mean at SERVE? What helps you feel empowered in your job? What gets in the way of you feeling empowered in your job? What could be done to improve your empowerment experiences? Why was the inverted pyramid initiated? Because employee interpretations emerge from the organizational culture, analyzing member responses to these questions provided insight into SERVE's culture and subcultures (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer told the informants that this study was part of her dissertation research and its purpose was to understand the empowerment process. Informants were also told that research findings, and their implications for improving the working conditions at SERVE, would be shared with organizational leaders. Informants were first asked to discuss the three most significant changes currently happening at SERVE. As the informant identified issues, they were explored for clarification, thus maximizing the "inquiry from the inside" (Evered & Louis, 1981) and increasing the organizational culture and subculture knowledge obtained. Answers to the central questions were then sought from all informants. The questions themselves were only asked if the informant did not directly answer them in response to prior questions. Interviews lasted 30 minutes to 2 hours, with the average interview lasting 1 hour. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher recorded ideas and reactions to the interview content, proposed hypotheses, and described informant reactions in her field notes.

Observations. Upon the initiation of this study, an initial 5-day reconnaissance visit (Kelly, 1988) was conducted at SERVE to briefly familiarize the researcher with the work environment. The researcher also observed staff interactions and two staff meetings at each field site. She attended to the frequency and purpose of informal staff interactions, the extent to which staff members participated in decision making, and the management behaviors that affirmed or negated such involvement. To minimize participants' reactivity and maximize information gathered, observations were conducted during the last week of the 3-week visit at each site.

Archival Data Review. To gather an historical perspective, the researcher reviewed the strategic plan, organizational memos that detailed

the strategic planning process and described the empowerment initiative, and the employee policy and procedures handbook.

Data Analysis

A thematic content analysis identified the emergent themes and system and individual reactions to empowerment. To reduce researcher bias, all verbatim transcripts were assigned a random four-digit code and identifying information was eliminated before coding. Then, reviewing all data sources, the researcher identified underlying themes and issues; each interview response was coded against these emergent themes. Following this content analysis, informants with similar theme profiles were clustered together. The dominant organizational practices, underlying interpretative frames, and empowerment experiences within each cluster were identified. These cultural elements were then mapped onto the proposed conceptual

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL ⇨ ⇦ INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

CONTROL/ POWER CRITICAL PRE-CONDITIONS	ABILITY TO EXPAND POWER STRUCTURE		DESIRE FOR INCREASED CONTROL	
	Willingness to Expand & Redistribute Resources	Willingness to Encourage Employee Risk Taking	Desire for Expanding One's Domain of Influence	Willingness to do Things Differently
SERVE'S CULTURAL INCON-SISTENCIES	Demand Ridden Environment	Authoritarian Leadership	Bureaucratic Reality Frame	
	■ Unbounded external demands ■ Demands for political accountability ■ Risk aversive environment	■ Punitive management practices ■ Autocratic decision-making processes	■ Employees' perception that staff control is infeasible in a bureaucracy ■ Employees' acceptance of the status quo ■ Employees' lack of desire for increased control over larger organizational decisions	

TRUST/ INCLUSION CRITICAL PRE-CONDITIONS	ABILITY TO PROMOTE INCLUSION		BELIEF/TRUST IN ORGANIZATION	
	Effective Communication	Meaningful Opportunities to Participate in Decision-Making	Trusting Leaders' Vision & System's Capacity to Change	Believing in Possibility of Empowerment
SERVE'S CULTURAL INCON-SISTENCIES	Organizational Disconnection	Action Inconsistencies	"Us Versus Them" Frame	
	■ Loosely coupled, disjointed structure ■ Little interaction between leaders and employees ■ Stagnated information flow	■ Token participation ■ Little time available or allocated for participation ■ Elimination of wait listing process	■ Employees' perception that leaders fail to deliver on past promises ■ "Old guard" mentality ■ Employees' perception that leaders do not understand them or value them. ■ Employees' belief that "big brother" is always watching	

Fig. 1. SERVE's cultural inconsistencies with Empowerment's critical preconditions.

model (Figure 1). The Results and Discussion section includes this organization of the data; the cultural elements presented represent themes and actual stories that dominated the employee interviews.

Data Authentication

To authenticate the conclusions drawn, a confirmatory analysis for qualitative, culture research was conducted (cf. Sackman, 1991). To confirm the accuracy of the information collected, the emerging themes were discussed with the informants throughout the process. Then the researcher discussed the emerging themes and other interpretations with a competent, disinterested third party member (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). A subset of interviews were reanalyzed 1 month later to assess the accuracy of that content analysis process. No significant discrepancies were discovered. Finally, four experts, an organizational insider and three disinterested outsiders, read and affirmed the conclusions drawn. With the triangulation of methodology, the ongoing organizational member authentication, and expert validation, the credibility of the information gathered was enhanced (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall, the interview and observation data revealed that two dominant, somewhat competing cultures—organizational system and local site—influenced the presence of the preconditions needed for worker empowerment at SERVE. First, the public bureaucracy contained numerous cultural elements inconsistent with the creation of a more empowering work culture (see Figure 1). The absence of the critical preconditions at this level not only caused most employees to feel disempowered as organizational citizens but also led them to rebuff the system-wide, worker-empowerment initiatives. Yet, ironically, many SERVE employees described themselves as generally empowered in their jobs. This paradox emerged because most workers considered themselves members of two organizations—the larger, public bureaucracy and their local, organizational site. When the local site contained the preconditions for empowerment, then an empowering environment was available. As one employee described:

> I basically have two jobs. One, I am in my office where I have a lot of decision-making power and control. I get to determine when and how things should go. I am pretty much left alone and supported in my decisions. But, the minute I step out of this office, Bam! I am slammed with all kinds of demands from . . .

Central—"Do this, do that!" It's enough to make you never want to leave your room.

While staff in all three local sites experienced the larger organizational culture similarly, the presence and form of this local empowerment varied. A comparison of these local site subcultures follows a description of SERVE's homogenous cultural environment.

SERVE'S HOMOGENOUS ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Power and Control

Organizational Precondition: The Ability to Change and Expand Power Structure and Access to Resources

Two cultural characteristics, individually and in concert, significantly hindered SERVE's capacity to expand its power structure and resource access.

Demand-Ridden Environment. Unrestricted demands for public and political accountability dominated life at SERVE, significantly constraining the feasibility of leader initiated change. Politicians often expected SERVE's directors to fulfill their own campaign promises and political agendas. Federal and state officials closely monitored SERVE's public image and service delivery record. Powerful advocates often demanded service delivery changes. These forces created an environment where significant consequences were associated with the failure to meet an external demand. In fact, several recent SERVE leaders were terminated prematurely as a result of these political consequences. In this context, SERVE's leaders experienced neither political nor economic gains from risk taking. The current leader promoted a risk-aversive work culture, punishing employee innovation when it ran afoul. As one employee described "Sure, (leaders) say I can implement any of my ideas—but I had better be willing to take the fall. There is no room for error."

Authoritarian Management Style. Concerned about public reprimands and facing an entrenched, tenured workforce, SERVE's leaders often relied on authoritarian means to accomplish their goals. Decision making was centralized, mandates for employee behavior were frequently ordered, disciplinary actions often taken. Even the current director, who had initiated and publicly expressed strong support for the inverted pyramid, still maintained a somewhat feared regimen of control and required all decisions first to pass his scrutiny. This authoritarian management style and SERVE's demand-ridden environment worked together to reduce opportunities for expanded power and control. When leaders needed to respond quickly to

some public outcry or government demand, the authoritarian style seemed particularly evident. For example, SERVE was recently chastised in some local newspapers for failing to provide a particular form of service. In reaction, organizational leaders demanded that middle managers "severely punish" staff members throughout the organization who failed to complete paperwork requirements. Certainly, organizational leaders had adequate reason for concern: The newspaper articles led to some public investigations of SERVE's provision of services. Yet, this incident only further entrenched leaders in their authoritarian style: "It's not like we want to treat them this way . . .But it just shows us what happens when we stop monitoring them . . .It's going to be a long time coming before they again have the freedom and lack of controls they got used to" (leader).

Other external demands that became vehicles for enhancing leader control and negating employee influence were federal and state requirements for affirmative action. The future employment of several top SERVE administrators rested on the success of this initiative. Under the process of affirmative action, top leaders had to authorize every employment decision. Thus, while leaders expressed a desire for employee control over organizational operations, these same leaders engaged mostly in crisis management—in which one individual leader made decisions—with input from perhaps a few other leaders. Such a style inherently excluded meaningful employee involvement, eliminated the possibility of a power redistribution or expansion, and restricted the degree to which leaders provided employees with the latitude to engage in new behaviors or implement innovations.

Individual Precondition: Desire for Increased Control

One cultural lens significantly impeded the employees' desire for increased control.

Bureaucratic Reality Frame. Given the demands and the autocracy, most SERVE employees did not desire a larger voice in organizational decision making. Instead, they seemed to adopt a "bureaucratic reality frame" that viewed an increased voice within the larger system as both infeasible and undesirable. Such a role seemed incompatible with how they perceived and defined themselves as members of a public bureaucracy. As one employee described:

> Well, I just think that when you try to change anything within an agency like this, you have your policy manual, which is backed up by the administrative rules, and your rules are backed up by laws, that back up all the way to the federal government. And so, you're talking about too many changes for an individual supervisor or an individual administrator or anyone. There are just too many controls for it (employee empowerment) to happen. (staff member)

Only in Site B, where numerous local opportunities for influence existed, did employees state a desire for a larger voice in organizational decision making. In other sites, employees wanted only more control within their own role, as currently defined (Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler, & Yapchai, in press, for a full description of the multiple meanings of employee empowerment at SERVE).

Individual-Organizational Interaction

This interpretive frame emerged from and helped to sustain the organizational practices that impeded the distribution of power and resources at SERVE. Many employees, particularly the more tenured, "old guard," strongly rejected the empowerment initiatives, refusing to participate in decision-making groups or adopt other new practices. Having witnessed an influx of proposed changes, these older employees simply embraced the *status quo* and did not trust that any agenda would lead to significant change. As one 23-year veteran explained: "Look, I am doing the same thing now as I did back then. Everyone always gets up-in-arms over these new announcements. Why bother? I have lived through many of them (change initiatives) and none have ever changed what I do." Because the old guard were often the recognized informal local leaders, their rejection of the empowerment initiative stymied the new leader's capacity to gain the local support needed for this initiative to succeed. This lack of support and employee resistance seemed to exacerbate the leaders' authoritarian practices, with some even making participation mandatory. The inconsistencies between the empowerment rhetoric and organizational practices strengthened the workers' bureaucratic reality frame and validated their belief that this initiative was just another short-lived fad. In the end, this interaction of individual and organizational characteristics wove a web of stagnation and frustration. As one employee aptly noted: "This empowerment thing—it means nothing. Nothing around here can or will ever change!"

Inclusion and Trust

Organizational Precondition: Promoting Inclusion

Two cultural elements seemed to impede SERVE's ability to promote the inclusion of its members.

Organizational Disconnection. Both structural and operational elements at SERVE weakened the linkages across organizational sites, roles, and levels. SERVE's large organizational size, in conjunction with its loose

coupling, created an environment where self-contained sites operated independently from the central administration and from each other. In such a system, effective communication mechanisms may promote a shared understanding and foster employee inclusion (Weick, 1985). However, SERVE was plagued by ineffective, stagnant communication processes. Memos often took 4 months to get through the system:

> They knew they needed this paper work done last January. ___ wrote a memo then asking us to complete and submit the changes by May 1. If I had received her request in January, when the memo was written, I would not have had any problems with the request. But when do I get the memo? April 1! Now you tell me, how am I supposed to change the paperwork on 120 clients in less than 30 days? And this is not the first time this has happened. (staff member)

Since each memo from Central traversed five levels of hierarchy en route to frontline staff, it was not surprising that this delay occurred. Overall, these ineffective communication procedures weakened SERVE's already disjointed connections.

Action Inconsistencies. In this context of disconnection, the employee decision-making teams had the potential for building linkages to enhance employee inclusion. Yet, numerous inconsistencies between the espoused ideology of the inverted pyramid and organizational operations existed at SERVE, undermining the success of the change initiatives (Martin, 1992). For example, despite organizational rhetoric on the importance of the inverted pyramid, in its initial implementation employee involvement appeared to some to be tokenism:

> So there was this attempt to create a facade that we were being empowered and having input in the development of this plan, when in fact they already had their plans made and they were telling them (the politicians) what it was going to be. They were in another state, telling them what they are, while we're out here thinking that we're gonna have input. So it's obvious . . .they try to make you feel like you have it, but you don't . . . (staff member)

The staff workload also impeded employee inclusion. Line workers often had caseloads that exceeded 150 clients and the documentation required for each client often consumed 70% of the work day. No reductions in this work load were planned to free time for employee involvement. On the contrary, SERVE's leaders had just announced that wait-listing clients was no longer an acceptable practice, a policy that increased the average caseload.

Individual Precondition: Belief/Trust in the System

This context of disconnection and action inconsistency fed mutual misunderstanding between employees and leaders. For most employees, this lack of trust was embodied in their strong "us versus them" frame:

Us Versus Them. Many employees questioned the leaders' intentions behind the change and seriously doubted that the central administration would be able and willing to share the power and control at SERVE. Exacerbating this distrust, staff strongly believed that SERVE's leaders devalued, misunderstood, and undermined them:

> I feel like we've got Big Brother watching a lot of what's happening down here and maybe not trusting and as a result a feeling that the people at the top don't really know what we do down here. (staff member)

> I think there is a lack of trust above us. They don't trust we will do a good job. Professionalism has been taken away from us . . . We have people coming in, monitoring this, monitoring that. (staff member)

This history of distrust, coupled with the perception that employee empowerment was illegitimate in a public bureaucracy, led most staff to resist the leader's efforts to enhance employee inclusion. In such a depersonalized setting, organizational citizenship behaviors decline (Organ, 1988) and involvement in larger, organizational decisions becomes irrelevant to the employees' daily lives.

Individual-Organizational Interaction

SERVE's physical disconnection and ineffective communication mechanisms played a critical role in initiating and sustaining employee distrust. Faced with a dispersed workforce and demands for public accountability, SERVE's leaders often felt they had little choice but to mandate certain employee behaviors. Because staff had little, if any interactions with the administration, this influx of demands became the only vehicle many had for assessing leader intentions. As the number of inconsistencies grew, staff members harbored more distrust and their resistance to the demands increased. This resistance created more mandates and intensified the autocratic tendencies of the leaders. Not surprisingly, the "inserted pyramid" became the colorful, ironic vernacular staff used to describe this empowerment initiative. It expressed well their perceptions that the dominant organizational culture controlled them, often painfully and perhaps unfairly, regardless of administration rhetoric to the contrary.

In conclusion, it was not that any of the above cultural characteristics, in isolation, impeded the implementation of employee empowerment at SERVE. Rather, it was their interaction that thwarted the emergence of the empowerment preconditions. In concert, these individual and organizational level cultural components created an ecology resistant to the empowerment initiative.

LOCAL SITE SUBCULTURES

While SERVE's organizational disconnection hindered the development of organizational citizenship, it also strengthened the significance of the local site cultures. When the site provided an environment where the empowerment preconditions could emerge, employee empowerment flourished. The different subcultures and their impact on member empowerment, are described below (see Table I).

Site A: Isolated and Authoritative

In many ways, Site A mirrored the larger cultural context of SERVE. It lacked the cultural conditions needed to redistribute power and enhance employee desire for control. The site supervisor and area administrator both embraced an authoritarian management style and employees mostly appeared resigned to their current, powerless fate. The local supervisor was extensively involved in the day-to-day operations of the site. For example, when faced with a fiscally tight month, he retained control over the budget, requiring all staff members to get approval from him before authorizing

Table I. Subcultural Characteristics Influencing Employee Empowerment Within Local Sites

Site	Subcultural characteristics	
	Facilitating elements	Impeding elements
A		Authoritarian local leader Stifling communication procedures Norms for isolation and disconnection No opportunities for inclusion Punitive management practices
B	Innovative, formal leadership Numerous opportunities for inclusion Risk-taking rewarded and supported Management advocates for staff Congruity between site supervisor's and area manager's leadership style Norms for teamwork Strong sense of community	
C	Innovative informal leadership Opportunities for inclusion Committed staff	Ineffective formal leadership Strong disrespect for local leadership Incongruity between site supervisor's and manager's leadership style

expenses for clients. Overall, he subscribed to classic Theory X manage-
ment practices (McGregor, 1960): "People who work for government are
people who in the end don't want a lot of control—they're followers . . .
it is my job to monitor them, and I have to be punitive at times" (Site A
supervisor).

Site A also lacked the components needed to foster employee inclu-
sion and enhance worker trust. Most employees were not even aware that
SERVE had initiated an inverted pyramid, and they seemed unconcerned
about their lack of information or involvement. Most workers strived to
keep themselves as disconnected from SERVE and their coworkers as pos-
sible. Each morning, upon entering Site A, employees immediately de-
parted to their own offices, where they remained throughout the day. They
knew or cared little about their coworker's behaviors and resisted attending
any office gathering or meeting: "I come here, go to my office, and do my
job. I don't really worry about what's going on out there. It has little to
do with me. And they (the other employees) do the same. We really leave
each other alone" (staff member).

Overall, the interaction between the individual elements of apathy
and distrust and the organizational elements of authoritarianism and dis-
connection created a setting where employees were both powerless and un-
interested in the inverted pyramid model of decision making. They feared
the dictates and punishments of their local leaders, avoided voicing their
opinions in public, and seemed generally unsupported by their coworkers.
The authoritarian style of the site supervisor seemed to exacerbate this
powerlessness. In the end, the combination of these elements created a
subculture incapable of fostering the critical preconditions to empower-
ment.

Site B: Involved and Participatory

The local culture at Site B contrasted sharply with Site A's; all of the
conditions needed for empowerment to flourish existed. Site B's manage-
ment (the site supervisor and the area administrator) used numerous meth-
ods to share and expand power and resources and thereby promote
employee inclusion. They followed a participatory style of decision making,
creating voluntary opportunities for worker involvement in local decision
making that spanned a variety of issues and took numerous forms. Contrary
to Site A, Site B's supervisor, when faced with the same budget crunch,
developed a technique that maintained staff autonomy while facilitating
group decision making. Each month, Site B staff set aside a portion of the
site's budget for special needs. Staff members continued to have their own

budgets, but if their resources were exhausted they could request use of these funds. The staff discussed these requests and determined, together, which financial requests to fulfill. Site B's management also encouraged employee risk taking. When mistakes occurred, management buffered employees from the administration's punitive actions by accepting full responsibility for any problems.

Coupled with consistent local leader support and validation, such an approach fostered employee trust and involvement in the local empowerment opportunities and promoted effective information sharing. This culture for inclusion was exemplified by the employees' emphasis on teamwork and the psychological sense of community within the office. Office doors remained opened and employees sought each other out to problem solve. The availability of legitimate, desirable opportunities for influence interacted with employee trust in the local leadership to promote an environment where positive social relationships and empowerment flourished.

Site C: Informal Influence

Site C represented a cultural amalgam: It failed to promote employee inclusion and engender employee trust, yet power was locally redistributed and employees strongly desired increased control. The failed attempts at promoting inclusion and employee trust emerged from the site supervisor's inability to uphold a participatory management style. Many decisions in which he involved his staff were overturned by his boss, the authoritarian area administrator that also supervised Site A. Perceiving the lack of positive results from their inclusion, fewer and fewer staff members vocalized their concerns or desires in the staff meetings. The failure of this manager to implement effective participatory management illustrates the risk of embedding empowering practices within a less than empowering setting (cf. Gruber & Trickett, 1987).

While employees considered this management layer of life at Site C as disempowering, their desires for increased control over their work lives created an environment where informal staff leaders operated somewhat independently from the supervisor. Several staff members in this setting submitted a successful application to become one of five "innovation sites." Sanctioned by the central administration, this initiative permitted staff to develop creative client programs. As long as SERVE offers legitimate systemic opportunities for innovation, informal leadership can continue to encourage staff empowerment at Site C. The mismatch of autocratic area director and democratic site supervisor weakened but did not prevent the effective empowerment of frontline staff.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

These findings support Weick's (1984) contention that emphasizing "small wins" is often most effective. SERVE failed to facilitate employee empowerment at the system level, yet in some cases fostered an environment conducive for worker empowerment at the site level. Thus, while all empowerment efforts need not be local, grassroots efforts may present the best ecologies for the initiation of these endeavors. Within larger contexts like SERVE, where the preconditions needed for empowerment to flourish are absent, the implementation of an empowerment initiative may neither improve employee–management relations nor reduce employee apathy. The proposed conceptual model provided an effective means for assessing system readiness for empowerment, for explaining why the initiation of the inverted pyramid was problematic, and for highlighting why more localized efforts succeeded within this context.

Those who have studied smaller organizations and committees have also found that issues of control/power and trust/inclusion can influence the success of an empowerment endeavor. Both Bond and Keys (1993) and Gruber and Trickett (1987) found that when initial power differences are substantial and are sustained by the organizational culture (e.g., roles, expectations), then it is unlikely that a disempowered group will become empowered. However, when power differences are not too great, and the organizational culture supports member inclusion, then it is more likely that groups may become empowered. This study supports these findings, extends them to a different setting, and places them in a more comprehensive theoretical context. Specifically, when substantial power differences existed—such as between the central leaders and the local site staff—and the organizational culture reinforced those differences, employee empowerment was infeasible. However, when power differences were modest—as in some cases at the local level between a site supervisor and staff members—and a participatory organizational culture existed, then employee empowerment was possible.

More important, this study provides a conceptual framework for understanding the individual–organizational factors and their dynamism inherent in the empowerment process (cf. Figure 1 and Table I). This framework extends the analysis of the empowerment process beyond the issues of "Can one group empower another?" or "Can two groups both be empowered simultaneously?" (Bond & Keys, 1993; Gruber & Trickett, 1987). It also goes beyond a singular emphasis on a setting's capacity to provide real influence and control (e.g., Rich et al., 1995; Zimmerman, 1995). Instead, this study suggests that three useful questions may be "What are the individual and organizational preconditions for empowerment?";

"How do these preconditions interact in the organizational culture?"; and "What kind of person/environment fit is needed for empowerment to flourish?" Future research should examine these questions in other organizational contexts to expand this analysis to a broader array of work environments.

Attending to Individual and Interactional Elements

This study also helps broaden our understanding of the empowerment process beyond an individual level of conceptualization (Perkins, 1995). The stories of life at SERVE illustrate well how individual and organizational elements, interacting together, shape and sustain an ecology that is either hospitable or inhospitable to empowerment. As the inverted-pyramid problems at SERVE suggest, simply altering or adding one discrete variable is unlikely to impact these cultures significantly (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). Instead, a cultural reform including the development of new organizational values and practices (Schein, 1985), and the adoption of new schemata and behaviors by many if not all employees (Bartunek & Moch, 1987), may be required. The proposed critical preconditions provide a template for guiding this transformation.

The results also confirm the necessary role individual desire plays in the empowerment process (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). While most employees rejected a larger role in organizational decision making at SERVE, many still desired more influence and control within their own job domain. This suggests that opportunities made available for employee empowerment must fit the individual's desire for control and influence. Thus, the assessment of employee desire for control may serve as an excellent first step in determining both the feasibility and the nature of an empowerment initiative.

Given the study's cross-sectional nature, we cannot determine exactly why employees rejected a larger role for themselves in the system. Possibly, this rejection reflects the impact of the above cultural constraints operating over time. After years as public servants, employees may have learned to accept their place within the system (Golembiewski, 1985). Many may have witnessed (or personally experienced) the punishment of deviants who demanded more (Martin, 1992). Knowing this, they may have identified only their immediate job domain as appropriate for control and influence. Employee resistance to these empowerment initiatives may also reflect the lack of salience of participation in organization-wide decision making (Bartunek & Keys, 1979; Cummings & Molloy, 1977; French, Israel, & As, 1960). Some employees may simply want to come to work, do their job, and go home. Certainly, some difficulties associated with gathering volunteers for

quality circles (Ledford et al., 1988) and maintaining employee participation in collectives (Riger, 1984) support this argument. Longitudinal research is needed if we wish to better understand the development of employee desire (or lack of desire) for increased control and power.

Value of an Organizational Culture Perspective

This study illustrates how the organizational culture perspective can advance the descriptive and explanatory power of our empowerment research. Organizational culture provides a conceptual framework and methodological strategy for capturing the multiple, potential contingencies that affect employee empowerment. By assuming that multiple subcultures coexist within any one setting (Martin, 1992), and that within each subculture a unique form of organizational life exists, community psychologists can identify the varied existent and potential manifestations of empowerment within a given environment. As such, organizational culture provides a perspective within which the varied experiences of setting members can be articulated and understood (Rappaport, 1995). Moreover, the emphasis on understanding the individual and organizational elements that dynamically create and sustain an organization's culture provide one template for assessing the often neglected person–environment interaction that is central to the empowerment process (e.g., Zimmerman, 1995).

As was the case with SERVE, the organizational culture perspective appears to be particularly useful when potentially empowering islands for employee empowerment are hidden within a larger, disempowering organizational environment. Given the empirical and anecdotal evidence about the work life within a public bureaucracy (e.g., Ban, 1995; Wilson, 1989), it would have been easy to conclude that worker empowerment is misplaced within such a setting. However, one critical island for initiating empowerment—the local site—emerged within SERVE. This isolated realm of empowerment emerged largely from SERVE's loosely coupled structure, a structure common to many public bureaucracies (Ban, 1995).

The culture framework also clearly illustrates the contextual determinism inherent to the empowerment process (Zimmerman, 1995). At SERVE, the different organizational subcultures required different skills and actions for workers to become empowered. This was best illustrated by the differences in staff behaviors between Sites B and C. While both sets of employees described their worklife as generally empowering, the manifestation of this control varied considerably across the two sites. In Site C, empowerment happened because employees, who were unable to depend upon local leaders, proactively pursued for themselves opportuni-

ties for initiative and creativity. In Site B, employees were less proactive in their pursuit of empowerment, since middle managers provided the opportunities and support needed for greater employee influence. The implications of these two different contexts for the employee empowerment experience, in the long term, should be investigated in future research.

In conclusion, organizational culture provides a framework for determining when, where, and how we should implement our empowerment interventions. Although intrapersonal empowerment is purported to be responsive to interventions (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), the present results suggest that interventions are vulnerable to the targeted setting's current ecology for empowerment. Creating false expectations for empowerment or misaligning programs with member desires and organizational culture realities is likely to create a more disempowering work environment. Ultimately, empowerment protagonists must resist monolithic empowerment initiatives that ignore the contextual realities. Instead, they should identify and respect an organization's multiple subcultures, illuminating, supporting, and building on those that serve as critical islands for empowerment. This suggests that organizations should only implement an empowerment initiative if (a) it fits the need of the system; (b) the system is willing to make the adjustments needed for such change; and (c) employees desire such change. Such adjustments would require considering issues of control and power, and trust and inclusion. When, as in the present case, these adjustments involve a major cultural change for the organization, the time and effort needed is substantial.

REFERENCES

Argyris, C. (1971). *Management and organization development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Armenakis, A. A., Harris, S. G., & Mossholder, K. W. (1993). Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human Relations, 46*, 681-703.
Ban, C. (1995). *How do public managers manage?* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
Bartunek, J. M., & Keys, C. B. (1979). Participation in school decision making. *Urban Education, 14*(1), 52-75.
Bartunek, J. M., & Moch, M. K. (1987). First-order, second-order, and third-order change and organizational development interventions: A cognitive approach. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 23*, 483-500.
Block, P. (1987). *The empowered manager*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
Bond, M., & Keys, C. B. (1993). Empowerment, diversity, and collaboration: Promoting synergy on community boards. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 21*, 37-57.
Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review, 13*, 471-482.
Cummings, T. G., & Molloy, E. (1977). *Improving productivity and quality of work life*. New York: Praeger.

Evered, R., & Louis, M. R. (1981). Alternative perspectives in the organizational sciences: "Inquiry from the inside" and "inquiry from the outside." *Academy of Management, 6,* 385-395.

Fawcett, S. B., White, G. W., Balcazar, F. E., Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Mathews, R. M., Paine-Andrews, A., Seekins, T., & Smith, J. F. (1994). A contextual-behavioral model of empowerment: Case studies involving people with physical disabilities. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 22,* 471-496.

Florin, P., & Wandersman, A. (1990). An introduction to citizen participation, voluntary organizations, and community development: Insights for empowerment through research. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18,* 41-54.

Foster-Fishman, P. G., Salem, D. A., Chibnall, S., Legler, R., & Yapchai, C. (in press). Empirical support for the critical assumptions of empowerment theory. *American Journal of Community Psychology.*

French, J. R. P., Israel, J., & As, D. (1960). An experiment in participation in a Norwegian factory: Interpersonal dimensions of decision-making. *Human Relations, 13,* 3-20.

Freire, P. (1968). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Seabury.

Golembiewski, R. T. (1985). *Humanizing public organizations.* Mt Airy, MD: Lomond.

Goodstein, L., & Boyer, R. (1972). Crisis intervention in a municipal agency. A conceptual case study. *Journal of Applied Behavior Science, 8,* 318-340.

Gore, A. (1993). *From red tape to results: Creating a government that works better and costs less* (A report of the *National Performance Review*). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Gruber, J., & Trickett, E. J. (1987). Can we empower others: The paradox of empowerment in the governing of an alternative public school. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 15,* 353-371.

Hollander, E. P., & Offerman, L. R. (1990). Power and leadership in organizations: Relationships in transition. *American Psychologist, 45,* 179-189.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation.* New York: Basic Books.

Kelly, J. G. (1988). *A guide to conducting prevention research in the community.* New York: Haworth.

Ledford, G. E., Lawler, E. E., & Mohrman, S. A. (1988). The quality circle and its variations. In J. P. Campbell & Associates (Eds.), *Productivity in organizations* (pp. 225-294). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. In *New directions for program evaluation* (Vol. 30, pp. 73-84). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Locke, E. A., Schweiger, D. M., & Latham, G. P. (1986). Participation in decision making: When should it be used? *Organizational Dynamics, 14,* 65-79.

McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1976). Organizational choice under ambiguity. In J. G. March & J. P. Olsen (Eds.), *Ambiguity and choice in organizations* (pp. 10-23). Bergen, Norway: Universitetsforlaget.

Martin, J. (1992). *Cultures in organizations: Three perspectives.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Maton, K. I., & Salem, D. A. (1995). Organizational characteristics of empowering community settings: A multiple case study approach. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* 631-656.

Meyerson, D., & Martin, J. (1987). Cultural change: An integration of three different views. *Journal of Management Studies, 24,* 623-647.

Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behavior: The good soldier syndrome.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. (1992). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Pacanowsky, M. (1988). Communicating in the empowering organization. In J. A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook* (Vol. 11, pp. 356-379). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Perkins, D. D. (1995). Speaking truth to power: Empowerment ideology as social intervention and policy. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* 765-794.

Przeworksi, A., & Teune, A. (1970). *The logic of comparative social inquiry.* New York: Wiley.

Rappaport, J. (1981). In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 9,* 1-25.

Rappaport, J. (1995). Empowerment meets narrative: Listening to stories and creating settings. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* 795-808.

Rich, R. C., Edelstein, M., Hallman, W. K., & Wandersman, A. H. (1995). Citizen participation and empowerment: The case of local environmental hazards. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* 657-676.

Riger, S. (1984). Vehicles for empowerment: The case of feminist movement organizations. In J. Rappaport, C. Swift, & R. Hess (Eds.), *Studies in empowerment: Steps toward understanding and action.* New York: Haworth.

Riger, S. (1993). What's wrong with empowerment. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 21,* 279-292.

Sackman, S. A. (1991). *Cultural knowledge in organizations: Exploring the collective mind.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization.* New York: Doubleday.

Serrano-Garcia, I. (1984). The illusion of empowerment: Community development within a colonial context. In J. Rappaport, C. Swift, & R. Hess (Eds.), *Studies in empowerment: Steps toward understanding and action* (pp. 9-35). New York: Haworth.

Smircich, L. (1983). Concepts of culture and organizational analysis. *Administrative Sciences Quarterly, 28,* 339-358.

Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). An empirical test of a comprehensive model of intrapersonal empowerment in the workplace. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* 601-630.

Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An "interpretive" model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review, 15,* 666-681.

Weick, K. (1984). Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems. *American Psychologist, 39,* 40-49.

Weick, K. (1985). Sources of order in underorganized systems: Themes in recent organizational theory. In Y. S. Lincoln (Ed.), *Organizational theory and inquiry: The paradigm revolution.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Wilkins, A. L., & Dyer, W. G., Jr. (1988). Toward culturally sensitive theories of culture change. *Academy of Management Review, 13,* 522-533.

Wilson, J. Q. (1989). *Bureaucracy: What government agencies do and why they do it.* New York: Basic Books.

Zimmerman, M. A. (1990). Taking aim on empowerment research: On the distinction between individual and psychological conceptions. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18,* 169-177.

Zimmerman, M. A. (1995). Psychology empowerment: Issues and illustrations. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* 581-600.

Zimmerman, M. A., & Rappaport, J. (1988). Citizen participation, perceived control, and psychological empowerment. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 16,* 725-750.