

**MET1 Paper P5 2007**  
**Human Resources**  
**CRIB**

**SECTION A: (U. McCormack)**

- 1 How and why do bureaucracies become dysfunctional? How and why can they be irrational? [100%]
  - 2 'Motivation only became an issue – for management and organisation theories as well as for the organisation of work itself – when meaning was either lost or disappeared from work' (Seivers). With reference to theories of motivation and job redesign, critically discuss this statement. [100%]
  - 3 'New-wave employees may only be able to echo the master's voice as if it were their own, not to challenge it' (Parker). Explain and critically evaluate this statement with reference to at least two of the following: emotional labour, post-bureaucratic organisation, culture management. [100%]
  - 4 What insights do critical theories give into power in organisational life and in organisational theory? [100%]
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**Q1:** Candidates are being asked to identify and explain a variety of possible bureaucratic dysfunctions: working to rule; goal displacement; mock bureaucracy. Good candidates will make the point that while the theory of bureaucracy is concerned with formal aspects of the organisation, it does not address informal aspects, and might discuss this further in the context of bureaucracy being an 'ideal type' which might not be achievable in practice. Candidates are also being asked to describe and distinguish between formal and substantive rationality and identify the ethical debates that surround bureaucratic organisation; dehumanisation; moral blindness; unintended consequences. There is scope for candidates to make the case for bureaucracies having a form of substantive rationality. Good candidates will place the emergence of bureaucracy in historical context and compare rational-legal authority to other forms of authority. Candidates could also draw connections to contemporary theorising of the demise of bureaucracy and offer some evaluation of this trend in theory.

**Q2:** Candidates should be able to trace some history of theorising on motivation, from economic motivators in scientific management to social motivators emerging from human relations. They should be able to distinguish between content and process theories of motivation, and good answers will identify the similarities between these in terms of their utilitarianism and attempts to align individual and management goals. Candidates should be able to explain the various attempts at job redesign. Good answers will contain some discussion of the division of labour and how job redesign attempts to mitigate its effects without radically disturbing the basic division between conception and execution. Excellent answers would include some discussion of alienation, and would be aware and possibly wary of the implication in the statement of a lost world of fully authentic work. Good answers

would reflect upon these theories' roots in organisational psychology. Excellent answers might include discussion of motivation as an 'artefact' of the science of OB and as a surrogate for 'meaning', and the nature of the human subject constructed in them (rational, goal-orientated, decontextualized and ahistorical).

**Q3:** Candidates are being asked to identify shifting patterns in work and the organisation of the workplace such as the rise of service sector jobs, the increase of temporary and contract work, employment flexibility, etc. They are being invited to reflect upon this in conjunction with concurrent shifts in contemporary management theorising from the management of behaviour to the management of belief, i.e., the creation of shared values, and the internalisation of these by employees. Candidates may take different views on both the possibility and desirability of attempts by management to inculcate shared values and beliefs. A discussion of emotional labour will distinguish it from emotion at work as the management of emotion, and explain the difference between surface and deep acting. Discussions of culture management will describe attempts to create strong cultures and identify the different critical takes on how achievable this is (from Smircich to Willmott). A discussion of post-bureaucracy might discuss whether shared culture and values can be maintained when organisational boundaries become less clear.

**Q4:** Candidates are being invited to explain, compare and contrast Marxist and post-structuralist accounts of power (as, respectively, possession and relation) and to relate them specifically to control of the labour process and the effects of hierarchical surveillance and normalising judgement. Good answers will evaluate these contributions and address the issue of the relevance of theoretical accounts. Good answers might also make connections to French and Raven's account of power as a resource and offer a critical perspective on it. Excellent answers will take the opportunity to reflect upon who has traditionally authored organisation theory and what the subject matter has been: possible discussions might address the explicit and implicit political nature of, respectively, critical and mainstream OB; the depoliticised nature of a 'classic' account such as French and Raven's; the gendered nature of concepts such as leadership and bureaucracy.

## **SECTION B: (J. Angelis)**

**Q1:** The first part of the question relates to (a) factors internal to the firm and (b) factors outside the firm. A comprehensive checklist of (a) would be as follows: The need to control labour costs; equity between the worth of jobs; equity in rewarding different contributions; technology and production constraints; product cycles and changes. A good student would know all these (or most of them) and for (b) would know that effective payment systems should relate pay to the labour market; be conscious of legislation and equal opportunities; and to pay attention to product markets and competition. General principles would be that they should be inexpensive to administer and cost-effective; easy to operate; easy to understand; perceived as fair, does not exacerbate employee relations and be effective in achieving aim. A good student would not know all but should be rewarded for knowing most of these. The second part of the question relates to the shift from the 'rate for the job' to pay systems associated with HRM such as merit pay, profit related pay and performance-related pay.

A good answer would be point out that HRM, with its humanistic image of the employee, derives largely from the 'human relations' school of thought. As such, it draws on the concepts of leadership styles, the work group, communication, and job content to generate a range of motivational techniques and associated payment and reward systems to improve and enhance performance. It is essentially based on a reworking of 1940s to 1960s ideas to generate efficiency. Efficiency underlies the second strand of HRM, namely a focus on employees as the human assets of the firm and an increased focus on the costs of employees. HRM literature emphasises the concern for the 'core' employees and the search for more flexible patterns of employment. This leads to a number of contradictions. On the one hand HRM presents itself as developing pay systems which link individual performance to career development and salary advancement, yet at the same time it debates the cost benefits of flexibility of working hours (e.g. annual hours, flexible rostering). Simultaneously, it is concerned with developing payment techniques to overcome the problems of motivating part-time and fixed contract staff. Given the above, any performance-related pay system, in order to be effective, would be extremely costly and complicated to administer. Hence, implementation issues such as feasibility, cost and risk and their implications may be incorporated in the answer.

**Q2:** The first part of the question is straightforward and it refers to the Basic Agreement between the SAF and LO agreed at Saltsjöbaden in 1936 which subsequently became known as the 'Swedish Model'. It provided for: employers and trade unions are highly centralised, well-organised and cover almost the entire labour market; pay and conditions are regulated through central basic agreements at industry-wide level which are then applied, after bargaining to local establishments; there is a low strike incidence; a premium is placed on industrial peace and compromise and there are close relations between the trade unions and the Social Democratic parties which tend to be elected to government.

A good answer would note the above and point out that the old Swedish model died out, largely as a result of wider pressures of changes in international product markets, globalization and developments in new technology when the employers withdrew from the government and industrial committees in 1991. However, trade unions are still well organized, legislation affecting employment relations is still in place and Sweden has modified its bargaining structures and introduced new legislation following its accession to

the EU in 1996. Care should be taken to avoid focusing on the cultural aspects of Swedish society and their relation to the Swedish model of employment relations, rather than discussing the particular advantages, disadvantages and causes of the model. The implications of current trends such as collective bargaining on local rather than industry level, strengthening of short-termism and capitalist politics even in the Social Democratic party may also be brought forward.

**Q3:** This question requires students to outline the reasons why microelectronics represents a heartland technology (significantly different from all previous technologies, cheaper, more reliable, capital and labour saving at the same time, can be applied to all jobs regardless of sector and occupations etc.). references to groundbreaking innovations in other industries, such as in processes, may be used as well. The students should then carry the argument forward to long-wave theory and draw on the work of Kondratiev, Mensch, Schumpeter, Freeman, Perez and others to discuss its impact on job creation in the next upswing of the Fifth Kondratiev. Candidates should be able to define the two different forms of technological innovation precisely, and relate them to different aspects of Christopher Freeman's theory e.g. R&D, design, investment, market structure and demand, labour, and effects on other sectors on the upswing and downswing of long waves. This is important since the answers otherwise may suffer from lack of explicit content. The students should be able to assess whether the developments in technology 25 years ago were sufficiently clustered to produce a new upswing around the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Good students will be critical of long wave theory and its value in predicting future economic trends, and also be able to justify their position.

**Q4:** Naomi Klein's book No Logo represents a very potent criticism of marketing brands and the power of multi-national companies in dominating capitalism and consumer tastes in the West. This has major implications for labour. This question is deliberately left open to enable good students to examine the labour implications of Klein's work. They may decide to analyse the 'sweat shops' in the so-called 'free trade zones' or consider the implications of popular consumer brands and their flight abroad with only a skeleton staff left in the West. Good answers will draw on the work of other authors e.g. Williams. Discussing the shift away from manufacturing products towards services is relevant, but should then also include issues of mobility of capital, goods and information.