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978-0-521-06630-3 - Change in Public Bureaucracies  
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MARSHALL W. MEYER

Professor of Sociology, University of California, Riverside

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LONDON • NEW YORK • MELBOURNE

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521226707](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521226707)

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First published 1979  
This digitally printed version 2008

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Meyer, Marshall W  
Change in public bureaucracies.

Bibliography: p.

1. Public administration. 2. Local finance.  
3. Organizational change. 4. Bureaucracy. I. Title.  
JF1411.M49 301.18'32 76-47193

ISBN 978-0-521-22670-7 hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-06630-3 paperback

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## PREFACE

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Like any successful organization, this book is a product of cooperation among many people in many places. The research reported here began in 1965 as part of the Comparative Organization Research Program, directed by Peter M. Blau, at the University of Chicago. Data for the first wave of the study of local finance agencies were collected in 1966 and early 1967 under the auspices of CORP. A panel or longitudinal design was not envisioned at the time. The longitudinal study was planned and the 1972 data collected while I was at Cornell University. The analysis of the data and preparation of articles and this work were undertaken at the University of California, Riverside.

I owe intellectual debts to a large number of people who have contributed to the development of organizational theory and research in the last decade. Most are cited in the bibliography. Some people making direct contributions to the design and execution of this research as well as to the analysis require specific mention, however. One such person is Peter Blau, now Quetlet Professor of Sociology at Columbia, who stimulated by example and suggestion the transformation of a cross-sectional study comparing organizations at one point into longitudinal research comparing organizations over time. Charles N. Halaby, now at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and M. Craig Brown, now at SUNY

Albany, provided substantial intellectual input into this work as graduate students (at Cornell) and as departmental colleagues (at U.C. Riverside). Brown, it should be noted, is co-author of the original version of Chapter 6. John C. Anderson of UCLA and Richard H. Hall of SUNY Albany read the manuscript with great care and provided detailed comments and suggestions for improvement. I am especially indebted to Anderson who took several hours to discuss his suggestions with me after I had had a chance to review them. I thank these people for their help and absolve them of responsibility for the flaws remaining in the book.

A number of organizations have also contributed to the research reported here. The National Science Foundation has supported the enterprise throughout. The 1966 study of finance agencies was funded as part of the Comparative Organization Research Program under NSF Grant GS-553. The 1972 wave was supported by NSF Grants GS-33509 and SOC73-05688. These grants are gratefully acknowledged. Put simply, the work could not have been undertaken without them. The field staff of the National Opinion Research Center conducted the interviews of finance officials for both the 1966 and 1972 waves. NORC also did the initial data processing for the 1972 wave. I am indebted to Eve Weinberg, then NORC's field director, for her diligence and graciousness in undertaking the task. The Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada also contributed to the research by its endorsement of our studies and by allowing me access to their records and meetings of their Executive Board. My special thanks go to Donald W. Beatty, Executive Director of MFOA.

This preface would not be complete without the acknowledgment of the cooperation of a large number of city, county, and state finance officials throughout the United States in the interviews used to gather data for this research. Over 97 percent of the assigned cases were completed, and interviewers noted consistently the care and thoroughness

with which responses were given. One could not but have the impression that the finances of most U.S. localities are managed by highly competent and considerate people.

Ande Deaver and Terry Herrity typed the several versions of this manuscript, always with good cheer. I am grateful to both of them.

Three others collaborated in this project, often unknowingly. My wife, Judith Meyer, aided in the legal research that was done in connection with Chapter 6. More importantly, Judy usually kept her sense of humor long after I had lost mine. Sons Joshua and Gabriel Meyer behaved like most academic children. Sometimes they prodded. And sometimes they interfered. This book is dedicated to Josh and Gabie with love and with the hope that their books, in turn, will be dedicated to their children.

Marshall W. Meyer