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REVIEWS & RESEARCH OF NOTE

Are Organizations Truly Moving Away From Managerial Control? John Schibler's Review of Joe Raelin's Recent Article, "The End of Managerial Control?"

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In the context of managerial work, control means the ability of managers to obtain the desired behavior from workers. There has been a gradual changeover from direct despotic controls toward more hegemonic, indirect, and unobtrusive mechanisms. This change in control from explicit to more subtle forms can be attributed to the influence of external environmental forces. Recent economic crises, highly turbulent and unpredictable business environments, stringent customers, and demanding shareholders have resulted in the need for organizations to be more flexible and innovative. Organizations have had to concentrate on increasing their problem-solving capacity, being innovative, and engaging in continuous production.

Innovation requires extensive data, diverse skills, and the ability to build on others' tacit knowledge and information. This would mean more emphasis on the internal functioning of a team to jointly solve problems, charge project committees, and manage meetings. It posits a focus of optimal energies on the creation, development, and sustenance of an internal working environment characterized by participation and democracy. At the same time, it would mean denouncing bureaucracies with their centralized structures of authority and control as inappropriate. Managerial controls need to be flexible and contributive, with a focus on adjustment and continual redefinition of individual tasks through interaction with others, distribution of commitment, use of a lateral communication system, and capacity to assimilate information located anywhere in the

organization, along with a commitment to fulfill the objectives of the organization.

The article by Joseph A. Raelin entitled "The End of Managerial Control?" in *Group & Organization Management* approaches this debate about change, if any, in managerial control systems. Raelin discusses the formation of different types of control, including ineffectiveness in managing employees in contemporary organizations. He points the reader toward softer and insidious, subtle, cultural forms of control mechanisms. Different roles of managers, with their new responsibilities and functions, are emphasized. Further, issues pertaining to control, mechanisms of control, and their suitability are effectively examined in the article.

John J. Schibler, in his review of Raelin's article, agrees that organizational control systems need to be revamped. Management control can never be eliminated within companies as an obsolete tool. Even if the modern ideology of manager as "facilitator" is adopted, the purpose remains the same—"coordinate disparate functions toward a common purpose" (p. 80). However, Schibler feels that in spite of the article being provocative with numerous interesting insights on the "role of control in today's organizations," it remains an academic paper, focused on academic jargon without completely addressing "what a world without managerial control would look like" (p. 80). He worries that the article fails to inform management practice and encourage dialogue in the broader management audience.

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