

HOW THE TFW VIRUS IMPACTS THE U. S. NATURALIZATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The TFW (Taylorism, Fayolism, Weberism) Virus can be found deeply rooted in the American Dream of the United States. The potential, the individuality, and the heart and soul of a human being are considered disconnected to the work that they do, even though the foundation of U.S. pride centers around the profession and work environment. Through an ethnographic analysis of the U.S. Naturalization process, we will illustrate how all three of these theories underline a perspective that considers the human being as an object within the U.S. Naturalization process.

Keywords: SEAM - Human potential - Social and economic performance - TFW Virus

INTRODUCTION

Going through the U.S. naturalization process, there are many concepts of the American Dream that the candidate must learn. During the process, during the interviews, and during the tests required for the process, the candidate must learn the foundation of the American Dream and the professional work environment that one is expected to respect. From an ethnographic view of the process, the TFW (Taylorism, Fayolism, Weberism) virus is evident in every step.

TFW VIRUS WITHIN THE AMERICAN DREAM

First, the clarification must be made. The American Dream is not American. It does not include Canada, Mexico or South America. It is strictly related to the U.S. mindset. The U.S. constitution, in its original intent to preserve life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, created a dream of opportunity. At the heart of the definition of the American Dream is the belief that if you work hard, sacrifice, risk and give up all you have, you will achieve and climb in social status and break out of your level of status and become free and successful.

Through previous research of over 300 articles on the American Dream (Salsi, 2019) over a span of 200 years, clustered themes through the data mining process brought up, unsurprisingly: financial freedom, independence and

opportunity. But the significance of these words is revealed in the process of obtaining these “mission statements” through the naturalization steps.

One of the main themes surrounding the American Dream is the belief of breaking out of social standing by rising up, grabbing an opportunity and breaking through to obtain a dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This dream parallels a struggle of working overtime, sacrificing and risking many human elements of life. Many people outside of the U.S. would think this is somewhat blind and naïve. For example:

- According to the ILO “Americans work 137 more hours per year than Japanese workers, 260 more hours per year than British workers, and 499 more hours per year than French workers.”
- The U.S. remains the only industrialized country in the world that has no legally mandated annual leave.
- At least 134 countries have laws setting the maximum length of the work week; the U.S. does not.

Being a workaholic is admirable because it’s at the root of achieving the American Dream And this is why the TFW Virus can live so well within the psyche of U.S. workers without them even realizing they are infected. The majority of a U.S. employee’s life is spent at work, not in balance.

Another constitutional premise that a candidate must learn is that the law rules. No one is above the law. Therefore, colleagues become objects of the law, needing to use the law only to accomplish their goals. If you can afford to hire an attorney, you can do anything you want. If you can’t afford an attorney, you are on your own to navigate and interpret the legal system as best you can.

TFW stands for Taylorism, Fayolism and Weberism. These organizational theories have influenced the foundation of business in the U.S. throughout its capitalistic history. Taylorism is the theory that contends that hyper-specialization is most efficient. It can create silos within an organization that lead to disconnected communication between departments and areas of expertise. Fayolism separates the thinkers from the doers by using a top down approach to disseminate information and communication. Weberism proposed the bureaucratic structure that creates specific job descriptions and regulations, establishing chains of command and duties that coerce individuals to comply with those regulations and duties.

All three of these theories underline a perspective that considers the human being as an object. The potential, the individuality, and the heart and soul of a human being are considered disconnected to the work that they do. Production, efficiency and effectiveness is in the process, not the human being. The individual who is engaged in the process can be replaced by any other individual. (Salsi, 2019)

THE HUMAN DISCONNECT IN THE U.S. IMMIGRATION OFFICE MISSION

Although the U.S. Immigration Office is a non-profit organization, the mission does not permeate the culture. In a for-profit company, the main goal is to make profit. They use human capital to achieve this goal. In a non-profit organization, their goal is a mission, again, using human capital for this goal. The difference should be the use of the human capital to achieve their goals. For example, if you are in a hospital and someone is bleeding, the first and foremost concern should be to stop the bleeding, not what insurance or how much money the person has. In the naturalization process, the focus should be the same. Instead of calculating the number of people processed into the country or which countries they are coming from, the mission and focus should be a process that allows the candidate to be comfortable to join their new naturalized country. The proportion or balance of priorities should be focused more on the spiritual and human content of the steps rather than the numbers and averages.

Mission statements are often viewed as the guiding force behind the nonprofit world. A mission statement is a statement of the purpose of the organization. Typically, a mission statement describes the aim(s) of the organization, and will delineate how the organization provides value to the community stakeholders. The former mission of the U.S. Immigration Service was:

USCIS secures America's promise as a nation of immigrants by providing accurate and useful information to our customers, granting immigration and citizenship benefits, promoting an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensuring the integrity of our immigration system. (www.uscis.gov, 2020)

Up until this year (January 28, 2020), the applicant was considered a "customer". This word, in itself, not only gives a false perception, but it implies that the individual is purchasing something. Merriam Webster defines a "customer" as: "one that purchases a commodity or service". According to immigration adjudication business, such a transaction would best be described as a "bribe". USCIS applicants do pay a fee to the agency for an adjudication but it is not a "purchase", because there is no guarantee of a positive result. The fee is paid in order to have the opportunity to have a neutral and impartial adjudication. (Arthur, 2018)

The USCIS Director explained the needed correction for a new mission statement:

"What we do at USCIS is so important to our nation, so meaningful to the applicants and petitioners, and the nature of the work is often so complicated, that we should never allow our work to be regarded as a mere production line or even described in business or commercial terms. In particular, referring to applicants and petitioners for immigration benefits, and the beneficiaries of such applications and petitions, as "customers" promotes an institutional culture that emphasizes the ultimate satisfaction of applicants and petitioners, rather than the correct adjudication of such applications and petitions

according to the law. Use of the term leads to the erroneous belief that applicants and petitioners, rather than the American people, are whom we ultimately serve. All applicants and petitioners should, of course, always be treated with the greatest respect and courtesy, but we can't forget that we serve the American people.” (Arthur, 2018)

THE TFW VIRUS WITHIN THE U.S. NATURALIZATION PROCESS

On average, immigrants hold green cards for eight years before becoming U.S. citizens. In general, naturalization requires being at least 18 years of age, passing English and civic exams, and for most, residing in the United States with legal permanent resident status continuously for at least five years and three years for those married to a U.S. citizen. (Migration Policy Institute, 2020) Through these years, there are various steps in the process that show signs of the TFW virus.

The first step is to apply for a two year green card. At this first step, you fill out the application, obtain criminal records, get fingerprints taken, take a medical exam, get vaccinations, translate all documents into English, get them Apostilled, including federal and state fees. Many of these steps need to be repeated when filing for a 10-year green card. In 2019, the total cost for both 2-year and 10-year green card ranges between \$4000-\$5000 excluding any attorney fees, if you use one.

During this period, you are only allowed to leave the country no longer than six months. Failing to file taxes on time, getting speeding violations or any other legal violations can jeopardize the ability to obtain a green card renewal or naturalization. Being involved with any totalitarian political party also will exclude your possibilities of obtaining a green card.

When filing for naturalization, the process is repeated once more with a third set of fingerprints, documentation and more fees. \$690 for the naturalization application and fees for the pictures, fingerprints, etc. not including legal fees.

The impact of hyperspecialization, the chain of command separating the thinkers and the doers are the key aspects of the TFW virus. (Savall, 2010) Below are some obvious examples during the naturalization process:

Fingerprints are scheduled at a different place and time than the interviews. It's a scheduled meeting, not a walk-in service that is not always easy to plan. Criminal records are collected in one state and the processing of the green card is in a different state. The extension of the green card is handled in yet another state. The medical exam is also scheduled at a different day and time, and must be completed by a specifically approved physician, which are not always local. Immigration officers process around 50 to 60 candidates in a day. The timing of these interviews are usually not on schedule, so the candidate must use a full day waiting for their number to be called.

Once the documentation process is completed and the candidate has been approved for naturalization, there is a swearing in process. The swearing in takes place on a different day than the day that they took the test and passed. This could be a three week or more time gap. It is at the swearing in that the candidate gives back the green card in exchange for their official naturalization document. At this point, the candidate must pay \$135 for a passport which takes, on average, another 4 months to process. During this gap of time, the candidate has no green card and no identification and cannot leave the country, allowing for an unprotected gap in the process.

The interviewer is not the decision maker who decides if the candidate can move to the next step. During the interview process, the officers may ask questions that have already been documented and confirmed. For example, they may ask if you completed your fingerprints, even though without the fingerprints, a candidate could not be called for the interview and continue with the process. This file is not always readily available either for the officer to verify, confirming that the communication between the offices are disconnected. Many times this even occurs in the same building.

Dehumanization is evident as the candidates are called by a number, not a name, for fingerprints, interview, etc. The timeframes and gaps between each step do not correlate to the necessary timeframes for a typical individual to work and survive. A candidate is not allowed to work until they have the appropriate documentation, but the documentation takes at least 6 months between each step. Most candidates need to work or find some kind of income in order to support themselves. Even with a sponsor, this creates a burden.

Some of the signs of the TFW virus are apparent in the loss of holistic thinking, depersonalization, burnout and anxiety of the government job. Supervisors are overworked. Processers are not trained to deal with people rather they are only trained to process their specialized area of paperwork.

Although the commitment to public service can be a motivator, it can be problematic if the work experience and conditions are negative. Inadequate agency resources, unmanageable workloads, co-workers who are disgruntled, or newly elected or appointed officials who shift the agency's focus or mission through politically-driven goals can make each month increasingly stressful, and it can go on for years. "The situation in government is exacerbated by several additional factors:

- The value of accrued benefits makes it very difficult for employees to rationalize quitting a federal job; stressed, burned out employees feel locked in. It's possible that many simply check out, quitting mentally.
- Federal work experience is often not valued by private employers, making it difficult to switch to a non-federal job at the same pay level. Looking forward to retirement is a common phrase.
- Newly-appointed agency leaders typically focus on policy issues and often ignore day-to-day workforce management. Moreover, relatively

few have experience managing large groups of workers. Daily work concerns are rarely a priority.

- The failure to recognize and reward accomplishments, confirmed each year in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, has to affect employee commitment in today's work environment. Employees who do not feel valued find it increasingly difficult to justify going the extra mile."

Public organizations tend to select managers and supervisors based on technical expertise and fail to adequately train or provide coaching and feedback necessary to become effective supervisors. The government lags behind high-performing companies when it comes to empowering workers. The government culture of compliance impedes worker initiative. Burnout is far more likely when workers feel they have no control over their work. Most government employees have to live with excessive hours, lack of control over workloads, and management actions that are seen as unfair. The consequences of burnout, over time, results in a decline of productivity and an increase in absenteeism, increasing the cost of burnout within the system. (Risher, 2018)

CONCLUSION

Much of the U.S. Naturalization Process includes redundant steps that break down the flow and efficiency of the process. Elements of the TFW virus inhibit a smooth flow on every step. There are also dehumanizing attributes displayed, creating a sense that employees are expecting candidates to fit into their mentality without explanation, rather than understanding the candidates may not relate or understand the mentality or cultural aspects they are being asked to display.

The distance between humanity and the cold process can be seen in simple examples. No one is addressed by name in any of the procedures. A candidate is continually given a number and called by a number. It is assumed that everyone has the same point of view and need to conform to the cultural standards of response. A person fleeing from a country in war is treated the same as a mature adult who is moving to the country to remain living with his American wife. Even in small ways, such as the appropriate distance of an expected handshake of an officer, may not be appropriate in other cultures. Sometimes asking certain questions may be interpreted as rude, too forward or unacceptable to ask. The candidate is forced to act within the expected point of view, without explanation of some of the subtle cultural items that they may not have previously experienced or understood.

FUTURE IMPACT

Focusing more attention on the embedded TFW Virus that exists in the immigration process is the first step to beginning a change to bring about the human potential and awareness that is lacking in the system. When processes are frustrating, unwelcoming and expensive, many candidates can become discouraged or even become unable to follow the appropriate process. The fees and process to become a naturalized citizen are expensive, time-consuming and

can involve unexpected complications that interfere with life balance. Immigrants coming from less education and income may need an attorney but cannot afford one. The poorer an individual is, the more expensive the case becomes, due to the additional support needed to navigate the details.

Much of the process can actually encourage people to live illegally because they are caught in the process. Applicants have also been known to be afraid of the test, which currently is being revamped to become more difficult. Language barriers and fear of not being able to memorize all the historical information for the test discourages people to apply for naturalization through legal means, and remain on their green card status, continually risking deportation and not enjoying all the benefits from being a citizen. For now, there is no sign of a positive change.

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