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CHAPTER 5

Organizations and Modern Society

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Our time is characterized by organized hugeness. Indeed, modern society is in large measure an organizational society¹; that is, organizations process and control our essential functional needs: communications, transportation, education, defense, social order, recreation, justice, and matters of the spirit. The organization is the most powerful social unit of which modern society is comprised for it ministers rationally, effectively, and efficiently to man's dependency better than does any other social form. While it may be a god to some and a devil to others, the ubiquitous organization is a simple fact of social life for modern man and, in the main, the arena within which his claims for success, income, and security are resolved.

Organizations constitute society's principal mechanism for men cooperatively to provide for their joint and variegated needs and to protect themselves and their resources. They have as well a "pervasive influence upon individual and group behavior, expressed through a web of rewards, sanctions, and other inducements that range from patent coercion to the most subtle of group appeals to conformity."² The system of rules and norms by which this influence is in part manifested may be simple or highly complex depending upon the structure of the unit and the number and variety of its goals. Man's

¹Robert Presthus, *The Organizational Society* (New York: Alford A. Knopf, Inc., 1962).

²*Ibid.*, p. 1.

acquiescence in, or perhaps more precisely, his assent to the system is explicitly understood to be exchanged for the benefits that only these huge social instruments of modern society can bestow. It is in a way a social compact, the implications of which carry impressive and sometimes frightening consequences for individual freedom and for the quality of life in our age.

Our society is geared to complex organizations and we vest in them heavy proportions of our faith, future, and fortunes, thereby becoming dependent on them. Organizational ineptitude or failure can have shattering consequences for individuals, communities, nation-states, and, in the instances of military defeat or economic disaster, for entire cultures. The decisive importance of the organization to the welfare of modern society, therefore, gives reason to the instrumental use of its members, not for their self-realization, but for their relevance to organizational objectives, power, and survival. The consequences of this relationship, which weighs rationality against human values on the scale of organizational purpose, are immense, to society if the organization stumbles or falls, and to the individual if his assent to the system is conditioned on the relinquishment of his freedom and happiness. Imbalance carries heavy social and human costs. The problem of modern organizations is thus "how to construct human groupings that are as rational as possible, and at the same time produce a minimum of undesirable side effects and a maximum of satisfaction."³

While it may be generally conceded that complex organizations are the most rational and efficient form of social grouping known, our understanding of them is limited and segmented. What little of them is understood is further fragmented owing to the biases brought to their investigation by the various social sciences. The organizational model for the political scientist, for example, implies bureaucratic power exercised to gain law and order in a given political unit or among such units. For the sociologist and historian, bureaucratization is the rationalization of collective activities, and for the economist corporate structure denotes the means for the arbitration and allocation of wealth, goods, and services. Each school, with its own terminology, points of reference, and bias, while providing some insight into how persons interact and how groups interact within organizations, yields relatively little useful information about the interaction of organizations with each other.

The interaction of organizations, on the other hand, even if more perfectly understood could not be regulated according to any single model, even in the most monolithic of societies. Yet, societies in their variety do differ from one another in the extent to which organizational interaction is regulated. The United States, for example, differs from most other modern societies "in the size of the sector of organizational interaction which is comparatively free of control or government regulation."⁴ Britain and France, while regulating organizational

³ Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

interaction more heavily than does the United States, practice a scope of regulation far narrower than do Communist societies where the most pervasive control over organization relations is asserted. To whatever extent government regulation is not manifested in organizational interaction, the pattern is dictated by the processes of conflict or cooperation, exchange or bargaining, "all of which are affected by ecological, cultural, and power factors."⁵ The paucity of information and understanding of these processes, however, makes no less substantial the critical nature of the problem. Modern society, whose dependency on large-scale organization seemingly grows ever greater, tends to devise more and more instruments of regulation, ostensibly to encourage the rationality, effectiveness, and efficiency of organizations and man's happiness, freedom, and well-being within them. How well this process is understood and how efficaciously the balance is struck between organizational needs and human values will determine in substantial measure the quality of life in our society and the survival of our culture.

Factors in the Organizational Phenomenon

Organizations are not uniquely modern. By coordinating personnel with resources, however unevenly, societies have cooperatively from recorded history made provision for their several needs. The irrigation systems and the great wall of China, the pyramids of Egypt, the legions of Rome, the navy of Great Britain—all attest in ancient through medieval times to organized, collective activity on a gigantic scale. But these organizations were few in number and encompassed relatively small numbers of the total population of those societies. In contrast to earlier times, contemporary society has put a premium on rationality, effectiveness, and efficiency. These attributes are the *raison d'être* for modern organizations. The contemporary social environment, owing to radical changes in the nature of society—secularization, urbanization, industrialization, politicization—is both hospitable to large-scale organizations and dependent on them for its functional requirements. What characterizes the modern organization as against its antecedents is not so much its bewildering complexity as its rationality and efficiency. It is these modifications in the service of old functions, not the emergence of new functions, that distinguish contemporary organizations and give them their uniqueness. Amitai Etzioni has made clear that "small, simple societies fulfill the same basic social functions as large, complex ones."⁶ Each produces goods, services, and wealth, however crudely; each allocates human and material resources, however unjustly; and each realizes social and normative integration, however imperfectly.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

If it is from the rational and efficient service of old functions that modern organizations derive their uniqueness, then it is to the society in change that we must turn for our understanding of those forces which nurture rationality and efficiency and thus hugeness in this society of organizations.

The organizational phenomenon, while far from being clearly understood, embodies at least the elements of structural, cultural, and psychological change.

The Structural Factor

The twentieth century has been characterized in the advanced states by:

1. The separation of ownership from management
2. The decline of the competitive economy and its replacement by a system of administered prices, production, and relationships between capital and labor
3. The concentration of economic power
4. The growth of science and technology
5. The development of mass production and mass markets
6. The rise in education
7. The decline of individual autonomy
8. The specialization of labor
9. The emergence of an employee society
10. The decline of the family
11. The marked increase in social mobility
12. The growth in size and power of government
13. The rise of urbanization
14. The spread of secularization
15. The startling growth in population

These sweeping changes in the societal structure, virtually occurring within the span of one lifetime, have radically modified the social controls of our society, substantially altered ideological positions, and irrevocably shifted the locus of social power. These structural alterations have encompassed the larger part of the population and have penetrated deeply into a wide range of social spheres.

The extent to which these shifts in structure has occurred is illustrated, for example, in the decline in the number of self-employed workers (nonagricultural). Between the years 1940 and 1960, in the United States, the number of these workers declined from 9,758,000 to 6,268,000, and this in spite of a considerable and continuous growth in the labor force as a whole. During the same period, the number of private wage and salary workers grew from 30 million to almost 60 million, "while government workers more than doubled, rising from 3,560,000 to 8,000,000; and in 1960 nearly

half the work force, about 25,000,000, were employed by 'big organizations'.⁷ More specifically, nearly one-fifth of the United States labor force in 1967 worked for the 500 largest industrial corporations whose aggregate production approximated 25 percent of the nation's total.⁸

A second illustrative measure of the scope of these changes has been the scientific revolution in industry: the chemical changes in materials; the refinements in standards and specifications; the advances in electronics, automation, and computer sciences; and the evolution in systems of energy supply. The impact of each of these revolutions within a revolution affects every level of the productive apparatus from the extraction of raw materials to final use by the ultimate consumer, the transportation and communications networks, and the intricacies of marketing, not to mention their significance for the educational system, the powers of government, and the quality of life in the broader society.⁹

A third illustrative indicator of these changes and their interrelationship may be seen in the separation of individuals from the instruments of production. If man is to work today, he must more and more be employed; for to work he must increasingly have the ever more complex and sophisticated tools and equipment which only large-scale organizations can supply. To gain access to the means of production, therefore, man becomes a worker, either blue-collar, white-collar or high-collar. As the means of production are socialized in complex organizations, man correspondingly becomes a participant in the collectivist system, less autonomous, more conformist, and increasingly dependent.

The main sociological characteristic of modernization, however, may be what Etzioni has called "differentiation," whereby rationality and efficiency are achieved and a number of specialized and distinct social units come to perform the various functions previously carried out by one social unit, the extended family. Differentiation fosters both the creation and growth of highly effective, specialized social units organized to perform the functions of production and allocation of goods, services, and wealth, and equips such units with norms and structure designed to match means and ends:

Production, once carried out by the father and his sons, is now carried out in the factory, which is free to put younger men in charge of older ones, or group the workers in the order it finds efficient. Education is carried out by organizations in which teacher-student relations are formed according to what is considered as advancing education; they are not submerged in the elder-junior structure of the community. Even religion is largely

⁷Presthus, *op. cit.*, pp. 74 and 206.

⁸Irving Kristol, "Professor Galbraith's New Industrial State," *Fortune* (July 1967), p. 194.

⁹Robert A. Brady, *Organization, Automation, and Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 5-6.

removed from the family and tribe and invested in a structure which recruits persons whose religious leadership is more effective than that of the average father and chieftan. Allocation is not left to the primitive barter exchange, but has developed into a highly complex and organized system.¹⁰

This structural differentiation in turn gives rise to secondary differentiation in each of its principal spheres. Thus, the school of medicine is differentiated from the school of nursing and each in turn from the school of pharmacy; the vocational high school is differentiated from the academic high school and each as well from the reform school; the police department is differentiated from the department of social welfare, and each is further differentiated from the vice squad. Thus, rationalization and efficiency of service is extended in an ever-widening circle to encompass the diverse and variegated requirements of a heterogeneous society whose members are at once less self-sufficient and more dependent than in earlier, simpler times.

The Cultural Factor

The most extensive analysis of the place of cultural change in the organizational revolution has been made by the German sociologist, Max Weber.¹¹ His inquiry into the origins of large-scale economic units led him to claim that Protestantism had provided an ethos within which a rational form of organized production could rise and flourish. "Thrift, self-discipline, hard work, asceticism, worldliness—these and similar characteristics of the Protestant ethic," said Weber, "nurtured the conditions necessary for the development of capitalism, modern science, and bureaucratic organization—all three of which support one another to a large degree." If the existing social order, as the Calvinists believed, were not God's but corrupted man's doing, then man had the responsibility neither to adapt himself to his society nor to retreat into an other-worldliness. Rather, man's duty was to transform the worldly realm into the Kingdom of God. That being no small task, the cultivation of severe virtues which frowned on pleasure and smiled on disciplined living, was viewed as an essential, personal obligation for those who would join in building the Kingdom. Protestantism's two normative themes of worldliness, which requires an empirical reference and thus encourages rational behavior, and asceticism, which demands a high tolerance for frustration and discipline and, consequently, supports the rational view, combined to provide the cultural context for the organizational revolution and growth. Worldliness and asceticism, Etzioni has suggested, imply commitments not to short-term but to long-term goals: the building of a modern economy, scientific research, the devising of large-scale

¹⁰Etzioni, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹¹Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

complex organizations—all these typify long-range tasks and a high regard for rational behavior:

If the yields of a young economy are immediately absorbed by consumption without reinvestment, there will be no economic growth. If a scientist seeking a quick solution to a difficult problem violates the canons of empirical research, his findings will not be valid. If a bureaucrat is regularly guided by his emotions or kinship considerations rather than by established rules and procedures, the organization will be inefficient.¹²

William H. Whyte, Jr., in contrast, holds that the Protestant ethic no longer meaningfully functions in American life for her people have abandoned the hopes and ambitions which previously characterized them.¹³ The ethic, he claims, rather than supporting the organizational society has today been replaced by a bureaucracy which has become the controlling end in itself. Thus, modern man looks not to his historical rootage for his security but to the big organization—corporation, government, university, military, eleemosynary, labor union, and professional association. The organization no longer derives its support and justification from the values of yesterday's ethos, says Whyte, for the bureaucracy embodies its own *raison d'être*. The large organization, J. K. Galbraith has said, is a bureaucracy first—a technostructure he calls it—and everything else last, the aim of which in the organized economic unit is security and corporate growth, in that order.¹⁴ However, one may wish to explain cause and effect in the cultural context, the society of organizations is a present fact and demonstrably viable as it shapes and influences man in virtually every sphere of social endeavor.

The Psychological Factor

Modern organization man embraces a set of personality traits which equip him to function differentially in a loosely articulated society. In sharp contrast to primitive man whose closed society precisely stratified and defined his role and, thus, by entrapping him, ensured his security in the broader social context, contemporary man operates within a bewildering system of diverse social units that differ in their peer and authority relations, in their structure, in their goals, and in their behavioral norms. On his ability to move effectively among these various units hinges not only his own claim to income, success, and security, but the viability, rationality, and efficiency of the organizational system itself. Promptness, reliability, integrity, consistency, loyalty, neatness, and conformity

¹²Etzioni, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹³William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1957).

¹⁴John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967).

are routinely expected attributes of organization man. But the essential characteristics include: (1) a desire to achieve; (2) an ability to postpone gratification; (3) a tolerance for frustration; (4) a willingness to compromise; and (5) a capacity and drive for disciplined work. These several qualities reflect organizational imperatives for commitment, career aspirations, functional expertise, rational behavior, and cooperation. Persons not strongly manifesting these traits are not likely to be found in the decision-making centers of complex organizations, whether large or small scale. The fact is that most functionaries in organized systems do exhibit these qualities more or less. This convergence of personality and organizational requirements broadly typifies our social environment, Etzioni believes, and is a condition owed primarily to the modern family and to the modern educational system, "both of which produce the type of person who will make a good organization man."¹⁵ It is not the organized system, therefore, that molds men to its norms as much as it is the broader society which for whatever reason is characterized by an ethic that values highly behavioral patterns essential to organizational viability.

The Nature of Organizations

The search for more highly rational, effective and efficient organizational models has given rise to a number of competing theories of organization which fall roughly into three principal groupings: (1) the Classical School which perceives the organization as a highly structured, impersonal, and efficient instrument of social good, primarily economic and governmental, where ends are clearly delineated, means are mostly repetitive, and order is imperative. Indeed, the complex organization is seen as society's ultimate collective expression of rational action; (2) the Human Relations or Interpersonal School which views the human element as indistinguishable from the organizational imperatives for rationality and order on the assumption that individual participants in the enterprise tend "to spill over the boundaries of their segmental roles, to participate as wholes";¹⁶ and (3) the Structuralist or Comparative School which sees the organizational phenomenon from a broader structural and cultural perspective than does either of the two other schools, and which strives to integrate the Classical and Human Relations approaches by seeing as desirable the inevitable conflict between man and the organization. This discussion of the nature of organizations will assume that formal structure and informal relationships interpenetrate and complete one another; thus, they will be considered together along with the power and authority system that integrates them.

¹⁵ Etzioni, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

¹⁶ Philip Selznick, "Foundations of The Theory of Organization," in Amitai Etzioni, ed., *Complex Organizations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1962), pp. 26-27.

The Structure

The complex, large-scale organization is dependent for its manifest effectiveness more or less on the following general conditions:¹⁷

1. "Continuous organization of official functions bound by *rules*." This imperative ensures both stable and comprehensive conditions by facilitating standardization and equality in the organization's internal relations with its clientele. This in turn reduces the power wielding elements of discretion, uncertainty, expediency, and judgment which are antithetical to organizational viability if indiscriminately and disproportionately exercised within the system.
2. "A specific sphere of competence." This ingredient of organizational life differentiates within the structure among degrees and kinds of expertise ordering these relationships systematically so that participants know not only their own boundaries of responsibility, rights, and power but, similarly, the roles of all others in the organization. Such a delineation of roles in a firmly ordered system of super- and sub-ordination markedly decreases the probability of subversion of the sort that inevitably flows from authority and responsibility in disarray.
3. "The organization of offices follows the principle of hierarchy; that is, each lower office is under the control and supervision of a higher one." As the control of the higher office over the lower implies the power to appoint, promote, and dismiss, compliance of the latter to the former is left less to chance than would otherwise be true. Thus, accountability within the system is clearly traceable both by office and by function, as bureaucratization integrates the two; and patterns of responsibility and control are more readily checked and reinforced.
4. "The rules which regulate the conduct of an office may be *technical* rules or norms. In both cases, if their application is to be fully rational, specialized training is necessary. It is thus normally true that only a person who has demonstrated an adequate technical training is qualified to be a member of the administrative staff. . . ." This principle implies that the basis of bureaucratic authority rests in the knowledge and training of the bureaucrat. Fitness for office normally involves a substantial period of formalized instruction as a condition of eligibility, measurable by examination or by similar rational procedure. Thus, it is one's attested competence that fits him for participation in the organizational society, not his social standing, his wealth, or his possession of other such traditional forms of influence.
5. "It is a matter of principle that the members of the administrative staff should be completely separated from ownership of the means of production or

¹⁷ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Talcott Parsons, ed., trans. by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1947), pp. 329-330.

administration. . . . There exists, furthermore, in principle, complete separation of the property belonging to the organization, which is controlled within the spheres of the office, and the personal property of the official. . . ." This separation, which is seen as an essential principle of organizational rationality, is not designed to prevent the official's private life from being infringed by organizational demands, but, rather, to preclude the intrusion of nonorganizational considerations on his formal bureaucratic role. To whatever extent the participant is privately influenced or monopolized by the organization's external resources, then in that measure is he constrained in the organization freely to assign organizational rationality to his bureaucratic behavior in allocating such resources.

6. "Administrative acts, decisions, and rules are formulated and recorded in writing. . . ." Only the written word within the organized setting can maintain a consistent, systematic interpretation of institutional norms and regulations. The system of control and accountability is dependent on the recorded word for its rationality and effectiveness in the same way as is the organization in its clientele relationships.

7. The remaining essential conditions necessary to organizational vitality and integrity mainly include the need to compensate by salary as against payments from clientele, to promote systematically on merit as against "influence," to reward conformity as against encouraging deviation, and to favor impersonality as against partiality.

Conditions of Survival

The basic conceptual assumption is that structure is fundamental to collective, organized rationality. Thus, maintenance of the integrity and survival of the system is the overriding imperative, to be obtained Philip Selznick suggests, by seeking:¹⁸

1. The security of the organization as a whole in relation to social forces in its environment
2. The stability of the lines of authority and communication
3. The stability of informal relations within the organization
4. The continuity of policy and of the sources of its determination
5. A homogeneity of outlook with respect to the meaning and role of organization

While trade unions, governments, business corporations, churches, political parties, universities, and the like are commonly conceded to be rational social units within the formal structure we have been describing, they are disparate in their ability to maintain organizational integrity and institutional survival.

¹⁸Selznick, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

Although each strives to obtain conditions of organizational equilibrium—by institutionalizing relationships, reducing uncertainty, interchanging personnel, and manipulating the mechanisms of coordination—each performs differently if it is (1) to control the conditions of its environment, and (2) to induce the participation of its members toward organizational objectives.

With respect to the first variable, the environment, S. N. Eisenstadt has suggested that the goals of the organization, the place of the goals in the societal structure, and the dependency of the organization on external forces influence greatly both its internal structure and its relation with its environment.¹⁹

The government bureau serves as an example. Being under less competitive pressure for survival on the environmental side, than say would be a corporate unit with marginal economic utility, the bureau, in being able largely to discount the sources of uncertainty in its environmental setting, turns its energies with undue importance to stabilizing the remaining areas of external uncertainty, to reducing internal uncertainties, and thus, to creating a stationary equilibrium which favors organizational survival. Thus, to understand the operation of a government by analyzing only the goals of the elected officials and the influence of societal demands on them is to discount the organized mechanism through which must flow whatever effective, continuous, and systematized programs the politicians desire. Indeed, as S. M. Lipset has suggested, "The goals and values of the Civil Service are at least as important a part of the total complex of forces responsible for state policy as those of the ruling political party."²⁰

The second variable in organizational survival—the ability of the organization to induce the participation of its members—has captured the attention of those who see a link between human relations theories and the problem of bureaucratic dysfunctions.²¹ If one believes with Michel Crozier that "human activities depend on the feelings and sentiments of the people involved, and on the interpersonal and group relationships that influence them, one cannot expect that imposing economic rationality on them will bring constant and predictable results." The functioning of a bureaucracy, therefore, "can never henceforth be totally explained by the combination of impersonality, expertness, and hierarchy of the 'ideal type.'"²² But planned, organized, and cooperative action is possible, as has been pointed out, only if one can depend in large measure on a predictable pattern of organizational behavior on the part of its members. Or, as Crozier puts it: "any organization must obtain from its

¹⁹S. N. Eisenstadt, "Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization, and Debureaucratization," in Amitai Etzioni, ed., *Complex Organizations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1962), p. 272.

²⁰S. M. Lipset, "Bureaucracy and Social Reform," in Amitai Etzioni, ed., *Complex Organizations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1962), p. 260.

²¹James March and Herbert Simon, *Organizations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958), pp. 36-47.

²²Michel Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 179.

members a variable but always substantial amount of conformity."²³ To state the imperative, exclusively in favor of human relations, neglects the aspect of rationality and efficiency that gives the organization its *raison d'être*; and to state the imperative, exclusively in favor of the classical view, overlooks the fact that individual participants in any organized enterprise tend to function as autonomous agents out of highly personal and diverse motivations. Thus, if organizational dysfunctions relate to the delicate balance between organizational needs for order and predictive behavior, and human needs for recognition, status, autonomy, meaningful work, and personal happiness, then authority and power within the system must be so structured as to ensure conditions that will enhance the balance, not serve to advance one set of needs over that of the other.

The Authority System

In legal and political writings, the distinction between power and authority is often neglected for both refer to the ability of an individual or groups of individuals to induce others to comply. Authority and power, nevertheless, are distinguishable. Authority can be defined as the "ability to evoke compliance",²⁴ owing mostly to superior wisdom, expertise, prestige, or position; and power can be defined as the ability to compel adherence by coercion or force. Whereas authority relies for its use and effectiveness upon the subjects' acceptance of the values implied in its exercise—what Weber calls "legitimate power"—the use of power depends on one's capacity to impose his will on another regardless of the other's opposition. Authority and power, however, both relate to the idea of freedom in that both bear on the capacity of persons and groups of persons to make choices. How authority and power are allocated in our society and organizations is, therefore, a principal determinant the freedom individually and collectively enjoyed by the people.

The ceaseless and changing debate about the proper balance between authority, power, and freedom emerges from the efforts to organize collectively for social action; that is, when persons come together for organized purposes they are confronted with these major tasks: setting goals, differentiating functions, gathering and communicating information, assigning relationships, establishing priorities, fixing responsibility, determining rewards, allocating resources, and providing sanctions.

As reasonable people can disagree on ends as well as on means, a society collectively striving to meet its dependency-needs through organized action must make certain provision for the rational arbitration of conflicting views in ways which will not structurally or procedurally threaten, by making more dependent

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²⁴ Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

than the rest, any part of the enterprise. To whatever extent the dependency factor is disproportionately assigned in the society, then in that measure the system is less rational and less free, and more power than authority oriented. The place of the Negro in America is an example. The Negro does not enjoy equal participatory rights in the rational system; his rights to education, to civil rights, and to employment are generally unequal to the white man's. Thus, the Negro is more dependent for his needs on the arbitrariness of the white man than he is on the rational structure which more or less systematizes and equalizes the dependency and uncertainty factors for most of the rest of society. As he is unable, therefore, to legitimize power within the rational process, his acceptance of the system and its dictates rests less on his own willingness and more on the power of the rest of society to coerce him. The result is that he is a less free man than those who participate in the system. Men must be enabled in a rational system and a free society formally or informally to legitimize authority; otherwise, the deprived will either reject authority and the fabric of cooperative endeavor will unravel or he will behave against his will under coercion—a condition prospectively as fatal to social order and cohesiveness as is anarchy.

Modern institutional order in the developed state is characterized by what Weber has called "rational-legal authority" by which he means bureaucratic authority or the authority of the impersonal order itself which grants legitimate power to individuals according to their office under written rules—authority which is exercisable only within the bureaucratic structure and only so long as the individual occupies the office. Within Weber's bureaucracy, men hold their positions by virtue of their fitness to perform the task. Thus, their power is legitimized for it reflects both expertise and position within a system impersonally ordered to maximize rational decision-making and to minimize arbitrary and illogical actions. While rational-legal authority is less stable than "traditional" authority—authority reliant on kinships, inherited rights, and status which was commonly found in medieval society—it is more stable than "charismatic authority" which depends for its effectiveness and legitimation on discipleships, moral precept, and the personal magnetism of leaders during times of severe social disorder and widespread uncertainty as in Nazi Germany in 1933, Bolshevik Russia in 1917, and revolutionary France in 1789. The rigidity of traditional authority and the unpredictability of charismatic authority are in a complex society equally unacceptable means of rationally coming to terms with the perplexing and volatile demands of modern civilization. Indeed, the predominance not of these two forms of authority but of rational-legal authority in the advanced industrial states is central to them and to whatever liberties their peoples enjoy.

While the development of rational-legal authority with bureaucratic administration has been both dependent on the breakdown of traditional authority and on the containment of charismatic authority, it has not resulted in

a monolithic-authority network characterized by centralized decision-making. Rather, the result has been a highly complicated, structured decentralization of the organizational process into pluralistic semiautonomous subsystems. This network of delicately interacting and interconnected parts reflects the diversity of views about means and ends that only free men will overtly exhibit, the tolerance for change that so typifies our culture, and the unwillingness to generalize any single solution, as Crozier points out:

The greater confidence effected by the progress of knowledge, the possibilities of mastering the environment that it implies, have not tended to reinforce the rigidity of the decision-making process. They seem, on the contrary, to have obliged organizations to discard completely the very notion of *one best way*. The most advanced organizations, because they now feel capable of integrating areas of uncertainty in their economic calculus, are beginning to understand that the illusion of perfect rationality has too long persisted, weakening the possibilities of action by insisting on rigorous logic and immediate coherence. Substituting the notion of program for the notion of operational process, introducing the theory of probability at lower and lower levels, reasoning on global systems, and integrating more and more variables without separating ends and means, they are experiencing a deep and irreversible change. The crucial point of this change consists, for us, in recognizing—first implicitly, then more and more consciously—that man cannot look for the one best way and has not actually even searched for it. The philosophy of the one best way has been only a way of protecting oneself against the difficulty of having to choose, a scientist's substitute for the traditional ideologies upon which rested the legitimacy of the rulers' decisions. Man has never been able to search for the *optimum* solution. He has always had to be content with solutions merely *satisfactory* in regard to a few particularistic criteria of which he was aware.²⁵

Centralized authority is further mitigated by the following two factors: (1) the separation-of-powers concept; as the separation in governmental structure between legislative, executive, and judicial authority; and (2) to the presence of collegial bodies of equals in the place of hierarchy; as in the authority of expertise embodied in the university faculty. These two factors and the forces discussed by Crozier produce wide variations in organizational structure and process. The corporate unit organized to produce goods will serve to illustrate the point. However large, complex, and decentralized it may be, this organizational model, especially in its manufacturing processes, will tend to favor hierarchial authority in the classical style. The uncertainties of the market, the predictable pressures of labor, and the complexity of inducing participation from vast numbers of skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled workers all press toward

²⁵Crozier, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

the organizational imperatives of more rather than less control of subordinates by superior offices, tighter rather than looser structure, impersonal rather than partial human relations, and a low rather than a high tolerance for individual discretion. A university, on the other hand, with relatively few skilled or semiskilled workers and large numbers of highly trained professional persons engaged autonomously in a bewildering array of diverse endeavors at levels of sophistication understood only by peers clearly demands a looser rather than a tighter structure, less rather than more hierarchy, high rather than low tolerance for individual judgment and discretion, and a wide rather than a narrow band of delegated administrative authority to coordinate with the authority of expertise collectively present in the body of scholars.

Organizational Dysfunction

What is conspicuous, however, about the modern organizational society is not so much the complexity and variety of its organized forms, but that they are nearly all variations on the same theme; that is, they are rational, effective, and efficient units characterized by hierarchy, differentiation of function, impersonality, and order, and integrated by the Weberian concept of rational-legal authority—however centralized or decentralized the unit may be, however hierarchical or diffused authority may be, however useful or esoteric organizational ends may be, or however large or small the scale of operation may be. Robert Presthus has observed that "artistic, educational, and spiritual activities have embraced bureaucratic organization, seeking efficiency, and confusing size with grandeur as fully as their industrial counterparts. In adopting the techniques of commerce," Presthus continues, "they have inevitably adopted some of its values, and their character has changed accordingly."²⁶ Indeed, for modern man, the omnipresent organization constitutes the arena, the mechanism whereby man wins or loses success, power, and personal worth. In terms of quality and of human values, however, the effect of large-scale organized endeavor "on art, liberal education, and mass communication is," for Presthus and others, "a disturbing question."²⁷

Impact on Higher Education

Consider for a moment the impact of this condition of hugeness and impersonality on education at the higher levels. In September of 1964, Bradford Cleaveland wrote the following which was widely distributed on the Berkeley campus of the University of California when the Free Speech Movement was in its nascent state:

²⁶Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁷*Ibid.*

The salient characteristic of the multiversity is massive production of specialized excellence. The multiversity is actually not an educational center but a highly efficient industry engaged in producing skilled individuals to meet the immediate needs of business or government. . . .

Below the level of formal power and responsibility (the Regents, president and chancellors), the faculty itself is guilty of a massive and disastrous default. More concerned with their own increasingly affluent specialized careers, they have permitted an administrative process to displace, and become an obstruction to, extended thought and learning for the undergraduate. Professors have made a gift of the undergraduate learning situation to the bureaucrat. . . .

The process [of education] is a four-year-long series of sharp staccatos: eight semesters, forty courses, one hundred twenty or more "units," ten to fifteen impersonal lectures *per week*, and one to three oversized discussion meetings *per week* led by poorly paid unlearned graduate students.²⁸

"Do not bend, fold, or mutilate," read the IBM cards pinned to the front of those students at Berkeley who regarded their University not as a center of learning but as an "impersonal bureaucracy," a "machine," and "knowledge factory." Education, they claimed, had been usurped and demeaned in favor of bureaucracy; that is, in preference to having learning as its end the University had chosen instead to produce men for the organizational society whose values and competencies would mesh with the needs of government and industry. Thus, it was asserted, the University typified in its structure and processes the same characteristics as would be found in other organized efforts calculated to produce measured and standardized goods and services. The University's bureaucracy had placed a premium on precision, efficiency, speed, control, continuity and similar administrative measures which optimized returns on input, depersonalized human relationships, and minimized nonrational considerations. Not only that, these students argued, but the rigid enforcement of rules designed not so much to enhance the learning process as to facilitate the administrative process had displaced the goals of education by becoming themselves the terminal values of organizational effort. Set against the learning ideals of free inquiry and expression, personal worth, spontaneity, and individual autonomy, the organizational claims, at least for these students, were dysfunctional. Indeed, personal freedom and progress, measured by these students in terms of effective choices and meaningful participation in the educational process, had for them been subverted by what they regarded as centralized power and decision-making. The acquisitive demands of our society had, as they understood it, subordinated the University's real values and

²⁸Bradford Cleveland, "Education, Revolutions, and Citadels," in A. M. Lipset and S. S. Wolin, eds., *The Berkeley Student Revolt* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965), pp. 89-90.

aspirations. The University in turn and inevitably had regarded them as instruments rather than as ends.

The implications of a university subverted by the dysfunctions of bureaucracy carry significant meaning for the faculty as well as for the students. Citing evidence of the extent to which organizational expectations and rewards influence individual behavior, Presthus has commented on the power struggles and professional commitments which typify departmental life in the modern university:

The underlying reason [for the dysfunction] is the passionate specialization of the university organization. All the dynamics of training, of values, and of professional recognition push one toward restricted fields of analysis. As a result, trained incapacity, technical introversion, and bureaucratic infighting are characteristic of most university departments.²⁹

Moreover, dysfunction occurs when those most qualified to make rational judgments are structured out of the decision-making process as is often true in contemporary university and college administration. Structure and process in higher learning today find the professional increasingly alienated, the administration aggrandized, and ultimate power vested in laymen whose values often run counter to those collectively held by the faculty and students and whose competence to make educational decision is clearly peripheral.³⁰

The Culture as a Constraint

The university condition illustrates in microcosm the quite unwanted dysfunctions of bureaucracy which generally, although in quite different fashion, typify the stresses which arise when organizational imperatives for order, efficiency, rationality, and impersonality confront human needs for autonomy, personal worth, and spontaneity. The example also points up the fact that organizations are not merely contrivances to provide goods and services, but constitute the environment in which most of us spend most of our lives:

In their efforts to rationalize human energy they become sensitive and versatile agencies for the control of man's behavior, employing subtle psychological sanctions that evoke desired responses and inculcate consistent patterns of action. In this sense, big organizations are a major disciplinary force in our society. Their influence spills over the boundaries of economic interest or activity into spiritual and intellectual sectors; the

²⁹Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³⁰For an in depth study of these forces at work in a major university during times of crises, see David P. Gardner, *The California Oath Controversy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967).

accepted values of the organization shape the individual's personality and influence his behavior in extravocational ways.³¹

Thus, large-scale organizations socialize their values through their authority and reward system, their unrivaled capacity to manipulate, and their centrality in modern man's pattern of survival. Culture, on the other hand, does act as a constraint on organizational character. Those societies, for example, which place great stress on authoritarian models, little emphasis on education for the masses, and considerable value on strict order in the home and school experience are most likely to emerge with an organizational pattern which favors a hierarchial bureaucracy in the rigid, classical sense; whereas, those societies which value equality of social relationships, mass education, and permissiveness in the home and school environment are more likely to develop a loosely articulated, pluralistic, highly diffused organizational situation. Complex organizations in Germany reflect German culture,³² as those in Britain are permeated by the British culture,³³ and as those in Japan bear the stamp of Japanese culture.³⁴ The American organizational pattern, as with the examples above, is stamped with the character of the culture which nurtures it and is more than not typified by the deep-seated sentiments in our society which oppose the use of men as instruments of impersonal ends (shocking exceptions include, among others, the use of Negro slaves in the agricultural south, the employment of Chinese in the building of the western railroads, and the use of child labor and women in the sweat shops which accompanied our earlier industrialization). The cultural bias which places a high valuation on individual worth has caused men to impede, through the enactment of antitrust legislation, the encouragement of unionism and the establishment of regulatory agencies, the otherwise dominant trend toward central authority and economic monopoly. Of course, the system remains imperfect as inevitably it must in any volatile, dynamic, and shifting social scene. Moreover, organizations while existing with the consent of the surrounding society do not automatically fall under societal control. But however one may view the contributions of the organization to and its dysfunctions in American life we are for better or for worse an organizational society:

We are born in organizations, educated by organizations, and most of us spend much of our lives working for organizations. We spend much of our

³¹Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³²Heinz Hartmann, *Authority and Organization in German Management* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959).

³³Stephen A. Richardson, "Organizational Contrasts on British and American Ships," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 1 (September 1956), pp. 189-207.

³⁴James C. Abegglen, *The Japanese Factory*, (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1958).

leisure time paying, playing, and praying in organizations. Most of us will die in an organization and when the time comes for burial, the largest organization of all—the state—must grant official permission.³⁵

Summary

Modern organizations have made collective, rational, and effective action possible in a time characterized by large scale human endeavor. Their predominance is not incidental, but central to the development of Western civilization. The principal social mechanism for translating ideas into viable, workable programs and for arbitrating the myriad wants of man is the organization; and we are reliant on it for the maintenance and enhancement of our most cherished freedoms and most important liberties. Our chances for security, position, success, and happiness are inseparable from it. Whether we shall be masters or servants of our collective selves will depend on our ability to cope with the vital dysfunctions of the system, especially as they affect the integrity of the individual human being.

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³⁵Etzioni, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

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