

396 SOCIAL CONTROL: Organizational Aspects

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II

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

All social units control their members, but the problem of control in organizations is especially acute. Organizations are social units which serve specific purposes. They review their own performances and restructure themselves. In this way they differ from natural social units such as the family, ethnic groups, or the community. The artificial structure of organizations and their concern with performance, as well as their tendency to be larger than natural units, make informal control insufficient and primary identification inadequate. Hence, organizations tend to require formally institutionalized allocation of rewards and penalties to enhance compliance with their norms, regulations, and orders. As a rule, organizations cannot rely on most of their participants to carry out assignments voluntarily. The participants need to be controlled.

For organizational means to fulfill their control function they have to be allocated differentially, so that performances desired by organizational norms will be rewarded while undesired performances will be punished. The allocation of means by the organization independently of performances, such as rewarding people for being white rather than Negro or male rather than female, does not directly enhance organizational control. Allocation according to such irrelevant criteria is more common in the less developed countries and is one of the reasons for the low effectiveness of organizational control in these countries.

The means of control used by an organization can be exhaustively classified into three analytic categories: physical, material, and symbolic. The use of a whip or a lock is physical in the sense that it affects the body; the threat to use physical means is viewed as physical because the effect on the subject is similar to that of the actual use. The

application of physical means for control purposes is here referred to as *coercive power*. Material rewards consist of goods and services; the granting of symbols (for instance, money) that allow one to acquire goods and services is classified as material because the effect on the recipient is similar to that of material means. The use of material means for control purposes is here referred to as *utilitarian power*. Symbols the use of which does not constitute a physical threat or a claim on material rewards should be viewed as pure symbols. These include normative symbols such as those of prestige and esteem and normative social symbols such as those of love and acceptance. (When physical contact is used to symbolize love or material objects to symbolize prestige, such symbols are viewed as normative because their effect on the recipient is similar to that of pure symbols.) The use of symbols for control purposes is here referred to as *normative or normative-social power*. Normative power is exercised by those in higher ranks to control the lower ranks directly; normative-social power is more commonly used indirectly—for instance, when the higher in rank use an individual's peer group to control him, as a teacher might do in a classroom.

The use of various classes of means for control purposes—power, in short—has different consequences in terms of the nature of the discipline elicited. All other things being equal, the use of coercive power, in most cultures at least, is more alienating to those subject to it than is the use of utilitarian power, and the use of utilitarian power is more alienating than the use of normative power. Or, to put it the other way around, normative power tends to generate more commitment than utilitarian power, and utilitarian power more commitment than coercive power. The application of symbolic means of control tends to persuade people, that of material means tends to build up their self-oriented interest in conforming, and that of physical means forces them to comply.

Most organizations most of the time use more than one kind of power. The kinds of power used vary according to the ranks of the participants to be controlled. Organizations tend to apply the less alienating means of control to their higher participants. Coercive power is as a rule applied only to lower participants: inmates are locked up if they try to escape. Higher participants are more often rewarded materially in order to increase their performances. It is therefore essential, for sociological purposes, to compare participants of the same rank in different kinds of organizations or of different ranks within the same organization. Otherwise

may not be able to tell if the findings differ because of differences in rank or in the nature of the organizations or both.

Three types of organizational control

Comparison of the controls applied to the lower ranks of different organizations yields a fruitful way of classifying organizations because differences in type of control on this level are associated with many other kinds of differences. Control may be predominantly coercive, utilitarian, or normative. Among organizations in which the same level of power predominates there are still differences in the degree to which this power is applied. Ordering organizations from high to low according to the degree to which coercion is predominant, we find that the most coercive are concentration camps, prisons, traditional correctional institutions, custodial mental hospitals, and prisoner-of-war camps. Ordering organizations from high to low according to the degree to which utilitarian power is predominant, we find that the list is headed by blue-collar organizations such as factories, white-collar organizations such as insurance companies, banks, and the civil service, and military organizations, at any rate in peacetime. Normative power is predominant in the following kinds of organizations: religious and ideological-political organizations, colleges and universities, voluntary associations, schools, and therapeutic mental hospitals. Not all organizations are dominated by a single type of control. Labor unions, for instance, fall into each of the three analytic categories: there are labor unions (those bordering on "underworld" organizations) that rely heavily on coercive power to control the lower participants; there are business unions, in which control is largely built on the ability of the representatives to "deliver the goods" (that is, to secure wage increases and other material improvements); there are normative unions, in which control is based upon manipulation of ideological symbols, such as the slogans of socialist ideology; and there are normative-social unions, in which the community of workers is recruited to exercise informal pressures on members to follow the norms and orders of the organization. More complicated combinations need not be discussed here (for further discussion, see Etzioni 1961, chapter 3).

Among the many factors that affect the kinds of power an organization uses to control its participants, the organizational environment looms large. To use coercion, an organization needs social license. The state is usually jealous of its own coercive power and reluctant to delegate it. Moreover,

such license, when granted, usually sets a ceiling on the amount of coercion to be used (mental hospitals can lock patients up, but not whip them) and specifies the conditions under which coercion can be exercised (the prison cannot hang trouble makers). Utilitarian controls are affected by the market position of an organization and by the general state of the market. Thus, a factory in a weak economic position may find it more difficult to raise wages than one that is strong. Periods of economic depression and inflation also affect the ability of such an organization to use utilitarian power. The environmental conditions affecting an organization's normative power are less clear. The presence or absence of competitive organizations seems to be important here; thus, the normative power of a church is higher in countries in which it represents the sole authorized religion than in countries where it must compete with other religious organizations and with secular ideologies.

The response of the participants to a particular use of power or combination of powers is only partially determined by the kind or kinds of powers used. Other factors affecting the participants' response include their social and cultural backgrounds and their personalities. For instance, a foreman slapping a worker—an exercise of coercive power—would elicit a more alienated response among lower middle-class persons than among persons of the very lowest class, in contemporary America rather than in the America of two generations ago, in Britain rather than in Ghana, and in an aggressive rather than a submissive person. However, when all these factors are held constant, the more normative the means of control used the less alienating is the exercise of power, and the more coercive the means of control the more alienating the use of power. Utilitarian power rarely elicits as alienating a response as coercive power, but it rarely generates as much commitment as normative power. To state it more concretely, people in a factory rarely feel as alienated as those in a prison or as committed as those in a church.

A central finding of the comparative analysis of organizations is that organizations which differ in the kinds of power they apply and in the amount of alienation or commitment they generate differ also, in many significant respects, in their organizational structure. We turn now to illustrate these structural differences.

Leadership and organizational control

The means used by an organization to control performances derive either from allocation to specific positions (such as a department head) or

from particular individuals (such as one with persuasive skills) or from a combination of both (such as a persuasive department head). An individual whose power is chiefly derived from his position is an official; if it is personal he is referred to as an *informal leader*. One who commands both positional and personal power is a *formal leader* [see LEADERSHIP].

A person who is a leader in one field is not necessarily a leader in another; the football captain is not necessarily the best student. Two main spheres of activity that an organization might wish to control are distinguished here: the instrumental and the expressive. Instrumental activities deal with the input of means into the organization and their distribution within it. Expressive activities affect social relations within the organization and the establishment of norms by organizational participants.

Coercive organizations. In organizations that tend to use coercion extensively and whose lower participants tend therefore to be alienated (traditional prisons are an example), control over performances for and within the organization tends to be shared between the officials and the informal leaders. That is, the powers of the guards and the warden derive mainly from their positions and are largely independent of their ability to influence the inmates. On the other hand, much of the power to control the inmates is in the hands of influential inmate leaders who hold no organizational positions and are hence informal leaders. While wardens, and to some degree guards, have some personal influence over inmates, such influence as a rule is minor; in this sense there is no formal leadership in prisons. The ability of the organization to control the inmates depends largely on the amount of power the prison commands (for example, on how many guards there are) and on the relations between prison officials and informal inmate leaders.

Expressive activities in a typical prison are controlled almost exclusively by inmate leaders, who set and reinforce the norms. These leaders determine, for instance, if and when it is proper to speak to a guard, and they rank crimes in order of relative prestige. Similarly, social relations are almost solely determined by the inmates and their leaders; "stool pigeons" and guards who do not accept the inmate norms tend to be isolated. Prison officials have little control over these norms and relations. This is one of the reasons why rehabilitation efforts and psychiatric work are so unsuccessful in typical prisons as long as the coercive structure is not changed.

Instrumental activities in the prison, especially

the allocation of food and work, are more subject to control by the organization and its officials, but even in this realm inmate leaders have a great deal of power. Certain types of food and other scarce items (such as cigarettes) that are allocated by the prison, tend to be reallocated by the inmates so as to reward those high on the inmate normative scale and status structure and to penalize those who are low on these dimensions. The allocation of work in the prison is similarly affected by pressures exerted on the officials by the inmates, who want to be rewarded for their cooperation. Further, the inmates' control of instrumental activities extends to the production of illicit goods and to the planning and execution of escape attempts. The officials' main weapon of instrumental control, on the other hand, is primarily ecological: it involves keeping the inmates in the prison and assigning them to various sections and cells.

Other organizations that rely heavily on coercive control have leadership structures similar to the prison's. However, the less coercion such an organization uses, the more control of the inmates it achieves and the greater the probability that some formal leadership will develop, at least in instrumental matters.

Normative organizations. In organizations that rely predominantly on normative controls there tend to be few officials and few informal leaders. As a rule, formal leaders control organizational participants. To the degree that informal leaders arise (within a parish, for instance) the tendency is either to recruit them outright or to co-opt them by giving them part-time organizational positions. Or the informal leaders may break away to form their own organization. In any case, the tendency is for the informal leaders to lose their leadership positions within the given organization and for the balance of power to remain in the hands of the formal leaders.

Control is dependent upon personal qualities much more in normative than in coercive organizations. Hence, through various selection and socialization processes (discussed below), efforts are made in normative organizations to staff the main organizational positions, from which control is directed, with individuals who combine positional and normative power (for example, the status of a priest) with the personal power to become formal leaders. Individuals lacking in personal power are often transferred to organizational positions, such as clerical or intellectual work, from which no control is exercised. Such an effort by normative organizations to provide formal leadership makes the evolution of informal leaders less likely.

Formal leaders in normative organizations are

much more successful in exercising both instrumental and expressive control than they are in coercive organizations, although they are more concerned with controlling expressive activities. Some religious organizations provide offices for both kinds of leadership. Thus, expressive matters tend to be the main functions of the major line of priests and bishops and instrumental activities the main functions of secondary positions such as deacons or local church boards. In other religious organizations, control of instrumental activities is left largely to the laity while the formal leadership endeavors to maintain a monopoly of control over expressive matters, such as which prayers are to be recited at what time, how strict the priest is to be in demanding adherence to the norms advocated by his church, and so on. Complete separation of the control of both types of activities is impossible, since instrumental matters, such as financing, affect expressive ones, such as the quality of Sunday or parochial schools. Therefore, in those religious organizations in which instrumental activities are not controlled by officials or formal leaders, the tendency is for the organization to insist on the superiority of expressive matters and hence of expressive (organizational) leadership over instrumental (informal) leadership.

Utilitarian organizations. The control structures of organizations that are less normative than those discussed above tend to approximate the utilitarian type. Control in utilitarian organizations is more evenly divided among organizational officials, formal leaders, and the informal leaders of lower participants. Moreover, the main concern of these organizations is with instrumental control over such matters as production and efficiency and not with the control of relations and norms established by the workers—at least so long as these relations and norms do not affect the instrumental activities. The particular leadership pattern that evolves depends largely on how relatively alienated or committed the workers are. In industries where the workers are more alienated, their informal leaders, whether “old hands” or union stewards, tend to control most of the expressive activities and a number of instrumental ones as well. In such factories the foreman and other higher-ranking officials are excluded, regardless of their own wishes, from social relations with the workers, and the workers set the norms that determine what is considered a proper day’s work, if and when it is proper to speak to a foreman, and so on. However, the factory usually determines at least what work is to be done and some of the specifications as to how it is to be carried out. Thus, the workers informally provide the expressive leaders and some

of the instrumental ones, but the factory exerts some formal leadership in instrumental matters.

In factories where the workers are less alienated and in white-collar organizations the formal leadership exerts considerably more control, especially over instrumental activities. The type and amount of work carried out is largely determined by organizational representatives. Moreover, some of the expressive control (though rarely much of it) is acquired by those in organizational power positions. The norms followed by lower participants are much closer to those of the higher ranks. Social relations are not as sharply segregated. It is in factories like these and in other utilitarian organizations that organizational efforts to control expressive activities through such mechanisms as personnel departments, social workers, and the participation of lower ranks in decision making are effective. The same techniques are often less effective, from an organizational viewpoint, in organizations where the participants are more alienated.

Control, selection, and socialization

If organizations could recruit individuals who would automatically perform as required, or could educate their participants so that they would perform adequately without supervision, then there would be no need for organizational control. While this is never the case, there are large differences in the amount of control needed in organizations because of differences in the provisions they make for selection and socialization.

The role of selection should be especially emphasized because the liberal-humanist tradition, which prevails in the social sciences, tends to underplay its importance and to stress that of socialization. Actually, various studies indicate that a small increase in the selectivity of an organization often results in a disproportionately large decrease in the investments required for control (Scudder 1954, pp. 80–82; Clark 1959, p. 1). One reason is that in most organizations a high percentage of the deviant acts are committed by a small percentage of the participants; hence, if these are screened out, control needs decline sharply. It is even more obvious that if those least able to perform were not admitted, the average performance score would increase markedly.

The degree to which an organization selects its participants affects its control needs in terms of the amount of resources and effort that it must invest to maintain the level of control that it considers adequate. This relationship between selectivity and amount of control varies in the three types of organizations that have been distinguished here. Coercive organizations are the least selective,

accepting practically everyone sent by such external agencies as the courts and the police. (Note, however, that when efforts are made to reduce coercion and to increase the use of other means of control, as when a rehabilitation program is tried in a prison or a therapy program is launched in a custodial mental hospital, one of the first steps taken is to reselect the lower participants and to increase the selectivity applied to prospective ones.) By contrast, utilitarian organizations are highly selective. They tend to employ formal mechanisms to make recruitment of participants as effective as possible. These include examinations, psychological tests, probation periods, and the like. All other things being equal, the higher the rank of the participant, the more carefully he is recruited and the less he is controlled once selected. Finally, normative organizations vary considerably in their degree of selectivity. Some are extremely selective—most religious sects, for instance. Other religious organizations are highly unselective—those that almost automatically accept the offspring of their members. The Communist party of the Soviet Union is highly selective; most democratic political parties in the West are highly unselective. Private schools are much more selective than public schools. Comparison of these normative organizations shows that the more selective ones are more effective in the area of control (Etzioni 1961, pp. 156–160).

Selection helps to insure that those entering the organization possess some qualities and lack others; organizational socialization adapts these qualities in order to bring them closer to those required for effective performance of organizational roles. As Simon (1947) points out, the more effective the socialization, the less the need for control. On the other hand, socialization is itself affected by the means of control used, since some means create a type of relationship between higher and lower ranks that is more conducive to effective socialization than other types. The efforts of coercive organizations at socialization are usually frustrated, as can be seen from the limited success of therapeutic or rehabilitation programs for lower participants. Organizations that rely heavily on normative power are among the more successful in terms of socialization achievements. Modern schools are a prime example. Utilitarian organizations tend to delegate socialization to other organizations such as vocational schools and universities and to replace socialization by selection of carefully socialized persons. This brings up the important point that socialization and selection can partially substitute for each other: the same level of

control can be maintained by means of high selectivity and a low level of organizational socialization or by means of low selectivity and a high level of organizational socialization. The amount of control needed is, of course, lower when selectivity and socialization are both high.

Control, pervasiveness, and scope

Means of control are used in all organizations to enforce the norms that set the standards of performance. But organizations differ markedly in the pervasiveness of the norms they attempt to set and to enforce. Some organizations—prisons, for instance—have a limited pervasiveness: they attempt to control only some of the activities carried on in the organization. Actually, the prison is more pervaded than pervasive, since many of the norms affecting prison behavior have been set and enforced by other social units, such as the communities from which the inmates come. Other organizations attempt to control most of the activities that take place within them but few of those carried on outside. Graduate schools are a case point. Other organizations, particularly churches, attempt to set and enforce norms mainly for activities that are carried on when the participants are not on the premises of the organization and that are not directly visible to the organizations' enforcing agents.

In general, the more pervasive an organization is, the greater the investment it needs to maintain a given level of control. Moreover, highly pervasive organizations almost inevitably have to rely mainly on normative control, since unless the participants internalize the norms that the organization wants enforced, they cannot be controlled. From the organization's point of view, such internalization is best achieved by normative means. However, norms with low pervasiveness can be enforced by any of the three kinds of means or by any combination thereof.

A variable that is substantively related to and analytically distinct from pervasiveness is organizational scope, which is determined by the number of activities carried out jointly by the same set of organizational participants. In organizations with narrow scope, participants share only one or a few activities, for example, social activities. Organizations with broad scope are those in which participants share several activities, as labor unions, for example, carry out social and cultural activities in addition to collective bargaining. "Total organizations" are those in which maximum scope is maintained, as it is in convents or *kibbutzim* (Goffman 1958). There is no one-to-one relationship between

scope and pervasiveness: an organization might set norms for more activities than are carried out jointly by participants, as a church does, or it might set norms for fewer activities than the joint ones, as a prison does.

High scope enhances normative control, is a necessary condition of coercive control, and seems to affect utilitarian control negatively. High scope enhances normative control because it separates the participants from social groups other than the organization and thus tends to increase the participants' commitment to the organization. Comparison of commuter with residential colleges illustrates this point. In commuter colleges, some of the educational effects are not attained and others are countered, because the students' involvement in the college as a social unit is limited and because they have significant and active social ties with groups that support different norms. All other things being equal, residential colleges can achieve considerably greater educational effects than commuter colleges with the same investment in normative control. (Education is here considered in its broadest sense and therefore includes character development as well as communication of skills and information.)

In the past, utilitarian organizations often attempted to maintain a broad scope, as in the classic type of company town. More recently, some organizations have made efforts to provide workers with educational, recreational, and residential facilities. Since the early 1950s, however, the tendency has been for corporations to reduce their scope in these areas without loss (and probably with some gain) in the effectiveness of their control structures (Scott & Lynton 1952, pp. 60, 77-78). This trend has reflected the situation of citizens in modern societies, who are socialized to shift constantly between various social units, such as the family, the community, and the work unit. The relatively high separation and low scope of all these units allow for the operation of the typically modern mode of tension management whereby tensions generated in one unit are released in another. This is achieved by changing one's role partners, thus "localizing" rather than "totalizing" interpersonal conflicts, and by continually exchanging one mode of interaction for another—for instance, a social unit in which rational, efficient behavior is demanded may be alternated with one in which nonrational behavior is the norm. High scope utilitarian organizations, which fuse work and nonwork units, prevent both the localization of conflict and the shift to units relatively free of rational considerations. Hence, from a utilitarian point of view, they are likely to

be less effective [see ORGANIZATIONS, *article on EFFECTIVENESS AND PLANNING OF CHANGE*].

Coercive organizations, however, must maintain total scope because unless the participants carried out all their activities within the organization they would not voluntarily carry out those activities the organization wishes to control. Moreover, the depriving character of total scope, of separating the inmates from all nonorganizational units, is used as a major means of control, as when a prisoner who has violated the prison's rules loses the chance of being paroled. Attempts to reduce the use of coercion and to rely more on normative power, as when rehabilitation programs are introduced, are frequently associated with efforts to reduce scope by allowing more visits from outsiders, initiating programs of work outside the prison, and so on.

Control and vertical communication

Authorities in the field of organizational studies differ largely in the significance they attach to upward and downward communication in the rank structure of an organization and to participation by its lower ranks in decision making. The human relations school, represented by Elton Mayo, Kurt Lewin, William F. Whyte, E. W. Bakke, and Chris Argyris, has tended to stress the importance of communication and participation. For instance, a study of efforts to convince mothers to drink orange juice showed that group discussion and group decision were even more effective than public lecturing or individual consultation (Lewin 1947). Another study showed that permitting workers to participate in factory reorganization proved much more effective than ordering them to make adjustments without consulting them or explaining the reasons for the changes (Coch & French 1948). On the basis of these and similar findings, a whole philosophy of control supported by general humanist, liberal-democratic values has developed. However, several sociologists have questioned the moral and analytical validity of this approach (Bendix 1956; Kornhauser 1953). The human relations approach has been characterized as manipulative insofar as it teaches management how to be more effective in getting workers to accede to its desires. Further, democracy in private governments has been viewed as misplaced or unnecessary. Differences in the economic interests of workers and management, the role of the labor union, ideological factors, power considerations—all, it has been alleged, have been neglected by the human relations school.

The tendency in the past few years has been to view the two approaches as complementary, not

so much on the moral as on the sociological level. Clearly, communication and participation affect the process of interaction among and within ranks. Still, many factors, especially structural and cultural ones, must also be taken into account (Etzioni 1961). One can study the structural and cultural conditions under which communication and participation are effective, as well as the effects of communication and participation on structural factors. For instance, vertical communication seems to be more controlling in its effects in normative rather than in utilitarian organizations and in utilitarian rather than in coercive ones, although it enhances control in all three.

There are many other variables that affect organizational control; those discussed have been the ones most frequently studied. Much additional research is required to explore the relationships among the kinds of control employed, the distribution of power between persons and positions and between formal and informal leaders, and the conditions under which the organization controls both instrumental and expressive activities or only one set or only part of one set. However, there seems to be little doubt that these variables are closely and systematically related. There are also two sets of factors which surely affect organizational control and about which there is little systematic information. One factor is differences in cultural and societal contexts. Most of the information available centers on organizations in Western societies. The need to study organizations in other cultures, especially in less developed and nondemocratic societies, remains one of the major tasks of social scientists. The second factor is that we know much more about control of lower-ranking participants than of higher-ranking ones, and clearly the control of the higher ranks is at least as important.

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[Directly related are the entries INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS; LEADERSHIP; ORGANIZATIONS. Other relevant material may be found in CHARISMA; DEVIANT BEHAVIOR; LABOR UNIONS; MEDICAL PERSONNEL, article on PHYSICIANS; MENTAL DISORDERS, TREATMENT OF, article on THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY; MILITARY; PENOLOGY; RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION; WORKERS.]

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SOCIAL DARWINISM

Social Darwinism was a short-lived theory of social evolution, vigorously discussed in America which rationalized and justified the harsh facts of social stratification in an attempt to reconcile them with the prevalent ideology of equalitarianism. The emergence of social Darwinism was perhaps the most visible effect on the social sciences of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

The influential social Darwinists of their age whose names are still to be reckoned with are Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903, and, later, Walter Bagehot, 1826-1877, in England and William Graham Sumner, 1840-1910, in America. Others (Benjamin Kidd, 1858-1916; Gustav Ratzefer, 1842-1904; Ludwig Gumplowicz, 1845-1909; Franklin H. Giddings, 1855-1931; and Thomas Nixon Carver, 1865-1961) are now little more than names, like social Darwinism itself.

Spencer and Sumner, however, were not only ethical evolutionists but also major contributors to the development of social science theory. Spencer, the fierce supporter of individualism and the contract theory of social order, also developed a theory relating environmental adaptation to social evolution and individual morality. Sumner, the social Darwinist advocate of class stratification, is remembered not for his laissez-faire economics but for his