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ABSTRACT

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Toward a Theoretical Base for the Study of University Organizations

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Abstract

Current knowledge about universities is such that approaches both more frequently and more carefully should be made through organization theory. While observers tend to agree about universities' general characteristics, important questions are as yet unsettled about their nature and viability. Michel Crozier's framework in particular is discussed as a device through which to pursue this study. While his views on organizations seem to be empirically close to the university situation, reservations are offered concerning their wholesale adoption. An operational definition of the Crozierian syndrome is offered on the basis of the author's own empirical work.

Toward a Theoretical Base for the Study of University Organizations

The Unfulfilled Potential of Organization Theory in University Research

Scholars have been pointedly admonished to enter the still virtually virgin territory of university organizations. Gladys Kammerer (1969) devoted her presidential address to the Southern Political Science Association to the idea that remarkably little is known about the university. Numerous institutions of this type exist, and collectively they have a tremendous impact on the economic, technological and sociological nature of our society. Professor Kammerer described the topic of universities not only as one where adequate understanding is urgent, but one which challenges the ingenuities of social scientists. University characteristics vary widely enough, and they are individually complex enough, to pose many questions about the relationships of many factors. More research is needed; case studies, tests of specific sets of variables within frameworks of good theory, and inter-institutional comparative analyses.

This is not to say that universities have been ignored. On the contrary, the problems and prospects of universities have occupied many scholars and study groups sponsored by governmental agencies, private foundations and universities. Currently dominant topics are student activism, faculty power (participation and unionization), and administrative practices. Since writers often tend to assert personal values on these subjects, many of the publications have a polemical flavor. There are more objective, less hortatory treatments--for examples, sociological studies of student life and of faculty members, administrative handbooks,

well-researched analyses of trends and problems, and objective studies of individual universities. But generally speaking, both the polemical and the objective kinds of studies suffer from a dearth of basic knowledge about universities as organizational entities.

Kammerer suggested that further research might well construe the university as a "political system." Victor Baldridge's rather thoroughgoing application of this approach is an example of its fruitfulness. (1971) Some other noteworthy studies, while not always pointedly addressing the university as a political system, regard the institution fundamentally in this way. John Millett's widely cited discussion of its "pluralistic" nature is a case in point. (1962)

Most observers of universities, however, have concentrated on the topics which lie more directly in the province of organization theory. Much of the literature concerns university administration, the problems of coordination, institutional response to the environment, goal attainment, and other topics conducive to this kind of analysis. Theorists themselves occasionally bring universities into their discussions as examples of certain points and as illustrations of variations in their analytical schemes.

Still, progress toward understanding universities as organizations has been slow. Two faults would appear to account for the disappointing pace. One is that much university research deals with limited aspects of organizational problems without painstaking efforts to do so within the rubric of theory. Theories of organization are not as a rule referred to in a rigorous manner so much as they are rather vaguely implied, or alluded to as if from the backs of the writers' minds.

Second, organization theorists do not seem to have pondered

universities per se in depth and detail. Some suspicions might be entertained that many theorists tend to misinterpret or to overgeneralize about the university in their usually fleeting references to it. Overall, the bulk of thought and existing information concerns theory-relevant aspects of the university in its organizational aspects, but not penetratingly enough to have achieved a really satisfactory understanding.

Since there are evidently few persons who are specialists in theories of university organizations, the literature is replete with dubious models. The frequent absence of theoretical rigor would perhaps not be so detrimental were it not for the writers' widely varying assumptions and conclusions. Beginning especially around 1960, however, studies have emerged which can be associated with standard organization theories, so that the diversity of thought might be interpreted as involving two broad schools. There has been something of a split between the more traditionally-based perspectives (those which presume that the classical bureaucratic model is or should be a prevalent component in a university's organization), and those which emphasize or advocate other configurations.[1] Much but by no means all of the more recent literature approaches the university as a relatively unstructured entity where hierarchical authority and related traditional theoretical concepts are not the dominant ingredients. The vagueries implicit in this theoretical division notwithstanding, some perspectives are offered in the following paragraphs as items upon which observers tend to agree.[2] Then, the section which ensues delves into differences of perspectives on important finer points which have not been definitively treated. Later on the paper discusses the potentialities of an organization theory approach.

A General Image of University Organization

Prominently visible in writings about universities is concern about the strain accompanying administrative efforts to exert an influence. Hierarchical involvement is typically viewed as a product of two types of pressure. First, administrative functions are said to increase in response to external demands. Second, administrative involvement occurs as a means of coping with the implications of university complexity. The often noted result of administrators' efforts is tension within the organization.

As a result of its importance to society, the university is not isolated from societal demands--pressures from clienteles, legislatures, taxpayers or other groups. The university's role interactions with society are not simple ones. By dint of tradition and the nature of academic professionalism the institution tries on the one hand to serve society's best interests as the university construes them. On the other hand, through the force of external demands, society tends in many ways to construe its best interests for itself. Demands are made concerning the type and quality of program emphases. Often the demands are attended by funds upon which the university is dependent.

The pressures generated by external sources have effects on the operating style of the university. Institutional autonomy and professional integrity, and accustomed structures and processes based upon these norms, often seem threatened by the implications of the external demands. Many members of universities and many analysts of university life see the threat as being clearly manifested in a series of structural changes away from collegial government or pluralistic politics and toward managerial domination. The sequence of events is frequently depicted as follows.

A characteristic organizational reaction to demands--whether they are additional new demands, additional loads of previously accustomed demands, or demands to change program emphases--is a heightened involvement of the hierarchical superstructure in order to attempt to effect an institutional response. A major trend, noticed more often in recent years, is toward an at least potential pervasiveness of the managerial stratum as distinguished from the university's traditionally primary stratum of educators and creators of knowledge. The effort by the university managerial stratum becomes in several ways an intrusion upon established patterns of internal structure, and problems arise in regard to consummating the process of adaptation. At a minimum the managerial problem is one of achieving some degree of institutional adaptation to externals without impairing the more accustomed internal relationships within the university.

Attempts to advance toward managerial involvement, and the concomitant organizational tensions, are especially noticeable among the fast growing universities which feel significant environmental pressures from governmental and private influences in regard to education, research and service programs and their funding. There are many such universities, and collectively they constitute perhaps the most significant single type. These universities are of relevance to the general public, its political sectors, educators, and students of public affairs not merely because they tend to dominant academia. "Problem universities" are often state owned institutions which are sizeable or approaching great size. Those which are nonpublic but privately endowed nonetheless receive demands backed by funds from government and from private sources which are of influence in American society.

Although the imperative to control often traces ultimately to the impact of externally-imposed demands, more strictly internal problems also stimulate control attempts. The administrator may often assume that the complexities inherent in size or functional proliferation require institutional efforts to ensure the efficient pursuit of goals. Allocations of property and money must be made appropriately to keep apace of ever-changing conditions. Auxiliary services such as libraries have to be provided. Legal matters such as degree requirements, contractual relations with faculty members, and provisions for student discipline must be arranged. Moreover, the administrator faces the presence of indigenous tensions regarding individualistic professors' rivalries over scholastic ideologies and professional ambitions. Often such conflicts seem to require hierarchical intervention.

Administrative activity is not simply a result of administrators' inclination to seek and therefore to find areas where their touch is called for. The administrator is expected, indeed he is often asked, by other organization members to become involved in housekeeping and conflict-resolution problems. In either case--in administrators' searches for new functions or in their performances of expected roles--others in the university find reasons to object.

Administrative actions threaten old patterns, as when building assignments throw a group of professors across the campus into the midst of a different academic discipline. Aggrandizements by administrators into new areas, as in their taking sudden interest in classroom behavior, are especially annoying to many faculty members. The quality of administrative work in ordinary affairs is often a bone of contention, for example in the operation of the library. Equity is a frequent issue, as

in cases where facilities seem better for a technological department than for a research department.

Issues can arise over the side effects of administrators' handling of even the most mundane of problems. The university bookstore may, in the name of efficiency, be protected by the administration regarding deadlines for ordering books. Many professors would object to this kind of rigidity--newly arriving faculty who might be bound to exiting faculty's selections, those with new courses not developed in time to meet the deadline, and those whose course topics are best served by literature which comes to attention after the deadline for ordering. In short, much of what management does can often impinge upon the performance of faculty members' functions.

These types of tension seem to be constantly present, although they are erratically patterned and dependent upon particular events and styles of management. A more pervasive and general concern is that administrative activity threatens the power structure which many nonadministrators prefer. Often considered more desirable than managerial involvement is the loose, unstructured process in which collegial agreement is the only and not very strong force over university personnel. Considering the apparent frequency with which administrative actions have consequences which are considered by many other university actors to be objectionable, it is no wonder that the degree of managerial presence is often at issue.

Unresolved Questions About University Administration

The trend toward emphasis on administrative involvement has several real or at least highly potential consequences, the dimensions of which have not been definitively analyzed. It will be noticed that in the preceding paragraphs the wording is equivocal concerning whether the

managerial stratum is indeed prevalent and whether it is successful in directing the university toward adaptation. By no means does the bulk of the literature conclude that university managers have achieved such capabilities; on the contrary, often underscored are the obstacles against their functioning as administrators in the usual sense of the term.

Thus, for example, the effects of external pressures on the university's products, as influenced by management, are not well understood. Do variations in management style per se effect the translation of input to a commensurable type of output? What does the "little black box" where management works have to do with transforming stimuli to responses? How, for example, does the administrative response to pressures associated with dollar inputs affect the type and quality of university products?

Some would suggest that management can cause the university to produce at least roughly what the external sources want. A study in progress at the time of this writing indicates that budget squeezes from state legislatures can lead university officials to centralize their structures in order to make a redistribution of funds resulting in changes of curriculum and research emphasis. (Swanson, 1976) On the other hand, perhaps so substantial a proportion of grant dollars are so specifically ear-marked that the external sources dictate most university output directly and management style per se is a variable of little consequence. (Litt, 1969)

Is it more typical that management attempts vigorously yet unsuccessfully to direct the university to produce what the external pressures want? Paul Woodring seems to think so: "A university is not an industry [which thrives upon growth]. Rapid growth based on a greater demand for its product only complicates the university's problems." (1968:22). The institution becomes disrupted, tense and ungovernable in the process of

trying to respond through managerial involvement. Woodring indicates that university management usually tries to make the university respond, even if it is to little avail and even if their involvement generates problems.

Intricately involved in these different assessments are questions about the effects of administrative exertions on the university's internal structure. By "internal structure" reference is made to the organization itself with boundaries that exclude students and other clientele and the environment's input forces. Internal structure denotes that area which includes administrative officialdom and staff, and the personnel who perform academic functions such as teaching and research.

If one views the university as a total system, it is at least theoretically sound to assume that interrelated parts affect profoundly the organization's pattern in regard to processing input into output and in dealings with clients. In this, the managerial style has an impact on other structural and processual elements of the organization per se. But what is the typical managerial style in universities, and what is its impact on the internal system? If typicality cannot be described, than what variables are relevant to any differences among universities in this regard?

Apparently involved in these questions are university traditions which only in part have continued into the present, participants' preferences regarding structure which are not uniformly agreed upon within or between organizational strata, and diverse assessments of Is and Ought. Traditionally preferred by many faculty members (and still preferred to a large extent and often to the point of being an ideological mainstay) is a structure which allows an egocentrism checked only by consensus. "Collegiality" is the source and style of making what few policies need to be made. "Autonomy" characterizes the remainder of university life. The

reader of older and recent works on the values of academia would find this basic insistence regarding university structure. "The literature on academic freedom [for example], carries with it an underlying conception of the academic world as a constellation of autonomous individuals each pursuing independent activities, thus giving an egocentric orientation to the university." (Savage, 1967:23)

The university, however, became too complex for this traditional concept to remain viable as the sole operating principle. Collegiality became viewed as inadequate as the only process for all phases of the university. A need for the management function was evident. There evolved an amendment to the norm of collegiality. Reluctant to give up any of the traditional values but rather forced by circumstances to compromise, the typical university member began to emphasize participation in governance or some variation on direct participation which would retain academicians' influence. If governance had to rear its ugly head, the government would be controlled by the will of its subjects.

Even so, a contrary set of traditions started to develop, one which strongly supported the idea of the managerial function. Howard Bowen states the main lines of the administrative tradition succinctly:

> The underlying theory of university government has been that the president in consultation with the board is the responsible decision-maker. Strictly educational and research questions are delegated to the faculty subject to general review. On nonacademic matters, the faculty and others participate only as consultants and advisors. (Bowen, 1969:175)

The two fundamental traditions co-exist with difficulty. Preferences for consensual or democratic "anarchy" collide with the practices of university government in which the faculty is given only some degree of delegated responsibility which is often a chance merely to review and advise.

> This pattern of university governance is being widely criticised, and the faculty, students, nonacademic staff, and their subgroups are all clamoring for increasing influence or authority, and all are forming councils, senates, or unions to exercise the power they hope to get. The theory is widely advocated that a university is a self-contained democracy in which the people are the members of the community or some subset of these members. (Bowen, 1969:175)

The preceding discussion has only hinted at the problem of ascertaining university structure and its consequences. Things are by no means necessarily as implied in this summary of the main thrusts of the literature. For example, efforts at collegiality might not produce consensus so much as "warring factions" in some cases. (Van Riper, 1966:9) What are the likely consequences of collegiality's malfunctioning? Does one faction promote and defend a particular administrative regime under which it can make permanent its victory? Does the war result in the university's becoming a nation of feudal kingdoms? We do not know what is typical, nor do we know all there is to know about what factors affect what outcomes.

Consider further that not all participants agree on the ostensibly firm norm regarding faculty influence. Archie Dykes found a significant amount of ambivalence among faculty members themselves on the subject of participation. (1968:40) Peter Savage found that social scientists within a single university would endorse the general idea of faculty influence but that their administrators would question its benefits. (1967: 58) Steve Marshall suggests that numerous faculty clamor more for administrative due process than for extensive democratic participation. (1975:144). What are the norms against which administrators may or may not struggle? Who has what values and against whom if anyone do what kinds of administrators conflict? What happens where administrators share rather than oppose the faculty's norms? Again, we do not know

definitely the answers to questions about the arrangement of values and the connection of norms and university structure.

Neither do writers agree on the issue of whether management on net balance prevails over the rest of the university. Gerald Platt and Talcott Parsons (1968) describe a dichotomy: some universities are more administratively bound than others. But Terry Lunsford (1968) speaks as if administrators typically do not have much sway in universities generally, and that they attempt to achieve control only by cautious, non-overt methods. Peter Savage's dissertation (1967) suggests that university management tends to make only feeble, piecemeal and ad hoc attempts to steer the organization.

Is it conceivable that university management simply acquiesces to the obstacles to its exerting any control at all? That such a pattern may exist in this era when many observers speak of managerial power would seem quite ironic. Yet Charles Frankel (to cite only one of several writers) argues cogently that the administrator is impotent, and hints that management recognizes its impotency as a fact.

> The university administrator, by and large, has to deal with people who are intent on their own work, who have bargaining power in their own individual right, who have entrenched positions and feudal retainers around them, and who carry with them bundles of traditional freedoms and antique privileges on which they can call in time of trouble. Usually, it's no contest: the administrator is out of his league. By cajolery, by the allocation of funds, every once in a while by the power of his ideas, he can try to bring some system and purpose into the division of faculty labor. But he doesn't run the plant. (Frankel, 1958:45)

Francis Rourke and Glenn Brooks (1966), on the other hand, indicate that an "administrative revolution" is fast under way in increasing numbers of quarters. To these two students, management's performance of just the "secondary" university functions by means of computer tech-

nology and rational decision-making procedures carries significant implications of the tail wagging the dog.

Importantly involved in many of these writings--although the authors seldom say so explicitly--is the variable of faculty members' orientations regarding authority and related aspects of the organization. Universities apparently have some sort of blend, as yet not clarified in the literature, of rational-bureaucratic and collegial-democratic elements. But just what blend conduces to viable faculty-organization relationships is not clear. Much more needs to be understood. Although it is organization theory which seems a highly useful vehicle for continued study, a note of caution should be made about that body of knowledge.

The Application of Organization Theory to the University: Some Caveats

Reservations might be held about the usefulness of rudimentary theoretical models as descriptions of universities. First, to the extent that the more common models employ rationality or nonrationality as a fundamental orientation, each poses a danger for the unwary. Much of the literature indicates that universities often and increasingly face the problem of attempting coordination and other trappings of rationalization in the presence of tremendous pressures of tradition, participants' values, and organizational stresses to de-rationalize. There is a hazard in thinking too simplistically in terms of models which ignore the interplay of both sides of this tension. Yet, as noted earlier, students of the university have tended not to give meticulous attention to their models.

Second, standard organization theories are built upon studies of governmental and private-corporate entities for the most part. Such

organizations have some characteristics which may not describe universities accurately. A review of the literature on universities suggests that there are elements which make the university rather idiosyncratic. (Bowen, 1969; Corson, 1960; Elam and Muskow, 1969; Kerr, 1966).

Since standard organization theories concentrate on non-university types, the variables which are emphasized sometimes have implications which seem far afield from the core issues concerning universities. It is often regarded as desirable, for example, to consider "routine" as well as "adaptive and innovative" processes, all within a context which assumes that interdependency for task accomplishment is a major element of these processes. (Gore, 1962) For the case of the university, however, the adjectives, routine and interdependent, do not appear to characterize the main tasks. Perhaps, then, the problems often associated with routine and interdependency are not so prevalent in universities. The "bureaucratic personality" which emerges under these conditions may not typify a university's primary task performance, for instance. (Presthus, 1965)

Third, typological schemes based on standard theories often seem to miss the mark in their relevance for universities. Etzioni (1964:59-67), for example, provides a scheme based insightfully (for many kinds of organization) on type of control. But one might take exception to his pointed inclusion of universities under the "normative" type. A chief element in his normatively controlled organization is the presence of few officials and few informal leaders, so that the formal leader tends to control effectively by means of charisma and symbol manipulation. The literature concerning universities lends credence more to their inclusion under Etzioni's "utilitarian" type of organization. In the utilitarian situation, control is divided between officials, formal leaders and informal leaders; and

control is dependent upon the pattern of alienation and commitment, effective over only a low scope of activities, and concerns overt and instrumental behavior only. The student of universities cannot with complete impunity rely upon the accuracy--the likelihood of "empirical fit"--of unguarded extensions of theoretical ideas to the university setting.

With these reservations in mind, a rather nonstandard theory is advanced in the following section as an heuristic device. Michel Crozier's framework (1964) makes few restrictive assumptions about structure and process, imposes no rigid analytical taxonomic scheme, and appears to be fairly close empirically to the university situation, especially in regard to the personalities of the personnel under study here.

The Crozierian View: An Heuristic Device

Michel Crozier (1964) produced a work in the early 1960s which provides a remarkably provocative framework through which to study the university. His topic involves illegitimate power. Resentment of this kind of power is rife; strains tracing to the organization's structural style and process are prevalent among organization members. His ideas about members' reactions to illegitimate power are not readily understood, however; let us pull them into focus.

A major element of most basic models for bureaucratic organization is the coordination of individual and group activity. In treatments of organizational control, reference is often to the directive functions of the hierarchically superior roles. Control is typically though of as being accomplishable through the exercise of "authority" by these roles. But what is authority?

Max Weber (1947) is credited for having supplied a perspective on authority which is the single most widely understood one among organiza-

tion theorists. He specified both the modern institutional characteristics and the psychological conditions under which power to obtain submission and obedience occur as a matter of right. Importantly, he introduced the term, "legitimation, to refer to the acceptance of the exercise of power because it is in line with values held by the subjects; and authority to refer to the combination of the two--i.e., to power that is viewed as legitimate." (Etzioni, 1964:51) (Italics in the original)

In Weberian thought, authority for the case of modern organizations occurs in a context designated "rational." The structure is hierarchical. Rules are the basis for roles, rights, and responsibilities. Authority "rests on the belief by subordinates in the legality and priority of the rules governing the organization and the right of those elevated to leadership to issue commands under such rules." (Dubin, 1961:277) This kind of authority, in this rational kind of setting, constitutes legitimacy in the eyes of modern organization members.

Legitimacy and authority have relatively clear-cut interrelated meanings. However, syntactical problems make rather difficult the concept of "power on bases other than legitimacy." If it is legitimacy which elicits voluntary and unequivocal compliance in Weber's authority model, what might prompt compliance when subordinates would not cooperate so automatically? An extensive literature deals with this question. There are forms of control other than Weber's authority. Charismatic leadership, coercion and sanctions, manipulative and persuasive techniques, material rewards, and many other methods have been examined. These control devices are not normally labeled illegitimate as a way of distinguishing them from Weber's model. It is Crozier who should be credited for depicting illegitimate power as having a quality of its own. Power can be

exercised in a way which is strongly resented by organization members. The organizational setting of at least those aspects which function via illegitimate power tend toward the opposite of the setting of legitimacy. The structure is not rationalized in those sectors where illegitimate power occurs. Power-wielders act upon their own discretion rather than within the rules structure. Other actors resent the discretionary nature of the actions. While Weber's term, "resistance," does not necessarily mean stark disobedience, it suggests a reluctance to obey. If power can be said to be effective it is so only to a degree: compliance may occur, but one involuntarily cooperates with misgivings, or complies unenthusiastically and only in part. An ironic outcome of the "power" situation is possible, of course: one might choose not to cooperate at all or to cooperate only at his good pleasure. The climate is such that one reacts emotionally against what he perceives to be efforts to exert unwarranted power over himself. The result is tensions between the exerters of what others sense to be illegitimate power and the actors who feel that they are victimized.

For the moment the reader should note that this scenario of illegitimate power bears on a special usage of the concept of "alienation." Etzioni defines alienation as a "negative...cathectic-evaluative orientation of an actor" (1961:9) which is associated with one's disapproval of the organization's power arrangement. "Alienation is produced [when an actor considers an organizational event or series of events to be characterized] by the illegitimate exercise of power...[and] by power which frustrates needs, wishes, and desires." (Etzioni, 1961:15) Robert Presthus similarly employs the term, alienation, in comments on faculty members' "dissatisfaction with the workings of academic government".

(1965:241) To employ the term in this way--to link alienation with illegitimate organizational power--is to emphasize the sense of resentment which illegitimate power engenders. Words such as resentment, discontentment, disenchantment and disgruntlement might be thought of as synonyms for "perception of illegitimacy." But unlike the usual association of actors' feeling alienated and therefore their withdrawing, Crozier links these attitudes with actors' vigorous reactions.

Crozier rejects the more typical theory's emphasis on actors' passivity to organizational events.

> Such a scheme of interpretation is no longer founded on the passive reaction of the human, offering [mild] resistance to certain kinds of interference and manipulation. [This scheme] is based on the recognition of the active tendency of the human agent to take advantage, in any circumstances, of all available means to further his own privileges [or to negate the privileges of others where they adversely affect his own]. (Crozier, 1964:194) (Italics in the original)

Actors want power--the power at least to act upon their own discretion, and often also to restrict others whose discretionary acts have adverse consequences for themselves. Actors want no unwarranted blocks against their acting on their own judgment.

Crozier continues to elaborate on the nature of the power struggle. The issue of power and who has it is constantly present on many different battle fronts because complete rationality--the thorough codification of action--is never achieved.

Struggling to exercise one's own power (to control one's own action and/or to affect the action of others) and struggling to restrict another's power over himself are principle dynamics of organizations. An example of this conceptualization, which is applicable to universities' faculty-administration relationship, is given by Crozier:

> [There may be] rules prescribing the ways in which the task must be performed and rules prescribing the way people should be chosen, trained, and promoted for various jobs. Subordinates fight rationalization in the first area and want it in the second, and supervisory personnel do just the reverse. (1964:161)

Important to note is that Crozier's depiction of nonrationality does not carry with it the optimism which some students of organizations convey. To him, as contrasted with William Gore (1964) for example, the nonrational structure is not a dynamic equilibrium capable of functioning well for indefinite periods. Crozier's emphasis is on power struggles and the propensity to attempt to resolve them by means either of exercising more discretionary power or of rationalizing the organization's processes. In either case conflicts are not obviated but stimulated. It is the latter--further rationalization--which ultimately prevails. The syndrome leads to a "bureaucratic vicious circle."

Whether power struggles become and continue to be vigorously dynamic, and how they are coped with, are considerations of central importance in this scheme. Fiercely contending forces tend to create further problems. If the organization reacts to struggles by extending centralization and the rationalization of rules, further dimensions to the struggle develop. As these new tensions in turn stimulate the typical organizational reaction toward still further rationalization, a vicious circle continues to build. Ultimately, features of rigidity dominate the scene. The pejorative meaning of "bureaucraticness" begins to apply. The organization can adapt only partially, only from the top, and only sporadically and incompletely to crises after they have passed the severe stages and have approached the impossible. In Crozier's words:

> By and large, the common underlying pattern of all the vicious circles that characterize bureaucratic systems [in the pejorative sense] is this: the rigidity of task definition, task arrangements, and the human relations network results in a lack of com-

> munication with the environment and a lack of communication among the groups [of the organization per se]. The resulting difficulties, instead of imposing a readjustment of the model, are utilized by individuals and groups for improving their position in the power struggle within the organization. Thus a new pressure is generated for impersonality and centralization, the only solution to the problem of personal privileges. [And the cycle continues.] (1964:194)

Qualifications to the Crozierian Framework

One need not be so pessimistic about the situation of universities as to endorse Crozier's feeling that the vicious circle is inevitable. Some notes which Crozier himself makes are instructive regarding forces which may detain the otherwise inexorable march toward organizational rigidity. These forces include:

1. The necessity to live together.
2. Recognition of the mutuality of privileges (in that one's privileges hinge upon the existence of the others' privileges as well).
3. A general consensus on minimum standards.
4. The stability of group relationships.
5. A context of relatively "more liberal sets of pressures." Crozier's examples of liberality include:
   a. The personnel have internalized general conformities.
   b. The organization can tolerate more deviance; its requirements are highly specialized and it may demand only temporary commitments.
   c. The organization can rely on "indirect and intellectual means to obtain conformity."
6. (To add to the foregoing general items, which Crozier mentions, another item which fits the university situation: A faculty which is not highly interdependent in regard to instrumental goals, so that the effects of A's actions are not so objectionable to B.)

These factors seem intuitively to describe at least some aspects of some university organizations. The present writer sees further reasons why the vicious circle may not be a foregone result of organizational processes.

Wherever conflict resolution efforts are made, some types of action

might occur which can constitute an at least relatively satisfactory resolution to the conflict.

If directives are given, they might be accepted as final by those whose claims are rejected. Contenders would have made a move of a power-struggle sort, and would now be prepared psychologically to accept a directive. Under certain circumstances a long and repetitive series of this pattern may be endured. One's participation sense can be restricted to the "aspirant" level, while the outputs of decision-making structures stimulate enough of a sense of being a "loyal subject" that one tends on a long-term basis to accept rulings, even if the rulings are not quite satisfactory to him. (Almond and Verba, 1965)

A second conceivable conflict-resolution pattern is one in which the higher levels to which cases are referred take no action. Matters concerning some power struggles may simply be pigeon-holed. The reluctance to act may stem from the absence of established lines of authority or from the presence of high tensions bearing on the issue. The power struggle under these circumstances may dissipate after the passage of time. The initial ardor of the contestants might cool down; new elements of the situation might take precedence; or the contending parties might change, for example through attrition or other changes of personnel. In either case the organization may warrant some of the deprecatory connotations of "bureaucracy," such as "inaction," but these processes are substantially different from that of Crozier's depiction.

There is a third and perhaps frequently occurring means of coping with conflicts by actors in an organization's higher reaches. The involvement of high-status holders of power does not preclude their dealing informally to resolve conflicts by means of mutual accommodation and bargaining between

the contenders. To the extent that this occurs, Crozier's "inevitability" of the vicious circle would seem to be an alarmist's fears and not a realistic assessment of organizational processes.

These remarks are by no means made in a mood of discrediting Crozier's contribution. Crozier himself indicates that the particular configurations he describes are perhaps not universal, in that they are applicable primarily to the French setting in which he obtained his empirical observations. Differentiations are seen through reference to Crozier's picture of bureaucracy in France and to his conception of the American culture's effects on American organizations.

The typical French organization is viewed as already being at a stage of fairly high rigidity as the dynamic becomes salient. The syndrome in France has a "head start." American organizations (presumably including universities) tend to "start" with a relatively less bureaucratized setting; at least the timing of the vicious circle would presumably be different than in France.

More importantly, Crozier sees cultural distinctions between the two nations which have an important bearing on organizational life. Individuals are less isolated in America by temperament and by sociological patterns. More interaction occurs within and between organizational strata. In America, there is less inclination to avoid face-to-face relationships and to fight when these relationships occur. Authority is divided so that American structures are more like Max Weber's ideal type than like France's rigid bureaucratic and power struggling model.

As a concomitant of these differences in personality, sociological patterns, and authority relationships, the American organization features an emphasis more on "due process" and not so much on power struggling when tensions develop. Reliance on due process is considered more

feasible by Americans than the French in regard to reconciling individual whims with organizational needs and the needs of other persons. Particularly in two aspects of due process are Americans less wary of power relations: they have faith in the enforcement of contractual obligations, and in the adjudication of disputes by arbitration based on the principal of mutual accommodation. (Crozier, 1964:231-236) This conception of comparative cultural influences on organizations should of course be considered an empirical question as immense as Crozier's theory about internal organizational processes.

Although the theory implicating a "bureaucratic vicious circle" may be most applicable to situations in France, viewed mutatis mutandis it has proven useful in this writer's studies of American university organizations. Several of the features which Crozier discovered in a French ministry and factory seem also to characterize American academia. That is, Crozier has provided a systematic means for studying the university as an idiosyncratic type of American organization. Faculty members would seem intuitively to be similar to Crozier's Frenchmen, while at the same time rather different from many other types of American organizational personnel. They seem inordinately to crave autonomy in their work and to resent arbitrary power. They exhibit a high instance of tension among themselves and with higher echelons. They tend to be strikingly individualistic. This image of faculty personnel is confirmed not only by reference to the literature on American universities, but also through general organization theory's depiction of democratic- and professionalistic-minded members' reluctance to grant legitimacy to some kinds of structures and processes which may exist in universities to some extent.

Another advantage of Crozier's theory lies in his approaching the

organization as a process rather than as a structure of specific design. A researcher discovers that the university's formal and "real" structures are as yet unclearly depicted in the literature, and difficult to discern in the field. Power relationships are not fixed but in flux. Crozier's framework allows for varying degrees and erratic patterns of rationalization, and it does not require a postulation of exactly who has power over whom. It does not seem far-fetched to visualize American universities on this basis if one admits that he must adopt an agnostic posture about their structure.

By way of testing the heuristic value of the framework, this writer (Marshall, 1975) has scaled attitudinal items drawn from Crozier to identify some university faculty members as persons who were sensitive concerning their power disadvantage, and some who were not or were less so. The sense of illegitimacy was directed toward the exercise of "power" as Crozier defined it: Unbounded by rules, others (especially administrators) made and enforced judgments of dubious merit on their own discretion. Additional ingredients of disgruntlement were compatible with the image which Crozier described: Upper echelons seemed to hold the advantage in power, in a setting which was viewed as centralized and as "stacked" against faculty members' viewpoints.

This package of perceptions was operationalized as agreement/disagreement with twenty-one Likert scale statements concerning the presence of the elements. Responses to the statements proved interrelated in a way which both formed a Guttman scale (which even with numerous items had a coefficient of reproducibility of 90.3 by Goodman's method), and showed item by item correlations which were each significant at the .05 level. A score of 2 was given for each response indicating an illegitimacy orien-

tation, 1 for neutral/nonresponse, and 0 for legitimacy orientation. Each individual's scores on the twenty-one items were totaled, and the respondents were rank-ordered according to their total scores. Two groups were defined (illegitimacy- and legitimacy-oriented) by dividing the faculty members at the median point of the rank order. One-third of the respondents scored between 0 and 14, indicating that a sizeable proportion tended to make responses of a quite favorable or positive nature concerning the university's organization. The following statements utilized in this operational definition were mixed throughout a lengthy questionnaire: (An asterisk indicates that an illegitimacy-oriented response is to disagree with the statement.)

Concerning Arbitrariness:

1. "Administrative power" prevails. Officials tend to determine policy and to act on the basis of their own judgment and criteria. Imbalances, unsound policies or arbitrary actions result.

2. Here, administrators' arbitrariness tends to hinder proper academic functioning.

3. "They" (administrators and authoritative committees) often ignore policies and rules in order to play favorites or to control the University the way "they" want to.

4. On the contrary (to item listed as no. 3, above), policies and rules are firm enough to prevent such "administrative power."*

5. Implementation of policies is fair, not arbitrary.*

Concerning Centralization:

6. Departments can "take liberties" in the administration of policies which are set at higher levels.*

7. Departments can formally and effectively initiate policies.*

8. The department has a great deal of autonomy in this area.*

9. Rather than having influence on policy per se, the department head merely administers policies which are made "higher up."

Concerning Faculty Influence:

10. Conflicts are resolved through processes which consider each party's position, desires, or point of view.*

11. Formal processes exist for "feedback" concerning policies per se, or the way in which they are administered.*

12. Faculty bodies formally influence policy guidelines (via the general faculty or faculty committees).*

13. The outcome of such "struggles" (as are described in the questionnaire) is usually satisfactory to the faculty members who are involved.*

Concerning Value Conflicts:

14. No conflicts occur between the values of my particular profession and the practices or emphases of this University.*

15. Professors here need not worry about losing their "academic freedom."*

16. Professors' individual rights, wishes or needs are often ignored or violated.

17. This University responds too much to selected "outside" influences such as business, professional and political groups. Academic values are "lost in the shuffle."

18. Faculty interests are protected by the policies.*

19. Policies are sound from an academic point of view, or on the basis of professional criteria.*

Concerning Desire to Increase Faculty Influence:

20. Increase faculty authority toward making more actual policy, or at least to initiate more and firmer guidelines for administrators to follow.

21. The faculty should be involved more than now in making actual policy, by referenda or through general faculty meetings.

22. The faculty should be more involved than now through more representation on more committees.

Concerning Evaluation of Administrative Performance:

23. "Administrative power" is appropriate and is well exercised here.*

Items 6 and 9 did not correlate with each of the remaining items, and so were omitted from the set of twenty-one statements employed in scoring for the dependent variable.

Among the several findings of the study was one which especially suggests the empirical closeness of Crozier's model. Given that a faculty member perceived arbitrariness in the university's processes, and given that his main attention was on matters pertaining to his own stratum's activities, "illegitimacy" often referred to his seeing special benefits being given to some of his colleagues. Since preferential treatments often occur outside the bounds of rules, i.e., through "informal relations," those who resented preferential treatment of others also inclined to distrust informal processes. Accordingly, they wanted the rules to be more adequate and binding in regard to proscribing favoritism.

This kind of intra-stratum tension comprises a major aspect of the syndrome which Crozier calls the "bureaucratic vicious circle." Ultimately those who feel that they suffer in power relationships desire to have rules and regulations built further--not only against the discretionary field of administrative actions but also against their colleagues who benefit from the exercise of administrators' discretionary judgments. If nothing else, Crozier's theory points up an alarming contingency. Although disgruntled faculty members may dislike both bureaucratic rigidity and its opposite, arbitrariness, their pursuit of remedies for the letter can involve measures which add to the former problem.

While it is of importance that the Crozierian image was held in the minds of a large group of faculty members in this single-case study, it is also noteworthy that a roughly equal number did not perceive their university setting in those terms. Continued study, on the basis of theory which includes the Crozierian perspectives on organizational processes, can facilitate understanding of the university's internal nature and its ultimate prospects regarding viability.

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