CHAPTER 7

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Summary and Review
HIS WAS THE MOST EXCITING DAY Jennifer could remember. Her first day at college. So much had happened so quickly. Her senior year had ended with such pleasant memories: the prom, graduation—how proud she had felt at that moment. But best of all had been her SAT scores. Everyone, especially Jennifer, had been surprised at the results—she had outscored everyone in her class.

“Yes, they’re valid,” her advisor had assured her. “You can be anything you want to be.” Those words still echoed in Jennifer’s mind. “Anything I want to be,” she thought. Then came the presidential scholarship! Full tuition for four years. It went beyond anything Jennifer had ever dreamed possible. She could hardly believe it, but it was really hers.

“Your Social Security number, please!”

These abrupt words snapped Jennifer out of her reverie. After an hour, she had reached the head of the line. Jennifer quickly mumbled the nine digits destined to stay with her to the grave.

“What?” asked the clerk. Jennifer repeated the numbers more clearly.

“I can’t give you a class card. You haven’t paid your fees.”

“What do you mean? I’m on scholarship.”

“Evidently not, or else you’d be in the computer,” replied the clerk, rolling her eyes.

“But I am.”

“If you were, it would say so here.”

“But I really am. Look,” Jennifer said as she took the prized letter out of her purse.

“I can’t help what it says there,” replied the clerk, “The only thing that counts is what it says here,” she said, gesturing toward the computer. “You’ll have to go to Forsyth to clear it up.” Then looking past Jennifer, the clerk said, “Next.”

Jennifer felt thoroughly confused. Dejected, she crossed the quadrangle to Forsyth and joined a double line of students stretched from the building to the courtyard.

No one told Jennifer that this was the line for deferring tuition. The “problem” line was in the basement.

You can understand Jennifer’s dismay. Things could have been clearer—a lot clearer. The problem is that many colleges must register thousands of students, most of whom are going to start classes on the same day. To do so, they have broken the registration process into tiny bits, with each piece making a small contribution to getting the job done. Of course, as Jennifer found out, things don’t always go as planned.

This chapter looks at how society is organized to “get its job done.” As you read it, you may be able to trace the source of some of your frustrations to this social organization, as well as see how your welfare depends on it.

The Rationalization of Society

In the previous chapter, we discussed how over the course of history, societies underwent transformations so extensive that whole new types of societies emerged. In addition to these transformations, a major development has been rationality—the acceptance of rules, efficiency, and practical results as the right way to approach human affairs. Let’s examine how this approach to life—which we today take for granted—came about.

The Contribution of Max Weber

Max Weber (1864–1920), a sociologist whose studies incorporated an amazingly broad sweep of world history, concluded that until recently the world’s groups and nations had been immersed in a traditional orientation to life—the idea that the past is the best
guide for the present. In this view, what exists is good because it has passed the test of time. Customs—and relationships based on them—have served people well and should not be lightly abandoned. A central orientation of a traditional society is to protect the status quo. Change is viewed with suspicion, and comes but slowly, if at all.

Such a traditional orientation stands in the way of industrialization, which requires the willingness—even eagerness—to change. If a society is to industrialize, then, a deep-seated shift must occur in people’s thinking—from wanting to hold onto things as they are to seeking the most efficient way to accomplish matters. With the “bottom line” (results) replacing the status quo, rule-of-thumb methods give way to explicit rules and procedures for measuring results. This change, called rationality, requires an entirely different way of looking at life. It lies in the face of human history, for it is opposed to the basic orientation of all human societies until the time of industrialization. How, then, did what Weber called the rationalization of society—a widespread acceptance of rationality and a social organization largely built around this idea—come about? How did people break through their profound resistance to change?

To Weber, this problem was like an unsolved murder is to a detective. Weber’s primary clue was that capitalism thrived only in certain parts of Europe. If he could determine why this was so, he was convinced that he could discover the root of this fundamental change in human society. As Weber pursued the matter, he concluded that religion held the key, for it was in Protestant countries that capitalism flourished, while Roman Catholic countries held onto tradition and were relatively untouched by capitalism.

But why should Roman Catholics have continued to hold onto the past, while Protestants embraced change, welcoming the new emphasis on practical results? Weber’s answer to this puzzle has been the source of controversy ever since he first proposed it in his highly influential book, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904–1905). He concluded that essential differences between the two religions held the answer. Roman Catholic doctrine emphasized the acceptance of present arrangements, not change: “God wants you where you are. You owe primary allegiance to the Church, to your family, to your community and country. Accept your lot in life and remain rooted.” But Protestant theology was quite different, Weber argued, especially Calvinism, a religion he was intimately familiar with from his mother. Calvinists (followers of the teachings of John Calvin, 1509–1564) believed that before birth people are destined to go either to heaven or to hell—and they would not know their destiny until after they died. Weber believed that this teaching filled Calvinists with an anxiety that pervaded their entire lives. Salvation became their chief concern in life—they wanted to know now where they were going after death.

To resolve their spiritual dilemma, Calvinists came up with an ingenious solution: God did not want those chosen for heaven to be ignorant of their destiny. Consequently, he would bestow signs of approval on them. But what signs? The answer, they claimed, was found not in mystical, spiritual experiences, but in tangible achievements that people could see and measure. The sign of God’s approval became success: Those whom God had predestined for heaven would be blessed with visible success in this life.

This idea transformed Calvinists’ lives, serving as an extraordinary motivation to work hard. Because Calvinists also believed that thrift is a virtue, their dedication to work led to an accumulation of money. Calvinists could not spend the excess on themselves, however, for to purchase items beyond the basic necessities was considered sinful. Capitalism, the investment of capital in the hope of producing profits, became an outlet for their excess money, while the success of those investments became a further sign of God’s
approval. Worldly success, then, became transformed into a spiritual virtue, and other branches of Protestantism, although less extreme, adopted the creed of thrift and hard work. Consequently, said Weber, Protestant countries embraced capitalism. Now, what has this to do with rationalization? Simply put, capitalism demands rationalization, the careful calculation of practical results. If profits are your goal, you must compute income and expenses. You must calculate inventories and wages, the cost of producing goods and how much they bring in. You must determine “the bottom line.” In such an arrangement of human affairs, efficiency, not tradition, becomes the drum to which you march. Traditional ways of doing things, if inefficient, must be replaced, for what counts are the results.

Marx on Rationalization

Another sociologist, Karl Marx, also noted that tradition had given way to rationality. When he analyzed the problem, however, Marx came up with an entirely different explanation. He didn’t think religion had anything to do with breaking the bondage of tradition. Rather, Marx concluded that the switch to rationality was due to capitalism itself. When people saw that capitalism was more efficient, that it produced things they wanted in much greater abundance, they embraced rationality, giving up their traditional thinking. Thus Marx reversed the equation: The change to capitalism, he said, changed the way people thought about life, not the other way around.

Who is correct? Weber, who concluded that Protestantism produced rationality, which then paved the way for capitalism? Or Marx, who concluded that capitalism produced rationality? No analyst has yet reconciled these two opposing answers to the satisfaction of sociologists: The two views still remain side by side.

Formal Organizations and Bureaucracy

Regardless of whether Marx or Weber was right about its cause, rationality was a totally different way of thinking that came to permeate society. This new orientation transformed the way in which society is organized. As a result, formal organizations, secondary groups designed to achieve explicit objectives, have become a central feature of contemporary society. Most of us are born within them, we are educated in them, we spend our working lives in them, and we are buried by them (Volti 1995).

Formal Organizations

Prior to industrialization, only a few formal organizations existed. The guilds of western Europe during the twelfth century are an example. People who performed the same type of work organized to control their craft in a local area. They set prices and standards of workmanship (Bridgwater 1953; Volti 1995). Much like modern unions, guilds also prevented outsiders (nonmembers of the guild) from working at the particular craft. Another example of an early formal organization is the army, with its structure of senior officers, junior officers, and ranks. Formal armies, of course, go back to early history.

With industrialization, secondary groups became common. Today we take their existence for granted and, beginning with grade school, all of us spend a good deal of time in them. Formal organizations tend to develop into bureaucracies, and in general, the larger the formal organization, the more likely it is to be bureaucratic.
The Essential Characteristics of Bureaucracies

Although the army, the post office, a college, and General Motors may not seem to have much in common, they are all bureaucracies. As Weber (1947) analyzed them, these are the essential characteristics of a bureaucracy:

1. **A hierarchy with assignments flowing downward and accountability flowing upward.** The organization is divided into clear-cut levels. Each level assigns responsibilities to the level beneath it, while each lower level is accountable to the level above for fulfilling those assignments. The bureaucratic structure of a typical university is shown in Figure 7.1 on the next page.

2. **A division of labor.** Each member of a bureaucracy has a specific task to fulfill, and all of the tasks are then coordinated to accomplish the purpose of the organization. In a college, for example, a teacher does not run the heating system, the president does not teach, and a secretary does not evaluate textbooks. These tasks are distributed among people who have been trained to do them.

3. **Written rules.** In their attempt to become efficient, bureaucracies stress written procedures. In general, the longer a bureaucracy exists and the larger it grows, the more written rules it has. The rules of some bureaucracies cover just about every imaginable situation. In my university, for example, the rules are bound in handbooks: separate ones for faculty, students, administrators, civil service workers, and perhaps others that I do not even know exist. The guiding principle generally becomes, “If there isn’t a written rule covering it, it is allowed.”

4. **Written communications and records.** Records are kept of much of what occurs in a bureaucracy. (“Fill that out in triplicate.”) Consequently, workers in bureaucracies spend a fair amount of time sending memos back and forth. They also produce written reports detailing their activities. My university, for example, requires that each faculty member fill out quarterly reports summarizing the number of hours per week spent on specified activities as well as an annual report listing what was accomplished in teaching, research, and service—all accompanied by copies of publications, testimonies to service, and written teaching evaluations from each course. These materials go to committees whose task it is to evaluate the relative performance of each faculty member.
5. **Impersonality.** It is the office that is important, not the individual who holds the office. You work for the organization, not the replaceable person who heads some post in the organization. Consequently, members of a bureaucracy owe allegiance to the office, not to particular people. If you work in a bureaucracy, you become a small cog in a large machine. Each worker is a replaceable unit, for many others are available to fulfill each particular function. For example, when a professor retires or dies, someone else is appointed to take his or her place.

These five characteristics not only help bureaucracies reach their goals but also allow them to grow and endure. One bureaucracy in the United States, the
postal service, has become so large that one out of every 150 employed Americans now works for it (Frank 1990). If the head of a bureaucracy dies, retires, or resigns, the organization continues, ordinarily hardly skipping a beat, for unlike a “mom and pop” operation, the functioning of a unit does not depend on the individual who heads it. The expansion (some would say domination) of bureaucracies in contemporary society is illustrated by the Down-to-Earth Sociology box below.

“Ideal” Versus “Real” Bureaucracy

Just as people often act quite differently from the way the norms say they should, so it is with bureaucracies. The characteristics of bureaucracies identified by Weber are ideal types; that is, they are a composite of characteristics based on many specific examples.
Think of a judge at a dog show. He or she has a mental image of what a particular breed of dog should look like, and judges each dog according to that mental image. No particular dog will have all the characteristics, but all dogs of that breed put together have them. Thus, a particular organization may be ranked high or low on some characteristic and still qualify as a bureaucracy. Instead of labeling a particular organization as a “bureaucracy” or “not a bureaucracy,” it probably makes more sense to think in terms of the extent to which an organization is bureaucratized (Udy 1959; Hall 1963).

As with culture, then, a bureaucracy often differs from its ideal image. The actual lines of authority (“going through channels”), for example, may be quite different from those portrayed on organizational charts, such as that shown in Figure 7.1. For example, suppose that before being promoted, the university president taught in the history department. As a result, friends from that department may have direct access to him or her. In giving their “input” (ranging from opinions about how to solve problems to personal grievances or even gossip), these individuals may skip their chairperson or even the dean of their college altogether.

Dysfunctions of Bureaucracies

Although no other form of social organization has been found to be more efficient in the long run, as Weber recognized, his model accounts for only part of the characteristics of bureaucracies. They also have a dark side, and do not always operate smoothly. Let’s look at some of bureaucracy’s dysfunctions—red tape, lack of communication, alienation, goal displacement, and incompetence.

Red Tape: A Rule Is a Rule. As Jennifer, in the opening vignette, discovered, bureaucracies can be filled with so much red tape that they impede the purpose of the organization. In the Bronx, Mother Teresa spotted a structurally sound abandoned building and wanted to turn it into a homeless shelter. But she ran head-on into a rule: The building must have an elevator for the handicapped homeless. Not having the funds for the elevator, Mother Teresa struggled to get permission to bypass this rule. Two frustrating years later, she gave up. The abandoned building is still an abandoned building (Tobias 1995).

Obviously this well-intentioned rule about elevators was not meant to stop Mother Teresa from ministering to the down and out. But, hey, rules is rules!

Lack of Communication Between Units. Each unit within a bureaucracy performs specialized tasks, which are designed to contribute to the organization’s overall goals. At times, these units fail to communicate with one another and end up working at cross purposes. In Granada, Spain, for example, the local government was concerned about the rundown appearance of buildings along one of its main roads. Consequently, one unit of the government fixed the fronts of these buildings, painting and repairing concrete, iron, and stonework. The results were impressive, and the unit was proud of what it had accomplished. The only problem was that another unit of the government had slated these same buildings for demolition (Arias 1993). With neither unit of this bureaucracy knowing what the other was doing, the huge expense and effort of the one ended in a rubble heap.
Bureaucratic Alienation. Many workers find it disturbing to deal with others in terms of roles, rules, and functions rather than as individuals. Similarly, they may dislike writing memos instead of talking to people face to face. It is not surprising, then, that workers in large organizations sometimes feel more like objects than people, or, as Weber (1978) put it, “only a small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to [them] an endlessly fixed routine. . . .” Because workers must deal with one another in such formal ways, and because they constantly perform routine tasks, some come to feel that no one cares about them and that they are misfits in their surroundings.

Marx termed these reactions alienation and attributed them to the fact that workers are cut off from the finished product of their labor. Although assigning workers to repetitive tasks makes for efficient production, Marx argued that it also reduces their satisfaction by limiting their creativity and sense of contribution to the finished product. Underlying alienation is the workers’ loss of control over their work because they no longer own their own tools. Before industrialization, individual workers used their own tools to produce an entire product, such as a chair or table. Now the capitalists own the machinery and tools and assign each worker only a single step or two in the entire production process. Relegated to repetitive tasks that seem remote from the final product, workers lose a sense of identity with what they produce. Ultimately they come to feel estranged not only from their products but from their whole work environment.

Resisting Alienation. Alienation, of course, is not a pleasant experience. Because workers want to feel valued and want to have a sense of control over their work, they resist alienation. Forming primary groups at work is a major form of that resistance. They band together in informal settings—at lunch, around desks, for a drink after work. There they give one another approval for jobs well done and express sympathy for the shared need to put up with cantankerous bosses, meaningless routines, and endless rules. Here they relate to one another not just as workers, but as people who value one another. They laugh and tell jokes, talk about their families, their problems, their goals, and, often, their love life. Adding this multidimensionality to their work relationships restores their sense of being persons rather than mere cogs in an endlessly moving machine.

Consider a common sight. You are visiting an office, and you see work areas decorated with family and vacation photos. The sociological implication is that of workers striving to overcome alienation. By staking a claim to individuality, the workers are rejecting an identity as mere machines performing functions.
The Alienated Bureaucrat. Not all workers succeed in resisting alienation, however, and some become extremely alienated. They remain in the organization because they see no viable alternative or because they have “only so many years until retirement.” They hate every minute of it, however, and it shows—in their attitudes toward clients, toward fellow workers, and especially toward authority in the organization. The alienated bureaucrat does not take initiative, will not do anything for the organization beyond what he or she is absolutely required to do, and uses rules to justify doing as little as possible. If Jennifer in this chapter’s opening vignette had come across an alienated bureaucrat behind the registration window, she might have been told, “What’s the matter with you—Can’t you read? Everyone else manages to pay their fees on time, why can’t you? I don’t know what kind of students they are sending us nowadays.” If the worker had been alienated even more, he or she might even have denied knowledge of where to get the problem taken care of.

In spite of poor attitude and performance, alienated workers often retain their jobs, either because they may have seniority, or know the written rules backward and forward, or threaten expensive, time-consuming, and embarrassing legal action if anyone tries to fire them. Some alienated workers are shunted off into small bureaucratic corners, where they do trivial tasks and have little chance of coming in contact with the public. This treatment, of course, only alienates them further.

Goal Displacement. Bureaucracies sometimes take on a life of their own, adopting new goals in place of old ones. In this process, called goal displacement, even when the goal of the organization has been achieved and there no longer is any reason for it to continue, continue it does. A good example is the National Foundation for the March of Dimes, organized in the 1930s to fight polio, a crippling disease that strikes without warning (Sills 1957). The origin of polio was a mystery to the medical profession, and the public was alarmed and fearful. All sorts of rumors ran rampant about its cause. Everyone knew someone who had been crippled by this disease. Overnight, a healthy child would be stricken. Parents were fearful because no one knew whose child would be next. The March of Dimes began to publicize individual cases. An especially effective strategy was placing posters of a child on crutches near cash registers in almost every store in the United States. The U.S. public took the goals of the organization to heart and contributed heavily.

The organization raised money beyond its wildest dreams. Then during the 1950s, when Dr. Jonas Salk developed a vaccine for polio this threat was wiped out almost
overnight. The public breathed a collective sigh of relief. What then? Did the organization fold? After all, its purpose had been fulfilled. But, as you know, the March of Dimes is still around. Faced with the loss of their jobs, the professional staff that ran the organization quickly found a way to keep the bureaucracy intact by pursuing a new enemy—birth defects. Their choice of enemy is particularly striking, for it is doubtful that we will ever run out of birth defects—and thus unlikely that these people will ever run out of jobs.

**Bureaucratic Incompetence.** In a tongue-in-check analysis of bureaucracies, Laurence Peter proposed what has become known as the Peter principle: Each employee of a bureaucracy is promoted to his or her level of incompetence (Peter and Hull 1969). People who perform well in a bureaucracy come to the attention of those higher up the chain of command and are promoted. If they again perform well, they are again promoted. This process continues until finally they are promoted to a level at which they can no longer handle the responsibilities well; this is their level of incompetence. There they hide behind the work of others, taking credit for what those under their direction accomplish. Although the Peter principle contains a grain of truth, if it were generally true, bureaucracies would be staffed entirely by incompetents, and none of these organizations could succeed. In reality, bureaucracies are remarkably successful.

**The Sociological Significance of Bureaucracies**

Perhaps the main sociological significance of bureaucracies is that they represent a fundamental change in how people relate to one another. When work is rooted in social relationships, much more is at stake than efficiency in performing tasks and keeping an eye on the bottom line. Seeing that all family members are employed, or that everyone in the community has a chance to make a living, for example, may be the determining factors in making decisions. Bureaucracies, or the rationalization of society (Volto 1995).

Although bureaucracies have become the dominant form of organization for large, task-oriented groups, even more common are voluntary associations. Let us examine their essential characteristics.

Back in the 1830s, a Frenchman traveled across the United States, observing the customs of this new nation. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote a book about his observations, *Democracy in America* (1835), which became widely read in Europe and in the United States and is still quoted for its insights into the American character. As an outsider, de Tocqueville was able to see patterns that people immersed in them could not. One of de Tocqueville’s observations was that Americans joined a lot of voluntary associations, groups made up of volunteers who organize on the basis of some mutual interest.

Over the years, Americans have maintained this pattern and are extremely proud of it. A visitor entering any of the thousands of small towns that dot the U.S. landscape is greeted with a highway sign proclaiming which volunteer associations that particular town has: Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, Eagles, Knights of Columbus, Chamber of Commerce, Future Farmers of America, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and perhaps a host of others. One form of voluntary association is so prevalent that a separate sign usually indicates which varieties are present in the town: Roman Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopalian, and so on. Not listed on these signs are many other voluntary associations, such as political parties, unions, health clubs, the National Right to Life, the National Organization for Women, Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Association of Pinto Racers, and Citizens United For or Against This and That.

Americans love voluntary associations, using them to express a wide variety of interests, goals, opinions, and even dissatisfaction. Some groups are local, consisting of only...
a few volunteers; others are national, with a paid professional staff. Some are temporary, organized to accomplish a specific task such as arranging a town’s next Fourth of July fireworks. Others, such as the Scouts and political parties, are permanent, large, secondary organizations with clear lines of command—and they are also bureaucracies.

Functions of Voluntary Associations

Whatever their form, voluntary associations are so numerous because they meet people’s basic needs. People do not have to belong to these organizations. They join because they obtain benefits from their participation. Functionalists have identified seven functions of voluntary associations.

1. Voluntary organizations advance the particular interests they represent. For example, adults who are concerned about children’s welfare volunteer for the Scouts because they think that this group is superior to the corner pool hall. In short, voluntary associations get things done, whether ensuring that fireworks are purchased and shot off or that people become familiar with the latest legislation affecting their occupation.

2. Voluntary groups also offer people an identity, for some, even a sense of purpose in life. As in-groups, they provide their members with a feeling of togetherness, of belonging, and in many cases, of doing something worthwhile. This function is so important for some individuals that their participation in voluntary associations becomes the center of their lives.

3. Voluntary associations help govern the nation and maintain social order. Groups that help “get out the vote” or assist the Red Cross in coping with disasters are obvious examples.

Note that the first two functions apply to all voluntary associations. In a general sense, so does the third. Although few organizations are focused on politics and the social order, taken together, voluntary associations help to incorporate individuals into the general society. By allowing the expression of desire and dissent, they help prevent anomie.
Sociologist David Sills (1968) identified four other functions, which apply only to some voluntary groups.

4. Some voluntary groups mediate between the government and the individual. For example, some provide a way for people to put pressure on lawmakers.

5. By providing training in organizational skills, some groups help individuals climb the occupational ladder.

6. Some voluntary groups help bring people into the political mainstream. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is an example of such a group.

7. Finally, some voluntary groups pave the way to social change. Opposing society’s definitions of “normal” and socially acceptable, some groups such as Greenpeace challenge society’s established boundaries. Their activities often indicate the direction of social change.

Shared Interests

Voluntary associations, then, represent no single interest or purpose. They can be reactionary, dragged screaming into the present as their nails claw the walls of the past, or they can lead the vanguard for social change, announcing their vision of a better world. In spite of their amazing diversity, however, a thread does run through all voluntary associations. That thread is mutual interest. Although the particular interest varies from group to group, shared interest in some view or activity is the tie that binds their members together.

Although a group’s members are united by shared interests, their motivations for joining the group differ widely. Some join because they have strong conviction concerning the stated purpose of the organization, others simply because membership gives them a chance to make contacts that will help them politically or professionally. Some even join to be closer to some special person of the opposite sex.

With motivations for joining voluntary associations and commitment to their goals so varied, these organizations often have a high turnover. Some people move in and out of groups almost as fast as they change clothes. Within each organization, however, is an inner core of individuals who stand firmly behind the group’s goals, or at least are firmly committed to maintaining the organization itself. If this inner core loses commitment, the group is likely to fold.

The Problem of Oligarchy

Rather than losing its commitment, however, this inner core is likely to grow ever tighter, becoming convinced that most members can’t be counted on and that it can trust only the smaller group to make the really important decisions. To see this principle at work, let us look at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

Sociologists Elaine Fox and George Arquitt (1985) studied three local posts of the VFW, a national organization of former U.S. soldiers who have served in foreign wars. The constitution of the VFW is very democratic, giving every member of the organization the right to be elected to positions of leadership. Fox and Arquitt found three types of VFW members: the silent majority (members who rarely show up), the rank and file (members who show up, but mainly for drinking), and leaders (those who have been elected to office or appointed to committees). Although the leaders of the posts are careful not to let their attitudes show, they look down on the rank and file, viewing them as a bunch of ignorant boozers.

Because the leaders can’t stand the thought that such people might represent them to the community and at national meetings, a curious situation arises. “You need to meet Jim,” the sociologists were told. “He’s the next post commander after Sam does his time.” At first the researchers found this puzzling. How could the elite be so sure? As
they investigated further, they found that leadership is effectively decided behind the scenes. The elected leadership appoints their favored people to chair key committees. The members then become aware of their accomplishments, and these individuals are elected as leaders. The inner core, then, is so effective in keeping their own group in leadership that even before an election is held they can specify who is going to be their new post commander.

Most organizations are like the VFW, and are run by only a few of their members (Cnaan 1991). Building on the term oligarchy, a system in which many are ruled by a few, sociologist Robert Michels (1876–1936) coined the term the iron law of oligarchy to refer to how formal organizations come to be dominated by a small, self-perpetuating elite. The majority of the members become passive, and an elite inner group keeps itself in power by passing the leading positions from one clique member to another.

What many find depressing about the iron law of oligarchy is that it applies even to organizations strongly committed to democratic principles. Even U.S. political parties, for example, supposedly the backbone of the nation’s representative government, have fallen prey to it. Run by an inner group that may or may not represent the community, they pass their leadership positions from one elite member to another. This principle is also demonstrated by the U.S. Senate. With their control of statewide political machinery and access to free mailing, about 90 percent of U.S. senators who choose to run are reelected (Statistical Abstract 1997: Table 447).

The iron law of oligarchy is not without its limitations, of course. Members of the inner group must remain attuned to the opinions of the other members, regardless of their personal feelings. If the oligarchy gets too far out of line, it runs the risk of a grassroots rebellion that would throw this elite group out of office. It is this threat that often softens the iron law of oligarchy by making the leadership responsive to the membership. In addition, because not all organizations become captive to an elite, this is a tendency, not an inevitability (Fisher 1994).

Careers in Bureaucracies

Since you are likely to end up working in a bureaucracy, let’s look at how its characteristics may affect your career.

The Corporate Culture: Consequences of Hidden Values

Who gets ahead in a large corporation? Although we might like to think that success is the consequence of intelligence and hard work, many factors other than merit underlie salary increases and promotions. As sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977, 1983) stresses, the corporate culture, the orientations that characterize corporate work settings, is crucial in determining people’s corporate fate. She explains how a corporation’s “hidden values”—the values that are not officially part of the organization, but that nevertheless powerfully influence its members—operate as self-fulfilling stereotypes. The elite holds ideas about who are the best workers and colleagues, and those who fit this mold receive better access to information and networking, and are put in “fast-track” positions. Not surprisingly, these people perform better and become more committed to the organization, thus confirming the initial expectation. In contrast, those judged to be outsiders find opportunities closing up. They tend to work at a level beneath their capacity, come to think poorly of themselves, and become less committed to the organization.

The hidden values that created this self-fulfilling prophecy remain invisible to most. What is visible are the promotions of people with superior performances and greater commitment to the company, not the self-fulfilling prophecy that produced these attitudes and work performances.
Maneuvering the Hidden Culture—Women Surviving the Male-Dominated Business World

I work for a large insurance company. Of its twenty-five hundred employees, about 75 percent are women. Only 5 percent of the upper management positions, however, are held by women.

I am one of the more fortunate women, for I hold a position in middle management. I am also a member of the twelve-member junior board of directors, of whom nine are men and three are women.

Recently one of the female members of the board suggested that the company become involved in Horizons for Tomorrow, a program designed to provide internships for disadvantaged youth. Two other women and I spent many days developing a proposal for our participation.

The problem was how to sell the proposal to the company president. From past experiences, we knew that if he saw it as a “woman’s project” it would be shelved into the second tier of “maybes.” He hates what he calls “aggressive bitches.”

We three decided, reluctantly, that the proposal had a chance only if it were presented by a man. We decided that Bill was the logical choice. We also knew that we had to “stroke” Bill if we were going to get his cooperation.

We first asked Bill if he would “show us how to present our proposal.” (It is ridiculous to have to play the role of the “less capable female” in the 1990s, but, unfortunately the corporate culture sometimes dictates this strategy.) To clinch matters, we puffed up Bill even more by saying, “You’re the logical choice for the next chairmanship of the board.”

Bill, of course, came to our next planning session, where we “prepped” him on what to say.

At our meeting with the president, we had Bill give the basic presentation. We then backed him up, providing the background and rationale for why the president should endorse the project. As we answered the president’s questions, we carefully deferred to Bill.

The president’s response? “An excellent proposal,” he concluded, “an appropriate project for our company.”

To be successful, we had to maneuver through the treacherous waters of the “hidden culture” (actually not so “hidden” to women who have been in the company for a while). The proposal was not sufficient on its merits, for the “who” behind a proposal is at least as significant as the proposal itself.

“We shouldn’t have to play these games,” Laura said, summarizing our feelings.

But we all know that we have no choice. To become labeled “pushy” is to commit “corporate suicide”—and we’re no fools.

Source: Written by an insurance executive in Henslin’s introductory sociology class who, out of fear of retaliation at work, chooses to remain anonymous.
however, to examine how corporate culture shapes people’s attitudes, and, by extension, the quality of their work.

One of the major issues in bureaucracies is how to adapt to a changing work force. A controversial solution that some corporations have chosen is discussed in the Social Issues box below.

**Humanizing the Corporate Culture**

Bureaucracies have transformed society by harnessing people’s energies to specific goals and monitoring progress to those goals. Weber (1946a) predicted that because bureaucracies are so efficient and have the capacity to replace themselves indefinitely, they would come to dominate social life. More than any prediction in sociology, this one has withstood the test of time (Rothschild and Whitt 1986; Perrow 1991).

Bureaucracies appear likely to remain our dominant form of social organization, and most of us, like it or not, are destined to spend our working lives in bureaucracies. Many people have become concerned about the negative side of bureaucracies, however, and would like to make them more humane. **Humanizing a work setting** means organizing work in such a way that it develops rather than impedes human potential. Such work settings offer access to opportunities on the basis of ability and contributions rather than personal characteristics, distribute power more equally, and have less rigid rules and more open decision making. In short, more people are involved in making decisions, their contributions are more readily recognized, and individuals feel freer to participate.

Can bureaucracies adapt to such a model? Contrary to some popular images, not all bureaucracies are unyielding, unwieldy monoliths. There is nothing in the nature of bu-

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**Liberal and Conservative Views on Social Issues**

**Diversity Training**

Some of the signs: More than half of U.S. workers are minorities, immigrants, and women. In San Jose, California, families with the Vietnamese surname Nguyen outnumber the Joneses by nearly 50 percent. Diversity in the workplace is much more than skin color. Diversity includes ethnicity, gender, age, religion, social class, and sexual orientation.

The huge successes of the women’s movement and of civil rights activism have encouraged pride in one’s heritage and made many Americans comfortable with being different from the dominant group. Consequently, people are now less amenable to **assimilation**, the process by which minorities are absorbed into the dominant culture. Assimilation involves relinquishing distinctive cultural patterns of behavior in favor of those of the dominant culture. Realizing that assimilation is probably not the wave of the future, most major companies sponsor “diversity training,” sending workers to lectures and workshops to learn to work with colleagues of diverse cultures and racial/ethnic backgrounds.

In general, liberals welcome diversity training. They see it as an effective means of coming to grips with the new reality of the workplace. As Roosevelt Thomas, president of the American Institute for Managing Diversity, says, “You don’t have to aspire to be a white male or a member of the dominant group. People are willing to be part of a team, but they won’t jump into the melting pot any more.” Consequently, say liberals, diversity training is needed so we can develop an appreciative understanding of our differences and work together to meet common goals.

Conservatives, in general, see a dark side to diversity training. They believe that it stimulates the stereotypes and divisiveness it is meant to alleviate. They point to the “blame and shame” sessions sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation, in which African Americans and whites were encouraged to exchange insults, and men were groped while running a gauntlet of women. Consequently, say conservatives, we must deemphasize group differences and instead stress the behavioral qualities that lead to success—especially responsibility and pride in one’s work. Then we can work together as a team to meet common goals.

**Sources:** Based on Thomas 1990; Piturro 1991; Sowell 1993a; Reibstein 1996.
raticies that makes them inherently insensitive to people’s needs or that prevents them from humanizing corporate culture.

But how about the cost of such changes? The United States is in intense economic competition with other nations, especially Japan and western Europe, and it would be difficult to afford costly changes. To humanize corporate culture, however, does not require huge expense. Kanter (1983) compared forty-seven companies that were rigidly bureaucratic with competitors of the same size that were more flexible. It turned out that the more flexible companies were also the more profitable—probably because their greater flexibility encouraged greater company loyalty, creativity, and productivity.

**Quality Circles**

In light of such findings, many corporations have taken steps to humanize their work settings, motivated not by any altruistic urge to make life better for their workers but by self-interest, the desire to make their organization more competitive. About two thousand U.S. companies—from the smallest to the largest—have begun to reform their work organizations. Some have developed “quality circles,” which consist of perhaps a dozen workers and a manager or two who meet regularly to try to improve the quality of both the work setting and the company’s products. Over half of these companies, however, report that quality circles have yielded few benefits. Part of the reason may be that many companies set up quality circles for reasons of publicity, not intending to take employee suggestions seriously. Disappointed with the results, companies such as Whirlpool and GE have abandoned quality circles. Each company continues to solicit ideas from its employees, however. GE now uses town hall type meetings and rewards workers with cash and stock options (Naj 1993).

**Employee Stock Ownership**

Many companies offer an opportunity for their employees to purchase the firm’s stock at a discount or as part of their salary, and about eight thousand U.S. companies are now partially owned by their employees. Because each employee typically owns only a tiny amount of stock in the company, such “ownership” is practically meaningless. In about a thousand of these companies, however, the employees own the majority of the stock. On average, companies with at least 10 percent of their stock owned by employees are more profitable than other firms, probably because the workers are more committed and managers take a longer-term view (White 1991).

One might think that employee ownership of a company’s stock would eliminate problems between workers and management. Profitability, however, not ownership, appears to be the key to reducing these problems. Unprofitable firms put more pressure on their employee-owners, creating tension between workers and managers, while profitable companies are quicker to resolve problems.

**Small Work Groups**

Pioneered in the computer industry to increase productivity and cut down on absenteeism, small work groups, or self-managed teams, are now used by one in five U.S. companies. Small work groups stimulate creative ideas and imaginative solutions to problems, and employees who work in them feel a greater sense of loyalty to the company, work harder, and reduce their absenteeism. Workers in these groups also react more quickly to
threats posed by technological change and competitors’ advances. No less a behemoth than IBM has found that people work more effectively in a small group than in a distant, centralized command structure (Larson and Dolan 1983; Drucker 1992).

Materials discussed in the last chapter help to explain these results. The small work group establishes primary relationships among its members, and workers’ identities become tied up with their group. This reduces alienation, for rather than being lost in a bureaucratic maze, here their individuality is appreciated, their contributions more readily recognized. The group’s successes become the individual’s successes—as do its failures—reflecting positively or negatively on the individual. As a consequence of their expanded personal ties, workers make more of an effort. The results have been so good that in what is known as “worker empowerment,” some self-managed teams even replace bosses in controlling everything from schedules to hiring and firing (Lublin 1991).

**Corporate Day Care**

Another way to humanize the work setting is to set up day care facilities at work. This eases the strain on parents, especially on new mothers, who are able to go to work and still keep an eye on a baby or young child. Parents are also able to spend time with their children during breaks and lunch hours. Mothers can even nurse a child at these times.

Granted global competition, can U.S. firms afford child care? Accountable to its stockholders, the Union Bank of Monterey, California, decided to measure the net cost of its day care. They found that the turnover of employees who used the center was only 2.2 percent, compared with 9.5 percent of those who did not use it. Users of the center were also absent from work almost two days a year less than the nonusers. Their maternity leaves were also shorter. The net cost? After subtracting what it cost to open the center and to run it, the bank saved over $200,000 (Solomon 1988).

A measure in between the company providing such services and offering no child care is to provide quality emergency back-up child care. Parents use their own baby-sitter, but when the sitter can’t make it, the center’s services allow the parent to get to work—and to work without worry. Such centers now operate in several cities, with staffs that hold master’s degrees in early childhood education (Nayaran 1994).

With increasing numbers of women in management, it is likely that more and more U.S. firms will offer child care services as part of a benefits package to attract and hold capable workers.

**Developing an Alternative: The Cooperative**

In the 1970s, many Americans, especially those opposed to capitalism and what they considered to be the deadening effects of bureaucracy, began to seek an alternative organizational form. They began to establish cooperatives, organizations owned by members who collectively make decisions, determine goals, evaluate resources, set salaries, and assign work tasks. These tasks are all carried out without a hierarchy of authority, for all members can participate in the decisions of the organization. Since the 1970s, about five thousand cooperatives have been established.

As sociologists Joyce Rothschild and Allen Whitt (1986) pointed out, cooperatives are not new, but were introduced into the United States during the 1840s. Cooperatives attempt to achieve some specific social good (such as lowering food prices and improving food quality) and to provide a high level of personal satisfaction for their members as they work toward that goal. Because all members can participate in decision making, cooperatives spend huge amounts of time in deciding even routine matters. The economic results of cooperatives are mixed. Many are less profitable than private organizations, others more so. A few have been so successful that they have been bought out by Wall Street firms.

**The Conflict Perspective**

Conflict theorists point out that the basic relationship between workers and owners is confrontational regardless of how the work organization is structured (Edwards 1979;
Derber and Schwartz 1988). Each walks a different path in life, the one exploiting workers to extract a greater profit, the other trying to resist that exploitation. Since their basic interests are fundamentally opposed, these critics argue, employers’ attempts to humanize the work setting (or to manage diversity) are mere window dressing, efforts to conceal their fundamental goal to exploit workers. If these efforts are not camouflage, then they are worse—attempts to manipulate workers into active cooperation in their own exploitation. This analysis does not apply to cooperatives because they are owned by the workers.

Technology and the Control of Workers

As stressed in the previous chapter, the microchip is changing our lives. Many people rejoice over the computer’s capacity to improve their quality of life. They are pleased with the quality control of manufactured goods and the reduction of drudgery. Records are much easier to keep, and we can type just one letter and let the computer print and address it to ten individuals—or to ten thousand. With ease, I can modify this sentence, this paragraph, or any section of this book.

Computers also hold the potential of severe abuse. They may allow governments to operate a police state, monitoring our every move. The Big Brother in Orwell’s classic novel, 1984, may turn out to be a computer.

Whether this happens or not, the computer certainly does allow managers to achieve much greater control over workers. Social psychologist Shoshana Zuboff (1991) reports how computers allow managers to increase surveillance without face-to-face supervision. They let managers know the number of strokes a word processor makes each minute or hour, or inform supervisors how long each telephone operator takes per call. Operators who are “underperforming” are singled out for discipline. It does not matter that the slower operators may be more polite or more helpful, only that the computer reports slower performance.

As sociologist Gary Marx (1985, 1986, 1995) says, with computers able to measure motion, air currents, vibrations, odors, pressure changes, voice stress, accompanied by video cameras that need only a pinhole for their spying eye, we may be moving to a “maximum-security” workplace. When workers at a leading hotel punch in, a device scans their eyes, comparing their retina with computerized data on file. This prevents employees from punching in one another’s time cards. A truckdriver at Safeway used to enjoy his job. He says, “No one was looking over your shoulder, and you felt like a human being.” But now he says he feels “pushed around.” A small computer in the dashboard of his truck (called, appropriately, a ‘Tripmaster) keeps track of his speed, shifting, excessive idling, and even reports when and how long he stops for lunch or a coffee break. The driver says he will retire early.

The maximum-security workplace seems an apt term for what is coming. And, as many fear, with the computer’s awesome capacities, this kind of workplace may be just one part of a “maximum-security society” (Marx 1995).

How were the Japanese able to arise from the defeat of World War II, including the nuclear destruction of two of their main cities, to become such a giant in today’s global economy? Some analysts trace part of the answer to the way in which their major corporations are organized. Let’s look at the conclusions of William Ouchi (1981), who pinpointed five major ways in which Japanese corporations differ from those in the United States.

Hiring and Promotion

In Japan, college graduates hired by a corporation are thought of as a team working toward the same goal, namely, the success of the organization. They are all paid about the
same starting salary, and they are rotated through the organization to learn its various levels. Not only do they work together as a team, but they also are promoted as a team. Team members cooperate with one another, for the welfare of one represents the welfare of all. They also develop intense loyalty to one another and to their company. Only in later years are individuals singled out for recognition. When there is an opening in the firm, outsiders are not even considered.

In the United States, an employee is hired on the basis of what the firm thinks that individual can contribute. Employees try to outperform others, regarding salary and position as a sign of success. The individual’s loyalty is to himself or herself, not to the company. When there is an opening in the firm, outsiders are considered.

Lifetime Security

In Japan lifetime security is taken for granted. Once hired, employees can expect to work for the same firm for the rest of their lives. Similarly, the firm expects them to be loyal to the company, to stick with it through good and bad times. On the one hand, employees will not be laid off or fired; on the other hand, they do not go job shopping, for their careers—and many aspects of their lives—are wrapped up in this one firm.

In the United States, lifetime security is unusual, being limited primarily to some college professors (who receive what is called tenure). A company is expected to lay off workers in slow times, and if it reorganizes it is not unusual for whole divisions to be fired. Given this context, workers “look out for number one,” and that includes job shopping and job hopping, constantly seeking better pay and opportunities elsewhere.

Almost Total Involvement

In Japan work is like a marriage: The employee and the company are committed to each other. The employee supports the company with loyalty and long hours of dedicated work, while the company, in turn, supports its workers with lifetime security, health services, recreation, sports and social events, even a home mortgage. Involvement with the company does not stop when the workers leave the building. They are likely to spend
evenings with co-workers in places of entertainment, and perhaps to be part of a company study or exercise group.

In the United States, the work relationship is assumed to be highly specific. An employee is hired to do a specific job, and employees who have done their jobs have thereby fulfilled their obligation to the company. The rest of their hours are their own. They go home to their private lives, which are highly separated from the firm.

Broad Training

In Japan, employees move from one job to another within the corporation. Not only are they not stuck doing the same thing over and over for years on end, but they gain a broader picture of the corporation and how the specific jobs they are assigned fit into the bigger picture.

In the United States, employees are expected to perform one job, to do it well, and then to be promoted upward to a job with more responsibility. Their understanding of the company is largely tied to the particular corner they occupy, and it may be difficult for them to see how their job fits into the overall picture.

Decision Making by Consensus

In Japan, decision making is a lengthy process. The Japanese think it natural that after lengthy deliberations, to which each person to be affected by a decision contributes, everyone will agree on which suggestion is superior. This process broadens decision making, allowing workers to feel that they are an essential part of the organization, not simply cogs in a giant wheel.

In the United States, whoever has responsibility for the unit in question does as much consulting with others as he or she thinks necessary and then makes the decision.

Limitations of the Model

This model of corporate life in Japan has always struck some sociologists as too idealized to accurately reflect reality. And, indeed, to peer beneath the surface gives a different view of this ideal image, as is illustrated in the Perspectives box below, with which we shall close this chapter.

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CULTURAL DIVERSITY AROUND THE WORLD

Cracks in the Corporate Façade

- The Japanese are more productive than Americans.
- The living standard of Americans has fallen behind that of the Japanese.
- All Japanese workers enjoy lifetime job security.
- The Japanese work for cheaper wages than do Americans.

What is wrong with these statements? Nothing, except that they are untrue.

In recent years, the Japanese economic behemoth seemed unstoppable. Many nations felt threatened by it, and there was even talk that Japan had lost World War II, but was winning a new, undeclared economic war. Impressed with the Japanese success, many nations, including the United States, copied parts of their economic model. A closer look, however, reveals that not everything about the Japanese corporate system is as it appears on the surface.

One element, in fact, is so unfair from the U.S. perspective that it is hard to imagine how the Japanese tolerate it. At age 60, workers are dismissed. Although early retirement may sound attractive, the problem is that retirement income does not begin until workers reach 65. Facing five years without income, these workers must depend on savings,
Chapter 7  Bureaucracy and Formal Organizations

Summary and Review

The Rationalization of Society

How did the rationalization of society come about?
Weber used the phrase rationalization of society to refer to transformation in people’s thinking and behaviors—the change from protecting time-honored ways to a concern with efficiency and practical results. Weber traced the rationalization of society to Protestant theology, which he said brought about capitalism, while Marx attributed the rationalization to capitalism itself. Pp. 168–170.

Formal Organizations and Bureaucracy

What are formal organizations?
Formal organizations are secondary groups designed to achieve specific objectives. Their dominant form is the bureaucracy, which Weber characterized as consisting of a hierarchy, a division of labor, written rules, written communications, and impersonality of positions—characteristics that allow bureaucracies to be efficient and enduring. Pp. 170–174.

What dysfunctions are associated with bureaucracies?
The dysfunctions of bureaucracies include alienation, red tape, lack of communication between units, goal displacement, and incompetence (as seen in the Peter principle). In Weber’s view, the impersonality of bureaucracies tends to produce alienation among workers—the feeling that no one cares about them and that they do not really fit in. Marx’s view of alienation is somewhat different—workers are separated from the product of their labor because they participate in only a small part of the production process. Pp. 174–177.

Voluntary Associations

What are the functions of voluntary associations?
Voluntary associations are groups made up of volunteers who organize on the basis of common interests. These associations further mutual interests, provide a sense of identity and purpose, help to govern and maintain order, mediate between the government and the individual, give training in organizational skills, help provide access to part-time, low-paying jobs, and family and friends to get by until their retirement pay kicks in.

Other cracks in the seamless surface—the image that Japan so carefully cultivated—have also become visible. It turns out that only employees of major corporations have lifetime job security, perhaps a third of Japanese workers. And Japan has found that paying the same wages to almost everyone in the same age group is costly and inefficient. Diligent but uninspired executives are compensated more by seniority than by output. Bottom-up decision making is also too slow to adjust to rapidly changing worldwide markets. Although still small by Western standards, unemployment has grown, while industrial output has fallen. Japanese labor costs have soared higher than those in the United States, while their much-vaunted productivity actually lags behind U.S. industry.

In a surprise move, Japan turned to U.S. corporations to see why they are more efficient. Flying in the face of their traditions, Japanese corporations now lay off workers and use merit pay. Toyota and Honda, for example, give bonuses to managers who meet their goals (a standard policy in the U.S. system, to be sure, but strange and innovative in Japan). And to meet the changing challenges of international markets, instead of waiting for “bottom-up” results, some managers now initiate decisions.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was Ford’s takeover of Mazda. After huge losses, Mazda creditors decided that Ford knew more about building and marketing cars than Mazda and invited them to manage the company. Just a few years earlier, the Japanese auto industry had seemed invincible.

We will have to await the results, but we know that the Japanese were remarkably successful in their initial adapting of the West’s manufacturing techniques to their culture. If they make the adjustment of this second phase as successfully, we can predict that a much leaner, meaner Japanese production machine will emerge.

The real bottom line is that we live in a global marketplace—of ideas as well as products. The likely result of global competition will be that both the West and Japan will feed off each other—the one learning greater cooperation in the production process, the other greater internal competition.

political power, and pave the way for social change. Pp. 177–179.

What is the “iron law of oligarchy”?  
Sociologist Robert Michels noted that formal organizations have a tendency to become controlled by a small group that limits leadership to its own inner circle. The dominance of a formal organization by an elite inner circle that keeps itself in power is called the iron law of oligarchy. Pp. 180–182.

Careers in Bureaucracies

How does the corporate culture affect workers?  
The term corporate culture refers to an organization’s traditions, values, and unwritten norms. Much of corporate culture, such as its hidden values, is not readily visible. Often, a self-fulfilling prophecy is at work: People who match a corporation’s hidden values are put on tracks that enhance their chance of success, while those who do not match these values are set on a course that minimizes their performance. Pp. 180–182.

Humanizing the Corporate Culture

What does it mean to humanize the work setting?  
Humanizing a work setting means to organize it in a way that develops rather than impedes human potential. Among the characteristics of more humane bureaucracies are expanded opportunities on the basis of ability and contributions rather than personal characteristics, a more even distribution of power, less rigid rules, and more open decision making. Attempts to modify bureaucracies include quality circles, small work groups, and self-management teams. Employee ownership plans give workers a greater stake in the outcomes of their work organizations. Cooperatives are an alternative to bureaucracies. Conflict theorists see attempts to humanize work as a way of manipulating workers. Pp. 182–185.

ACTIVITY

Sociology and the Internet

All URLs listed are current as of the printing of this book. URLs are often changed. Please check our Website http://www abacon.com/henslin for updates.

1. The United States government bureaucracy is one of the largest and most complex in the world. Explore a small portion of its organization by accessing the Secretary of Defense’s Web page http://www.defensemlink.mil and select “The Secretary of Defense.” On the Secretary’s page select “The Organization Chart.” Browse through the chart, looking for elements that are bureaucratic. What are the advantages of these bureaucratic features? What are the drawbacks? Can you think of any alternative ways of organizing the Department of Defense? Print the chart and bring it to class for discussion.

2. Women business owners are no longer rare. Go to the Business Women’s Network http://www.tpag.com/BWN.html and browse the site. Look at the issues raised, problems noted, and suggested solutions. Do women business owners face special difficulties not faced by men? Discuss.

3. Examine the Alzheimer’s Web Page http://www.alz.org/  
What kind of group is represented here? Is this a voluntary organization? How do you know? What are some of the functions of the organization? Does this association fulfill any of the four additional functions identified by sociologist David Sills and discussed in your text? After reading some of the Web pages, why do you think people would join this group?

4. Are sororities and fraternities formal organizations or bureaucracies? Examine the following Greek organizations and discuss whether the organizations contain the essential characteristics of bureaucracies identified by Weber. When you think of bureaucracies, do you normally think of sororities and fraternities? Do you see a difference in the organizational structure of social, professional, or service fraternities/sororities? Explain the differences and similarities in the organizational setup of the three listed below. Were you surprised by your results?

- http://www.deltagamma.org/ Delta Gamma (Social)
- http://www.bap.org Beta Alpha Psi (Professional)
- http://dolphin.upenn.edu/~phispi/ Phi Sigma Pi (Service)