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Control in Organizations: Individual Adjustment and Organizational Performance

This analysis focuses upon the control aspects of organizations. Organizations are characterized as orderly arrangements of individual human interactions, in which control is an essential ingredient. A major assumption is that the total amount of control or influence in an organization is not a constant, fixed amount but that it may vary. Increasing the influence of one group (e.g., the workers) in an organization does not necessarily imply decreasing that of others (e.g., supervisors and managers). Some evidence is presented to suggest that increased control exercised by all levels of the organization hierarchy is associated with increased organizational effectiveness. A relatively high level of total control may reflect increased participation and mutual influence throughout the organization and a greater degree of integration of all members. This is likely to result in the enhancement of ego-involvement, identification, motivation, and job satisfaction of members. Some of the psychological costs of increased control and responsibility on the part of workers and management are noted.

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MAN'S life in contemporary society can be characterized largely as one of organizational memberships. Man commits a major portion of his waking hours to participation in at least one—and more often several—social organizations. His motivation, aspirations, his gen-

eral way of life, are tied inextricably to the organizations of which he is a part—and even to some of which he is not.

Organizations are of vital interest to the sociologist and the psychologist because one finds within them an important juncture between the individual and the collectivity. Out of this juncture comes much in our pattern of living that has been the subject of both eulogy and derogation. That man derives a great deal from organizational membership leaves little to be argued; that he often pays heavily for the benefits of organizational membership seems an argument equally compelling. At the heart of this exchange lies the process of control.

Characterizing an organization in terms of its patterns of control is to describe an essential and universal aspect of organization, an aspect of organizational environment which every member must face and to which he must adjust. Organization implies control. A social organization is an ordered arrangement of individual human interactions. Control processes help circumscribe idiosyncratic behaviors and keep them conformant with the rational plan of the organization. Organizations require a certain amount of conformity as well as the integration of diverse activities. It is the function of control to bring about conformance to organizational requirements and achievement of the ultimate goals of the organization. The co-ordination and order created out of the diverse interests and potentially diffuse behaviors of members is largely a function of control. It is at this point that many of the problems of organizational functioning and of individual adjustment arise.

Control is an inevitable correlate of organization. But it is more than this. It is concerned with aspects of social life that are of the utmost importance to all persons. It is concerned with the questions of choice and freedom, with individual expression, with problems of the common will and the common weal. It is related not only to what goes on within the organization but also with what the organization does in its external relations. It touches on the questions of democracy and autocracy, centralization and decentralization, “flat” and “tall” organizational structures, close versus general supervision, workers’ councils and joint management.

The problems of control and conformity in organizations contribute to a serious dilemma. Organization provides order—a condition necessary for man to produce abundantly and live securely. Abundance and security in turn create opportunities and choice—conditions which form the basis for human freedom. Yet social order itself requires conformity and imposes limitations. Furthermore, the responsibility for creating and sustaining order tends to be distributed unevenly within organizations. Often it is the few who decide about the kind of order to which the many must conform. But regardless of how order is created, it requires the conformity of all or nearly all to organizational norms.

The magnitude of this problem as it applies to our economic institutions has been indicated by Berle and Means:

To the dozen or so men who are in control there is room for . . . [individual] initiative. For the tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of workers and of owners in a single enterprise, [individual] initiative no longer exists. Their activity is group activity on a scale so large that the individual, except he be in a position of control, has dropped into relative insignificance.¹

And the *trend*, according to Barnard, is in the direction of greater concentration of control in the hands of fewer persons:

There has been a greater and greater acceleration of centralization in this country, not merely in government, and not merely in the organization of great corporations, but also a great concentration on the part of labor unions and other organizations. There has been a social disintegration going along with this material development, and this formulation of organized activities implies payment of a price, the amount of which we are not yet able to assess.²

This, perhaps, is one of the most crucial problems of social morality which we face in the age of massive organization, although the problem is not an entirely new one. We see it in Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Whyte's *Organization Man*. And social and administrative scientists have become increasingly interested in

¹A. A. Berle, Jr., and G. C. Means, "The Control of the Modern Corporation," in R. Merton *et. al.*, eds., *Reader in Bureaucracy* (Glencoe, 1952).

²C. I. Barnard, *Organization and Management*, as quoted in *Harvard Business Review*, 29 (1951), 70.

this question, as indicated by the work by F. Allport, Argyris, Likert, McGregor, and Worthy. As a result, social researchers have applied themselves to the study of the problems of control, individual adjustment, and organizational performance, and a body of facts and hypotheses is growing. We would like to review some of these, drawing heavily upon the work done at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.³

SOME DEFINITIONS

Control has been variously defined, and different terms (e.g., power, authority, influence) are sometimes used synonymously with it. Its original application in business organizations derives from the French usage meaning to check. It is now commonly used in a broader and perhaps looser sense synonymously with the notions of influence, authority, and power. We shall use it here in this broader way to refer to any process in which a person or group of persons or organization of persons determines, i.e., intentionally affects, what another person or group or organization will do.

Control, of course, may operate very specifically, as, for example, a foreman's specifying how a subordinate will do a particular job. Or it may operate more generally, as, for example, the determination of organizational policies or actions. Control may be mutual, individuals in a group each having some control over what others will do; or it may be unilateral, one individual controlling and the others controlled. We ascribe power to an individual to the extent that he is in a position to exercise control. Authority refers to the right to exercise control. If by freedom we mean the extent to which an individual determines his own behavior, being controlled can be seen in general to relate inversely to freedom. The more an individual's behavior is determined by others (i.e., is controlled), the less an individual is free to determine his own course of action.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL ADJUSTMENT

The elementary importance of control to people can be seen in the fact that every act of control has two implications: pragmatic and symbolic. Pragmatically, control implies something about *what* an individual must or must not do, the restriction to which he is subject, and the areas of choice or freedom which he has—whether, for example, a worker is transferred to a new machine or stays on the old, whether he is classified into a \$1.75 or a \$2.00 wage category, whether he is free to talk, smoke, rest, slow down, or speed up while on the job. These pragmatic implications are often of vital importance to the controlled individual as well as to the individual exercising power.

Control also has a special psychological meaning or significance to the individuals involved. It may imply superiority, inferiority, dominance, submission, guidance, help, criticism, reprimand. It may imply (as some students of control argue) something about the manliness and virility of the individuals involved. The exercise of control, in other words, is charged emotionally.⁴

Emotional reactions to control may be explained, in part, by the predispositions which individuals develop early in life to types of authority relations. The infant's behavior is controlled by persons upon whom he is highly dependent, and the process of socialization involves the imposition of controls by parents, teachers, and other authority figures. In the development of a pattern of responses to control during this process of socialization, control takes on emotional meaning.

A great deal of research has been done regarding predisposition to varying patterns of control. Tests have been devised, for example, to measure authoritarianism, egalitarianism, need for independence, need for power. Research employing some of these

⁴The criticism which labor groups have sometimes hurled at human relations research in industry is in large measure a criticism concerning the emphasis which this research has placed on the psychological or symbolic rather than the pragmatic aspect of control. The human relations approach, the argument goes, is not so much concerned with *what* decisions are made by management nor with the implications of these decisions for the welfare of the workers, but rather with *how* these decisions might be conveyed to workers so as to facilitate their acceptance. See, for example, Deep Therapy on the Assembly Line, *Ammunition*, 7 (1949), 47-51.

measures suggests that individuals' reactions to patterns of organizational control may differ according to personality.

This is illustrated by an experiment in a large clerical organization in which about two hundred female clerks were given greater responsibility to make decisions about some of the rules that affected their work groups. They were able to make decisions affecting work assignments, vacation schedules, length of recess, overtime, and other matters. These decisions previously had been made by persons at higher levels. Most of the clerks reacted favorably to this experimental program. A small number, however, did not. Among these were a relatively high proportion of clerks whose personalities were not suited to the type of authority relations brought into play by this experimental program. These preferred to be submissive, depend on others, obey rules, and follow directions.⁵ Similar results were found among male workers in an industrial service organization. Workers who received low scores on measures of authoritarianism were more likely to react favorably to supervisors who were judged to use participative methods (asking workers' advice, trying to involve them in decision making) than workers with high scores. Furthermore for workers with low scores, those who judged their supervisors to use participative methods were generally higher in productivity than those who did not judge their supervisors so.⁶

Preferences for different kinds of authority relations may develop out of early childhood experiences. They may also represent reactions to certain contemporaneous circumstances. Research on the authoritarian personality, for example, suggests that individuals who suffer anxiety because of a failure in their work may tend to prefer more structured authority relations. A study of high-producing and low-producing insurance salesmen suggests the tenability of this idea. Productivity varied widely for these agents. An agent might show high productivity during one period and

⁵A. S. Tannenbaum, *One Man's Meat*, *Adult Leadership*, 3 (1955), 22-23; A. S. Tannenbaum and F. H. Allport, *Personality Structure and Group Structure: An Interpretative Study of Their Relationship through an Event-Structure Hypothesis*, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58 (1956), 272-280.

⁶V. Vroom, *Some Personality Determinants of the Effects of Participation* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1960).

low productivity during another. Those who were low producers tended to suffer some anxiety. They also indicated "a desire for interpersonal interaction where the status of a man's position was the basis for communication, where orders were to go through 'the chain of command,' where decisions 'must be made by the District Manager,' and where 'those in control' of the situation were to act 'aloof,' and/or 'be friendly but not too intimate.'⁷ The more successful, less threatened salesmen preferred more permissive, informal authority relations—no communication barriers because of status and no reporting through the chain of command.

Emotional reactions to authority relations may develop because authority, control, or power represents, as we have pointed out, an important social symbol. Power, for example, is often understood as synonymous with prestige, status, social eminence, or superiority. Indeed, it is often correlated with these criteria of success. Persons obviously are perceived and treated differently according to their power. The man with power is often looked up to and treated with respect. Equally important, individuals can be expected to evaluate themselves in this way. An individual's self-concept is very likely affected by his power in the organizations and other social situations in which he takes part. The emotional effects of authority, as they bear on the way organization members may perceive authority and nonauthority figures, is illustrated by an experiment in which Navy recruits described the physical appearances of men, some of whom wore first-class petty officer's uniforms and others of whom wore recruit uniforms. The men being judged as petty officers and those being judged as recruits were well matched in physical appearance. Differences existed, however, in their uniforms—the kind and number of stripes on their arms and whether or not they wore canvas leggings. The recruits viewed these persons through a series of lenses which distorted their appearance in varying degrees. However, a greater tendency to resist this distortion occurred in the perception of the "petty officer." Rank may create an emotional set which affects how the men holding this rank appear to those who do not.⁸

⁷L. G. Wispe and K. E. Lloyd, Some Situational and Psychological Determinants of the Desire for Structured Interpersonal Relations, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 51 (1955), 57-60.

⁸W. J. Wittreich and K. B. Radcliffe, Jr., Differences in the Perception of an

While individual differences may exist in preferences for types of authority relations, organization members generally prefer exercising influence to being powerless. Studies repeatedly show that workers and supervisors are much more likely to feel that they have too little authority in their work than too much. It is the rare individual indeed who thinks he has too much. Several thousands of workers in a large number of organizations (including one Norwegian factory) were asked to describe how much control various groups in their work places exercised and how much they *should* exercise. In all the organizations studied the "average" worker reported, as might be expected, that managerial personnel exercised more control than did the workers as a group. In response to another question, workers reported that managerial groups *should* exercise more control than the workers. However, in 98 per cent of these organizations, workers felt that the workers did not have as much control as they should.⁹ It is interesting to contrast these results with responses to the same questions addressed to supervisory personnel. None of the supervisory groups questioned felt that *workers* should exercise more control than they did.

For whatever reasons, power is desired. This desirability may be attributed to the gratification which individuals may derive simply by knowing that they are in control—from the psychological satisfactions which come from exercising control. Or it may derive from the pragmatic implications of power—being able to affect the work situation in ways favorable to one's personal interests, as the individual sees them.

A concern for the rewards which accompany power results in a serious oversimplification, however, unless one considers also some of the correlates of power which are sources of serious tension and frustration. Among these are the added feelings of responsibility for, commitment to, and effort on behalf of the organization. Power can be an important stimulant, pushing the individual

Authority Figure and a Non-Authority Figure by Navy Recruits, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 53 (1956), 383-384.

⁹In the Norwegian plant the question was phrased in terms of control over the setting of piece-rate standards. Not only did the workers indicate that they should exercise more control than they did, but that they should exercise more control than managerial groups.

toward a greater and greater share of the work load of the organization. Furthermore, in so far as control may imply weighty decisions, decisions affecting the welfare of people as well as the destiny of the organization itself, exercising control can be burdensome.

Individuals who are not able to exercise control are, in general, less satisfied with their work situations than those who have some power, but their dissatisfaction often has the quality of apathy and disinvolvement. For the individual in control, added dimensions of personality come into play contributing to the energies which he puts into his work and to the problems he may encounter. The man who exercises control gives more of himself to the organization. He is likely to be more identified, more loyal, more active, on behalf of the organization. A recent national survey suggests that individuals in positions of control and responsibility in industrial and business organizations are more "ego involved" in their work. Managerial personnel, for example, derive not only greater satisfactions from their jobs, but also greater frustrations.¹⁰ The responsibility which devolves upon persons in control creates a sense of personal involvement and concern over the success or failure of the decisions made. These individuals have a personal stake in the outcome of decisions taken. This can be a satisfying, even an exhilarating experience, but it can also lead to sleepless nights.

This mixed blessing which power sometimes represents is illustrated by the experiment in the large clerical organization described in which about two hundred clerks were given greater responsibility to make decisions about their work conditions. In general, morale increased as a result of the change in control. Clerks felt more satisfied with the company, with supervision, with their work in general. They were, in large measure, favorable toward the increased control which they were able to exercise. Despite the general increase in satisfaction, however, the clerks felt less of a sense of accomplishment at the end of the work day. They were also less satisfied with their present level in the organization (see Table 1). In acquiring an increased feeling of responsibility for the work through the added control which they were

¹⁰G. Gurin, J. Veroff, and Sheila Feld, *Americans View Their Mental Health: A Nationwide Interview Study* (New York, 1960).

Table 1. Changes in clerk's attitudes following delegation of control to clerks in work groups.

Clerk's job attitudes	Mean changes in attitudes*
Feeling of responsibility for getting work done on time	+ .15
Feeling of self-actualization	+ .14
Average satisfaction with supervisor	+ .15
Satisfaction with company	+ .17
Satisfaction with control	+ .35
Satisfaction with accomplishment at end of work day	- .27
Clerk's satisfaction with her present level in company	- .42

*All of the differences are statistically significant at the .05 level or better.

able to exercise, the clerks no doubt developed standards of achievement which were harder to satisfy.

A similar result was found in a study by Mann and Hoffman comparing a newly automated electrical power plant with a less highly automated one.¹¹ Workers in the new plant exercised more control and experienced greater responsibility than those in the older plant, according to the responses of the workers in the two plants. The men in the new plant made important decisions about the work and had significant influence on their supervisors concerning their work place. They also reported greater satisfaction with their immediate supervisor, with the amount of information they received about plant operations, and with plant management in general. Despite this generally heightened state of morale, however, workers in the newly automated plant more often reported that their work made them feel "jumpy" or nervous and that they were tense and on edge when equipment was being started up or shut down. (Yet workers in the *old* plant reported slightly more danger in their work.) These may be some of the costs to the workers of their increased power and responsibility.

Certain kinds of psychosomatic ailments are known to be relatively frequent among individuals in positions of control and responsibility in organizations. Research in this country and

¹¹F. C. Mann and L. R. Hoffman, *Automation and the Worker: A Study of Social Change in Power Plants* (New York, 1960).

abroad provides added documentation for this generally recognized fact. French reported a greater prevalence of psychosomatic disorders of varying kinds among supervisors than among workers in a large Midwest plant.¹² Vertin found the frequency of ulcers increases at ascending levels of the hierarchy in a large Dutch company.¹³ "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," always seemed to make good sense. To the extent that power and responsibility are distributed widely among organization members, however, a number of heads may lie uneasy.

CONTROL AND PERFORMANCE

Variations in control patterns within organizations have important—and in some cases quite predictable—effects on the reactions, satisfactions and frustrations, feelings of tension, self-actualization, or well-being of members. They also have implications for the performance of the work group and for the organization as a whole.

This can be seen in the plight of the first-line supervisor who sometimes finds himself in the anomalous position of being a leader without power. The first-line supervisor is often referred to as the man in the middle. He is often caught, as an innocent bystander, in a serious cross fire. In effect he may be a messenger transmitting orders from above. On the one hand, he must bear the brunt of resistance and expressed grievances from below and, on the other, must suffer criticism from above for the failure of his subordinates to conform to expectations. The seriousness of this situation is compounded by the fact that orders coming from above are often formed without the advantage of adequate knowledge of conditions at lower levels. The powerless supervisor lacks effective means of gaining the confidence of his men, of understanding their views, and of transmitting this important intelligence up the hierarchy. The orders which he is responsible for relaying, then, are often the least likely to gain full acceptance, thus making his position all the more untenable and that of his subordinates all the more difficult. The powerless leader can do

¹²J. R. P. French, Jr., *The Effects of the Industrial Environment on Mental Health: A Theoretical Approach*, (paper presented at the meetings of the American Psychological Association, 1960).

¹³French, *op. cit.*

little in the hierarchy on behalf of his subordinates or himself and is relatively helpless in the face of many serious problems which confront him and his work group. This is illustrated by the research of Pelz, who shows that unless the supervisor is influential with his own superiors, "good" supervisory practice on his part is not likely to make much difference to subordinates. Subordinates are more likely to react favorably to "good" and adversely to "bad" supervisory practices *if* the supervisor is influential in the company.¹⁴

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CONTROL IN AN ORGANIZATION

Many administrators seem to face a serious problem in their understanding of supervisory-subordinate relations. They often assume that the amount of control exercised by members of a group or organization is a fixed quantity and that increasing the power of one individual automatically decreases that of others. There is good reason, however, to question this conclusion. The total amount of control exercised in a group or organization can increase, and the various participants can acquire a share of this augmented power. Conversely, the total amount of control may decrease, and all may share the loss. This is illustrated in everyday social situations—friendships, marital relations, as well as supervisory-subordinate interactions. One can easily picture the *laissez-faire* leader who exercises little control over his subordinates and who may at the same time be indifferent to their wishes. He neither influences nor is influenced by his men. A second supervisor interacts and communicates often, welcomes opinions, and elicits influence attempts. Suggestions which subordinates offer make a difference to him and his subordinates are responsive, in turn, to his requests. To the extent that this may contribute to effective performance—and we have reason to believe that it does if the supervisor also has influence with his manager—the group itself will be more powerful or influential. The manager under these circumstances is more likely to delegate additional areas of decision making to the group, and he, in turn, will respect and

¹⁴D. C. Pelz, *Influence: A Key to Effective Leadership in the First-Line Supervisor, Personnel*, 29 (1952), 3-11.

be responsive to the group's decisions. To the extent that the organizational hierarchy, from top to bottom, is characterized in these terms, we have a more highly integrated, tightly knit social system. We have, in the terms of Rensis Likert, a more substantial "interaction-influence system."¹⁵

The importance of the notion of "total amount of control" and of the "interaction-influence system" is illustrated in an analysis by Likert of data collected in thirty-one geographically separated departments of a large industrial service organization.¹⁶ Each of the departments did essentially the same work, and careful records of department productivity were kept by the company. Nonsupervisory employees were asked the following question in a written questionnaire: "In general, how much say or influence do you feel each of the following groups has on what goes on in your department?" Answers were checked on a five-point scale from "little or no influence" to "a very great deal of influence." Employees answered this question relative to the following groups within their departments: the department manager, the supervisors, the men. Likert then divided the 31 departments into three groups according to their level of productivity. Figure 1 shows the average responses of the departments to the question for the third highest in productivity and for the third lowest in productivity.

According to these employees, not only did they have more influence as a group within the high-producing departments, but so did the supervisors and managers. Likert's analysis of these departments suggests that the social systems differed in the high- and low-producing departments. The former was characterized by a higher total amount of control, by a greater degree of mutual influence. "The high-performing managers have actually increased the size of the 'influence pie' by means of the leadership processes which they use. They listen more to their men, are more interested in their men's ideas, and have more confidence and trust in their men."¹⁷ There was a greater give-and-take and supportiveness by superiors, a higher level of effective communication upward, downward, and sideward. This all contributed to a great-

¹⁵R. Likert, *New Patterns of Management* (New York, 1961).

¹⁶R. Likert, "Influence and National Sovereignty," in J. G. Peatman and E. L. Hartley, eds., *Festschrift for Gardner Murphy* (New York, 1960).

¹⁷*Ibid.*

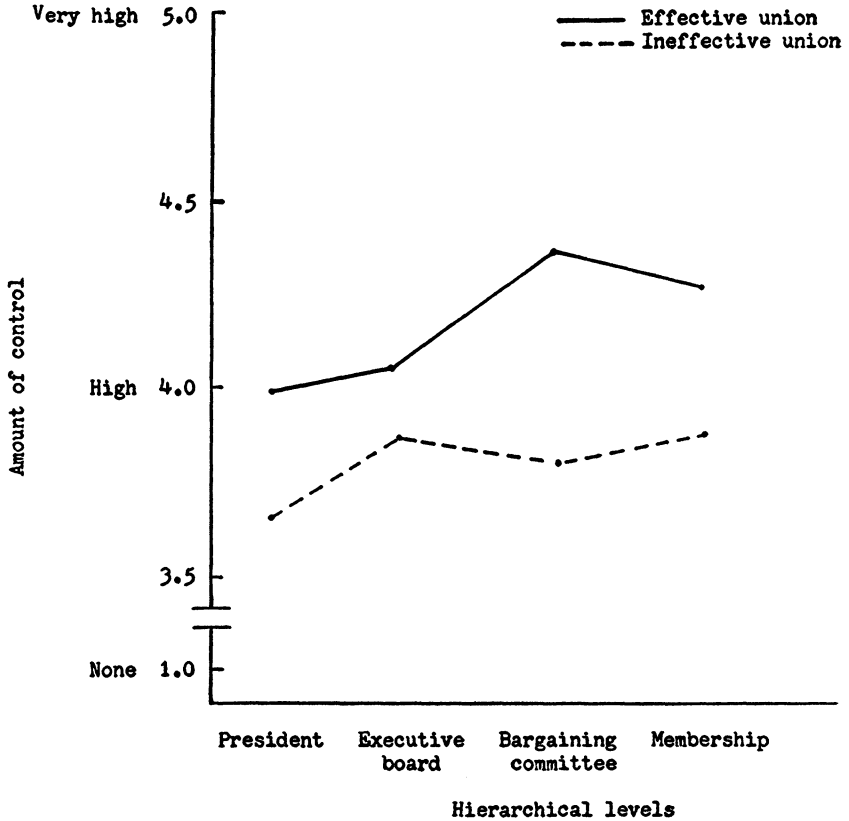


Figure 1. Control curves of high- and low-producing departments.

er sensitivity and receptivity on the part of each organization member to the influence of others—superiors relative to subordinates and subordinates relative to superiors. There was in all cases a higher level of mutual influence and control and a more likely integration of the interests of workers, supervisors, and managers. Under these circumstances, the high level of influence among workers was not a threat to managerial personnel. On the contrary, it was part of a process leading to more effective organizational performance.¹⁸

It is interesting to see that similar findings occur in several other types of organizations. In a study of four labor unions, for exam-

¹⁸*Ibid.*

ple, we found that the two more effective, active, and powerful unions had the highest total amount of control exercised by members and officers.¹⁹ The most powerful of the four unions had a relatively influential membership—but the leaders (the president, executive board, and bargaining committee) were by no means uninfluential. In this union, members and leaders were relatively more active. They attended more meetings, took part in discussions at meetings, communicated informally about union affairs, and heard and considered the feelings and ideas of others. Members and leaders influenced each other and in the process created effective concerted action. This union “keeps management on its toes” as the personnel manager at the plant philosophically pointed out. In the least effective union, however, the members were relatively uninfluential in union affairs, and so were the leaders. A kind of laissez-faire atmosphere prevailed. Members were not integrated and not tied together by bonds of interaction and influence. They were not really part of an organized system. The ineffectiveness of this union was illustrated by the comments of a union field representative: “If the company wanted to take advantage, they could make the people live hard here.” An old-timer of the local expressed his disillusionment: “We feel that it is not what it used to be. . . . Nothing happens to grievances. You can’t find out what happens to them—they get lost. . . . The [bargaining] committee doesn’t fight anymore.” The differences between the most powerful and least powerful union in their distributions of control as reported by members is shown in Figure 2. Although the wording of the question in this study is somewhat different from that of the industrial service organization study discussed, the implications are very similar.²⁰

Mann and Hoffman applied a similar methodology in studying some of the effects of automation in a power plant. They illustrated, through a comparison of a new, highly automated plant

¹⁹A. S. Tannenbaum and R. L. Kahn, *Participation in Union Locals* (Evanston, Ill., 1958); A. S. Tannenbaum, Control Structure and Union Functions, *American Journal of Sociology*, 61 (1956), 536–545.

²⁰Question in union study: “In general, how much do you think the president [membership, plant bargaining committee, executive board] has to say about how things are decided in this local?” Responses ranged on a five-point scale from “a great deal of say” to “no say at all.”

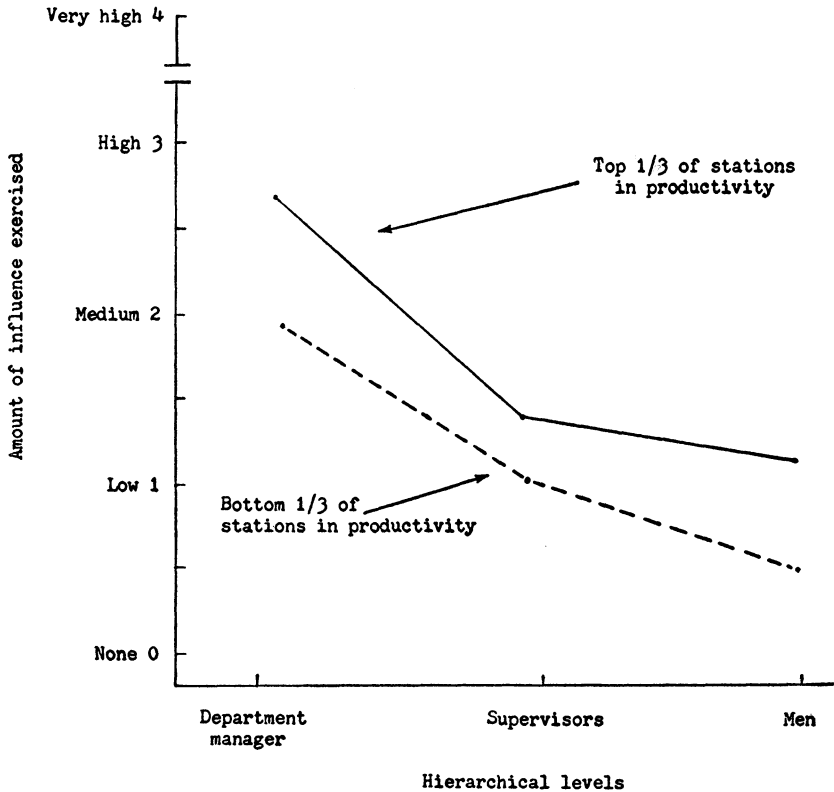


Figure 2. Control curves of effective and ineffective unions. (From A. S. Tannenbaum and R. L. Kahn, *Participation in Union Locals* [Evanston, Ill., 1958], p. 162.)

with an older, less automated one, how changes in technology might affect the social structure of a plant, including its patterns of control, worker responsibility, and level of morale.²¹ Fewer employees operated the new plant, although the ratio of non-supervisory to supervisory personnel was about the same. The jobs in the new plant required more knowledge and responsibility of the workers, and, as Table 2 illustrates, the patterns of control in the two plants differed too. According to the workers (and the supervisors were in essential agreement), the new plant was characterized by more control than the old.

²¹Mann and Hoffman, *op. cit.*

Table 2. Amount of influence exercised by three levels as perceived by the men in two plants.*

Level	Old plant	New plant
Men	2.64	3.12†
Foremen	2.42	3.51†
Front office	4.56	4.48

*F. C. Mann and L. R. Hoffman, *Automation and the Worker: A Study of Social Change in Power Plants* (New York, 1960), p. 57; by permission of the publisher, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. The following questions were employed:

Question: "In general, how much do you and the other men of your work group have to say about how things are done?"

Responses: 5—"Our foreman gives us a great deal of say in how things are done." ... 1—"Our foreman gives us hardly any say at all in how things are done."

Question: "In general, how much do you think the foremen have to say about how things are done in this plant?"

Responses: 5—"They have a great deal of say." ... 1—"They have very little or no say at all."

Question: "In general, how much say do you think the men in the front office of this plant have in how things are done in this plant?"

Responses: 5—"They have a great deal of say in how things are done in this plant." ... 1—"They have very little or no say at all in how things are done in this plant."

†Differences significant beyond the .001 level of confidence.

The difference between the plants is particularly interesting at the foreman level. In the new plant, foremen were judged to have more influence than the men; in the old, less. Nor was the more powerful supervisor considered a threat to the workers in the new plant. Despite—or should we say, because of—the greater influence of foremen together with that of the men, the men reported less often that their foremen treated them like inferiors, that he was a "driver" of men, that he was "bossy," or that he said one thing and did another. They reported more often that the foreman tried to get ideas from the work group, that he was a warm and friendly person, that he would "go to bat" for the men, and that he was a "leader" of men. When all the responses are taken into consideration, 66 per cent of the men in the new plant and 36 in the old report that they are very satisfied with their immediate supervisor. The new plant is a more tightly integrated social (as well as physical) system. Workers feel more a part of a

work group and feel free to call on others in the work group for help with job problems. There is a higher degree of interdependence between foremen and men and to some extent among the men themselves. The foremen in the plant have more influence than their counterparts in the old—and so do the men.

Results from an unpublished study of forty insurance agencies show the same direction. D. Bowers and S. Seashore compared twenty insurance agencies high in sales volume with twenty agencies low in volume. In the high-producing agencies, the general agents, the district agents, and the sales agents as a group were all reported to have more influence in their agencies than were their counterparts in the low-producing agencies.

The clerical experiment discussed previously yielded similar results. The increased control which the clerks reported was not accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the control attributed to supervisory and managerial personnel. The total amount of control reported by clerks increased, accompanied by a more effective social system. Not only did morale increase in this group, but so did motivation and productivity.²²

Interestingly, the kinds of relationships suggested by these data apply in a voluntary organization too, as indicated by research in over one hundred geographically separate local Leagues of Women Voters.²³ The effectiveness of each local league was rated by a group of judges in the national office, and a sample of the members and leaders in each was then asked several questions relating to control within their organizations. The results indicate that members in effective leagues exercised more control than did their counterparts in ineffective leagues, but leaders did not exercise less. A greater total amount of control was ascribed to effective leagues than to ineffective ones.

²²Productivity also increased in a contrasting experimental group within the company under conditions of lowering the amount of control exercised by clerks. Here, however, clerk morale, loyalty, and motivation decreased. Considerable tension was felt in this group, and it gave the appearance of high instability. There is serious doubt that this type of system could sustain itself as well as the other for an extended period under conditions which prevail in American society. See R. Likert, *Measuring Organizational Performance*, *Harvard Business Review*, 36 (1958), 41–50, and *New Patterns of Management* (New York, 1961), chs. v, vi.

²³A. S. Tannenbaum, *Control and Effectiveness in a Voluntary Organization*, *American Journal of Sociology*, 67 (1961), 33–47.

While these results from a variety of organizations seem to suggest an important hypothesis connecting the total amount of control and organizational performance, our research findings are not completely consistent on this point. A recent study of thirty automobile dealerships, for example, did not reveal any relationship between criteria of effectiveness (including growth in sales during the past year) and the total amount of control within the dealership as reported by salesmen. The automobile sales agency may present a somewhat different social structure in which "individual enterprise" and competitive behavior among salesmen is more at a premium. We do not know what the effect would be if agencies were structured more like the typical business organization with greater emphasis on co-ordination and co-operative effort. The total amount of control might be greater under these conditions, and this variable might prove, under these circumstances, to have important implications for effective performance.

CONCLUSION

American management is dollar cost conscious. Many managers are also aware of the costs of organized productive effort which cannot be calculated immediately in terms of dollars and cents. These are the human costs of organization, costs paid by members and ultimately by society as a whole. Nor are they to be calculated simply in terms of the dissatisfactions which industrial man faces. They may be paid in terms of the shaping of his very personality. The evidence on this is not very clear, but we have reason to believe that adult personality may change as a result of persistent conditions in the environment. The nature of man's experiences in an organization can affect his general mentality and outlook on life. In the clerical experiment described above we saw evidence of slight changes in personality after a year's exposure of clerks to different patterns of control. These changes were in the direction of increasing the "fit" between the worker's personality and the nature of the control structure.²⁴ Notorious "brain washing" methods represent the ultimate in the process of institution-

²⁴A. S. Tannenbaum, Personality Change as a Result of an Experimental Change of Environmental Conditions, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 55 (1957), 404-406.

alized personality change, and we see illustrated in the fiction of Orwell and Huxley the psychological bludgeoning of individual personality into a perfect fit to the institutions of a "hypothetical" society of the future. As Huxley puts it, "Round pegs in square holes tend to have dangerous thoughts about the social system and to infect others with their discontent."²⁵ Organizations cannot often tolerate deviants, and there are pressures, sometimes subtle, on deviants to change.

Organizations in a democratic society present a seeming dilemma. As Geoffrey Vickers puts it,

We are forever oscillating between two alternatives which seem mutually exclusive—on the one hand, collective efficiency won at the price of individual freedom; on the other, individual freedom equally frustrated by collective anarchy. Those who believe in a middle way which is more than a compromise do so in the faith that human beings are capable or can become capable of social organization which is both individually satisfying and collectively effective; and they have plenty of evidence for their faith. On the other hand, our knowledge of the laws involved is still rudimentary.²⁶

Middle ways are sprouting up around the globe today. The work council systems in Yugoslavia, in Germany, France, Belgium, England, though differing radically in character and effectiveness are, within their respective cultures, experiments in the middle way. We have our Scanlon plans, profit-sharing and suggestion schemes, as well as varying degrees of participative management. However, our knowledge of the effects of these systems is, as Vickers says, rudimentary.

If the clues provided by our research so far are substantiated, the middle way will have to take into account the important facts about control: how control is distributed within an organization, and how much it all amounts to. Patterns of control—as they are perceived by organization members, at least—are tied significantly to the performance of the organization and to the adjustments and satisfactions of members. If our research leads are correct, the more significant improvements in the human side of enterprise

²⁵A. Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York, 1953), p. xvi.

²⁶"Control Stability and Choice," reprinted in *General Systems, Yearbook of the Society for General Systems*, 2 (1957), 1-8.

are going to come through changes in the way organizations are controlled, and particularly through changes in the size of the "influence pie." This middle way leans on the assumption that influential workers do not imply uninfluential supervisors or managers. This is a relatively novel assumption for many managers who have been weaned on the all-or-none law of power: one either leads or is lead, is strong or is weak, controls or is controlled. Disraeli was no less influential a leader, however, for having questioned this when he said, "I follow the people. Am I not their leader?" And, managers who in their behavior question the all-or-none principle do not seem less influential for it.

Our middle way assumes further that the worker, or supervisor, or manager, who exercises some influence over matters of interest to him in the work situation, acquires a sense of self-respect which the powerless individual may lack. He can also elicit the respect and high regard of others. This is the key to good human relations. Supervisory training alone cannot achieve this any more than good intentions in bad organization can achieve it. The pattern of control in an organization, however, has a direct and profound effect on the organization's human relations climate. Workers who have some sense of control in the organizations we have studied, are, in general, more, not less, positively disposed toward their supervisors and managers. And their managers are more positively disposed toward them.

We assume further, with some support from research, that increasing and distributing the exercise of control more broadly in an organization helps to distribute an important sense of involvement in the organization. Members become more ego involved. Aspects of personality which ordinarily do not find expression now contribute to the motivation of the members. The organization provides members with a fuller ranger of experiences. In doing this, however, it creates its own dilemmas, similar in some respects to those described by Vickers.

A first dilemma concerns the increased control to which the influential organization members may become subject. While he controls more, he is not controlled less. The loyalty and identification which he feels for the organization lead him to accept organizational requirements and to conform to organizational

norms which he might not otherwise do. We find evidence of this in the behavior of members of the effective union with high total control. Their behaviors were more uniform than were those of members in the ineffective laissez-faire union.²⁷ Norms and pressures toward conformity existed in the effective union which were lacking in the ineffective one. Members in the effective union pay for the increased control which they exercise (and for the effectiveness of their organization) not only in terms of the greater effort that they put into union activities, but also by their greater sensitivity and accession to controls within the union. An analysis in the thirty-one departments of the industrial service organization described revealed a similar phenomenon. Norms, measured in terms of uniformity in the behavior of workers, were more apparent in the departments having high total control than in those having low control. In these "better" departments, influence by the men as a group was greater, morale was more favorable, productive effort was higher, and so was uniformity.²⁸ The exercise of control did not spare the controller from being controlled. The contrary may be true in effective organizations with high total control, where influence tends to be reciprocal.

A second dilemma arises out of the increased involvement and motivation that are likely to accompany the exercise of control. While we see greater opportunity for human satisfaction in the middle way, the result is not simple felicity. Whenever man is highly motivated he may experience the pangs of failure, as well as the joys of success. He will know some of the satisfactions which come from a challenge met and a responsibility fulfilled. He may also feel frustration from the development of goals which are not easily reached.

²⁷Tannenbaum and Kahn, *op. cit.*; Tannenbaum, Control Structure and Union Functions.

²⁸C. G. Smith, O. Ari, and A. S. Tannenbaum, The Relationship of Patterns of Control to Norms in a Service Organization (unpublished report, 1962).