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### Commentary

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## COMMENTARY

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These comments on Churchman and Schainblatt's "The Researcher and the Manager: a Dialectic of Implementation" attempt to expand the discussion in their basic paper in two directions. One expansion is more theoretical in content; the other adds a brief practical note. In the first place, we will examine relations between their four categories of "implementation" and social science theory regarding four organizational processes that have affected the structure and functioning of modern business corporations. In the second place, however, we will briefly focus attention on some practical considerations in the "mutual understanding" solution to the implementation problem. I hope that these comments will help to demonstrate both the theoretical relevance of Churchman and Schainblatt's concepts and the need for further research to make them more useful in the task of research implementation.

Considering research activities (whether these include "operations research," "social sciences," "physical sciences," "management sciences," or other scientific categories) and managerial activities as *separate functions* is an integral part of the process of *bureaucratization*, which has affected modern business corporations to a considerable degree. Max Weber and the theorists of bureaucratization who have followed him have recognized that bureaucratization means, among other things, compartmentalization.<sup>1</sup> In some of my own past studies, I have noted how the process of bureaucratization has been associated with the development of new concerns for employee rights to balance managerial prerogatives in the employment relationship.<sup>2</sup> In firms that become more bureaucratized and thus more compartmentalized, both management and employees come to recognize the separation between the individual, on one hand, and the position he occupies in the firm, on the other hand. The employment relationship becomes more of a limited contractual relationship between equals, in contrast to the master-servant relationship that characterized more aristocratic and paternalistic societies.

What does this mean to the researcher or scientist caught up in the web of modern bureaucratic enterprises? It means that for him, the implementation of his research findings in a corporate context consists of "designing operational solutions" to corporate problems, which management is then free to accept and implement or to reject as it sees fit. This corresponds to Churchman and Schain-

<sup>1</sup> See Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1947); also Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. by H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> See H. M. Vollmer, *Employee Rights and the Employment Relationship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1960), especially Chapter I, "Bureaucratization and the Employment Relationship."

blatt's description of *the separate functionalist*. It implies a highly rationalized relationship between managers and researchers in which both seek independence from interference in each others "proper function." It is a relationship that is conducive to a high degree of specialization, but that makes no provision for the kind of understanding that is necessary for the successful integration of diverse functions.

It was this need for the integration of employee interests and activities under conditions of increasing bureaucratization that led to the "human relations in industry" movement, which we associate preeminently with the name of Elton Mayo and his followers.<sup>3</sup> The key principle of this movement has been that management must strive to understand better the motives and interpersonal satisfactions of its employees so that it can better command their loyalties and integrate their efforts toward the performance of corporate goals. This attempt at the *humanization* of management (if we may use this term as a shorthand expression of the process that attempts to offset the depersonalizing influences of bureaucratization) has also had consequences for the employment relationship. Where successful, it has resulted in what William H. Whyte has called the "organization man," whose primary work interests, career aspirations, and whole life, in significant portions, has become bound up with the concerns of his employer.<sup>4</sup>

A principal concern of human relations theorists and practitioners has always been *communication*. In human relations theory, "two-way communication" between employees and managers has always been the desiderata; but in practice, as many critics have pointed out, the human relations movement has resulted in an attempt by management to use various communications techniques to manipulate employees' interests and activities to correspond with those of managers, rather than the other way around.<sup>5</sup> This theme can be found in the more recent human relations literature which emphasizes the need for managers to understand more about "what research scientists are trying to do and why they do what they do" in order "for the proper communication to take place"—i.e., to better utilize scientific employees' efforts in relation to corporate objectives and requirements, as Churchman and Schainblatt have noted. The danger is that this approach can lead to a distortion of scientific values in the face of its preponderant attention to corporate objectives. While this form of communica-

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949).

<sup>4</sup> William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1956); see also, *Employee Rights and the Employment Relationship, op.cit.*, Chap. II, "Human Relations and the Employment Relationship."

<sup>5</sup> See for example, R. Bendix and L. H. Fisher, "The Perspectives of Elton Mayo," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, vol. 31 (1949), pp. 312-321; J. T. Dunlop, "A Framework for the Analysis of Industrial Relations," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 3 (1950); and C. Kerr and L. H. Fisher, "Plant Sociology: the Elite and Aborigines," in *Common Frontiers of the Social Sciences*, M. Komarovsky, ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957).

tion may serve corporate goals in the short run, it may undermine them in the long run by contributing to the subversion of science.

This consideration has caused Churchman and Schainblatt to turn their attention to *persuasion*. Here they are focusing upon the attempts of researchers to understand management problems better and to take the initiative to communicate possible solutions to management. We might suggest that the attempt of researchers to influence management, rather than the other way around, is made possible by the process of *professionalization*. A. M. Carr-Saunders and others have pointed out how many occupations, including those of research scientists, have become more professionalized over time.<sup>6</sup> One important aspect of professionalization is that the members of an occupational group begin to assume more responsibility over time not only for the accuracy and general quality of their own work, but also for translating this work into useful applications relevant to the needs of their "clients." Anselm Strauss has shown how scientists tend to become more professionalized in this regard as they move out from academic surroundings to situations in which they are employed to perform services to industrial, governmental, or other clientele.<sup>7</sup> In discussing *the persuasion position*, Churchman and Schainblatt have pointed to the relations of physicians and patients as being similar to those of researchers who act as persuaders to "seek methods for overcoming managerial resistance to change, altering managerial attitudes, and gaining managerial acceptance of recommendations." In this role, the researcher becomes a "change agent."

But this is not enough, as Churchman and Schainblatt point out, for it involves the danger that research scientists, in their attempt to persuade management to accept what the researchers believe is "good for them" without really understanding managerial problems, will actually subvert corporate goals. What is required is *mutual understanding* of each other's problems and points of view among both researchers and managers. We might suggest that what Churchman and Schainblatt call "mutual understanding" really involves the process of *institutionalization*, as Philip Selznick has used this concept. To Selznick, institutionalization refers to "the development of orderly, stable, socially integrated forms and structures out of unstable, loosely patterned, or merely technical types of action."<sup>8</sup> How is this social integration achieved? By (1) the formalization of rules governing the relationship (in this case, the relationship between researchers and managers), (2) the development of mechanisms concerned with maintenance of the relationship to achieve long-run objectives, (3) the infusion of values and achievement of personal satisfactions by all parties to

<sup>6</sup> See A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, *The Professions* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1933); see also H. M. Vollmer and D. L. Mills, *Professionalization: Readings in Occupational Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965).

<sup>7</sup> Anselm Strauss, "A Concluding Note on Professions" in A. L. Strauss and L. Rainwater, *The Professional Scientist*, (Chicago; Aldine, 1962).

<sup>8</sup> Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, *Sociology: a Text with Adapted Readings*, 2nd ed., (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1958), p. 238; see also Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration*, (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957).

the relationship, and (4) the development of a social base of support for the relationship over and beyond the immediate parties to it.<sup>9</sup> One might go into considerable detail beyond the limitations of space here to show how these elements actually do develop in the relations of researchers and managers as they seek a mutual understanding of each other's problems and points of view over an extended period of time. However, it should suffice for the present purposes simply to suggest that institutionalization of the relationship does take place, as is reflected in the establishment of formal research contracts which specify the mutual rights and obligations of both researchers and managers, the development of means for maintenance of these relations over time through the establishment of research groups within corporations and research contract capabilities in research institutes outside, the development of highly valued interests in research uses and applications among scientists and in the scientific method among managers, and a growth of a significant social base among managers who have had some scientific training themselves and among scientists who have had a considerable degree of association with managers in corporate environments.

In sum, there is much reason to believe that neither the humanization (or should we say the scientization) of management nor the professionalization of researchers is enough to assure the kind of implementation of research findings that Churchman and Schainblatt and many others seek. The separation of research and managerial functions characteristic of modern bureaucratic corporate environments can be overcome only by the institutionalization of researcher-manager relations.

But how can this institutionalization take place in practical terms? This is where we need further research. Several of us are now working to discover and analyze mechanisms of adaptation that allow managers and scientists to relate to each other in ways that preserve the integrity of the functions of both roles, and yet allow for well integrated efforts.<sup>10</sup> There is certainly room for much more research on how mutual understanding between researchers and managers can be reached so that both can achieve a successful *adaptation* without *assimilation*, in either direction.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Our research on these matters to date has been summarized in H. M. Vollmer, *et al.*, *Adaptations of Scientists in Five Organizations: a Comparative Analysis and Applications of the Behavioral Sciences to Research Management: an Initial Study in the Office of Aerospace Research* (Menlo Park, Calif.: both are reports of Stanford Research Institute to the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, 1964). This continuing research has been sponsored by the Behavioral Sciences Division of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research under contract No. AF 49(638)-1028, Task No. 37707, Project No. 9778.

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