Weber's bureaucratic model vs. the political process model: a critical comparoson

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The purpose of this paper is to develop a critical comparison of two models of organization theory: Weber's bureaucratic model and the political process model. One of the major differences between these two models is the different focus of analysis. In Weber's bureaucratic model, the unit of analysis is the organization, especially its authority structure and in the political process model, the unit of analysis is a political group or coalition. The comparison of these two models will concentrate on four different issues: 1) the intellectual heritage from which the models developed, 2) assumptions and characteristic of the models, 3) methods of dominating and controlling the employees advocated by models and 4) theoretical and methodological strengths and weaknesses of the models. Finally, the comparison will end in an evaluation of the new critical insights generated by each model.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In Kuhn's terminology, the »sociological» definition of the term paradigm is as follows: Paradigm is »the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given (scientific) community» (1970, 175). From the perspective of this definition, the fields of the social sciences don't have a paradigm — they are at a preparadigmic stage. Kuhn has described the preparadigmic period of a science as follows: »The practitioners of a science are split into a number competing schools, each claiming competence for the same subject matter, but approaching it in quite different ways» (1970, 295). Our field, organization theory, is not exception in that sense: it is split into a number of competing schools.

The origin of organization theory dates back to the late 1800's and early 1900's. Some of early perspectives of organization theory, such as Scientific Management School and the Classical Management School represented normative views of organizations. They suggested an »ideal model» of organizations (e.g. Fayol 1949) with an emphasis on uniting goals and effectiveness/efficiency of organizations. Later models, the Human Relations Model (e.g. Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939), the Decision-Making Model (e.g. March & Simon 1958, Cyert & March 1963), and the »structuralist» perspectives with their several schools have broadened our understanding of organizational reality. We have learned that organizations don't work as ideal model describes (see, e.g. Blau 1955), that organizations don't work on unitary basis, but rather the dominant coalition determines the course of an organization (Cyert & March 1963) and that employees are motivated also by factors other than money (Roethlisberger & Dickson 1939). Finally, we know that there is no »best way» (Fayol 1949) to design an organization, but structure is contingent, for example, upon such factors as technology (Woodward 1965), environmental conditions (Lawrence & Lorsch 1967), and growth strategy (Chandler 1962). The last model in this theoretical evolution is the political process model (Allison 1971, Lawler & Bacharach 1980). The farther the evolution progresses, it seems, the better the new models are able to describe and explain organizational reality. We have come a long way from the closed system models of the early

days of organization theory to the open systems process models of today (see Scott 1981, 128).

The purpose of this paper is to develop a critical comparison of two of models of organization theory: Weber's bureaucratic model and the political process model, described, for instance, by Lawler and Bacharach (1980). The comparison will focus on four points.

(1) The intellectual heritage from which the models developed

(2) Assumptions and characteristics of the models

(3) Methods of dominating and controlling the employees

advocated by the models

(4) Theoretical and methodological strengths and weaknesses of the models

The comparison will end in an evaluation of the new critical insights generated by each model. The framework for the discussion is developed on the basis of the following works:

(1) The scheme for analyzing the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, as well as the assumptions about the nature of humans presented by Burcell and Morgan (1979) and Morgan and Smircich (1980),

(2) A critical comparison of the dominant perspectives and their alternative counterparts in organizational analysis by Zey-Ferrell (1981),

(3) Pfeffer's overview of the four organizational decision making models in his *Power in Organizations* (1980),

(4) Comparison of the Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives on Organizations by Scott (1981).

2 THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF THE MODELS

2.1 The Historical Period in Which the Models Developed

Weber's bureaucratic model and the political process model came from the temporally distant poles of the history of organization theory. Weber developed the model of »the ideal type of bureaucracy» at the turn of the 19th century in Germany. His thinking was molded by the intellectual atmosphere of German historicism (Weber 1962, 8), as well as by the societal and economic changes that took place in the Western world at that time. Such trends were the rise of democracy to replace the traditional power bases in Western European nations, as well as

the progress of industrialism with the emerging new forms or organizations (Chandler 1977). Karl Marx sought a historical explanation for the evolution of economic-societal forms of society, and ended to predict the final, ideal form of economy to be »communism,» a state in which class and economic structures disappear — the people are equal in every sense.

Weber's thinking departed from the model of communism. Weber saw an ideal model of society and economy in capitalism. He linked the rise of capitalism to a shift in religious ideas, as well as to the rise of bureaucratic administration (Weiss 1983). In particular, he saw a strong causal linkage between the »protestant ethics» and capitalism. In this perception, protestant faith is the driving force for rationality (see Weber 1964). Weber's intention was to address a long-standing theoretical debate carried on by Rousseau, Hegel and Marx regarding the basic nature of domination in society. On this particular issue, Weber's position was about half way between the idealism of Hegel and the materialism of Marx. It can be concluded, that Weber's most important criticism of Marx was his contetion that as a consequence of capitalism the process of alienation was part of a broader phenomenon, demystification. This phenomenon he labeled »rationalization». The rational mode of legitimation, then, would be the most crucial for an modern society (Weiss 1983). To summarize, Weber's model of bureaucracy was only a milestone in his academic efforts to establish a rational explanation of the legitimacy of capitalism.

The political process model is a product of the late 1970's and early 1980's. The historical heritage of this model lies in political science (e.g. Allison 1971), social psychology (e.g. Bacharach & Lawler 1980), and the Decision-Making School (e.g. Cyert & March 1963) in organization theory.

Historically, the socio-political events of the 1970's, such as the Watergate Scandal, revealed a new, largely-ignored side of organizational life: »conflict» and »political games». Another incident, the publication of Allison's (1971) comparative analysis of three different decision-making models aroused interest in the political processes of organizations. Intellectually, the political process model opposes the »unitary» views of organizations by replacing them with a »pluralist» view (Burrell & Morgan 1979) which emphasizes plural goals, conflicts, and influence (Barcharach & Lawler 1980) as

part of organizational reality. Politics in organizations can be seen as observable, but also often as covert actions by which executives enhance their power in decision-making processes (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois II I 1988). Politics in organizations can be seen as fluid (Stevenson, Pearce & Porter 1985) or not so fluid (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois II I 1988). It is reasonable to conclude, however, that individuals, in general, do employ political tactics in organizations in various ways, depending on the issue and situation at hand. Political behavior in organizations arises for several reasons. For example, Mintzberg (1983) observed that the main reason for it is conflict. Further, Pfeffer (1981) contended that politics is an outcome of power decentralization in organizations. On the other, politics can also be linked to increased centralization in organizational decision- making (see Eisenhardt & Bourgeois II I 1988). In conclusion, Weber's model was a product of its own time, while the political process model reflects the societal and organizational developments of the 1980's.

3 MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS OF THE MODELS

3.1 Ontological Assumptions

Ontological assumptions deal with the nature of knowledge. The nominalist assumption denies the existence of the real structure to the world, while realism posits that »the social world external to individual cognition is a real world made up of hard tangible and relatively immutable structures» (Burrell & Morgan 1979, 4).

Coming from the tradition of German historicism with an emphasis on the »uniqueness of phenomena» (Lipset et. al, 1970, 169), Weber's bureaucratic model is closer to subjectivism than positivism. The core ontological assumption of this model is that reality is »a social construction» (Morgan & Smircich 1980, 492). For Weber, »all empirical knowledge is in the nature of case abstract» (Weber 1964, 9). Despite the multiple interdependent features that characterize the bureaucratic model (e.g. Perrow 1979, 4), it would be wrong to argue that Weber's ontological stance is in realism. In terms of the ontological continuum presented by Morgan and Smircich (1980), the political process model can be placed closer to realism than nominalism. However, for scientists like Bacharach and Lawler (1980), reality is not »a concrete struc-

ture», but rather »a concrete process» (Morgan & Smircich 1980, 492). They focus on conflicts and power from the influence viewpoint. For them, power is not a structure, it is a relation, a part of social interactions.

3.2 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology deals with the grounds of knowledge. Positivism seeks regularities and causal laws about the relationships among variables, whereas anti-positivism, in general, focuses on understanding of phenomena »from the inside» (Burrell & Morgan 1979, 5) through participant observation. Weber's stance, in terms of epistemology, was to understand (Verstehen) how social realities become constructured. He relied on a historical explanation of phenomena. Again, by using the continuum, of Morgan and Smircich, Weber's epistemological stance is to »understand how social reality is created» (1980, 492). The political process model is closer to positivism than Weber's stance, but neither is it constructuring a purely positivist science. The focus in the political process model is »to study systems and processes» (Morgan & Smircich 1980, 492).

3.3 Nature of Humans

A deterministic view assumes that the behavior of humans is determined by the environment or situation. Voluntarism posits that men are »completely autonomous and free-willed» (Burrell & Morgan 1979). In Weber's model, »the actor is treated not merely as responding to stimuli, but as making an effort to conform with certain ideal, rather than actual patterns of conduct with the probability that his efforts will be only partially succesful, and there will be elements of deviation» (Weber 1964, 12).

It seems that the assumption about human nature in Weber's model is a mixture of determinism and voluntarism. The model assumes that humans are rational and will work towards organizational goals (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Tha basic motivator of individual employees is money. The employees tend to be lazy, and therefore need to be directed and controlled by the management through the legitimate authority structure. Also, this model suggest that managers, by »natural selection», are more talented and intellectually superior to their subordinates. In the political process model, individuals are also rational, that is »intentionally rational» (Pfeffer 1982), but they pursue their

own self interests in the organization. Humans are motivated by such factors as resources, promotion, or increased power (Pfeffer 1981). In the bureaucratic model, humans adapt to the organizational hierarchy, while the political model humans mold the organization through their own behavior. In order to gain more power, individual's form political groups and coalitions (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). Thus, humans are active, imaginative, and creative in the pursuit of their self-interests.

3.4 Nature of Organizations

Weber's model views organizations as closed systems, whereas the political process model is based on an open system perspective (Scott 1981). A unitary view is incorporated in Weber's model, while the political process model fits in the pluralistic view (Burrell & Morgan 1979). The unitary view is characterized by a conception of an organization with a common goal, no conflicts, and a control mechanism based on positional authority. The pluralistic view presents an organization that is composed of pluralistic entities with various interests, subcultures, and subunits. These are pursuing their own goals which often results in a conflict. Organizations may have explicit »shared» goals as facade, but they are not real objectives. Thus, in the political model, organizations are viewed as »political systems» (March 1962) in which the subunits of the system compete over the control of scarce resources, information, or the organizational outcomes (Tushman & Nader 1980). Organizational activity is a result of »bargaining and compromise,» and the decisions made seldom »perfectly reflect the preferences of any group or subunit in the organization» (Pfeffer 1981, 28). In summary, the political process model postulates a view of an organization as a »game» which often is all but rational (Allison 1971). In the bureaucratic model, an organization is a social structure characterized by legitimate authority based on rational grounds. Mouzelis (1967) describes the nature of a bureaucratic organization as follows: »Organizations act rationally and perform their tasks with maximum efficiency.» Their structure is designed to facilitate this pursuit (Weber 1964).

3.5 Relationship Between Humans and Organizations

The bureaucratic model assumes that the members of an organizations act in the most

efficient way in performing their tasks (Mouzelis 1967, 47). The individuals' goals are in harmony with the organizational objectives. In the political model, individuals pursue their own self interests and goals — which are in conflict with the goals of others (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). The relationships between individuals and organizations in the political model is voluntary. Organizations don't control individuals, but individuals in groups and coalitions attempt to gain control of others in the organization. In the bureaucratic model, the whole organization functions towards maximum rationality. Individual behavior is controlled by the legitimate authority structure of the organization. In a bureaucratic organization, there should be no conflicts. If a conflicts exists, it is an indication of the lack of rational structuring of the organization (Perrow 1979). Further, it is important to notice that in the bureaucratic model, individual's private life is separeted from his organizational life »through the use of rules, salary, and career» (Thompson 1967, 6). In the political process model, the distinction between individual's private and organizational life is difficult, because authority structure is not the only basis for action (Bacharach & Lawler 1980).

3.6 Methodological Assumptions

An idiographic approach attempts to obtain first-hand knowledge about the subject matter, while a nomothetic approach emphasizes systematic way to study phenomena (Burrell & Morgan 1979). The latter approach often employes statistical techniques to test hypotheses about the subject under investigation. Both models are based on a case methodology, though Weber's approach has more idiographic elements in it (Lipset 1970, 169). Neither one of these models relies on a pure nomothetic approach. The political process model doesn't propose a prediction of future outcomes of political processes, since these processes are »fuzzy», complex, and unpredictable (Allison 1971). Weber's methodology is based on a comparative historical analysis with elements from hermeneutics (Roth 1971), and this model is predictive construct.

4 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODEL

In Weber's bureaucratic model, the unit of analysis is the organization, especially its authority structure. In the political process model, the unit of analysis is a political group or coalition (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). Some authors, such as Pfeffer, identified »groups and individuals» (1982, 61) as the units of analysis for the political models. One of the major differences between these two models is the different focus of analysis. Another distinguishing element between these models is that the political process model focuses on the influence processes (Allison 1971), while Weber's bureaucratic model deals with the legitimate authority structure. Weber discusses three pure types of legitimate authority (1964, 328): legal authority based on rational grounds, traditional authority based on traditional grounds, and charismatic authority based on charismatic grounds. For Weber, the rational-legal authority represents the ideal type of authority structure. This structure is characterized by the following features of the organization (Mouzelis 1967, 38):

(1) High degree of specialization

(2) Hierarcial authority structure with limited areas of command and responsibility

(3) Impersonality of relationships between organizational members

(4) Recruitment of officials on the basis of ability and technical knowledge

(5) Differentiation of private and official income and fortune

The technical advantages of a bureaucratic organization are precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and material and personal costs, which results in economic rationality (Weber 1964). The position of the official in Weber's model is characterized by the following features (Weber 1964):

(1) Office holding is a profession

(2) The official enjoys a distinct social esteem in this position compared to this subordinates

(3) Bureaucratic officials are appointed by their superiors

(4) The position of the official is held for life

(5) The salary of the official is based on his rank in the organization

(6) The official is set for a career in the hierarchy.

The political process model is interested in power relations (Bacharach & Lawler 1980) between different groups and coalitions in the organization. More specifically, the political process model focuses on the »formation or mobilitation of interests groups into coalitions», and »the nature or pattern or conflict between different coalitions» (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). One of the central processes in this model is the bar-

Table 1. Bureaucratic vs. The Political Process Model.

Dimension	Bureaucratic	Political Power
Goals, preferences	Reasonably consistent	Consistent within social actors; inconsistent, pluralistic within the organization
Power and control	Less centralized with greater reliance on rules	Shifting coalitions and interest groups
Decision Process	Procedural rationality embodied in programs and standard operating procedures	Disorderly, characterized by push and pull of interests
Rules and Norms	Precedent, tradition	Free play of market forces; conflict is legitimate and expected
Information and Computational Requirements	Reduced by the use of rules and procedures	Information used and withheld strategically
Beliefs about action — consequence relationships	Consensually shared acceptance of routines	Disagreements about technology
Decisions	Follow from programs and routines	Result of bargaining and interplay among interests
Ideology	Stability, fairness, predictability	Struggle, conflict, winners and losers

gaining process between different coalitions (Bacharach & Lawler 1980).

Pfeffer (1981, 31) compares the »bureaucratic model» and the »Political Power» model by eight dimensions. (See table 1)

The crucial distinguishing factor between these two models is the concept of power. For Weber, the basis for action is authority, the legitimate power. In the political process model, the basis for action is influence (Allison 1971).

All types of power other than authority are illegitimate in Weber's model. In the political process model, a distinction is made between two types of power, authority and influence (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). The table 2 presented by Zey-Ferrell (a handout) compares the notion of authority (Weber 1964) and influence

Table 2. Authority vs. Influence.

Aspect of Power	Authority	Influence
Role of Subordinate	Subordinate accepts right of superior to make decision. Rights nominatively supported by rules and regulations.	No superior dictate or subordinate re-relationship
Nature of Compliance	Subordinate acquiesces without question. 1) Suspends intellectual judgment 2) Acts as if they suscribe to judgment even if in fact it is personally distateful 3) Involuntary submission	One who has less influence fights to maintain power
Location	Lodged in hierarcial arrangement	Lodged in functional differentiation
Content of	Authority is in decision making	Is In making suggestions, discussion, persuading
Direction of Flow	Undirection down the organization	Multidirectional all directions for source-horizontal and vertical as well as up the hierarchy (Can influence superiors and subordinates)
Who can activate	Authority only at top	Anyone
Nature	Static, social control, status quo	Dynamic, charge status quo
Type of Variable	Discrete/Dichotomous	Continuous
Nature of Game	Zero-sum game (Only one person or group can make decisions. This means others can't make decisions.)	Non-zero sum game (Many can give power at same time.)
Sources (How parties come to control bases)	Structure in position	Personality expertise
Bases (What parties control that enables them to manipulate the behavior of others)	Coercion (physical sanction) Renumeration (material resources & rewards) Normative (symbols) Knowledge (information and experties)	Coercion Normative Knowledge
Domain	Authority is broader because it has 4 bases (Can renumerate where as no one with influence can renumerate)	Influence is narrower
Scope	Circumscribed (Only to the areas within domain of position)	Uncircumscribed — technically unlimited
Legitimacy	Subordinates accept not just the authority of superordinates but also rationale for attaching authority to a position (Beliefs about rights of decision maker)	Believes in right, but no formal status

(Bacharach & Lawler 1980). The table is based on Bacharach and Lawler's book Power and Politics in Organizations (1980, 10—44). (See table 2)

Table 2 summarizes comprehensively the major diffrences of the two models in terms of the concept of power (Bacharach & Lawler 1980, 3, 44).

5 MAJOR FOCUS OF THE MODELS

5.1 Dependent and Independent Variables of the Models

The political process model attempts to explain organizational decisions of the allocation of resources in organizations (Pfeffer 1982, 64) by focusing on the formation and mobilization of interest groups Into coalitions, and by the nature and pattern of conflicts between coalitions (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). The basic theme in this model is that organizational members play power games to pursue their own self-interests (Allison 1971). In explaining the decisions, the political process model asks the following kinds of questions (Allison 1971):

1) Who is playing the political game?
2) What determines the stance of each player?
3) What determines the power of each individual?
4) How are the players stance, actions, and outcomes connected to each other?

As Allison (1971) pointed out, the decisions in this model are not rational or exhaustive. Decisions are made within a time frame and under constraints, such as authority structure (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). Most of the time, the decisions, as a result of bargaining, do not reflect anyone's original proposal, but are an outcome of a compromise. Finally, there is no measurement of the efficiency of decisions in this model (see Allison 1971).

To summarize, the crucial variable in explain and understand organizational outcomes is the notion of power (Bacharach & Lawler 1980, 204) and its legitimacy. The conditions in which power is used are resource scarcity, uncertainty, and disagreement about goals or technology (Pfeffer 1982, 67). To increase their power, organizational groups participate in political activity through forming coalitions to overcome the opposing power.

Coalition can be defined as »an interacting group of individuals, deliberately constructed, independent of formal structure, lacking its own internal formal structure, consisting of mutually perceived membership, issue oriented, focused on a goal or goals external to the coalition and requiring concerted member action» (Stevenson et al. 1985). Coalitions are characterized and constrained by such factors as size, density, centrality, and fit with the normal structure (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). Mintzberg (1984) described different forms of internal and external coalitions. Personalized, bureaucratic, ideological, professional and politicized coalitions represent internal forms. When a coalition is personalized, personal control of the leader dominates in the group. In a bureaucratic coalition, formal standards are determinants of behavior. In a ideological coalition, strong internal values and beliefs shape the behavior of the coalition. Technical skills and expert knowledge dominate in professional groups, while political forces are driving force in a politicized coalition. External coalitions can be seen as dominated, divided, or passive depending on the degree and form of influence they excert over an organization. Pfeffer (1981, 31) indentified factors that can have an impact on the coalition formation as follows: individual's age, position in organization, educational background, length of employment in the organization, and personal values. Mechanic (1962) identified factors that are related to an individual's power. These factors are commitment, effort, interest, willingness to use power, and attractiveness.

The bureaucratic model is less complicated, since it suggests an ideal model of organizational order — or authority structure — by which organizations can maximize their efficiency and effectiveness (Thompson 1967). The characteristics (listed in an earlier section) of the bureaucratic organization are the conditions needed to achieve the unitary goals. In the bureaucratic model, »everything is functional» (Thompson 1967, 6), and related to efficiency.

5.2 Methodological Strategies and Specific Techniques For Measuring the Relationships in the Models

As Mouzelis points out, Weber's bureaucratic model is an »ideal type» with no counterpart in reality (1967, 38). Weber himself based his theory of social and economic organizations on a historical comparison and logical inference. His method of historical analysis was based on

case studies (Lipset et al. 1970). The authors that have supported Weber's bureaucratic model (e.g. Perrow 1979) have relied on case descriptions as a method to validate Weber's ideas. Weber's model represents a »holist theory» (Diesing 1971). In the holistic approach, theory is built » by comparing cases of widely different types and what they have in common» (Diesing 1971, 203).

There are three types of models that focus on power: (1) power as structural phenomenon (Hickson et al. 1971, Pfeffer 1973, Hinings et al. 1974), (2) power process model or the political process model (Bacharach & Lawler 1980, Allison 1971), and (3) perceptions of power (Tushman & Nadler 1980). The political models that focus on process and conflict have traditionally been based on case studies (Allison 1971, Pettigrew 1973, Crozier 1964). Pfeffer (1981) concludes that power and politics are difficult concepts to operationalize and measure. That fact has limited the use of statistical methods in studies of political processes. Most of the data collection methods have been interviews (Pfeffer 1982), in which the distinction between the actual and perceived power is problematic.

6 METHODS OF DOMINATION AND CONTROL IN THE MODELS

Mouzelis describes the nature of control in the bureaucratic as follows: Control is based on »a system of rational rules... which try to regulate the whole organizational structure and process on the basis of technical knowledge and with the aim of maximum efficiency» (1967, 39). Thus, the control is embedded in the obedience of the employees to the positions of the legitimate authority structure (Etzioni 1964, 51—57). Control in this model is vertical, whereas in the political process model control can be multidirectional (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). Mechanic (1962) pointed out that control depends on one's formal power (authority) or his informal power (influence). From a structural viewpoint, the control of scarce resources or information increases one's ability to control others in the organization (Hickson et al. 1981, Mechanic 1962).

7 WEAKNESSES OF THE MODELS

7.1 Theoretical Weaknesses

Perrow summarizes the criticism of the bureaucratic

(1) Bureaucracy is said to be inflexible, inefficient, and in a time of rapid change, uncreative and unresponsive

(2) Bureaucracies are said to be stifle spontaneity, freedom, and selfrealization of their employees.

The first point indicates that the bureaucratic model is a closed system model (Scott 1981) which ignores the environmental influence on an organization. The political model differs from the bureaucratic model in its systems view, it takes the environment into account. Other major weaknesses of the bureaucratic model are incorporated in its assumptions as follows:

(1) It believes in common goals among organizational members

(2) It regards conflict dysfunctional, whereas the political model regards conflict as a normal driving force of an organization (Bacharach & Lawler 1980)

(3) It ignores power in the sense of »influence» as a normal part of organization life (Bacharach & Lawler 1980)

(4) It posits organizations as rational systems, which seems unrealistic (Allison 1971)

(5) Weber's model is an ideal model of an organization with no perfect counterpart in the real world (Mouzells 1967)

(6) Weber's model is not a real theory in terms of testable hypotheses. However, it has generated much empirical research to challenge its assumptions (e.g. Selznick 1948, Blau 1955, Gouldner 1956)

(7) The assumptions of humans as lazy and being motivated by money have been rediculed by, for example, the Hawthorne studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson 1939) and by Barnard (1938).

The political model doesn't view organizations as rational systems, but it assumes that the individual members of an organization are intentionally rational in pursuing their self-interests (Pfeffer 1982, 64—65). This is an obvious exaggeration (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972). Farrell and Petersen have summarized three kinds of criticisms of the political model as follows (1982, 404):

(1) Political models have »failed to distinguish required job behavior from discretionary political behavior»

(2) Political models have »failed to distinguish calculated from accidental political behavior»

(3) Political models have »failed to distinguish clearly between macro and micro levels of analysis».

Further, the political process model ignores the fact that all interactive social systems develop sets of behavioral rules for their participants,» and organizations — formal and informal — are no exception (Porter et al. 1981). This means that political processes are constrained, not only by the Formal Structure (Bacharach & Lawler 1980), but also by the informal political norms of an organization setting (Porter et al. 1981).

Pfeffer (1982, 65) points out the problems of the political process model as follows:

> Power can be virtually defined by the relationships between the preferences of an actor and outcomes achieved ...and if the preferences are themselves problematic, the validity of the political model is open to doubt.

Finally, the political process model is capable of explaining and understanding phenomena, but it cannot predict the outcomes of future bargaining processes (Allison 1971).

7.2 Methodological Weaknesses of the Models

From a research viewpoint, the political process model is difficult to test. The topic is sensitive (Pfeffer 1981), and the concepts of power and politics are extremely problematic to operationalize and measure (Pfeffer 1981). Also, in organizations, it may be difficult to distinguish between political activity and administrative processes. The use of perceptual measures of power makes it difficult to distinguish between people's intentions and their real actions (Porter et al. 1981).

Studying organizational processes is more difficult than studying the structure of an organization, since it usually requires more resources and time (see Blau 1955) than cross-sectional, structural studies.

One of the major methodological weaknesses of Weber's bureaucratic model is that it is an »ideal type» where superior performance cannot be validated empirically. Most of the studies concerning Weber's model have, however, succeeded in proving the existence of an informal organization ignored by Weber's ideal model (e.g. Blau 1955). Further, Lipset et al. (1970) have pointed out the problems of generalization from a case study, the method used by Weber. Weber's bureaucratic model faces most of its methodological criticisms from those that apply a different philosophical approach than Weber used. For Weber, a com-

parative historical case analysis was the most applicable tool to advance social science (Weber 1964). Finally, the strength of Weber's model has become its weakness. The model has been so widely and uncritically accepted that it doesn't invite new empirical research.

8 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MODELS TO ORGANIZATION THEORY

The purpose of this concluding section is to answer the question of what new critical insights were generated by each model that challenged the existing models. Weber's bureaucratic model provided a rational response to the organizational inefficiencies of Feudalism (Weber 1964). In Perrow's view, »bureaucracy is a form of organization superior to all others we know or can hope to afford in the near or middle future» (1979, 6). Weber provided a model of an organization that could be a tool for achieving efficiency and effectiveness. The basis for this was in the rational-legal authority structure with no room for such phenomena as nepotism or personal favoritism on the part of managers (Perrow 1979, 12). This view laid a basis for the new organizational structure of the »modern» corporations in the late 19th century (see Chandler 1977). The political process model has focused our attention on the basis of decisions in reality (Allison 1971). The decisions are often an outcome of political games characterized by bargaining, conflicts, and compromise (Bacharach & Lawler 1980). The previous models had ignored the »pluralistic view» of organizations (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

In conclusion, neither one of these models fully captures the true nature of organizations. The fact is that all organizations have — at least to some extent — a formal, rationally oriented routine administration, but within that structure numerous political configurations shape the course of the organization. Thus, the next model in organization theory could be the one that integrates different models into one, comprehensive framework, and progresses our understanding of the nature of complex organizations.

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