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The disciplinary society: from Weber to Foucault*

ABSTRACT

Weber's analysis of bureaucracy is framed in terms of the legal and rational accounting requirements of political and economic organizations. These, in turn, furnish legal domination with its aura of administrative rationality and adequacy. The formal analytic features of bureaucratic discipline are drawn from Weber's studies of the army, church, university, and political party, as well as from the organization of the discovering social sciences. Foucault's studies of the hospital, prison, and school, in addition to accounts of the factory system by Marx and recent social historians, ground Weberian formal analysis in the history of various social techniques for the administration of corporeal, attitudinal and behavioural discipline, i.e., the disciplinary society. Foucault's studies, however controversial, may be seen to extend Weber's concept of rational-legal discipline through studies of the discursive practices that construct a physiology of power/knowledge which deserves the attention of social scientists.

The formidable works of Weber and Foucault may be considered in terms of their convergence upon a single question, namely, *what are the techniques by which man has subjected himself to the rational discipline of the applied human sciences* (law, medicine, economics, education, and administration)? Clearly, it is not possible to pursue this question in the same historical and comparative detail to be found in either the Weberian corpus or in Foucault's recent archaeological studies. Rather, it will be argued that certain developments in Foucault's studies of the disciplinary society (1978; 1979b) may complement Weber's formal analysis of the modern bureaucratic state and economy – despite Foucault's different conception of social rationality. Thus, the formal analytic and historical features of Weber's account of the bureaucratic state and economy may be related to Foucault's analysis of the discursive production of the human sciences of

government, economics and social policy and to the concomitant regimentation of *docile bodies* under the disciplines of the prison, the workhouse and the factory. Despite Foucault's critical stance on the Marxist theory of state power, we cannot overlook Marx's attention (as well as that of more recent social historians) to the rise of factory discipline since this is an essential presupposition in the theory of discipline and power espoused both by Foucault and Weber. An historical sketch of the struggle over the work process, labour discipline, Taylorism and the bureaucratization of controls backed ultimately by the State which also guarantees rights to work, health and education, is necessary to understand how labour is rendered docile in the disciplinary culture of the therapeutic state (Miller and Neussus 1979; Hirsch 1979).

I STATE POWER, BUREAUCRACY, AND BIO-POLITICS

It is not far-fetched to consider Weber an archaeologist of the power man exerts over himself, and thus to see him as a precursor of Foucault's conception of the disciplinary society. In each case, history is not ransacked for its rational essence, even though it is only understood as a process of increasing rationalization. Nor is history seen as the story of individual freedom, even though western political history is only intelligible as its invention. What intervenes is the logic of the institutions that bring together rationality, individualism and freedom in the large-scale disciplinary enterprises of capitalism, bureaucracy and the modern therapeutic state. Modern society makes itself rich, knowledgeable and powerful but at the expense of substantive reason and freedom. Yet neither Weber nor Foucault are much beguiled by the socialist diagnosis of these trends. Of course neither thinker is entirely intelligible apart from Marx's analytic concerns. But both are closer to Nietzsche than to Marx in their grasp of the radical finitude of human rationality (Foucault 1970). In this, Weber and Foucault part company with Marx's ultimately romantic rationalism and its sad echoes in the halls of socialist state bureaucracy. Both of them are resolutely separated from any transcendental rationality, although Weber seems at times to have yearned for the desert winds of charisma to blow through the disciplinary society. But Foucault, distinguishing himself from Weber, shows no such equivocation.

One isn't assessing things in terms of an absolute against which they could be evaluated as constituting more or less perfect forms of rationality, but rather examining how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play within them. Because it's true that 'practices' don't exist

without a certain regime of rationality. But rather than measuring this regime against a value-of-reason, I would prefer to analyse it according to two axes: on the one hand, that of codification/prescription (how it forms an ensemble of rules, procedures, means to an end, etc.). and on the other, that of true or false formulation (how it determines a domain of objects about which it is possible to articulate true or false positions). (Foucault 1981: 8)

The only possibility of any reversal in the discursive production of the disciplinary sciences and their technologies of administrative control, as Foucault sees it, is that archaeological studies of the knowledge/power complex will simultaneously unearth the *subjugated knowledge* of those groups (not simply identifiable with the proletariat) who have been condemned to historical and political silence (under socialism no less than capitalism). If Weber, on the other hand, saw no relief from his vision of the *bureaucratic production of the state, economy and society*, it is because he regarded science in general, and the social sciences in particular, as 'factions' in the production of the rationalization process they simultaneously discover as a topic and deploy as a resource for their own disciplinary organization (Wilson 1976; 1977). Thus Weber carried out his own vocation as a 'specialist', limited by his reflections upon politics and history itself unable to transcend positive finitude. Weber's commitment to his discipline did not represent a mode of self-alienation or of political bad conscience, so much as the responsible ethic of an individual who had seen the limits of our faith in science as an objective belief. The alternative is a leap into the barbarism of reflection and a utopian invocation of the cycle of history to deliver new men on the back of the old man.

Weber's distillate of the formal features of bureaucratic organization and discipline (1947; 1967) is intended to assist in the study of hospitals, armies, schools, churches, business and political organizations, as well as of the institutions for the production of scientific knowledge of nature and society. Legal order, bureaucracy, compulsory jurisdiction over a territory and monopolization of the legitimate use of force are the essential characteristics of the modern state. This complex of factors emerged only gradually in Europe and is only fully present where legitimacy is located in the body of bureaucratic rules that determine the exercise of political authority. It should be noted that Weber's concept of the legitimacy of the modern legal state is purely formal: laws are legitimate if procedurally correct and any correct procedure is legal. Of course, Weber did not ignore the actual value-contexts of political legitimacy (Schluchter 1981). He saw the historical drift moving from natural law to legal positivism but could not see that the events of the twentieth century would lead to attempts to reinstate natural law in an effort to bridle state barbarism. Foucault's studies of the rise of the modern state apparatus do not

alter Weber's conception of the legitimation process but they are much more graphic. This is meant quite literally. Although Weber sees the documentary growth of the legal and bureaucratic administrative process, he does not judge its effects upon the *body politic*. By contrast, like Marx, Foucault never loses sight of the body as the ultimate text upon which the power of the state and the economy is inscribed (O'Neill 1972; 1985). By the same token, Foucault is able to go beyond Weber's legal-rational concept of legitimacy to capture the medicalization of power and the therapeutic mode of the legitimation function in the modern state

In concrete terms, starting in the seventeenth century, this power over life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical however; they constituted rather two poles of development, linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles – the first to be formed, it seems – centered on the body as a machine; its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines*: an *anatopolitics of the body*. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body as the basis of the biological processes: propagation and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls*: a *bio-politics of the population*. (Foucault 1980: 139)

Weber's discussion of bureaucracy is largely framed in terms of the legal and rational accounting requirements of political and economic organization which in turn give to legal domination its administrative rationality and adequacy. The formal-analytic features of the Weberian concept of bureaucracy are to be found as constitutive practices in the operation of the army, church, university, hospital and political party – not to mention the very organization of the relevant discovering social sciences. Although Foucault (1975; 1979a) does not study the bureaucratic process in the Weberian mode, his studies of the prison, hospital and school go beyond Weber in grounding the legal-rational accounting process in techniques for the administration of corporeal, attitudinal and behavioural discipline. Foucault thereby complements Weber's formal-rational concept of bureaucracy and legal domination with a *physiology of bureaucracy and power* which is the definitive feature of the disciplinary society. It is for this reason that, despite the difficulties in his style, Foucault deserves the attention of social scientists. There is a tendency in Weber's account of bureaucracy to identify it with a ruling class, dominating the economy and the

bourgeois democratic state. There are a number of overlapping issues here regarding the demarcation of the economy and the polity, of classes and elites, but especially of the distinction between the *state apparatus* and state *power*. Bureaucracy is the dominant mode of operation of the state apparatus, as it tends to be in the economy. But it is neither a class in itself nor is it the state power. Rather, bureaucracy might be treated as a *strategy* for the reproduction of the state's relation to the economy, and for the reproduction of socio-economic relations between individuals in the state. Thus we have to review, however briefly, the history of the separation of labour from the ownership of the means of production. In other words, we have to see how the bourgeois state assigns to the juridical individual his/her legal rights whereby he or she freely contracts into systems of exploitation and discipline (patriarchal, paternalist and bureaucratic) which the state defends even when it corrects its abuses. The ideological function of the state and legal process is to constitute individual agency at the juridical level precisely in order to reproduce the social division of labour and its bureaucratic rationalization independent of 'individuals' and their particularistic attributes (Poulantzas 1973). The sociological codification of this effect is to be found in the Weberian and Parsonian (1951) analysis of the rational-legal accounting process and its pattern variable schematization of required conduct from adequately motivated, i.e., disciplined individuals concerned solely with role-specific functions.

What the ideological isolation of the independent juridical subject achieves is the *inversion* of the economic dependency of the subject who freely contracts into a system of labour dominated by the market. Or rather, precisely because the issue of independence is removed from the level of the economy to the level of the polity, the economy can subject itself to the 'independent' discipline of external laws of the market before which capitalists are as unfree as labourers. These features are preserved when we replace the 'market' with 'bureaucracy' as a gloss upon the isolation of the state and socio-economic processes of capitalist production. By the same token, the bourgeois state limits itself to the integration of the isolated effects of the underlying class system of production and labour discipline but without seeking to radically alter it beyond the defense of individualized rights and duties. But this argument needs to be considered in an historical perspective in order to recapture (however briefly) the movement from which Weber, Marx and Foucault drew their theoretical insights into the strategems of power that shape the disciplinary society.

II THE RISE OF INDUSTRIAL DISCIPLINE

It may be worthwhile to consider the middle ground between Weber

and Foucault by taking even a brief look at the history of *industrial discipline*. This will enable us to weigh the difference between Weber's formal-analytic approach to the rationalization of social and political control and Foucault's approach via the discursive strategies and physiology of *disciplinary power* which were devised in the context of the shift to the factory and its gradual bureaucratization of the work process. By the same token, this will put in perspective Foucault's (1980) critique of the Marxist theory of power by reminding us that industrial and bureaucratic discipline arise from the historical struggle between capital and labour over control of the technical means and social organization of production (Braverman 1974; Burawoy 1984; Pollard 1963; Reid 1976; Thompson 1967). This is necessary since, while Foucault scores nicely against certain Marxist conceptions of state power, his own views are in danger of leaving us the victims of power that is everywhere and nowhere.

Although, as we know from Laslett (1965) and Wall (1983), it is no longer possible to indulge the myth of the family as a natural economy, it is generally agreed that in the mid-eighteenth century the family-based putting-out and domestic system of manufacture came under pressure as the industrial revolution got under way. In the specific case of the cotton industry, the family system had to adjust to a new pace, increasingly independent of the agricultural seasons (Smelser 1959; Edwards and Lloyd-Jones 1973; Anderson 1976). The pull in this direction showed itself in productive bottlenecks, imbalances between spinning and weaving, and the master's increasing dissatisfaction with the independence, self-pacing and casual character of the workers engaged in the putting-out system (Reid 1976). The putting-out system compared unfavourably (Landes 1969) with the factory system of control and discipline and with the Methodist values which serviced the interests of continuous production (Burrell 1984). Thus workers were plagued with charges of idleness, dishonesty, drunkenness and immorality in the courts and the press. The factory masters responded in opposing ways to this perception of wayward labour, namely, with the imposition of harsh and cruel conditions, as a general rule, and with proposals for 'model communities', to transform the old rule. In either case, worker *discipline* was the main ingredient aimed at improving the moral habits of the labouring poor, to make them orderly, punctual, responsible and temperate

In all these ways – by the division of labour; the supervision of labour; fines; bells and clocks; money incentives; preachings and schoolings; the suppression of fairs and sports – new labour habits were formed, and a new time discipline was imposed. (Thompson 1967: 90)

Further stress fell upon the domestic system and the family economy

with the differential impact of technological changes in spinning and weaving. The spinning jenny and the water-frame moved spinning into the factory and, by simplifying the labour, at first displaced men with women and children. This, of course, seriously challenged the moral economy of the family, although a modified apprenticeship and family hiring survived in the factory for quite a while. Thus, as Smelser observes

the water-frame factory of the late eighteenth century moved only 'part way' toward the ideal conditions of economic rationality. Workers were segregated from their means of production, but the remnants of job appropriation by workers remained in the form of a modified apprenticeship system and family hiring. Discipline proved a major problem to the early capitalists, but its enforcement had not differentiated entirely from the more diffuse family ties of the pre-factory social structure. (Smelser 1959: 107)

With the introduction of mule spinning and steam power, the factory system and its discipline became more pronounced. The separation of the workers from the ownership of the means of production increased capital's control over labour. By the same token, workers lost control over their own pace (Thompson 1967) and became increasingly subject to entrepreneurial discipline. The changes we have observed on the spinning side of the cotton industry could not continue without building pressure for similar changes, differentiation and realignments in the weaving trades. As spinning began to outstrip the weavers, pressure grew to separate weaving from its basis in the domestic putting-out system, moving it into hand-loom factories and eventually power-loom factories. The big difference here is that power-loom weaving, as opposed to mule-spinning, displaced males with women and children. Workers in the cotton industry responded to the changes in their family economy with machine breaking, strikes and riots. They struggled to come to terms with piece rates, child labour, and the ten-hour day, always trying to preserve their skilled status (Penn 1982). The hand-loom weavers turned to pleas for relief, violence, political agitation and were attracted to the utopian movements of Cobbett, Owen and the Chartists. The Acts of 1833 and 1844 combined to reduce child labour and thereby to separate the adult and child working day, putting pressure once again on the family and state agencies to be concerned with child education and family welfare. Thus the workers turned to the organization of unions, friendly societies and savings banks as means of adjusting to circumstances that could no longer be handled by the old poor law relief system.

We cannot pursue these histories. Moreover, the complexity of the issues surrounding the evolution of the working class (Form 1981;

1983) and its paths towards reformism or revolution (Burawoy 1984) remains unresolved even by a host of empirical studies. Here it is enough to remark that in most instances worker discipline, even where it involves self-discipline, is always a ruling concern – food riots and strikes, being taken as evidence of the naturally undisciplined nature of workers outside of administrative controls, while the workers struggle to maintain their skills and concomitant social status. The fact remains that industrial discipline has never wholly conquered the working classes. Workers have hung on to many pre-industrial values, they have learned to sabotage, slow down, quit and take off (Palmer 1975; Stark 1980; Littler 1982). Thus labour discipline continues to challenge management and government to this day. It is therefore necessary to avoid a naive economism when thinking of the capitalist control of the means of production. Such control may be more or less efficient when viewed from a strictly technical standpoint and there may even be some competitive push in this direction. But capitalism is a social system concerned to reproduce itself. In other words, any form of social control over the means of production must reproduce the class system of capitalism – and this rule must apply to bureaucracy no less than to technocracy

all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination and exploitation of the producers. (Marx 1906: 709)

Thus capitalists had also to bring themselves into line with the requirements of industrial rationalization (Pollard 1963). It is one thing to be Protestant in outlook and quite another to be so in narrow practice. For this reason, capitalists as entrepreneurs resisted feeding themselves into Taylorism as much as their workers, preferring as Littler (1978; 1982) points out to subcontract worker discipline and management. It fell to the engineers to devise for them the bookkeeping and cost-accountancy functions that increased control over expenses, stocks, overheads, productivity and profitability (Hill 1981). The engineers and middle managers, then, made themselves the servants of capital in this respect. Its prospective control of the work process, craft knowledge and labour solidarity further extended the appeal of scientific management and professional engineers (Rodgers 1979). Here it is vital to see that what was at stake was capitalist hegemony over the primary work process and not some abstract attachment to scientific efficiency. Taylorism was morally alien to the values and dignity of independent labour. Taylor's conception of the labouring man as lazy, bestial and intemperate, working only under the threat of discipline and strict supervision was hostile to self-paced labour. However, Taylorism was gradually adjusted to accommodate unionism, collective bargaining and various

paternalistic and welfare concessions to labour, and owners came to terms with working-class struggles against premium systems, piecework, and loss of control of pace and decision in the smallest of tasks. Indeed, the union movement itself incorporated features of scientific management, particularly during World War II. Whenever management fails to negotiate between labour and capital, labour returns to its historical struggle and capital will call upon the police and, if necessary, the army to maintain law and order. It is, however, in the interest of both the state and capital to reserve legal force for exceptional use. This can be achieved so long as the disciplinary society, to which we now turn, can be relied upon to operate with quasi-natural effect, i.e., removed from historical and political consciousness. How this can be uncritically assumed will be seen in some closing remarks upon the liberal conception of bureaucracy (Crozier 1964) and power.

III THE PRISON AND THE FACTORY

The labour history we have briefly sketched needs to be relocated in the original framework of classical political economy and its concerns with 'policing' an impoverished, unhealthy, rebellious and criminal population created by the new industrial economy. The autonomy of modern economics was achieved at the expense of abstracting its concerns from the original disciplinary science of government and morals that occupied classical political economy. Thus it is necessary, in the light of Foucault's studies, to review how industrial discipline arose in relation to prison discipline in the production of a docile labour force suited to the needs of early industrial capitalism. It is then possible to see how the bureaucratic discipline of late capitalism presupposes this early history of bodily discipline which, so to speak, funds society's more superficial attitudinal controls. The formal (contractual) freedom of labour expresses its separation from the ownership of the means of production.

The decline of feudalism, the enclosure movements and the confiscation of monastic property at first released large numbers of former peasants into vagabondage and criminality. Fifteenth and sixteenth century legislation was faced with the task of separating 'the impotent poor' from the anomalous 'able bodied poor'. The former were authorized to beg; the latter were lucky to find their way into the workhouse and forced labour, a slight-step away from prison. In part, the segregation of forced labourers functioned to regulate the supply of free labour; but, in a broader way, it set the model for the discipline and surveillance of former peasants and artisans while they resisted their new freedom. Early capitalists needed not only to depress wages as far as possible; they also needed wage-labour disciplined to accept

long hours and harsh conditions of work. They had also to destroy the popular culture and habits of pre-industrial labour, yet to avoid entirely destabilizing the social order (Ignatieff 1979: 183–4). Thus Calvinism was nicely instrumental as a substitute for Catholic attitudes to charity, holidays and the like. It might be said that if Protestantism removed religious authority from the community, it restored it inside the factory. In fact, Protestantism reinvigorated patriarchy both in the family (Stone 1979: 103–5) and in the workhouse which it ran on family lines, as it would later the hospital and prison

If prison is a model of society – and here one is still concerned with metaphor – it will not take many years for the Protestant and above all the Calvinist view of society to create a model of the prison of the future in the shape of the workhouse. (Melossi and Pavarini 1981: 28–9)

In England, despite the challenge to law and order and the ineffectiveness of its terrible punishments, the propertied classes were not in a hurry to embrace rationalist and utilitarian penal reforms. Such reluctance may well have been inspired by a better sense of the workings of law and authority that enabled the eighteenth century bourgeoisie to exercise its hegemony without either a large army or a police force. Between them patronage and pardon seem to have increased respect for the law in its mercy and through the very arbitrariness that might strike equally at rich and poor gave rise to a general sense of justice. A curious balance was attempted between the law as an instrument of class privilege and the panoply of its impartiality (Hay 1975).

However, it was inevitable that the increasing demand for labour at lower wages would destroy the Elizabethan Poor Laws, replacing charity with forced labour in the workhouse. But the confusion between the workhouse and the house of correction continued – they were often parts of the same building. When labour became increasingly plentiful, unemployed and driven to crime and rebellion, the houses of correction became even more punitive, while labour in the houses of correction was limited to intimidating and useless tasks so that no one would enter them voluntarily. The overall effect was to teach free labour the discipline of the factory outside and inside the factory in such a manner that factory discipline in prisons and workhouses – whatever, and usually due to, the practices of enlightened penology. Thus the employed and the unemployed learned their respective disciplines. Thereafter, we might say that in the bourgeois social order the prison, the factory and the school, like the army, are places where the system can project its conception of the disciplinary society in the reformed criminal, the good worker, student, loyal

soldier, and committed citizen. In every case, it is a question of reproducing among the propertyless a sense of commitment to the property system in which they have nothing to sell but their labour and loyalty. The articulation of the disciplinary society in the factory, prison, army, schools and hospitals represented a response to social and moral problems arising from industrial change and conflict

the new science called political economy arises out of the registering of the new network of constant and multiple relations between population, territory and wealth; and this corresponds to the formation of a type of intervention characteristic of government, namely intervention in the field of economy and population. In other words, the transition from an art of government to a political science, from a regime dominated by structure of sovereignty to one ruled by techniques of government occurs in the 18th century around the theme of population and consequently centres on the birth of political economy . . .

We must consequently see things not in terms of the substitution for a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a governmental one; in reality we have a triangle; sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and its essential mechanism apparatuses of security. (Foucault 1979b: 18–19)

However repressive these disciplinary strategies may look to us, in their own day they were part of the reformist, humane and enlightened discourse that responded to the needs of the times and were often inspired by a pedagogic intention to transform individuals into able bodied citizens. The broad issue here is a complex, shifting relationship between industrialization, law, criminality and the labourers in the town and countryside (Tobias 1967). Thus it is not always easy to decide whether such responses as food riots, poaching, machine breaking, reform movements and trade unionism were popular politics or mob crimes. From the standpoint of the propertied classes, such activities were more likely to be criminalized than politicized, so to speak, since the propertied class had trouble in imagining the kind of political order that might be built upon a propertyless mass. From the standpoint of the peasants and urban labourers faced with immiseration, certain criminal activities were often desperate strategies of maintenance, however colourful they may have made London life. Although the law was used to enact severe and terrible punishments for crimes against rural and urban property, it nevertheless seems to have been employed also to teach lessons of mercy and a universal sense of order. In other words, the bourgeois state tempered the force of law with the ideology of respect for the Law. To the extent that this was achieved, the labouring class also

won from the bourgeoisie extensions in the rule of law, freedom of speech and assembly, as well as the right to strike and to organize in the work place. The law, therefore, is not simply the oppressive agency for the bourgeois state. Inasmuch as capitalism must be concerned with its own social reproduction, it will be driven to motivate moral consent as well as sheer physical compliance. Thus the class struggle will propel the law to universalize its prescriptions in the search for solutions on a higher level of control.

In the eighteenth century, the role of the state was at first minimal in the sense that it served to sweep away the feudal order and to institute the necessary discipline of the new industrial labour force. Later, it began to adjust the conditions of labour, passing the factory legislation that to some extent restricted capital while accommodating labour. At this stage, the state's task in softening domination with education is shared by humanitarian, paternal and religious welfare in helping the poor, sick, criminal and ignorant. Foucault (1979a) argues that the disciplinary institutions were conceived to open up a field for the practices of evaluating, recording and observing large populations in order to administer them through the therapeutic institutions of health, education and penalty. This is the original matrix of the human and social sciences, rather than any abstractive generalization such as Comte's Law of the Three Stages. Instead, we might speak of the social sciences as *strategies of power* designed to minimize the cost of power, to maximize its coverage and to link 'economic' power with the educational, military, industrial, penal and medical institutions within which the docility and utility of populations can be maximized. In a disciplinary society power works by a sort of capillary action, drawing itself up from individual conduits. Thus, in a certain sense, the operation of power is individualized in order to achieve its maximum concentration

In a disciplinary regime . . . individualization is 'descending': as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference, by 'gaps' rather than deeds. . . . All the sciences, analyses, or practices employing the root 'psycho-' have their origin in this historical reversal of the procedures of individualization. The moment that saw the transition from historico-ritual mechanisms for the formation of individuality to the scientific-disciplinary mechanism, when the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment when the sciences of man became possible is the

moment when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy of the body were implemented. (Foucault 1979a: 193)

IV BEHIND THE STATE: BUREAUCRACY AND THE DISCIPLINARY SOCIETY

When Weber considers the historical roots of bureaucratic discipline, as well as of the factory, he traces them directly to the model of military discipline. 'The discipline of the army gives birth to all discipline' (Weber 1967: 261). This emphasizes the uniformity of obedience and command in an impersonal office. Emotions, status, devotion and charisma are subordinated to a rational calculus of success or profitability from the objective standpoint of the organization. At the same time, Weber concedes that there is no direct link between military discipline and various economic institutions such as the Pharaonic workshops, slave plantations and the factory. He remarks upon the intensification of rational discipline achieved through the American systems of 'scientific management'. But his observations on these topics are not developed and his interest is absorbed by the most general features of formal bureaucratic administration. Thus it may be argued that, while Weber (1950) saw the direct line from monastic discipline through Luther and Calvin to bureaucracy and scientific management, he did not pay sufficient attention to the circuits of the factory, workhouse and prison in the creation of industrial discipline and social control. Discipline in the factory, prison and school involves much more specific strategies of corporeal discipline than is captured by the generalized attitude of Protestant asceticism. In this respect, Weberianism implies a too cognitivist version of capitalist, state and bureaucratic controls. Moreover, it leaves the impression that in late capitalism the state only employs brute force, of a police or military nature, in the last instance. Thus the history we have reviewed makes it possible to see how the Weberian approach can result in Crozier's (1964) portrayal of enlightened bureaucracy produced by taking for granted the *disciplinary society* (family, schools, hospitals and prisons) that underwrites discipline in the workplace and allows the State to reserve its violence on behalf of the property system

Modern organizations, in contrast to their predecessors, use a much more liberal set of pressures. They deal with people who, through their education, have already internalized a number of basic conformities and a general ability to conform easily to an organization's way Most important of all, human behaviour is now better understood and therefore more predictable. Because of this, a modern organization does not need the same amount of conformity to get as good results as did earlier organizations. The

modern organization can tolerate more deviance, restrict its requirements to a more specialized field, and demand only temporary commitments. For all these reasons, it can and does rely more on indirect and intellectual means to obtain conformity: communication structure and work flow, the technical setting of jobs, economic incentives, and also, perhaps, rational calculus of a higher sort. The punitive aspect of the conformity achievement process has declined. Direct coercion is still in reserve as a last resort, but it is very rarely used, and people apparently no longer have to see it operate often to retain it in their calculations. (Crozier 1964: 184–5)

Crozier's view of workers' compliance will seem plausible only to the extent that it can presume upon the *natural discipline*, so to speak, of the work place and of the wage system. But this, as we have seen, is always the arena of a struggle with formally free labour to accept its substantive lack of freedom due to the persistent efforts of capitalism to separate labour from control of the work process. Thus the rights of labour to freely contract for wages guaranteed before the law is reproduced in the system of punishment calculated in retribution for crimes against property, against property in persons and ultimately against the crime of propertylessness (Melossi and Pavarini 1981). The legal contract is therefore the sacred fiction of the bourgeois social and political order since it simultaneously reproduces formal freedom and equality with substantive inequality and oppression. The discipline of the factory and the wage system, however much it is bureaucratized, remains the ultimate source of labour's docility. Indeed, it is the work place discipline that funds the apparent organizational effectiveness of state and bureaucratic controls. In fact, these controls also require for their effectiveness that the greater part of the bureaucratic structure be itself subject to the very discipline its middle management employees imagine they are supervising with respect to labour. What is called bureaucratic control must be seen to involve a continuous struggle over

- (a) the *technical control* over the work process, and
- (b) *disciplinary and punitive control* over the social relations of production.

Whereas in early capitalism paternalist power derived from the personal relationships between the owner and his labourers, technical and bureaucratic control grow out of the formal structure of the firm. The difference is that technical control is embedded in the production process and, as such, may be employed to *naturalize* bureaucratic controls which are embedded in the social organization or power structure of the firm. In practice, paternalistic, technical and

bureaucratic discipline will be found to coexist and, while they may be regarded as stages of industrial discipline (Perrot 1979), they have arisen in a pragmatic way as responses to owner/worker struggles for control. Although it is preferable from the standpoint of management to address control issues in terms of a Weberian vocabulary of rational accounting, efficiency and universalistic-achievement requirements – in fact to naturalize the social relations of production to technical relations of production – the reality is that it is relations of power and ideology that are at stake. Where labour freely contracts to meet the wage discipline, it thereby subordinates itself to the conditions of mental and bodily control (Sohn-Rethel 1978) arising from its separation from the ownership of the means, pacing and purpose of production in a substantively rational social enterprise. In detail, this means that workers submit to the direction of their tasks, their nature, method, pace and quality of work (Edwards 1979; Thompson 1961). They thereby simultaneously submit themselves to a system of worker evaluation, punishment and reward. It is, of course, in the interests of bureaucratic management to make worker discipline, punishments and rewards, appear to flow from naturally established organizational rules and procedures. Analytically, there occurs a kind of progression in industrial discipline moving from paternalistic controls to assembly line, machine paced routines and, finally, to bureaucratically imposed discipline. What is involved is a shift from heteronomous paternalist controls to autonomous, internalized discipline, and identification with corporate goals and values. To achieve this, worker evaluation is concerned less with physical productivity than with workers' attitudes to the corporation. In a certain sense, the modern corporation seeks to refamiliarize the workers while cutting them off from their own class culture. Since such a disciplinary achievement takes time, corporations seek to minimize labour turn-over and to maximize loyalty, ever solicitous of worker attitudes

What distinguishes bureaucratic control from other control systems is that it contains incentives aimed at evoking the behaviour necessary to make bureaucratic control succeed. It is this *indirect* path to the intensification of work, through the mechanism of rewarding behaviour relevant to the control system, rather than simply to the work itself, that imposes the new behaviour requirements on workers. (Edwards 1979: 148–9)

These considerations suggest further political studies of the internalization of discipline in the enucleated family, in schools, sports and much of modern entertainment. The family has long ceased to be the natural scene of work discipline, while still charged with the production of able-bodied citizens. It has fallen to the schools, social and medical agencies, and the media – inasmuch as the message is

still the ordinary society – to provide the secondary socialization which Crozier takes for granted in shifting the disciplinary burden from modern bureaucracy onto an ‘educated’ citizenry. In short, we need to re-examine the division between public and private conduct in terms of historically variable strategies of discipline – even in so-called leisure – which subserve the social and political imperative of a disciplined labour force and its current levels of manual, mental and emotional ‘education’. Such a tactic would treat social discipline as a socio-political strategy whose organizational features are historically and institutionally variable. Moreover, it would avoid any retrospective myth of an undisciplined state of nature generated from a Freudian or a Hobbesian perspective. At the same time, it would not reduce political discipline to a work place activity, nor indulge prospective fantasies of an undisciplined society ruled by play and the absence of the state. By the same token, the approach recommended here might give social scientists direction in the empirical study of the embodiment of power as it is achieved in the lives of individuals, families and educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

It has been argued that Weber’s formal theory of bureaucracy needs to be complemented by the history of factory discipline, the latter overlapping with prison discipline and eventually overlaid with bureaucratic discipline. Thus we return to Weber via Foucault and Marx. The benefit of this approach is that it makes it clear how Weber’s concept of state and bureaucratic discipline alternates between (i) obedience based upon the observation of rules of technical efficiency, and (ii) obedience required as a governmental end in itself, or what Gouldner (1954: 216–17) calls ‘punishment centered’ bureaucracy. In reality, the sphere of the technical expert is subordinate to that of the true bureaucrat whose administration derives from a presumption of power. For this reason, the disciplinary tasks of punitive bureaucracy are directed to the industrial control of minds and bodies, of attitudes and behaviour. Here the studies of Foucault and the social historians we have cited broaden the Weberian concept of administrative power into the embodied strategies of industrial power. Bureaucrats cannot make the Prussian assumption that their goals are beyond criticism and resistance (Gouldner 1976). Industrial bureaucracies are less privileged than government bureaucracies in this respect. For this reason, the two bureaucracies of state and economy share an interest in depoliticizing the perception of their power and ideology by subordinating them to the neutral image of disciplined technology and expertise. With this strategy, the two bureaucracies seek to manufacture public docility

and in this way have citizens support the state which in turn supports them with a modicum of legal force exercised against their occasional disobedience.

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NOTES

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