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# The Emerging Organizational Synthesis In Modern American History*

*Almost unnoticed in the midst of revisionist attacks on progressive history and the rise of the New Left, an organizational synthesis has been emerging which offers much to the student of modern America. Professor Galambos presents a historiographical survey of this synthesis and concludes that its chief strength is a mode of analysis blending the traditional tools of historical thought with ideas from the behavioral sciences.*

With the demise of progressive history, scholars interested in modern America are left without an effective historical synthesis.[1] For many, a new conceptual framework may seem unnecessary. Some will be content to level another revisionist broadside at the crumbling structure of liberal ideas.[2] Others will find the lack of a synthesis appealing on the grounds that our sophisticated age can no longer use ideas which might blind us to some of the complexities of man's past behavior.[3] To many, the New Left will provide the best alternative, either because of or in spite of its heavy ideological orientation.[4] Meanwhile, quantification beckons, although most historians must already know that statistical analyses are only

*Business History Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. 3 (Autumn, 1970). Copyright © The President and Fellows of Harvard College.

* The author wrote this article while working on a project supported by a grant from the Sloan Foundation to the Center for the Study of Recent American History, the Johns Hopkins University. Several persons – including Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., Jack P. Greene, Allen J. Matusow, and Charles E. Neu – read a draft of the paper and gave the author valuable suggestions.

[1] Two recent analyses of the progressive synthesis are: John Higham, *et al.*, *History* (Englewood Cliffs, 1965), 221–30, and Samuel P. Hays, "The Social Analysis of American Political History," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXX (September 1965), 373–94. The liberal framework still exercises some authority among historians of the New Deal: Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s, *The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston, 1958), and *The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, 1960), carry forward the progressive tradition in brilliant style. Even the historiography of the 1930's has been touched by revisionism, however, and an excellent example of the newer approach is provided by Barry D. Karl's perceptive analysis of *Executive Reorganization and Reform in the New Deal* (Cambridge, 1963).

[2] Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historian* (New York, 1968), xv, comments on the essentially negative quality of revisionism during the past two decades.

[3] This viewpoint is brilliantly analyzed in Isaiah Berlin's study of *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (New York, 1957).

[4] Irwin Unger, "The 'New Left' and American History," *American Historical Review*, LXXII (July 1967), 1237–63. For a harsh indictment of the New Left, see David Donald's review of Barton J. Bernstein (ed.), *Towards a New Past*, in *ibid.*, LXXIV (December 1968), 531–33.

https://doi.org/10.2307/3112614 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tools for testing hypotheses; the ideas themselves must come from the historian's view of society and social change.

Those who reject all of these options may be attracted by the synthesis which is emerging from the organizational school of history.[5] While their work varies in subject matter and emphasis, historians contributing to the development of this new synthesis share certain premises. One is the assumption that some of the most (if not the single most) important changes which have taken place in modern America have centered about a shift from small-scale, informal, locally or regionally oriented groups to large-scale, national, formal organizations. The new organizations are characterized by a bureaucratic structure of authority. This shift in organization cuts across the traditional boundaries of political, economic, and social history. Businesses, reform groups, professional and labor organizations – all developed along somewhat similar lines. These organizations could and did conflict, but they nevertheless shared certain modes of orientation, certain values, and certain institutionally defined roles.

As John Higham suggests, organizational history of this stripe can be distinguished from the earlier variety of institutional history.[6] The nineteenth-century institutionalists described and analyzed the evolution of particular political or economic organizations; they interpreted their subject's development in a way which compartmentalized their findings along traditional lines. They studied a political party, for instance, in order to reach conclusions about the American political system. They tended to stress the unique, not the general, aspects of their subject.

In the new style of organizational history these boundaries are disappearing, dissolved by a set of generalizations drawn primarily from the work of Max Weber and other sociologists. The organizational historians who use the Weberian model have a tendency to stress the universal, not the particular, qualities of their subject.[7] In the model which Weber and the organizational historians share,

[5] I prefer "organizational" to the other terms which scholars have used. John Higham, *et al.*, *History*, 231, refers to "the new institutionalism," but this expression lacks precision and threatens to create unnecessary confusion between the new brand of history and the institutional school of economists. "Institutionalism" does not identify the particular type of institution, the large-scale, modern organization, which plays the leading role in the new synthesis. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York, 1967), uses "bureaucratic." This term has the advantage of being even more precise than "organizational," but bureaucracy carries a heavy pejorative connotation which historians might eventually find burdensome.

[6] Higham, *History*, 231.

[7] This general question is discussed in Kai Erickson, "Sociology and the Historical Perspective," the MacIver Lecture, given at the Southern Sociological Society (Atlanta, 1968). As devotees of historicism will recognize, this difference in emphasis can be of crucial significance. See R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York, 1956), especially 199 ff., for a superb argument against the behavioral orientation in history.



https://doi.org/10.2307/3112614 Published online by Cambridge University Press

major emphasis is placed on the hierarchical, bureaucratic structure of authority; this form of organization normally involves precise definitions of responsibility and an emphasis upon relatively impersonal decisions made by a staff of experts filling positions which (theoretically, at least) do not change when the personnel does.[8] Other behavioral tools of analysis, such as the concept of role, have also helped these historians break out of the older categories.[9] The result of this new orientation is the beginnings of an historical synthesis which focuses on the modern organization, qua organization.

Scholarly emphasis on these kinds of large-scale organizations as a central phenomenon of modern society is certainly not new. James Burnham's famous study of *The Managerial Revolution* first appeared twenty-eight years ago, and bureaucratization became a major interest in the 1950's.[10] In 1952, John Kenneth Galbraith suggested that the workings of our economy could, and the management of our polity should, be formulated in terms of a theory of countervailing organizational power. Galbraith's ideas were rooted in the premise that large-scale organizations had drastically and irrevocably transformed the capitalistic economy of the present century.[11] One year later, Kenneth E. Boulding published *The Organizational Revolution,* which also focused attention on the "great rise in the number, size, and power of organizations of many diverse kinds."[12] A similar theme was developed in William H. Whyte's popular treatment of *The Organization Man.*[13] All of these studies, and many others as well, centered on the rise of complex bureaucracies as the most important characteristic of modern America.[14]

These books were not written, however, to serve the special purposes of history. A number were policy oriented. They employed historical data and insights, and in many cases provided ideas which historians could use. But their purpose was to re-structure our view of the present, not the past.[15] They did not offer a detailed study

[8] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Glencoe, 1947), 324–41.

[9] Edward N. Saveth (ed.), *American History and the Social Sciences* (Glencoe, 1964), 357–69.

[10] (New York, 1941).

[11] *American Capitalism* (Boston, 1952).

[12] (New York, 1953), xi.

[13] (New York, 1956).

[14] Other studies developing closely related ideas include: C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York, 1951), and *The Power Elite* (New York, 1956); Peter M. Blau, *Bureaucracy in Modern Society* (New York, 1956); R. K. Merton, *et al.* (eds.), *Reader in Bureaucracy* (Glencoe, 1952); Edward S. Mason (ed.), *The Corporation in Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1959); Adolf A. Berle, Jr., *The 20th Century Capitalist Revolution* (New York, 1954); W. Lloyd Warner, *The Corporation in the Emergent American Society* (New York, 1961); and W. Lloyd Warner, *et al.*, *The Emergent American Society,* I (New Haven, 1967).

[15] Some of the essays in W. Lloyd Warner's *The Emergent American Society* provide an exception to this rule; see, for example, Gibson Winter, "Religious Organizations," I, 408–91. This volume has received less attention from historians than it probably deserves.



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of the historic roots of the organizational revolution. This distinguishes them from the historians who are the primary concern of this article.

A number of the new breed of organizational historians have come out of the fields of business and economic history.[16] This is not just a coincidence. One of the concomitants of this type of history is a shift in emphasis from public policy as a central theme to the underlying modes of socio-economic organization.[17] In order to accomplish this transition, historians first broke down the progressive categories which for years had isolated businessmen, leaving them an essentially negative role as opponents of the reform measures which (in the liberal view) shaped our modern society. Numerous historians – including Arthur H. Cole, Allan Nevins, Harold F. Williamson, Ralph and Muriel Hidy, and Arthur M. Johnson – have contributed to this task.[18] Especially important, however, was the recent work of Robert H. Wiebe, Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., and Thomas C. Cochran.

In his first book, *Businessmen and Reform: A Study of the Progressive Movement*, Wiebe used liberal history as a target.[19] Instead of a monolithic, conservative business community, he discovered businessmen with varied forms of opinion and influence on reform measures. They opposed some laws, favored others, and influenced the content of almost all of the new economic regulations.[20] Wiebe found the progressive era to be "An Age of Organization."[21] But he did not employ bureaucracy as a major, positive theme, as he did in his second book. In this latter study Wiebe portrayed businessmen as confused participants, along with most other Americans, in a quest, a search for order. Instead of omnipotent robber barons, the author described businessmen who were "trapped by the present, scurrying where they appeared to stalk."[22] When at last they solved their problems through a new bureaucratic order, this was, after all, the same solution that most urban Americans achieved – even the reformers.[23] Wiebe had thus completely transformed the businessman's historical role.

[16] Higham, *History*, 231.

[17] While this premise seems to have a Marxist ring, there is in fact a wide gulf between the Weberian and Marxist views of history.

[18] Arthur H. Cole, *Business Enterprise in its Social Setting* (Cambridge, 1959); Allan Nevins, *John D. Rockefeller* (2 vols., New York, 1941); Harold F. Williamson and Orange A. Smalley, *Northwestern Mutual Life* (Evanson, 1957); Ralph W. and Muriel E. Hidy, *Pioneering in Big Business* (New York, 1955); Arthur M. Johnson, *The Development of American Petroleum Pipelines* (Ithaca, 1956).

[19] (Cambridge, 1962).

[20] *Ibid.*, 206–24.

[21] *Ibid.*, 16–41.

[22] Wiebe, *Search for Order*, 18.

[23] *Ibid.*, 164–95.



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Chandler took a different tack. From the first, he focused on the organizations and the organization builders, largely ignoring progressive history and its value judgments. In several influential articles and books, Chandler asked when, how, and why the modern corporation developed as it did.[24] In a recent book, he concentrated upon an important organizational innovation: the strategy of diversification as implemented by the new style of the decentralized firm.[25] Most of this work stayed well within the confines of economic history; Chandler's contribution was to emphasize the importance of bureaucratic institutions and to demonstrate the value of studying their historical evolution. Recently, however, he has shown how the bureaucratic techniques developed in the private sector of the economy had a significant influence upon public policy during World War II. In this case, the methods of business forecasting employed by General Motors and other large corporations were (with modifications) used in the government's Controlled Materials Plan. The government devised this plan, along with the Component Schedule Plan, in order to coordinate the flow of war materials through America's complex, industrial economy.[26] Chandler, like Wiebe, was describing the interaction of business and non-business organizations in ways far more complex than the style of conflict which dominated progressive history.

Cochran recently summarized and extended these new viewpoints in his presidential address to the Organization of American Historians.[27] He concluded that scholars had broken down an artificial barrier which had existed between business institutions and the rest of society. Now, he said, historians were at last able to show the influence that business had exerted "on educational development, on the writing and preaching of the clergy, on the settlement of new communities, and on all levels of politics – in a word, on the other

[24] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *Henry Varnum Poor* (Cambridge, 1956); "Management Decentralization: An Historical Analysis," *Business History Review*, XXX (June 1956), 111–74; "The Beginnings of 'Big Business' in American Industry," *Business History Review*, XXXIII (Spring, 1959), 1–31; "Recent Developments in American Business Administration and Their Conceptualization" (with Fritz Redlich), *Business History Review*, XXXV (Spring, 1961), 1–27; *Giant Enterprise: Ford, General Motors, and the Automobile Industry* (New York, 1964); *The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business* (New York, 1965); "The Railroads: Pioneers in Modern Corporate Management," *Business History Review*, XXXIX (Spring, 1965), 16–40; "The Coming of Big Business," in C. Vann Woodward (ed.), *The Comparative Approach to American History* (New York, 1968).

[25] *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the Industrial Enterprise* (Cambridge, 1962).

[26] "The Large Industrial Corporation and the Making of the Modern American Economy," in Stephen E. Ambrose (ed.), *Institutions in Modern America* (Baltimore, 1967), 91–94.

[27] "The History of a Business Society," *Journal of American History*, LIV (June 1967), 5–18. Cochran's attitude toward the progressive synthesis has not remained static over the years; compare this essay and his volume on *The American Business System* (Cambridge, 1957), with Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, *The Age of Enterprise* (New York, 1942).



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major American institutions." [28] While Cochran did not stress the importance of bureaucratic business in particular – as Wiebe and Chandler did – he emphasized the need for "inter-institutional history" of the sort which characterizes the organizational school.[29]

If the conclusions reached by these economic and business historians were correct, then it followed that the organizational aspects of domestic politics needed some serious re-examination. Indeed, this work has been under way for some years now. Richard Hofstadter long ago called attention to the importance of organizational questions during the progressive period.[30] Recently, Robert Cuff has explored American mobilization during World War I; his studies pointed to the importance of the organizational context in shaping wartime policies.[31] In *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, Samuel P. Hays showed that liberal conservationists and the leaders of large corporations shared many values, particularly a dedication to the rational and efficient employment of natural resources.[32] More often than not, the corporations and the conservationists were united in their opposition to small enterprises and individual entrepreneurs who sought a free hand to exploit the nation's wealth in the haphazard style of the nineteenth century.

Efficiency was also the theme which Samuel Haber used to link scientific management and progressive politics. As Haber illustrated, the business policy of systematic management appealed to many liberals. They translated these ideas, often uncritically, into the political realm. Goals such as the strong executive, apolitical administration, and non-partisanship held out the promise of a more efficient, businesslike polity. The price was a less democratic government, but Haber (like Hays) concluded that many progressives were far more interested in efficiency than in government by the people.[33]

Cuff, Hays, and Haber limited their studies to the years before 1920, but their conclusions could well be extended to cover subsequent periods of American history.[34] The organizations and the ideas which they examined became more, and not less, important during the 1920's, the New Deal, and World War II. New problems

[28] Cochran, "The History of a Business Society," 6.
[29] *Ibid.*, 18.
[30] *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), 215–71.
[31] "Bernard Baruch: Symbol and Myth in Industrial Mobilization," *Business History Review*, XLIII (Summer, 1969), 115–33.
[32] (Cambridge, 1959).
[33] Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890–1920* (Chicago, 1964).
[34] While Haber briefly surveys the 1920's, his major emphasis is upon the years 1890–1920.



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arose. New leaders took power. But the evolving politico-economic bureaucracies which had begun to take shape at the turn of the century provided a relatively constant dimension to the nation's political history.

Foreign, as well as domestic, affairs have been analyzed from an organizational point of view. For a number of years, diplomatic history was isolated from some of the major trends in American historiography, but this is no longer the case.[35] A few students of diplomacy have already begun to study the relationships between bureaucracy and foreign policy. In his Albert Shaw Lectures at the Johns Hopkins University, Ernest R. May examined in some detail the formulation of American policy vis-à-vis the Washington Naval Conference of 1922. One of the most important groups shaping that policy was, May said, the State Department bureaucracy, the second tier of officials, men who had been systematically ignored by most historians.[36] May suspects that the British and Japanese bureaucracies might have exerted a similar influence upon their respective national policies. Robert Wiebe has attempted to apply a similar thesis to the entire range of American foreign relations, 1877–1920. In this instance, his generalizations seemed to suffer from the lack of previous monographic research along the lines of May's lectures.[37] But nonetheless, his chapters on this subject indicated that the organizational aspects of America's foreign relations need more attention from historians.[38]

These organizational themes appearing in the political and economic history of modern America dictate a similar approach for the more diverse field of social history. When organizations such as the new bureaucracies achieve a substantial measure of wealth and power, their interaction with a wide variety of other social institutions must be of interest to the historian. Three different studies illustrate that organizational analysis has indeed invaded social history. Philip Gleason's research on German-American Catholics emphasized two major themes: the process of Americanization, and the relationship between that process and the immigrant group's attitude toward political reform. In developing these subjects, however, the author also offered some provocative insights into the group's organizational history. One of the strongest German-Ameri-

[35] Charles E. Neu, "The Changing Interpretive Structures of American Foreign Policy," in John Braeman, *et al.* (eds.), *American Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (forthcoming at the Ohio State University Press).

[36] "The Albert Shaw Lectures on Diplomatic History," The Johns Hopkins University, 1965–1966.

[37] *Search for Order*, 224–85.

[38] Professor Jerry Israel is now working on a study along these lines; he is examining scientific management in the State Department, 1906–1924.



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can organizations was the Central Verein, a federation of mutual aid societies. Gleason found that one of the factors shaping the Verein's position on reform was the organization's need to remain viable by adopting new goals. This special kind of organizational imperative helped to shape the content of the group's political efforts. The reform orientation could not be fully understood in terms of the membership's rationalistic response to a problem. An important, indirect influence was exerted by the particular requirements of their organizational context.[39]

Roy Lubove's volume on the social workers, 1880–1930, goes one step further in the direction of organizational history.[40] Lubove made progressivism a minor subject. His major concern was the emergence of a profession and of professional organizations. He concludes that: "Specialization and the idealization of expertise, the growth of an occupational subculture, and bureaucratization were instrumental in shaping the character of twentieth-century social work. These typical features of an urban-industrial society have affected not only the professions but most spheres of life, and their controlling influence will undoubtedly remain potent." [41]

Similar ideas were advanced in Gibson Winter's perceptive article on religious organizations in America.[42] Winter found that the nation's churches have undergone a special brand of organizational revolution in the present century. This transformation involved the growth of complex agency bureaucracies which performed special functions related "to human rights, economic life, political development, international concerns, welfare structures, educational activities, and mass media." [43] The agencies have had different effects on the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths; but on all three, these new bureaucracies have exerted an important influence.[44]

Winter's essay and the books by Lubove and Gleason hint at even broader applications of organizational concepts in social history. If bureaucratization is as multi-faceted and omnipresent as these scholars have indicated, then we need to examine in greater detail the relationship between the new organizations and a variety of other institutions: the family, the school, and the local community.

[39] Philip Gleason, "An Immigrant Group's Interest in Progressive Reform," *American Historical Review*, LXXIII (December 1967), 367–79; and *The Conservative Reformers: German-American Catholics and the Social Order* (Notre Dame, 1968), 24, 74, 80–83, 90–91.

[40] *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, 1965).

[41] *Ibid.*, 220.

[42] "Religious Organizations," in Warner, *Emergent American Society*, I, 408–91.

[43] *Ibid.*, 490.

[44] *Ibid.*, 483–91.



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It seems likely that large-scale organizations have influenced all of these institutions, and could perhaps provide social history with a new type of centralizing theme.

This hypothesis is strongly supported by the work of Robert H. Wiebe, the only historian who, to my knowledge, has attempted a general survey of modern American history along organizational lines.[45] Wiebe recast the entire history of the years 1877 to 1920 in organizational terms. He described a nation which in the 1880's and 1890's was confronted with a severe social crisis stemming from the breakdown of local and regional systems of power and status. As a result, Americans sought a new set of guidelines, a new "order" for society. Agrarian reform failed to provide an answer. But the urban-based progressive movement advanced a more appealing program: "The heart of progressivism was the ambition of the new middle class to fulfill its destiny through bureaucratic means."[46] Bureaucracy, and its concomitant values, provided the nation with a new, twentieth-century order. By the end of World War I, "the realignments, the reorientations of the progressive era had been translated into a complex of arrangements nothing short of a revolution could destroy."[47]

Wiebe's book represented a significant breakthrough, and the volume's weaknesses, as well as its strengths, set benchmarks for future organizational historians. As was already observed, the chapters on foreign policy seem relatively weak. Then too, the author's attempt to link sophisticated philosophical systems, such as pragmatism, with the emerging bureaucratic culture appears strained.[48] An organizational synthesis is probably far better suited for analyzing general value systems than for explaining the thought of Thorstein Veblen – let alone John Dewey. The author also slights the bureaucracies themselves. Curiously, the intricacies of organizational change receive very little attention, even though bureaucracy provides the moving force in Wiebe's view of history.

The survey's positive contributions are, however, impressive. Wiebe's framework effectively combines a wide range of political, social, and economic developments. The breadth of the synthesis is one of the book's most outstanding qualities. Within this general framework, the author's treatment of the cultural environment is most persuasive. In Wiebe's view, bureaucracy was far more than a set of formal organizations. The process of bureaucratization in-

[45] *Search for Order.*
[46] *Ibid.*, 166.
[47] *Ibid.*, 302.
[48] *Ibid.*, 133–63.



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volved a fundamental shift in values. The new orientation stressed efficiency, continuity, systematic controls, and group action. These were the guiding norms of the new bureaucratic middle class and, by the end of the 1920's, of most urban Americans.

If historians follow the lead of Wiebe and the other scholars mentioned, they will elaborate and extend a new synthesis in modern American history. On the basis of the work already completed, one can perhaps chance a guess as to what some of the major characteristics of the organizational school will be. Organizational history will, no doubt, stress the role of environmental forces acting on the individual. Less emphasis will be placed on the individual's efforts to shape his own historical context. In part this will be a product of behavioral models which tend to fix one's attention on the more general, environmental factors instead of the unique individual.[49] Historians who draw upon Weberian sociology will find it difficult to escape this bias.

With the organizational synthesis should come new attempts at periodization. Historians in this field will doubtless abandon the progressive categories of Populism, Progressivism, the New Deal, and After. Wiebe has already broken with the familiar view of World War I as a watershed between a progressive era and a distinctive interlude during the 1920's.[50] While any precise chronology awaits further research, it already seems clear that a crucial period in organizational terms will be the years from around 1890 to 1910. During these two decades, the modern corporation, the modern craft union, and a variety of other forms of large-scale organization underwent decisive changes. Future historians may find these organizational developments of more lasting importance than even the New Deal innovations which have heretofore loomed so large in our concept of the immediate past.

By developing an organizational analysis of modern America, historians could also produce some new ideas about earlier periods in the nation's history. If one assumes that the era of large-scale organizations began to take shape in the 1870's and 1880's, then one common characteristic of all previous periods is that they were non-bureaucratic. In this sense, the American experience from the seventeenth through the middle of the nineteenth centuries had a common element, something which distinguishes it from the modern

[49] Even Wiebe apparently finds this tendency disturbing. In a paper delivered before the Dallas meeting of the Organization of American Historians (1968), he called upon scholars to stress the role of the individual in history – a theme which is certainly not very prominent in either of his books.

[50] *Search for Order*, 286–302.



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age. Similarly, if the focal point of modern history becomes the underlying patterns of social, political, and economic organization – as opposed to particular political events or ideologies – then perhaps the same assumption would be applicable to research on the colonial and ante-bellum years. Ultimately, this type of work might suggest some modifications in the traditional categories of our national history. Such speculations are hazardous, of course, especially at a time when the organizational synthesis of modern American history has only begun to emerge.

Even more difficult to predict are the values, the moral judgments, which will be adopted by the students of bureaucracy. It is possible that they will follow Wiebe and write a relatively amoral brand of history. If so, they will abandon the heroes and villains of the progressive synthesis and the New Left. Explicit or formal ideology will receive less attention, as historians employ a McLuhanesque emphasis on the organizational medium instead of the political message. Men who are portrayed in this type of history will solve or fail to solve problems. Society will change, without moving the nation or any part of it toward a rendezvous with destiny.[51]

It is equally possible, however, that the dominant theme will be a negative judgment on modern organizations. An air of pessimism and fatalism pervades much of the sociology of large-scale organizations, and this may influence organizational historians.[52] If this is true, the historians of bureaucracy may be attracted by the New Left's condemnation of big business and the military-industrial complex. Organizational analysis could blend with New Left ideology to produce a synthesis which would appeal to those scholars who demand that history be "relevant" in some precise and immediate way.

On the other hand, some historians may find it impossible not to surrender their own judgment to the pragmatic and self-serving viewpoints expressed by their organizational subjects. The experience of business history suggests that this could be a major problem. Although my own interest is in Wiebe's style of analysis, it seems impossible at this time to even guess which of these three courses will become most popular. The choice seems certain, however, to create difficulties for scholars working in this field.

Such problems arise for all historians, however, and they cannot override the conclusion that the organizational synthesis offers much

[51] The price of this style of history is of course that sense of participation which energized the progressive historians and added a special and interesting quality to their work.
[52] This is discussed in Alvin W. Gouldner, "Metaphysical Pathos and the Theory of Bureaucracy," *American Political Science Review*, XLIX (June 1955), 496–507.



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to the student of modern America. The chief strength of the organizational approach is a mode of analysis which blends the traditional tools of historical thought with ideas from the behavioral sciences. Organizational history spreads a very broad net.[53] Ultimately, this synthesis may enable historians to combine many elements in our past which can not be accommodated to the New Left or the liberal view. At any rate, in a society in which bureaucracies play such a commanding role as they do today, it seems likely that more and more historians will explore the new field of organizational history in the years ahead.

[53] No synthesis has ever included with equal facility every aspect of a complex nation's history. The organizational framework will probably not be very useful to the scholars studying the history of the Negro or to those who are working on many facets of immigrant groups in the American past. In effect, this synthesis will probably trade some of the emotional facets of history for a better understanding of how the highly organized sectors of society actually functioned.



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