

# Organizations as Instruments of Domination

February 27, 2013



# Domination

- Pursuing the goals of the few through the work of the many
- Weber's view of domination:
  - Coercion through direct force
  - From being *perceived* as having the right to dominate
    - (legitimate power... remember from last week)?

# Weber's Typology of Domination

- Charismatic
- Traditional
- Rational-Legal

# Are we still enslaved?

- Structure of job opportunities to produce and reproduce class structure
- Hazardous work, industrial accidents, and occupational disease
- Structures and practices can promote workaholism and social and mental stress

# Labor efficiency

- Slaves can be inefficient and its not a problem
- Modern management comes from the need for wage labor to be efficient

# Two Labor Sectors

- Primary
  - Worth of investment
  - “Human capital” and “corporate assets”
- Secondary
  - Lower-skilled (and lower-paid)
  - More easily disposed/replaced
- What is the impact of tech?

# Health and Safety at Work

- Work hazards are often only handled when required by law
- There are still substantial work-related diseases, accidents, etc.
- SAFETY VS. COST!!!



# Workaholism and Mental Stress

- Afflicts more “primary” sector workers
- 75 to 90% of physician visits in the US are stress-related
- Comes from:
  - Overwork
  - High uncertainty
  - Fear of job loss
  - Economic problems
  - Work-family conflicts
  - etc

# Why are people so insecure?

- “orange peel phenomenon”
- Flattening of organizations has removed slack
- IT has led to increased surveillance

# Radicalized Organizations

- Remember from power discussion
  - Unitary – teams
  - Pluralist - shared power
  - Radical – deep class divisions between power and labor
- Relatively non-existent in some countries

# Global Economy

- Now have large, diversified multinational organizations
- “postcapitalist society”;  
“triad power”
- Worldwide sourcing of raw materials at lowest price → goods and services in profitable market
- Use of immense lobbying power in multiple countries to influence legislation, trade agreements, etc.



# The Role of the Multinationals

- Positive: economic development, job creation, delivery of capital, technology, and expertise
- Negative: Authoritarian juggernauts out to exploit their hosts
  
- What do you think?
- Break into groups of four for 10 minutes then present to class for 2 minutes per group: USE EXAMPLES (from book or online)

# Unintended Consequences

- Rationality in economic terms means basically wanting more of something good and/or less of something bad
- Rational to want more productivity, profit, etc.
- BUT unintended consequences arise from a “partial point of view”

# Strengths of Domination Metaphor

- Weber: the pursuit of rationality can be a mode of domination. ALWAYS ASK: “Rational for whom?”
- Can show us how to create organizational theory *for* the exploited
  - Radical org theory as counter to traditional org theory
- Enables appreciation of the issues that lead to the “radical frame of reference”

# Limitations of Domination Metaphor

- May make us see conspiracies that aren't there
  - Does organizational domination occur by default or by design?
- Can blind us to nondominating forms of organization
- Can be said to promote “left-wing” ideology



# Upcoming

- Friday: Optional discussion with mid-term prep
- Monday: Mid-term 2  
**Questions?**
- Wednesday: Melissa guest lecturing