

# 5

## **Organizations, Bureaucracy, and Work/Occupations**

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# Team Case Study of A Community Organization

Rebecca Bach, Duke University

## Rationale

Throughout the semester we examine a number of serious social problems, so by the end of the semester you may feel discouraged about the human condition. In this project you will have the opportunity to become familiar with social problems in the local community and to begin to envision potential solutions to social problems. The assignment is designed to enhance your ability to apply course concepts and theories to the real world and to develop your research and analytical skills.

## Instructions

Each team will identify a local community organization that addresses one of the social problems we have studied this semester. For instance, if you are interested in family violence, you could study a local domestic violence shelter. If interested in drug abuse, you could study the DARE education program in schools, or a local rehabilitation program. Your research should include examining the organization's website and any of the organization's publications, such as newsletters or brochures. In addition you are expected to conduct interviews with some combination of the following populations: employees of the organization, volunteers of the organization, and/or clients of the organization.

The final team project should include each of the following components:

1. An introduction that offers a brief overview of the project and includes your research questions.
2. An explanation of the purpose and goals of the organization and the larger social problem that the organization addresses.
3. A discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the organization's work on this social problem. For example, is a conflict theory implicit in the organization's mission and goals?

4. A summary of the organization's programs and the populations they address.
5. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the organization in accomplishing their goals. How do the clients of the organization evaluate their programs? How do the staff members evaluate the effectiveness of their programs? What do they consider a "success story"? What do they see as the major challenges they face? What would they like to do differently?
6. Recommendations for improving organizational effectiveness.

**Grading** Ask your instructor to explain the grading criteria.



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## Team Case Study of A Community Organization

### Worksheet

Team Members' Names:

Complete the following during class and turn into me before you leave.

1. What organization are you going to study?

2. What social problem does it address?

3. What sources of information will you use?

4. Who will be primarily responsible for obtaining information from each source? (In other words, what is your division of labor?)

5. What questions will you ask in your interviews? Don't worry about the final phrasing of the questions at this point, but think about what you want to learn from each question.

For clients:

For staff:

For volunteers:

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# Structural Change at Your College or University

Charles S. Green III, University  
of Wisconsin at Whitewater Rationale

The college or university that you attend is a complex organization—a bureaucracy. Its structure is an ongoing pattern of relations characterized by specialized occupations and coordinated and controlled by a hierarchy or administrators. Why does the structure exist, and what makes it change? The objective of this exercise is for you to find answers, albeit partial ones, to this question.

## Instructions

Your instructor will assign each group, or ask each group to volunteer, to answer *one* of the questions on the work sheet. All questions involve gathering information, and the information for most questions can be assembled from the two organization charts that your instructor will provide. Groups will share their findings in class and discuss their implications.

## Grading

Check with your instructor on grading criteria, but how thoroughly and accurately you complete the assignment will no doubt influence your grade.

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## Structural Change at Your College or University

Worksheet

Group #

1. How much growth in the administrative component of your college or university has taken place?

Number of Positions:			Change:	
<i>Positions</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Top dogs				
Others				
<i>Total</i>				

Group #

2. Why has growth taken place?
  - a. Has the number of students grown? Has the number of faculty grown? (Make use of the library to find out.)
  - b. Could there be other (externally induced) reasons for growth? (Refer to the *Journal of Higher Education* article for possible reasons.)

Group #

3. Was there a change in the gender composition of administrators? If so, why did it occur?

For example:

- a. Were more women than men recruited to new positions? (This situation might indicate that new positions were created for women to make the institution look good.)

b. Were more women than men recruited to old positions? (This situation might indicate genuine efforts to stop gender discrimination.)

c. Both?

New Positions:

Old Positions:

*Year 1*

*Year 2*

Men

Women

Vacant positions or Gender indeterminate

*Total*

Group #

4. What sorts of structural changes have taken place? Describe the changes that have taken place (offices added or dropped and changes of titles). Speculate—in a disciplined way—why the changes took place. (Use a separate sheet of paper for your answer.)

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# Critique of Student Government

Alton M. Okinaka, University of Hawaii at Hilo

## Rationale

The political philosophy of the United States of America is based on democratic principles, taking the form of a republic. As a participatory form of government, it integrates public opinion and power into elections. These elections assume an informed public that will select candidates based on their performance and character.

A common theme in public discourse is the weaknesses of this system and questions about the efficacy of such a system. Does this system in fact empower the masses or simply provide the illusion of power? To what degree are the premises of an informed public true, and is this concern the cause of many of the problems in government? Many people express the opinion that their vote does not really matter, and voter apathy would seem to be a direct reflection of this attitude. Yet, the amount of money spent on campaigns and advertising to shape public opinion would suggest that there is power in the system.

For most Americans, politics is something that they rarely get involved in directly. On those occasions when an issue is of concern for them, most Americans do not know how to get involved and make an impact on the decision-making process. Even in our education systems, we teach about American history and the structure of American government and the electoral process, but we rarely cover how people can get involved or influence decision making. While it seems that most Americans love to talk about (and complain about) American government at all levels (county, state, and federal), we rarely discuss what would characterize a good government or how to affect this result.

The purpose of this assignment is to raise your awareness of the democratic political process and have you reflect on what you would want from your government.

While it might be difficult to gain access to resources in order to properly investigate the civil governments at the county, state, or federal level, there is a level of participatory government at most colleges and universities that is, or should be, readily available to all students. This government is the

student government at your school. Most colleges and universities have a student government that serves to represent the student body, much in the same way as elected officials at the county, state, and federal levels represent their constituencies. A portion of the student fees that you pay goes to student government as the equivalent of taxes. As the constituency of your elected student government, those who are elected have an obligation to represent you and your interests.

Similar to elections at other levels, participation on college campuses varies greatly, with many student bodies demonstrating high levels of apathy. Many of the characteristics of American politics that are complained about at all levels exist as well on the college campus. This government provides a local resource for students to learn about the process of electoral and representative politics and hopefully to develop some insights into what makes it work and why (and how members of the public can get involved and make a difference.)

Consider aspects such as the purpose, procedures, organizational rules, openness to input from their constituency, ability to work with the college administration or other agencies, dissemination of information to their constituency, and effectiveness of your student government. In all of these aspects, consider not only what it does well but also its weaknesses and how things might be improved.

## Instructions

Form groups of four to six students. By working in groups, you will have more opportunities to collect information and to compare impressions and ideas.

Discuss and outline your ideal vision of what your student government should be doing and how. This vision will serve as the basis for a critique of the student government in operation by comparing what they are actually accomplishing and how with your expectations. In forming this vision, you should consult sources such as the constitution and bylaws of your student government as a basis of their formal charge and prescribed procedures. Such material is often available on your campus web site.

Collect information about what the current student government's goals are, how it is conducting business, and what it is achieving. In performing these actions, consider both the process by which it operates and the consequences. Effectiveness and efficiency are often linked but are not always identical. Coordinate your information-gathering efforts with your group mates.

Critique and discuss the information gathered. In performing this critique, match up the ideals of the institution in their formal documents, such as the constitution and bylaws, your own vision for how it should operate, and the information that you collected about how the government actually operates. Consider how efficient and effective it is, the appropriateness of its goals and procedures, and the degree of conflict and/or cooperation that takes place. You should consider not only how it deals with issues that you were initially concerned with but also whether it was dealing with issues you had not anticipated. Consider its strengths, weaknesses, and how it could improve.

Write a group report on your critique. Provide your vision and how it matches with the formal goals and rules of the student government as well

as how this then matches its actual operation and your recommendations for improvement.

Present a summary of this report in class, and compare your report to reports done by other groups.

Each group member should list the names of every member of the group, including themselves, and score each person individually for the quality and quantity of their contribution to the assignment.

While many sources of information are available, here is a short list of possibilities to help you get started:

- student government constitution, bylaws, and operating rules
- minutes of meetings and bills and resolutions
- interviews with members of student government
- interviews with members of the administration who deal with student government
- interviews with students who are represented by the student government
- articles in papers or news stories about student government activities
- information about student governments at other schools for comparison

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# Critique of Student Government

## Worksheet

### Group members

Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____
Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____
Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____
Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____
Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____
Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____
Name: _____	Phone Number: _____	E-Mail: _____

Vision of goals for student government:

Sources of Information:

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Information about actual goals and procedures:

Critique:

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# Occupation and Income Exercise

Keith A. Roberts, Hanover College

## Rationale

This exercise was designed to help you think about the reward systems in our society and the reasons for inequality of rewards for various occupations. Why do we pay more for some jobs? Are these reward systems fair? Do they help the society, or do they in some ways create problems? Why do we think as we do about the differential in pay for various lines of work?

## Instructions

On the following page you will find an "Occupation and Income" sheet. In groups of about four or five members, determine what you think would be appropriate levels for each of the listed occupations, with the total for all occupations not to exceed \$500,000. This should not take more than 20 minutes or so.

When you finish, give a copy of your answers to the instructor. The instructor will then lead a discussion about the scores and after the discussion you may be asked to write a short analytical paper.

## Grading

See your instructor for his or her plans for grading this exercise. If the instructor asks for a written paper, you will submit an essay (2–3 double-spaced typed pages) in which you will explain how inequality in the society is functional and how it is dysfunctional. Use concrete examples from the list you worked with and illustrate your essay by discussing discrepancies in pay for various occupations. The audience for this paper should be other college students who do not know the two sides of the argument.

Criteria for grading will be (1) your ability to articulate clearly and accurately the functionalist argument about inequality in society, (2) your ability to articulate clearly and accurately the conflict argument about social inequality, (3) clarity in the use of examples, and (4) control of the conventions of good writing so as not to jeopardize your credibility with the reader.

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## Occupation and Income

### Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your task is to decide how much income a person in each of the following occupations ought to receive. You will want to consider justice (fairness) and practicality (what will “work”) as you distribute income based on a fixed or limited pool of resources.

You have \$500,000 total to distribute to the following *male* workers:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Physician
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Loan officer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Medical scientist
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Garbage/Refuse collector
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Elementary/Middle school teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Telecommunications equipment installer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Bus driver
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jailor/Correctional officer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Food service manager
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Emergency medical technician (EMT)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Farm laborer or fisherman

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# Fast Food, Fast Talk

## *Interactive Service Work*

Catherine Fobes and Adam Gillis, Alma College

### Rationale

As service workers, service recipients, or as managers, Interactive Service Work (ISW) impacts us on a daily basis. Therefore, it is important to understand its components and complexities. This exercise on McDonald's was developed to help you learn about and apply the components of ISW, enact varying alignments of the components, and discuss your experiences as participants and observers.

### Instructions

Review and discuss the "Interactive Service Work Chart" below with your instructor then fill out Part I of the worksheet. Your instructor will ask for students to volunteer, and he or she will choose half of the number of students needed for the skit. The other half of the participants will be chosen from the student body that did not volunteer. This way there will be a mix of students who volunteered and who did not. Those of you not in the skit will serve in the role of observers.

As skit participants, you will be assigned to your various positions as manager, burger-flippers, window workers, and service recipients; as observers, please pay careful attention to how actors enact the varying alignments of *A and B vs. C*, etc., as seen in the chart on the "Social Dynamics in Interactive Service Work."

After the exercise, record your reactions to the skit in Part II of the worksheet.

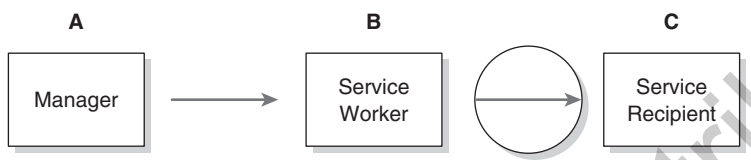
Finally you will be encouraged to discuss your experiences as participants, as well as your observations as audience members.

### Grading

See your instructor for information on the grading of this exercise in your course.

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## Social Dynamics in Interactive Service Work



<i>Example</i>	<i>Social Dynamics</i>
<b>A and C vs. B =</b>	Service worker treats service recipient rudely or inappropriately. Service recipient approaches manager who warns service worker.
<b>A and B vs. C =</b>	Service recipient orders a lot with no money to pay for it. Window worker asks for and receives manager's support. Manager asks service recipient to leave.
<b>B and C vs. A =</b>	Service worker gives "unapproved" order to service recipient on the sly without manager's knowledge.

*Source:* Adapted from P.Y. Martin, lecture on "Complex Organizations," Florida State University, 1995.

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## Fast Food, Fast Talk: Interactive Service Work

### Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part I—Past Experiences

1. Have you ever worked in this type (Interactive Social Work) of position? Y      N
  
2. If yes, what job(s) did you perform?
  
3. If yes, how did you feel about the job or position that you held?

#### Part II—Reactions and Reflections

1. How does this exercise show the concept of Interactive Service Work (ISW) to you?
  
2. How did you feel and react to being the various characters in different situations?
  
3. If you were assigned a specific character, from where did you draw your inspiration to portray him/her?
  
4. How might an understanding of ISW help you in your daily life? In your future career?

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