Institutions and Ideology

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CONTENTS

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IDEOLOGY AND INSTITUTIONS: INTRODUCTION

Renate E. Meyer, Kerstin Sahlin, Marc J. Ventresca and Peter Walgenbach

The common denominator among researchers of ideology is, apart from the very broad understanding that the term is related to "ideas," that it is a muddy, nebulous, slippery, chameleon-like concept, an "almost inexhaustible topic" (Therborn, 1980, p. 1). According to McLellan (1986, p. 1), ideology is even "the most elusive concept in the whole of social science." Indeed, the range of definitions and meanings is so diverse that its usefulness as an analytical category has been questioned altogether. Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 204, footnote 100), for example, complain that the "term 'ideology' has been used in so many different senses that one might despair of using it in any precise manner at all." Ideology is not only one of the most elusive and colorful concepts in social sciences, it is also among the most loaded and contested. The debate transcends a number of disciplines – philosophy, political science, sociology, and others – and ontological and epistemological positions.

While the engagement with ideology is still vibrant in critical strands of research (for critical management research, see, e.g., Grey & Willmott, 2005; Mumby, 2004; Alvesson & Willmott, 1992, 2003; Deetz, 1992; Alvesson, 1987, 1991), the recent cultural turn in sociology, linguistics, social movement theory, and organizational research has interestingly remained disinterested in matters of ideology. This particularly seems to be the case

for organizational institutionalism: Cultural analysis is central to the core theorization and empirical work of the approach and ideology was a frequent reference in some of the earlier publications in this field (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Boli-Bennett & Meyer, 1978; Brunsson, 1982; DiMaggio, 1983; Meyer, 1986; Thomas, Meyer, Ramirez, & Boli, 1987; Barley & Kunda, 1992; Guillén, 1994). Indeed, the founding texts in the organizational institutionalism tradition challenged students of organizations to understand "institutionalized organizations as myth and ceremony" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), to study "collective rationality in organizational fields" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and to recognize the value of "ontology and rationality" (Meyer, Boli, & Thomas, 1987) as a starting point for empirical study. In their pioneering contribution, Meyer and Rowan (1977, p. 345f.) argued that "the postindustrial society – the society dominated by rational organization even more than by the forces of production – arises both out of the complexity of the modern social organizational network and, more directly, as an ideological matter."

Yet, the latter concept is seldom brought explicitly into the current research conversation (for exceptions, see, e.g., Levy & Scully, 2007; Frenkel, 2005; Creed, Scully, & Austin, 2002; Fiss, 2003). In fact, the term is often only mentioned in passing, that is, without defining or discussing it. The term "ideology" is currently more vivid at the periphery of institutional research, especially at the crossroads to critical approaches (e.g., Mohr & Neely; Westenholz, both in this volume) or the framing approach to social movements (e.g., Davis, McAdam, Scott, & Zald, 2005). Thus, while we see a proliferation of work on discourse, belief systems, meanings, and institutional logics, ideology itself seems to be out of fashion.

Therefore, why do we believe that it is important to recharge the debate? Why do we believe that institutional theory is the place to do so? For one, the silence with regard to ideology is surprising since many of the core concepts of institutional theory, such as institution, legitimation, social categories, institutional logics, and theorization, are, in one way or another, closely related to the notion of ideology. The most distinctive and generative contributions of theory and research in organizational institutionalism are centrally concerned with (contested) systems of meaning, collective rationality, taken-for-grantedness, and variants of Selznick's (1957, p. 17) classic definition of institution as "infused with value beyond the technical requisites." In short, a distinguishing feature of the new institutionalism is the focus on cultural elements.

Moreover, the concept of ideology has highlighted a range of issues that still deserve our attention and are in fact at the center of the current

institutional research agenda. For example, the renewed focus on actors and interests (e.g., Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009), the sociopolitical and cultural embeddedness of agency (e.g., Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006; Fiss & Zajac, 2004; Clemens & Cook, 1999), frames (e.g., Kaplan, 2008; Fiss & Zajac, 2006; Lounsbury, Ventresca, & Hirsch, 2003), inhabited institutions (e.g., Hallett, Schulman, & Fine, 2008; Hallett & Ventresca, 2006), and the notion of institutional entrepreneurs (e.g., Hardy & Maguire, 2008; DiMaggio, 1988) point out once more the relevance of ideology for institutional theory. At the same time as institutional scholars started calling for more attention to meaning (Zilber, 2002, 2008), other scholars began demanding closer attention to power, domination, and inequality (e.g., Khan, Munir, & Willmott, 2007; Lounsbury, 2003; Phillips, 2003; Lounsbury & Hirsch, 1996; Perrow, 1985) – the dark side of institutions and institutional entrepreneurship. This brings ideology – Thompson (1996, p. 7), for example, defines ideology as ''meaning in the service of power'' – into the center of the institutional research agenda. The chapters in this volume address several of these topics in more detail.

A central question for institutional research is of course the relationship between institutions and ideology, which was more central in earlier publications than it is today. For John Meyer, for example, to whom the institutional research tradition owes much more than its starting signal, institutions are fundamentally ideological in the sense that they constitute social entities and the social categories that are at the foundation of any social order. ''Hence,'' Meyer et al. (1987, p. 29) contend ''in modern social systems, it is fruitful to see social structures not as the assembly of patterns of local interactions but as ideological edifices of institutionalized elements that derive their authority from more universal rules and conceptions.'' In the world polity approach, institutions and ideology are so closely interwoven that the concern for how institutional structures legitimate and empower social entities as ''actors'' is tantamount to the question of how ideologies construct social agency. In this sense, Drori, Meyer, and Hwang (in this volume) argue that ''rather than seeing ideology masking unjust conditions of power or material domination, rationalization […] is fundamentally a cultural process that constitutes and elaborates social entities as actors with ontological standing in the collective project of progress and justice.'' Similarly, for Friedland (in this volume; see also Friedland & Alford, 1991), institutions shape and transform the social categories through which individuality is created and enacted. Thus, they are inherently ideological not only by legitimating a certain social order but by constituting this order in the first place. Friedland (in this volume) points out that ''institutions are ideological

formations, not just in the sense that they are organized around languages that legitimate power as control over persons and things, but in that they produce powers by authorizing practices that constitute subjects and objects through which the authority relation is organized.''

CONCEPTIONS OF IDEOLOGY, A BRIEF REVIEW

In this brief review, we do not attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of how the concept of ideology has developed in the different perspectives; this has been done in several publications that classify and discuss ideology in great detail (see Chiapello, 2003; Thompson, 1996; Eagleton, 1991; Lenk, 1984; Therborn, 1980; Larrain, 1979, among many others). However, the brief sketch below is intended to help us find venues for combining theories of ideology and institutions. Furthermore, it helps us to place the chapters of this volume in this broader context.

Coined in revolutionary 18th-century France as ''science of ideas,'' the term ideology became famous because of the Marxian notions of false consciousness and commodity fetishism. In research on ideology, in general, the wide variety of definitions is arranged between two polar traditions stretching from a critical to a neutral – or sometimes even positive – connotation of the term. Basically, the two poles, as sketched below, span from Marx's ideology critique to Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Multiple other conceptualizations are located between these two research traditions (e.g., Eagleton, 1991, p. 28ff.).

As is widely known, the Marxist legacy emphasizes ideology as an illusion, a distorted image of the real world. Ideology obscures reality and makes it inaccessible to human recognition. This notion may be best expressed by the famous passage by Marx and Engels (1990, p. 27) in which they compare ideology with a camera obscura that represents the world upside down. In everyday language, the word "ideology" is still typically used in a disreputable and pejorative sense, normally to discredit the perspectives of one's opponents. Obviously, any image of distortion or false representation of reality is, ontologically, bound to the existence of an undistorted reality and, epistemologically, presupposes that this reality can be known. These assumptions are often reflected in the contrast between science and ideology.

Mannheim's (1972) answer to false consciousness is the argument of *Standortgebundenheit*, and, thus, the relationism of all knowledge, the denial of the existence of an Archimedian point from which reality can be objectively known. In Mannheim's total conception – which encompasses

the *Weltanschauung* of a social collective or epoch with its entire categorical apparatus – ideology becomes a general problem of epistemology: All human thought is historically and culturally situated, that is, anchored in a socio-historical context, and this context is constitutive for content. Since all knowledge is relational and can be understood only with reference to these socio-historical circumstances, no human thought and no knowledge (according to Mannheim, with the exception of mathematics and natural sciences) is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context. What is more, relationism is not a flaw of knowledge that ought to be overcome, but its very condition. Without hope to ever grasp the whole, Mannheim urges us to retrieve as many different perspectives as possible. The group in which Mannheim invested his hopes to possibly achieve a synthesis of all the different perspectives is the "freefloating intelligentsia." Hence, the two primary poles in the conceptualization of ideology are separated not only by different definitions but by different epistemological perspectives.

These research traditions obviously appeal differently to more critical approaches to organizational research and to more cultural ones. Institutionalist notions of ideology are essentially shaped by the approach's phenomenological legacy and roots in sociology of knowledge and are therefore closer to a culturalist sense of the concept.

In a cultural tradition, ideology is rooted in the anthropological embrace of symbols and meaning and is in fact constitutive of social reality, albeit one that is collectively constructed and inevitably socially mediated. Ideology is conceptualized as *Weltanschauung*, a belief system and representations that are shared by the members of a social collective. However, the downside of such a broad cultural understanding is, of course, that if all belief systems and social representations are ideological, the concept itself becomes all-encompassing and, thereby, redundant. In this sense, Therborn (1980, p. 5f.) criticizes that "these all-embracing definitions […] drown everything in the same water." In a similar vein, Vogel (in this volume) notes that "as long as the concept of ideology is used interchangeably with other core categories in institutional analysis, it provides terminological variety, but not analytical value added."

IDEOLOGY, INTERESTS, AND INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS

In particular, broad cultural perspectives of ideology have been criticized for their non-interest-based, apolitical approach (see, for instance, the debate in the Academy of Management Review more than two decades ago between

Weiss & Miller, 1987; Beyer, Dunbar, & Meyer, 1988; Weiss & Miller, 1988).
The main argument is that by deflecting attention from the political nature
inherent in ideological systems, scholars in fact normalize ideology,
neutralize it, and run the risk of doing exactly what ideology does: obscure
this very bias. Hence, several authors from various disciplines and research
traditions tie their understandings of ideology to political interests. From a
social movement perspective, Zald (1996, p. 262), among others, regards
ideology as "the set of beliefs that are used to justify or challenge a given
social-political order and are used to interpret the political world." From a
pragmatist research tradition, ideology is a "linked set of beliefs about the
social or political order" entailing an evaluative component and a central
claim to morality or judgement (Fine & Sandstrom, 1993, p. 23). And from
an institutional perspective, Delmestri (in this volume) contends "that only
by readdressing the ideological interest-laden component of institutional
logics, which has mostly been disregarded in new institutionalism […] can
we understand and explain today's globalized world and the grip that
similar institutional logics hold on entire spheres of material life in several
countries and places."

   Berger and Luckmann assert that not all social knowledge is ideological
and tie their understanding of ideology to power interests and, further,
contestation. According to them (1966, p. 123; similarly, Berger & Kellner,
1984, p. 65), "[w]hen a particular definition of reality comes to be attached to
a concrete power interest, it may be called an ideology." In addition, they
argue, it makes little sense to speak of ideology if everyone in a society
"inhabits" the same universe: "The distinctiveness of ideology is rather that
the same overall universe is interpreted in different ways, depending upon
concrete vested interests within the society in question" (1967, p. 123).
Similarly, as Mutch (in this volume) points out, for Archer "the key point
about ideology is not just that it involves the identification of the interests of a
particular group with a particular set of ideas, but that conflict between ideas
exists both at the level of ideas and at the level of social groups." van Dijk
(2001) also rejects an all-pervasive view of ideology and calls the "cultural
common ground," that is, cultural knowledge that is shared across ideological
group boundaries, non-ideological. "Indeed," he argues (van Dijk, 2001,
p. 16), "despite their fundamentally opposed opinions about immigration, for
instance, both racists and antiracists share at least some general knowledge
about what immigrants, countries, passports, and borders are." However,
defining ideologies as constitutive of subjects and objects leaves no space for
apolitical knowledge or realities no matter how uncontested they might be. In
a similar vein, Stinchcombe (1982, p. 147) calls deeper social categories the

"ideological raw material" from which order is constructed. Just as in the debate on the multiple faces of power (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974; Clegg, 1989), the absence of any (visible) form of contestation may in fact be an indicator for ideology working at its best. Hence, to intertwine ideology and contestation would also make necessary a debate on ideologies as foundation of totalitarian systems (e.g., Arendt, 1951), or the relation to total institutions (Goffman, 1961).

For institutional theory, the question of how to disentangle ideology and shared belief systems is of course especially challenging with regard to the relationship between ideology and institutional logics (e.g., Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Thornton, 2004; for an overview, see Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), a concept that is currently making a substantial impact on institutional research. However, explicit cross-references are rare. Institutional logics were originally conceptualized by Friedland and Alford (1991, p. 248) as material practices and symbolic constructions that constitute an institutional order's organizing principles and later by Friedland (2002, p. 382) as "cosmology within which means are meaningful, where means-ends couplets are thought appropriate and become the naturalized, unthought conditions of social action, performing the substances at stake within them." A very similar definition is provided by Simons and Ingram in their study on organization and ideology; however, they do not define institutional logics but rather ideology. They note, "Ideology is a set of beliefs about how the social world operates, including ideas about what outcomes are desirable and how they can best be achieved" (Simons & Ingram, 1997, p. 784). Three pages later, they add, "Attention to ideology suggests a simple theory of action: actors will pursue the ends their ideology values using means derived from their ideology. In this way, ideologies provide a set of first-order organizing principles" (Simons & Ingram, 1997, p. 787). We wonder if the exchange of the terms ideology and institutional logic would make a conceptual difference, particularly when taking into consideration that Friedland (in this volume) regards institutions as fundamentally ideological and that he and Alford criticized the lack of politics as one of the most serious drawbacks of almost all cultural approaches (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 253). Still, we would assume that many institutional scholars would refuse to use institutional logics and ideologies synonymously.

The understanding of institutional logics as socio-historical belief systems that guide practices in an organizational field extends this question to another prominent concept in institutional research: organizational fields. While in their famous 1983 article, DiMaggio and Powell describe one of the components of the process of institutional definition of a field, the field

structuration, as "the development of a mutual awareness among participants in a set of organizations that they are involved in a common enterprise" DiMaggio (1983, p. 148); in the same year, DiMaggio (1983, p. 150) speaks of "the development, at the cultural level, of an ideology of the field." Scott (1994, p. 207f.), in his much-quoted definition of organizational field, explicates, "The notion of field connotes the existence of a community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field." Are these meaning systems to be equated with ideologies? Is the notion of institutional logic an opportunity to talk about ideology without calling it ideology? And if not, what differentiates ideology and institutional logic on a conceptual level?

The authors in this volume address this question differently. Mutch prefers Archer's "cultural logic" over "institutional logic." Vogel suggests differentiating: "While the term of institutional logic emphasizes the conflation of symbolic constructions and material practices, capturing both, ideology only refers to the former, being reliant on, but separated from, material practices. Thus, ideology and institutional logic, though empirically interwoven, are kept conceptually separated in order to preserve their analytical usefulness. Ideologies are the nonobservable and ideal part of an institutional order which is, and must be, related to material practices." For Delmestri, "ideologies are the institutionalized interest-laden glue justifying material practices through, and connecting them to, the symbolic constructions that make up institutional logics"; for Weik, ideology is the link between institutional logics and individual choice. Hasselbladh and Kallinikos are reluctant in using the term "ideology" at all. Instead, they refer to "institutional logics" only.

As the following chapters illustrate, the link between institutions, logics, or fields on the one hand and ideologies on the other is not an easy but a challenging one. Seeing the increasing role of ideas and interests in organizational institutionalism (e.g., Scott, 2008; Campbell, 2004) and the call for more structural and political "grounding" (e.g., Lounsbury & Ventresca, 2002), we hope that this volume will inspire a lively debate.

OUTLINE OF THE VOLUME

In this brief introduction to the volume, we do not wish to engage in the lengthy debate on what ideology is or how it functions, nor did we encourage the authors of this volume to add another definition to the

myriad of those that already exist. Our goal in this volume is more modest: We want to encourage *re-engagement* with the notion of ideology in contemporary institutional research. The chapters to follow all deal with the relationship between institutions and ideology – some in a very cautious way and others in a more explicit way.

Focusing on the global expansion of formalized organization across different sectors, levels, and national societies, in "Global Organization: Rationalization and Actorhood as Dominant Scripts," Gili Drori, John Meyer, and Hokyu Hwang find hyper-rationalization and actorhood to be the driving themes. They argue that rationalized models of organizing and organization that have come to dominate the world society and structure a wide range of activities carry an ideology that emphasizes empowered and responsible actorhood. Although creating winners and losers, they argue, this cultural process "occurs at the global level in the absence of a clear gravitational center of power."

In the second chapter of this volume, "Institution, Practice, and Ontology: Toward a Religious Sociology," Roger Friedland explores institutions as religious phenomena and politicized religion as an institutional project par excellence. Taking his seminal work on institutional logics further, he explains that an institutional logic is a set of material practices organized around a particular substance that is the unobservable "sacred core" of each institutional field and the principle of its unity. Institutions, he contends, have a logic because the practices, cultural categories, and the unobservable substance are co-constitutive. Institutions depend on the faith in these invisible substances and institutional logics on making the invisible visible. It is not in the sense of legitimating power but by constituting subjects and objects and, thus, powers, Friedland argues in this chapter, that all institutions are inherently ideological formations.

Rick Vogel ("Paradigm Shifts as Ideological Changes: A Kuhnian View of Endogenous Institutional Disruption") deals with the relationship between institutions and ideology by re-reading Thomas Kuhn's (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and addressing the notion of a (scientific) paradigm through the analytical lens of new institutionalism. He thereby generates interesting insight into endogenous institutional change. Vogel dissects Kuhn's dialectical approach to ideology to show that ideologies can be both a stabilizing force in the scientific process and a starting point for change. If the current ideologies do not lead to adequate behaviors to solve present puzzles, they lose their legitimacy, which opens up the possibility for a paradigm shift. In this sense, "ideologies have an expiration date," which gives rise to a new paradigm.

In his chapter on "Institutional Streams, Logics, and Fields," Giuseppe Delmestri sheds new light on the diffusion of institutions across cultures. A key point in his chapter is the view of institutions as products of legitimating discourses and as patterns of action and thought in an institutional context. He defines ideologies as the link between material practices and symbolic constructions in institutional logics. Referring to Czarniawska and Sevón (2005), he argues that ideologies, upon which institutions are built, may have a life of their own. They travel either as symbolic systems of abstract ideas or as institutional streams with an ordering potential when carrying elements of taken-for-grantedness. However, institutional logics or ideologies can penetrate institutional contexts only if they help actors to link material practices with specific identities and social worlds.

Alistair Mutch's chapter on "Dominant Logic, Culture and Ideology" exceeds the confines of institutional theory. To deepen the cultural turn in institutional analysis and to provide an alternative to the current focus on institutional entrepreneurship, he suggests learning from critical realism and cultural sociology. Building on a discussion of possible links between the understandings of ideology by Archer and Wuthnow and the notion of institutional logics, he explains changes in logics in the UK brewing industry. His longitudinal study explores in particular how ideologies, even when they remain linked to the interests of particular groups, are riven with contradictions and, ultimately, strengthen other actors and provide them with space in which to develop alternatives.

In "'Birthing' versus 'Being Delivered': Of Bodies, Ideologies, and Institutions," Elke Weik analyzes how broader belief systems shape the cognition and behavior of actors. Comparing German and Dutch practices of childbirth, she shows the interplay between institutions, agencies, and agents in both countries and elucidates how multiple competing logics, contestation of meaning, and practices evolve. Applying Giddens' theory of modernity and Friedland and Alford's (1991) model of institutional logic, she argues that competing institutional logics provide individual actors with a choice between several ideologies concerning the same topic, each providing a distinct social identity. In her case study, she especially highlights the material side of ideology and identity – "body styles" as part of the identity construction – and offers new insight on various topics, especially on the influence of individual actors, either as professionals with strategic interests or as agents construing their identity.

John Mohr and Brooke Neely argue in "Modeling Foucault: Dualities of Power in Institutional Fields" that from the beginning, institutional theory has always been a transformed ideology theory, and thus, critical ideology

theory and institutional theory share intellectual lineage and cross-linkages. In this spirit, they read Foucault as an institutionalist and use his work as a guide to generate new insight into the question of how power and ideology operate within institutional fields and constitute institutions as dually ordered systems of truth and power. Empirically, they explore historical data on New York carceral organizations in the late 19th century and apply structural equivalence techniques to model and measure patterns in the data and decode different modalities of power. They impressively demonstrate how subject categories in an underprivileged domain are created together with the categories of "treatments" they receive and how subjection and microphysics of power operate at the level of the institutional field.

Jannis Kallinikos' and Hans Hasselbladh chapter on "Work, Control and Computation: Rethinking the Legacy of Neo-institutionalism" pleads for breaking with the conventional outlook in new institutionalism that considers technology outside the object of institutional analysis of organizations. They argue that the distinctive regulative logic of computational technology which is manifested in the increasing entanglement of domain-specific practices and their underlying cognitive and normative order with the decontextualized principles and methods that have traditionally been deployed in the management and control of work operations needs to be addressed in institutional analysis.

Finally, Ann Westenholz asks in "Institutional Entrepreneurs Performing in Meaning Arenas: Transgressing Institutional Logics in two Organizational Fields" how the transgression of the institutional logics of two contradictory organizational fields into a new practice – commercial open source software – occurred. She argues that bringing together traditions of critique of ideology critique and critique of new institutional theory enhances our understanding of political and discursive processes. Ideologies are equated with meaning systems that allocate subject positions and social identities. Instead of one or a few, the study finds many different and scattered institutional entrepreneurs at various levels of legitimacy, the joint effort of whom brought about the change.

We are also indebted to the authors of this volume for their willingness to engage in intense debates on the relationship between institutions and ideology. Furthermore, we especially thank the editor of *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, Mike Lounsbury, for the opportunity to publish the volume at hand. Finally, we thank Susan Dortants for her language editing assistance for all non-native speakers.

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GLOBAL ORGANIZATION: RATIONALIZATION AND ACTORHOOD AS DOMINANT SCRIPTS

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ABSTRACT

One of the dominant features of the age of globalization is the rampant expansion of organization. In particular, formal, standardized, rationalized, and empowered forms of organization expand in many domains and locales. We discuss these features of organization, showing that hyper-rationalization and actorhood are main themes of organization across presumably distinct social sectors and national societies. We explain the ubiquity of such organizational forms in institutional terms, seeing the global culture of universalism, rationality, and empowered actorhood as supporting the diffusion of managerial roles and perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we discuss the modern global expansion of rationalized models of organizing and organization. These models stress a distinctive sort

of formalized organization and carry an ideology emphasizing empowered and responsible actorhood. Relevant themes flow around the world, in good part independent of nation-state boundaries. They flow between private and public structures and across essentially all social sectors – for example, business, religion, education, medicine, and recreation. They flow between very central locations in organizational hierarchies and the details of local settings. And strikingly, they flow back and forth between high academic theory, dominant organizational structures, and conventions of practice. These models, in short, help build a world in which highly standardized forms of organizing can be found in the widest variety of countries, sectors, and levels. We analyze why this expansive trend of organizational rationalization, based on strong assumptions of agency and actorhood, occurs. Modern organization involves both hyper-rationalization and dramatic emphasis on actorhood. These two features are intertwined, marking organization in the age of globalization as distinct.

The core themes of our analysis of the expansion and diffusion of "organization" are as follows. First, we observe that modern organizations are expected to be bounded, purposive, and rationalized sovereign actors, with great capabilities for effective action toward goals (Brunsson, 1989; Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). Second, such organizations are seen as necessary and effective in an increasingly globalized (or Europeanized) environment. And third, this is true as the modern environment comes to be seen as highly rationalized and scientized and filled with empowered human agents. Under these conditions, effective organizing – standardized across time and space and social sectors – is both possible and progressive (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006b). Taken together, these notions about organizing and organization set an ideological basis for today's managerial and governance schemes.

Rationalization, in its varying forms, is a very long-term trend in Western history. Many of its earlier manifestations – the old-style bureaucracy, the traditional family firm, or the classic professional organization (e.g., a hospital or a university) – are clearly undercut by the rise of the forms of rationalized organization we explore here. The older forms were inconsistent with the organizational actorhood that characterizes the modern organizational revolutions (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000; Meyer, 1992).

We begin our discussion with an example illustrating the rationalized and scripted character of the modern organization. We then turn to theoretical reflections about the character and culture of the modern global environment that supports the expansion and diffusion of models of the proper organization as a highly rationalized actor. We then survey examples of rationalization across social sectors and across national or cultural

boundaries. The goal of this survey is to illustrate the expansive nature of organizational rationalization. In the research literature, it is common to take for granted the general global rise in organization, as if it were an endogenous – almost teleological – process driven by the functional demands or power centers of an inevitable global expansion. In reaction, we emphasize that the whole massive organizational explosion of since the middle of the twentieth century is surprising and that its ubiquity calls for explanation. Traditional explanations in terms of local functionality or interest constellations do not adequately account for the extraordinary organizational elaboration involved; they also fail to account for the commonalities across societies and social sectors routinely observed.

An Example

Consider the following planned organizational reform:
  Ten expected results:

1. [Local unit] programs that were established, continued, and discontinued on the basis of vulnerability, potential impact, capacity, and [the organization's] comparative advantages.
2. Quality criteria for service delivery and advocacy in each of the core areas, adopted through policy decisions at national and international levels.
3. [Organization]-wide evaluation system that showed measurable progress in all core areas and a process of achieving the characteristics of a well-functioning [local unit].
4. [Local units] that work with different models of [personnel] engagement. Decision-making bodies that reflected the population with balanced gender, ethnic, and youth representation.
5. [Local units] with more diversified and sustainable financial resource base.
6. An organization that mobilized people and influenced decisions in each core area.
7. Cooperation strategies agreed upon by all, framing humanitarian and capacity-building cooperation programs between [local units].
8. Increased availability of information, demonstrated information sharing, and learning from experience, regionally and internationally.
9. More [local units] contributing internationally on a long-term basis to development cooperation.
10. All components developed and implemented in parallel against a common strategy for the movement.

We observe here a 10-year strategic plan of a prominent international organization (quoted from Quelch & Laidler, 2003, p. 27). Elaborate rationalization is involved, along with a dramatic emphasis on organizational accountability. With slight changes in wording, it could describe organizational reform in any locale around the world or in any social sector. The conundrum of such organizational reforms is that their schematic approaches to organizational reform drain plans and organizations from distinct identities or goals. References to humanitarian work, local units, and advocacy provide hints to the organization's identity, but had these been replaced by profit or subsidiaries, it would be easy to mistake the case for a transnational corporation. This seems to follow from the fact that "best practice" models tend to be conceived as universal and thus eliminate from the individual case much of its individuality. Here – in the "universalism of particularism" (Robertson, 1994) or in the dialectics of "totalizing and individualizing" practices (Foucault, 1977, 1991) – lie the dialectics of organizational rationalization and actorhood. "Best practice" scenarios in the current world are scripts of standardized actorhood, and modern formal organization, because it involves extensive rationalization, generates reliance on formulaic plans.

Thus, the fact that the reform plans above describe what was once thought to be a very distinctive organization – the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – tends to disappear. Along with the name of the distinct organization, schematic plans for reform of what were once distinct challenges and operations also tend to disappear in "Strategy 2010." Their disappearance is a response to extensive rationalization and to the dominance of standardized notions of organized actorhood. Homogenization is, therefore, the result of the increasingly global reaches of organization and rationalization. It is an outcome of the global rationalization processes involved.

In this chapter, we illustrate the expansive nature of models of the organization as rationalized actor, relying on historical accounts of organizational change across different societies and societal sectors. We suggest the extraordinary range of dimensions on which rationalized formal organization arises – across social sectors, around the world, and over time. Our review emphasizes some major dimensions of the modern model of the organization: strategic planning, personnel policies, and formalized and differentiated structures. We observe that rationalization is intertwined with the construction of actorhood, transforming modern organizations into highly agentic and proactive social entities (Drori et al., 2006b).

Before turning to the descriptive empirical material, we reflect theoretically on the forces producing the expansion and diffusion of the rationalized

organized actor. We are interested in the social and cultural conditions that have transformed entities like the International Red Cross, formerly understood to be very unique and particular, into social structures that can now be described as standard instances of organization.

RATIONALIZED ORGANIZATIONAL ACTORHOOD

The formalization of social relations is a ubiquitous feature of the modern era. Activities from production and mass education to charity are recast as formal organizations: they become firms, educational organizations, and nonprofits. This has long been a tendency in the stateless American society, as classically observed by Alexis de Tocqueville (1836/2002). The underlying analytic argument is that rationalized actorhood is a cultural ideology that supports social order and control in an expansive stateless society.

In the current era, similar conditions of statelessness and expansive organization are evidenced worldwide. While both the reality and the perception of globalization have intensified dramatically since the twentieth century, no world government or other centralized authority emerged to coordinate or control intensifying globalization. In addition, the nation-state as the sovereign mechanism of control, challenged by both the market and the civil society, as well as transnational and sub-national forces, has weakened substantially. Parallel to the earlier American history, a diffuse structure of authority has created opportunities and demands for expanded subunit actorhood. Under such conditions, cultural emphases on rationalized organizational actorhood have become a global feature: formal organizations dramatically multiply worldwide (Drori et al., 2006b, pp. 2–7). The associated formalization of social life is depicted as progress in the achievement of effective social integration, control, and action by theorists from Tocqueville, Dewey, and Mead to contemporaries like Putnam (2000). And it is often criticized as suppressing creativity and diversity and community (e.g., Lewis, 1922; Riesman, 1950; Whyte, 1956).

In any case, the expansion of modern organizational formalization has far exceeded any growth in functional complexity. In spite of the common view of formalization as a response to the needs of a growing population and of a more complex economy, we observe that the rates of organizational proliferation outpace growth in population or in economic capacity – in national, sub-national, and international spheres (Drori et al., 2006b, pp. 7–12). Therefore, the construction of world society as an associational society has been largely a cultural phenomenon. Globalization has propelled the proliferation of the formal organization in volume and in reach (Boli &

Thomas, 1997, 1999). Moreover, the organization that arises globally is of a particular kind. It is formal, rationalized, and empowered organization.

Rationalization is a quintessentially cultural process. It refers to "(1) continuing efforts to systematize social life around standardized rules and around schemes that explicitly differentiate and then seek to link means and ends; (2) the ongoing reconstruction of all social organization – both social activities and social actors, … as means for the pursuit of collective purposes, these purposes themselves subject to increasing systematization" (Jepperson, 2002, p. 257). Through the transformation of social life around means-ends logic, the celebration of efficiency, and the valorization of credentialed expertise, rationalization becomes a most pervasive cultural force. Thus, while rationalized action is sometimes explained by long-term competitive evolution and increasing sociotechnical complexity, it is clear that rationalization involves a great deal of cultural enactment, and this enactment relies on images and identities of a broad environment. In Weberian terms, the impact of rationalization is not in the mechanistic routines that it establishes but rather in the "spirit" that it settles on modern social arrangements: "In the last resort the factor which produced capitalism is the rational permanent enterprise, rational accounting, rational technology and rational law, but again not these alone. Necessary complementary factors were the rational spirit, the rationalization of the conduct of life in general and a rationalistic economic ethic" (Weber, 1961, p. 260).

The cultural construction of organization as rationalized actor is clearly supported by the rapid globalization perceived in the world of the past half-century and may well reciprocally reinforce the actualities and perceptions of globalization. This period is one of expansion, with increased economic, political, military, social, and cultural interdependence, both actual and perceived. These expansions do not take the form of classic state-building, which might have provided answers to questions of social order, since there is no prospect of an overarching sovereign structure bringing order in the stateless world society (or even in Europe). Instead, sweeping sociocultural movements, promulgated by the widest variety of professional and associational structures, build a global society (Boli, & Thomas, 1997, 1999; Drori et al., 2006b). Much rationalization is achieved through (social) scientific analysis and is based on scientized authority (Drori, Meyer, Ramirez, & Schofer, 2003; Drori & Meyer, 2006a, 2006b). And, accompanying something of a delegitimation of the authority of the traditional national(ist) state, we observe much expansion in emphases on the rights and capacities of individual persons. Both rationalization and actorhood are embodied in the extraordinary worldwide expansion of

education in the post-war period (Drori et al., 2003; Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

Rationalized Organizational Actorhood as Ideology

In this cultural context, the ideological celebration of rationalized organizational actors as natural units of social life makes much sense. The natural and social worlds, formerly filled with the arbitrary and unknown, are now scientifically analyzable places. Arbitrary environments have become the tamed ''uncertainties'' that call for competent rational analysis and action: modern schooled humans are seen as endowed with extraordinary rights and capacities, not only to act agentically on their own, but also to assemble in and contribute to participatory organizations of every sort.

Rationalized organization, therefore, seems to have become the preferred ideology for structuring the widest range of activities across different social contexts. ''Ideology'' is a loaded term, with a long and complex lineage that cuts across several disciplines and theoretical persuasions (Guillén, 1994; Thompson, 1984). The central lineage reaches back to the Marxian notions of false consciousness and commodity fetishism. It has been reconceptualized in multiple ways, from the crude, now largely rejected conception of false cognition, or ideology as an inversion of reality, to ideology as the legitimation of dominant groups, and to the more diffuse notion of ideology as stemming from ''the material structure of society as a whole'' (Eagleton, 1991, p. 30). Despite the varied ways in which the term is used in the abundant literature on ideology, it often retains its close affinity with analyses rooted in conceptions of power, interests, and domination. For instance, Thompson (1984, p. 4) proposed that ''To study ideology … is to study the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination.''

Rather than seeing ideology masking unjust conditions of power or material domination, rationalization (as discussed in this chapter) is fundamentally a cultural process that constitutes and elaborates social entities as actors with ontological standing in the collective project of progress and justice (Meyer, Boli, & Thomas, 1987). In this context, the value attributed to a model (practice, structural element, or idea) helps drive its enactment: formal organization is prevalent in many social environments (across fields and across countries) because of the qualities attributed to it, such as rationality and agency. Its prevalence in many different social environments with widely different material conditions and power