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Organizational Deviance: A Humanist View

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ABSTRACT

The sociological paradigm proposed by C. Wright Mills is advocated as a basis (model) for the study of elite deviance of an organizational nature. The relationship between social structure and social character within organizational environments is examined utilizing central concepts regarding both social character (i.e., alienation, other-directedness, and inauthenticity) and bureaucratic structural characteristics (e.g., routinization and fragmentation of tasks, dehumanization and groupthink, the construction of guilt neutralizing ideologies, and front activities). The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of this approach for a humanist study of crime.

Humanism, "Crime," and Alienation

As news items go, those appearing in the Okland Tribune on October 12, 1983 were not unique:

> Some fifteen reputed Midwestern Mafia members were indicted by the Justice Department for using their influence to get Teamster Union pension fund loans, and, having

invested such monies in certain Las Vegas casinos, then "looted" the gambling profits by skimming operations that created tax-free pools of capital divided among said investors.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka was found guilty of accepting a $1.8 million bribe from the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. Tanaka was sentenced to four years in prison and fined 500 million yen. Evidence against Tanaka, and four co-defendants was gathered from Lockheed officals in exchange for a promise of immunity from prosecution; something never before granted in a Japanese trial. The question of what Tanaka will do regarding the seat in the Japanese Parliament he has held since 1947 has created something of a crisis for the current Prime Minister. Some 350,000 Japanese attended 320 rallies throughout Japan to demand that the first Japanese Prime Minister ever convicted of crimes while in office resign.

Item: Meanwhile on the editorial page, Coleman McCarthy related that certain American brewers are actively engaged in the cultivation of consumer loyalty on some 550 American college campuses. Firms such as Coors, Miller, and Busch employ student representatives at $150 to $300 per month to distribute samples that include everything from free beers to bumper stickers and hats, replete with brewing company logos. Much of such distribution takes place at rock concerts that are underwritten by the firms.

Meanwhile, notes McCarthy, alcohol abuse now figures in 100,000 deaths and $120 billion in social costs per year in the United States. Moreover, certain groups, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest are convinced that the activities of the campus "booze merchants" are predatory and actually involve the creation of "drinkers" among American Youth (Jacobson et al, 1983).

C. Wright Mills correctly stated that such examples of the "higher immorality" are "symptoms of a much more widespread condition" (Mills, 1963:331). As has been pointed out elsewhere, Mills' thoughts on the nature of the higher immorality have been both prophetic (Simon & Eitzen, 1982:35-68) and theoretically solid (Ermann & Lundmann, 1978:57) as a basis of study for many types of elite/organizational deviance.

Mills saw the higher immorality as a structural condition of American society and made clear that it entailed acts only some of which constituted crimes. Mills made clear that the higher immorality was composed of acts, whether illegal or not, that, by the value system of this culture would be regarded as immoral (deviant). Since Mills, a number of students of the subject have advocated the study of both legal and illegal acts of "white-collar" (elite/organizational) deviance as a proper focus (Simon & Eitzen, 1982; Kramer, 1982:75; Schrager & Short, 1978). Moreover, the recent work of Scimecca has advocated that humanists in sociology begin taking Mills' sociological theory seriously as a basis for studying a broad range of sociological issues (Scimecca, 1977; 1981:18-21).

Yet, for all of the professed interest in

elite deviance, and in Mills' sociology, a humanistic study of such deviance remains in an embryonic state. Indeed, the position taken here is that a humanistic study of crime would (1) employ Mills' theories of social structure and social character and (2) meaningfully relate the phenomenon of elite crime to the social structure and crime as a whole. The purpose of this paper is to suggest some beginnings in these directions. Its thesis are that a humanistic study of crime is possible, and the Mills' sociological view, taken as a whole, provides a basis that constitutes both an empirically testable set of propositions and a politically radical humanist sociology.

Social Structure and Social Character: Mills' Sociology

In this brief space it is not possible to delve into the nuances of Mills' social psychology. The single best treatment of the relationship between social structure and social character developed by Mills is Character & Social Structure (Gerth & Mills, 1954; see also Scimecca, 1977:37-47 for a useful summary). For present purposes, it is most useful to note Mills' basic premise that organizations shape social character through the social roles played by persons situated therein (Scimecca, 1977:42-45). Thus for Mills social character consists of "the relatively stabilized intergration of" the biological apparatus and psychic structure as they become linked within such social roles. The resulting combination was referred to by Gerth and Mills as the person. What institutions do is select and mold members according to various formal and informal rules. Some of these rules relate to the type of character traits centering around the goals and gratifications sought by organizations.

An important aspect of Mills' thought

concerns the type of social character that has come to dominate modern industrial society. A paramount concept in this regard for Mills was that of alienation. As Mills (1959:171-172) states:

> The advent of the alienated man and all the themes which lie behind his advent now affect the whole of our serious intellectual life and cause our immediate intellectual malaise. It is a major theme of the human condition in the contemporary epoch and of all studies worthy of the name. I know of no idea, no theme, no problem that is so deep in the classic tradition and so much involved in the possible default of contemporary social science...
>
> Back of all this -- and much more of traditional and current worry and thinking among serious and sensible students of man -- there lies the simple and decisive fact that the alienated man is the antithesis of the Western image of the free man. The society in which this man, this cheerful robot, flourishes is the antithesis of the free society -- or in the plain and literal meaning of the word, of the democratic society. The advent of this man points to freedom as trouble, as issue, and - let us hope - as problem for social scientists. Put as a trouble of the individual -- of the terms and values of which he is uneasily aware -- it is the trouble called 'alienation.' As an issue for publics -- to the terms and values of which they are mainly indifferent -- it is no less that the issue of democratic society, as

fact and as aspiration.

Mills' vision of the alienated person in the mass society serves also as image for a humanist study of elite deviance. Such a construct might be reasoned as follows:

1) American Society is ruled at the highest level by a converging elite of power composed of transnational capitalist conglomerates, political elites (especially those in the executive branch of the federal government), and high ranking military members (Simon & Eitzen, 1982:6-22; Scimecca, 1981:116-139 for a review of supporting evidence). More important, such elite institutions are functionally interdependent, and relationships between them exist on a number of levels, including the interchanging of personnel and interorganiza-tional cooperation in the furtherance of various mutual goals.

2) Within these higher circles character types are shaped by the roles played therin. The traits of value include what Mills char-acterized as:

a) "The selling of the self" in the person-ality market, false personalization, other-directedness, the cheerful robot mentality (Mills, 1963:365; 263-273; 330:339; 1956) denote a great deal of manipulation in in-terpersonal behavior within organizations.

b) ·A moral insensibility, lack of stable, meaningful values a relentless pursuit of money on the part of the white-collar worker; and a "higher-immorality" among the elite. Mills described the moral insensibility in part as referring to:

> the mute acceptance -- or even un-
> awareness of moral atrocity ... by
> moral insensibility I mean the inca-
> pacity for moral reaction to event

>and to character ... of people who
are selected, molded, and honored in
the mass society. [Indeed,] the
atrocities of our time are done by
men as functions of social machinery
-- men possessed by an abstract view
that hides from them human beings
who are their victims, and, as well,
their own humanity. They are inhu-
man because they are impersonal.
They are not sadistic but merely
businesslike; they are not aggres-
sive but merely efficient; they are
not emotional at all but technically
clean-cut.

c) The prevalence of prejudice and stereotype
(1963:365) in a world where people interact
largely as players of secondary, segmented
roles.

To these traits we would add an addition-
al central concept, one which both synthesizes
and expands Mills' view of alienation in the
mass society. We speak here of the notion of
inauthenticity. The concept has been used in
several senses (Seeman, 1966; Etzioni, 1968;
1969; Baxter, 1982). Yet there is a unifying
theme to which ne can point, one which focuses
on the two dominant, yet opposing trends in
alienation studies. That is, alienation as
"an objective social condition" versus alien-
ation as an individual "subjective state"
(Schweitzer, 1982:68; Plasek, 1974).

On the level of social structure,
inauthenticity refers to the appearance of
overt positive appearances, coupled with nega-
tive underlying realities. Within large
bureacratic organizations, this frequently
means the overt appearance of democratic par-
ticipation. In reality, however, underlings
are excluded from meaningful democratic input
in key decisions. Thus institutionally, inau-
thenticity is often indicated by the amount of

resources spent by organizations on various "front" (propaganda) activities designed to convince workers, clients, and/or publics of their positive attributes in the face of negative often tightly held secrets. Mills spoke of such activities as merely the manipulation of public opinion (Mills 1963:330-339; 1956, 344), but the effects of inauthentic activities on social character and crime are striking.

On the level of social character, inauthenticity of structure results in a series of manifest negative conditions, including:

a) difuse, unfocused, "bottled up" aggression (Etzioni, 1968:881) the lack of outlets for which may result in such symptoms as psychosomatic diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide.

b) The use of irrelevant status criteria resulting in misconceptions of one's own status. For minorities this often includes the acceptance of negative stereotypes about their own ethnic or religious groups. For example, Jews may come to believe that they are overly materialistic and clannish. Or Blacks may come to believe that they are physically ugly and mentally dull. Thus one's concept of self becomes based on a distorted image of what others think.

c) A lack of creativity due to the acceptance of negative stereotypes concerning one's own status.

d) Most central to our purposes, the element of self-deception regarding the failure to understand fully or even to deny one's own experiences.

The unifying theme in such literature on both the institutional and characterological levels concerns the construction of false

inaccurate images that are antithetical to the meeting of basic human needs for love, creativity, identity, and community.

Alienation, Inauthenticity, and Elite Deviance

A number of studies of the Vietnam and Watergate era scandals provide a valuable starting point for understanding the varieties of alienation spoken of above (Sanford & Comstock, (Eds.), 1971; Kelman, 1973; 1976; Janis, 1972; Bernard et al, 1971). What is striking about this literature is its emphasis on the group processes involving the lessening of moral restraints on the part of elites and those authorized to carry out their directives. Such processes include the following:

Authorization and Powerlessness: The practice of unquestioning obedience to elite authority is of central importance to the study of organizations and to the deviance committed therein. Orders, decisions, and plans that are unethical or illegal are often carried out by underlings in part because they felt they had no choice; they felt powerless to disobey such injunctions. Examples include incidents such as the massacre at My Lai, and the Watergate "horrors." Suprisingly, those who seem most to evidence such powerlessness include those underlying "far removed from the centers of power and ...those relatively close" (Kelman,1976:308) to elite power. Indeed, a nation wide poll taken by Kelman and Lawrence in 1972 found that fifty-one percent of respondents said that they would engage in mass killings such as those that took place at My Lai. Those who stated that they would do so felt "by and large that the individual had no choice in the face of authoritative orders" (Kelman, 1973:41). Moreover, Kelman notes, such individuals are often characterized by what he terms normative integration concerning the political order. That is, such individuals feel that they are included in the poli-

tical system in only a tenuous manner. They do not see themselves as actively determining the fate of a government that is theirs. Rather they feel like pawns; that they must support elite policies regardless of personal preferences.

While such perceived powerlessness is usually charactersitic of the lower middle and lower classes, Kelman found a striking degree of such conformity among high level military officers and bureaucratic functionaries. Moreover, Kanter (1977:189-205) and Kanter and Stein (1979:80-96) have discussed the existence of widespread feelings of powerlessness at both top and middle levels or organizations. The empirical study of such powerlessness, and its relationship to organizational and interorganizational deviance has hardly been examined. (1) Nevertheless, available evidence does indicate that the modal response to powerlessness is a begrudging, albeit fatalistic conformity.

Conformity among those in the "higher circles" tend to involve either: (a) an overwhelming sense of obligation elicited by elites; or (b) the creation of some transcendent mission whereby elites stake claim to "higher" purposes that are clearly outside the law. In the case of government such purposes usually relate to the national interest, executive privilege, fighting the communist menace or other foreign threat. In the case of corporate deviance such notions usually involve meeting profit targets, protecting the interests of the stockholders, or other overriding organizational goals. Gross, (1978:199) has gone so far as to claim that, because they are goal oriented, "all organizations are inherently criminal." While this serves to overstate the point, there is plenty of evidence to indicate that deviant behavior in government and business is commonplace (Simon & Eitzen, 1982), but the effects on the

individuals who engage in such deviance are
little known.

Routinization and Fragmentation of Tasks:
Decisions to commit deviant acts, even murder,
are carried out within an established routine.
Such routines involve more than the filling
out of forms, reports, and schedules. Indeed,
a number of students of this subject have
maintained that the large, complex nature of
modern organizations encourages deviance be-
cause (1) specialized tasks involve the same
routines whether they are deviant of legiti-
mate, and (2) elites may both discourage being
informed of scandals within organizations by
lower functionaries and hide from function-
aries and the public acts of elite deviance
(Simon & Eitzen, 1982:26; Silver & Geller,
1978; Vaughn, 1980:87; Kramer, 1982).

     There are a number of additional struc-
tural factors that tend to increase the like-
lihood that deviant acts will be committed by
organization. Because tasks within large
organizations are so specialized and involve
the cooperation of teams and/or committees o
co-workers, finding out who is responsible for
the commission of deviance within organiza-
tions becomes difficult (Schrager & Short,
1978). This is because personal responsibil-
ity becomes more diffuse as the division of
labor becomes more complex, and organizational
subunits become more autonomous. Technology
has made possible new types of deviance, in-
cluding everything from environmental poison-
ing to computer fraud. Technological growth
is also related to increases in the complexity
of the division of labor, subunit autonomy,
product diversification, and hierachical con-
trol of administrative functions, all of which
facilitates deviance within and between organ-
izations (Vaughn, 1980). This is true in part
because technological and organizational com-
plexities tend to mask both the identities of
the victims and victimizers from one another.

This may be true to the point where the harm that befalls victims may be quite unintended, (e.g., the use of illness causing preservatives, flavorings, and colorings in the manufacture of foods), thus raising the question of unintended harm as a proper focus of the study of organizational deviance (Schrager & Short, 1978).

Within Mills' frame of reference, such structural conditions and processes tend to promote the adoption of special vocabularies of motive. Mills' claim was that "it is an hypothesis worthy of test that typical vocabularies of motive for different situations are significant determinants of conduct" (Mills, 1963;445)). A number of recent case studies of elite deviance report the construction of an elaborate vocabulary designed to provide both motive and neutralization of guilt (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Item: the SS in their quest to exterminate European Jewry adopted special "language rules" (Arendt, 1964:85) in which terms like "final solution," "evacuation," "special treatment," and "clearing up fundamental problems" (Barnet, 1972:15) were used as euphemisms for mass murder.

Item: Janis (1971:73) has noted that within the Johnson administration Vietnam policy group:

> The members of the group adopted a special vocabulary for describing the Vietnam War, using such terms as body count, armed reconnaissance, and surgical strikes, which they picked up from their military colleagues. The Vietnam policy makers, by using this professional military vocabulary, were able to avoid in their discussions with each other all direct referen-

ces to human suffering and thus to
form an attitude of detachment sim-
ilar to that of surgeons.

Item: Stotland (1977) notes that one
common ideology among white-collar criminals
concerns an initial belief that the criminal
actually benefits the victim through victimi-
zation.   Such vocabularies may also stem from
a wider societal attitude that stems from the
notion that human beings are by nature "lar-
cenous" (Stotland, 1977:193).   Thus making
victims of such people teaches them lessen
their greed.

Such vocabularies tend to involve an
element of self-delusion that characterizes
the inauthentic condition.   Such exercises in
self-delusion are also characteristic of many
con-artists (Stotland, 1977).   Most important,
perhaps, is the notion that in the end self-
delusion does not seem an effective guilt
reducing mechanism.   Thus underneath the overt
exercises in image building among the elite
deviants one would expect to find a consider-
able amount of intrapsychic conflict, perhaps
manifested   as   psychosamatic diseases and
bouts with drugs and/or alcohol (Etzioni,
1969).

This same phenomenon has also been dis-
cussed by Lifton (1971) in relation to combat
troops in Vietnam: those involved in the
killing of innocent civilians came to view
virtually all Vietnamese as the enemy.   This
ideology based on self-delusion was referred
to as false witness by Lifton.   Underneath,
however, studies by Lifton and others reported
that many fought there stopped believing in
the usefulness of the war.   Some of these men
felt that they had been "victimized and bet-
rayed by their country" (Lifton, 1971:48).
Indeed, Lifton predicted such feelings would
result in a variety of disturbances in vet-
erans ranging from "mild withdrawal to peri-

odic depression to severe psychosomatic dis-
orders to disabling psychosis" (Lifton,
1971:48). The theme of victimizers turning
into victims is a strong one in the psycho-
logically oriented literature (Bernard et al,
1971; Kelman, 1973; 1976), and its implica-
tions for the humanist study of deviance is
discussed in the concluding section.

Distance, Dehumanization and Groupthink

Bernard et al (1971) view dehumanization
as a psychic defense mechanism against the
pain of overwhelming emotions that entails a
decrease in both the individual's own sense of
individuality, and the perception of the "hu-
maness of others" (1971:102) (i.e., stereo-
typing; Duster, 1971; Smelser, 1971; Opton,
1971). This mechanism, it is claimed is di-
rectly fostered by the "impersonal aspects of
modern organizations and the mass society,"
(Bernard et al, 1971:102) and can be either
self-directed, or object-directed. When self-
directed dehumanization involves treating
one's self as a machine like cog-in-a wheel,
thus fulfilling the very threat such a defense
seeks to prevent; loss of status. Powerles-
sness, as mentioned above, constitutes one
cause of such abject conformity.

When object-directed, dehumanization in-
volves the perception of others as statistics
or commodities in a vast numbers game. In-
deed, many studies of both elite and non-elite
deviance have noted a strong tendency on the
part of victimizers to stereotype victims,
and, consequently, to deny victimization:

Item: During the Watergate era Daniel
Ellsberg was labeled by the White House "plum-
bers" as having affiliation with both Commun-
ist spies and the Democratic canidates for the
Presidency (Kelman, 1976:312).

Item: Smigel (1956) noted that large

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organizations may be likely victims of deviant acts because restraints against crime become weakened when the victim is perceived as non-human. One would suspect that this would especially be the case if such organizations are perceived as evil entities that have victimized individuals.

Item: One characteristic of the Vietnam era was the emotional and physical distance of victims. Indeed, the enemy was denied human status on both political (Communistic) and racial ("gook", "slope", "dink") grounds. As Barnet has emphasized: "Dehumanizing the enemy is a psychological precondition for killing because most human beings have been socialized against homicide" (1972:47).

Item: Such dehumanization is by no means confined to governmental of military organizations as examples of it abound in the study of corporate scandals. Among the most graphic, perhaps, is the Ford Pinto scandal of the 1970's. Therein the Ford Motor Company's internal memo reduced human life to a dollar figure obtained from the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, a federal agency. Comparison of the costs to the company for death and burn claims versus the costs of inserting a protective rubber bladder within the Pinto's gas tank was a major consideration in the decision to leave the gas tank defective (Simon & Eitzen, 1982:98-100).

Item: Vaughn (1980) has noted that deviance between organizations is contributed to by stereotyping the status of the victim organization by the victimizer. This is especially true concerning government agencies which are often viewed by corporations as inept, inefficient, and destructive of the free enterprise system because of their regulatory role.

Item: Presthus (1978) has noted that one

type of social character found within large
organizations are people possessing combina-
tions of authoritarian and other-directed
characteristics. These individuals tend to
exude charisma via a superficial sense of
warmth and charm, and also tend to be able to
make decisions easily because they are able to
view matters in black and white terms. The
latter requires the ability to categorize
people into nonhuman entities for the purposes
of making decisions concerning layoffs, fir-
ings, plant closings, and advertising cam-
paigns. Such people, termed upwardly mobiles
by Presthus, ten to rise to the top within
bureaucratic structures.

Moreover, Clinard (1983:136-138) notes
that those managers likely to engage in acts
of organizational deviance tend to be people
recruited from outside of the companies they
head. They tend to be men who are interested
in getting as much publicity in financial
journals, showing quick increases in profits,
and moving on to higher positions within two
years. Recent studies of work alienation
demonstrate that people with such high extrin-
sic needs also tend to be "workaholics," mani-
festing what is called "Type-A" personality
characteristics. These traits involve "free-
floating hostility, competitiveness, a high
need for socially approved success, unbridled
ambitions, aggressiveness, impatience, and
polyphasic thought and action" (i.e., trying
to do two things at once) (Kanungo,
1982:1557). These people also tend to exhibit
the lowest scores on measures of mental health
in such studies.

Moreover Janis has described the presence
of a related phenomenon at work in elite cir-
cles. Termed groupthink, it refers to "a mode
of thinking that people engage in where they
are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group,
where the member's striving for unanimity
overrides their motivations to realistically

appraise alternative courses of action"
(1972:9). Groupthink results in a reduced
capacity for moral judgement. It increases the
likelyhood of stereotyped thought by in-group
members. Thus during the Vietnam era each
member of the Johnson inner circle of policy
makers shared stereotypes, e.g. that the poor
of the world wanted to take from rich, and
that Asians had little regard for human life.

Another aspect of groupthink involves
criticism and eventual ostracism of dissen-
ters. Within Johnson's inner circle those
advocating alternative courses of action in
Vietnam were at first somewhat openly criti-
cized by the President and eventually press-
ured into leaving the administration. Simil-
arly, Smith (1961) in his analysis of the
General Electric price-fixing scandal notes
that those who objected to the conspiracy were
threatened with loss of their jobs. This
remained true even after the legal department
of General electric warned those involved that
what they were doing was against the law and
that further price-fixing efforts should
cease. Other studies (Clinard, 1983:125 ff)
also demonstrate the immense pressures to
conform that can be placed on underlings by
top managers within organizations.

Moreover, there are a number of addition-
al ways in which those who differ from group
norms may be removed from important organiza-
tional posts (e.g., retirement, or being
placed in a position of lesser status). As
Glass (1976) has written, organizations can
kill people in a a number of ways, and among
the easiest is neglect: neglect involves the
power to make individuals feel useless. (2)
Not only can organizations make people feel
powerless, but there exists a related set of
processes inherent in bureaucratic structures;
those involving the routine in roles played by
bureaucrats.

Front Activities: A number of students of the subject have noted the front behavior involved in elite deviance (Barnet, 1972; Mills, 1956:344-356; Simon & Eitzen, 1982:49-53). This vague term has come to include deceptive or outright lies, encompassing everything from corporate advertising to the creating of pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1961) and phony crises by news media, public relations firms, and governmental agencies.

Indeed, during the Watergate era, a number of liberal and radical commentators noted the degree to which the White House staff tended to perceive the problem as one of managing public opinion (Simon, 1978). During the Nixon and Carter eras a common complaint was that the confidence gap between White House and public was the product of an image problem. It is also reported that fully one-third of corporate advertising now goes for messages about the corporation itself; not about products or services.

Front activities used to mask elite deviance are a common attribute of virtually all types of bureaucratic entities. Turk (1981) believes that lying within governmental security agencies is "a routine tactic," the use of which is limited only by expediency. Other "front activities" include providing only the information requested by investigating officials or citizens; destroying or "misfiling" incriminating items before they have to be produced; fragmenting information so it appears out of sequence; depicting deviant acts as the machinations of "bad apples" within the organization or of past leaders; and, of course, denying access on the basis of "need to know," "national security," or other justifications to hide embarrassing secrets.

In addition, it appears that front activities are often characterized by cooperation between organizations. The FBI and CIA are

interesting cases in point. Bernstein (1976)
has demonstrated that as presidents have invo-
lved the nation in undeclared wars, repression
at home has grown in part due to the granting
increased powers to government spying agen-
cies. All presidents since Franklin Roosevelt
have use the FBI for partisan political pur-
poses. Thus when the legality of such prac-
tices has been questioned, the executive
branch, congressional committees, so-called
nonpartisan panels all rush to the defense of
such intelligence agencies (Waegal et al,
1981). The result, according to Bernstein,
has been a strengthened executive branch,
stifled dissent at home, a press reluctant to
criticize government, and a foreign policy
based on the creation, manipulation, and man-
agement of crisis (Barnet, 1972).

Implications for a Humanist study of Crime: Future Directions:

Given the above socio/psychic processes
and their relationships to deviance among
elites, there is a number of interesting re-
lated issues that seem worthy of the attention
of students of these subjects. In addressing
these issues, it is important to keep in mind
the Millsean perspective concerning the socio-
logical imagination. Mills advocated that we
understand the relationship between private
troubles and public issues, that sociological
investigation answer the greater questions
concerning the places of our society in human
history, the types of human nature that are
being produced, the direction in which our
society is heading. Further, Mills advocated
that such investigation be undertaken using a
comparative perspective. With such issues in
mind, the foregoing would seem to me to raise
three broad sets of concerns for the humanist
student of deviance.

First, this study ought to examine the
study of institutions and social character.

This means, among other things, that it is no longer realistic to study "white-collar" crime as an economic crime for two reasons. One is the crucial realization that the bureaucracy is the dominant form of social organization in modern society. Thus, the question of how bureaucratic organizations, be they economic, military, or political in nature shape the social characters of those playing roles within them becomes an issue. The interpenetration of the three elites of these institution makes it clear that "white-collar" crime, political corruption, and deviance within the military-industrial complex are interrelated, involving cooperation between public and private organizations. Indeed, as Terreberry (1968) has argued, as organizational environments become increasingly turbulent due to unstable economic and political conditions, organizations tend to become less autonomous, and outside organizations become increasingly important components of organizational environments.

Second, the current definitions of white-collar deviance describe a dichotomy between acts of individuals and acts committed on behalf of organizations. From what we have said above, there is good reason to suspect that within organizational hierarchies many of the same people who execute deviance on behalf of organizations also commit acts against such organizations for their personal gain. As REasons (1982) has recently noted, supervisory personnel have accounted in Canada for approximately two-thirds of the business dishonesty over the last decade. This follows from the writings of Kelman, (1973; 1976) and Bernard et al (1971) concerning the conversion of the victimizer into victim. An hypothesis to test would be that within organizations that commit acts of deviance, individuals involved in the commission of such acts are likely to engage in acts of deviance for personal gain against the organizations by which they are employed.

Third, and as a related matter, one reads a good deal these days concerning the demonstration effect provided by acts of elite deviance to nonelites. Thus, one would expect inauthenticity, as modern society's dominant form of alienation, to affect deviant behavior throughout the socioeconomic ladder. Among the lower classes this link is not readily apparent because of the extreme structural distance of lower class members from elite power centers. Nevertheless, recent studies of lower class alienation reveal a substantial impact of elite deviance.

Important, too, is the contention that inauthentic social structures result in diffuse targets of aggression. Philliber in a study of over 500 residents of a Model Cities project found that lower class alienation is expressed towards particular segments of society (police, merchants, politicians, or the neighborhood), but becomes a "Generalized response pattern toward the total social system" (1977:305). That is all institutions with which lower class people have contacting their daily lives appear to them as impersonal and bureaucratic, with each person with whom they interact playing limited social roles. Yet, the people in Philliber's sample viewed the various sectors of modern society as interrelated. Only in the neighborhood, where contact took place on a more primary basis, was there a lessening of alienation evidenced.

Fairchild (1977) in a study of prison inmates found that street criminals tended to view the American political system as containing little "that indicated widespread democratic decision making" (1977:295). Most members of her sample felt that real power in America rests with a group of corrupt, unelected influentials of vague composition. Money, they thought, is the real source of power.

Such attitudes stemmed in large part from the nature of the contact such people experienced in being processed through the criminal justice system. There money for legal representation was viewed as the most important determinant of guilt or innocence. Moreover, the police, courts, and prisons were complained about as corrupt, impersonal, and collusive, and offenders felt alone and powerless in dealing with the state. These attitudes represented a marked contrast with those expressed prisoners during the 1950s; then offenders frequently blamed themselves.

This alienation from the dominant institutions of American society is by no means confined to the lower class. Over the past decade or so, public opinion polls have registered a crisis of confidence in the major American institutions (Simon & Eitzen, 1982:2-4) caused in large part by revelations of major scandals on the elite level. Recent evidence shows that the public has become concerned about white-collar crime (Cullen et al, 1982). One measure of the lack of public confidence in major institutions is large scale tax cheating. (3)

Finally, I believe that Mills would consider decadent much of what passes for the study of crime these days. He as much as said so in his classic "Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists" (1943). Crime has been for too long studied as a lower class (street) phenomenon, and the relationships between street crime, organized crime, individual white-collar deviance, and elite deviance, by and large severely neglected. Thus the nexus of the Mafia activities – supplying drugs to lower class criminals, fencing goods stolen by white-collar employees, and providing capital and certain valuable services for certain legitimate business and government organizations has not been fully explored (Smith, 1980; 1982; Simon & Eitzen, 1982; 58-63).

Thus despite Thio's (1983) useful theory concerning the interrelationships between the deviance of masses and elites, and studies of these "two faces of deviance" by Wilson and Braithwaite (eds., 1978), there is much about such interrelationships that we do not understand as they relate to either social structure, social character, or history.

These then are merely a few of the issues Mills' legacy suggests for a humanist study of deviance based on alienation. The challenge for the humanist is to gain access to data relating to elite wrongdoing, and to make such findings known to an increasingly alienated mass victimized by acts of such deviance. As sociologists, Mills would have us do nothing less.

Footnotes

1) Unfortunately, the powerlessness of the individual looms as such a taken for granted state in much of the organizational literature that the individual has been all but eliminated as a focus of study. Instead, there is a great focus on people as occupants of positions (roles), and that as people individuals are merely replaceable, interchangeable parts (Coleman, 1974; Ermann and Lundmann, 1982; Scott and Hart, 1979; MacCoby, 1976:230). The notion that conformity is the overwhelming modal response to powerlessness is, as I shall note below, both dehumanizing and misleading in the study of organizational deviance.

2) This is not to imply that individuals are totally powerless and without choice in responding to organizational attempts to discard them. Indeed, the position taken below in that some "white-collar" defiance committed against organizations by employees may be reactions to perceived mistreatment by emplo-

yers, including requests to engage in deviant acts on behalf of the employing organization.

3) Moreover, Meier and Short (1982) have advocated that the study of societal trust become the focus of increased attention by sociologists and criminologists, based in part on personal experiences with white-collar criminality. Meier and Short, however, advocate focusing on the more traditional measures of alienation, especially those relating to powerlessness and normlessness, They also also imply that the traditional victimizer/victim dichotomy should be maintained. They also emphasize that it is people of lower socioeconomic level who are most likely to experience victimization and powerlessness in relation to such deviance. The position taken here differs from that of Meier and Short in that inauthenticity as a form of alienation that contributes to being both victim and victimizer among persons occupying roles at upper organizational/socioeconomic levels are deemed worthy of study.

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