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FILM ANALYSIS 1

Office Space

Weber's Bureaucracy:

Among the problems that arise from bureaucracy, the main one is that as much as it tries to get the best out of people the relationship between the management and those managed is like that of a person and a machine. Weber argues that once a lot capital is accumulated labor has to be frequently divided thus leading to the need to acquire more staff and vice versa (Hinkle, 1997). With both division of labor and accumulation of capital, employees are offered labor the same way machines operate without getting exhausted. Once labor is increased, division will result to specialization and hierarchy (Hinkle, 1997).

Characteristics of bureaucracy by Weber are emphasized strongly bringing out six elements (Du, 2000). The first element is that of specialization whereby from the company's setting every worker has his designated task. From the film Office Space there exist high levels of job specialization at Initech. Every employee has his/ her own unique job type just as the same way a computer is programmed. To the company's viewpoint, specialization will lead to achieving efficiency. The description given by Peter about his job is that the entire day is spent sitting in a cubicle making updates on the bank software.

The other element of bureaucracy according to Weber is arising from hierarchy and is the applied rule of many by the few (Du, 2000). This simply implies that many employees are managed and governed by a handful of leaders. For Peter's case, he is answerable to eight different levels of management when he says that in case of a mess he has to face eight different people for questioning. The structure of management is of a pyramid whereby Lumbergh is at the top while Milton, who surprisingly has no form of authority over the rest of the workers, is at the bottom. Since there exist levels in hierarchies, the level of income varies evident from the common cars owned by employees and the unique one by Lumbergh.

Bureaucracy's third element is that of rules and regulations. From the film there are many instances in which rules and regulations are evident. The first instance is that of the type of staplers that are to be used by employees. Others include filling out of TPS reports and covering them, mode of dressing, time of arrival at work and parking spots provided for the employees. Basically, work in this kind of domain will involve the same repetitive patterns every day unless a promotion or change role in the task force. Weber believes that bureaucracy will only prevail only if certain rules and regulations have to be adhered to by workers (Du, 2000).

Technical competence is the fourth aspect of bureaucracy. From the film, Bob Slydell and Bob Porter are two consultants who come to help the company achieve efficiency through cost cutting measures to minimize wastage. As a result, it brings up the idea of downsizing. An assessment of each worker is conducted to determine their purpose and roles conducted in the company together with their level of performance. Weber's emphasis on bureaucracy is that

there has to be a certain level of qualification within a working environment that will qualify one to maintain his position (Du, 2000). Evaluation is to be conducted on the basis of employee output. In Initech, Peter does not qualify to be at the company due to his work ethics and conduct which is evident from his interview with the two consultants.

The next component basing on bureaucracy is that of impersonality. Weber's argument is that majority if not all high ranking organizational leaders are not always after the idea of creating a bond with their subordinates but instead opt to use memos which in most cases do not have significant impact compared to that by an individual (Du, 2000). The same is visible in the film when Samir, a great friend of Peter, having worked in the company for a reasonable time is unhappy due to the fact that his name is still gets mispronounced frequently. This signifies that there lacks a personal bond between workers and management. Additionally, is from the description provided by Peter referring to the company's vice president, Bill Lumbergh. He is described as a person signifying everything that has no soul and wrong. He is a man that rarely interacts with employees. Weber further argues that impersonality spreads further into the working environment with the risk of alienating employees in turn affecting their productivity (Du, 2000).

Simmel's Sociology

Simmel came up with a variety of social types to back his idea of social forms. The forms include the stranger, mediator, poor, adventurer, middle man and the renegade (Wolff, 2015). Every social form listed has to be affected by the reactions and expectations of the rest. One can

be given a specific social form from his interactions with different people who put him in a position that qualifies him to act in a particular way. Moreover, the traits of these forms as mostly perceived as characteristics of the social structure (Wolff, 2015).

In the film Office space, Peter, a programmer at Initech, is faced with problems such as depression, boredom and fear attributed to the social environment created by the bosses as a result making him a middle man. First of all, he does not like his work and through a conversation with his colleagues; he is to choose a place to visit in case he ever had money. Secondly, he is aware of his girlfriend's infidelity but does nothing about it. The many disturbing conditions make him conclude doing nothing. The company's management becomes the renegade form since it is the root cause of Peter's trauma. Initially, there was an unwritten agreement concerning employee roles struck between the company and employees but yet to be upheld. The contract was formed as a result of the type of relationship that existed between Peter and Initech. The contract affects the social form of Peter.

According to Simmel social forms that exist within social reality are never tainted since each situation that arises has a variety of formal elements (Wolff, 2015). Within a bureaucratic setting like that of Initech issues that deal with conflict, cooperation and subordination may often arise. Peter during the performance assessment forwards his thoughts to Bob's regarding how the company is not holding to part of its bargain. This idea hits him hard after his visit to the therapist and directs his incapacity to carry out his roles to the lack of motivation. He is at conflict with company for not regarding the employee's concerns thus feels that not performing

tasks ever amounts to ignorance. If he works hard the company would benefit more. Motivation is done away with by the company's tradition of not rewarding them and the harassment he usually goes through from the many managers. With all these being considered, the work environment at the company is usually negative which then affects the social bonds (Wolff, 2015).

Weber's viewpoint is on how employees alienate from other colleagues. He thoroughly gives an in depth analysis of how most organizations perceive labor. It is often viewed as a commodity compared to a social bonding that is to exist among people sharing the same organizational interest. Similar to Weber's argument, Simmel general view is that measurements can be made so as to determine the gap that exists between a specific phenomenon and social form, which is a mixture of certain aspects that identify the bond between "the stranger" and the rest of the social society. In my opinion, Simmel's argument brings out a strong argument that can be of great help when applied in the current work environment.

REFERENCE

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