In modern society, large corporations and educational systems

Business, Management

Inmodern society, large corporations and educational systems are all controlledby a system that consists of organized hierarchies, also known as bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is defined as " a formal organization characterized by a hierarchyof authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules, and impersonality" (BureaucracyDefinition). Bureaucracy is for the mostpart seen in corporate divisions consisting of employees who are controlled bythe Executor, a Supervisor, or a Manager. Max Weber and Karl Marx both hadperspectives regarding bureaucracy and how it affected the individual thatworked in a corporation that followed these ideologies. Weber was concernedwith the " operation of modern large-scale enterprises in the political, administrative, and economic realm" (Max Weber). On the other hand, Marxasserts that it is " the state of formation of the civil society" (Karl Marx'sViews).

The film Office Spaceprovides a perfect example of controlled employees that are not allowed toexcel in their profession, as they are not given the opportunity to show thepotential they have to offer the company. Bureaucracy is a function that haslived through many years in large corporations that require different ideas tocome together to run the business. In short, many of these companies havehigher management that oversees the work of others and assures that everythingis well handled in the workplace. An example bureaucracy in the workplace isthat prior to submitting work whom can be the President of the company, theVice President would have to review it to reaffirm the employee followed theguidelines of the company.

We then ask, why does this occur now in the modernworld? Bureaucracy has been a major asset for companies to expand and completeprojects as a team. Though, many may do not agree with these set of rulesbrought into the workplace it becomes harder for them to climb the ladder thatwill allow them to get to the top. Peter Gibbons, the main character in Office Space, illustrated a characterthat was tired of doing the same thing everyday. Gibbons was told what to do byeight other employees, who happen to have a higher position than him.

When Gibbonsmade mistakes, eight employees would tell him the work he was doing was doneincorrectly. This clearly provides us the idea of how bureaucracy is portrayedin the workplace; rather than just being told by his supervisor who overseeshis work, he is told by everyone. An interesting point that was illustrated inthe film was the fact that upper management lacked communication about theiremployees in the company and where they stand within the business.   Karl Marx's idea on bureaucracyasserts that wealth is rarely created within itself, rather it " coordinates…governs the productions, distribution, and consumption of wealth" (New World). Marx believed that within bureaucracy, there was an extreme amount of humanlabor that was applied to during the time people were at work. Wealth was notseen for these individuals; rather, the corporation only had the idea of whattheir daily earnings were. Referencing back to Office Space, we witnessed how the consultants knew the main reasonwhy they were paying their visit to Initech. The individuals who play a part inupper management

know exactly what is going on while the employees who do mostof the work are left without a clue of what may occur in their workplace.

Lumbergh's consistency on having Gibbson do more work over the weekendsprovides viewers of how bureaucracy plays a compelling role in largercompanies.   As stated before, both Weber andMarx had views regarding bureaucracy and how most corporations implement a setof guidelines that employees must follow. When comparing Weber and Marx's viewson bureaucracy, Weber's views clearly define what occurs in Office Space. If Weber were here to be acritic in the environment that Peter Gibbons and Milton Waddams are working in, he would state that they are not given the opportunity to speak up and providetheir insight on the work they are doing. Throughout the film, Gibbons would dohis best to avoid speaking to his boss, Bill Lumbergh. Gibbons knew that hewould ask him to do overtime work without asking him if he can come in on theweekend or not.

Though Gibbons was not scheduled for the weekend, he was toldto do so because Lumbergh, who has the higher authority within the company, toldhim to. This is an example of bureaucracy, as Lumbergh would demand Gibbons tocome in to take care of more work; however, Lumbergh was not going to assistwith anything. Refercning back to our lecture, beaurcracy has " fixedjurisdictiational and official duties and there is a hierarchy of authority"(Abdel, H.

) As stated before, Lumbergh has the higher authority; therefore, hebosses the employees around to in order to get work done.   In addition to Weber's views onbureaucracy, he also stated that within these corporations, employees are stuckin what is known as an " iron cage." An " iron cage" is defined as a " situationin which an individual is trapped by social institutions" (Iron-CageDefinition). To expand, Weber explained that people who currently have a jobare often stuck in a certain position and cannot excel beyond than where theyare positioned now. Examples of characters from Office Space are Milton Waddams, Samir Nagheenanajar, and MichaelBolton; these individuals work for Initech. These men play the same role as computerprogrammers and complete their obligations before the end of day. Although workis completed by the deadline, they are not well known for their work.

MiltonWaddams, who has been in the company for many years, is always moved from onefloor to another in the building. Towards the end of the film, Milton Waddamswas in the basement of the company. He always feared that Lumbergh was going tomove him, and would stutter when he talked to him. These characters would dothe most to complete their work but upper management did not recognize it.   Moreover, in larger corporations andbusinesses, there is a lack of communication between upper management and theemployees themselves.

Within Office Space, we noticed that when the consultants came in to downsize the company, the twoconsultants that were playing the role did not relay the information over toBill Lumbergh, who is the Vice President of

Initech. The consultants promotedGibbson, who decided to not show up to work for a few days, without discussingwith Lumbergh about the promotion. With that being said, we can safely concludebureaucracy was playing an important role as the consultants had higherauthority than Lumbergh and in reality his opinion was not taken intoconsideration. With Weber's idea of bureaucracy, he states that " rules areimplemented by neutral officials" and in this case, the consultants carry thisfunction. The consultants held more power over Lumbergh allowing them to makedecisions for the company. As previously stated, the " ironcage" is an invisible barrier between the employee and the opportunities thatare available within a business.

As the employee, you excel in as many areas todemonstrate the skills that you have acquired over the years. Although you tryto put yourself out there with providing new ideas, the employer tends to notrecognize them. When the employee is stuck in these situations, there areconsequences that follow. The " iron cage" prevents the employee from movingforward in their career and obtaining a better position. In society, we stepout into the world to display our best work ethic and professionalism to climbthe ladder of success; yet, the " iron cage" prevents us from allowing theemployee to be acknowledged for their accomplishments.   Bureaucracy will continue to play asignificant role in the large corporations and businesses within our society. Max Weber and Karl Marx studied the roles that hierarchies control withinbusinesses and how they affect the functions of others within the company.

Overthe years, there has not been much change as we continue to see them ineducational systems like universities, colleges, and the K-12 system as well asbusinesses around the globe. The " iron cage" is an idea that should beeliminated in order to allow others to succeed within their workplace. Weber, who presented this idea, was correct in all of the aspects of how we see it inour daily life. The potential that an individual brings to their employershould be credited, as the employer may never know if they may bring in newideas that can help the business in a positive matter.