

Riesman, how does
the rise of
bureaucratic



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According to Riesman, how does the rise of bureaucratic, mass society encourage a transition from "inner directed" to "other-directed" character? Who are the new versus the old middle-class? Which one is more likely to be other-directed? How is its socialization likely to be different?

David Riesman argued that the emergence of the bureaucracy and the mass society diminishes the importance of other social institutions such as the family on the individual level. The "inner directed" characteristics of individuals began to disappear and be replaced by a socially inclined type of personality, the "other-directed". The "inner directed" domain of individuality loses primacy when personal values are compromised for the sake of gratifying other people. In a bureaucratic type of environment, social acceptance is deemed to be very significant. Moreover, in a mass society dominated by the attitude of following trends and fashion, the "other directed" features rule out the "inner directed". The transition occurs whenever an individual becomes aware of the relevance of coping up with the changing times. The moment an individual learns to filter out messages from the social environment and to process these messages to something that would be beneficial for the self, then the shift from the "inner directed" to the "other directed" takes place. In simpler terms, "inner directed" character denotes individuality or independent thinking whereas "outer directed" means cooperation and the likelihood to compromise, which is the fundamental attitude requirement of advanced capitalism (Kivisto 1998: p. 112).

Riesman further asserts that the shift in the social character was brought about by the transition of the society. He had delineated three stages of this societal transformation: the traditional, the inner directed and the outer

directed. For him, the traditional stage is the best form of social character because it has the potentiality to develop in a high degree (p. 112). In these levels of social development, Riesman integrated the concept of the old and the new middle class. The old middle class that thrived in the traditional stage were the feudal lords and other individuals from an aristocratic blood. The new middle class that arose in the contemporary period are the entrepreneurs who are driven not by competition but cooperation. These two middle classes that existed from different times were in conflict when it comes to social character. The old middle class is more inclined on individualism than to the concept of a social being hence described as “inner directed”. On the contrary, the new middle class which relies on the cooperative nature of capitalism is “other directed”.

The new middle class is “other directed” because of its preoccupation on entrepreneurship and other economic activities that remove any sign of a free competition. The creation of bureaucracy and the mass society led to the surfacing of a new batch of people who devalue the worth of individualism and liberated thinking. This new generation of middle class focuses on the advantages that they could get from socially interacting with other people. Instead of being creative or resourceful to make things happen for them, this new middle class operates like a roaming satellite which looks for innovative ideas from others. Since they have lost their ingenuity, these modern-day individuals merely depend on the capabilities and aptitude of others’ originality, which they will imitate later on.

I think “inner directed” people socialize in a way that asserts their uniqueness and highlights individual differences. In a conversation, “inner directed” people would probably invite conflict because they will

straightforwardly articulate their own insights and principles in life. On the other hand, the “other directed” people would most likely be preoccupied by thoughts of how to impress others for social acceptance. In a discussion, the conviction of the “other directed” is feeble than that of the “inner directed” individuals. The “other directed” can be easily influenced by pleasant words, heavenly promises and misleading arguments whereas the “inner directed” would most likely hold their grounds.

According to Robert Bellah and his associates, what are the dangers of utilitarian and expressive individualism to the community? When answering this question, how were Robert Bellah and his associates influenced by Durkheim, Alex de Tocqueville, and David Riesman? What did they see as the difference between utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism? Which is more likely to be other-directed? Why? How does Bellah's "communitarianism" seek to overcome the problem of the relationship between the community and the individual?

Robert Bellah categorized two types of individualism that are present in the current period: utilitarianism and the expressive individualism. The former is closely linked to the market capitalism because of its emphasis on self-interest. Meanwhile, the latter is quite related to Riesman's “inner directed” social character because of its accent on self-actualization through individual attempts of self-discovery. The difference between the two types of individualism is apparent. To follow the logic of Riesman, the utilitarian individualism is the “other directed” which is characterized by much preoccupation on economic cooperation whereas the expressive individualism is the “inner directed” which is depicted as an individual adventure towards the self's genuine worth (Wuthnow 1994 as cited in <https://assignbuster.com/riesman-how-does-the-rise-of-bureaucratic/>

Kivisto 1998: p. 114).

Bellah and his colleagues did not presume that individualism is a harmful entity to the community. Yet, they have pursued a study wherein they have searched for evident clues on the effects of excessive individualism.

Adopting from Emile Durkheim's theory of the individual, Bellah claimed that the harmonious relationship between individual and the community is gradually tipping off its balance. Individualism, he believed, is becoming greater in its influence over the significance of the community. However, this does not mean that the individual is detached or separated from the community. Bellah and his colleagues used the American attitude towards community life to show that there is no isolation occurring between the individual and the community. Bellah affirmed the premise through stating that the Americans are active in their participation to voluntary civic organizations. This cooperative behavior, for Bellah, is not a positive development because these organizations only eliminate the similar elements bonding the individuals together in a community. Because of differences in objectives and beliefs among the civic organizations, individuals become more attached to their own self-identity than to their communal identity (Bellah et al 1996; Putnam 1995 as cited in Kivisto 1998: p. 114). The community is at danger every time individuals lose their shared language of obligations and goals. Civic organizations diminish this sense of responsibility and loyalty to the community through the private discourses that ensue within the territory of the organization (Bellah 1985 as cited in Kivisto 1998, p. 115). Furthermore, Bellah argued that individualism has developed into a pathological illness that could eat down the very foundation of the community's balancing power. This belief is in line with Tocqueville's

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idea that individualism wears down the ability of a community to transform the negative aspects to building blocks that could ensure the maintenance of balance between the functional and dysfunctional constituents of a system (p. 113).

The most destructive form of individualism according to Bellah is the one that is characterized by capitalist market economy. The role of the community as a stabilizer of the system loses importance because of the consequences of capitalism to the accord relationship between the public and the private sphere of life (Putnam 2000 as cited in Kivisto 1998: p. 115). The utilitarian individualism is the replica of Riesman's "other directed". Its weight bears down on the preservation of the self through utilizing the resources of others in a clandestine manner.

Nevertheless, Bellah and his colleagues are not entirely dissuaded by the prospect of the future. They have thought of an ideology that could advance the equilibrium between the individual and the community. For Bellah, Americans mutual understanding of the general good will do the duties of communitarianism. In this approach in analyzing the potentialities of individualism, the liberal individualist's principle is combined with a sense of commitment and responsibility. Some cynics perceive communitarianism as a subtle form of conservatism. Nonetheless, the primary objective of the movement is to cure the malevolent effects of liberal individualism.

Communitarianism will bring back the times when there reigns a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the community (Etzioni 1993 as cited in Kivisto 1998: p. 115).

Work Cited

Kivisto, Peter. Key Ideas in Sociology. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication, Inc. , 1998.