

# Chapter 6

## GROUPS & SOCIAL ORGANIZATION



Photo 2016, Gary Payne, St. Kitts Island

This group of students on St. Kitts Island in the Caribbean Sea show a similar amount of apprehensive tension in all their faces as they are entering a music competition together against rival high schools. **Sociologists would say this group has become its own separate organism** rather than just a random collection of individuals. They share a common socialization process and an immediate common purpose that binds them into a singular mindset.

**A**lmost everything that humanity accomplishes is done by people *in groups*.

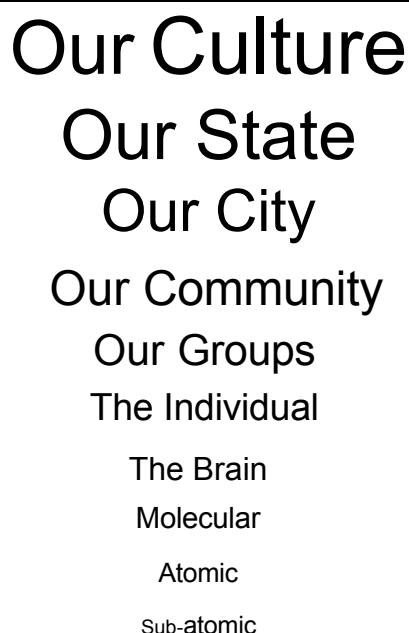
Even individuals, acting “alone,” are usually acting on *behalf* of groups, or because of the expectations of groups they belong to. As we have seen, the concept of the totally independent individual is a myth. Therefore, sociologists tend to view individuals not as the basic units of humanity, but more like the living parts of a group. **In the sociological discipline, the group itself is the basic unit of humanity.** For, as poet John Donne wrote many centuries ago, “No man [or woman] is an island.”

And every group is *organized* in some way. That includes your classes, your family, your co-workers, even your collection of close friends on Saturday night. The groups we belong to are the main architects of our identities, our self-esteem, our chances

for success, our basic values and even our level of personal freedom. But...at what level is humanity most evident? Consider Figure 6.1 below.

**Figure 6.1: At which level is humanity best analyzed?**

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An argument *could* be made that “human activity” is evident at *all* these levels. It is hard to imagine coherent human consciousness, decision-making or personality at molecular levels and below. Our religious traditions and most psychologists in the USA encourage us to select the *individual* as the basic unit of humanity.

But Emile Durkheim’s research and the profoundly different international rates of homicide from nation to nation (all noted in Chapter 1) demonstrate that individuals are not the *primary* creators of their own thoughts, beliefs or behavior.

Sociologists note that no human being thrives - or even survives - in isolation from other humans. We are *intensely social* animals, living our lives out mostly in groups. We therefore focus on the group level and above to explain human thought, beliefs and behavior.

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## **DEFINING LEADERSHIP, POWER AND AUTHORITY**

Let’s have a look at how our groups are constructed. Leadership, power and authority are terms that interchange occasionally, and need to be defined here.

**Leadership - is the ability to influence people.** Sociologists recognize three basic types of leaders:

1. Instrumental – commands, directs, barks out orders, dictatorial.
2. Expressive – seeks group consensus, group decision making, democratic.
3. Laissez- faire – allows individuals to make their own decisions, self-rule.

**Power - is the ability to make people do things, even if they do not want to.**

Sociologists recognize three basic types of leaders:

1. Coercion - the use of unethical or illegitimate force
2. Influence - legal persuasion
3. Authority - having the right to make decisions for all (three types of authority)

**Authority - is the right to command. There are three types of authority:**

1. Traditional - based on customs, royal family members ruling by inheritance.
2. Charismatic - based on the popularity or charm of a widely admired person.
3. Legal - based on holding a legitimate office by election or appointment.



Photo by Gary Payne, Guyana 2008

Mahatma Gandhi is a perfect example of a *charismatic* leader. He is probably the most widely known person in global history even though he never held public office. His peaceful campaign to end the brutal British occupation of India earned him the respect of the entire world, including the British themselves. His policy suggestions to India's leaders carried enormous weight because he spoke for hundreds of millions of his charmed followers. I encountered this statue of Gandhi at a site where hundreds of runaway slaves had once been executed by the British. As with India, the British finally gave up and let the people take over. This site is now called Paradise Park in Georgetown, Guyana.



## DEFINING TYPES OF GROUPS

**The "primary group" is a small number of people who interact over a relatively long time on an intimate basis.** This is a tight and very close group that knows each other well and engages in considerable "backstage" behavior. Families, close friends, fraternities, room mates, longtime co-workers and youth gangs are good examples. Primary groups tend to stay small, because the main purpose for their members is up-close and personal emotional support. The majority of the human timeline is the story of scattered hunter-gatherer groups which were relatively small primary groups of less than 100 members. As a primary group grows larger, it is likely to break up into smaller primary groups.

But even after humans settled into small rural communities, the bonds between people were relatively tight compared to what is experienced in large cities today.

**The "secondary group" is a larger group of individuals that interacts on a temporary and impersonal basis.** The members of a secondary group do not know each other as whole persons, but only in particular roles. For example, your classes at the college are filled mostly with strangers that have one common task, to get an education. Most students know each other only as students acting out student roles, although students in face-to-face classes often become close friends.

As any community population increases to thousands of inhabitants it becomes dominated by secondary groups, and a metropolis like Minneapolis or Chicago seems to an outsider to contain little else to someone passing through. But primary groups still form there for emotional support. Almost every individual on the planet will spend at least a little time each day in the calming presence of close friends or family.

**The "reference group" is a group to which people refer when making evaluations of themselves and their behavior.** For example: "What was my class rank in the year 2025 graduating class of high school seniors?" In an attempt to know how a particular individual is doing in life, a rational comparison can be made with people in the same circumstance. In this case, the reference group was 2025 seniors at a particular high school. Here is another example: "How much did our family give to our church compared to the other families in our church?" The reference group is the family memberships of "our" particular church.

**An "informal organization" is a group that has no *official* leadership or *official* positions.** Examples would be a group of friends, a small hunter gatherer village in a remote area or members of a forum on internet. No one has *official* power over anyone else. The group exists for the pleasure and support of its members. The group's responsibilities are shared, including decision-making since the members usually negotiate decisions. It becomes a miniature informal "democracy."



Photos by Gary Payne 2017

Above: The Omani men at this goat auction are *all* herders, a perfect example of a “reference” group.

Below: Within the reference group are families which sociologists would classify as a “primary” group.



**A "formal organization" is a large secondary group which is rationally designed and formally structured to reach specific goals.** A formal organization is designed with a *chain of command* to control its members and parcel out organizational responsibilities and rewards or punishments for persons in every position in the organizational chain. *Accountability* from everyone in the formal organization is guaranteed through written *job descriptions* that each member must submit to. These job descriptions formally set out the exact duties for each job.

There are many labels for formal organizations, and they are often used interchangeably. **A formal organization is normally called a "bureaucracy" but may also be: a hierarchy, a chain of command, a department, or an agency.**

Below are a few examples of *formal* organizations:

Government agencies (Public):

The Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force  
The Federal Bureau of Investigation  
The Department of Natural Resources  
Central Lakes College

For-profit corporations (Privately Owned by Stockholders):

Wal-Mart, Target, Kohl's, Best Buy  
GM, Ford, Chrysler, Phoenix University  
Exxon-Mobil, Conoco-Phillips  
McDonald's, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Hardee's

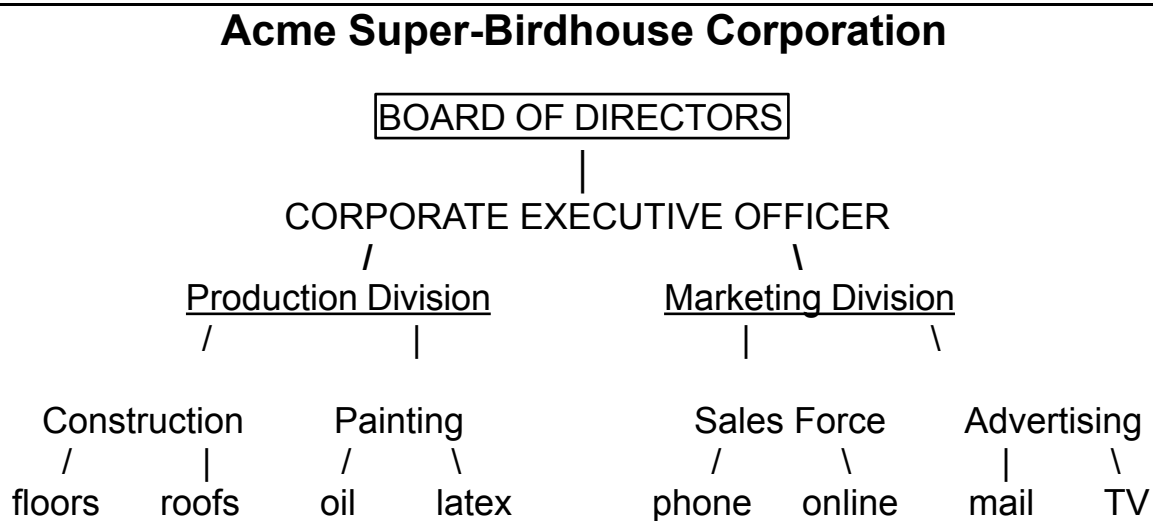
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs):

The National Rifle Association, Ducks Unlimited  
The Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Audubon Society  
Human Rights Watch, National Labor Committee  
The American Cancer Society, The March of Dimes

In all of these *formal* organizations the *structural design* of personnel positions is similar to the fictional Acme Super-Birdhouse design I created in Figure 6.1, (below). Those vertical lines you see between the layers of structure are *lines of authority*. All these formal structures are controlled from the top all the way down to the lowest positions, through a chain of supervisory staff. Thus, the term, "chain of command."

Note too that the formal structures are always far wider at the bottom than the top. And if we drew a line over the contour of the entire structure, it would resemble an "*arch*." Thus, the term "hierarchy," of which the Catholic church is the oldest known example. Since this design is permanently established, it is "formal." And because it was (usually) well thought-out and designed to fit exact organizational needs, it is considered a "rational" organization.

**FIGURE 6.2: A Typical *Formal* Organization Structure:**



|||||< lower skilled and/or temporary workers >|||||

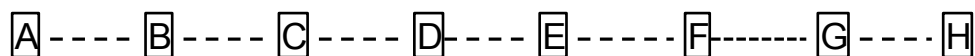
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Every large *formal* organization has this basic shape, narrow at the top, wide at the bottom. Again, it is all on paper, as are the job descriptions for every employee.

Now compare this to an *informal* organization structure, in Figure 6.3 (below.) These smaller informal organizations - for example, small family businesses like bait shops or flower shops – usually have no formal positions or job descriptions on paper. Their authority lines are vague and uncertain; but if we had to draw them out, they would probably be a string of lateral positions. The boxed letters represent the people in this small, loosely organized group.

**Figure 6.3: A Typical *Informal* Organization Structure**

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**These weak lines of authority are drawn *laterally* because statuses are *roughly* equal here. It is likely that no one person is *totally* in control.** So then, examples of informal organizations are: a peer group, a band of hunter-gatherers, a commune, a chat network, a collective, a small family business, a cooperative, friends at a party, or any group *without* a formalized hierarchy to set authority.



Hunter-gatherers are often led by Headmen. But analyses of these groups indicate that most Headmen act like *spokespersons* for these informal groups, not dictators.

One could argue that a family business does indeed have a supervisor, a mom or dad, with a potential to be very strict. True enough. But on the other hand, a daughter's or son's suggestions are likely to be heard and considered, and thereby influence decisions. And eventually, the son or daughter may be taking over at some point. They are never more than a generation removed from leadership.

That isn't likely to happen in large corporations. Here, the people at the bottom level of authority do not even get to meet the people at the very top, much less interact with them, or make serious suggestions to them. How many employees at Taco Bell or Walmart even know the names of the Chief Executive Officers of their corporations? How many even know in which state the corporate headquarters are located? Obviously, there is a huge disconnect here in human relationships.



Who is in charge in this photo? Nobody. And that's why everybody is smiling. It's a moment of equality and fairness; statuses are roughly equal, and decision making is shared. These are the conditions that make life worth living. It's a collection of friends, an informal organization.



## MERTON'S "DYSFUNCTIONS" OF BUREAUCRACY

In the last century, large formal structures have overtaken most of human social organization (outside of family and friends), in modern industrial societies. This enormous change in the human social world has occurred with surprisingly little popular reflection on what it means for the quality of life for workers in formal organizations and for communities who are served by formal organizations.

The historic shift from informal to formal organizations was inevitable. A nation of over 300 million people cannot operate gigantic federal programs or move its armies from continent to continent with the informal organizational structure common to family businesses and peer groups. And the tax-paying public demands rational policy and accountability, the goals of the formal structure design.

What might be the consequences of a society dominated by formal structures? Sociologist Robert K. Merton studied formal structures at the University of Chicago. Merton was a functionalist, a conservative member of the sociological community. But all sociologists are concerned with the spread of formal organization. Merton outlined six areas in which formal organizations fail. As might be expected of a functionalist, Merton referred to these negative effects as "**dysfunctions.**"

1. *Inefficiency in unusual cases.* Bureaucracies streamline their operations to handle the most typical cases and situations. That makes them very efficient as long as nothing unusual comes up. But when it does, the bureaucracy is often slow or unable to adapt to it.
2. *Trained incapacity.* Adherence to rules tends to rob formal organizations of creativity. If the mission of the organization changes - as our military missions are now with the invention of weaponized drones - the usual training and expertise within the organization is suddenly no longer relevant to the task and becomes ineffective.
3. *Bureaucratic enlargement.* For the same reason stated above (survival), formal organizations tend to grow larger and larger. They almost never spend less than their budget or hire fewer staff than they are allowed. They tend to absorb a greater level of resources every year. Some see that as creepy.
4. *Goal displacement.* Organizations, once formed, do not wish to disappear, even if they reach their original goal. So...organizations often add new goals to their mission, and the net effect is that organizations can be nearly impossible to get rid of. Unconsciously or not, **formal organizations adopt their own survival as their main goal**, which could mean that they actually *avoid* reaching their goals, in order to maintain a valid reason for their continued existence.
5. *Authoritarian structure.* All hierarchic structures are dictatorial by design. If a worker lives in a "free country," but spends a lifetime working inside a formal organization, is that a lifetime of freedom? Or of submission?
6. *Bureaucratic personality.* Merton noted negative effects on the personalities of people who work in formal organizations. The inflexible guidelines that they

must follow can crush their individual creativity and imagination. The people who are served may find that they are treated as just a number or 'case.' The cold and impersonal treatment of clients necessary to operate an efficient formal organization on a large scale does not compare well to what one might find, for example, in interaction with a family business or a peer group.



Courtesy Jonathan Giannarco, National Labor Committee (NLC.org) 2010

The National Labor Committee (NLC) photographed these exhausted Chinese youth taking naps during their 12-hour day/7 days a week shifts. This Foxconn facility attached nets to the outside walls of their factories to reduce suicides by workers as young as 13 years of age. Foxconn manufactures electronic devices for Microsoft, Apple, Hewlett Packard, Samsung, Best Buy, Acer and other US companies. NLC claimed it violates every labor law in existence in China. But those laws are rarely enforced.

## OLIGARCHY

No formal organization operates exactly as its formal design would suggest. Various people in the upper levels of an organization may have a lot of authority or almost none. Favoritism, political maneuvering, trickery, blackmail and even sexual favors within an organization may disrupt the formal chain of command structure. A tiny *informal* network of kingpins frequently emerges to control an organization behind the scenes.

This hidden network usually includes the formal leader of the organization, but not always (watch re-runs of the PBS British comedy, *Yes, Mr. Prime Minister* on public television for a hilarious series of examples.) This is so common that German sociologist Robert Michels claimed that, “whoever says [formal] organization, says oligarchy.” **Oligarchy means “rule by the few.”**

Michels explained that leaders in bureaucratic organizations gradually adapt to reduce the number of decision-makers. This keeps decision-making quick and simple by skipping decisions over a few layers of bureaucracy and bending a few rules to allow some useful flexibility in handling of unusual cases or mission changes. Of course, there are significant benefits to the “few.” As it improves its ability to control, it may become a fearsome presence; thus serious complaints from other members of the formal structure tend to disappear.

For anyone who seeks to really understand a bureaucratic organization a knowledge of its hidden oligarchy is essential.

## **RETHINKING FORMAL ORGANIZATION**

Although people of almost every political persuasion have something negative to say about bureaucracies, these structures are probably indispensable in large modern societies.

Ironically, the very survival of democracy may depend on functioning bureaucracies wherever societies are populated by millions of citizens. Voter registration, the creation of electoral procedures and enforcement of all of this machinery requires the presence of large formal organizations. Similar examples could be given for every major undertaking in a modern society.

So...bureaucracies are probably here to stay, as long as modern societies exist. But bureaucracies could be improved for the sake of humanity. Some more recent organizational models have emerged that deserve our attention either because they work so well, or because they work so poorly.

### **Japanese Corporations**

One of the bright lights of organizational design is found in some progressive Japanese corporations, which in many ways are opposites of the corporations in the USA. The Japanese committed themselves to *worker enhancement policies* in the 1950s that put a very positive emphasis on life in the workplace, and which turned out to benefit productivity and quality control as well. This strategy is based on trust in the good nature of human workers.





Photo by Gary Payne 2014

A vast expanse of paved-over planet means another Walmart “superstore” has been created. Opponents of Walmart’s mistreatment of employees and foreign child sweatshops have tended to despise Walmart’s leaders. But sociologists suggest the fault also lies within its *design*. Its gigantic size increases the **bureaucratic interactive distance** between top executives and low-level workers. **Interactive distance refers to the extent to which members of an organization are isolated from face-to-face interaction with the organization’s top decision makers.**

Ironically, the Japanese model of worker enhancement is rooted in the ideas of Edward Deming (1900-1993), a statistician from Iowa who promoted a 14-point management program that included several sociological principles. He is still known in Japan as the Father of the Japanese Industrial Revival.[1]

Deming was invited to Japan to suggest a management model after the Allied bombing campaign in World War II. Japan had been devastated. The entire economy needed to be rebuilt. His model was “collectivist” in that it was designed to serve the interests of the workers as well as the management. By doing so, it encouraged loyal, creative and highly educated workers. These workers were capable of contributing far more than under typical management programs in the USA where workers were viewed merely as a necessary evil.

And since they appreciated their good treatment, Demings’ workers were quite willing to pay back the favor through higher worker productivity. Here are a few of his suggestions:

- Adopt leadership aimed at **helping people**, not threatening them, to do a better job.
- Encourage effective two-way communication to **drive out fear** throughout the organization so that everybody may work effectively and more productively.
- Break down barriers between departments and staff. People must **work in teams** to tackle problems, and not be isolated in assembly lines.
- Institute a vigorous program of education, **encouraging self-improvement for everyone**. Organizations thrive when workers are growing intellectually.

For his efforts, Deming was awarded the Second Order of the Sacred Treasure by the former Emperor Hirohito. Japanese scientists and engineers also named the coveted Deming Prize after him.

Only in recent years have corporations in the USA begun to take Deming's ideas seriously. Costco is a giant corporation that tried increasing its profits by respecting its workers. Starting with higher wages, quicker promotions and greater benefits, it began to out compete Walmart which was still operating in the traditions reminiscent of the old plantations. In 2025, Costco refused pressure from the White House to cut its diversity, equity and inclusion program. Costco saves money by reducing worker turnover and retraining. And worker loyalty makes everything in the stores run more smoothly according to my students who work there.

The good news is that the potential exists for our nation to treat all workers with respect and dignity. My own (unpublished) survey of worker enhancement programs in the USA confirmed that *almost anything* that is done on behalf of the welfare of workers results in quality and productivity paybacks to employers. Treating workers well is good business and makes a workplace a comfortable and warm place to be.

### **Apple Computer's Interesting Example**

When Apple Computer began it was organized like a group of friends; in fact, it *was* a group of friends. These young entrepreneurs were known as a collection of free-thinking intelligent hippies studying at universities in California. They valued the *equality* aspect of their informal relationships with each other and refused to adopt a formal bureaucratic design. This use of *lateral lines of authority* made Apple explosively creative and wildly successful during its early years.

The fact that Apple became the largest computer company in the USA without any prior financial backing or dealer network is a testament to the value of informal decision making and equal status structures. Apple's story proved that informal organizations can compete with formal ones under certain circumstances.

Like primary groups, informal organizations do have limitations with size. Above 100 staff members the intimacy and personal trust is gradually lost. Apple certainly experienced this effect as it grew into a global bureaucratic giant. It eventually lost a bit of its soul by adopting cruel labor practices in China. But the benefit of operating organizations with shared power and authority was already a valuable lesson.

Encouraging size limitations through tax incentives might be useful for corporations. Many have become too massive to care about their employees, too powerful for a nation to control, too domineering in the communities in which they operate and too destructive to local economies in the event of a business failure.

Ideally, corporations would only grow to a size that allows both peak creativity and worker satisfaction. That seems a happy set of outcomes for workers and higher profitability.

But some corporations haven't gotten the message. Defacto slavery still exists south of our borders where giant corporate sweatshops, mines, factories, oil fields and industrial agriculture facilities have located. Protestors here are in real danger.



**Above:** In Santa Sofia, Columbia a centennial celebration turned into a protest against corporate greed. The signs reads, "We Colombians are like donkeys to work for the USA." **Below:** Many of the recent Presidents of Mexico were Harvard or Yale graduates elected with U.S. corporate campaign donations.

**President Carlos Salinas, 1988-1994: Harvard grad**



\$100M discovered in Swiss bank account, drug connections?  
1 brother murdered, another in prison for murdering political opponent. Fled to Ireland.

**President Ernesto Zedillo, 1994-2000: Yale grad**



U.S. corp. boards: Coke, Citigroup, Alcoa, Union Pacific

**President Vicente Fox, 2000-2006, Harvard grad**



Coke's supervisor for Mexico, and later, all of Central America.



## SECRET ORGANIZATIONS

Although we grow up hearing wonderful things about “democracy,” most of us cannot define the term very well. **“Demo-cracy” is a Greek term meaning “people-rule.”**

The term democracy is not about freedom *per se*, but about *participating in decision making*. Freedom – hopefully - should flow from universal participation, but universal participation has to be established first, to insure that whatever freedom emerges is for everyone. We are proud of our democracy, where almost anyone of voting age may vote, or join campaigns, or run for office. The idea is that people get to control their own government, and decisions are made right out in the open for all to see.

However, after World War II, a number of secretive government organizations were created or expanded to deal with the perceived threat of the Soviet Union, which had, like us, developed atomic weaponry. But after the Soviet Union faded as a threat, the secret organizations did not disappear. Like organizations everywhere, they found new goals. Note that “goal displacement” is one of the “dysfunctions of bureaucracy” Robert K. Merton warned us about earlier in this chapter.

Secret government organizations “re-justified” themselves on the basis that:

1. Behind-the-scenes operations protect the security of the country, and
2. Secret information gathering is vital to elected decision makers.

Nevertheless, a question is posed by the existence of these secret organizations: If important decisions are being made and implemented by secret organizations, do we still live in a democracy?

Today there are numerous government organizations that make decisions and take significant actions on our behalf without our knowledge. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Administration (NSA), and separate secret agencies for each branch of the military service are examples. These agencies have even kept information secret from each other.

For that matter, their budgets are secret as well, so citizens cannot know what their own money is being spent on, or how much is being spent. There is very little public oversight undertaken to determine whether these organizations are working in the best interests of our nation, or if they have begun to work in their own interests. Taken together, the image reflects a secret government, rather than an open and democratic government.[2]

The CIA's support for some of history's worst characters does not inspire confidence in our nation's secret government. This is a disturbing subject I have been investigating during my career as a sociologist. An eye-opening example comes from Chile.



Augusto Pinochet photo from: The Museum of Human Rights, Santiago, Chile

In the 1970s, the CIA planned the removal of Chile's democratically elected leader. Augusto Pinochet was installed as dictator. His brutal reign lasted for 17 years. Thousands of students who protested were beaten, imprisoned, tortured and hundreds were "disappeared" by dropping them from helicopters into the Pacific Ocean.

Citizens of the USA knew nothing about this massive violation of human rights. After Pinochet's death in 2006 it was revealed that he had raised \$27 million by illegally selling weapons the U.S. provided to his dictatorship and by transporting cocaine to the USA. He avoided trial, but his wife and children and accomplices were arrested for embezzlement, money laundering through U.S. banks and creating false passports to try to escape prosecution in Chile. [10, 11, 12, 13]





Courtesy of the Museum of Human Rights and the Museum of Salvadore Allelyende, Santiago, Chile

**Above:** Chilean mothers of the “disappeared” students marched through Santiago’s streets for years, asking if their sons and daughters were to be forgotten. They courageously kept the issue alive. By this time the world’s press was protecting them by covering their stories. They brought Pinochet down.

**Below:** 1. Photos of the disappeared students in Chile’s famous Human Rights Museum.  
2. An artist’s critique of the USA, blaming guilty corporations and CIA secrecy.





Furthermore, it is not clear that the behind-the-scenes operations have benefited our nation as a whole. *In secret*, Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein was provided poison gas by the USA to attack Iran. The Iranians never forgave us for that; it became a worldwide embarrassment for the USA, and Hussein ended up using some of the poison gas on his own people as well as Iranians.[3]

In 2003, our CIA improperly claimed - in great *inaccurate* detail - that Iraq's Saddam Hussein was manufacturing and storing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). President Bush made the decision to attack Iraq on that information. This attack on Iraq was unnecessary since no such weapons existed, leading to another global embarrassment for our nation related to secret government operations. By 2005, a world survey by the non-partisan PEW Research Center found respect for the USA had moved into last place among developed nations after our attack on Iraq.[4]

*In secret*, Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden was among those given arms and funding by the USA to fight the Russians in Afghanistan. Later, he turned those weapons on Afghani citizens, and then on us.

How well are U.S. citizens served by secrecy? The attack and occupation of Iraq had already cost the USA more than \$2 *trillion* during its first decade of warfare.[6] Counting interest on that debt load, it will require about \$40,000 payback per family of four; it must be paid back either by higher taxes or reduced government services.



A CIA agent that became his nation's leader was Manuel Noriega who seized power in Panama in 1982 with U.S. support (photo above, left). He was also a famous drug lord. His brazen disregard for the law and human rights publicly embarrassed the CIA when these secret activities became public (above left). In just one of his many hideouts \$8 million in cash was discovered (photo above, right).

The Iraq War had also created roughly 32,000 U.S. casualties and 4,400 deaths by June of 2010. More than a quarter of the hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers sent to Iraq report suffering psychologically from their service. Iraqi *civilian* casualties are very poorly recorded, but the estimates are many times higher than our own. Millions of Iraqis have fled their homeland and the tension between Iraqi religious groups has never been higher. When polled, U.S. citizens rate the Iraq War as a blunder.[7] But all this human misery began as a popular military effort, based on misinformation promoted by the CIA.

## **Political Leadership Connections to Secret Organizations**

Those who rise to the top of secret intelligence organizations seem somehow destined to win the highest public offices later. President Putin of Russia was previously head of the KGB, the secret intelligence agency of the former Soviet Union. Likewise, President George H. Bush had previously been appointed CIA Director in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal. Many high-level staff that served him later shifted into his son's 8-year presidency. Included in this group was Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld who was forced to resign after his involvement in directing torture tactics on Iraqi prisoners was disclosed.

Multinational corporations have also been accused by human rights groups of secretly hiring their own paramilitary assassins in poor nations to dispose of journalists, environmentalists and labor leaders whose activities might reduce their profits.

Nicaragua's Coca-Cola Chief Adolfo Calero became the leader of the secretive CIA mercenaries known as the "Contras" that murdered thousands of Central American citizens during several years of the Reagan Administration.[8]

The Smithsonian survey reported that over 700 environmental activists were killed or "disappeared" between the years 2001-2014 around the world as they fought to save our Earth's natural resources.[9] The assassins usually get away without detection, but it's no secret which corporations benefit from these killings or the secret agency they have relied on to organize and cover it up for decades.

Trust in a civil society depends upon keeping the public educated and aware of the facts. In a world populated by secret organizations it becomes difficult for citizens to understand how a system operates because too much of the machinery is invisible. Rumors thrive in such an environment. How then can citizens be real participants in real democracy?

A true democracy limits secret organization to that which is absolutely necessary.

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