

Oligarchical Organization Bifurcation Leading to Prolonged Decline Then Demise

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Render unto Caesar ...

Organizations have a primary purpose, be it educational, professional, representative, political, religious, special interest, community service, fraternal, social, or ad hoc. I have had interests in all of these areas and belonged to respective groups for each purpose, over the years. As time went on, few were able to maintain their focus and branched out into reforms beyond their basic purpose.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote two articles* on “the professionalism of reform” for *National Affairs*. The first appeared in [1965 Issue #1](#) and an update, 30 years later, in [1995 Issue #121](#). He quoted Everett Hughes: “*Professionals profess*. They profess to know better than others the nature of certain matters, and to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs.” A large increase in credentialed “intelligentsia” can be traced back to the GI Bill. The post-war period also saw family formation, childbirth, remarkable growth, career opportunities, personal wealth, tax revenue that exceeded social programs costs, and the populace were able and generous supporters of churches and charities.

After a long and major war many veterans were accustomed to hierarchical direction. Also, from time immemorial humans have been ruled by monarchs, lords, generals, and priests. Our natural tendency is to follow those who occupy leadership positions. Unfortunately, [many incompetent people held positions of authority](#).**

Oligarchical Encroachment

My first observation of attempted encroachment for a cause was during the 1960s, after I graduated from engineering school. The post-WWII peace movement made a major effort to have our professional societies dissuade working in the defense industry. The military-industrial complex was still a major employer and the protestor’s attempt at influence did not succeed. Thus, the role of professional societies to enhance application of physical science and not to take on social movements, no matter how worthwhile, was preserved. Unfortunately the wall of separation has been penetrated in recent years.

The five educational institutions that granted me degrees in engineering, business, and psychology began sending me information on how they are integrating environmentalism and social justice. Across the three fields, I would rather see a focus on better teaching of physics, mechanics, heat transfer, and thermodynamics; accounting, management, marketing, and economics; or psychology, personality, psychodynamics, and therapy; for example. Accomplished individuals, will be better able to effectively devote their life to social causes, if they learn their craft and profession well and can critically think, independently of the political advocacy of college and university presidents, deans, and faculty.

Oligarchical Takeover Examples

One very large fraternity to which I belonged has had a steady two-thirds membership decline of millions since 1959. A local educational support group hired a really exceptional person and was overruled by a central board. Our oligarchical delegate told us to accept and move on. When he said we did not have the competence of our betters, I violated etiquette and loudly asked if a school principal, thirty year teacher in the specialized field, and licensed psychologist were less capable than people who spent their life learning lore and relishing titles.

Over time, oligarchies justified their “goodness” by independently taking on major “humanistic” programs. These “leaders” had to find ways to tax local members or obtain grants as they had no direct source of funds. Financing changed from bottom-up contributions to top-down assessments. As a result, limited resources were diverted from the community they were chartered to serve and enhance. Greater goodness was assigned to, not originated by, the local membership. Many of these groups survive because branch banks and other PR-aware organizations now pay for their employee’s membership.

Community service groups were usually started by local businesspeople and professionals to meet for lunch and lectures. Besides eating, mingling, and listening to speakers, they had fun sponsoring neighborhood projects. Later, they got redirected toward worldwide “causes.” This grew out of a self-serving tendency of delegates to form an oligarchy, thereby enhancing their status locally and at regional, national, and international levels. This was a change from when representatives took notes and reported back to the rank and file for grassroots direction.

The Decline of Professional Elites

Decline was a delayed process as *funding became disconnected from membership*. Headquarters pursued funds from governments and foundations to carry on their activity. Such money was plentiful after World War II.

It is well over a half-century since we had post-war prosperity and the rise followed by decline of oligarchies that were insular. Public broadcasting was well funded until the late-1980s and had infrequent fund-raisers to involve their members. Now they broadcast frequent appeals. Federal deficits further threaten all allocations.

For decades, members have been leaving traditional faith denominations and transferring to unaffiliated churches. With population growth, the pool of professed believers was increasing. Top-down initiated changes in tenets result in many congregants **voting with their feet** and worshipping where they had local control. *Feet voting* sets off death spirals where maintenance is deferred and bills are not paid, resulting in church closures.

We now know that only about [25% of leaders are competent](#).** Tax money and grants are drying up. At least in areas where people can **vote with their feet and money**, it behooves us to reassess our folly. Elites will need to be competent and respond to their membership.

*Both are posted on Internet