

Government 1521
Bureaucratic Politics:
Government, Military,
Social and Economic Organizations

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Lecture 10: Twentieth-Century Organization and
Control: The Second World War and Its Aftermath

Mechanic: Talk about Formal versus
Informal Power

In what ways do people with less authority have
more power?

- Greater power if a person is...
- Difficult to replace [H4]
- Expert [H5]
- Willing to exert effort [H6]
- “Attractive” [H8]
- Central [H9]

'24' – Who Has the Most Power?

Please do not inform any Harvard University official that I am actually making
reference to a fictional counter-terrorism syndicated television program in my
capacity as a Harvard University Professor of Government teaching this class.

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Coffman:

Massive Planning and Mobilization for WWI before Pearl Harbor

- Chief of Staff of Army: George C. Marshall
- Benning promotion: George S. Patton, commander of third Cavalry Regiment
- 1940: Creation of Armored Force [War Dept directive]
- Cultural and org conflicts between regulars and enlists

Coffman:

Massive Planning and Mobilization for WWI before Pearl Harbor

“After the Louisiana maneuvers of 1940, an unusually qualified battery commander who was disgruntled by the poor air support decided to state the case. Not once during four months of field problems had an air observer actually adjusted the fire of his battalion.”

Capt William W. Ford: “had some experience as an air observer but, more to the point, he was a qualified pilot”

Ford proposes lighter, unarmored aircraft, remaining close to the firing [field artillery] batteries. Low authority, but plan gets adopted.

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

Puzzle: “Although distinctly outnumbered and in a strategic sense quantitatively inferior in equipment, the German Army, on all fronts, maintained a high degree of organizational integrity and fighting effectiveness through a series of almost unbroken retreats over a period of several years. In the final phase, the German armies were broken into unconnected segments, and the remnants were overrun as the major lines of communication and command were broken.”

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

“It is the main hypothesis of this paper, however, that the unity of the German Army was in fact sustained only to a very slight extent by the National Socialist political convictions of its members, and that more important in the motivation of the determined resistance of the German soldier was the steady satisfaction of certain primary personality demands afforded by the social organization of the army.” [Shils and Janowitz, 281]

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

- (1) a soldier's ability to resist is a function of the capacity of his immediate primary group (his squad or section) to avoid social disintegration.
- (2) The capacity of the primary group to resist disintegration was dependent on the acceptance of political, ideological and cultural symbols...Only to the extent that these secondary symbols became directly associated with primary gratifications.
- ...
- (4) as long as the primary group structure of the component units of the Wehrmacht persisted, attempts by the Allies to cause disaffection by the invocation of secondary and political symbols (e.g., about the ethical wrongfulness of the National Socialist system) were unsuccessful. By contrast, where Allied propaganda dealt with primary and personal values, particularly physical survival, it was more likely to be effective.

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

Modes of Disintegration

- Desertion
- Active surrender
- Passive surrender
- Routine resistance
- "Last-ditch" resistance

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

The Function of the Primary Group

"The company is the only truly existent community. This community allows neither time nor rest for personal life. It forces us into its circle, for life is at stake. Obviously compromises must be made and claims be surrendered....Therefore the idea of fighting, living, and dying for the fatherland, for the cultural possessions of the fatherland, is but a relatively distant thought. At least it does not play a great role in the practical motivations of the individual." – German officer after WWI.

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

“In the Wehrmacht desertions and surrenders were most frequent in groups of heterogeneous ethnic composition in which Austrians, Czechs, and Poles were randomly intermixed with each other. In such groups the difficulties of linguistic communication, the large amount of individual resentment and aggressiveness about coercion into German service, the weakened support of leadership due to their inability to identify with German officers – all these factors hampered the formation of cohesive groups.”

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

- Organizational Response [from General Staff]:
“German officers saw that solidarity is fostered by the recollection of jointly experienced gratifications and that accordingly the groups who had gone through a victory together should not be dissolved but should be maintained as units to the greatest degree possible.” [287]
- Replacement system: withdraw entire personnel of a division from the front and refit it as a unit with replacements. [287]

Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht

- Factors Influencing Surrender/Disintegration
 - Isolation
 - Familial Ties: Interviews with POWs show that as general conditions worsened, more and more talk of families and like “back home.”
 - Demand for Physical Survival
- Organizational Response
 - Imbue officers with ethic of honor
 - Oath of non-surrender
 - “In some cases it went to the extreme form of imagining how they would justify themselves in the event that Hitler were to confront them at the very moment and were to ask them why they had allowed themselves to be captured.” [295]

Interesting Historical Twist: Nazi Party overtakes General Staff (1939-1945)

End result is that “the Wehrmacht was rendered powerless to make its own decisions.”

- Ensure execution of Nazi strategic intentions
- Render capitulation impossible
- Maintain internal solidarity

Allied Propaganda

- Attacks on Nazi Party leaders and Germany’s war aims
- Strategic hopelessness of Germany’s position
- Justness of UN war aims
- Promises of good treatment to prisoners with appeals to self-preservation through surrender.

“The single leaflet most effective in communicating the promise of good treatment was the “safe conduct pass.” Significantly, it was usually printed on the back of leaflets which contained no elaborate propaganda appeals except those of self-preservation. The rank and file tended to be favorably disposed to its official language and legal, document-like character.”
