Sociological theory has not yet been subjected to the rigorous analytical treatment which has stripped economic theory of much of its logical inconsistencies and many of its vague, unsubstantiated generalizations. This is due in part to the fact that there is as yet no tradition in sociology of analytical rigour. But whatever the complete reason it is clear that progress in the formulation of sociological theories depends upon the introduction of tools which will expose the bare framework of analysis and the assumptions about social behaviour on which it is based.

In this paper an attempt is made to examine the construction of one organization theory for logical consistency. The exercise is a case study of what is called the structuralist theory of organization contained in two books by Amitai Etzioni: *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* published in 1961 and a shorter and more general book, *Modern Organizations* published in 1963. The first book tells us about the tools Etzioni uses while the second one enables us to identify more clearly than a reading of the first book would do the conceptual framework within which the tools are used.

There are obvious reasons for selecting Etzioni's work for scrutiny. His writings contain the most recent and most ambitious attempt to reach a theoretical understanding of organizational behaviour. They are widely acknowledged as an advance on earlier theories of organization. And Etzioni himself makes such substantial claims for his theory that he invites attempts at validation. Etzioni is not the sole advocate of a structuralist approach to organization theory but he is the acknowledged spokesman of a particular version and it is this version with which this paper is concerned.
Claims made for the theory

The claims are extensive and fundamental. First, the theory is described as the „great synthesis“ (1): a synthesis of what Etzioni calls the „Classical“ and Human Relations approaches representing studies of formal and informal organizations with Max Weber’s theory of bureaucracy and one of Karl Marx’s analytical tools (2). „It remained the task of a third tradition in organizational thinking“ he wrote, „to relate the two concepts of the formal and informal organization and to provide a more complete and integrated picture of the organization. This convergence of organizational theory, the Structuralist approach, was made considerably more sophisticated through comparative analysis” (ibid., pp. 20-21). The third tradition is not, according to Etzioni, yet universally accepted, despite its claimed superior analytical qualities. „The application of the Classical approach with its concern for formal organizational structure“, he wrote, „has by no means died out. Some continue to apply it as if it had never been criticized. Some new and fruitful developments, however, have arisen out of the Classical tradition, especially efforts to find an empirical basis for studying administration . . .” (ibid., p. 25). The new developments, described as Neo-Classical, are represented by the work of March and Simon. Nor, he adds, has the purely informal approach been discarded for there „are still Human Relations training manuals whose authors have learned little and forgotten little since Mayo wrote his first books . . .”, (ibid., p. 48). But „generally . . . those who still identify themselves with one or the other of these earlier schools have come to broaden their theoretical approach, and are moving in the general direction of the synthesis suggested,” (ibid.).

Etzioni is exuberant about the theoretical potential of the great synthesis. It can enable comparative studies to be undertaken thus broadening considerably the scope of organizational theory. In justification of his approach, Etzioni stated in the introduction to Complex Organizations that „Organizational analysis has reached the stage where it becomes crucial to study systematic differences among the various social units classed as organizations . . . The comparative analysis of organizations will lead to a richer and more precise organizational theory”, (p. XII). „Eventually, the comparative study of organizations will:
1. Establish the truly universal propositions of organizational theory.
2. Reduce overgeneralized propositions to middle-range (specific) statements, specifying the categories of organizations for which they hold.
3. Develop new middle-range propositions, so that knowledge of universals will be supplemented with statements about analytical types of organization ...” (ibid., p. XIV). More specifically Etzioni claims that his organizational theory has broadened to include:

1. both formal and informal elements of the organization and their articulation;
2. the scope of informal groups and the relations between such groups inside and outside the organization;
3. both lower and higher ranks;
4. both social and material rewards and their effects on each other;
5. the interaction between the organization and its environment;
6. both work and non-work organizations.” (Modern Organizations, p. 49).

Within its scope are fitted factories, banks, insurance companies and a large variety of organizations from the Communist Party to the Catholic Church, and from a maximum-security prison to a small residential college”, (ibid., p. 48). But as well as this all-embracing scope, the synthesis purportedly enables its users to perform the quite exceptional feat of extricating themselves from the constraints of the value-judgements admittedly contained in the approaches which make up the synthesis. “The Classical approach”, Etzioni wrote, „... viewed the organization from a highly managerial standpoint”, (ibid., p. 21); while the „Human Relations approach ... favours management and misleads the workers”, (ibid., p. 41). On the other hand, the great synthesis, is „more encompassing and balanced perspective not only encourages the growth of a value-free, neither pro-management nor pro-worker, approach to organizational analysis and the expansion of its scope to include all types of organizations and all the elements of organization, but it enriches the study of any single element by providing a context within which to place it, and points of reference for judging its importance to the organization,” (ibid., p. 49). Etzioni stated that „It remained ... for the Structuralists to ... emphasize that social science is not a vehicle to serve the needs of either worker or organization. It is no more concerned to improve the organization of management than it is to improve organization of the employees,” (ibid., p. 40). Whether Etzioni successfully frees his analysis of value-judgements will be seen as we identify the conceptual framework within which he operates. But from this point we are encouraged to ask flippantly whether it is by adding a degree of Karl Marx that two pro-management approaches can be combined to produce a value-free one.
Firstly the whole of Etzioni's work is concerned with the exercise, the administration of power within organizations defined, after Parsons, as social units oriented to the realization of specific goals. An organization is seen as a large, complex social unit in which many social groups interact. It involves the co-ordination of a large number of human actions and "combines its personnel with its resources, weaving together leaders, experts, workers, machines, and raw materials. At the same time it continually evaluates how well it is performing and tries to adjust itself accordingly in order to achieve its goals ..." (*Modern Organizations*, p. 1). Within this complexity, the prime variable is power. Indeed it is because Etzioni is concerned with the "kinds and distribution of power in organizations" (*Complex Organizations*, p. XV) that he calls his study a structural one. He follows, therefore, in the tradition of Weber. His model is an elaboration of Weber's, employing more sophisticated analytical tools and using a more complex set of assumptions. Weber is accorded the status of a founding father of the Structuralist school. After Weber, Etzioni accepts the pyramidal, hierarchical shape of organizations as given and concentrates on the administration of control in pursuit of goals which may or may not be those which are stated. He extended Weber's analysis of authority, including its legitimation, to cover non-legitimate power so as "to give full status to both legitimate and non-legitimate sources", (*Complex Organizations*, p. 15). Etzioni, concentrating on the phenomenon of legitimation in Weber's analysis, identified "compliance" as the "central element of organizational structure" and chose it as the basis for the classification of organizations. "Compliance", he wrote, "is a relationship consisting of the power employed by superiors to control subordinates and the orientation of the subordinates to this power", (ibid., p. XV). In other words, after examining legitimation, he asked "To what extent can the organization expect its participants to accept its rulings because "they were always so", to what extent because the rulings agree with a law the participants acknowledge, and to what degree must the person who issues an order be highly persuasive", (*Modern Organizations*, p. 50). Compliance is undoubtedly a more analytically useful concept than legitimation. Compliance then was chosen by Etzioni as the main variable and was related in the analysis to certain other variables which were not examined in relation to each other. There are two parties to a compliance relationship: one which exercises power and one which is subjected to it. But in any one organization compliance relationships are likely to be complex so, in order
to simplify the analysis, Etzioni dealt only with what he called „higher participants” and „lower participants”.

The next stage in the analysis was to categorize the means of control at the disposal of the higher participants and to distinguish between the kinds of responses of the lower participants. After that the types of means of control and the kinds of responses were related, constituting compliance relationships, and acted as a basis for the classification of organizations.

Etzioni identified three means of control, or means whereby higher participants exercised power over lower participants. They were physical, material or symbolic. The physical means he describes as coercive, resting on the „application, or threat of application, of physical sanctions such as infliction of pain, deformity, or death; generation of frustration through restriction of movement; or controlling through force the satisfaction of needs such as those for food, sex, comfort, and the like”. The material means constitute remunerative power and are based on the „control over material resources and rewards through allocation of salaries and wages, commissions and contributions, „fringe benefits”, services and commodities”. Lastly symbolic means entail the „allocation and manipulation of symbolic rewards and deprivations through employment of leaders, manipulation of mass media, allocation of esteem and prestige symbols, administration of ritual, and influence over the distribution „acceptance” and „positive response” ” and are based, in short, on normative power (Complex Organizations, p. 5).

So far coercive power, remunerative power and normative power are analytical categories which assist towards understanding how control in organizations is exercised. When, however, organizations have to be classified according to these categories the assistance is seriously weakened. It is pertinent to say that „Most organizations employ all three kinds of power, but the degree to which they rely on each differs from organization to organization”, (ibid., p. 6), but difficult to say more. It is difficult to say precisely which organizations obtain compliance mainly through which type of power: which organizations use coercive means, which use remunerative and which normative. Yet as a first step towards an understanding of the actual situation different organizations have to be put into precise categories. What perhaps is more important from our point of view is that the three types of force are given equal weight by Etzioni as determinants of compliance, and therefore of behaviour. The three major sources of control, Etzioni states, „whose allocation and manipulation account to a great extent for the foundations of social order . . . are coercion, economic assets, and normative
values. Social relationships differ in the relative predominance of this or that kind of control; but none has an a priori superiority, nor is there one which, as a rule, is the most powerful . . . All three enjoy equal status. No assumption is made that force is necessarily disruptive, or that economic factors ultimately determine the distribution and dynamics of the others, or that an organization is one integrated collectivity”, (Complex Organizations, pp. XVI-XVII). Etzioni is using, then, a multi-causal analysis in which nothing can be said for certain until it has been empirically determined. This is our first significant insight into his conceptual framework. With the assumption about causality that no power has priority over any other then causal explanations depend upon the way in which Etzioni, or anyone else who uses his model, classifies organizations according to their dominant means of control. If, for instance, so-called professional organizations are described as normative controlled then it is equivalent to saying that behaviour in those organizations is largely value-determined. The all important thing is the classification and, as we stated above, this is beset with difficulties, particularly as on Etzioni’s own admission most organizations employ all three kinds. The question concerning the causal relationships between the three types of power is not even posed let alone answered in Etzioni’s model. We do not expect him to engage in the long-standing controversy about the merits of economic as against normative determinism but as he introduces physical power, coercion, as an independent variable and claims this addition as an improvement on Weber’s model the reader is surely entitled to a comment (see Complex Organizations, p. XVII). It is misleading to contraction out of making a causal explanation without some comment because this in itself is a causal explanation. We shall leave this point in order to get on with the construction of the model. „Organizations”, Etzioni states, „can be ordered according to their power structure, taking into account which power is predominant, how strongly it is stressed compared with other organizations in which the same power is predominant, and which power constitutes the secondary source of control . . . Most organizations tend to emphasize only one means of power, relying less on the other two . . . The major reason for power specialization seems to be that when two kinds of power are emphasized at the same time, over the same subject group, they tend to neutralize each other”, (ibid., pp. 6-7). And with that we move on to another part of the model.

This section distinguishes between the kinds of responses of the lower participants. „Organizations”, Etzioni states, „must continually recruit
means if they are to realize their goals. One of the most important of these means is the positive orientation of the participants to the organizational power" or, in other words, the intensity of involvement, (ibid., p. 10). The participants can be placed along an involvement continuum where at one extreme there is positive involvement or commitment and at the other extreme negative involvement or alienation. ,,Actors can accordingly be placed on an involvement continuum which ranges from a highly intensive negative zone through mild negative and mild positive zones to a highly positive zone," (ibid., p. 9). Etzioni found it convenient, he stated, to name three zones on the involvement continuum which are: alienative involvement where lower participants tend to be alienated from their respective organizations as, he quotes, prisoners or enlisted men are; calculative involvement, a low intensity phenomenon characteristic of economic relationships; and moral involvement designating a positive orientation of high intensity and found amongst church parishioners or devoted members of political parties.

There are then three kinds of power and three zones of involvement and the relationships between them constitute compliance relationships. In Etzioni's typology there are nine types of compliance grouped into what he calls congruent and incongruent types. A congruent type is one where ,,the kind of involvement that lower participants have because of other factors ... (such as personality structure, secondary socialization and membership in other collectivities) ... and the kind of involvement that tends to be generated by the predominant form of organizational power are the same ...” (ibid., p. 12). It follows that congruence is more effective than incongruence and because organizations are under external and internal pressure to be effective congruent types are more frequent than incongruent ones. Thus the more frequent cases are where normative powers are applied on highly committed participants, remunerative power is applied on participants in the calculative involvement zone and coercive power operates on highly alienated participants. Since organizations are under pressure to be effective, Etzioni adds, ,,organizations tend to shift their compliance structure from incongruent to congruent types and organizations which have congruent compliance structures tend to resist factors pushing them toward incongruent compliance structures,” (Complex Organizations, p. 14). This is presented as a dynamic hypothesis. The dynamic determinants are environmental factors which, presumably, have to be empirically determined and can, because of Etzioni's assumption about causation, be almost anything. The congruent types are referred to as coercive compliance, utilitarian compliance and normative compliance.
The three kinds of power and the three zones of involvement are basic but bare hypotheses of a general nature. We have mentioned the difficulties associated with categorizing actual organizations into power types and will leave the matter there. Given then that the power categories have a meaningful existence we must know, in order to make sense of the concept compliance relationship, who the lower participants are so that we may decide about their distribution into the three zones of involvement and what determines involvement. Answers to these questions tell us much about the subjective content of the analysis.

Etzioni correctly defines lower participants in terms of the intensity of their involvement but he has to refer to them in concrete terms. They are employees, rank and file, members, clients, customers and inmates. Thus the lower participants in industrial organizations are employees, those in churches are members and those in prisons are inmates. Customers and clients figure as lower participants if they satisfy the criteria for participation which Etzioni specifies. The criteria are involvement, subordination and performance. Before deciding on who would rank as participants Etzioni would want to know the nature of involvement, its direction and intensity; the degree of subordination and the amount of performance. He does not rate the criteria in any order of importance so that the evaluation is left largely to the discretion of the analyst. A participant, however, must rank high on at least one of the three dimensions (Complex Organizations, p. 21). As an illustration of how the ranking operates Etzioni states that inmates are more subordinated than employees, employees more than members and members more than clients but against this one must evaluate the amount of performance which is high for employees, low for inmates and lowest for clients and customers. Soldiers in combat are high on all three dimensions; inmates are high on involvement and subordination but low on performance; while employees are medium in involvement and subordination but high on performance. Customers and clients usually score low on the three dimensions but not necessarily in every case so they may figure as lower participants. The consequence of applying the three criteria is that participants are included who may not be usually regarded as belonging to organizations with sufficient closeness to warrant their inclusion as participants. Etzioni is aware of this for he says that his manner of delineating organizations "draws the line much lower than most studies of bureaucracies, which tend to include only persons who are part of a formal hierarchy: priests but not parishioners; stewards but not union members; guards but not inmates;
nurses but not patients," (ibid., p. 21). But to exclude the parishioners, union members and patients, Etzioni claims would "be like studying colonial structures without the natives, stratification without the lower classes, or a political regime without the citizens or voters" (ibid.). To this rather crude comparison Etzioni adds that if priests were regarded as the privates of the church or schoolteachers as the lowest ranking participants of a school the analysis would ignore "the psychological import of having "subordinates""

The identification of lower participants raises questions of much greater analytical significance than Etzioni's comments would indicate. It was necessary that Etzioni should define lower participants as he did in order to complete his model and not because an analysis would be defective if they were defined in any other way. Having assumed the existence of three kinds of power it was necessary that there should be related kinds of involvement so that compliance relationships could be constructed. If, for instance, only the members of formal organizations had been included in the analysis then all of the lower participants would have been in some way employees, with a largely dominant calculative involvement. There would then have been only one congruent type, namely where remunerative power was used. The coercive category would have to disappear altogether for it is impossible to conceive of an organization based on coercion if there are no recipients of the coercion. We would be left with the normative category in which the only clear indication of the normative element would be in the stated goals of the organizations. The exercise of normative controls where the involvement was largely of an economic nature would pose analytical difficulties for in this as in other analyses there must be comparable elements or categories so that correlations can be established as Etzioni himself indicates. When faced with defining lower participants Etzioni had either to include amongst them actors who were patently not motivated by remuneration and who appeared to be motivated by the use of force or the influence of values or alter his initial hypothesis which stipulated three kinds of power systems. The difficulty Etzioni would have faced if he had defined lower participants as employees is illustrated by his treatment of higher participants or elites. He wrote: "The compliance structure of elites of higher participants varies much less from one type of organization to another than the compliance structure of lower participants. The basic differences between the compliance of higher and lower participants are as follows: Coercive power is rarely applied to higher participants; their involvement is usually moral or calculative, and only rarely alienative. Second, pure moral involvement is relatively
rare because higher participants are more likely than lower participants to have career or economic interests in the organization. This means that the higher ranks exhibit a more limited range of compliance patterns than power ranks do. The compliance structure of guards in a prison is quite similar to that of foremen in a factory, and, since the clergy too is a vocation, with income, promotions, and prestige differentials, the compliance structure of ministers does not differ as much from the foremen's pattern as his parishioners differ from workers in compliance," (Complex Organizations, p. 202). If Etzioni had not been able to stretch his definition of lower participants as he did it is likely that he would not have been able to maintain his analytical power categories. The importance of this can be seen from the fact that his three categories, equal in causal weight, constitute the assumption about causal explanation on which the whole analysis rests. Faced with a single compliance relationship with a utilitarian basis Etzioni would have had to have assumed, explicitly or implicitly, a variant of economic determinism. His subsequent analysis would have been different. Indeed, from our point of view, the analysis cannot be accepted unless the definition of lower participants is accepted first.

So far we have shown only the analytical importance of the definition of lower participants, we have not raised objections to it. All the organizations with which Etzioni is concerned have goals by definition. In every case the fulfilment of the goals results in the provision of a service or the production of a commodity. This is so whether, to use the concrete terms employed by Etzioni, we are dealing with hospitals, prisons, schools, churches, industrial organizations, the Communist Party, the Mapai or any other type. The point at which the service or commodity enters its market marks the end of formal organizational responsibility. It does not end, of course, the interest of the organization for a relationship exists between the organization and the consumer and the significance of this relationship for organizational behaviour depends upon the nature of the market. Put another way, every organization works within a market of one kind or another, whether it be for religious beliefs, medical care, coercive detention or manufactured goods, but the market, no matter how much its characteristics react on the organization, is not a part of the organization. There is no essential sociological difference between the service a hospital provides and the commodities many industrial organizations produce. The patient is no less the consumer of a service than the person who buys a motor car is a consumer of a commodity. If there is a difference between the two it will depend on the characteristics
of the market; on the extent to which the providing organization has control over the amount and quality of the service or commodity and, relatedly, on the value attached to the service or commodity by the consumer. We shall develop this line of argument more fully in the next chapter. Here it is enough to show that there is a serious inconsistency in Etzioni's manner of defining lower participants. We are not neglecting, or underestimating, the warder/prisoner, nurse/patient relationships which concern Etzioni so much but are simply placing them for analysis as market phenomena. There is no doubt that similar relationships exist between producers and consumers in commodity markets depending upon the degree of monopoly which exists in them. There is no doubt in our minds that lower participants must belong to formal organizations.

The next question concerns the determinants of involvement which means the orientation of lower participants to the organization as a power system. Why is it that there is, in terms of Etzioni's analysis, this continuum of involvement ranging from intensive commitment to intensive alienation? Firstly, lower participants are influenced in their attitudes to the elements which comprise a power system, such as the directives the organization issues, the sanctions by which it supports its directives, and the persons who are in power positions, by external environmental factors. Etzioni describes these factors as membership in other organizations such as labor unions, basic value commitments obtained from say Catholic as against Protestant religious commitments and the personality structure of the participants which may, for instance, be authoritarian, (ibid., p. 13). Secondly, lower participants are influenced by organizational power. Indeed Etzioni insists that organizational powers generate involvement, that is, either commitment or alienation, (ibid., p. 12). We are given a number of hints about the generation process. He says that "involvement ... is affected both by the legitimacy of a directive and by the degree to which it frustrates the subordinate's need-dispositions. Alienation is produced not only by illegitimate exercise of power, but also by power which frustrates needs, wishes, desires. Commitment is generated not merely by directives which are considered legitimate but also by those which are in line with internalized needs of the subordinate. Involvement is positive if the line of action directed is conceived by the subordinate as both legitimate and gratifying. It is negative when the power is not granted legitimacy and when it frustrates the subordinate ..." (Complex Organizations, pp. 15-16). Coercive power is regarded as illegitimate by subordinates, therefore it is alienative. It is
for this reason that inmates are said to be alienated from prisons and that some degree of alienation exists among students and pupils. „Levels of alienation are closely associated with the degree of coercion applied,” (ibid., p. 49). Normative power, on the other hand, is generally regarded as legitimate and therefore generates commitment. This process occurs through the internalization of normative directives and is seen in its extreme form in churches. Where norms are internalized there is presumably no conflict between directives and the need-dispositions of participants. Where they are not internalized, as in prisons, the need-dispositions of participants are frustrated. In between the extreme cases where there are degrees of legitimacy and illegitimacy it is necessary to make more detailed correlations between elements of power systems and the frustration of need-dispositions. Thus Etzioni states that factors which allow for the greater application of normative controls increase commitment and he lists higher rewards, closer and more personal contact with management and deference from clients as such factors. Presumably lower wages, less contact with management and little or no deference from clients lead to increasing alienation. The need-dispositions of participants involve other factors than those just mentioned; they involve anything which goes towards determining satisfaction with work. In so far as any meaning can be given to the term satisfaction it too operates on a continuum coincident with involvement. Etzioni wrote that high intrinsic satisfaction from work is positively associated with positive involvement and we take it that the reverse holds too, (Complex Organizations, p. 53). It should be noted that the area on the continuum between the extremes is largely occupied by work organizations, by, as Etzioni terms them, blue-collar, white-collar and professional organizations where compliance is a mixture of three sorts but is primarily utilitarian and where the lower participants are employees. Etzioni divides the blue-collar, white-collar and professional organizations up into normative influenced categories with the normative element increasing as one moves away from manual work. Alienation, therefore, is greatest in blue-collar organizations and least in professional organizations. But there is more to it than this.

There are alienating creating factors which are common to work organizations and, depending upon the intensity with which they are present, which cause different degrees of alienation to occur even between organizations in the same category. The factors are described in Modern Organizations. Their operation poses what in Etzioni’s mind is the main organizational dilemma.
The use of human resources by organizations to achieve their goals creates, Etzioni believes, a central dilemma which previous theorists did not recognize. "The problem of modern organizations is," he states, "... how to construct human groupings that are as rational as possible, and at the same time produce a minimum of undesirable side effects and a maximum of satisfaction," (Modern Organizations, p. 2). Or, rephrased in a manner which illuminates his approach more clearly, the problem is "how to control the participants so as to maximize effectiveness and efficiency and minimize the unhappiness this very need to control produces." (ibid, p. 50). The undesirable side-effects stem to a significant extent from the increasing rationality of organizational action. Etzioni does not believe, as did the "classical" theorists, that rational behaviour through increasing productivity and therefore incomes leads to greater worker satisfaction; or that there is a positive correlation between productivity and worker satisfaction, as does the members of the Human Relations school. "Modern civilization", he stated, "depends largely on organizations as the most rational and efficient form of social grouping known" but the "increase in the scope and rationality of organizations has not come without social and human cost. Many people who work for organizations are deeply frustrated and alienated from their work ... At this point we must confront a major misunderstanding. Not all that enhances rationality reduces happiness, and not all that increases happiness reduces efficiency ... Generally the less the organization alienates its personnel, the more efficient it is. Satisfied workers usually work harder and better than frustrated ones. Within limits, happiness heightens efficiency in organizations and, conversely, without efficient organizations much of our happiness is unthinkable ... Thus, to a degree, organizational rationality and human happiness go hand in hand. But a point is reached in every organization where happiness and efficiency cease to support each other. Not all work can be well-paid or gratifying, and not all regulations and orders can be made acceptable. Here we face a true dilemma", (Modern Organizations, p. 2). Efficiency results from rational action through increasing specialization. Alienation results from increasing specialization. At this point instead of seeing alienation simply as negative involvement we recognize it as a term borrowed from Karl Marx and referring to the attitude of work caused by the inability to become identified with the whole of a particular work process including the disposal of the product. Only the term, however, is borrowed from Marx, not the conceptual framework of which it was a part and it has, therefore, a somewhat different meaning in the hands of Etzioni. This is how Etzioni sees the connection
between specialization and alienation: "Specialization has fragmented production so that each worker's labor has become repetitious, monotonous, and lacks opportunity for creativity and self-expression. The worker has little conception of the whole work process or of his contribution to it; his work is meaningless. He has little control over the time at which his work starts and stops or over the pace at which it is carried out. To this Marxian analysis, Weber added that this basic estrangement exists not only between the worker and the means of production, but also between the soldier and the means of warfare, the scientist and the means of enquiry, etc. This is not just a legal question of ownership ... but rather that with ownership goes the right to control, and that those that provide the means also define their use; thus the worker, soldier, and researcher — and by implication all employees of all organizations — are frustrated, unhappy since they cannot determine what use their efforts will be put to since they do not own the instrument necessary to carry out independently the work that needs to be done. When asked, "all said and done, how satisfied are you with your work?" about 80 per cent of American blue-collar workers answer "not satisfied". Alienation is a concept that stands for this sentiment and the analysis of its source in the Marxian-Weberian terms", (Modern Organizations, p. 42). Thus the movement towards large-scale production with its base of specialization is seen as the source of alienation. But not all work is alienating and not all alienating-creating work alienates workers to the same extent; only "after a point" does the organization of work create unhappy, frustrated workers. Once alienation exists then workers become unco-operative and come into conflict with management. Industrial conflict, then, is seen as a product of alienation. We shall return to Etzioni's view of conflict below. For now we shall accept that alienation causes conflict.

Etzioni's interpretation of the alienation generating process involves a number of propositions about organizational behaviour which need to be made explicit. We must perforce state them barely though some are highly controversial and lie at the root of major methodological differences in industrial sociology.

1) First is the proposition that the sub-division and simplification of work caused by specialization creates dissatisfaction with work. If this is valid then the converse should hold good that the less the specialization the more employees are satisfied with their work. A historical analysis of organizational change should reveal increasing unhappiness among employees.
(2) If the first proposition is valid then, although all workers who are in any way affected by specialization will experience some dissatisfaction with their work, there will be sharp differences in the incidence of dissatisfaction both within organizations and between them as the degree of specialization varies. The greatest dissatisfaction will be experienced by those performing the simplest and most mechanical tasks. There should be some empirical evidence concerning this proposition.

(3) If alienation causes conflict between management and workers (see ibid., p. 41) and alienation is defined as a form of dissatisfaction then industrial conflict must be a function of dissatisfaction.

(4) As dissatisfaction is created by specialization and itself creates conflict there must be a positive correlation between specialization and industrial conflict. The more specialized work is the more intense in conflict. It should be possible to validate this proposition.

(5) It follows that as specialization is the result of rational action and rational action is positively associated with efficiency, the more efficient production is the more likely there will be conflict between managers and workers. This proposition too can be tested empirically.

(6) If dissatisfaction becomes more intense as work tasks become subdivided and dissatisfaction creates conflict then the sharpest conflict in any organization should involve management and the least skilled workers. We should find that lowly skilled workers on mechanical tasks and clerical workers on routinized tasks reveal a deeper conflict with management than say apprentice-skilled workers do. More specifically, lowly skilled surface workers on the coal mines should be more militant than coal face workers in the mines. All the evidence is to the contrary.

(7) If rational action based on specialization increases both productivity and dissatisfaction then there must be a positive correlation between productivity and dissatisfaction and an inverse correlation between productivity and satisfaction. This is completely contrary to the proposition on which the Human Relations school is based and although Etzioni criticizes that school he does so for its incompleteness rather than its use of false assumptions about industrial behaviour.

(8) It follows from all the above propositions that the Structuralists correlate the physical work environment or organization of work (an independent variable) with satisfaction from work (a dependent variable) and conflict between management and workers (a dependent variable). If, therefore, the physical work environment is varied to make work less repetitive and monotonous and more autonomous and creative, employees will
adopt a more co-operative attitude towards management. In other words the intensity of conflict can be varied by adjustments within organizations. In this sense they are working from the same basic assumption as the Human Relations School, that conflict is a dependent variable. They differ only in the kind of adjustment they think necessary to produce any given conflict situation.

The above propositions, though they may read like a skit on a serious academic work, follow logically from Etzioni’s analysis. They suggest the ludicrous conclusion that rational action results in both efficiency and inefficiency in such a way that the more efficient an organization becomes the less efficient it is.

Apart from telling us that Etzioni has not examined the logical of his analysis, the propositions indicate an approach to conflict which is basic to his analysis. This approach is implicit in the whole of his work.

Firstly, Etzioni recognized that conflict, tensions or frictions do exist in an organization. His whole work deals with the question of power and its acceptance: his prime variable is compliance. Throughout his model he is concerned with obstructions to positive involvement, with the sources of alienation and with the realignment of the beliefs, norms and perspectives of participants with those of the organization. In other words Etzioni is constantly concerned about what he would describe as the sources of conflict. He goes out of his way to dissociate himself from those who deny the existence of conflict. He rejected, he stated, the “harmony” assumption of the Human Relations School and mentioned that it was “in exploring the harmony view . . . that the Structuralist writers first recognize(d) fully the organizational dilemma: the inevitable strains which can be reduced but not eliminated — between organizational needs and personal needs; between rationality and non-rationality; between discipline and autonomy; between formal and informal relations; between management and workers, or, more generally, between ranks and divisions” (3). More than this, he considered that conflict could be functional. “Industrial conflict is viewed”, he wrote, “by many social scientists of the other generation and by most Human Relations writers as basically undesirable . . . The Structuralists, however, point to the many important social functions of conflict, including its positive contributions for the organizational system itself, and object to any artificial smothering of conflict. The expression of conflict allows genuine differences of interests and beliefs to emerge, whose confrontation may lead to a test of power and adjustment of the organizational system to the real situation, and
ultimately to organizational peace. If glossed over, conflict and its concomitant latent alienation will seek other outlets such as withdrawal or increase in accidents which in the end are disadvantageous to both worker and organization” (4).

It is not necessary to dispute this interpretation of conflict in order to illustrate the analytical irrelevance of the distinction Etzioni has made. The distinction is that Human Relations writers on the one hand see conflict as being analogous to pain in the human body in that they believe that by correct action conflict can be resolved completely whenever it occurs, while on the other hand, the Structuralists regard conflict both as something which can be prophylactically treated and as a phenomenon which itself has prophylactic qualities. The distinction relates to different views about the sources of conflict within the organization. In the one case conflict is wholly the product of maladjustment between parts whereas in the other case it may be this but it may also result from internal structural factors and not be amenable to remedial treatment. Now it is not suggested that such a distinction is worthless. The interpretation of Etzioni does, in fact, constitute a useful modification of equilibrium analysis in that it takes it closer to reality. But it is a modification of equilibrium analysis and not an alternative to it. In each case the origin of conflict is detected within the organization. The existence of conflict as seen by Etzioni no more disturbs the persistence of the organization as a social system than does that of the Human Relations school. The sources of conflict are not traced to environmental factors. Etzioni, as do many structural functionalists, pays lip-service to the existence of an environment. For instance, he stated that „both the initial involvement of lower participants and the involvement they develop while in the organization are determined in part by the organization's environment. The kinds of power an organization applies are affected by its „social license“ to use coercion, by its market position and by its social status. The goals an organization serves are formulated in part to maximize its input-output exchange with the environment. The legal system of the external collectivities in which organizations operate imposes constraints on recruitment and control methods; so does the political power exercised by lower participants in external systems. Recruitment, scope, and pervasiveness are all directly concerned with „boundary” processes or relationships” (5). But he gave it no causal part to play in his analysis. The relationships he mentions do not appear anywhere in his elaborate model.

The cruz of this matter is that if an organization is regarded as a social system with some means of insulating itself from environmental pressures
and possessing, therefore, elements which are specific to itself, it is this which is the major analytical distinguishing feature such an organization can consistently be abstracted from its environment for analytical purposes and be attributed the qualities which determine its own behaviour. There can be, and are, differences of opinion about the internal nature of the system but these are not conceptual differences. A conceptual difference arises when contrary views are put about the insularity of the system. An important clue to conceptual differences is contained in the approach to conflict and on this score there is no doubt where Etzioni and the Structuralists stand. They may argue with the „Classical” theorists, the Human Relations school, and the structural functionalists about the extent, the intensity, the permanence and the function of conflict but their analysis of conflict stands fairly and squarely within a common conceptual framework.

Notes

2. ibid., p. 41.
3. ibid., p. 41.
4. ibid., p. 44.