

## **Unit Three: The Organization**

### **1 Concept of the Organization**

Etzioni defines an organization as a social unit created to achieve a specific, predefined goal.

With respect to Parsons, he defined organizations as social units established which establishment was according to a specific structural model to the achievement of particular goals.

Robert Ford defines an organization as a group of interactive individuals which interaction is to achieve a specific objective.

Zanden defines it as a group of individuals who share certain traits and characteristics, distinguishable in the presence of social relationships, where these individuals are centered around a particular goal.

### **2 Significance of Organizations Study**

The study of organizations is of paramount importance in the sociology of organizations, from inception to present day. The following points are an attempt to highlight this significance.

- A. Because individuals, whose majority belongs to formal organizations, are either directly or indirectly connected to organizations throughout their working lives, the study of the organizations' work conditions ensures personnel conformity and contentment, especially when they exhibit work competence;
- B. Organizational research can also be beneficial to management which results aids with more effective planning because one of the organizations' characteristics is dynamism and constant change in response to internal and external conditions of the working environment.
- C. Regardless of the practical goals, researchers are interested in the study of organizations to develop organizational knowledge and the relationships between key variables in this field. Such study results in the accumulation of knowledge and the advancement of scientific foundations, which are crucial for the improvement of policies and practical procedures.

- D. The results from the study of organizations can be applied and generalized to other fields and organizations (for instance the digitization of the various administrative and economic sectors).
- E. The study of organizational structure allows researchers to explore the individual behavior and the human personality as well as the structure impact on personality development and attitudes.

### **3 Typology of Organizations**

There exist several typologies of organizations depending on the adopted criterion. The section ahead will attempt to present the key typologies as follows:

- Typology on the basis of Compliance Relationships:

Such typology is based on how the personnel responds to the organization's authority. Accordingly, three types can be recognized:

- A. Coercive or compulsory organizations: organizations that impose their authority on individuals through force, such as prisons and mental hospitals.
- B. Utilitarian organizations: organizations that are established to achieve goals and benefits of practical and tangible nature, such as universities and industrial or commercial institutions.
- C. Voluntary organizations: organizations where individuals have complete freewill to either join or leave, such as clubs and places of worship.

- Typology on the basis of the Primary Beneficiary of Activities:

Such typology is based on a simple question: "Who is the primary beneficiary of the organization's activities?" Accordingly, three types can be recognized:

- A. Mutual benefit organizations: organizations where the primary beneficiary is the key members, for instance political parties, unions, and sports clubs.
- B. Business organizations: organizations where the primary beneficiary is the owners, for instance industrial organizations, banks, and insurance companies.
- C. Service organizations: organizations where the primary beneficiary is the clients, for instance the various service institutions and social welfare organizations.

- Typology on the basis of Technology Use:

Such typology is based on the degree of technology use in industrial organizations, and the typology recognizes the following:

- A. Organizations using simple technology: industrial organizations which production is on the small-scale or of small quantities that involve production activities, such as canning and packaging (e.g., milk, biscuits).
- B. Organizations of large-scale production processes: industrial organizations which production is on the larger scale or of large quantities, such as car factories and home appliances manufacturers.
- C. Organizations of highly complex production processes: industrial organizations that require a high technological level and involve continuous and complex production processes, such as military and defense industries and petroleum industries.

- Typology on the basis of the Organizations' Functions:

Parsons advanced four key functional requirements needed for the survival or continuance of any given system. On this basis, four types can be recognized based on the organization's performed function within the overall system or society, as follows:

- A. Organizations with adaptive aims: organizations that achieve family-like adaptation and integration among their members to guarantee their continuity;
- B. Organizations that are goal-oriented: organizations that primarily strive to realize their creation objectives, such as schools;
- C. Organizations with integration aims: organizations that chiefly work towards achieving harmony and coherence among their members as basis to reach their goals;
- D. Organizations with regulatory and tension reduction aims: organizations that establish tension reduction rules to ensure regulation.