

Domination and Stratification

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Legitimacy and the Types of Authority

Authority is the probability that specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of people. Thus not every means for exercising power and influence over other people is involved here. Authority, in this sense, can be based in each individual case on the most varied motives for compliance: from dull habit to purely rational calculation. A certain minimal willingness to obey; that is, an interest (external or internalized) in obeying is essential in every real model of domination. . . .

Obedience ideally signifies that the conduct of the obeyer proceed as if he has made the content of the command a maxim for his own activity and for its own sake. Without concern for his own valuation of the command as such, his activity ideally occurs exclusively for the sake of the formal obligation. . . .

There are three pure types of legitimate authority. The basis for their claim to legitimacy may be primarily one of:

(1) *Rational* character—resting on the common belief in the legality of rules and the right of those empowered to exercise authority (i.e., legal authority); or

(2) *Traditional* character—resting on the common belief in the sanctity of existing traditions and the legitimacy of that authority thereby empowered (i.e., traditional authority); or finally

(3) *Charismatic* character—resting on an uncommon devotion to the sanctity, heroism or otherwise impressive character of

an individual and to the dispositions openly enacted by that person (i.e., charismatic authority).

In the case of statutory authority, obedience is accorded the legally prescribed technically impersonal order. This obedience is further accorded specific persons in whom authority is vested on the basis of the formal legitimacy of this legally prescribed order, its dispositions and its scope. In the case of traditional authority, obedience is accorded that individual empowered by the tradition who is (within its domain) bound to that tradition. Obedience is accorded on the basis of loyalty to the leader within the scope of custom. In the case of charismatic authority, it is the charismatically qualified leader to whom obedience is accorded and on the basis of a personal trust in the leader's revelation, his heroism or his exemplary character within the parameters of the individual's willingness to believe in this charisma. . . .

That none of these three ideal types, a discussion of which is to follow, really occur historically in their pure form should certainly not prevent us from expressing them in as sharply focused a conceptual framework as possible. . . .

Charisma is to be considered an uncommon quality of an individual personality (originally deemed a magical quality, whether of prophets, healers, wisemen, leaders of the hunt, or war heroes). It invests that personality with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically extraordinary powers which are not accessible to other individuals. These

qualities are thought to be either of divine origin or exemplary personal characteristics, and therefore designate the individual as a leader. How the relevant quality might be "objectively" assessed from an ethical, aesthetic, or any other point of view is obviously immaterial: of sole importance is how the charismatically ruled, (i.e., the "followers"), assess this quality. . . .

The Routinization of Charisma

Charismatic authority, in its genuine form, is of a character specifically foreign to everyday routine. Social relationships subject to it are of a strictly personal nature and play an important role in the validity of charismatic personal qualities and their confirmation. If these, however, are not to remain purely ephemeral, but demonstrate a quality of permanence, such as a community of fellow worshipers, warriors, disciples, a party organization, or any type of political or hierocratic group, it is necessary that the character of charismatic authority be fundamentally altered. . . . It will become either traditionalized, or rationalized (i.e., legalized), or a combination of both. . . .

With the routinization process, the charismatic authority is essentially transformed into one of the everyday authorities—the patrimonial form, especially in its estate or bureaucratic variant. Its original unusual character expresses itself in the charismatic status honor enjoyed, whether it be acquired by heredity or office-holding. This is shared by all who are subject to the appropriation, the leader as well as the administrative staff, and constitutes a type of prestige among ruling groups. An hereditary monarch ruling by "divine right" is no simple patrimonial lord, patriarch or sheik; a vassal is

different from a medieval or modern official. . . .

Routinization does not occur, as a rule, without a struggle. Initially, personal claims on the charisma of the leader are not forgotten, and the struggle between office-based, or hereditary, charisma and personal charisma is a typical historical process. Consider the following examples:

(1) . . . Revolutions led by charismatic leaders against the powers of charismatic heredity or office can be found in the history of any organization, from the state to the trade unions (as is the case now! [1918–20]). But the more developed the economic interdependencies of the monetary economy, the greater the pressure of the charismatic subject's everyday needs becomes. The result is the tendency toward routinization, which is in operation everywhere and, in general, took effect very quickly. Charisma typically appears early on in the development of a religious (prophetic) or political (conquering) authority. It will give way before long, however, to routine powers as soon as its authority has been assured and, above all, as soon as it has gained sway over the masses.

(2) In all cases, one primary motive for the routinization of charisma is, naturally, a striving for security. This entails the legitimization, on the one hand, of the social prestige of positions of authority and, on the other, the economic opportunities for the followers and supporters of the leader. An additional motive develops, however, out of the objective necessity of adapting the orders and the administrative staff to the average everyday exigencies and conditions of an administration. Connected to this is the particular need for guiding principles to establish an administrative and jurisdictional tradition, a need equally necessary to both the administrative staff and those subject to its authority. Furthermore, there is a need

for the ranking of positions held by members of the administrative staff. Finally, and of greatest importance, it is necessary that all administrative regulations be adapted to the everyday economic terms. It is not feasible to fund a permanent, everyday administration in a fashion similar to that of a warring or prophetic charismatic authority; that is, via booty, contributions, gifts, hospitality, and the like.

(3) The problems of the routinization process, therefore, are not confined to the problem of succession and, in fact, involve much more than just this. The primary problem involves the transition from charismatic administrative staffs and corresponding administrative principles to a routinized system. But the problem of succession is crucial because it concerns the routinization of the charismatic core—the leader himself and his claim to legitimacy. In contrast to the problems of transition to traditional or legal structures and their accompanying administrative staffs, the charismatic succession problem reveals the peculiar and characteristic conceptions involved, which are only comprehensible when viewed in the context of this process. The most important of these conceptions are the charismatic designation of a successor and hereditary charisma.

(4) The most important historical example of successor designation by a charismatic leader is that of Rome. In respect to the *rex*, this arrangement is attested to by tradition, while the naming of the dictator, the co-emperor, and successor in the *Principat* are historically recorded. The style of appointing all upper-level officials with full powers clearly indicates that even they were designated as successors by the military commander, pending the approval of the citizen army. The nature of this development is clearly indicated by the fact that

candidates were examined by the magistrate in office and originally could be excluded on an obviously arbitrary basis.

(5) The most important example of successor designation by the charismatic followers is the appointment of the bishops. Of special interest is that of the Pope, whose designation, in the original system, was in the hands of the clergy, while his recognition was the part of the lay community. It is probable that the election of the German Kaiser was later modelled on that of the appointment of bishops, in which designation was undertaken by certain princes and recognition granted by the "people" (i.e., those who bore arms). Similar forms are found throughout history.

(6) The classic country of origin for the development of hereditary charisma was India. All occupational skills, and especially, qualifications for positions of authority and power there were considered strictly bound to charismatic heredity. Any claim to fiefs and the accompanying powers was dependent upon membership in the royal clan and was granted by the eldest of the clan. Every level of religious office, including the extremely important and influential position of guru, all traditional client relations, all positions within the village establishment (priests, barbers, laundrymen, guards, etc.) were also considered charismatically hereditary. The founding of every sect signified the foundation of a hereditary hierarchy (as was the case with Taoism in China as well). Prior to the introduction of the Chinese model of the patrimonial bureaucracy, which then led to prebendary forms and feudalism, the social framework of the Japanese "clan state" was based on purely charismatic heredity.

The charismatic hereditary right to positions of authority developed in a similar way throughout the world. Qualification on the basis of self-achievement was re-

placed by a system in which qualification was based on genealogy. The appearance of this phenomenon became the basis for the development of status by birth as exemplified by the Roman nobility; by the concept of the *stirps regia* among the Germanic peoples as recorded by Tacitus; and by the competency qualifications for

entry to tournaments and the right to make donations of the late Middle Ages. It can also be found in modern genealogical studies conducted at the request of the American *nouveau* aristocracy. In fact, the importance of genealogy becomes manifest wherever differentiation by "social status" has become established. . . .