SOC 3411W
ORGANIZATIONS & SOCIETY

Fall 2007

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Course Overview

The SOC 3411W syllabus is a contract describing the work to be done and how it will be evaluated for a course grade:

- Course Objectives & International Perspectives theme

- Readings; download pdf files from E-Reserves (password=???)

- Course Webpage: download lecture slides

- Choose: Regular, Major Paper, or Service Learning options?

- Writing Intensive assignments, shorter & longer, course paper

- Grading: assignments and the course grade

- Scholastic Dishonesty: plagiarism & how to cite others' work

- Class Schedule of weekly topics

- Formats: lectures, discussions, films, role-playing activities

Organization Studies

A multidisciplinary perspective comprising interplay among:

- Diverse levels – personal psychology to international networks

- Diverse methodologies – case studies to population surveys

- Diverse theories – individual motives to chaotic systems

DISCIPLINES:

Sociology

Economics

Management

Political Science

History

Law

Public Administration

Public Health

THEORIES:

Institutionalism

Marxist/class conflict

Network analysis

Organizational evolution

Organizational ecology

Resource dependence/ power

Transaction cost economics

… many dozens more

International Perspectives

This course emphasizes international aspects of organizations. We'll explicitly compare & contrast the U.S. with other advanced societies (Japan, EU) and developing nations ("Third World"). Central issues include:

► Is the globalizing economy creating greater prosperity or exploitation?

► How are interorg'l networks connecting world's states & societies?

► What emerging institutions manage & regulate world system orgs?

► Are orgs converging on few forms or do national differences persist?

► What differences among work, nonprofit, voluntary, social mvmt orgs?

► Can we explain trends with universally valid organization theories?
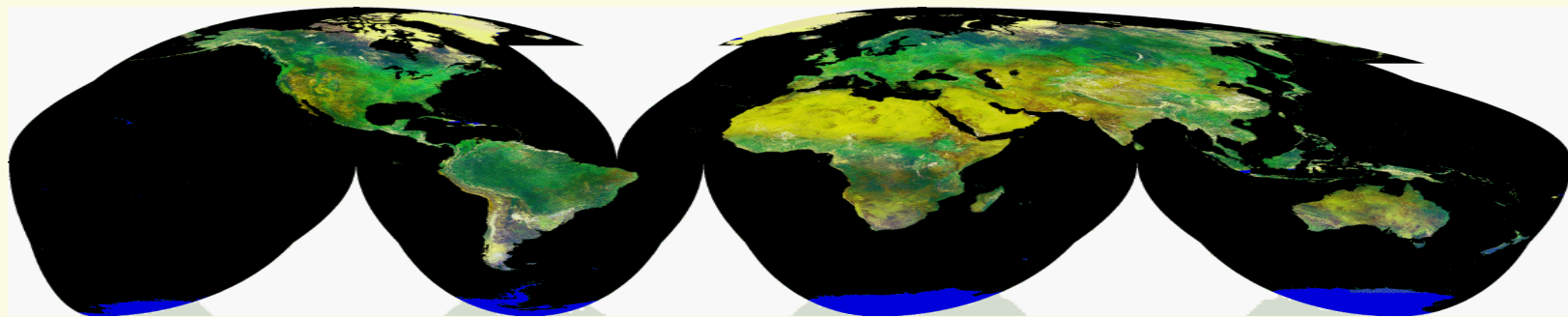
Organization Defined

Organization: a goal-directed, boundary-maintaining, activity system (Aldrich 1979)

What are the U.S. Army's goals, boundaries, activities? How have they changed recently?
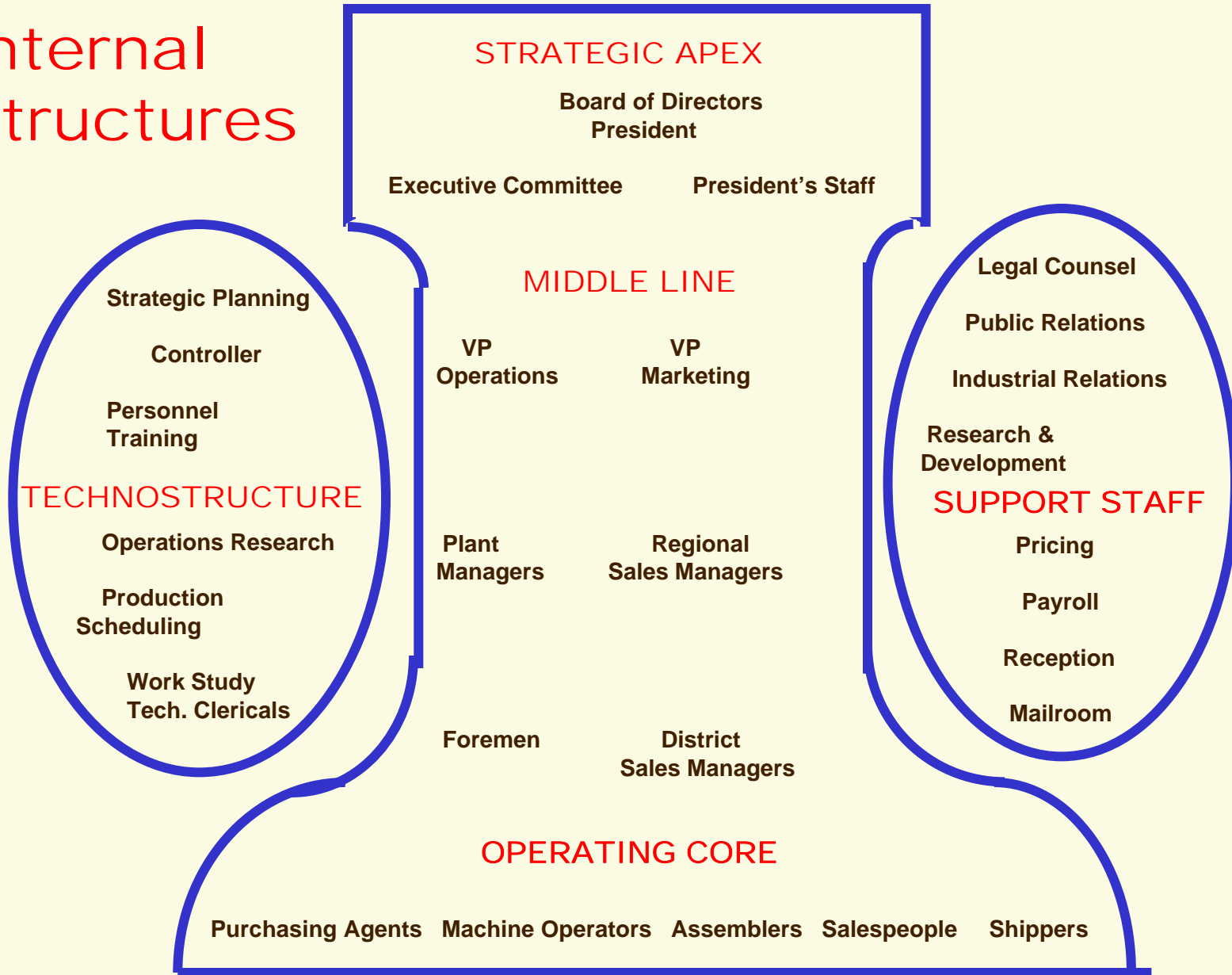
Extensive outsourcing to private companies (e.g., Halliburton) of mess halls, laundries, communications, weapons maintenance, …

Internal structures: Differentiation into stable patterns of routine activities among positions (roles) filled by persons; hierarchical & horizontal divisions of labor and administrative authority (e.g., bureaucracy vs. collegium)

Henry Mintzberg's (1979) 5-part internal structure model (next slides). Different types of orgs vary in the relative sizes of these five parts.

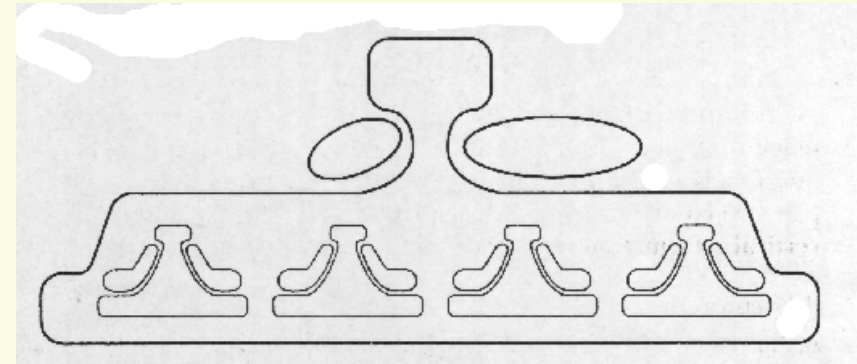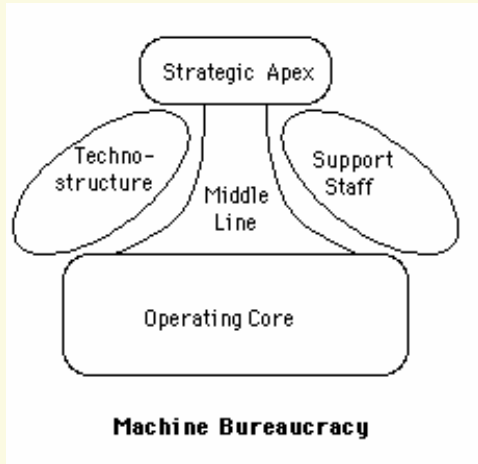How do auto assembly plants differ from law firms & biotech labs?
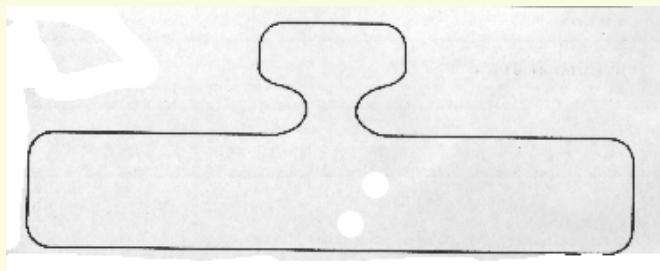
Internal Structures

STRATEGIC APEX

Board of Directors
President

Executive Committee   President's Staff

MIDDLE LINE

Strategic Planning

Controller

Personnel
Training

TECHNOSTRUCTURE

Operations Research

Production
Scheduling

Work Study
Tech. Clericals

VP
Operations   VP
Marketing

Plant
Managers   Regional
Sales Managers

Foremen   District
Sales Managers

Legal Counsel

Public Relations

Industrial Relations

Research &
Development

SUPPORT STAFF

Pricing

Payroll

Reception

Mailroom

OPERATING CORE

Purchasing Agents   Machine Operators   Assemblers   Salespeople   Shippers

The Five Basic Parts of an Organization

Structures in Fives

Give examples of each of Mintzberg's five basic org'l structures:

Machine Bureaucracy

- Strategic Apex
- Techno-structure
- Support Staff
- Middle Line
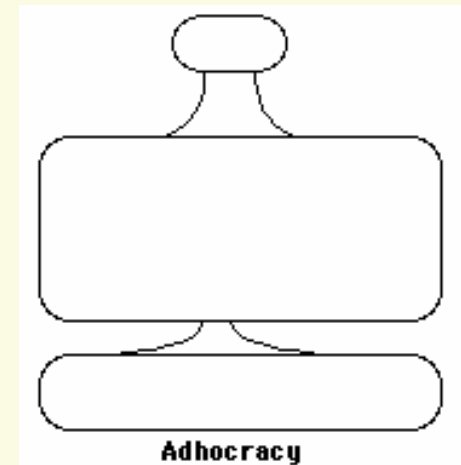- Operating Core

Divisionalized

Simple structure
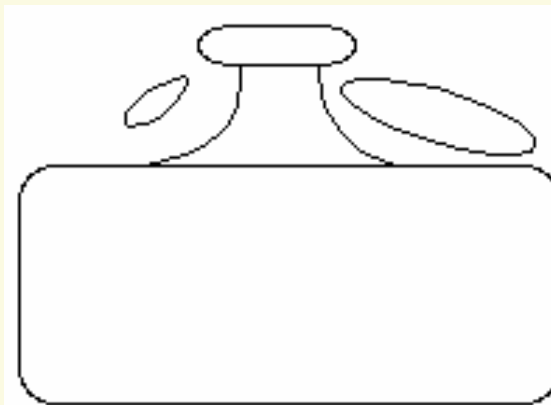
Professional Organization

Adhocracy

Organizational Form Typologies

Org'l forms can be classified using many other characteristics. Analyst's choice depends on theoretical or empirical objectives.

Some prominent typologies of organizational forms:

LEGAL OWNERSHIP: proprietorship, partnership, corporation, nonprofit, public

INDUSTRIAL: primary economic products or services: autos, software, restaurants (NAICS replaced SIC in 2000)

STRUCTURAL-RELATIONAL: Internal roles & authority: bureaucratic, collegial, cooperative, participatory

SOCIAL IDENTITY: socially constructed & legitimated corporate identities based on externally developed and enforced conformity to a social code (Carroll & Hannan 2000):

Why did Death Row Records & other "gansta rap" labels fail to gain acceptance by the pop-music industry?

Organizational Environments

Environment: everything outside an org's boundary; primarily other orgs (esp. governments) & "customers"

> Multi-dimensionality of org'l environments (Aldrich 1979):
>
> (1) Rich-Lean Capacity   (2) Homogeneity-Heterogeneity
>
> (3) Stability-Instability   (4) Concentration-Dispersion
>
> (5) Consensus-Dissensus   (6) Turbulence-Placidity

Org Population: A homogeneous set consisting of all organizations of a specific form or type

Org Field: Aggregate of orgs constituting a recognized area of institutional life (DiMaggio & Powell 1983); e.g., pop-music field

Org Society: Totality of all the organizations functioning within a community, nation, or international system

THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIETY

Organization Populations

Organizational Field
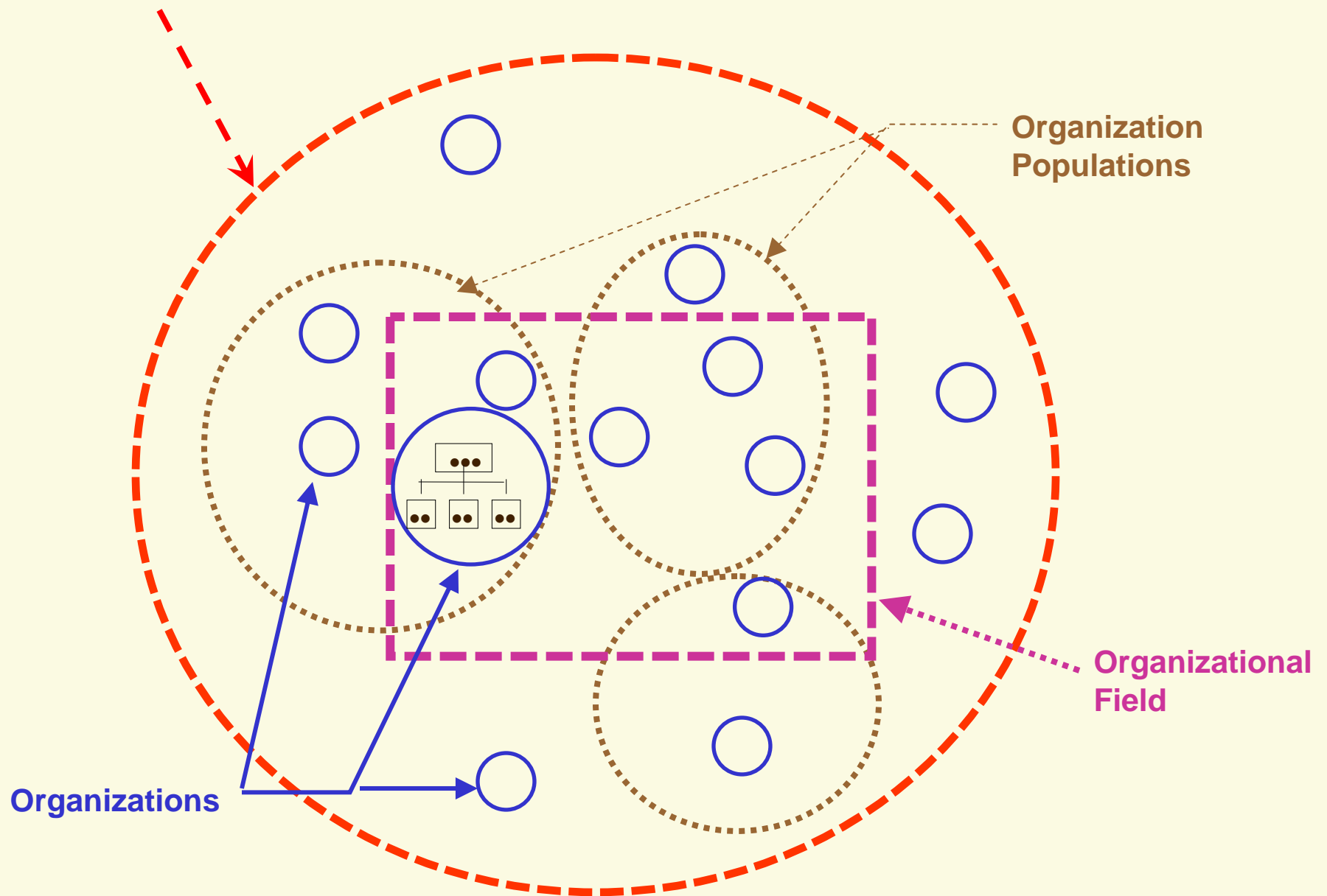
Organizations

SOURCE: Knoke (2001: Fig 2-1)

A Society of Organizations

Charles Perrow is pessimistic about trend toward org'l giantism since 19th century, an updated version of Max Weber's infamous "iron cage."

"… the appearance of large orgs in the U.S. makes orgs the key phenomenon of our time, and thus politics, social class, economics, technology, religion, the family, and even social psychology take on the character of dependent variables."

► What does Perrow mean by "large orgs have absorbed society?"

► What examples of large orgs in nonprofit and voluntary sectors?

► How did wage-dependency & externalization of social costs enable ever-larger corporations to control our modern economy and society?

► How does the "factory bureaucracy" form allow unobtrusive control?

► Give an example, from your personal life, of how large corporations helping or hindering your social, economic, or political opportunities.

► Can a "small firm network" reverse the tide of corporate domination?

The Netization of Organizations

Janet Falk sees an emerging "new network paradigm" of organizations by which to make sense of the global world order in this century.

> Technology and institutional restructuring do not "fully address the qualitative change in functionality of communication technologies that occurred when they were integrated with computing."

☼ **What are network forms of organization? Give some examples.**

☼ **Why was the connective U.S. telephone system unable to support emergent contacts over its hardware network?**

☼ **How did the integration of computing, particularly by the Internet and Worldwide Web, create communality? What benefits, harms?**

☼ **Is the extension of orgs across national boundaries weakening traditional centers of control relative to new global network orgs?**

☼ **What are the three key concepts of co-evolution of complex systems? Does it offer the best explanation of emergent networks?**

References

Aldrich, Howard E. 1979. *Organizations and Environments*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Carroll, Glenn and Michael T. Hannan. 2000. *The Demography of Corporations and Industries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

DiMaggio, Paul and Walter Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48:147-160.

Knoke, David. 2001. *Changing Organizations: Business Networks in the New Political Economy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

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