50 Bureaucracy, Capitalism

In more local ways, bureaucracy is used to refer to the complicated formalities of official procedures, what the *Daily News* in 1871 described as 'the Ministry . . . with all its routine of tape, wax, seals, and bureauism'. There is again an area of uncertainty between two kinds of reference, as can be seen by the coinage of more neutral phrases such as 'business methods' and 'office organization' for commercial use, bureaucracy being often reserved for similar or identical procedures in government.

See democracy, management

---

## C

### Capitalism

Capitalism as a word describing a particular economic system began to appear in English from c19, and almost simultaneously in French and German. Capitalist as a noun is a little older; Arthur Young used it, in his journal of *Travels in France* (1792), but relatively loosely: 'moneyed men, or capitalists'. Coleridge used it in the developed sense - 'capitalists . . . having labour at demand' - in *Tabletalk* (1823). Thomas Hodgskin, in *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* (1825) wrote: 'all the capitalists of Europe, with all their circulating capital, cannot of themselves supply a single week's food and clothing', and again: 'betwixt him who produces food and him who produces clothing, betwixt him who makes instruments and him who uses them, in steps the capitalist, who neither makes nor uses them and appropriates to himself the produce of both'. This is clearly the description of an economic system.

The economic sense of capital had been present in English from C17 and in a fully developed form from C18. Chambers *Cyclopaedia* (1727–51) has 'power given by Parliament to the South-Sea company to increase their capital' and definition of 'circulating capital' is in Adam Smith (1776). The word had acquired this specialized meaning from its general sense of 'head' or 'chief': *f<sub>w</sub> capital, F, capitalist, L, *rw caput*, L - head. There were many derived specialist meanings; the economic meaning developed from a shortening of the phrase 'capital stock' - a material holding or monetary fund. In classical economics the functions of *capital*, and of various kinds of *capital*, were described and defined.

Capitalism represents a development of meaning in that it has been increasingly used to indicate a particular and historical economic system rather than any economic system as such. Capital and at first *capitalist* were technical terms in any economic system. The later (c19) uses of *capitalist* moved towards specific functions in a particular stage of historical development; it is this use that crystallized in *capitalism*. There was a sense of the *capitalist* as the useless but controlling intermediary between producers, or as the employer of labour, or, finally, as the owner of the means of production. This involved, eventually, and especially in Marx, a distinction of *capital* as a formal economic category from *capitalism* as a particular form of centralized ownership of the means of production, carrying with it the system of wage-labour. *Capitalism* in this sense is a product of a developing bourgeois society; there are early kinds of *capitalist* production but *capitalism* as a system - what Marx calls 'the capitalist era' - dates only from C16 and did not reach the stage of *industrial capitalism* until IC18 and C19.

There has been immense controversy about the details of this description, and of course about the merits and workings of the system itself, but from c20, in most languages, *capitalism* has had this sense of a distinct economic system, which can be contrasted with other systems. As a term *capitalism* does not seem to be earlier than the 1880s, when it began to be used in German socialist writing and was extended to other non-socialist writing. Its first English and French uses seem to date only from the first years of C20. In mC20, in reaction against socialist argument, the words *capitalism* and *capitalist* have often been deliberately replaced by defenders of the system by such phrases as 'private enterprise' and 'free enterprise'.

---

"See"
These terms, recalling some of the conditions of early capitalism, are applied without apparent hesitation to very large or para-national 'public' corporations, or to an economic system controlled by them. At other times, however, capitalism is defended under its own now common name. There has also developed a use of post-capitalist and post-capitalism, to describe modifications of the system such as the supposed transfer of control from shareholders to professional management, or the coexistence of certain nationalized (q.v.) or 'state-owned' industries. The plausibility of these descriptions depends on the definition of capitalism which they are selected to modify. Though they evidently modify certain kinds of capitalism, in relation to its central sense they are marginal. A new phrase, state-capitalism, has been widely used in mC20, with precedents from eC20, to describe forms of state ownership in which the original conditions of the definition – centralized ownership of the means of production, leading to a system of wage-labour – have not really changed.

It is also necessary to note an extension of the adjective capitalist to describe the whole society, or features of the society, in which a capitalist economic system predominates. There is considerable overlap and occasional confusion here between capitalist and bourgeoïs (q.v.). In strict Marxist usage capitalist is a description of a mode of production and bourgeoïs a description of a type of society. It is in controversy about the relations between a mode of production and a type of society that the conditions for overlap of meaning occur.

See bourgeoïs, industry, society

**CAREER**

Career is now so regularly used to describe a person's progress in life, or, by derivation from this, his profession or vocation that it is difficult to remember, in the same context, its original meanings of a racecourse and a gallop – though in some contexts, as in the phrase 'careering about', these survive.

Career appeared in English from eC16, from FW *carrière*, F – racecourse, rw *carraria*, L – carriage road, from *carrus*, L – wagon. It was used from C16 for racecourse, gallop, and by extension any rapid or uninterrupted activity. Though sometimes applied neutrally, as of the course of the sun, it had a predominant C17 and C18 sense not only of rapid but of unrestrained activity. It is not easy to be certain of the change of implication between, for example, a use in 1767 – 'a ... beauty ... in the career of her conquests' – and Macaulay's use in 1848 – 'in the full career of success'. But it is probable that it was from eC19 that the word used without derogatory implication began, especially with reference to diplomats and statesmen. By mC19 the word was becoming common to indicate progress in a vocation and then the vocation itself.

At this point, and especially in the course of C20, career becomes inseparable from a difficult group of words of which work, labour (q.v.) and especially job are prominent examples. Career is still used in the abstract spectacular sense of politicians and entertainers, but more generally it is applied, with some conscious and unconscious class distinction, to work or a job which contains some implicit promise of progress. It has been most widely used for jobs with explicit internal development – 'a career in the Civil Service' – but it has since been extended to any favourable or desired or flattered occupation – 'a career in coalmining'. Career now usually implies continuity if not necessarily promotion or advancement, yet the distinction between a career and a job only partly depends on this and is often associated also with class distinctions between different kinds of work. On the other hand, the extension of the term, as in 'careers advice', sometimes cancels these associations, and there has been an American description of 'semi-skilled workers' as having a 'flat career trajectory'.

It is interesting that something like the original metaphor, with its derogatory C17 or C18 sense, has reappeared in descriptions of some areas of work and promotion as the rat-race. But of course the derogatory sense is directly present in the derived words careerism and careerist, which are held carefully separate from the positive implications of career. Careerism is recorded from 1917, and careerism from 1933; the early uses refer to parliamentary politics.

See labour, work