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INTERNAL CAUCUSES AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF CRITIQUE IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

This article examines the internal dynamics through which power preserving caucuses emerge within socio-religious, cultural and political organizations. It analyses how mission-oriented goals are gradually displaced by self-protection strategies rooted in narrative control selective inclusion and ideological mediation. The discussion explores mechanisms of escalating misrepresentation of ground realities, ill-treatment with whistle-blowers, fragmentation of opposition and reliance on shifting visions that hinder accountability. Attention is given to the role of external intellectual frameworks that quietly legitimize such practices while avoiding responsibility. Rather than advocating direct confrontation the article proposes measured detachment and critical vigilance as ethically sustainable responses. By highlighting the self-defeating nature of these structures, the analysis contributes to understanding organizational decay and the conditions under which authority undermines the mission and vision of organizations.

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Introduction: -

Nearly every socio-religious, cultural and political organization contains an internal group of people whose primary concern gradually shifts from advancing the stated mission and vision of organization to preserving its own authority. This tendency does not arise solely from individual moral weakness but from structural conditions that shape how power is accumulated and maintained. As organizations expand in scale and complexity decision making becomes concentrated among a limited set of elite decision makers. Over a period of time these actors develop heightened sensitivity to challenges both real and imagined. Legitimate criticism ethical concern or alternative perspectives are increasingly interpreted as threats rather than contributions to decision making process. The original mission and vision remain visible in official discourse yet in practice it becomes secondary to the imperative of maintaining control. What emerges is a persistent divergence between declared values and operational priorities.

This divergence frequently generates a pattern of escalating misrepresentation. Initial errors, miscalculations or questionable decisions are rarely acknowledged openly. Instead, small distortions are introduced to protect credibility and avoid accountability. These distortions create conditions in which further falsehoods become necessary. Each new adjustment is designed to conceal the previous one and justify actions that might otherwise

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appear incoherent or irresponsible. As plans fail to produce promised outcomes the response is seldom reflection or correction. Instead, escalation follows.

Riskier decisions are framed as decisive leadership while structural flaws remain unexamined. Simultaneously organizational realities are selectively represented through controlled information curated reports and symbolic achievements. This manipulation shields those in authority from scrutiny and enables ineffective or harmful strategies to continue under the appearance of progress. Many individuals within the organization participate in this process without malicious intent. Honest and sincere members often accept prevailing narratives because they are emotionally persuasive and socially reinforced. Those in positions of influence present their ideas in simplified moral terms appealing to loyalty, urgency and collective identity. In doing so they function as producers of aspiration offering visions of future success that distract from present inconsistencies.

These visions are rarely grounded in rigorous analysis yet they resonate because they promise meaning resolution and purpose. The caucus portrays itself as a guardian of institutional stability claiming to protect the organization from fragmentation or decline. In reality its survival depends on exploiting existing structures, symbolic strength and inherited legitimacy. Stability becomes a rhetorical instrument rather than a shared ethical commitment. Individuals who attempt to raise concerns or expose contradictions often encounter resistance rather than engagement. Whistle-blowers are rarely addressed on the substance of their claims. Instead, they are portrayed as incompatible with organizational culture or accused of undermining unity. The language directed at them emphasizes procedural loyalty rather than ethical responsibility. Paradoxically opposition to whistle-blowers frequently comes from well-intentioned members who have internalized dominant narratives. Through deliberate framing critics are recast as obstacles to necessary action or as individuals motivated by personal grievance. This inversion of moral logic allows those in power to neutralize dissent while maintaining an image of principled leadership. Over time such dynamics discourage open dialogue and reinforce conformity.

To sustain its position the internal group employs differentiated strategies tailored to specific individuals and contexts. Dialogue is used to simulate inclusion through consultations that seldom influence outcomes. Rewards such as recognition access or symbolic status are distributed to secure compliance and loyalty. When these approaches prove insufficient punitive mechanisms are applied. These include marginalization, exclusion from decision making and reputational damage. Importantly these strategies are not applied uniformly. They are calibrated to fragment potential opposition and prevent the formation of collective resistance. By encouraging internal divisions and rivalries the group ensures that dissent remains isolated manageable and non-threatening. Narrative control by the caucus plays a central role in this process. Through sustained framing efforts opponents are defined less by the substance of their arguments than by perceived personal shortcomings. Past errors are amplified while contextual factors are ignored. Complexity is replaced with simplified characterizations that make critique appear illegitimate. Whistleblowers and critics are subjected to belittlement defamation and targeted attacks not because of demonstrable misconduct but because their presence threatens established authority.

Responsibility for these harms is often diffused through informal channels allowing those in power to deny direct involvement while benefiting from the outcome. Such practices erode trust and cultivate an atmosphere of caution silence and self-censorship. A further defining characteristic of the caucus is its reliance on shifting and internally inconsistent narratives. Strategic priorities are frequently revised and new frameworks introduced with notable regularity. Each change is presented as a response to evolving circumstances or as evidence of intellectual vitality. On the surface this constant motion creates an impression of adaptability and innovation. Functionally however inconsistency serves specific purposes. It prevents systematic evaluation of past decisions by making meaningful comparison difficult. Objectives metrics and timelines are continually redefined limiting the ability of members to assess outcomes or identify patterns of failure. At the same time attention is redirected toward future promises that remain vague insufficiently planned and weakly supported. Emotional engagement is sustained through anticipation rather than evidence.

Closer examination reveals that the authority of the caucus within the organization is rarely self-generated. Instead, it is derived from actors positioned beyond the visible organizational hierarchy. These may include intellectual networks, ideological traditions or established schools of thought that provide conceptual legitimacy. In this configuration the group functions as an intermediary translating abstract ideas into operational practice. Through this role it institutionalizes particular orientations while insulating their originators from direct accountability. Influence is exercised indirectly allowing ideas to shape policy without exposure to sustained scrutiny. The group thus

becomes a conduit through which broader ideological commitments are normalized embedded and maintained. The individuals who supply these conceptual frameworks typically avoid formal leadership positions. They present themselves as thoughtful approachable and open to dialogue.

Publicly they may encourage debate and appear receptive to criticism of organizational practices. This posture enhances credibility and reinforces perceptions of neutrality. Privately however their positions remain stable. They continue to affirm prevailing strategies because these strategies reflect their own intellectual contributions. Their influence operates through endorsement rather than command enabling them to shape direction while maintaining distance from operational consequences and ethical responsibility. Within this arrangement opportunities for independent thought are limited. Participation is encouraged only insofar as it aligns with foundational assumptions. Ordinary members are valued for compliance rather than insight. The ideal participant is one who does not question dominant narratives or challenge established priorities. Those who quietly disagree or seek deeper understanding soon encounter informal barriers. Exclusion from networks diminished influence and subtle reputational harm gradually signal that dissent is unwelcome. Removal is rarely abrupt. Instead, it unfolds through the accumulation of small acts that collectively render continued participation untenable and psychologically exhausting.

Responding to such dynamics through constant confrontation is often ineffective. Direct opposition can reinforce existing power structures by providing a visible adversary. It allows those in authority to mobilize loyalty consolidate support and justify further centralization. A more sustainable approach involves measured detachment combined with attentive observation. By maintaining outward composure while remaining critically aware individuals avoid reinforcing the very dynamics they seek to resist. This stance requires patience, emotional discipline and confidence in long term consequences. When one recognizes that systems built on misrepresentation of ground realities and factual information, fragmentation and incoherence are inherently unstable patience becomes an ethical strategy rather than passive withdrawal. Such systems tend to collapse under the weight of their own contradictions. Their failures are often consequences of internal logic rather than external pressure. Excessive effort to expose them may be unnecessary.

Those driven by self-preserving motives frequently create conditions for their own decline. In observing this process with clarity restraint and integrity individuals preserve ethical coherence while allowing structural realities to assert themselves over time. In conclusion the analysis presented here identifies a recurring organizational condition rather than exceptional deviation. When authority slowly detaches from institutional purpose ethical language becomes instrumental and responsibility disperses. Such environments weaken trust inhibit learning and reduce the capacity for collective self-correction. Effective response does not lie in constant confrontation but in sustained ethical awareness critical reflection and preservation of institutional memory. Individuals who recognize how power functions through narrative incentives and strategic silence can maintain integrity without reinforcing harmful dynamics. Over time organizational legitimacy depends less on visionary promises than on accountability humility and openness to acknowledged failure. Where these qualities persist, institutions remain adaptive credible and genuinely oriented toward the people they exist to serve collectively today.