The Organization Man Encyclopedia Article

The Organization Man

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William H. Whyte's popular psychology bestseller of the mid-1950s outlined a contemporary figure who captured many fears for the nature of the American individual in an age of increasing rationalization. *The Organization Man* (1956) showed the white-collar employee as increasingly shaped by his employer's demands: focused on advancement through the firm, he became narrow, conformist, and unwilling to innovate. This figure's fear of original thought and his lifestyle (situated in rationalized suburbs and marked by consumption, rather than community) seemed to contravene the American values of competitive individualism. Whyte's work was simplistic and deterministic, but it influenced the broad discussion of conformity, and its risks, in the 1950s.

Further Reading:

Pells, Richard H. *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age.* Middle-town, Wesleyan University Press, 1989.

Ross, Andrew. *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture.* London, Routledge, 1989.