An important justification for this effort is that a successful conceptual delimitation of industrial sociology will make research in the field more economical. When it can be shown that an applied field is congruent with a theoretical area, and to determine its systematic boundaries, it becomes possible to see its relations to other fields of study (such as political sociology) and to make use of their hypotheses and concepts. Thus industrial sociologists have had a better understanding of the process of supervision and the role of the foreman since the concept of leadership, taken from other areas, has been introduced. Military sociology, on the other hand, has benefited from the idea of informal organization, first used by industrial sociologists. Such “translations” of concepts are not possible unless it becomes clear that soldiers and officers, on the one hand, and workers and foremen on the other, are phenomena that have some elements in common. This is where theory enters into applied fields. It will be attempted below to point out some general parallelisms between industrial sociology and other areas of study, in order that sets of concepts and hypotheses can be translated. And another reason for attempting to spell out the theoretical dimensions of a field is that this effort may fulfill the function that Mendeleev’s table fulfilled in chemistry: it may help to point out the missing elements, the uncovered, neglected areas.

Such an attempt as here described should not be either too inclusive or too exclusive of the work already performed in the field. Thus if we should define industrial sociology as the study of the relationship between rational and non-rational elements, we would be too inclusive, since this definition would include many major research areas that industrial sociologists have never studied and are not in their realm, as for instance the sociology of science...
and the study of administrative behavior (in all organizational structures, not only in industry). On the other hand, if we should define industrial sociology as the study of the social relationships in industry, the definition would be too exclusive, for it would leave out many relevant and significant studies in the field which have taken into account the industry’s social environment and its influence on the relationships within the industry.

I would like to suggest that what is usually regarded as industrial sociology can be fruitfully conceived of as a branch of organizational sociology. Industrial sociology has an implicit delimitation which, when made explicit and somewhat rearranged, fits neatly into the model of organizational sociology.

The latter is concerned with roles and with processes of interaction, communication, and authority, that are specialized in serving specific social goals. Thus it studies public service as pursuing the goals set by the government; and industry as creating goods and services, or as making profit. It has a relatively well developed theoretical model based on Max Weber’s theory of bureaucracy, which has been significantly remodeled and improved by supplementing the study of rational aspects with the study of non-rational and irrational aspects of organizations.4

Organizational sociology is potentially able to develop sound bases for a generic as well as a comparative study of organizations,5 and it has greatly benefited from the interchange of concepts and hypotheses among its various sub-fields. Thus, while there are


5 See the studies collected in R. K. Merton et al., eds., Reader in Bureaucracy (Glencoe, Ill., 1952); and P. M. Blau, Bureaucracy in Modern Society (New York 1956).
manufacturing institutions; the role of inter-organizational mobility; the functions of social contacts among the economic elites in maintaining informal monopolistic price regulations and "price leadership." And we know even less about the relations between economic and non-economic organizations. After centuries of abstract arguments concerning the influence of governmental control on economic organizations, there are only a handful of sociological studies on the subject, many of which are predominantly concerned with the sociology of law\(^\text{18}\) and not with the study of inter-administrative relations.\(^\text{19}\) When one turns from the Western world and studies industries and other economic organizations in newly developed countries or in countries of the Soviet orbit, one can make little progress, however, without taking into account at the very least the relations among economic organizations, governmental agencies, and political parties.

In turning now to the relations between economic organizations and collectivities, it should be repeated that by the latter term is meant social groups that have strong elements of solidarity, such as families, communities, ethnic groups, social classes, and society as a whole. All economic organizations are partial systems, in the sense that they do not regulate all the basic needs of the actors. Therefore they are always embedded in collectivities, which serve

\(^{18}\) See, for example, D. Bell, "Taft-Hartley: Five Years After," in Fortune, vol. 46 (July 1952); A. H. Mills and E. Brown, From the Wagner Act to Taft-Hartley (Chicago 1950).

\(^{19}\) This subject is discussed by Amitai Etzioni, "Administrations and the Consumer," in Administrative Science Quarterly, vol. 3, no. 2 (September 1958). Of special interest in this connection are the bodies discussed by Robert E. Cushman, The Independent Regulatory Commissions (New York 1941).