



Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness.

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labor legislation are treated in substantial detail. The nature of union organization is illustrated by an extensive account of the history and structure of the United Automobile Workers and much briefer descriptions of five other major unions. The formal structure of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. is fully presented. The contents of major pieces of labor legislation—the Norris-LaGuardia Act, Wagner Act, Taft-Hartley Act, and Labor-Management Act of 1959—are carefully delineated.

Analysis of management organization is largely focused around a "Design for Harmonious Productivity" intended to achieve the "twin objectives of productivity and worker satisfaction" by controlling "the immediate interpersonal and organizational circumstances of the job itself." The components of this design, most of which are quite familiar, are derived from the ample body of research that has been done on formal organization, social relations in industry, morale and productivity. The "design," however, lacks a sensitivity to the persisting problems that managers face in reconciling competing demands and in balancing principles that are often, at least in part, antithetical.

This deficiency is part of a larger defect that mars the entire book, the absence of a systematic, carefully applied theoretical perspective. The reader is often lost in the rich historical and organizational detail for lack of a theoretical compass with which to take his bearings. The chapters on the government's role in collective bargaining and on social legislation affecting workers are almost entirely descriptive. The explanations that are proffered for the changes that have taken place in the status of organized labor, the organization of unions, and the practices of management are characteristically couched in very general, imprecise terms. Even the systematic analysis that is offered—at its best in the discussion of research on "human relations in business organizations"—is often sketchy and incomplete.

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Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness. By CHRIS ARGYRIS. With a chapter by ROGER HARRISON. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, Richard D. Irwin, 1962. xi, 292 pp. \$6.50.

Argyris' analysis of the relationship between interpersonal competence of executives and organizational effectiveness is of much interest in itself, as well as for the study of the articulation of personality and social units in general. In this book Argyris provides: a model for the

study of "interpersonal relations and formal organizations"; a report about a diagnostic study conducted on the basis of the model and about the feedback of the findings of the study to a group of executives of "one of the large divisions of one of the biggest corporations in America"; an account of a T-group organized to increase the interpersonal competence of these executives and an evaluation of the results.

In general, the study, method, and conclusions are in the best of the human relations tradition, but Argyris has a rather special position on one central point: he seeks an organization that will keep its personnel not necessarily productive and happy, but productive and growing. "Growing" stands for all the values that Argyris finds his model serving: "Mutual understanding, trust, self-esteem, openness, internal commitment, full functioning human beings who aspire to excellence." The author insists that these are the values of our society and of the executives; that he has found a system to "unfreeze" behavior so that it can be changed to be more in line with these values; and not only that the industrial setting can serve as a place to implement these values, but also that its effectiveness as a producing system will directly benefit from such implementation. Unlike most human relations writers, Argyris emphasizes personal growth over satisfaction and asserts that these values often involve strain, tension, and even conflict, rather than harmony.

The point at which Argyris comes closest to the human relations approach is in his belief in the value of increased communication. Actually, he goes right back to the psychoanalytical roots of this tradition in his central assumption that making people aware enables them to overcome their interpersonal difficulties and limitations. Unlike the psychoanalyst, Argyris uses T-groups instead of person-to-person communications, and he helps organizations as well as people.

To those who argue that factors other than communication, for example, differences in power and interest, not simply lack of insight and sensitivity, mar the interpersonal relations of executives, Argyris would answer: (a) that he studies one set of factors, that surely behavior is affected by others (though the other factors he usually refers to in his book are mainly technological-economic ones); and (b) that his study shows that increased interpersonal competence on the part of the executives increased organizational effectiveness. This leaves several questions unanswered: how *much* difference does increased interpersonal competence make? There are many hundreds of

factors that influence organizational effectiveness. Using almost exclusively qualitative measures, of course, bars answering this question with the necessary precision.

Second, how long does the influence of the T-group last? How strong are the "wash-out" effects that set in after the executive returns from the T-groups to the social realities of an unchanged organization?

Argyris solved this problem in part; he did include a second group of executives, lower in rank, in a T-group; he acted as a consultant to the organization in the critical period that followed the T-group training. To what degree these steps reduced the "wash-out" effects and secured the institutionalization of the new patterns of behavior is not established.

Extension of this line of work will sooner or later have to relate communication and personality analysis to structural analysis, since the separation of these elements is artificial; for instance, we should like to know if "freezing" is more common in inter-rank relations than in intra-rank relations; how it is affected by departmental loyalties; what effect membership in various groupings outside the organization, as well as its social scope, has on the participation in the organization, and so forth. My basic assumption here is that the social-psychological variables and the psychoanalytical processes cannot be separated from the sociological ones.

Finally, one hopes that in his future work Argyris will test his hypothesis that "the same basic findings will tend to hold in other formal organizations with variation primarily in degree [for example, churches, hospitals, schools, governmental bureaus, as well as other industrial organizations]." Up to this time, very few findings have withstood this test.

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Man, Work, and Society: A Reader in the Sociology of Occupations. Edited by SIGMUND NOSOW and WILLIAM H. FORM. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962. viii, 612 pp. \$8.50.

A goodly number of sociologists would undoubtedly view courses on work, occupations, and the division of labor as an important segment of the modern liberal arts curriculum. Despite much interest in the development of such courses, their growth has been impeded by the scarcity of adequate textbooks as well as the scattering of pertinent readings through many journals and books concerned mainly with other subjects. The appearance of *Man, Work, and Society* brings happier days to the

instructor, and it should make possible the institution of courses in departments where they are not now offered.

The bulk of the volume consists of 68 reading selections from many sources and authors. It is more than a competent compilation of readings, however; Nosow and Form introduce each group of selections with an orientation to the subject which includes a summary of basic facts and principles and a discussion relating the selections to the over-all topic and to one another. The result is unity and coherence not often found in "readers" of this sort.

The first chapter, written by the editors, traces the development of the sociology of occupations as a subdiscipline, appropriately calling attention not only to recent interest in the subject, but also to the concern shown for the division of labor, economic institutions, work, and occupations by some of the "old masters" in sociology and related disciplines. Because these classics (e.g., those of Durkheim, Weber, Marx) are easily available to the student, they do not appear in this collection. The readings in the ensuing chapters are taken primarily from more recent and less available publications.

Both in scope and substance, the remainder of the volume is impressive. Fourteen chapters deal with such topics as the meanings of work in historical perspective; changes in socio-economic, occupational, and industrial systems; the industrial order, labor force, and labor market; occupational associations; the professions; occupational status; career patterns; occupational mobility, occupational ideologies, and the social power of occupations; personal adjustment to work; studies of individual occupations; and the relationships of occupations to the broader social context.

A comprehensive bibliography, 29 pages in length, is appended. Its topical organization conforms to that of the book. It is a useful addition to a volume which is a welcome contribution to the literature.

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Occupations and Social Status. By ALBERT J. REISS, JR. With the collaboration of OTIS DUDLEY DUNCAN, PAUL K. HATT, and CECIL C. NORTH. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962. vii, 305 pp. \$5.00.

Occupation is probably the most often used index of social status, and the North-Hatt occupational prestige scale based on the 1947 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) poll has frequently been used to measure occupational status. But the North-Hatt scale has