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# The Human Relations Approach and Its Critics

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THE HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH

AND ITS CRITICS

by

Ronald William Korajczyk

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# LIFE

Ronald William Korajczyk was born in Chicago, Illinois, March 12, 1934.

He was graduated from Saint Mel High School, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1952, and from the University of Chicago, August, 1956, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

From 1956 to 1961 the author has been teaching English as an employee of the Chicago Board of Education. Most of this time was spent at Carl Schurz High School. During summer vacations he has studied at Northwestern University, Roosevelt University, and Loyola University. He began his work at Loyola University for the Master's degree in February, 1957.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Being highly influencial in the modern world, the "human relations" approach, first developed in the industrial scene, has penetrated far-reaching vistas since its relatively recent inception in the 1920's by Elton Mayo and his colleagues, frequently known as the Mayo group in human relations literature. In what began as an illumination experiment and ended as "the most extensive and influential study ever conducted in industry,"[1] Elton Mayo, often referred to as the Father of the "Human Relations" approach, headed a staff of men who were to revolutionize the then-current trends and beliefs in industrial relations at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago. "In general, the studies established that men are not typically individualistic and materialistic, but social beings with social as well as material needs."[2]

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[1]Henry Clay Smith, Psychology of Industrial Behavior (New York, 1955), p. 47.

[2]Ibid., p. 55.

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Before discussing the underlying philosophy of the "human relations" approach, a succinct historical overview is in order for the purpose of showing how the "human relations" approach is a subsequent development in the dynamic history of industrial relations. In the following pages selected items will be discussed which will trace the "human relations" approach back to the Industrial Revolution, the importance of which will later be brought out.

## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The need of developing better, more efficient methods of production because of a tremendous growth of commerce was met by the Industrial Revolution in the late 1700's, which brought two important changes in the economic environment of the working man. The first change involved production from an individual to an enterprise basis; the second change concerned substituting a dynamic, impersonal economy for a personal, static one.

The effects of the Industrial Revolution on the common people are known all too well to need to be described in great detail. Women and children were made to work such long hours that often their health would be affected greatly. And as the population was growing all the time, more and more people were found to keep the industrial system, even though the life span of so many was shortened considerably by abuses.

Polanyi somewhat ironically states:

> There was complete agreement on the desirability
> of a large population, as large as possible, since
> the power of the state consisted in men. There
> was also ready agreement on the advantages of
> cheap labor, since only if labor were cheap could
> manufacturers flourish. Moreover, but for the
> poor, who would man the ships and go to the wars?
> Yet, there was doubt whether pauperism was not
> an evil after all. And in any case, why should
> not paupers be as profitably employed for pub-
> lic profit as they obviously were for private
> profit?[3]

The above paragraphs tell in some detail just how a great

social problem arose from the abuses of a laissez-faire

philosophy, running rampant and with little government regu-

lation.

The Industrial Revolution can actually be delineated

into two separate "revolutions": the first dealt with the

triumph of the steam engine; on the other hand, the second

witnessed the transformation of industry into an immense

field dominated by electric power.[4]

The staggering changes thus effectuated by the second

industrial revolution in the latter half of the nineteenth

century were at least as dynamic and far-reaching as the

first industrial revolution of the previous century. The

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[3]Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation (New York,
1944), p. 109.

[4]Georges Friedmann, Industrial Society (Glencoe,
Illinois, 1955), pp. 26-27.

advent of all the technological innovations mentioned in the previous summary stimulated a desperate search for new outlets of trade. The second industrial revolution extended the division of labor by breaking down tasks minutely on the more and more specialized machines, thus causing a further concentration of workers in industrial centers.

It was during the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century that the true character of capitalism was matured. The then-prevalent doctrine of individualism was largely responsible for an extended depression, lasting from 1873 until 1895. This was a culmination of all the abuses which arose from the acquisitive nature of unscrupulous business people, who only thought of how much money they could make, even though they exploited the common man to the fullest extent. As a resultant consequence of the demise of the laissez-faire philosophy, a titanic growth of gargantuan associations and organizations was brought about. The Rockefellers, Carnegies, and J. P. Morgans had their counterparts throughout the world. "The captains of industry, a new species, so to speak, were hailed as equal to the great men of the past, as leaders of man and nations."[5] The new

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[5] Reinhard Bendix, "Managers, Workers, and Ideas in the United States," Research in Industrial Human Relations: A Critical Appraisal, ed. Conrad M. Arensberg et al., (New York, 1957), p. 3.

market conditions forged under monopolistic capitalism led directly to the development of mass production and consequently, its psychical and moral repercussions upon the entire working class were obvious.[6]

Note that the giantism fostered by capitalism was marked by the fact that great attempts were made to eliminate the waste of both human and natural resources. It was during the first industrial revolution that an employer's rationale was the unrestricted exploitation of mankind; moreover, the early years of the second revolution were also marked by this characteristic. However, it soon became evident that "the supply of labor was not inexhaustible, and that it was expensive, all the more so as the workers were organizing both to defend their value of the labor market and the elementary guarantees of their well-being. Social legislation was devised and defined. Natural resources also were not limitless, and the concern for their economical use was... acute."[7]

Large companies were now characterized by the almost antithetical fact that they were now seeking to get the most out of all their resources, including the human ones, even if this meant treating the human element in an entirely different fashion. This change in managerial ideology

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[6]Friedmann, pp. 27-29.

[7]Ibid., p. 29.

engendered a whole new field of study, often subsequently referred to as rationalization, which "includes... the efforts at occupational organization and selection inside a firm, and is concerned... with the human problems of machine industry."[8] It is from this turn of events that the "human relations" approach burgeoned.

## SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT

The next development in industrial relations which has a bearing on this study was scientific management, which originated as an inquiry into management's attempt to control the physical output of the worker, directly stemming from the employers' attempts to conserve its natural and human resources. Leaders of the union movement hold that scientific management, along with its various related developments, stemmed from management's attempt to deter workers from joining unions. Management especially became concerned "when the membership of trade unions increased from 400,000 to two million between 1897 and 1904."[9]

Frederick W. Taylor is the father of the scientific management movement. For a given situation Taylor attempted

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[8]*Ibid.*, p. 30.

[9]Bendix, p. 5.

to secure the <u>one</u> <u>best</u> <u>way</u> of performing a task, although he claimed that his main object was "to remove the causes for antagonism between the boss and the men who were under him."[10] Through the use of his famed time and motion study, Taylor aspired to perfect the operation of a given task to such an extent that the widespread use of his method would enable management to obtain the maximum efficiency from equipment and labor. Taylor was quite concerned, in addition to his time and motion study, with contributing "scientific data concerning the selection of workmen,, their psychological motives and incentives, their initiative, their fatigue, and the 'real' time necessary to effect an operation; that is, scientific management touches problems which involve the physiology and psychology of work."[11] Taylor, whose followers considered him an equal of Descartes and Newton, held that there were four rules of his scientific method which could felicitously be applied to industry. These are: "(1) before any action set yourself a definite single and limited aim; (2) before starting work, study scientifically the best methods to be employed to attain the end in view; (3) before be-

[10]Frederick W. Taylor, <u>Scientific</u> <u>Management</u> (New York, 1947), pp. 128-129.

[11]Friedmann, p. 39.

ginning work, bring together all necessary tools; (4) act in exact conformity with the arranged program."[12]

As part of Taylorian philosophy, the worker and the employer were to experience a type of mental revolution, whereby both would be educated to the fact that if production could be increased, both parties would benefit. In addition to this increase, friction would be reduced to minimum so that a worker could feel free at any moment to present a complaint to management, which in turn would do all in its power to solve the dilemma. In this way collective bargaining by a union agent would be an unnecessary, outmoded structure. As part of the increased production, management's job also entailed fitting the right people to the right job, this gradually increasing management's responsibility to the individual, in that management would take it upon itself to assess each person's abilities. "Instant dismissal became a measure of last resort, the task being to keep workers on their jobs and actually seeing to it that they did their best."[13]

The decline of scientific management was brought about when it produced unforeseen violence and discord from a goodly number of workers. Its demise culminated with the

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[12]Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[13]Bendix, p. 7.

famed Hoxie report, made by a group of experts chosen by both employers and unions, which condemned scientific management, casting doubt on the scientific value of time study. The report held that the Taylorian method often pointed to psychological, moral, and social disadvantages of selection and brought about a degradation of skilled labor.[14] However, Taylor led the way to many of the changes which characterized the twentieth century field of industrial relations.

World War I was a great stimulus to the formation and improvement of both methods of management and the testing of employees on a large scale basis, for it was at this time that procedures had to be changed in order to produce the amount of material that was needed for the great war effort. Leading the investigative effort were the various boards set up by numerous governments to study the problems of fatigue. These boards in general found that these "one best ways" precluded entirely that ever-present problem of individual differences and that a limitless number of factors prevented the researchers from reaching any simple solution. Studies of fatigue frequently brought in the problem of monotony, a factor resulting from the minute subdivision of work and thereby reducing the capacity of output.[15]

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[14]Friedmann, pp. 41-42.

[15]Smith, pp. 40-50.

## MAYO'S PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

It is at this point that Elton Mayo stepped into the picture with his highly-successful research effort at a textile mill near Philadelphia. Called the Father of the Human Relations Approach, Mayo served on the faculty of the Graduate School of Business Administration of Harvard University from 1925 until his death in 1949.

In a particular department at the mill, production was not at its optimum because of an unusually high turnover rate of the employees. Even though the mill was managed well, no solution could be discovered to remedy the situation. Mayo analyzed the conditions and discovered that the mule-spinning department, which had so poor a record, had work which was a "semi-automatic process which required enough attention to be irritating and not enough for the complete absorbtion of mental activity."[16] Even financial incentives had failed to interest the department workers.

Since regular interviewers failed to obtain sufficient rapport with workers, Mayo successfully won their confidence by having a trained nurse, who was also a skilled interviewer, gain their confidence. As workers frequently talked to the nurse and related their problems to her, a series of

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[16]Elton Mayo, The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization (New York, 1933), p. 44.

rest pauses were initiated at regular periods throughout the day. Mayo relates how astounding results were achieved by this experiment:

> The rest-pause innovation was accompanied, from its introduction, by an improvement in the officially recorded productive efficiency. The mental and physical condition of the men was distinctly bettered, their comments to observers were less generally pessimistic than before. Whereas the financial incentive of the bonus had not previously operated to stimulate production, the men now began to be pleased by the fact that they were working less time, earning bonuses as never before, and feeling less tired and irritated. For the first five months of the experiment the average productive efficiency of the department was eighty per cent.[17]

After a series of additional experiments the turnover problem was solved and production remained at a high level with continuous bonuses being paid to the workers. It was this Philadelphia experiment which encouraged Mayo to further his achievements by working with research teams at the Hawthorne Plant of the Western Electric Company in Chicago.

## THE HAWTHORNE EXPERIMENT

The experiments which took place at the Hawthorne Plant from 1924 to 1939 are among the most relevant of investigations into industrial relations that exist today. The influence of the Hawthorne experiments has extended to

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[17]*Ibid*., p. 50.

all phases of the American work scene. Beginning as a small illumination experiment, the Hawthorne studies grew to become an immense body of data, from which arose the famed "human relations" approach of Elton Mayo. A brief summary of the experiments will follow, and it will be the job of the second chapter to discuss the "human relations" approach itself.

"In November, 1924, the Western Electric Company, in connection with the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, planned to study the 'relation of quality and quantity of illumination to efficiency in industry.' These experiments lasted until April, 1927, a period of two and one-half years."[18] Attempts were made to manipulate the lighting environment, thereby seeking to arrive at an illumination rate which would yield the most production. Results of this experiment were inconclusive, and the study, discouraging as it was, "brought out very forcibly the necessity of controlling or eliminating the various additional factors which affected production."[19]

This initial study led the researchers to conduct the famed relay-assembly room experiments. In these experiments an effort was made to test the hypothesis that production would be higher under an improved incentive system and under

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[18]Fritz J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickson, Management and the Worker (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), p. 14

[19]Smith, pp. 48-49.

a shorter work week with rest and lunch periods. This part of the studies was conducted with quite a small group, which was allowed to chose its own members and which worked in a room separate from the regular shop in an attempt to control more variables. "The number of relays assembled per week was the primary criterion employed in the test."[20] The experiment itself had thirteen distinct periods in which the researchers changed various conditions, such as the length of the rest period, the total hours per day, and so on. From the outset of the experiment, production rose continuously. "The increased production during the test has taken the operators from an average weekly output of about 2,400 relays at the beginning to an... average weekly output of about 3,000 relays per week."[21] Several other experiments were performed on different groups, and the same results were obtained. "The best interpretation of the results is that the experimenters had <u>accidentally</u> introduced changes in the social climate of the work situation. It was these changes that were primarily responsible for the greatly improved production and morale. The chief result of years of work had been to demonstrate the importance of employee attitudes."[22]

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[20] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 24.

[21] Mayo, <u>Human Problems</u>, p. 66.

[22] Smith, p. 51.

In the course of the relay-assembly room experiment a
great number of uncomplimentary remarks about supervisors were
made by the workers. Hoping to initiate some type of super-
visory training program which would increase employee morale,
management began its famed interview program in which five
interviewers worked for two years in obtaining more than
twenty thousand interviews:

> At first, the interviewers patterned their
> procedure on the existing techniques of inter-
> viewing. They knew something about, and had
> had experience with, the conventional type of
> interviewing done by supervisors, by employ-
> ment departments, and by personnel people. Nev-
> ertheless, each interviewer began to suggest
> certain modifications, and these were discussed
> and criticized daily among themselves.
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>
> It was finally decided, about July, 1929,
> to adopt a new interviewing technique, which
> at that time was called the indirect approach.
> After the interviewer had explained the program,
> the employee was to be allowed to choose his own
> topic. As long as the employee talked spontan-
> eously, the interviewer was to follow the employ-
> ee's ideas, displaying a real interest in what
> the employee had to say, and taking sufficient
> notes to enable him to recall the employee's
> tone.[23]

A major finding of the interview program was that the complaints
of an employee might only be symptoms of the real indication
of the cause of trouble, meaning that an employee's complaint
often indicated some kind of personal difficulty, other than
a difficulty in his immediate surroundings at work. In

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[23]Roethlisberger, pp. 201-203.

correlating the interviewing data, it was noted that employee complaints often centered about social positioning in the respective work groups. The social values brought out in the interview program were further studies in what was called the bank-wiring room observation. The prime purpose of these observations was to discover what the social organization was and how it operated. Fourteen men were initiated into the study, which lasted for over six months. After initially establishing rapport with the fourteen men, the observed noted that the wage incentive system was completely ineffective, in that the workers determined what they considered to be satisfactory work quotas, thereby pacing their work so that none would exceed the group's definition of a day's work. It was noted that the workers frequently broke the rules of the company when its officials were not around the immediate work group.

The importance of the informal social organization among the workers made the company aims, policies, and aspirations completely inoperative. The informal organization had its own names for those members who did not conform to its wishes. There were corresponding punishments for members who would not conform; each member of the group was kept in check by the fear of losing status in the clique.[24]

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[24]Smith, p. 54.

The observer in the bank-wiring room noted two distinct subgroups in the informal social organization. One group considered itself on a higher plane than the other. Whenever the opportunity arose, the members of the respective groups would gather together for a variety of social activities. "Conformity and nonconformity to the norms... seemed to determine whether or not an operator was accepted or rejected by the group."[25] The worker's position in a group was so important that rather than violate his group's norm of conduct, the worker would not make use of the financial incentives.

As a final part of the study a personnel counseling bureau was set up for the purpose of providing such service within the company for employees who desired it. This practice spread to other firms, but subsequently has been abandoned entirely for a number of reasons, one being the expense of the operation and another being the opposition, in general, which the labor movement has voiced.

What the results of the Hawthorne studies did to the management of the work situations since the 1930's is truly astounding.

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[25]Henry Landsberger, Hawthorne Revisited (Ithaca, New York, 1958), p. 26.

# CHAPTER II

## THE UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY OF THE
## HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH

Attesting to the great influence of Elton Mayo in the field of industrial relations, Daniel Bell notes that "Ford set aside $500,000 for its human relations program and university centers have arisen all over the country."[1]  Bell goes on to point out that some have even compared Mayo's experiment in relative merit to that of Galileo in the physical sciences.  This placing of the Mayo Group's work in the limelight is in accord with Mayo's discussion of the problems of material efficiency and human collaboration in his famous work, The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization.[2]  In this book Mayo continually refers to the lag which can be discerned between improvements in production methods and the arrant dissipation of the ability of groups to collaborate effectively, this latter development being responsible for so many of the ills of modern civilization.

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[1]Daniel Bell, "Adjusting Men to Machines," Commentary, III (January, 1947), 79.

[2]Elton Mayo, The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization (Cambridge, Mass., 1945).

In developing his proposals Mayo explains two important terms which appear throughout his writings that need to be kept in mind. Mayo states that the "Difference between two principles of social organization--the one, that of an <u>adaptive</u> society; the other, that of an <u>established</u> society is extremely important."[3] In what would be called primitive societies, group codes dictated a certain social order and directed each individual to a patterned, stable kind of life. The individual himself was always considered subordinate to the group, which developed his life pattern and gave him stability. In return the individual was assured of a definite function and was able to participate satisfactorily in this <u>established</u> society. Medieval living modes, as described in the first chapter, would be typical examples of an established.

On the other hand, the seeds of the Industrial Revolution burgeoned the bitter fruit of an <u>adaptive</u> society. This society is characterized by the fact that it is composed of individuals of varied origins, many of whom are characterized by the fact that they frequently move from one group to another in hopes of obtaining a better job. The problem of too frequent changing makes the individuals of an adaptive society aimless and unhappy. Many individuals react in such

[3]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. vii.

a way that they find the world in general extremely hostile to them and any fleeting moments of happiness that might come their way are certainly short-lived.

Mayo answered those people who might be naive enough to propose a return to the methods of an established society by saying that there is no way to revert back, but if all seek effective collaboration, improvement can be made.  He states that "sociology and psychology can, out of lowly and pedestrian skills, develop the beginning of understanding; until then we shall continue to find technical advance provocative of social chaos and anarchy."[4]

## INFLUENCE OF LEPLAY AND DURKHEIM

Mayo was especially influenced by two individuals, Frederic Le Play and Emile Durkheim.  Le Play made a very intensive and extensive study of European workers as they were becoming industrialized between the years 1829 and 1855. His voluminous writings concerning his wide travels on the European continent, comprising six volumes, were written under the assumption that a dimishing capacity for working effectively together in urban and industrial settings was obvious.  Le Play, upon observing simpler com-

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[4]Ibid., p. viii.

munities which had agriculture and fishing as their chief occupation, noted those qualities which Mayo described as being attributive to an established society:

> He finds in such communities peace and stability, a simple faith in, and capacity to live by, the social code. In such community life, the individual understands every social activity and in greater or less degree, participates in it. The ties of family and kinship operate to relate every person to every social function: human content and happiness, the power to cooperate spontaneously and effectively, are at a high level. The members of such a community do not work together by reason of any sort of social or legal constraint. The social code and the desires of the individual are practically identical; every individual participates because his strongest wish is to do so.[5]

Emile Durkheim, whom Mayo cites quite frequently, made observations of a similar nature to those of Le Play, and his studies are characterized by an attempt to note the effect of industrialization upon the individual. In his famed book, Le Suicide,[6] Durkheim points out that industrial development has lessened both the capacity of working together and the sum of human happiness. He demonstrates that industrialization has led the individual away from the relationship of cooperation which was characteristic of a pre-industrialized community. In the typical industrial community the stresses of unhappiness could be found on all sides.

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[5] Elton Mayo, "Forward," in Fritz Roethlisberger, Management and Morale (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), p. xvii.

[6] Emile Durkheim, Le Suicide, trans John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (Glencoe, Illinois, 1951).

There no longer was any direction in living; all orderly
resemblances of an established society were destroyed, this
leaving a chaotic, lonely rubble.  This change, according
to Durkheim, is the cause of anomie, which is defined as a
planlessness in life, leading to community disorganization.

## COLLABORATION

In developing his philosophy of the "human relations"
approach, Mayo scorns the effects of laissez-faire indivi-
dualism, as described in the last chapter.  According to Mayo,
many of the present century's problems stem from its influ-
ence.  One of the principles of the laissez-faire school is
that its laws "are in no wise opposed to human liberty; on
the contrary, they are the expression of relations which
arise spontaneously among men living in society, wherever
these men are left to themselves and are free to act accord-
ing to their own interests."[7]  Mayo firmly asserts, citing
the Le Play and Durkheim observations and emphasizing the real
importance of them that "collaboration in an industrial society
cannot be left to chance--neither in a political nor in an
industrial unit can such neglect lead to anything but dis-
ruption and catastrophe.  Historically and traditionally our

[7]Charles Gide, The Principles of Political Economy
(London, 1909), p. 24.

fathers worked for social cooperation—and achieved it. This is true also of any primitive society. But we, for at least a century of the most amazing scientific and material progress, have abandoned the effort—by inadvertence, it is true, and we are now reaping the consequences."[8] Mayo frequently mentions studies of primitive societies in his writing. "Intertwined are the premises of a new cultural anthropology which draws on many comparisons between status systems of preliterate tribal communities and factory social structure in modern society."[9]

Mayo further claims that every social group must face two problems which are perpetual. The first and more emphasized in the modern world is the satisfaction of material needs; the second deals with the maintenance of spontaneous cooperation. Since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the former of these two has been obviously stressed, so that the second has gone begging. What society needs, says Mayo, is the development of social skills which will be effective in a specific situation.

Interesting and important to the understanding of the

[8] Mayo, Social Problems, p. 9.

[9] Robert Sorensen, "The Concept of Conflict in Industrial Sociology," Social Forces, XXVIV (March, 1951), p. 263.

"human relations" approach is Mayo's comparison of the physical sciences with the social sciences.

## KNOWLEDGE-OF-ACQUAINTANCE---KNOWLEDGE ABOUT

In describing the issues, Mayo speaks of two kinds of knowledge--the knowledge-of-acquaintance and the knowledge-about, these being distinguished by William James. "Knowledge-of-acquaintance comes from direct experience of face-to-face situation; knowledge-about is the product of reflective and abstract thinking. 'Knowledge derived from experience is hard to transmit, except by example, imitation, and trial and error,' where erudition is easily put into symbols--words, graphs, maps."[10]

The physical sciences, whose job it is to develop the first of the two goals of a social group, that is, the satisfaction of material needs, have, according to Mayo, made use of both the knowledge-of-acquaintance and knowledge-about quite effectively, in that work in laboratories has developed manipulative skill in terms of knowledge-of-acquaintance development. It is the blending of these two skills that Mayo attributes the technical dexterity of industrial society. Without the emphasis of both knowledge-of-acquaintance and knowledge-about, society would never have been industrialized

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[10]Mayo, Social Problems, pp. 16-17.

to the extent it has.[11]

On the other hand, in turning from the physical sciences "to the unsuccessful sciences--sociology, psychology, political science--one cannot fail to be struck by the extent of the failure of the latter to communicate to students a skill that is directly useful in human situations."[12]

Mayo describes the fact that the social sciences do not equip even the most brilliant students to bring about any order in the chaos that is found in society. Departments of the social sciences at various universities are too concerned with knowledge-about and should shift more emphasis to knowledge-of-acquaintance, for the ability of social scientists to secure cooperation through social skills is certainly low. The unbalance of the physical and social sciences in regard to technical and social skills has been disastrous, according to Mayo. "If our social skills had advanced step by step with our technical skills, there would not have been another European war /World War II/: this is my recurrent theme."[13]

Mayo, then, believed that in general the social sciences

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[11]Ibid., pp. 15-19

[12]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[13]Ibid., ,pp. 20-21.

were ineffective and even displayed little responsibility
in attempting to develop studies made in terms of the actual-
ities of life. Not until the social sciences caught up in
development with the physical sciences could society be put
back in balance. The social sciences could do this by
developing an understanding of the complex social problems.

## CLINICAL APPROACH

Mayo advocates the use of a clinical method in the de-
velopment of a useful approach to securing social skills.
It is the job of the clinical method to ferret out complex-
ities of the relationships between people and to support the
knowledge-of-acquaintance structure of the social sciences.
The job of the practitioner of the clinical method is to
start at the grass-roots level and critically examine all data
which may be relevant to the formulation of a theory of social
skills. "The clinical method helps the research student to
obtain knowledge about group behavior, to develop simple
generalizations, to explain what happens, and to incubate the
kind of behavior which facilitates effective action."[14]
Typical examples of the clinical method are Mayo's mule-
spinning department experiment in the textile mill near Phil-
adelphia and the Hawthorne experiment. As Mayo puts it:

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[14]Donald Schoen, "Human Relations: Boon or Bogle?"
Harvard Business Review, XXXV (Nov-Dec, 1957), 43.

Economic theory in its human aspect is woefully insufficient; indeed it is absurd. Humanity is not adequately described as a horde of individuals, each actuated by self-interest, each fighting his neighbor for the scarce material of survival. Realization that such theories completely falsify the normal human scene drives us back to study of particular human situations. Knowledge-of-acquaintance of the actual event, intimate understanding of the complexity of human relationships, must precede the formulation of alternatives to current economic abstraction. This is the clinical method, the necessary preliminary to laboratory investigation. Only when clinically tested by successful treatment can a diagnosis be safely developed toward logical elaboration and laboratory experiment.[15]

Mayo and his group elaborate on a number of terms which they derived essentially from the Hawthorne studies, thus formulating a "human relations" approach to management. Some of the important ideas which continually appear and re-appear in human relations literature and which often are related to each other are: the factory as a social system, equilibrium, leadership style, participation, morale, communication, interviewing, informal and formal work groups, and cooperation. Since the above terms, among others, are crucial to the understanding of the "human relations" approach, they will be discussed briefly throughout the remainder of this chapter.

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[15]Mayo, Social Problems, p. 59.

# EQUILIBRIUM

The point of view which gradually arose from the Hawthorne studies is that "an industrial organization is regarded as a social system,"[16] the function of which are described as economic solvency and the maintenance of employee relations. From these two functions, two corresponding problems arise out of this social system, one being of external balance (economic) and the other being of internal equilibrium (maintaining good employee relations). "A factory system, like any stable social system, must be conceived as tending toward an equilibrium in which its different parts are functionally adjusted to each other."[17] Mayoites hold that the latter is held to be the nadir of the former by too many industrial concerns, the researchers claiming that the effectiveness of any social organization is contingent upon the total effectiveness of all parts of the structure. However, the economic aspect of the social system of industry with its advances in productive techniques has by far eclipsed the function of maintaining good employee relations (cooperation), thereby causing a vast dis-equilibrium in the social system.

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[16]Roethlisberger and Dickson, P. 552.

[17]Bell, p. 83.

The industrial plant can be divided into two separate organizations, one the human organization and the other the technical organization, both of which bring about changes which require mutual adjustments. In the human organization is found a number of individuals, each bringing with them a totally different personal and social background. However, this "human organization of an industrial plant is more than a plurality of individuals, each motivated by sentiments arising from his own personal and private history and background. It is also a social organization, for the members of an industrial plant... are interacting daily with one another and from their associations certain patterns of relations are formed among them."[18]

As in any social milieu, the factory constantly has processes of social evaluation at work; that is, minute distinctions of better, good, and bad are continually in evidence, these distinctions being attached to the processes of work performed throughout the plant. Mayo thereby states that every item and event of this system are objects of sentiment and cannot be treated in themselves, but must be interpreted as carriers of social values. In other words, "noneconomic

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[18]Roethlisberger and Dickson, p. 554.

motives, interests, and processes, as well as economic, are fundamental in behavior in business, from the board of directors to the very last man in the organization. Man is not merely--in fact is very seldom--motivated by factors pertaining strictly to facts or logic."[19]

## ORGANIZATION

The social organization itself is divided into two parts-- the formal and the informal organizations. The formal organization's purpose is..."to subdivide the work so that it may be performed to accomplish the organizational goals."[20]

In other words, it directs itself to the economic purposes of the concern; whereas, the informal organization, existing in every plant, is a necessary prerequisite for effective collaboration. Often the informal organization has developed in opposition to the formal organization, thereby showing the important relation between the two. The formal and informal organization patterns were brought out in the relay-assembly room experiment, where there was an informal organization developed which had close alliance with the goals of management and the bank-wiring room experiment, which had the opposite effect. The point to be made is that the informal organization can be so powerful as to subvert the avowed

[19]Ibid., p. 257.

[20]Keith Davis, Human Relations in Business (New York, 1957), p. 57.

goals of management as made in the formal organization.
Therefore, if management could be skillful enough to get the
informal organizations of its concern to run along parallel
lines with the formal organization, as was seen in the relay-
assembly room experiment, many of its problems would be re-
solved. Three kinds of logic are to be found within the factory
social system: the logic of cost, the logic of efficiency,
and the logic of sentiment. It is the last of these three
which is so often neglected.

The various parts of an industrial plant are quite
interrelated. A change in one element of its makeup is necess-
itated by a change in its other elements. The system can be
viewed as in a state of equilibrium. Some portion of the
system can change more rapidly than others; for example, parts
of the system related to the technical organization can usually
change more readily than parts of the social organization.
One of the principles of equilibrium is that once a change is
introduced into a system, the system reacts, as a whole, "tend-
ing toward the conditions that would have existed if the mod-
ification had not been impressed."[21] The human relationist
considers this extremely important, in that many of the
difficulties of present society stem from the disparity of the

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[21]V. Pareto, The Mind and Society, (New York, 1935),
p. 1438.

rate of change of the technical and social organizations in the work place. Changes in the technical sphere were not matched with corresponding changes in the social sphere, thereby causing a state of disequilibrium, a condition of unbalance, so to speak, which made itself manifest in many ways. "Management's general... objective regarding change is to restore and maintain the group equilibrium and personal adjustment which change upsets."[22]

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The interviewing experience at Hawthorne, as described in the first chapter, was responsible for developing a new concept of leadership. The results themselves led to a leadership training program at Hawthorne. To the leader fell the responsibility of maintaining or re-establishing the equilibrium of the social system. Alfred G. Larke states that "the supervisor who succeeds in developing an enthusiastic, productive, cohesive team is likely to be sensitive to interpersonal problems among his people; to talk of his job in terms of the group rather than of individuals."[23] All through-

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[22]Davis, p. 140.

[23]Alfred G. Larke, "Human Relations Research: Academic Wool-Gathering, or Guide to Increased Productivity?" Dun's Review and Modern Industry, LXVIII (July, 1956), 44.

out the Mayo literature are statements concerning the leader's

job of integrating groups by means of social skills so that

these groups will effectively form a stable team for the pur-

pose of integrating formal and informal organization goals as

nearly as possible:

> The leader's function is such as to assist the
> group in maintaining its customs, its purposes
> and its attitudes undamaged by the chance in-
> eptitudes of the less experienced or less skill-
> ful members. This is a conservative function,
> calculated to maintain the society in an unvary-
> ing circle of procedures. A group so maintained
> may be expected to display integration in a high
> degree.[24]

The new leader is trained to take the point of view of senti-

ments. Practitioners hope to apply definite principles

to the practice of this point of view. In many respects

the leader would take a more passive role in his dealings with

subordinates. The leader is to listen carefully to what

a person has to say, not for the purpose of making categorical

judgments, but for the purpose of attempting to understand

why the person feels and acts the way he does. Roethlisberger

states five rules whereby a supervisor could attempt to under-

stand employee sentiment better;  they are:

> The first rule is that the supervisor should lis-
> ten patiently to what his subordinate has to say be-
> fore making any comment himself... The second
> rule is that the supervisor should refrain from
> hasty disapprobation of his subordinate's conduct...
> The third rule is that the supervisor should not

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[24]Thomas N. Whitehead, Leadership in a Free Society
(Cambridge, Mass., 1936), p. 69

argue with his subordinate... The fourth rule is that the supervisor should not pay exclusive attention to the manifest content of the conversation... The fifth rule is that the supervisor should listen not only to what a person wants to say but also to what he does not want to say or cannot say without assistance.[25]

Included as part of the leadership program is the crucial issue of communications, and in order to adjudge a particular situation, management must be provided with adequate and accurate information as to the manner in which the total organization is functioning, depending upon an accurate transmission of information _down_ through the structure and, likewise, information of the various strata of work levels up through the structure. This latter point is to be buttressed by the education of enlightened supervisors to the new managerial approach. "In the past, management... concentrated on setting up communication channels _to get the work done_. The new approach calls for setting up channels—from the bottom up as well as from the top down—through which _improvements_ in the organization of work are constantly taking place."[26]

[25]Roethlisberger, pp. 41-43.

[26]William Foote Whyte, "Human Relations Theory—A Progress Report," _Harvard Business Review_, XXXIV (September-October, 1956), 128.
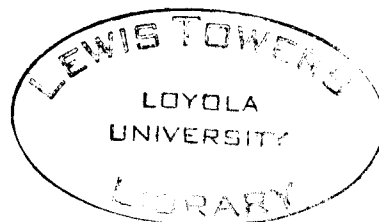
These enlightened supervisors, upon applying this "human relations" approach, will discover, if all goes well, that the morale of the social system should reach high levels. Morale, defined as "the maintenance of cooperative living," is not the intangible that economists, engineers, and the like term a mere epithet. Mayo cites instances in his studies, the relay-assembly room experiment, for example, where morale was made to rise a great deal. It is this same morale which is so essential to the successful operation of a concern. It is this morale which will develop out of a more closely allied informal-formal organization and effective communications in a firm. Although morale is so often ignored or disregarded, its absence is quite conspicuous:

It is our hope that in time, through the practice of these /_human relations_7 skills, the word "morale" will drop from the vocabulary of administrators and their staff specialists concerned with human situations, just as the word "health" has dropped from the terminology of medicine. In its place will be substituted effective classifications of human situations and skillful methods of treating them. In this modern organization it will become just as old-fashioned to ask, "What is the state of morale of your department?" as for a physician to go into a modern hospital and ask, "What is the state of health of our patients?" In its place will be asked, "What are the particular human situations in your department, and how are you handling them?" This will be the exercise of "control" by understanding and not by ritualistic, verbal practices which address themselves to human nature in general, but not to

particular human beings in particular places
with particular feelings and sentiments for
which they need concrete social expression.[27]

A concluding, poignant statement of Mayo is that:

> Modern civilization is greatly in need of
> a new type of administrator who can, metaphor-
> ically speaking, stand outside the situation he
> is studying.  The administrator of the future
> must be able to understand the human social facts
> for what they actually are, unfettered by his
> own emotion or prejudice.  He cannot achieve
> this ability except by careful training--a train-
> ing that must include knowledge of the relevant
> technical skills, of the systematic ordering
> of operations, and of the organization of coop-
> eration.[27]

Over the years a slight difference in attitude can be
discerned in the approach to human relations.  It now goes
without saying that many assumptions made in the past by
management are now out of date.  Assuming, for example, that
the worker is _merely_ interested in the weekly paycheck is
one example.  As Saltonstall puts it, "Executives now under-
stand his /the worker's/ needs for recognition, a sense of
belonging, and a chance to participate and grow in a secure
position under a responsible management.  These are prerequi-
sites for sustained productivity."[28]

Since its inception the "human relations" approach has
been viewed with mistrust by many, especially labor.

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[27]Mayo, _Social Problems_, p. 122.

[28]Robert Saltonstall, _Human Relations in Administration_
(New York, 1959), p. 16.

Criticism of the Mayo school by a large number of sociologists
and economists "seems to be a favored pastime of several
years' standing."[29]  It is the task of the next three chapters
to describe and discuss some of the principal criticisms of
the approach.

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[29]Landsberger, p. 29.

# CHAPTER III

## THE MANIPULATION CRITICISM

In recent years the "human relations" approach of the
Mayo group has been criticized at great lengths by a large
number of people.  In fact, the criticism levy "as compre-
hensive an indictment of a theoretical system as could be
imagined.  Nothing more devastating could be said about...
a system than that it is superficial and totally misses the
point."[1]

One criticism of the "human relations" approach,
centers around the manipulative tendency of the ideological
structure of the approach.  Briefly, some critics who dis-
parage the "human relations" approach as a thinly disguised
process whereby production can be improved from what can be
called the manipulation techniques.  They maintain that
management has shown so widespread an adoption of the "human
relations" approach only because managers realize that their
methods in dealing with employees will no longer work.  Harold
L. Sheppard states that "it is correct to say that the popu-

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[1]Landsberger, p. 46.

larity of the human relations approach has developed largely
as a result of management's realization that the older methods
of obtaining a 'cooperative' work force, such as the use of
the fear of discharge, no longer are effective."[2]  Conse-
quently managers are to apply a new approach in dealing with
employees.  The new managerial elite is to work for worker
acceptance of management's goals.  Critics claim that in-
stead of being dictatorial in achieving its goals, management
is to become a "benevolent despot who manipulates his subjects
in the interests of his own security and their welfare."[3]
The logical outcome of such a theory is an Orwellian society
in which manipulation is the chief form of control.  In other
words, the essence of the manipulative criticism is that
"human relations" is, so to speak, really a wolf in sheep's
clothing.  Under the guise of showing an ardent interest in
worker welfare, practitioners of the "human relations" approach
are concentrating on an increased output in production, using
the approach merely to manipulate the workers into accepting

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[2]Harold L. Sheppard, "Approaches to Conflict in American
Industrial Sociology," British Journal of Sociology, V
(December, 1954), 334.

[3]Clark Kerr and Lloyd Fisher, "Plant Sociology: The
Elite and the Aborigines," Common Frontiers of the Social
Sciences, ed. Mirra Komarovsky, (Glencoe, Illinois, 1957),
p. 291.

the goals of management and accomodating larger production goals. As one critic puts it, Mayoites attempt "to cow workers into subordinating their own values and thoughts. The procedures allow for 'brainwashing' and the use of suggestion to impose management's views. In its most successful development, workers will accept management's premise and work out rationalizations to explain their submission in the face of the obvious conflict with their own interests."[4]

## KERR'S CRITICISM

Clark Kerr has been one of the most ardent critics of the manipulative aspects of the "human relations" approach. It is his contention that in Mayo's theory of undivided loyalty to the plant can be discerned a subtle form of totalitarianism. According to Kerr, a division of Loyalties between the various institutions of a modern industrial society is the guarantee of freedom. Kerr is quite concerned about Mayo's wanting a plant which develops an increasing control over man's loyalties, asserting that "in the division of loyalties... to self, to family, to state, to union, is seen

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[4]Solomon Barkin, "Commentary on Mr. Simon's Chapter," Research in Industrial Human Relations: A Critical Appraisal, ed. Conrad M. Arensberg et al., (New York, 1957), p. 147.

the guarantee of freedom."[5]   Rather than abhor conflict and
competition, Kerr holds that today's society is made up of
accommodated conflicts rather than universal collaboration.
Attempting to recapture the spirit of the Middle Ages and
working for a spontaneous collaboration in an ever-changing
capitalistic society is a naive approach to the problems.
The collaboration which Mayo seeks is that which was char-
acteristic of a static society and cannot be superimposed on
the present day modern industrial society, so says Kerr.
Quite emphatically Kerr states that the view of iniative and
rationality being left to the manipulation of a managerial
elite and the belief that the common man is merely left to
obey the edicts of this elite are ideas which cannot be ac-
cepted in any sense.

Kerr reviles at length Mayo's position on the role of
the leader.  In accepting what the school has to say concern-
ing the leader, Kerr believes one must accept the fact that
"the manager is combining men to save society by making them
into the modern counterpart of the tribe, or clan, or guild...
The survival of society itself rides on the manager's skill.
It is human relations training rather than competition, which

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[5]Clark Kerr, "What Became of the Independent Spirit?"
Fortune, XLVIII (July, 1953), 111.

will avoid the debacle. The worker's primary contribution is his loyalty, and only secondary are his production skills."[6] Critics who protest the manipulation underlying the Mayo Group's approach counter the latter's analysis of modern society with their own, these ideas being "an almost opposite view of heaven on earth."[7] These critics hold that man is primarily motivated by a desire to maximize his individual welfare. Competitive markets are used to spur on managers to greater efficiency, and reliance is primarily placed upon a regulated self-interest and freedom of choice. In a modern society loyalties are divided, insuring in this division a guarantee of freedom. Being part of a progressive society, the market assumes the achievement of group welfare. "The open society to which the Western World has been dedicated for a century and a half... is viewed with mistrust by Mayo."[8] It is this society of accomodated conflict rather than universal collaboration that is the world of Adam Smith, not Plato.

The manipulation critics of the "human relations" approach fear that if Mayo's idealized society would come to

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[6]Kerr, "Plant Sociology," p. 303.

[7]Ibid., p. 305.

[8]Ibid., p. 307

its logical conclusion, the world would be peopled by vast
numbers of robots who would uncritically adopt industry's
"own conception of workers as <u>means</u> to be manipulated or
adjusted to impersonal ends."[9] The brave new world to ensue
would resemble what Alduous Huxley satirizes in his novels
on the manipulation of people by the "gods" of industrial
proficiency.

Clark Kerr states:

> The danger is not that loyalties are divi-
> ded today but that they may be undivided tomor-
> row... I would urge each individual to avoid to-
> tal involvement in any organization; to seek to
> whatever extent lies within his power to limit
> each group to the minimum control necessary for
> performance of essential functions; to struggle
> against the effort to absorb; to lend his ener-
> gies to many organizations and give himself
> completely to none; to each child should be
> taught what Walt Whitman urged many years ago;
> that is, 'to be laws to themselves and to depend
> on themselves'--for that is the well source of
> the independent spirit.[10]

Some critics hold that Mayo's error in dealing with con-
flict stem from his own personal feelings on the subject. "It
is difficult to understand Mayo's work unless one realizes
how much he abhors conflict, competition, or disagreement:
conflict to him is a social disease and cooperation is social

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[9]Bell, p. 88

[10]Kerr, "What Became of the Independent Spirit," p. 112

health."[11]   Bendix holds that Mayoites fail to see that a
freedom to conflict actually establishes boundaries within
which conflict can be contained.  Mayo's assumption that
there is a national community between worker and manager is
unfounded and affects the conclusions which he derives from
this belief.

## MAYO'S INFLUENCE IN PERSONNEL

Several special aspects of personnel management which
have arisen from the Mayo research are held up to scorn by
the manipulation critics.  The critics claim that "human
relations" thinking has permeated many aspects of manage-
ment and has helped foster erroneous notions concerning the
techniques employed on workers; such things as widespread
company testing, leadership training programs, group theories,
and educational system procedures have been spawned by
"human relations" in a further effort to manipulate workers
for self-motivated reasons.  One critic notes that the wide
and varied uses of these "techniques of manipulation, as
with all propaganda, will vary, but the elements remain
similar.  They will include excessive simplification of issues,
omission of essential facts, use of ambiguous language, images,

[11]Reinhard Bendix and Lloyd Fisher, "The Perspectives
of Elton Mayo," Review of Economics and Statistics, XXXI
(November, 1949), 320.

and data, and exploitation of prestige personalities to re-
inforce the message... The use of ambiguous and mellifluous
words such as 'human relations' to describe these practices
compounds the villainy of the deception.  It takes close study
to recognize the malignant purposes and unrealistic assump-
tions of a 'human relations' approach."[12]

## WHYTE'S CRITICISM

Manipulation critics, such as William H. Whyte, Jr.,
maintain that the voluminous amount of tests of subjective
traits fostered by human relationists start with an under-
lying bias of the testers.  In the tests themselves are en-
shrined the values, organization values, which tend to make
the tests gauges of loyalty of potential loyalty to the
concern.  In short, these tests seek to reward the conform-
ist, who is considered an ideal type to fit in to management's
groupings.  As Whyte puts it:  "What the personality testers
are trying to do is to convert abstract traits into a con-
crete measure that can be placed on a linear scale, and it is
on the assumption that this is a correct application of the
scientific method that all else follows.  But merely defining
a trait is immensely difficult, let alone determing whether

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[12]Barkin, pp. 117-118.

it can be measured as the opposite of another... /In short/ not failing to make the tests scientific enough and illustrating a basic bias are the real errors."[13]

One critic notes that in putting a currently-popular personality test to a severe analysis, more objective evidence of what the people tested were actually like was uncovered. It was found that no significant relationships and sometimes reverse correlations were evidenced between the personality test and the actual conditions. Another manipulation critic points out the frequent use of profiles in the hiring of employees is quite popular with many concerns. One such concern specifically states that accepting artistic beauty and taste as a fundamental standard of life is not a factor which makes for executive success and anyone scoring much above the tenth percentile on aesthetic values on a particular profile is to be looked at askance. In other words, the allegation is made that when employees seek to obtain employment at an increasing number of concerns, "everything you do to white mice is done to them, except their spines and skulls are not split so the fluid could be analyzed."[14] So not only are the tests unscientific, but many of the things they hope to measure con-

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[13]William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (New York, 1956), p. 36.

[14]Carliner Lewis, "Deep Therapy on the Assembly Line; Moo, Moo, Moo, Say the Cow Sociologists, but They Don't Even Give Skimmed Milk, " Ammunition, VII (April, 1949), 47.

cerning the innermost self of an individual are not believed
to be anyone's business but the individual's. Management
ignores this last point entirely in its use of testing.
William H. Whyte, Jr., holds that a line must be drawn to
protect individuality and that although a concern may have a
right to expect superlative work from an employee, it should
not demand his psyche as well. He holds that in defending one's
self against the harmful results of the tests, one can feel
free to cheat on them, once he knows what they are seeking to
measure.[15] The following data should be kept in mind, according
to Whyte, in answering questions on personality tests:

I loved my father and my mother, but my
father a little bit more.
I like things pretty much the way
they are.
I never worry much about anything.
I don't care for books or music much.
I love my wife and children.
I don't let them get in the way of
company work.[16]

In other words, don't answer what is really felt but what one
thinks the tests want.

In regard to leadership training programs, the view of
manipulation critics is that these are merely another device
engendered by management to achieve more successful control

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[15]Whyte, p. 233.

[16]Ibid., p. 217

of workers.  McNair states that "we have blown it /human rela-
tions training/ up too big and have placed too much emphasis
at the collegiate and early graduate level."[17]To McNair
"human relations of proficiency, technical expertness, effect
of calculation and manipulation... has a cold-blooded conno-
tation:"[18]

> In companies in which human-relations train-
> ing programs have been emphasized... some su-
> pervisors interpret the training to mean that
> the company management wants them to keep em-
> ployees happy, so they work hard to do so.  The
> result is a nice country-club atmosphere in
> which the leadership function has been abandoned
> to all intents and purposes.  Employees like
> it and absence and turnover are low, but since
> little production is felt to be expected, they
> produce relatively little.[19]

"Human Relations" beliefs concerning the importance of
groups have been under considerable criticism by critics,
who hold that it isn't enough for a man to belong, but he
must also belong together with others.  One reason for the
importance of groups is the belief of supposedly scientific
origin that the group is superior to the individual.  For
theoretical justification, group advocates have done must
work in the field of group dynamics, which describes the

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[17]Malcom P. McNair, "Thinking Ahead:  What Price Human
Relations?" Harvard Business Review, XXXV, (March-April, 1957),
39.

[18]Ibid., p. 20.

[19]Whyte, p. 64.

work of those whose attention is focused on the face-to-face group. The belief is that a harmonious atmosphere will bring out the best in everyone, and this harmony will aid in worker acceptance of the goals of management as criteria of behavior. Everyone will be a member of one happy family in which the leader is recognized as the ultimate decider of all group actions. It is he who will skillfully manipulate the group to follow management's directives. Critics scorn the relatively new creative vehicle of thinking in groups, holding that people can "very rarely think in groups."[20]

Some rather far-reaching influences of the "human relations" approach can be discerned in educational institutions of this country. The fading influence of liberal arts education can be noticed all through the country with only three out of every ten college graduates majoring in the liberal arts.[21] More and more emphasis has been placed on the training of students in the minutiae of organization skills. The huge expansion of courses in business administration within the last thirty years reflects management's influence in educational circles. In such courses students are transfixed into approaching the secrets of happiness, for "the courses

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[20]Ibid., p. 57

[21]Ibid., p. 86

explicitly instruct one in the skills of manipulating other
people of the skills of adjusting oneself."[22] Many business
administrators have gained a foothold in colleges by alumni
ties, whereby large grants are given to schools which are in-
fluenced by what the successful business men want.

An important concept of Whyte is the social ethic. It
sums his essential criticism: a belief in group creativity;
belongingness; and a belief in the application of science
to achieve this belongingness.

In concluding this chapter a succinct summary of the
manipulation criticism will be given:

> Beyond "market psychology" another new field of
> psychology has arisen, based on the wise to un-
> derstand and manipulate the employee. This is
> called "human relations." It is a logical
> outcome of the changed relationships between
> capital and labor. Instead of crude warfare
> there is cooperation between the giant colossi
> of labor unions, both of which have come to the
> conclusion that it is in a long run more useful
> to compromise than to fight. In addition,
> we have also found that satisfied, "happy"
> men were more productively inclined and pro-
> vided for that smooth operation which is a
> necessity for big enterprises. Thus, what
> Taylor did for the rationalization of physi-
> cal work the psychologists do for the mental
> and emotional aspect of the worker. He is made
> into a thing, treated and manipulated like a
> thing, and so-called "human relations" are
> the most inhuman ones, because they""reified"
> and alienated relations.
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

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[22]Ibid., p. 86

Complete rational knowledge is only possible of things--Man is not a thing; therefore, he can't be dissected without being harmed.[23]

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[23]Erich Fromm, "Man Is Not a Thing," Saturday Review of Literature, XL (March 16, 1957), 9.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE UNION AND RELATED CRITICISM

The Mayo school treatment of unions has been the subject of severe criticism by unionists and many others since the very formation of a "human relations" approach. For the most part research done by the Mayo group has deemed it sufficient to generally ignore the role of the union in a modern industrial setting, thereby causing "a leading character /to be missing/ from the drama of industrial relations."[1] Whitehead in his Leadership in a Free Society has provided the Mayo groups formal statement on unions, a position which has been criticized at great lengths. Before presenting the criticisms themselves it will be necessary to briefly summarize Whitehead's position on the controversial issue of unions. Robert S. Lynd, upon reviewing Whitehead's Leadership in a Free Society, holds that Whitehead "misses the central mean-

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[1]Landsberger, p. 44.

ing of modern capitalistic control,"[2] and even notes "shades of Marx and Veblen"[3] in Whitehead's analysis of leadership. Whitehead's interesting and controversial views on trade unions follow:

## WHITEHEAD'S TREATMENT OF THE UNIONS

He states that trade unions, being entirely of European origin, were formed because of the influences of the Industrial Revolution. It was the Industrial Revolution, as described in the first chapter, which broke down the relations between employer and employee which had been personal, "relatively permanent, and regulated by an historic system of mutual privileges and obligations."[4] With the advent of the factory these relations were destroyed, causing a wide gulf to be established between employers and employees. In the new system, the giantism of an organization precluded the hope on the part of employees of ever hoping to own a business, as in the past. As was mentioned previously, in

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[2]Robert S. Lynd, "Review of Thomas N. Whitehead, Leadership in a Free Society," Political Science Quarterly, LII (December, 1937), 591.

[3]Ibid., p. 592.

[4]Whitehead, p. 143.

industrial society, relations between workers and their super-
visors were mainly impersonal, the workers having no security
nor any human function to perform in the social structure.
According to Whitehead, early unions were formed, not to im-
prove the material conditions of the worker, but to direct
"a new ordering of society,"[5] which would restore to the
workers the task of leadership and organization, thus recover-
ing some of the functions which the new working class had lost.
Sheppard states that the above interpretation is "typical of
Mayo's tendency to minimize the importance of material con-
ditions of the worker and idealize the community."[6]

In time, purports Whitehead, the European unions, es-
pecially those of English origin, adopted the policy of
improving factory and living conditions for the purpose of
having a more palpable goal, but their real object was "the
establishment of a new international society, ∠to be achieved⁊
by burrowing methodically in the foundations of the existing
system in order to bring it down with a crash."[7]  What the

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[5]Ibid., p. 144.

[6]Harold L. Sheppard, "The Treatment of Unions in Manage-
rial Sociology," American Sociological Review, XIV (April,
1949), 311.

[7]Whitehead, p. 145.

English unions sought was to force cooperative action upon the rest of society. In summary, Whitehead believes that earlier trade unions had two objectives:

> They are looking after the economic condition of the working class, and simultaneously enriching their immediate social relations. Under the first heading come such activities as improving factory conditions and pay, and providing various forms of insurance and collective security against accident and extreme poverty. These activities are too well known to need description.
> Closely allied to trade unions' function noted above is the most impressive function for promoting social activity. In a country where labour is so highly unionized and where union activity is so great, it is natural that unions should have functioned in some ways as social clubs for their members, and they have taken their part in the organization of social gatherings in the narrow sense of the term.[8]

Whitehead believes that the most impressive function, then, of the trade union is the social activity which it promotes, the union functioning in many ways as a social club for its members, who take part in the organization through social gathering. Important in the social interpretation of the trade union is the fact that in Europe the doors of high social classes are not readily opened to those who seek admittance from below, even if the seeker has come into moderate financial success. The trade union makes up for this social immobility by essentially being a working class enter-

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[8]*Ibid.*, p. 146.

prise which provides the ambitious workman with psychological
satisfaction and with the opportunity of becoming an official
by assisting in organization by collaborating with manage-
ment. As Whitehead puts it:

> Whatever may be the economic success of unions
> in England and in some other European countries--
> and this must not be underrated--they do undoub-
> tedly achieve one function for successful insti-
> tutions. They provide their members with a social
> structure and enhance their opportunities for
> effective participation in the life of the community
> as a whole.[9]

Whitehead believes that the disparity of origins in the
European and American union scene is highly significant
in that so many people came to America from Europe seeking to
escape from many of the evils inherent in their respective
mother countries. In early America the managers had to build
and maintain their enterprises "in the face of chronic labor
scarcity."[10] The managers had to be more careful in his
treatment of workers because of several factors. First of
all, the lack of a high degree of social stratification in
this country made it possible for people to move with rel-
ative ease from one social class to another. Secondly, if a

[9]Ibid., p. 147.

[10]James Worthy,"Management's Approach to 'Human Relations,"
Research in Industrial Human Relations: A Critical Appraisal,
ed. Conrad M. Arensberg et al., (New York, 1957), p. 17.

man were unhappy about conditions, he could always turn to
the alternate career of pioneer-farming. These factors con-
tributed to an egalitarian situation in which no self-con-
scious class of working people existed, according to White-
head. Therefore:

> The history of American industrial labour begins
> not with organizations but with strikes. Employees
> required no union to give them a place in society,
> they had that already; but when conditions were un-
> satisfactory these men remained true to their tra-
> ditions and they walked out. It was not until
> after 1830 that permanent unions began to be de-
> veloped, as a result of forty years' experience
> of strikes supported only by temporary organiza-
> tions created for the immediate purpose. These
> early unions were little more than strike organiza-
> tions placed on a permanent basis; they performed no
> other service for their members, for there was no
> other service to perform. The employees had the
> status and the security of the rest of the society
> and had no need for social activity outside of it.
> Only with respect to bargaining power was the posi-
> tion of the employee substantially worse than that
> of the owner, and just as a modern householder
> provides himself with a fire extinguisher, so the
> early householder provides himself with a strike
> organization.[11]

Whitehead notes that the early unions in America were
characterized by a lack of success, stating that the fre-
quent strikes, unwisely undertaken and poorly organized,
made failure imminent. He mentions that unions had an ex-
tremely difficult time in holding members because workers
often only joined unions when strikes were occurring, thereby

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[11]Whitehead, p. 149.

hoping to reap some benefits. Because of the fact that lead-
ers of strikes were wanted more than leaders for the organiza-
tion of social living, poor union leadership was quite com-
mon. Able manual workers found it much more profitable to
become owner-managers rather than union leaders. Whitehead
believes that the union leadership problem has basically re-
mained the same in the present century.

This weakness of unions to perform adequate social func-
tions in the United States has led to the formation of another
worker organization, entitled the company union, whose
function is to represent the wishes and attitudes of the
workers of a given company to the management. Although many
company unions have failed, "where the relations between man-
agement and employee are those of collaboration based on a
mutual trust, company unions have proved a flexible instru-
ment and one capable of being adjusted to the real situation,
and it has shown great possibilities under such circumstances
as this."[12]

Whitehead believes that the future of trade unions is
contingent upon the degree to which social living is made
the concern of those who are doing the leading. He believes
that a self-conscious class of manual workers is developing,

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[12]_Ibid_., p. 154.

a fact which may lead to the strengthening of unions, even though these unions are "not adequately led and have no great traditions of collaboration with management."[13]

Whitehead is confident that the executive ranks of business make-up the best brains of the country and may very well develop a means of coping with the problems of industry; therefore, trade unions might lose their members, who will find that direct collaboration within the factory is all they need in way of personal self-expression. In short, unions must change their functions to the seeking of an effective means of collaboration. In summing up Whitehead's remarks concerning the union, he suggests that "no organization involving much human energy is likely to be supported unless it has adequate purposes and also provides immediate social satisfactions."[14] Industrial peace, it would seem, depends upon exercising social skills and rests on the assumption of a fundamental identity of interests between the parties, summarizes Harold L. Sheppard.[15]

Whitehead sums up his main point in the following statement:

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[13]Ibid., p. 155.

[14]Ibid., p. 156.

[15]Sheppard, p. 144.

The advantages that the firm has to
offer its society are as follows:  initia-
tive; vigorous personalities; a guarantee
of competent management; the economics of an
organization in being; larger institu-
tional contacts; and the gain of backing of
a known reputation.  These are assets, not
expenses; and the obvious solution of the prob-
lem is that the persons benefiting should
pay their way, as they do now.  For instance,
anyone joining a tennis club pays his fees and
would continue to pay them if the club
made use of a firm's facilities, but it is
a fair presumption that the fees would be
lower.  Other services, such as a medical
service for unemployed, might be paid out of
local taxes; but the service would not cost
more if it were run in connection with res-
ponsible firms.  The point is that firms should
recognize their dominant position in the social
economy, not that they should distribute largesse
from some invisible source.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Business is the universal pattern of stable
social organization everywhere and always.[16]

Unionist critics, notably Solomon Barkin, Lewis Carliner,

and Joseph Shister, agree that unions were formed with the

advent of the Industrial Revolution.  Since the factory

system did cause a wide gulf to develop between employers

and employees and a considerable lessening of the bargaining

power of any individual worker, the unions feel that they

arose in part to lessen the gulf between employer and employee

by acting as a collective agent for the employees of a

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[16]Whitehead, p. 176.

particular concern, thereby changing the individual bargaining procedure to a collective bargaining basis. Considering what Whitehead states about unions being formed to direct "a new ordering of society," the unionists revile as being absurd.

Concerning what Whitehead has to say about the union functioning as a sort of social club for its members, Chamberlain argues that "the union is an instrument, a tool, offering satisfactions of its own, it is true, but created for the basic purpose of influence in business decisions. It is not a social club."[17] The continual insistence on the function of the union to promote cooperative efforts between management and the worker precludes the relevance of conflicting interest in worker-management relations. The implication in Whitehead, as in other human relationists' writing is that the interests of both are identical, or at least should be.

In addition to accusing the "human relationists" of ignoring to a large extent the union as a functioning institution of modern society, Solomon Barkin states that the approach misinterprets the history of unionism flagrantly.[18]

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[17]Neil Chamberlain, The Union Challenge to Management Control, (New York, 1948), p. 99.

[18]Solomon Barkin, "A Trade Unionist Appraises Management Personnel Philosophy," Harvard Business Review, XXVIII (September, 1950), 59-64.

In analyzing Mayo's philosophy, the critics believe it is "irrelevant to refer to primitive or medieval society as a model of solidarity because the solidarity there is, is based on similarities, as opposed to the ideal of solidarity for modern society, based on differences."[19] It should be noted, say the critics, that the transition from medieval society to modern society via the Industrial Revolution has developed institutions whose functions are a necessary part of present society. Changes which have taken place are irrevocable, and developing theories of a return to the spontaneous collaboration of a medieval society is not feasible.

## RELATED CRITICS

In noting the grave results of omitting the union in its human relations approach, Hart charges Mayo with failing to see one of the important remedies for the social isolation and moral confusion of the individual. He goes on to mention that the omission of the union in its theories can be "interpreted to mean that the reorganization of the worker and the industrial system can be achieved only by managerial action."[20]

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[19]Harold L. Sheppard, "Social and Historical Philosophy of Elton Mayo," Antioch Review, X (September, 1950), 405.

[20]C. Hart, "Industrial Relations Research and Social Theory," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, XV (February, 1949), 60.

Blumer's contention is that the complexities of industrial
relations simply cannot be understood without some attention
being focused upon the labor organization.  In a very terse
statement Blumer claims that "industrial relations are be-
coming increasingly a matter of alignment of organization...
Unless the consideration of /the/ front line of contact is
made in the light of the relations between the organizations,
the consideration will give rise to only a deceptive portrayal
of industrial relations."[21]

Missing a key relationship, Mayo is accused of failing
to utilize an institution which could aid him in the under-
standing of industrial relations, so states Mills.[22]

Moore asserts that the emphasis of human relationists
is upon the problems of management, obscuring the role of
the union as a complex bureaucracy in its own right:

> The research situation almost appears to be
> one in which those whose primary concern is with
> the problems of management viewing the union as an
> uncomfortable external factor of significance only
> as it impinges upon the environment of managerial
> decision, while those interested in the "labor
> movement" hesitate to discuss any organization
> fact that might seem less than favorable to the
> labor cause.  It is at this point that a crucial

[21]Herbert Blumer, "Sociological Theory in Industrial Rela-
tions," American Sociological Review, XII (June, 1947), 276.

[22]C. Wright Mills, "The Contribution of Sociology to
Studies of Industrial Relations," Proceedings of the First An-
nual Meeting, Indust. Relations Res. Association, (New York,
1948), 211.

error is made.[23]

Lewis Carliner's criticism of the "human relations" school is quite vitriolic. He believes that an actual cult has arisen from the studies made by Elton Mayo. In discussing the various devices used by the human relationists, such as psychological counseling and testing, he feels that all such techniques are merely tools whereby the management of a firm will make the workers feel that a union is not necessary.[24]

Solomon Barkin, perhaps the most outspoken of the union critics, suggests that management has been employing the "human relations" approach since it discovered that devices to destroy the unions, such as Homestead and Pullman, were not working out as planned. He believes that a wave of "human relations" was started only because management had failed to extirpate the unions by harsh treatment. Not matter how one looks at it, the "human relations" approach is just another tool which management is using for its own selfish ends.

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[23]Wilbert E. Moore, "Current Issues in Industrial Sociology," American Sociological Review, XII (December, 1947), 655.

[24]Carliner, pp. 47-50.

# CHAPTER V

## THE ENVIRONMENTALIST CRITICISM

The third major criticism of the "human relations" ap-
proach is what is often termed the environmentalist crit-
icism. This criticism "reflects essentially a basic uneasiness
about the capacity of the human relations framework to pro-
vide full and adequate answers to questions about the under-
lying uniformities and differences in motivational, attitu-
dinal, and behavorial patterns and relations of men at work
in modern industrial society."[1] These critics hold that to
limit the specific field for analysis of the sources of worker
unrest to a unit which is selected for the convenience of
study rather than thoroughness of study is to do a dastardly
disservice to an adequate explanation of the material at hand.
In limiting its context for generalization, an unwarranted
explanatory autonomy is assigned to proximate, internal
variables and structural relationships.[2] In other words,

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[1] Abraham Siegel, "The Economic Environment in Human Re-
lations Research," Arensberg, p. 88.

[2] Ibid., p. 89.

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"many psychologists, being almost exclusively concerned with such matters as the manner in which stimulus--response connections are established, tend to take goal objects for granted and have shown little interest in examining various environments... /which/ seem to be an important source of insight into behavior."[3] The critics suggest that what the "human relationists" take as "givens" are actually variables which are derivative in nature. What the Mayoites are attempting to measure microscopically within a self-contained situation will depend upon external environmental factors which are so often ignored. In doing this the researcher is thereby excluding those variables which give systematic frameworks to the phenomena that he is studying. In summing up a brief explanation of the criticism, environmentalists claim that in neglecting to take into account elements of the external environment of the plant, the Mayo Group fails to provide an adequate explanation of industrial relations problems. "The human relationist fetters himself too frequently to descriptive generalization after the fact--to 'how's' more often than to 'why's'".[4] Chien maintains that one of the most outstanding weaknesses of "human relations" research "is the relative

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[3] Isidor Chien, "The Environment as a Determinant of Behavior," Journal of Social Psychology, XXXVIV (February, 1954), 120.

[4] Siegel, p. 89.

negligence of the environment by many of the most influencial theoretical viewpoints."[5]

## WILLIAM F. WHYTE'S STUDIES

Critics seize upon _Pattern for Industrial Peace_ by William Foote Whyte as a typical example of how the external environment is ignored by a "human relationist." Whyte detailed by means of his study over a decade of industrial relations history with almost no reference to external factors. In his study of the Chicago plant of Inland Steel Container Company over a period from 1937 to 1950, Whyte notes that industrial relations passed through three stages of disorganized conflict, organized conflict, and organized cooperation. These stages were characterized by the type of communications that were prevalent during the respective periods, the last being characterized by communication which took place freely up and down the lines of the company.

In unfolding his project, Whyte notes that "it has been possible to tell the story of that plant almost as if it were a _completely independent unit_."[6] (Italics Mine) His critics find it difficult to accept the fact that no reference is made to World War II, the Taft-Hartley Act, the cost of living,

[5]Chien, p. 115.

[6]William Foote Whyte, _Patterns for Industrial Peace_ (New York, 1951), p. 221.

the profitability of the industry, and others. Whyte, of course, explains the success of the improved relations to good human relations practices.

In an attempt to counter earlier criticism of the Mayo school in regard to the neglect of unions in its literature, Whyte makes the union an integral part of the human relations structure, holding that unions are bad if they oppose management and good if they cooperate. He infers that unions are to be taken as the outgrowth of bad management:

> While it is impossible to generalize for all workers, we may say in general that the worker wants security in his job... Now top management may make decisions that disrupt the informal organ- ization of workers, lower the status of many individuals, and destroy the workers' sense of security... Union organization from observations functions, in part, to build up a new equilibrium through establishing communication with top manage- ment and through resisting decisions that would upset relationships at the work level.[7]

He holds that a recurrent problem is that the personnel man and executive have been misled by the individualistic point of view, when they should have been working on a self-contained system of human relations.

In his Pattern for Industrial Peace Whyte acknowledges that the union is accepted as making an important functional contribution by accepting the goals of management, thereby

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[7]Ibid., pp. 195-196.

causing management to have "two channels to get things done."[8]
Now instead of being opposing forces the union and management
join forces against those who are causing trouble.  Environ-
mentalist critics charge that "human relationists" attempt to
make union leaders part of the managerial elite by saying these
union leaders "must know how to deal with sentiments and
emotions of men."[9]  So now, claim the critics, the union as
an institution no longer has to be ignored but can also be
used as an aid in developing the social system of the factory.

## KERR'S CRITICISM

Kerr holds that in discovering types, not stages of in-
dustrial relations, it would be found that some are not open
to improvement in social skills of managers and union but
only "an alteration of the external environment,"[10] which
"human relationists" choose to ignore.

Kerr criticizes Whyte's analysis of his thirteen year
study on many counts.  He holds that Whyte's study was pos-
sible with no reference to external factors because of the
nature of the environment within which the plant was operated.

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[8]Ibid., p. 171.

[9]Ibid., p. 228.

[10]Kerr, "Plant Sociology," p. 307.

In addition to enjoying full employment and earning favorable
profits, the company and union had settled one of their most
controversial issues--the wage scale. Kerr notes that things
might be quite different if the company had been a marginal
one, if the period had been characterized by mass unemployment,
or if the union had been Communist-dominated. In these hy-
pothetical situations the influence of external factors
could not have been ignored. Or if the case had been one of
a breakdown in union-management relationships, then, presum-
able, the external environment would have been the source of
the deterioration.[11]

Environmentalist critics hold that industrial relations
are not structured in a continuous vacuum. The relationships
between workers and employers develop from a number of things
in physical, economic, political and cultural surroundings.
Siegel lists numerous external factors which readily may in-
fluence the relationship between employer and employee in a
given situation. The items listed below are those which the
Mayo school has chosen to ignore in its study of a self-
contained social setting:

> The specific environment--size of the plant and
> company; seasonal and cyclical stability of its
> production pattern; volume, nature, and rate of
> technical change and related ratio of capital

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[11]Siegel, p. 89.

investment per worker; quality and composition of
its jobs; comparative cost position; nature
of the product market (expansion or contraction,
sensitivity to the business cycle, responsive-
ness of market demand to price changes); nature
of the labor market (quality and supply of the work
force available, percentage of the labor force
in the area employed by the company, local wage
levels); nature of the union dealt with (insti-
tutional security of the union, presence of ab-
sence of rival unionism or internal factionalism,
degree of bargaining autonomy the union can exer-
cise, ideological commitments of its leadership,
degree of political involvement); role of the company as
pattern-setter of the industry or pattern-follower;
age and origins of the bargaining relationship.
    The broader environment--community's pro
or anti-union complexion; procedural and sub-
stantive content of past and prevailing labor
legislation; level of general economic activity;
the broad stage of the economy's relative inci-
piency or maturity of industrial development;
the pressures, motivations, and groups or agen-
cies assuming organizational responsibility
for industrialization; the historical timing of
industrialization; the ideological organizing
principles of the culture (egalitarian libera-
lism, autocratic paternalism, etc.)[12]

In studying any given situation there may be a marked

difference in the combination of the external environment

factors, causing the need for a different approach to the

problems.  However, "human relationists" neglect this as-

pect of the industrial relations scene.  "The plant as a

social system is not an island to itself, but part of a

wider community upon which it is dependent, and within which

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[12]Siegel, pp. 89-90.

it plays a crucial role."[13]

## ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS

The critics say that for any two situations compared over a period of time, there may be quite a different total environmental context.  In a certain situation the roles ascribed to the worker, employer, and state may shape the whole structure of the industrial relations pattern.  It is therefore unwise to generalize that theories derived from a group of case studies should apply to all industrial workers of a given industrial society.  To do so shows the naive character of the industrial relations pattern as viewed by theorists of the "human relations" approach.[14]

Siegel, in discussing the external environment factors in the industrial relations picture, states that extra-plant factors may shape the kinds of problems which form the locus of worker unrest.  For example, he states that in an auto plant the large number of employees with easily interchangable jobs, the process of technological change, and the application of seniority rules are quite likely to be important sources of grievances; while, on the other hand, he notes

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[13]Meyer Barash, "An Industrial Relations Philosophy," Personnel Journal, XXXVI (December, 1957), 258.

[14]Sheppard, "Approaches to Conflict," p. 331.

that in the hotel and restaurant industry and in the building
trades there may be only a few workers on a separate class-
ification. Also, the irregularity of employment and rapid
turnover may mean that seniority has little to do with this
situation.[15]

Some critics say that the study of industrial unrest may
very well hinge upon the various stages of industrial devel-
opment, in that a mature industrial society will exhibit dif-
ferent problems than those of a society which is in its
earlier stages of development. The problems of the latter
would center about the shift from one way of life to another;
that is, the transition from an agricultural work force to an
industrial one.

Factors in the environment itself may account for tactics
and manifestations of protest as well as for problem-like-
lihoods. Siegel notes that the "quickie" strike in the long-
shoring industry can be explained because of its tactical
effectiveness in that particular environment. On the other
hand, machine breaking in England in the early nineteenth
century was another method readily explained by external
environment factors rather than by the internal organization
of industry.

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[15]Siegel, p. 91.

In short, the critics say that in attempting to explain worker discontent, one must go to the broader cultural and political backgrounds of a given situation of industrialization to seek the answer. It is these external variables which hold many clues to the understanding of a given situation. To ignore them is to labor under false assumptions, assumptions which are wrought without regard to external environmental variables affecting the systems under study.[16]

Environmentalists hold that one set of environmental circumstances may give rise to industrial peace, while another set of environmental circumstances may lead to industrial conflict. Kerr cogently summarizes typical environmental circumstances which surround peaceful industrial relations in a firm:

> A medium-sized company with a steady production
> pattern and subject to moderate technological ad-
> vance; interesting and responsible jobs; an
> efficient company with an expanding market
> and administered prices; a company which is firm-
> ly established in a multi-industry community
> which has a tractable labor force and wage
> levels which can readily be met in accordance
> with industry standards; a community which
> is accustomed to collective bargaining; a secure
> union with stable leaders and a homogeneous
> membership; a wage pattern which the parties
> can use as a guide; some local autonomy for
> both parties; a system which is well-established,

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[16]Ibid., p. 92.

and leaders on both sides who are experienced.[17]

On the other hand, some industries are chronically con-
flict-ridden; for example, maritime, which is opposed to
certain industries like clothing, generally known for its
peaceful industrial relations.

Moreover, critics argue that there is something more than
a mere study in internal interaction patterns of differences
in face-to-face relations in analyzing these situations.

In summary, environmentalists maintain that there are
some environments in which good industrial relations occur--
such as pulp and paper and garment--and others in which good
industrial relations are unlikely--such as the maritime
industries. Is it possible that leaders with "social skills"
should always be present in some industries and absent in
others? No, say the same critics, the environment must be
the essential determinant.

In study a small, manageable unit of a plant, the
"human relationists" find it much easier than studying the
big picture of the external milieu. But, environmentalists
charge, what is the easiest to investigate is not the most

[17]Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Structuring of
the Labor Force in Industrial Relations: New Dimensions
and New Questions," Industrial and Labor Relations Review,
VIII (January, 1955), 160.

reliable guide to effective control and in limiting their framework, "human relationists" have been concerned with "the 'how's' and not with the 'why's'. In short we hold that what the large organization is to the small group, the external environment is to the large organization."[18]

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[18]Siegel, p. 99.

# CHAPTER VI

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis has been to describe and analyze the "human relations" approach and some of its criticisms. The main body of the thesis was prefaced by an historical introduction which was written for the purpose of focusing on the "human relations" approach with regard to previous developments in the industrial relations field. In the first chapter, after an initial statement of the "human relations" approach, selected topics were discussed, the relevance of which were brought out. First, the industrial revolutions, which brought about a dynamic society in which industrial relations were completely transformed, was discussed with the resulting conditions of social unrest brought out.

The importance of the delineation of two separate industrial revolutions was emphasized with the second revolution being a rather direct cause of the formation of the "human relations" approach. Secondly, Taylorism was presented as having stemmed in part from management's fear of the rise of unionism in the last years of the nineteenth century. Thirdly, World War I gave rise to numerous experiments for

increased productivity because of the need for producing
vast amounts of material in relatively short periods of time.
Experiments after the war, such as Mayo's research efforts
at a Philadelphia mill, were discussed. Fourthly, the
empirical highlights of the Hawthorne experiments at the
Western Electric Plant were briefly summarized, establishing
that workers are not typically individualistic and material-
istic, but social beings with social as well as material needs.

In the second chapter, the underlying philosophy of Elton
Mayo was presented. Mayo's analysis of a cultural lag theory
was presented, whereby Mayo holds that social skills of the
present industrial society have not kept pace with tech-
nological skills, therefore causing a vast social problem.
In an established society, such as the Middle Ages, everyone
knew his place; whereas, in an adaptive society, such as the
present age, social disorganization is commonplace and
"anomie", planlessness in living, is related to a disorganiza-
tion of community life. Mayo hopes to recapture the together-
ness of the Middle Ages with his view of the factory as a social
system. It is through the industrial plant that he hopes to
resurrect the woefully deficient social skills of modern in-
dustrial society. He entrusts the job of solving world problems
to a managerial elite, who will skillfully manipulate
their work groups to a pattern of the medieval guild system
security. In manipulating the group Mayo wishes to employ

a clinical approach, which gives the manager the job of secur-
ing worker cooperation while at the same time helping people
maintain their integrity.

In viewing the factory as a social system, the different
parts of which are inextricably bound, a change in one part
of the system, such as the technological, brings about a
change in another, such as the social.  A balance or equilib-
rium of the parts of the social system are always to be mutu-
ally adjusted.  The job of the managerial elite is to main-
tain this balance for the good of the whole of industrial
society.  Management is to accomplish its objectives through
leadership training programs in which supervisors are en-
lightened as to the methods they are to use of employees.
Mayo notes that controlling the informal organization of a
plant is just as important, if not more so, than its formal
organization, as informal organizations often tend to subvert
the goals of the formal organization.

An interviewing program can be introduced to bring out
unfavorable worker attitudes to the light of management.
Through data received from these interviews, management can
correct situations which are causing friction between workers
and management.  Also, in letting the workers have their say,
management can more fully hope to control informal organiza-
tions in a plant.  In using the interviewing program as a means

of improving communications both up and down the structural
company lines, managers, if all goes well, should note an
improvement in morale, the spirit of cooperative living.  In
other words, an enlightened managerial elite can achieve
higher production rates and can improve face-to-face relations
with employees, who can willingly cooperate, if the "human
relations" approach is applied correctly.

Chapters three, four, and five are devoted to three
criticisms of the Mayo school's approach.  It should be noted
that other headings for criticisms might have been used
because basically, many of the individual criticisms overlap.
Many of the criticisms of the "human relations" approach seem
to arise from one basic point of Mayo, and from this basic
point they take different paths.  This basic point is what
the critics say is Mayo's faulty view of modern society as
one in which a condition of "anomie" is found.  Critics do not
regard modern society as a mere leftover after the breakup
of group solidarity in an old established society and see
industrial workers as social beings who continue to harbor
an ancient need for submerging themselves in the purposes of
a larger group in order to find freedom.

Chapter three deals with the manipulation criticism.
These critics say the "human relations" approach has become so
popular because management realizes that its older methods,
such as scientific management, will no longer work.  Daniel

Bell, one of the most ardent of these critics, holds that proponents of the Mayo approach have increased production goals in mind when they apply Mayo's methods.  In addition to increasing production, the users of the "human relations" approach hope to eliminate conflict from the industrial scene, so that workers eventually unquestioningly accept the goals of management to be identical with their own.  In this way, then, management is said to manipulate the workers for its own purposes.  Clark Kerr holds that in attempting to get the undivided loyalty of workers, management actually displays subtle forms of totalitarianism.  He, along with others, states that it is the divided loyalties of workers to various organizations which insures freedom.

Chapter four deals with the union and related criticism of the "human relations" approach.  These critics excoriate Mayo, first of all for generally ignoring the union, especially since they feel that the union is the agent which can help management in achieving cooperation and secondly, because of a misinterpretation of the labor movement.  Some well-known critics, such as Blumer, dismiss any adequate explantion of industrial relations which neglects the union as an agent for employees.

Chapter five, "The Environmentalist Criticism," reflects a basic uneasiness for the "human relationists" to study the industrial situation in a vacuum.  These critics hold that

what the Mayo group takes as "givens" in their studies are actually variables which are derivative in nature. In brief, their contention is that in neglecting to take into account the external environment of the plant, Mayoites fail to provide adequate explanations of industrial relations.

## CONCLUSIONS

In concluding, it should be noted that while Mayo explicitly disclaims any identity with scientific management, his particular school of industrial relations should actually be looked upon as rather a refinement of Taylorism, as a later phase of scientific management. Such a relationship is brought out when Mayo's approach is located in the same social context as that of scientific management; that is, as one of the features of the further rationalization of management to secure worker loyalties for its own ends.

Mayo's "human relations" approach, like personnel management, must not be confused with the scientific study of industrial relations. If such a distinction is not made, the viewpoint of one of the groups involved in the industrial relations process is unconsciously adopted and taken to be disinterested, "objective" social science.

As Harold Sheppard brings out, the significance of scientific management and personnel management programs towards organized labor is more than a slight one. As long as anti-

union capitalism resorted to force, and based its wage system
on "supply and demand," the strength of unionism was not too
endangered.   But in addition to methods of force and violence,
methods of inducement have been and are being developed as an
essential part of management philosophy.   This is the new
labor program of American industry; "human engineering" and
research in "human relations in industry," focussing upon
communication and the like are part of the later phase of this
program which began with scientific management.   Taylorism was
concerned with converting the laborer from his convictions
about job-scarcity to an optimist that jobs cannot be "used
up" through increases in production, and to the belief that
unionism is detrimental to the interests of himself and
society, as well as to the employer.   Beside the motive of
reduction of waste in material and time, another motivation
behind management's new program is the heading off of an
unwanted expansion of organized labor's membership and power.
Moreover, the increase in wages going even to the unskilled
workers, has put a premium upon new ideas for getting the
greatest efficiency out of each employee.

The location of Mayoism within the broader movement of
management's rationalization to attain its own ends becomes
clear when we take into account Sheppard's thesis that the
greatest weapon of the movement, or program, is that in deal-
ing with employees, it takes the worker's point of view.   That

is, it voluntarily offers to the worker a fair wage, good
working conditions, etc., for which unionism has always worked
to achieve through its "job control."  And most significant
of all about this acceptance of the workers' point of view
(not to be confused with acceptance of the goals and demands
of the laborers as part of a social movement), the underlying
notion of management's rationalization is an emphasis upon a
solidarity uniting all the members of the same industrial
enterprise (the "factory as a social system"), whether manager
or employee.  Such a solidarity is conceived as the only
solidarity that is "natural" in industry.  This notion prob-
ably constitutes the greatest potential threat to indepen-
dent labor organization.

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   The thesis submitted by Ronald William Korajczyk

has been read and approved by three members of the faculty

of the Institute of Social and Industrial Relations.

   The final copies have been examined by the direc-

tor of the thesis and the signature which appears below veri-

fies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated

and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference

to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

   The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfill-

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January 20, 1961
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Date

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