

Book Reviews

People and Their Work

Men and Women of the Corporation. ROSA-BETH MOSS KANTER. Basic Books, New York, 1977. xvi, 348 pp. \$12.

The Gamesman. The New Corporate Leaders. MICHAEL MACCOBY. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1977. 288 pp. \$8.95.

These two books have received a large amount of publicity in popular media, even though both are intended for professional audiences and are based on established models of social scientific analysis. Both books describe life in the large-scale corporations that employ much of the labor force, corporations whose political and economic decisions affect this and every other nation in the world. Neither book deals with similar organizations in the public sector or of a nonprofit nature.

The subjects in both books are affiliated with administrative branches of corporations. Maccoby focuses on men: managers, corporate executives, and engineers. Kanter examines both sexes: managers, their wives, and the administrative secretaries as well. Despite some conceptual similarity of their general topics, they differ widely in approach, coverage of literature, and presentation of theory and empirical findings and in the buttressing of policy recommendations.

In *Men and Women of the Corporation* Kanter argues that corporations "produce people" and provides an empirically grounded case study of one huge corporation (50,000 employees). Her detailed methodological appendix shows how she used data from a variety of surveys, interviews, examinations of records, and observations and experiences during five years of work as a consultant with the corporation. The book draws solidly on these materials, as well as on the author's encyclopedic knowledge of the literature on human behavior and large-scale organizations.

Using three central explanatory variables, the opportunity structure (expectations and prospects), power (the ability to mobilize resources), and relative pro-

portions of men and women, the author systematically examines the way managers and secretaries respond to the demands of their work roles. A brief chapter on corporate wives describes their dilemmas as people who are both part of and yet excluded from the corporation.

An important subtheme of the book is the relationship of gender to placement in the organization and to the opportunity and power people have, or think they have. Since the discussion of gender is one of Kanter's unique contributions, the examples in this review will stress women, although Kanter makes it clear that it is structural effect on individuals that is of importance, not gender itself.

The opportunity structure affects people differentially. Those who can aspire to the highest levels of management, and who are in fact rising, may look upon current positions as stepping-stones to them; those who have obviously hit the limit of their careers may emphasize social and other non-task-related aspects of work. People with limited opportunities for advancement protect themselves and others like themselves from feelings of failure by organizing informal groups of co-workers. Their culture is characterized by passive resistance to work, the development of gossip and jokes at the expense of those higher up in the organization, and a general loyalty to the group members. Membership in "antisuccess peer solidarity" groups can assuage feelings of failure, but it can also prevent some individuals from moving up the ladder. Leaving the group, even for a promotion, may be considered an act of disloyalty to the group and a challenge to the antisuccess ethos (p. 151).

This social process was especially important for women, since they dominate the ranks of those with the least opportunity. It was a rare woman who was offered the opportunity to move from secretarial ranks to a managerial position; not all of that small number jumped at the chance.

Power can affect leadership styles. In the absence of real power it is almost im-

possible to control or even command the loyalty and respect of subordinates. The secretarial pool coordinators, for example, in positions of high accountability and low power, tended to become coercive and "bossy" in supervisory style; others in powerless but accountable positions became rules-minded, concerned about their territory, and, in general, petty martinets. Women are often found in such positions; their behavior, Kanter argues, is the consequence of their relative lack of opportunity and of power, not their gender per se.

Interacting with opportunity and power, the proportion of men and women in different positions influences their behavior. At the managerial level, there were few women, and many were "tokens" who stood out, got attention both favorable and unfavorable, and were expected to act in stereotypical ways to fill informal roles of mother, seductress, pet, or "iron maiden." Under these conditions, the women often became conservative, and, by virtue of their scarcity, had few people with whom to share their perceptions of the situation.

In an early chapter, Kanter shows how the nature of the job content influences the behavior of high-level managers and perpetuates an imbalance in the proportions of men to women at that level. She starts with the striking similarities in the personal appearance of managers to demonstrate the pressures for conformity exerted on people who are working in situations of high uncertainty, where important decisions must be made without complete knowledge of all contingencies and consequences. In these situations, there is a strong tendency to depend upon people who are predictable and trustworthy, with sound judgment and committed to the corporations. Managerial solidarity is better ensured and communication is enhanced if the managers all come from similar backgrounds, with similar education, and if they share social networks and activities. Persons who possess different social characteristics—women in this case—are either excluded from management or clustered in lower-level management positions where there is less uncertainty, more routine jobs, more objective modes of performance evaluation, and little left to the discretion of the person in the position. "Social homogeneity as a selection criterion for managers" and "social conformity as a standard for conduct" (p. 68) create a self-fulfilling prophecy, with self-perpetuating closed circles at the highest levels of management. How to break such a circle while avoiding in-

creased routinization of jobs is an important problem corporations must face if women (and other "outsiders") are to move up in the corporate hierarchy.

Kanter addresses this and other policy-related issues in the book's final chapter. She recommends programs designed to change power, opportunity, and proportions at every level. To enhance opportunities at lower-level positions, she recommends more precise job descriptions, clearer criteria for promotion, work planning and review sessions with managers, and the use of managers as counselors helping employees to improve their skills. She proposes to bridge the gaps between the different ranks by sequences of ever more skilled jobs to gradually move lower-status employees into eligibility for higher-status jobs.

In the attempt to solve morale and commitment problems of blocked mobility higher up in the corporation, she suggests, among other things, job rotation, short-term projects, and decentralization of large organizations to open more leadership positions.

Kanter has participated in programs to change organizations, particularly those concerned with affirmative action, but some of the essential changes she describes are dependent on changing people's perceptions (for example, educating managers to counsel employees). To recommend a goal of changing perceptions without showing how the reward structure would change for cooperative managers seems to vitiate the behavior-stemming-from-structure argument. The possibly stultifying effects of precise job descriptions are not considered in detail, and the question how to make decentralization attractive to those who already hold the power and make the crucial decisions is not addressed.

These omissions do not constitute serious flaws in this important book, which clearly links behavior and social structure in a solid contribution to organizational literature. Much organizational literature posits a static set of relationships between worker and position, but Kanter shows how opportunity structures provide a dynamic forward thrust to those relationships. Both power and opportunity must be considered by adherents to either the "redesign by enlarging the job" or the "encourage worker participation" social psychological school. Job enrichment without increased opportunities for promotions and other rewards can be a burden, participation without power a waste of time. As for gender, individual-based models that at-

tempt to explain "women's place" at work result in considering the women the architects of their own fate and men as discriminating oppressors. "But the structural approach used here can turn attention away from inter-group competition and toward the real problem: the ways systems of work are organized" (p. 264).

In sum, Kanter has provided a gracefully written model of scholarship, broad and deep coverage of theory illuminated by her field studies, which lead her to recommend policies she has tested at least in part. She shows how the corporation "produces people," she suggests how happier and better people might be produced, and she provides dozens of hypotheses for interested researchers to explore.

Maccoby is not as successful in his attempt to examine the corporate leaders. His problems have to do with both methodology and presentation of material. While the first sentence of *The Gamesman* states that the book is a study based on interviews with 250 managers from 12 major companies in different parts of the country, and the lengthy questionnaire is included, these promising glimpses of clear methodology are not sustained. Almost casually, one learns later not only that the questionnaire provided a stimulus for free discussion and a survey instrument but that Rorschach interpretations and dream analyses were also used.

Exactly who constituted the subjects is not clear after all, for the study group actually concentrated on two multinational corporations after surveying corporations all over the country, "interviewing a large sample of managers and in a few cases their wives and children" (p. 18). In "many instances" only parts of the questionnaires were completed, but "even though everyone did not answer every question, we explored every question with many managers" (p. 26). How many or even approximately how many constitute a "large sample," "a few cases," and "many instances" the reader asks in vain. How many Rorschachs, how many dreams, how were they analyzed? Whose wives and children, and how many, and what questions they were asked remain unanswered, and equally unanswered is how many managers were observed at work and at home as well.

Maccoby calls his approach sociopsychanalytic, the method being one in which character diagnosis and an understanding of individuals are used to describe dominant traits shared by many

people belonging to the same type (p. 39). Only persons who are experienced students or practitioners of psychoanalysis are able to do such a study, he says.

A researcher using a psychoanalytic approach has the responsibility to assess data and inferences very carefully. Robert Waelder, in discussing the problem of validation of psychoanalytic interpretation, writes;

Somewhere between uncritical speculation and the insistence on an impossible mathematical certainty, we must look for the degree of certitude that we can at best expect to reach in these matters, a degree of certitude where interpretations and propositions can be established beyond reasonable, though not necessarily beyond all possible, doubt [*Basic Theory of Psychoanalysis*, International Universities Press, New York, 1960, p. 4].

This degree of certitude must follow from a disciplined use of evidence, but Maccoby seems to operate with the idea that for those who believe, no explanation is necessary, for those who do not, none will suffice.

The interviews themselves depend upon innumerable intangible judgments made by the interviewer in interaction with the interview subject. The data were analyzed by a research group that considered the interviews, Rorschach tests, and dream reports in the context of observations about the organization (p. 39). The preliminary analyses resulted in the establishment of social character types. The key term "character" is never precisely defined but is described as including "qualities of both the head and the heart, creative strivings, courage and cowardice, values and moral principles, sense of identity, and cognitive style. . . . Character is a person's psychic fingerprint" (p. 41).

Four character types somehow emerge: the company man, the craftsman, the jungle fighter, and the gamesman. No information is supplied about what proportions of the sample each type represents. The majority of those interviewed on the lower levels were craftsmen, company men are at the middle levels of management, and gamesmen are presumably the new leaders replacing the jungle fighters who were the leaders in the past. Maccoby does not disentangle character from behavior appropriate to different statuses in the organization.

One half of the book is devoted to descriptions of the four character types. The craftsman has a sense of self-worth based on skills; he sets his own standards and competes against himself. Case examples of the craftsmen provide contradictory and confusing descriptions.

Craftsmen "do not consider the product's usefulness to society" (p. 137). However, the "dutiful craftsman" says that his "goals for America were 'conquering disease, increasing the life span, lessening of poverty, lessening of lawlessness, increasing productivity, and making able-bodied individuals who can work, work'" and he feels that "the computer he is helping to create should help lead to these goals" (p. 56).

Seventeen pages are devoted to a description of a "rare craftsman," unusual by virtue of his position in high middle management, where he exercises high-level administrative ability as the major part of his daily tasks. The reader wonders whether the rest of the craftsman category is filled with people opposite in character and behavior from the example. Why was the case categorized as it was and chosen as the chapter's major example?

Historically, the jungle fighters have been entrepreneurs and empire builders. Not cooperative, they best others, using any means possible. The 11 cases in this category are "lions" dominating through superior ideas, courage, and strength or "foxes" operating by seduction, manipulation, and betrayal. The brief chapter is chiefly devoted to a discussion of Andrew Carnegie and to a card-by-card description of one subject's Rorschach responses. The bases for the subdivisions are unexplained.

The company man is essential to the company, is loyal to it, and cares about it and its future. He lacks risk-taking ability, toughness, detachment, and other qualities necessary to reach the top.

The gamesman enjoys competition with others, wants to win, is innovative, flexible, and risk-taking, and has a zest for the game of work itself. "His main goal is to be known as a winner, and his deepest fear is to be labeled a loser."

Compared to the gamesman, the company man comes off a poor second. Some gamesmen, however, are evidently company men in disguise. In a key chapter entitled "The head and the heart," the author finds that "heart" qualities (for example, compassion, generosity) are not encouraged by the company and remain undeveloped for different reasons for each of the four types. For the gamesman the problem is "careerism."

Overly concerned with adapting himself to others, to marketing himself, the careerist constantly betrays himself, since he must ignore idealistic, compassionate, and courageous impulses that might jeopardize his career. As a result, he never develops an inner center, a strong, independent sense of self, and eventually he loses touch with his deepest

strivings. . . . To stand up to others requires courage and to know what you want implies the sense of volition of a strong heart [p. 193].

This description of gamesman as careerist does not seem to fit the lengthy description of the gamesman as risk-taker, wanting to win, welcoming change and wanting to influence its course. It does, however, match the description of the company man, who exemplifies

what Fromm has called the "marketing character." When they describe themselves, they seem to be trying to give the right impression, to sell themselves to the interviewer. . . . Company men's self-descriptions often sound as though they are trying to satisfy everyone's view of what they should be with the result that there is hardly any self to describe [p. 92].

The author seems unaware, in his disarming statements about the necessity for psychoanalytic training to examine character traits, that there are methods that could help prevent confusion of traits between categories or provide some firmer basis for the categories themselves. Maccoby may be trying to make some statement about an aspect of American national character as it is shaped by the large corporation. In this sense one might wish to consider his description of types more seriously, even though the methodological base for the descriptions is very weak. For validation he cites the enthusiastic agreement of various managers who have read or heard about the categories, but the categories provide few possibilities of serious analysis of relationships between character types and work roles. Furthermore, although the categories are described, however unclearly, there is no attempt at explanation of how character types were developed by the "psychostructure of the corporation," despite assertions that such is the case.

In his final chapters the author swoops from a base of few relevant data to stirring statements calling for a change in society, recommendations that are themselves vague but unarguable (it is, after all, hard to knock "strengthening life-giving attitudes in society"). The book concludes abruptly with brief but glowing references to two corporation presidents, "managerial mutants," who have developed their hearts, their heads, and their companies. The restructured companies themselves are not described.

These two books, then, represent different approaches to the question of the relationships between people and their work. Most of all they represent vastly different levels of execution. Both books are currently popular. *Men and Women of the Corporation* will be providing the

basis for research in organization theory and policy experiments for years to come. *The Gamesman* will make its major contribution to a better society by affording people at cocktail parties a chance to glibly label friends and co-workers, until the next set of catchy phrases comes along.

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A Memory Theory

Language, Memory, and Thought. JOHN R. ANDERSON. Erlbaum, Hillsdale, N.J., 1976 (distributor, Halsted [Wiley], New York). xiv, 546 pp., illus. \$19.95. Experimental Psychology Series.

Most theoretical controversies in psychological research on memory have had to do with the nature of memorial representations—semantic features versus propositional networks, analog versus propositional representations of visual information, and so on. There has been much less emphasis on the processes involved in the utilization of stored information, even though it is widely acknowledged that such processes will have to be a central component of any reasonable theory of human memory.

The book under review describes an example of a new generation of memory theories that attempts to provide a more detailed development of utilization processes. In 1973, Anderson and G. H. Bower published an influential book entitled *Human Associative Memory* in which they expounded a theory of memory that they called, for short, HAM. The theory Anderson presents in the present book, ACT, is a descendant of HAM. ACT and HAM make similar assumptions concerning the representation of knowledge, but, unlike HAM, ACT incorporates specific processes for the utilization of information stored in memory. ACT is a synthesis of several important concepts that have been incorporated in other models of cognitive processes: propositional networks, productions, processing-capacity limitations, and activation processes defined on a memory network. In ACT, declarative knowledge, knowing that, is represented in a propositional network similar to that used in HAM. Procedural knowledge, knowing how, is represented in condition-action pairs known as productions. The processes necessary to utilize the in-