

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Rosabeth Moss KANTER : *The Change Masters. Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984, 432 pp., ISBN 0-671-42802-0

Alexander J. Matejko

Volume 40, Number 2, 1985

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/050149ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/050149ar>

[See table of contents](#)

### Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

### ISSN

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this review

Matejko, A. J. (1985). Review of [Rosabeth Moss KANTER : *The Change Masters. Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984, 432 pp., ISBN 0-671-42802-0]. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 40(2), 411–412. <https://doi.org/10.7202/050149ar>

Tous droits réservés © Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval, 1985

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

stitutional and structural determinants of labour market development. Unfortunately, they leave aside many of these factors such as the role of the state, the legal system, the credit markets, etc. and retreat to the more standard concerns of labour economics such as labour supply, technological change and wage rates.

The discussion of «homogenization» is the weakest in the book. They underplay the craft union rebellion against homogenization; preferring to cast the rise of industrial unions as the response to the process. This raises the real problem, as well, of the implied homogenization of skilled and unskilled. There is ample evidence to show that Gompers and the craft dominated AFL had little interest in organizing the immigrant and unskilled worker. The continued division along real or perceived skill differences is something we have seen continue well into their «segmentation» phase.

There are problems at times with the authors trying to push their data into the model. This is evident in their claim that there was labour peace during the consolidation of the proletarianization stage. This flies in the face of studies such as P.K. Edwards, **Strikes in the United States, 1881-1974** where the opposite is demonstrated.

The book leaves one with a view that the whole process they described was a simple conspiracy that was designed by capital and acquiesced to by labour. This hardly captures the complexity of the historical interaction of individuals, classes and structures which produced the situation.

Despite its weaknesses, **Segmented Works Divided Workers** is a rich and thoughtful contribution that is of importance for many fields of study.

Jerry P. WHITE

McMaster University

**The Change Masters. Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation.** by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984, 432 pp. ISBN 0-671-42802-0.

As change masters Kanter treats those people and organizations adept at the art of anticipating the need for, and of leading, productive change. The basic thesis is that the difference between those companies which stagnate and those which innovate depends on the degree to which the opportunity to use power effectively is granted to or withheld from individuals. The difference above mentioned begins with a company's approach to solving problems and extends throughout its culture and structure. The companies with reputations for progressive human-resource practices are significantly higher in long-term profitability and financial growth than their counterparts (p. 19). The willingness of a company to take lead in innovation makes it open to internal and external self-improvement.

The author examined 115 innovations in ten core companies but she also depended on other data. Her main conclusions are focused on the difference between the 'segmentalist' and the 'integrative' approaches. In the first one the existing divisions prevent to open to innovation. In the second people aggregate subproblems into larger problems, so as to recreate a unity that provides more insight into required action (p. 29). The segmentalist approach actually prevents innovations. There is a quiet suffocation of the entrepreneurial spirit in segmentalist companies. Insiders do not have enough power to bring something new but anyway they are blamed for any failure. Outsiders reinforce a culture of inferiority and meet much resistance.

It is quite common in organizations that power to innovate is restricted to a limited number of people and circumstances which eliminates a considerable number of potential contributors. The innovatory rhetoric is not enough to keep innovations going. Many superiors regard any new idea with suspicion,

insist that people get their own approval on everything, ask for dissension, criticize but not praise, monopolize change only for themselves, reinforce the inferiority feeling among subordinates, are not receptive to problems faced by them. Segmentalist companies withdraw any power and potential from innovative people multiplying obstacles to their local initiatives and making practically impossible any change originating from the bottom of the hierarchy. Quite often the only suitable vehicle of organizational opening is to create inside the company a 'parallel organization' promoted by an appropriate steering committee, autonomous project groups and official individual promoters of change.

Innovators benefit from the supportive and empowering environments in the enterprises oriented towards novelty and willing to support constructive changes. «Creativity does not derive from order but from the attempt to impose order where it does not exist, to make new connections» (p. 138). «The way innovating companies are designed leaves ambiguities, overlaps, decision conflicts, or decision vacuums in some parts of the organization. People rail at this, curse it -- and invent innovative ways to overcome it» (pp. 142-143). Therefore, any rigid structuralization of the organizational field works against innovation. Intersecting territories just force organizational units to cooperate.

The culture of pride and esteem for innovative contributions mobilizes people and gives them much satisfaction. The incentives for initiative are situational rather than material (p. 152). The self-actualization potential offered by an innovative enterprise is the most promising stimulus to act constructively. As long as people carry out their own projects they have a good reason to be satisfied from their work and the employer. Information, resources and support are badly needed in order to implement the initiatives. Open communication helps to collect all necessary data. Network-forming arrangements allow to form a coalition of sup-

porters. Decentralization of resources makes them available in the places where they are needed most urgently.

**Alexander J. MATEJKO**

University of Alberta

**Canadian Medicine: A Study in Restricted Entry**, by Ronald Hamowy, Vancouver, The Fraser Institute, 1984, 394 pages, ISBN 0-88975-062-9

Dans tous les pays occidentaux la pratique de la médecine est fortement réglementée: les mécanismes diffèrent (régie d'État, corporation professionnelle, etc.), mais en général des règles strictes encadrent la pratique de la médecine et des professions connexes. Partout la profession médicale jouit d'un monopole plus ou moins vaste de la production de soins et services de santé, du moins des plus importants comme la prescription de médicaments et de traitements thérapeutiques et la chirurgie. Ce livre explore les origines de cette réglementation au Canada et en cherche les objectifs réels derrière ceux que lui a traditionnellement attribué la profession médicale.

L'apparente universalité de l'existence de tels privilèges monopolistiques peut laisser croire à un ordre naturel des choses; la situation privilégiée des médecins découlerait naturellement de l'importance de leur fonction sociale et de leur compétence exclusive à l'exercer.

Hamowy veut montrer qu'il n'en est rien. Le monopole des médecins date, selon les pays ou les régions d'un même pays, du milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XX<sup>e</sup>. Il a été gagné de haute lutte par les associations professionnelles qui ont réussi à convaincre les autorités politiques, et le public, que seuls leurs membres avaient la compétence requise pour offrir des soins. Leur combat politique était d'autant plus difficile qu'à l'époque la médecine avait bien peu à offrir comme arsenal thérapeutique. Ses principales armes, un peu de chirurgie — sans aseptie ni anesthé-