

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Dan ONDRACK, Timperley STUART : *The Humanisation of Work. European Perspective.* London, Armstrong Publishing, 1982, 239 pp., ISBN 0-9506540-86

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Volume 39, Number 2, 1984

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/050037ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/050037ar>

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### 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. (1984). Review of [Dan ONDRACK, Timperley STUART : *The Humanisation of Work. European Perspective.* London, Armstrong Publishing, 1982, 239 pp., ISBN 0-9506540-86]. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 39(2), 392–393. <https://doi.org/10.7202/050037ar>

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Cet ouvrage est complété par une annexe méthodologique, une bibliographie et un index.

En somme, un livre potentiellement utile aux personnes qui s'intéressent à la médiation.

Jean SEXTON

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**The Humanisation of Work. European Perspective**, by Dan Ondrack and Timperley Stuart (Eds), London, Armstrong Publishing, 1982, 239 pp., ISBN 0-9506540-86

This is a collection of writings on the European quality of working (QWL) projects and their general impact on industrial relations. One of the most significant among them in the contribution by G. Hofstede who emphasizes the difference in basic values existing between managers, professionals, technicians and skilled workers, and finally clerks and unskilled workers. Managers as well as professionals put on the first place **job content**. For the two remaining categories safety and security, reward, and interpersonal relations play the most important role. «The values explicit in humanisation efforts tend to be in the areas of job content and learning; values which a priori are more salient to the humanisers than to those to be humanised» (p. 222).

It is not possible to overcome the passivity of the alienated workers, the resistance of the ruling elite and the inertia of the industrial and administrative establishment without taking into consideration the existing gap in values. The humanisers need the involvement of the workers themselves, and possibly the unions too.

So far unions are not directly concerned. According to R. Tchobanian, «Employers will have to look upon the humanisation of work not merely as a modern technique in labour management but also as something to

be worked out in consultation with the unions and taking due account of their overall policies (...). It is bargaining at the plant level that ensures the most effective control over the actual conditions of work» (pp. 210-211).

The papers on **work restructuring** (Hepworth & Osbaldeston, Jonsson, Birchall, Carnall and Wild, Durand, Docherty & Berg) help to understand several demands for change in the operation of working systems. A distinction has to be made in this respect between the **remedial** short term perspective and the **preventive** long term perspective. The first one quite often prevails to the detriment of broader interests.

A company **strategy** is badly needed in order to avoid the fragmentation of actions and their very limited validity in a long run. As may be learned from the examples included into the book, there are several difficulties involved into the **work restructuring**. For example, in the cases reported by Durand the enlarging of autonomy and quality of work resulted in some lowering of production or to the deterioration of product quality.

One of the common difficulties in the QWL projects arises when there is not enough **freedom** of introducing necessary changes. «Projects with fairly narrow degrees of freedom cannot make significant improvements to levels of worker responsibility and participation if other support systems in the organization discourage such changes (...). There are difficulties related to the different cultures and perspectives of people from different departments and levels in the organization (p. 82). Top management support is a critical factor.

Papers on **work changes** and their effect on people (Stjernberg, Hill) show the mutual interaction between personal transformations of people and the techno-organizational transformations of work processes. The patterns of responses by people to organizational changes are a product of their prior orientations to work (affected by their life values and concerns), as well as their more 'deterministic' reactions to the specific changes be

they structural or technical (p. 84). It is a great task of management to synchronize both **work** changes and **human** changes in order to achieve a perfect mutual reinforcement in this respect.

The papers on **comparative assessments and evaluation** (Bartolke and Gohl, Hepworth and Osbaldeston) ask some major questions: how much of a genuine concern for the welfare of workers is involved in the QWL projects? Which among the various approaches to QWL are generally successful and which lead to problems or even failures? As long as the management's primarily motivation are profits and earnings, welfare and workers (as well as clients) remain of a secondary importance.

A management belief in the legitimacy of worker participation is an important factor of the QWL success. A tight labour market makes management more favourably oriented. The 'project' team system in which employee groups are set up to solve particular problems seems to be much promising.

The immediate supervisors are particularly vulnerable and it is necessary to pay a particular attention to their changing roles. The wage payment systems have to be adequately redesigned in order to secure for the employees an appropriate reward for a higher performance. There is also a need for education towards a **broader** interpretation of promotion. A relevant information has to be provided, as well as enough additional training.

The organizational aspects of work humanisation are well presented in this book which should become well accepted by the interested readers.

**Alexander J. MATEJKO**

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**Renewal in the Workplace: A Critical Look at Collective Bargaining**, by Harry Antonides, London, Ontario, Christian Labour Association of Canada, 1982, 82 pp., ISBN 0-919663-00-1

In this short booklet, Mr. Antonides, research director for the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLRA), briefly examines man's relationship to God and its ramifications for such issues as the nature of work, quality of worklife, codetermination, inflation, strikes, compulsory arbitration and union plurality. On the basis of a rather superficial analysis of these issues as seen from a Christian perspective, the author recommends solutions to a variety of problems which he sees as part of the malaise of the Canadian industrial relations system.

The sections which discuss man's relationship to God are developed in a rather cursory way with man being viewed as the image bearer of God with one of his tasks as the keeper and developer of God's creation. The author acknowledges that the Christian faith does not provide quick and easy answers to immediate problems, and that Christians possess no magic formulas. Nevertheless, he makes some very specific recommendations on some very complex issues.

After describing how work has been broken down into small parts which are often routine and boring, he endorses the concept of quality of worklife projects without showing how this will change the meaning of work from a Christian perspective. While being critical of the hierarchical structure of organizations and the lack of worker participation in the decision-making process, the author recommends a form of codetermination (workers elected to the boards of directors) which is practised in a number of European countries, but he does not show how this conforms to the Christian view of man.

Inflation is seen as a cruel form of income redistribution and its major cause is seen as greed — a greed that lives inside of us. While the author acknowledges that greed