

BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews Editor: M. F. Bradley

European Sociological Review, Oxford Press, 1985.

The European Sociological Review, a new journal published in 1985, aims to provide an effective medium for presenting the work of European sociologists to an international audience. It will publish the results of sociological inquiry concerning European societies based on empirical research. This research will address major substantive issues and be conducted to high methodological standards. Hence, one of the major contributions of the journal is that it will endeavour to encourage cross-national comparative work on European societies.

One significant feature of this journal is that about a quarter of the space, or twenty pages of each issue, is devoted to book reviews and review articles dealing with national and international literature as well as research reports. In the first issue less than one eighth of the space or twelve pages was given over to reviews of seven books. Being unfamiliar with many of the books, I found the reviews both revealing and helpful in my subsequent decision to read *Poverty and Famine* by Amartya Sen. However, I was somewhat disappointed to discover that in the second issue a mere three books were reviewed, utilizing only five pages. This is one section of the journal that I feel would be worth developing. Review articles dealing with both classical and current studies on substantive issues would be most helpful in developing and integrating all the multivarious strands of sociological thought for both sociologists and laymen.

Like any other reader of journals, I am more interested in and familiar with particular subject areas and this no doubt biases my review of certain works. Two of the four articles in the first issue

1. "Are American rates of social mobility exceptionally high? New evidence or an old issue" (Erikson, R. and Goldthorpe, J. H.)
2. "International variation in strike activity" (Batstone, E.)

certainly meet with the editors declared aims of publishing works which address a major substantive issue and are based on empirical research conducted to a high methodological standard. The style and presentation of both the theoretical arguments and the empirical findings used by Erikson and Goldthorpe are lucid, logical and convincing. The first section of Batstone's article where he reviews with great precision and insight three earlier studies on industrial conflict, Ross and Hartman, Clegg, and Korpi and Shalev is most comprehensive. However, the section titled *Trying to do better* suffers from the difficulties that Batstone himself identified with this type of analysis:

1. Findings are a product of the indicators used and much more attention needs to be paid to the creation of the indicators.
2. The availability of statistical information, particularly official statistics, determines the types of models developed.
3. The addition or exclusion of certain countries could change the whole argument.

4. Finally, the complexity of strikes themselves and factors associated with them implies that this type of statistical analysis has a limited role to play.

Given the inherent problems associated with this type of statistical analysis, it is more difficult to understand, interpret and evaluate the models if the value of each indicator, assigned to each country is not available to the reader; unfortunately this detailed distributional information is not provided by Batstone.

Bergers account of recent changes in the role of religion in French politics and Rose's study of the work of the Aix group were of limited interest to me. In particular, I found Rose's style turgid and I imagine that it might have been written more simply and clearly. Finally, I agree with other reviewers, that it is highly appropriate for this journal, with its learned international group of editors, to emphasise the comparative study of European societies.

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TERESA BRANNICK

Organisational Behaviour — Concepts and Applications, 3rd edition. Author: Gray/Starke.

This book is a textbook aimed at students taking a broad overview of the social sciences and their application to organisations.

It draws on well known theories about human behaviour in business from psychology, sociology, social psychology and management science.

The first part of the book concentrates on understanding the individual. Part II looks at inter-personal dynamics. Part III looks at the organisation and Part IV at personal, cultural, and social perspectives.

At the end of each chapter, there are exercises which the student is to carry out.

The book would appear to be aimed at the American equivalent of secondary school students and uses a significant amount of pictorial and photographic material.

The book obviously suffers from the lack of coverage which it can give to anyone area and is more like a series of trailers than a main film. For example, under the heading of "*Understanding the Individual*", the Behaviourist are given half a page, while Freud merits two-thirds of a page.

The relevance of these theories to the student is dealt with by trying to link them with organisation life. The first chapter begins by saying "*It's not what you know but who you know*", and ends by saying. "*the concepts and research presented here will enhance your understanding of human behaviour so that you can be more successful in dealing with this most important component and life*".

Similarly, the chapter on *Interpersonal Communication Techniques* gives advice about how the student can improve his/her listening skills by greater attentiveness, asking open-ended questions, practising active listening, reflective listening, and showing empathy.

In the chapter "*Organisational Politics*" he also give advice to the student who is anxious to achieve maximum success in an organisation. The specific techniques covered include maintaining a high positive profile, communicating an image of authority and developing a power base in the organisation. A written schedule of your goals which will serve as a road map to direct and evaluate your progress in the organisation is suggested. Without such a plan he says you may end up anywhere, often where you do not want to be. The exercise to be carried out at the end of this chapter is an excerpt from an article called "*Power Games in the Corporation*" which describes how you can ride the right coat tails, "*be*

a *visible executive*" and have "friends" in high places. The question at the end of this section include "discuss the importance of obtaining a sponsor above you in the organisation". The values which underly some of the opinions expressed by the author do not appear to me to be the ideals to be formally inculcated to secondary school students in textbook. These are the realities of large scale American organisational life but would we wish to have the formally communicated here as though they must be the norm in every organisation? Other chapters include how organisations work, leadership in organisations, leadership and practice, organisation development and the quality of work life, etc., give reasonable coverage of the standard theories in those areas.

In the latter part of the book, there is a chapter on *International Variances in Human Relations* covering the author's opinion of the culture of Japan, China, Latin America, Mexico, Africa, India and the Arab culture, USSR, France and Germany. Here again, the summary nature of the treatment causes difficulties. Just over a page is given to the Russians, who are summarised as a "people of paradoxes. They coupled socialism with deep emotion, a scientific orientation with romanticism and indifference with a deep chauvinist commitment to Mother Russia".

The book itself comprises 306 pages into which it attempts to summarise the major business-related theories of psychology, sociology, social psychology, and management science. For some reason however, the author treats the transactional analysis in an Appendix which runs to 39 pages, which seems somewhat disproportionate.

While this book might be of interest to teachers of the social science of secondary school level, some of the values contained in it and the very strong American orientation would seem to me to have to be counter-balanced by the teachers' treatment of it in the classroom.

Coras Trachtala

PHILIP REGAN

Business Statistics by Phillip Enns, Richard Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Ill nois, 1985, pp. 777.

This is a standard textbook for business studies undergraduates who do not need calculus to understand it. In the treatment of linear regression, the results for the normal equations estimating the parameters thus have to be stated rather than proved. A good example of misleading use of statistics appears in Chapter 2.7 when unequal class intervals are used for a toothpaste decay problem. A useful section on Exploratory Data Analysis pioneered by Tukey is given in Chapter 3.7. There is a thoughtful piece on the interpretation of r and r^2 in regression and correlation analysis, and a useful Chapter 15 on nonparametric statistics. Students will find helpful the legal analogy to Type I & II errors. Finally there is a lucid treatment of the multiplicative model in time series analysis, with the calculations set out in detail.

The text is illustrated with some appropriate quotations and amusing cartoons, and rounded off with a worthwhile chapter on index numbers including the consumer price index. With printing of the text in two colours the book is most attractive to read. I recommend it without hesitation.

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