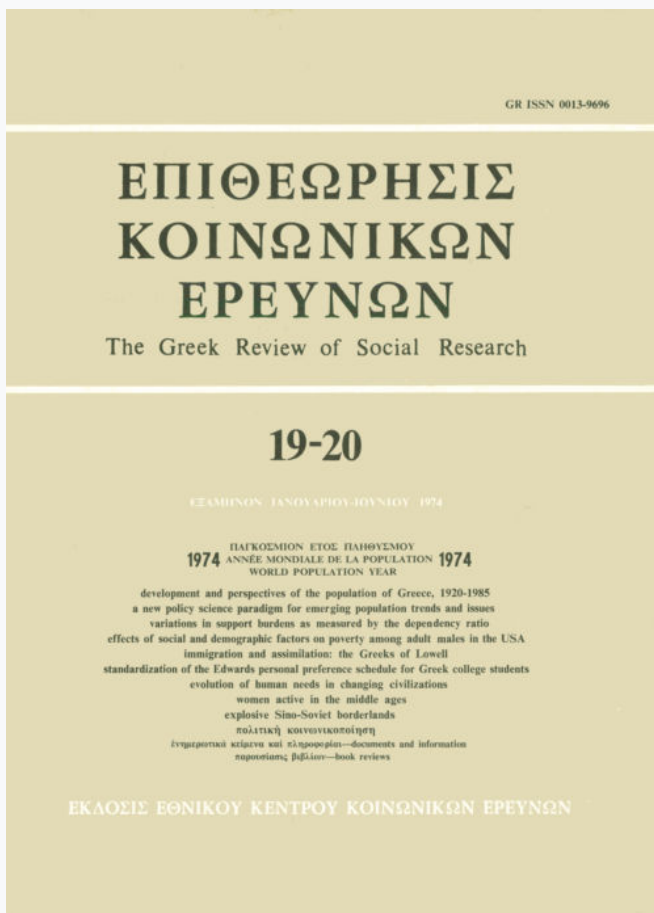


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The applicability of organizational sociology, by  
Chris Argyris

Jiri Kolaja

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ἐρευνῶν τῶν τοιοῦτων θεμάτων εἰς τὸν τόπον μας. Τὰ συμπεράσματα καὶ αἱ ἐρμηνεῖαι τῆς παρουσίας ἐραίνης παρέχουν ἕδρα εἰς ἔλεγχον, παρατήρησεις καὶ κρίσεις καὶ πάντως ἀποτελοῦν εὐπρόσδεκτον ἀφαιρήσιαν διὰ τῆς ἐραίνης τῆς Κοινωνιολογίας τῆς Παιδείας μας.

Διὰ τὰς μελλοντικὰς ἐρεῖνας τοῦ εἶδους τοῦτου θα ἐπεθώμην νὰ ἐπιστήσω τὴν προσοχὴν τῶν ἐρευνητῶν ἐπὶ τῆς ἰδιωτικῆς τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κοινωνίας, ἢ ὅποια, ὡς ὀρθῶς παρετήρησεν ἡ κυρία Δημάκη, εἶναι εἰσέτι ἀσημῆσιμος, δι' ὃ καὶ διαφέρει κατὰ τὴν ὕψην πρὸς τὰς τῶν παλαιῶν Δυτικῶν Κρατῶν. Ἐπομένως τὰ μέτρα, αἱ ταξινομήσεις, αἱ ἐκτιμήσεις καὶ αἱ μέθοδοι τῶν ξένων πρέπει νὰ χρησιμοποιεῖνται παρ' ἡμῶν μετὰ πολλῆς περιστοχῆς. Ἄς ἐνθυμηθῶμεν ἀπλῶς ὅτι πρὸ δύο γενεῶν ἀκόμη ἡ πρωτεύουσα μας ὅν ἐρχε περισσοτέρως τῶν 150.000 κατοίκων, ὅτι ὁ πληθυσμὸς μας ἦτο κατὰ 70 τοὶς ἑκατὸν ἀγροτικός, ὅτι τὸ 80 τοὶς ἑκατὸν τοῦ σημερινοῦ ἀστικοῦ πληθυσμοῦ μας εἶναι νεοπαγῆς καὶ ὅτι τὸ 30 τοὶς ἑκατὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνήκει εἰς οἰκογενεῖας ὧν τὸ ἥμισυ τῶν μελῶν τῶν διαμένει εἰς τὴν ἐπαρχίαν καθὼς καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ἰδιώματα κοινωνικὰ φαινόμενα, ἐκ τῶν ὁποίων καθίσταται πρόδηλον ὅτι αἱ ταξινομήσεις, ὡς λ.χ. ἡ κατάταξις εἰς κοινωνικὰς τάξεις, εἶναι κάπως ἐπισφαλές.

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*The Applicability of Organizational Sociology*, by Chris Argyris, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 138, \$, 8.95.

There is first an analysis of the theories of Peter Blau, James Thompson, Charles Perrow, John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood. After criticizing them, Argyris presents his comments and suggestions of a desirable organizational research methodology. Blau, Thompson, and Perrow are criticized because they studied a part of an organization while Goldthorpe and Lockwood «omitted the psychological dimensions from their theory» (p. 53). Blau concentrated on formal organization, and especially on top management and therefore his data were biased toward top management view. Though verbally professed to seek an integration of the formal and natural system, Thompson favored the closed system and that was more to the management's liking. Perrow especially stressed the significance of technology. However, since the relationship between technology and structure is not studied by means of other variables such as administrative controls

or leadership styles, etc., their influence is unknown. Generally, Blau, Perrow and Thompson tended to stress a normative position, favoring the present orthodoxy in studies of organization.

Though Argyris does not use the term, it appears to me that Goldthorpe and Lockwood are closer to Durkheimian epistemology. Argyris insightfully points out that workers provide the instrumental explanation to the question «why they work» and yet, as he suggests, the British workers also desired a meaningful and not only an instrumental job.

In the presentation of suggestions contained in the last two chapters, Argyris first refers in varying degrees to other students of organization, he appears quite well read though, I am sorry to observe, he considers only authors who published in English or whose works were translated into English. Argyris epistemological position is a greater emphasis on individual differences and on a greater number of possible variations. As used by him, the term «organic» expresses his framework. What is certainly sympathetic in his conclusion is his emphasis on a possible change and restructuring of organization. From reading his pages, one can feel that he himself is engaged in observations or experiments which should provide a greater opportunity for spontaneity in organizational behavior. Argyris explicitly subscribes to an integration of psychological and sociological data. Generally, he feels that data from any discipline should be available if it helps our explanation. This reviewer could not help but remember Durkheim and his programmatic declaration of the autonomy of sociology. Certainly, Argyris has introduced or seeks to introduce a contrary epistemological position. Especially as analyzed on pp. 109-110, an individual and an organization can be related in contradictory or in coordinated demands. Argyris is, of course, eager to promote the latter relationship. A desired change can be observed or measured in five dimensions: deviance from existing norms; degree of unfreezing of the old that is required; new system required to be self-corrective; degree to which others are required; and degree of personal and system discomfort. Though my failure of a further explanation of these five dimensions leave the reader somewhat at a discomfort, I would like to point out that the dimensions deal with demands on persons as well as on a social system. In this respect Argyris follows his interest that deals with psychological-sociological data. However, could not a change be analyzed within another conceptual framework? Certainly, Argyris would agree. Suppose if an organization would be changed from a charismatic to a bureaucratic leader? Could we consider conflict or ambivalence or compli-

mentarity of norms? Generally, my criticism of Argyris' elaboration is that, if I take for example Durkheim's different categories of suicide, they emerge with a disregard of certain psychological variables. By that we do not say that the disregarded variables are irrelevant but that a theory disregards them if it has other certain theoretical explanations. In other words, I would argue that under certain conditions a combination of psychological and sociological data, as far as we can differentiate them, is legitimate while under other conditions that may be less so.

To finish my review I would like to point out the great degree of clarity in which the book is written. He asks his questions in a rather spontaneous way though, I suspect, that behind most questions has accumulated an extensive amount of thinking and reading. As stated earlier, Argyris expresses an energetic optimism that we shall be able to improve our organizations. It is a good book. However, one more point; it would help to compare Blau, Thompson, Perrow, Goldthorpe and Lockwood in more categories than those chosen; or to point out more explicitly in which categories they can be compared or not, probably one could have two separate books: one to deal with certain selected theories, and another with Argyris own elaboration.

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Elie Dimitras, *Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὴν Κοινωνιολογίαν τῆς Ἀναπτύξεως (Eisagogi eis tin Koinoniologian tis Anaptyxeos)* (Introduction to the Sociology of Development), Athens, Greece: National Centre of Social Research (EKKE), 1973, second edition, pp. 137, \$ 4.00.

This book is one of a number of excellent studies recently published by the National Centre of Social Research in Athens, Greece. The volume at hand is the second installment (the first was originally published in 1971) on the growing literature concerning the sociology of development in Greece. This reviewer is familiar with other pertinent works particularly those written by such Greek social scientists as Tsaoussis, Xirotyris, Patras, Tsakonas, Lambiri-Dimaki, Athanasios Kanellopoulos, and Daskalakis.

Professor Dimitras who is also the general director of the National Centre of Social Research in Greece (known better by its Greek acronym EKKE), in a