

## Book Reviews

*Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity.* By R. L. Kahn *et al.*, 1964. Available from John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 605 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. 470 pp. \$7.95.

Extension workers and others who have recently been involved in an institutional reorganization will find valuable information in this book. It is an enlightening contribution to understanding organized human behavior. The authors make a detailed analysis of conflicts between workers and supervisors, then tackle the ulcer-causing areas of internal role conflict and ambiguity. In essence, this relatively easy-reading book is a study in the organizational application of role theory, with role expectations as its key concept.

The Extension worker is part of a highly organized and production-minded society. He is subject to stressful conditions that result from channeling efforts and talents of people toward a common goal—organizational production. This book is a study of organizations (such as the Extension Service) and how they affect the psychological well-being of their members.

Through effective use of research material, the authors illustrate how people create problems for themselves by worrying about worry. The authors report from six intensive case studies and a nation-wide survey dealing with real everyday work situations. Excerpts from case material help the reader understand the dynamics of the three major factors discussed: the individual's position in an organization, the nature of his relationships with his immediate associates, and his personality.

Some of the major findings lead the authors to suggest that (1) a basic cause of role conflict and ambiguity is the lack of communication of the expectations for a job, (2) strategies or efforts of the individual to cope with these problems are directly influenced by personality characteristics (his own and those of his associates), and (3) these strategies often aggravate rather than improve the stressful situation.

This book is a well-documented, down-to-earth, current, step-by-step analysis of stress as an inescapable part of modern living. The reader will recognize most of the factors which bear upon episodes of role conflict and ambiguity in his organizations. It is not a how-to-do book, even though it concludes by advocating a new approach to dealing with various problems. It is designed to help the reader understand organizational stress and its resultant costs to both individuals and or-

ganizations. This book should be of real value to all Extension workers in understanding how their environment affects them, their fellow workers, supervisors, and subordinates.

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*Home Economics Show-How and Showmanship.* By Genevieve Callahan and Lou Richardson, 1966. Available from the Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa. 149 pp. \$3.95.

Authors of this book say they are trying to show how to generate creativity, make the most of visuals, and develop showmanship. They also tuck in numerous ideas that could stimulate curriculum improvements and better teaching. The ideas could give new confidence to the home demonstration agent as she writes, shows, and tells her information.

Writing skills receive much emphasis. A chapter on picture-making words suggests simple ways of writing lively copy. The aids to writing could help in many professions. The writers have used their own suggestions. One sees this in their crisp topic sentences, touches of imagination, and numerous unusual forms of expression.

The scope of the book is extremely broad. In a chapter written for business home economists, the discussion of the five business senses provides good advice for almost anyone who works. Organizations whose meeting or convention programs have become stale can find stimulation in a chapter on "Putting Showmanship into Professional Programs." Persons looking for inspiration for original visual displays will appreciate the chapters on bulletin boards and posters, and on graphics for chalk boards and projectors.

Extension personnel, particularly home demonstration agents, can expect to discover a variety of useful information. Those who have responsibility for bulletins and other publications will perhaps turn first to the two chapters dealing with publications and photography. As the book's title suggests, the accent is on visuals, and the reader who wishes to try the suggestions will be pleased to find that materials needed are usually readily available objects. Because the authors touch on such a variety of topics, the reader may occasionally wish there were time to study a topic in a little more depth.

The thoughtful reader, after laying down the book, will want to take a critical look at how he does things, and to consider especially the extent to which he is being creative in his work.

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*Principles of Organization.* By Theodore Caplow, 1964. Available from Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, N.Y. 10017. 383 pp. \$6.95.

This book attempts to demonstrate that a single theoretical model, although rough and incomplete in many instances, can be used to analyze organizations of any type or size (regardless of their culture or historical location) and to generate useful predictions.

An organization is defined by Caplow "as a social system that has an unequivocal collective ideality, an exact roster of members, a program of activity, and procedures for replacing members." A clever and functional model (denoted by the letters S, I, V, A) is presented. SIVA is used as a memory device standing for Strength, Influence, Volition, and Action. SIVA is used throughout the book with different words. A single analytical model cannot be used for all situations but ideas encompassed in the SIVA model are thought to have the same basic pattern. For example, the pair relationship between any two positions in an organization are described in terms of Status, Interaction, Valence, and Activity. Stability, Integration, Voluntarism, and Achievement are used in studying organizational effectiveness. In situations of conflict the model is defined by Subjugation, Insulation, Violence, and Attrition.

The Extension person will be interested in the four requirements the author believes must be acquired if he is to become a successful incumbent. He says the candidate must acquire a new Self-image, new Involvements, new Values, and new Accomplishments.

The meanings of structure, effectiveness, improvement, and conflict to an organization are described along with suggested ways or methods for helping an organization effectively use the SIVA model. Caplow draws on others' writings to show that the wheel-shaped interaction network is faster and makes fewer errors in performing tasks than the circle, chain, or any other type of network.

In one chapter four utopian organizations and their functioning are explained. Some requirements for a so-called perfect organization are also discussed.

Extension personnel need information on principles of organization. As is true of so many sociology textbooks, this one is full of sociological jargon. However, the Extension worker who is willing to spend the time and effort needed to define this jargon will find the book helpful in understanding why organizations function or fail to function as they do. It also provides clues as to why members of organizations act as they do in given roles and in specific status positions.

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*Social Action and Interaction in Program Planning.* By George M. Beal, with Ross C. Blount, Ronald C. Powers, and W. John Johnson, 1966. Available from Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa. 464 pp. \$8.50.

Here is an intensive case study of an experimental approach to program planning. A state committee of the Iowa Cooperative Extension Service developed what it conceived to be an ideal approach to program planning. This plan was carried out as an experiment in one county. A research project was set up to measure the relative effectiveness of the ideal approach and to provide a basis for improving the existing program planning process. The book describes and analyzes the program planning process that was carried out.

A study is made of the flow of a complex idea (program planning) through various levels of the system: from the State Extension Action Committee to the county staff, to the Extension council, to the steering committee, to subcommittees. Two analytical frames of reference are used: (1) the model of social action, and (2) selected concepts of group formation and maintenance. Use of the social action model has two objectives: to determine its utility in analyzing this type of social action, and to analyze the process of implementing a new concept of program planning in a county. Analysis of program planning in terms of group formation and maintenance utilizes three social system elements: ends (objectives), facility (means), and power (authority). These elements are studied in the council, steering committee, and subcommittees.

Two other phases of the study involve setting up and using a general set of criteria to evaluate the process of program planning, and making an analysis of member interaction in a small committee.

Persons who want specific recommendations for planning Extension programs are likely to be disappointed by this book. However, persons looking for a research base for examining various aspects of program planning may find it of tremendous value. Research workers will appreciate the precise descriptions of frames of reference, methodology, and empirical measures. Extension agents and other personnel should find the inferences and implications applicable to many program planning and execution situations. The language is very understandable.

The book is relatively long, but this is no criticism. A welcome addition would be a summary of important findings and implications. This would be a valuable time-saver to the person who wants only the highlights, yet is reluctant to dig for them. In fact, a summary might stimulate the reader to dig deeper. There is much worth digging for.

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