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Taking Back a Rich Tradition: A Sociological Approach to Workplace and Industrial Change in the Global Economy

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ABSTRACT

Sociology possesses a rich and deep tradition in the field of industry, work and organizations. However, its past preeminence in the field lies encrusted under layers of research and practice done by those in other disciplines. This is particularly disappointing with regard to the absence of sociologists' involvement in the momentous changes overtaking the industrial landscape—the move to more flexible and participatory workplace arrangements. Part of the problem is the lack of a coherent theoretical framework to help locate a distinctively sociological approach and provide a clear clinical role for sociologists. This article attempts to "take back" sociology's considerable heritage with regard to workplace and industrial change. It does so by locating sociology within the field and by focusing on the theoretical, methodological, and practice dimensions of three prominent practitioners. The distinguishing features of the work of these practitioners are presented and the outlines of an expanded sociological approach and clinical role are proposed.

The current transformation of industry and the workplace is without precedent, and it is irreversible. The scope and magnitude of the transformation may even surpass that of the Industrial Revolution. Profound changes in technology, the global economy, the workforce, national and international politics, market structures, and the organization of work and production have required a fundamental rethinking of the nature of industrial society. We are on the threshold of an entirely new era (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Finkelstein, Harrick & Sultan, 1991; Reich, 1983; Sable & Piore, 1984; Zuboff, 1988).

Although the enormity of industrial change appears indisputable, the work of American sociologists in this area, particularly with regard to applied research and practice, is clearly lacking. Sociologists, for the most part, have utterly failed to follow through on the promise of a rich and deep tradition. For example, in terms of theory, classical sociology's central preoccupation with industrialization, work, production, and organization, as well as contemporary sociology's emphasis on "post-industrial society" have become relatively marginal in the literature. Recent efforts have been made to resuscitate economic sociology in an attempt to "take back" what sociology has lost to economics (Block, 1990), or to integrate the two disciplines more effectively (Etzioni, 1988). Unfortunately, the losses and inadequacies are likely far too extensive for this.

Industrial sociology has probably been the greatest victim. Most of us are familiar with the role of sociology in helping to found the field of Human Relations in industry in the 1930s and 1940s. As sociology's active involvement in industry began to evaporate in the post WWII period, the field became diffused and fragmented into areas such as complex organizations, work, professions, and occupations. In the meantime, other disciplines took the lead in industry. Today the bulk of research and activity in the area of workplace and industrial change is being done by others: industrial psychologists, management, labor, and industrial relations specialists, labor economists, communications and human resource professionals, and a host of others from a variety of applied fields. Indeed, Miller (1984) maintains that, "the best industrial sociology is now found in the business schools." A recent study of the 80 most important journals reporting on the behavioral and organizational aspects of management revealed that not one American Sociological Association journal is ranked in the top twenty-five (Extejt & Smith, 1990).

Closely related to the decline of industrial sociology is the disinterest and unwillingness of those in the discipline to engage in applied research. Clinical and applied sociology in general has certainly had its difficulties in garnering support for its activities in the past three or four decades, but

few applied areas have been quite as starved of sustenance as has this one. As a consequence, applied graduate and undergraduate sociology programs which focus on work, organizations and industry are virtually non-existent (Finkelstein, in press). In view of the current transformation of industrial societies and the unique traditions of sociology in this regard, it is vital that these trends in the discipline be reversed. In short, there is a need to develop a distinctively sociological approach; one which not only provides the benefits of a broad analysis of industrial change, but which also offers systematic methods and strategies to bring about change.

The purpose of this article is to help accomplish this task. How should we proceed, given the absence of a cohesive literature to examine, or applied academic programs to guide us? first, I review and contrast the characteristics of other perspectives in the field of industry and the workplace with those of sociology. Secondly, I draw from the work and careers of three prominent figures in the field and sketch out a portrait of a common orientation. The three figures are W. F. Whyte, whose career spans the entire period of industrial sociology, including the rise of Human Relations; Warren G. Bennis, whose eclectic perspective and clinical practice became widely recognized in the 1960s as helping to found the field of Organizational Development; and finally, R. M. Kanter, who, perhaps, has recently gained the most notoriety, and who is now editor of the Harvard Business Review. Brief portraits of their work are drawn and analyzed in terms of: 1) theoretical frameworks, 2) research and methodological strategies and 3) practice and policy implications. Finally, I conclude by suggesting a more significant role for sociology in addressing global trends and an expanded and more coherent approach for doing so.

Contrasting Perspectives: The Applied Behavioral Sciences

Few areas of study feature the kaleidoscope of perspectives which can be found in theories of changing work organizations and industry. Outside of sociology, these theories fall variously within such growing fields as organizational development, organizational behavior, management, personnel, industrial relations, or, more generally, they are regarded as rooted in the "applied behavioral sciences." All of these fields share several common characteristics.

First, they developed out of a critique of classical management principles which prescribed formal organization structures and mechanistic processes. They have a common origin in the works of Elton Mayo, Rothlisberger and Dickson, and Chester Barnard, who are often credited

with “discovering” the significance of informal, natural social systems, and who gave birth to human relations theory and practice. Secondly, these fields are concerned almost exclusively with social-psychological processes, such as employee motivation, satisfaction, superior-subordinate relationships, leadership, and other managerial-related topics. The third common characteristic underlines a more contemporary emphasis on organizations as open systems in which the nature of the “environment” (e.g., technology, economics, and social values) has a critical impact on organizational operations (Perrow, 1986).

In this regard, contingency theory has emerged as the most prevalent conceptualization of organization-environment relationships. Following the “organic,” or “natural” model, organizations are seen as adapting to changes in the environment. The practical implication of this theory is the prescription that management find the right fit between the nature of the environment and internal organization structures and operations (Morgan, 1986). Here, the social-psychological dimension again remains central, as managers are charged with adapting the work force to meet the changing organizational needs. This has often meant developing managerial techniques in employee participation, team building, and group facilitation. This clear connection to application and practice is the final characteristic common to these fields. That is, specific skills in these areas are lacking across the American industrial landscape, and there is a boom in the popular business literature and in consulting firms which foster their development (Tjosvold, 1986).

Despite past concerns that research conform to formal notions of scientific inquiry (e.g., research must be disinterested, uninvolved, value free, and predictive), these fields have become increasingly applied. This does not mean that they have resolved the basic research issues. It merely suggests that there is a general recognition of the inescapable normative implications rooted in research efforts in these fields, and that the strong demand for research to afford practical applications has led to a greater acceptance of applied work (Lorsch, 1979).

Significantly, most of the applied perspectives considered thus far understand change within a fairly narrow set of parameters, since the primary unit of analysis remains the individual. Moreover, as Burrell and Morgan (1979) point out, much of social science, and especially industrial sociology and psychology, organization theory, and industrial relations, has been dominated by a paradigm that has been confining in its orientation toward change and the methods used to investigate human activity in general. As we shall see, these limitations help identify the contributions sociology has

made in the past, but more importantly, encouraged sociologists to pursue the greatly expanded approach taken by leading practitioners.

Why a Sociological Approach? Sociological Theories of the Workplace

Industrial and organizational sociology claim a similar theoretical heritage to the variants of applied behavioral science, but assert a longstanding tradition of concern with society-organization interrelationships. Moreover, sociological practice in this field has historically been concerned with broad based change efforts (Fritz & Clark, 1989). Intervention in social activity has been understood by industrial sociologists in terms of "quantum" levels of interest: personal, group, organizational, and social world (Straus, 1984).

Additionally, the sociological perspective has emphasized organizational and structural processes over narrowly conceived social-psychological ones. For example, although criticized for its apparent restricted and closed model of organization, Max Weber's classic work on bureaucracy was, of course, part of his overall macro-historical account of the rise of modern industrial society. Non-sociologists, in particular, often sketch out the bureaucratic characteristics which were presented in Weber's ideal type, while simultaneously losing sight of his most important observations—that modern organizations were increasingly becoming societal instruments of domination (Fischer & Sirianni, 1984).

The Human Relations School, itself, may be traced back to Durkheimian sociology and the rise of structural functionalist theory. This theoretical tradition firmly grounded the study of organizations in an institutional context and in the larger social system. Nevertheless, studies in human relations have been criticized for narrowly focusing on the attitudes, beliefs, and subjective states of individuals in order to predict behavior. Perrow (1986), for example, argues that, "One cannot explain organizations by explaining the attitudes and behavior of individuals or even small groups within them. We learn a great deal about psychology and social psychology, but little about organizations per se in this fashion. In fact, what we are learning about psychology and social psychology from these studies may be an outmoded psychology and social psychology."

Symbolic interactionists have, of course, long recognized the error in thinking that we might somehow measure the objective features of manager-employee-group relations based on presumed social psychological predispositions, and then suggest causal relationships among these features as discrete variables for the purpose of prediction (Denzin, 1983). Such a view

often fails to recognize employees as active agents and creators of workplace realities as opposed to passive recipients or carriers of attitudes.

More recently, the population-ecology model, or natural selection perspective, and the resource-dependency model have stressed the fundamental importance of interorganizational relationships in a highly competitive environment. According to these models, those organizations which collaborate and negotiate with other organizational entities will be in a better position to adapt and attain the scarce resources necessary for their survival (Hall, 1991).

Moreover, these theoretical models share common concerns with the political-economical approach to industry. Those advancing this perspective in sociology have long attempted to root organizational processes in the larger social context of the conflict over resources and the control of the production process. They have asserted a management bias in more conventional analyses because of the assumptions they have made regarding the class structure of organizations and because of their disregard for the divergent goals and interests of the participants. For example, the critique of modern management methods as a strategy of "deskilling" has stimulated a reexamination of managerial practices and a movement toward more participatory forms of production and organization (Derber & Schwartz, 1983).

The applied behavioral sciences have drawn and benefitted from the sociological tradition, yet virtually all of these fields have grown and advanced while sociology has declined. Why so? Two interconnected explanations come to mind. First, a sociological perspective was likely to be more critical of work and industry arrangements because it broadened the investigation and highlighted power relationships. This had already become evident in such studies as the *Man On The Assembly Line* (Walker & Guest, 1952) and *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (Chinoy, 1955), which exposed the oppressive nature of the factory, even though they saw little possibility for an alternative set of arrangements; and the work of Robert Blauner (1964), whose groundbreaking research offered a view toward skilled and autonomous industrial work, while examining the alienating characteristics of modern industrial production.

Secondly, sociology's broadness and potentially critical orientation made it less desirable and applicable, compared to the emerging behavioral sciences, which promised a more practical approach to solving managerial problems and to dealing with individuals, rather than dealing with the wider structural or institutional processes. Meanwhile, sociology began to emphasize basic research, and distanced itself from clinical settings. The dominance of formalistic protocol in scientific research discouraged practical

applications. The rise of conflict perspectives in the 1960s and 1970s made involvement anathema for many interested in the field. Thus, sociology, though obviously endowed with the capacity to become a powerful force in this arena, abandoned opportunities to fulfill its potential.

The premise here, however, is that times and conditions have changed dramatically. The onset of global, industrial, and workplace change have made institutional, societal, and international relationships a dominant factor in workplace and organizational dynamics. Continuous and reciprocal interrelationships among organizations, both private and public, are a key feature of this change. The current myriad of socio-economic problems in the U.S., including trade and budget deficits, plant closings and unemployment, skills shortages and educational inadequacy, work and family demands, and racial and gender discrimination, are traceable to national inattention to the scope and implications of such global changes. Restrictive individual and social-psychological based analyses are insufficient to the task of understanding modern industrial change.

The splintering of global markets and the need for flexibility in production to deal with a multiplicity of demands, means that employers must place far greater emphasis on developing the skills, knowledge, participation, and commitment of a culturally and racially diverse work force. To support this enhanced and increasingly diverse workforce will require unprecedented partnerships among major institutions: industry, government, education, and labor. Thus, to some extent, the traditionally opposing interests of employer and employee may be recast in a context of the need for mutual obligations, employee rights, information sharing, participation in decision making, opportunities for employee ownership, and the like. A greater emphasis on more democratic industrial and workplace relationships has become clearly visible.

This means that not only has a sociological approach become an indispensable aspect of research and practice, but that moral and ethical problems concerning such activities are less sharply drawn and may be more readily resolvable. Indeed, those who regard social and organizational change as an important goal should find this area of inquiry particularly attractive. Nevertheless, most sociologists have continued to avoid involvement in this wide-ranging field and have largely failed to realize the inherent strengths and benefits of their own approach (Finkelstein, 1990).

Our next task is to provide examples of exceptions to this claim by over-viewing theoretical, methodological, and practice dimensions of three prominent individuals. In each of these dimensions, summary statements will be presented as a way of helping to formulate a distinctively sociological approach. It should become apparent that such an approach is an

attempt to substantially broaden the paradigm for activity in this field. The overall framework presented is as much a challenge to sociologists to join in this effort as it is a statement of sociological practice.

Portraits of the Sociological Perspective

The Theoretical Dimension

William Foote Whyte was one of the pioneers of the Human Relations movement. In a recent self-reflective critique, Whyte argued that not enough attention was paid in Human Relations to forces external to the interpersonal relations among managers and employees (1987). Nevertheless, in his groundbreaking research of the restaurant industry (1948), Whyte not only contended that the structure of social relationships highly influenced employee motivation and productivity, he offered particular solutions to solve problems of inefficiency, low morale, and high turnover. Whyte's classic solution of the "spindle" to the problems of status inconsistency in a restaurant has often been used to illustrate the importance of the workplace as a social system rather than as merely a set of assorted component parts (Porter, 1987).

Over the years, Whyte's perspective has widened to provide theoretical insights into the issues of worker ownership and control (Whyte & Blasi, 1982). The culmination of these efforts is illustrated in his recent analysis of Mondragon, the worker cooperative complex in the Basque region of Spain (1988). For Whyte, the worker cooperative represents an important alternative, and a social experiment in developing new forms of industrial organization. In his analysis, he introduces us to the importance of relationships between organizational, political, and economic processes. Whyte has recently mounted a penetrating critique of sociology in the university (Whyte, 1991). He calls for greater efforts to connect research and practice and urges interdisciplinary approaches which vigorously integrate social science with the technical aspects of work and industry.

This broadening and deepening of the field has also been a distinguishing trademark of Warren G. Bennis, longtime advocate of applying knowledge to create change (Bennis, et al., 1984). More specifically, Bennis' career exhibits an unrelenting effort to critique and transform business management and education by drawing on the behavioral sciences and arguing for organizational development and social change (1966). His academic training at MIT was broad and interdisciplinary. He was one of the first to enlarge the boundaries of social psychology, as an organizational

clinician. Indeed, a closer reading of his work demonstrates that he has especially relied on sociology to draw vital connections between the need for micro and macro changes.

For example, he and sociologist Philip Slater wrote a series of farsighted essays in the 1960s, in which they overviewed the constraints inhibiting American institutions and proposed new ways of thinking about overcoming the constraints (1968). In fact, one of these essays, originally published in 1964 and entitled, "The Inevitability of Democracy," has recently been reprinted in the *Harvard Business Review* to mark its profound and continued relevance in the contemporary scene (1990). In this article, they argued that democratic forms of organization would be necessary, if not inevitable, in order for entire social systems to be able to successfully solve complex problems and survive in a changing world. This approach was reflected in Bennis' focus on bureaucracy and the need for organizational change. He was a founder of the organizational development movement and he has had a determining influence on the shape of movement (1969). All of his work has been directed toward bridging the gap between theory and practice for the purpose of making changes that are deliberate and collaborative.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter followed a similar path to her predecessors, but has sought to break new ground and enlarge the terrain of change by emphasizing a structural analysis. This was evident in her first major work, in which she studied the relationship between individual commitment and the community (1972). Rather than view commitment as primarily a social psychological or attitudinal phenomena, she focused on the structural mechanisms which fostered and sustained high levels of commitment. Her now classic study, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, applied this thesis to the realm of large scale bureaucratic organizations. She found that the structure of corporate bureaucracies limited opportunities for individual growth, created powerless positions which stifled innovation and creativity, and demotivated organizational members, not only women and minorities, who were the most vulnerable, but anyone who was not on the "fast track." Her calls for "flattening out the hierarchy" and fostering "empowerment" have now become standard concepts in the organizational change literature. Her more recent research is rooted in a social structural approach to organizational change which highlights the interconnections between changing demographics, new technology, and the globalization of the economy (1983).

In summary, there are theoretical elements common to the portraits presented thus far, which may help us formulate an expansive sociological approach:

- a macro-historical and structural perspective
- attention to multi-level analysis, especially micro-macro connections
- a critique of psychological reductionism
- an emphasis on institutional and political-economic processes
- an emphasis on a close relationship between theory and practice for the purpose of social change.

The Methodological Dimension

It should not be surprising that this theoretical orientation calls for methodologies that are action-based. Data are collected and analyzed in the process of a close interactive relationship between the researcher and those in the research setting. Traditional rules of scientific conduct stressing disinterest, distance, and objectivity are mediated by a concern for solving problems and producing changes. There is an effort to coordinate the involvement of workplace members in the research as a part of the change process.

For example, W. F. Whyte was one of the first social scientists to develop field methods that could be directly applied to the workplace. He was one of the pioneers of participant observation and qualitatively based research, which became well known in his classic work, *Street Corner Society* (1943). His classic account of the restaurant industry utilized such procedures and was instrumental in making changes in the organization of restaurant work (1948).

Over the years, Whyte has consistently argued that the methods of the natural sciences may be less appropriate, particularly in applied settings, where the solutions to problems may call for “social inventions” (Whyte, 1982). According to Whyte, these social inventions come from within the organization or community itself and come out of a research process in which the researchers are immersed in the activities of the participants.

Whyte’s methodological innovations have recently been formulated in a more systematic approach directly related to workplace change, which he calls “participatory action research,” or PAR (1989). A central element of PAR is that practitioners (managers, employees, stewards, owners) in the research setting participate in the research process. Whyte argues that such collaboration will help to integrate knowledge and methods in a way that will advance scientific research while solving practical workplace problems. He demonstrates that research can be engaging and client-centered.

Warren Bennis has long advocated such clinical procedures in his work in organizational development. His whole idea of planned change which emerged in the 1960s dealt with generating knowledge out of a mutual col-

laboration with the client organization; a mutual determination of research goals; client-practitioner involvement at each stage of the research process; continuous clarification of goals and information gathering; and reciprocal feedback, learning, and assessment as an ongoing part of organizational operations (1969). These elements are considered essential for providing information that is both accurate and practical. Bennis was one of the leaders in the development of sensitivity training, or lab training, for practitioners, in which "T-groups" became a way for social scientists to more effectively facilitate and consult with managers and corporate executives in information sharing and problem solving efforts (1966). Since then, these kinds of techniques have blossomed into an array of small group activities that bring together employees from all levels and locations of the organization.

As a way of accomplishing many of the goals associated with an action-research approach, Rosabeth Moss Kanter has become a master of the art of case study analysis. Her research is characterized by the simultaneous use of several methodologies—survey questionnaires, interviews, content analysis, field observation—all in an effort to avoid what she calls taking "snap shots" and to instead create "movies" that tell the story of organizational change while simultaneously facilitating those changes (1983). Such an approach presents a picture that is rich with description and shared meanings of organizational realities as they unfold. In this sense, Kanter is an organizational historian with an eye toward the future. Data is oriented toward documenting and creating change. She is keenly aware of her role as a "change master," who must always present research findings in such a way that they will permit the client organization and the participants to move on to the next stage. Kanter's approach is characterized by an understanding of how the research process itself may affect those in the research setting.

Thus, the characteristics of research methods likely to inform a more penetrating sociological approach to industrial and workplace change:

- are participatory action oriented
- are interactive and collaborative
- link theory and method
- use multiple and diverse data gathering techniques
- are directed toward solving problems and making changes.

The Practice and Policy Dimension

All of these applied sociologists are experienced consultants to industry, but the scope of their efforts goes far beyond the traditional role of the

industrial consultant, which has most often been confined to fee for service activities offered to individual firms. These practitioners are architects of broadly conceived change strategies which involve individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and societies worldwide. Sociological practice has been redefined by them as global practice.

Warren Bennis was a pioneer of laboratory training techniques, such as T-groups, survey feedback, and organizational assessment. These techniques were designed to encourage organizational members to become more sensitive to each other's needs, to learn to be mutually supportive and cooperative, and to orient their knowledge toward action-based solutions. All of this Bennis continues to refine today as part of the organizational development strategy. He was one of those who coined the term "change agent" in the 1960s, but he has since advocated that OD efforts be aimed at broader labor-management problems, the problems associated with plant closings, and at multinational corporate restructuring. Bennis has argued that more and more organizational decisions are public decisions, with a multiplicity of constituencies and stakeholders. "No longer can the management of external relations be left exclusively to the public affairs department. Top leadership and OD practitioners must be involved directly. In short, the political role of organizations must be reconceived." (1987, p.43)

Rosabeth Moss Kanter is among those in the field calling for fundamental organizational and structural change strategies such as employee participation, project teams, Quality of Worklife, and labor management cooperation. In addition, she has advocated equal opportunity employment and affirmative action as a means to counteract the problems of tokenism in predominantly white and male organizations. These practice strategies constitute an approach oriented toward changing the structure of opportunities for people of all levels of the organization, and especially those traditionally excluded, to get involved in higher level problem solving and decision making.

In the *Change Masters*, she identifies "power tools"—information, resources, and support necessary to empower organization members, provide them with greater input, and spur innovation and creativity. In her most recent book, she provides a practical analysis of the ways organization members can work together and with other organizations by pooling resources and forming partnerships and alliances (1989). Moreover, she summarizes ten national policy recommendations and the kinds of strategies which she advocated as a major adviser to the 1990 Dukakis campaign:

a human resource development tax credit; industry-level training partnerships; accelerated technology and language education; union-management partnerships to plan workplace changes; incentives for profit sharing and performance bonuses; stronger safety nets for displaced employees; daycare; flex-year opportunities; flexible use of severance and unemployment benefits; and portable pensions. (1989, p.366)

Finally, W. F. Whyte has developed and directed Cornell University's Programs for Employment and Workplace Systems, where research and practice in developing employee-owned and -run organizations is carried out. In the 1980s, these efforts spawned several projects in which the PAR (participatory action research) approach was specifically utilized. For example, Whyte's program became involved with Xerox Corporation and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) on a joint project designed to address the declining market share and competitive position of the company. A major result was the "cost study team"—which Whyte has termed a "social invention" because it emerged out of the PAR process. Not only did labor and management find ways to jointly cut costs and save jobs, the project led to important research findings on the relationship between employee participation and productivity (1989).

Another project in which the Cornell program implemented the PAR approach was the FAGOR group of cooperatives in Mondragon, the oldest and largest cooperative complex in Spain. The PAR process in this case investigated cultural processes that encouraged or inhibited participation in decision making. Researchers found that studying the causes of apathetic attitudes was less helpful than discovering the formal and informal structures which might be reorganized to foster greater cooperative relationships. One of the outcomes of this project is that PAR is becoming incorporated into the FAGOR personnel program (1989).

In his book, *The Making of Mondragon*, Whyte gives much importance to the role of applied sociology in the historical development of the American industrial cooperative. In fulfilling such a role, he has provided assistance in the writing of national legislation designed to foster worker cooperatives and has worked with the Employee Stock Ownership Association and the National Center for Employee Ownership. In addition, Whyte has advocated that state universities develop assistance capabilities to aid community efforts on the model of an Agricultural Extension Service. Applied and clinical sociology might then be integrated into the technical assistance and resource programs, such as engineering or accounting, and

consultation could be provided for those interested in cooperative industrial relations and planned change (Whyte & Boynton, 1984).

In sum, these practitioners see themselves as:

- change agents and change masters
- clinicians of change, human resource and organizational development practitioners
- policy advisors and consultants
- developers and providers of educational, training, research and consulting programs and services.

Conclusion

Sociology has an important role to play in the current transformation sweeping the global economy and the workplace. Macro structural change of unprecedented proportions requires a broad multi-level theoretical perspective, and a variety of closely connected methodologies, techniques, applications, and clinical procedures capable of addressing global problems and trends. Other applied disciplines have flourished in this field, yet they often remain limited to narrowly conceived social-psychological accounts and an overly restrictive conceptual paradigm. The strength of sociology is rooted in its broad applicability.

We see these strengths in the approaches of practitioners such as Kanter, Bennis, and Whyte. Taken together, these practitioners advance a greatly expanded paradigm for sociological activity in this field. Their theoretical perspectives stress inextricable connections among theory, method, and practice, and between micro- and macro-processes. Their perspectives reflect innovations in applied research and clinical practice. These innovations encompass the global transformation of work; fundamental structural and organizational change; cooperative ownership and decision making; work/family and race/gender relations; and greater participatory and democratic arrangements. They argue that theory building is a transformative process and will progress insofar as it is based on action research and is derived out of an effort to change existing social contexts. They are actively engaged in developing programs and services which foster social change.

Sociology's rich tradition in industry and the workplace is surpassed only by its future promise. Much needs to be done in order to ensure that this promise is fulfilled.

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