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CHRIS ARGYRIS

ARGYRIS, CHRIS, educator; b. Newark, July 16, 1923; s. Stephen and Sophia (Papastathis) A.; A.B., Clark U., 1947; M.A., U. Kan., 1949; Ph.D., Cornell U., 1951; M.A. (hon.), Yale, 1960, Harvard, 1971; m. Renee Brocoum, July 23, 1950; children—Dianne Ellen, James Phillip. Asst. prof. Yale, 1951-55; asso. prof., 1956-60, prof., 1960-65; Beach prof. adminstr. sci., 1965-71; James Bryant Conant prof. edn. and orgnl. behavior Harvard Grad. Schs. Edn. and Bus., 1971—; cons. in field. Trustee Clark U. (Mass.), Nat. Tng. Labs. Served with Signal Corps, AUS, 1941-45. Ford distinguished vis. prof., 1967-68; Sloan prof. U. London, 1970—; vis. scholar Cambridge U. (Eng.), 1970—. Mem. Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi. Author 17 books including Intervention Theory and Method, 1970; Management and Organizational Development, 1971; The Applicability of Organizational Sociology, 1972; Organization and Innovation, 1965; Integrating the Individual and the Organization, 1965; Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness, 1964; Behind the Front Page, 1974; (with Donald Schon) Theory in Practice, 1974.

Argyris's concern is to provide a research based model for explaining behavior in organizations. All human behavior in organization is explainable in terms of the essential oppositions of individual needs and those of the formal organization. The result is adoption by both and the development of informal group organization.

Each individual will attempt to attain his goals and in the process adapt to his environment - self actualization. The formal organization characterized by rationality seeks same goal attainment. To accomplish this the organization must structure individual behavior through specialization, formalization and hierarchy. This tends to create a dependency by the individual and increase conflict between their goals and those of the organization - this can be psychologically damaging.

The fundamental differences between the individual and the organization leads people to adapt in one of four ways:

1. they leave the organization
2. they conform
3. they develop psychological defenses
4. they become apathetic or disinterested

This reaction may lead to increased management controls which serve to further restrict the individual.

Argyris seeks solution to this conflict through job enlargement and training and development. Argyris takes the view that the special training and detached approach of the social scientist enable him to help people understand themselves and their situation at work - from this comes appropriate action.

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CHRIS ARGYRIS (cont.)

His work represents a series of gradual approximations towards a generalized scheme for analyzing and understanding behavior in the settings of work organization.

Source. Pugh, D.S., et al. Writers On Organization. Penguin, 1964.