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### The planning of change

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## Review

# The planning of change—reconciling the arts with science

Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne,  
Robert Chin, and Kenneth E. Corey (Eds.)  
*The Planning of Change*, Third Ed.,  
New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1976

The third edition of *The Planning of Change* continues the attempt to reconcile the social arts with the sciences evident in the first two editions. Recent developments are conspicuous, however, by the inclusion of numerous new readings. Structurally, the book consists of four sections: *Part One*—"Planned Change in Perspective," *Part Two*—"Diagnostics of Planned Change," *Part Three*—"Interventions for Planned Change," and *Part Four*—"Values and Goals." Readings in each section focus on central themes in current fields of inquiry.

In *Part One*, selections present an historical perspective of planned change and differentiate between the various current theories and practices. The historical perspective describes the evolving nature of relationships between social scientists and practitioners. Distinctions between contemporary theories and practices focus on different units of organization as targets of change, as well as intervention strategies applicable to each unit. In addition, consideration is given to current thought and action to induce change in extra-organizational targets.

*Part Two* explores the technical aspects of the concept of system, along with knowledge utilization, emerging views of planned organizational change, and sources of support in the legitimation of change efforts. The technical approaches of the system model are viewed as enabling planners to approach change with a degree of reliability not possible with more simplistic concepts. Points of view on the relationships between the general knowledge of scientists and the specific knowledge of practitioners are discussed. Sources of validity of knowledge are explored in terms of science, practice and interaction between the scientist and the practitioner. The effects of discrepancies between espoused or idealized theories and theories-in-action, as expressed in intervention strategies, are also analyzed.

Readings on emerging perspectives of planned organizational change center around the increasing

pressures from the political, economic, and cultural environments of organization. Embryonic direction for coping with forces in the environment in contention with intraorganizational pressures is given.

Developing support for people is set forth as being necessary for the legitimation of change efforts. Inherent in all the viewpoints expressed in this section of *Part Two* is a commitment to the direct involvement of those to benefit by the change considered. These positions seem to be premised on the assumption that people must have the requisite motivation and skills for autonomous action in order to effectively participate in meaningful change activities.

Readings in *Part Three* treat planning structures and processes, education and re-education, and power in the "new" politics as they relate to interventions for change. The selections dealing with planning structures and processes point toward the desired holistic conceptual system. An attempt is made to indicate direction for serving personal needs, as well as organizational goals reflecting environmental needs. Normative re-education approaches to planned change focus on underlying processes. Kurt Lewin's views are appraised, the implications of relations between consultant and client are explored, and the role of the community change educator as a helping professional is described.

"Power and the New Politics" (pp. 259-423) is a collection of readings not included in earlier editions. The "new" politics are characterized by techniques which may seem shocking, or at least alien, to those committed to traditional strategies. The techniques espoused by the radicals represented in these readings tend to evoke optimism and, at the same time, create disequilibrium in value structures.

*Part Four* of *The Planning of Change* discusses the implications of the value dilemmas faced by change agents. Readings focus on identifying meritorious goals and confronting ethical issues. The process of identifying goals is approached as a set of interactions between society and the learning communities of society. Goals for future societies are presented as the basis for establishing a shared world culture. The continuous psychic re-creation of man's "self" and his perception of his fate is seen as a strategy for dealing with contemporary and future psychohistorical cultural dislocation. Means of dealing with the ethical issues confronting planners of change are presented as a cluster of value commitments—to collaboration; to the basing of plans upon valid knowledge; and, to reducing power differentials between men and groups of men.

The third edition of *The Planning of Change* is somewhat disjointed, but at the same time consistency in underlying themes is evident. Views on planned change have undergone considerable growth and refinement in recent years. The contemporary nature of these views is reflected in the readings selected for the latest edition—eighty percent of the readings are new! With new content, the third edition of *The Planning of Change* becomes the current standard reference for advocates of change.

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