THE CHANGING COMPOSITION OF THE
WORKFORCE

Implications for Future Research and Its Application

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PREFACE

The Annual Scientist-Practitioner Conferences in Industrial-Organizational Psychology were conceived by the Department of Psychology at Old Dominion University as a means to foster exchange of information, points of view, and insights among those who are engaged in research in the behavioral and social sciences, and those who, in various business, industrial, managerial, organizational, and educational roles, are actively engaged in work affording opportunities to apply the findings and concepts generated by scientific study (many people do both). Our vested interest and our hope is that the stimulus provided by these exchanges will help us and our professional cohorts in psychology and other disciplines to advance the cutting edge of theory and application in problem areas of present and prospective importance. The first of these conferences took place in 1980, and had as its theme, "Performance Appraisal." The papers here constitute the substantive contributions to the second conference which addressed issues pertinent to "The Changing Composition of the Workforce."

It should be noted that although industrial-organizational psychologists continue to claim parentage, this meeting can lay claim to an interdisciplinary lineage, validated by the presence on its panels and among the other invited participants of economists, labor officials, educators, personnel administrators, gerontologists, sociologists, business managers, and military officers, as well as others of unknown origins.

Four half-day panel presentations followed by open discussion considered issues with regard to changes in age composition and in gender composition, and to implications for management and labor and for higher education. No prescriptions were given to the scientist and practitioner panelists in each area other than that they be provocative and seek to highlight "implications for future research and its application." The vitality of discussion that was generated in each instance demonstrated the success with which they responded to that charge.

For their contributions, profound gratitude is due to the panelists; particularly because they had the distinction of being among the first to bear the sacrifice imposed by economies enforced by the incoming federal administration. Because expected funding was "frozen", no tangible reward for their efforts could be provided. To Raymond H. Kirby, Chair, Department of Psychology, Old Dominion University, go thanks for extracting from departmental funds the operational and panelist travel expenses that made it possible to put our plans for this Conference into effect.

The spirited and constructive inputs to discussion that came from the others in attendance -- to some degree assimilated in the final publication drafts here -- added substantially to the intellectual and social ambience of the meeting. The conduct of the Conference was also facilitated by the volunteer efforts of students in the ODU doctoral program in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and the administrative assistance of Nancy K. Eberhardt, Research Specialist. The burdens of the editor were eased by Elizabeth S. Henry, Associate Professor of Psychology, who initiated liaison with the publisher; by Sarah B. Sands, Secretary, Center for Applied Psychological Studies, who carried a large part of the responsibility for preparation in advance of the Conference and for the preparation of the manuscript of these proceedings, assisted by Karen Lound and Renee Lied; and Patricia M. Vann, Associate Editor, our principal contact at Plenum Publishing Corporation. To all of these, I express my great appreciation.

Albert S. Glickman

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