

Conrad and poole "relational strategy of organizing"



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What Conrad & Poole (1998) refer to as a "relational strategy of organizing" is more commonly called the "human relations approach" or "human relations school" of management by organizational theorists. This human relations approach can be seen as being almost entirely antithetical to the principles of classical management theory. Where classical management focused on the rationalization of work routines, human relations approaches stressed the accommodation of work routines and individual motivational and relational needs as a means of increasing productivity.

To a great extent, the human relations approach can be seen as a response to classical management an attempt to move away from the inflexibility of classical management approaches. The human relations approach can also be seen as a response to a highly charged and polarized social climate in which labor and management were viewed as fundamentally opposed to one another, and communism was seen as a very real and immediate danger to the social order the notion of class struggle propounded by Marxist theorists was taken very seriously.

By focusing on the extent to which workers and managers shared economic interests in the success of the organization, the human relations approach can be seen as an attempt to move beyond the class struggle idea. Of course, the human relations approach (which really emerged in the late 1930s) was made possible by the fairly coercive suppression of the most radical organized labor movements.

The sidebar describes one such movement, and is provided in order to indicate the social climate extant in the period immediately preceding the

emergence of the human relations approach. In essence, the human relations approach sees the organization as a cooperative enterprise wherein worker morale is a primary contributor to productivity, and so seeks to improve productivity by modifying the work environment to increase morale and develop a more skilled and capable worker.