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ABSTRACT

This speech contains an analysis of school personnel absence, that seeks to develop a formula useful for understanding more clearly the nature of absence behavior. Since absence is an important aspect of productivity, it is important to understand better the dynamics of absence. Absence could be conceptualized as contractual relationships within a social exchange framework. Within that framework, collective legitimacy and organizational attachment appear as promising explanatory concepts. The type and the length of absence are seen as indicators of legitimacy, while frequency of absence is seen as an indicator of attachment. The findings are consistent with the proposed sociological formulation and suggest that rules and regulations may confirm rather than initiate patterns of absence behavior. (Author)

COLLECTIVE LEGITIMACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT:

A Longitudinal Case Study of School Personnel Absences

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COLLECTIVE LEGITIMACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT: A Longitudinal Case Study of School Personnel Absences

Introduction

Absence has been a recurring subject of study, particularly absence from work, because of its economic consequences. Often the object is to provide knowledge about what happens in order to get clues about how to control absence.

Another approach is that directed toward understanding absence as a form of human behavior. Such study could lead eventually to prediction of absence behavior and so, also, provide a basis for control of absences.

The present analysis is one developed out of a much larger longitudinal case analysis of absence of personnel in a school system.[1] This analysis seeks to develop a formulation that may prove useful in efforts to understand more clearly the nature of absence behavior.

Case Study Background

The data of the general study were collected from school records of an inner-suburban school system of a metropolitan area of northeastern United States for the years 1938-9, 1948-9, 1958-9 and 1968-9. Through the first three the system had the same superintendent. There was a new superintendent in 1968-9. There was a continuity in record keeping. There appeared to be a concern about accuracy and detail in record keeping.

It was necessary to go to the original data to identify individual absences and so give data on both the frequency and duration of absences. The school recorded absences as "illness" and "other". The records also provided data on marital status, sex, age, service, work and size of school. State legislation to protect personnel against discrimination on age resulted in considerable 'no data' on age in 1968-9. General descriptive data are provided in Table 1.[2]

There were some changes in absence policy during the period. Starting well before 1938-9 the policy for teachers was ten days a year without loss of salary and in case of absence exceeding ten days but not exceeding two months in any one year, half salary was paid. Effective September 1, 1945 sick leave for teachers was made cumulative without limit on the basis of ten days a year. Policy for civil service workers was generally the same. Five days absence without loss of pay on account of death in the family was also allowed.

There was no formal change between 1948-9 and 1958-9. In 1968-9 sick leave policy was ten days annually cumulative without limit for the first five years of service after which 12 days were allowed cumulative without limit. Other types of leave were: administrative (up to five days), death in family (up to five days), funeral (one day), religious (three days a year), and court appearance.

This report is an analysis of part of the data collected. Since it is a case study, generalization to other school systems is not intended. Chi square and gamma statistics are reported as indicators of relative degree of association of variables.

Formulation Background

Much of the literature has emphasized understanding absence of personnel in terms of characteristics, such as age and sex, of the individuals who are absent or not. Review of the literature and preliminary analysis of data suggests a need for a conceptualization that would give much more attention to the social aspects of absence (Gibson, 1966).[3] The studies of Gadourek (1965 and 1969), Philipsen (1968 and 1969) and Backenheimer (1968) give clear support to the usefulness of viewing absence as a social phenomenon. This perspective suggests that absence behavior is performance in an absence role based upon the rights and duties supported by the institutional normative structures.

In sum, there is a growing body of literature that points to the usefulness of reducing the emphasis on micro analysis of the person and the absence and directing more attention to the larger social context. This approach is given further credence by the overall data of the study. Table 2 reports the annual frequency and duration (number of days) of absence. There is a clear tendency running through the data, a sort of social "jet stream", of increasing annual frequency and number of days of absence. At the same time that the proportion of individual absences of one and two days was increasing, that of three days and longer was decreasing while duration of individual absences was decreasing (Table 3). The social "jet stream" phenomenon was pervasive and consistent in increasing frequency and days of absence with decrease in the duration of individual absences. The jet stream effect held in subanalysis for both "illness" and "other" absences. Further initial analysis assessed the degree of association of the other variables (marital status, sex, age, length of service, work and size of school) upon which data were collected. Age and sex had relatively low levels of association as did size of school. Marital status was distinctly more strongly associated and length of service and type of work were most strongly associated.

Marital status, length of service and type of work point again toward social analysis. If we think of work in this context as the manifest role, marital status may be seen as an importantly related latent role. Length of service may be seen as duration of manifest role occupancy and type of work as an indicator of role status ranging from supportive through instructional to administrator. The data provide a particularly useful opportunity to look at length of service and personnel entering and leaving the system with respect to changing absence.

Service and Absence: An Analysis of Systemic Absence Change

The data were collected at ten-year intervals. Anyone with up to ten years of service is called a "newcomer"; anyone with ten years or more service was there at the last data collection and is called "continuing". Those there at the start of the ten-year period and not there at the end are called "leavers".

Cross-sectional analysis at each of the four years indicated that frequency of absence was negatively associated with length of service. At any point in time, apparently, the longer personnel have been with system, the less likely it is that they will be absent; it may be that those with stronger attachment to the

system are those who stay. Does this association hold longitudinally? If so, continuing personnel will be less frequently absent ten years later than they were at the start of the period; leavers, since they are at the end of service, could be expected to be relatively lower and newcomers, since they are starting, higher.

Those expectations were tested for the periods 1938-9 - 1948-9 and 1948-9 - 1958-9. The results in Tables 4 and 5 are quite different from the proposed expectations, and those differences are strikingly consistent for both periods. At the end of each period continuing personnel were much more frequently absent than they were at the start. The newcomers were similarly different from the leavers. There is a striking similarity between the continuing personnel and leavers at the start of the period and the continuing and newcomers at the end. Peers at a point in time seem to be more alike in their absence behavior than they are like themselves ten years from then. Does this mean that we are dealing with a collective understanding about the norms that give legitimacy to absence roles? This collective understanding manifests itself in a steady increase in illness absence which, in turn, "creeps" into other less legitimate absence (creeping legitimacy).

Another question arises. Who are the bearers of this creeping legitimacy? Are the continuing personnel the bearers of creeping legitmacy, the newcomers picking it up,or does it enter through the newcomers? The organizational attachment assumption leads to the expectation that continuing personnel will be less frequently absent than newcomers and both will be quite consistent in this regard over time as the frequencies of both increase. These expectations are born out in Tables 6 and 7 for illness and other absences. Since newcomers are more frequently absent than continuing personnel, it may be that newcomers are, in part at least, bearers of creeping legitimacy.

In the matter of legitimacy, illness would normally be conceived to be a more legitimate reason than "other" for absence. It would then be reasonable to expect that creeping legitimacy would make its early appearance in absence of higher legitimacy (illness) and then "creep" in the lower legitimacy level (other). In Table 6 a comparison of the high frequency-low legitimacy absences (3 or more a year) for continuing personnel and newcomers shows that lower legitimacy is creeping forward in both illness and other absences increasing more rapidly first in illness, later shifting to other reasons. High frequency of illness was at a level in 1938-9 not approached by other absences until 1958-9. This trend was given further legitimacy by the change of absence policy during the following decade. By 1968-9 high frequency of absence for other reasons had moved ahead of illness.

If newcomers are ahead in creeping legitimacy, we could expect that they will lead in the succession from illness to other. This expectation is born out in Table 8.

Frequency and type of absence tend to be indicators of legitimacy with low frequency being more legitimate than high frequency and illness more than other. What about the length of the individual absence? Regularly the longer the absence, the more the likelihood that evidence (e.g., doctor's certificate) will be needed. Thus, longer absences would be more likely to be made legitimate than would short ones. If such is the case, we could expect newcomers to account for a greater portion of short absences (one day) and continuing personnel to account for a greater portion of longer absences. This expectation is born out in Table 9.

In summary, in the school district under study, frequency and number of days of absence were increasing throughout the period while the duration of individual absences was decreasing. If we assume that these changes relate to the normative structure of the system, we could propose that there is a process of creeping legitimacy at work. If so, we could expect continuing personnel to "creep" more slowly than newcomers. Newcomers do indeed seem to lead the way to increased frequency of shorter absences for other than illness reasons. All the while, however, the newcomers are more like their contemporary continuing personnel than either is like previous or later such groups.

Discussion: Notes Toward a Formulation

Throughout the period under study many people made many decisions to go to school to work or not. Each, no doubt, felt that the reasons were quite idiosyncratic; one had a cold, another had to observe a holiday, another had a sick child at home and another felt that there was a day off coming to him. Despite what must have been the feeling of uniqueness in each decision, the pervasive trend of increasing annual frequency and number of days of absence along with decreasing length of individual absences across the whole period suggests that there is a social dynamic at work in some very major way.

The notion of some pervasive social entity is not a new one. Rousseau spoke of the "general will"[5]. The concept was given greater conceptual clarity early in the present century by Durkheim as the "conscience collective"[6]. The construct in Durkheim no longer assumed a rathor static, given "will" but a dynamic social variable involving a "system of beliefs and sentiments" held in a shared way by people in a society as a basis for how they ought to act with respect to one another. Durkheim later developed more fully the idea of socially shared normative components as collective representations[7], emphasizing their cultural and symbolic aspects. For instance, the totem may serve as a concrete symbol around which clusters a set of inter-related collective meanings. It appears to be this socially epistemic correlation between the concrete symbol and the abstract cultural meaning that Levi-Strauss calls the totemic operator[8]. One is led to speculate about the mechanisms that serve to link collective meaning to concrete instances of action. The flag and/or the national anthem serve such a purpose in linking collective ideology to individual action. Thus, it seems useful to think of a socially structured symbol system that links collectively understood norms to the rights and duties of persons, namely to their roles, and to their action. This symbolic linkage system may be seen as a symbolic transducer[9].

Parsons has given increased conceptual precision and clarity by introducing a hierarchy of subsystems of action; namely, behavioral organism, personality, society, and culture[10]. Those four systems may be seen as ranging from the concrete or particularistic to the abstract or universalistic. Parsons sees that distribution as directly associated with level of information and indirectly associated with level of energy. "As we move downward, control of more and more necessary conditions makes the implementation of patterns, plans, or programs possible. Systems higher in the order are relatively high in information while those lower down are relatively high in energy."[11] The level of collective understanding may now be seen as a cultural system cybernetically related to other aspects of social action providing a high level of information and control. Absence may be viewed as a form of social action on the part of behavioral organisms (people) controlled by collectively held normative understanding which define the level of legitimacy of the action for those people in the system at that time.

Dynamic inter-relations of systemic components at a point in time are here called a horizontal section while dynamic inter-relations of components over time are called a longitudinal section. One of the more useful modes of longitudinal analysis is that of modernization, particularly that developed by Levy[12]. The formulation views the process of modernization as one composed of several variables: increasing modernization is associated with increasing specialization of units, decreasing self-sufficiency of units, increasing universalism, increasing centralization, increasingly rational, universalistic, functionally specific and avoidant social relationships, and more generalized media of exchange and markets. This analysis points to major shifts in modernization from loyalty to rationality and from persons to tasks. Levy gives little attention to cultural aspects of the process. Clearly such a process can be expected to affect collective normative understandings, particularly those related to work and absence from work. Increased absence would seem likely on the whole.

The work contract of employees and the attached rules and regulations may be seen as a symbolic transducer linking general normative beliefs about work and what one does on the job. That contract provides a linkage with the social conceptual base for legitimacy of absence from work; indeed explicit provision is normally made for absences. It is probably useful to distinguish between informal and formal (or emergent and institutionalized) contractual relationships. Almost all treatises on contracts recognize the social legitimacy of unwritten collective normative understanding, e.g., how to eat, speak, dress, etc. These informal or emergent expectations are woven into the normative conceptual base of the society (for example, related to the "work ethic") while responsive to modernization processes in the system. As the collective meaning shifts sufficiently to justify behavior that is quite distinguishable from earlier behavior, operationally there would have been a change of an informal sort in the contract.

An example of such a change can be drawn from the school system under study in this paper. The community had a very large Jewish population component. By the 'fifties community understandings gave legitimacy to the practice of being absent for holy days while drawing pay as one would for illness. Thus, the informal part of the contract, as a symbolic transducer, was already legitimizing absences conceptually related to the collective meaning of the society. It was not until the following decade that the change was formally recognized by changes in regulations that made provision for holy days. It has been reported that protestants experience some concern about ways in which such rights might be conceptualized and so given legitimacy under their collective understandings.

This line of reason suggests that informal or emergent legitimacy will be clothed in formal legitimacy (holy days claimed under illness, for example) until such time as it has been institutionalized with the formal legitimacy of written contractual rules. In the case under study there was growing legitimacy for illness absence and there is some evidence to suggest that some other absences which came to be viewed as legitimate came to be included under that heading. During the last decade some of those other absences were given formal legitimacy. Under these circumstances, it would be reasonable to expect that during the early part of the period illness absence would have increased considerably and have leveled off somewhat toward the end of the period as the rate of other absences gained momentum. This shift is hypothesized upon the assumption that a number of absences would move from the older legitimacy of illness and show under their new legitimacy. Figure 1 provides a comparison of means of illness and other absences by year. It appears that they lend themselves to the above interpretation.

The previous analysis and discussion suggests a sort of diffusion or contagion effect in the process of increasing absence. Presumably in the early stages low legitimacy absence is seen as a form of deviance and is slow in its rate of diffusion. As it comes to be accepted as part of the collectively understood norms, the rate could be expected to increase. The rate of spread could be given fresh impetus when the informal is changed to formal through rule change. Something of this sort does seem to be at work. The rate of increase of mean frequency of other absences is positive but moderate during the period 1930-9 through 1950-9. The turning point on the graph is in the decade 1959-1960, and it is in that decade that the rule change occurred. It may be that the emergent deviance must be acted out and incorporated into the collective normative understanding before it can be given formal legitimacy in the rule structure. It also appears that once such a symbolic transducer has been introduced then the rate of spread increases sharply. These observations lend some credibility to the proposition that formal policy change or legislative legitimization will occur near the turning point in the curve of innovation.

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF PERSONNEL
BY YEAR AND STUDY CLASSIFICATIONS

Study Classifications	1938-9 N	1938-9 %	1948-9 N	1948-9 %	1958-9 N	1958-9 %	1968-9 N	1968-9 %
N	354		411		500		800	
1. Employed 1938-9	354	100	168	41	119	24	19	2
No data	-	-	90	22	9	2	45	6
2. Employed 1948-9	170	48	411	100	242	48	100	12
No data	3	1	-	-	9	2	39	5
3. Employed 1958-9	103	29	218	53	500	100	227	28
No data	3	1	8	2	-	-	28	4
4. Employed 1968-9	No data		No data		No data		800	100
5. Marital Status								
Single	83	23	100	24	149	30	284	35
Married	55	16	125	30	246	49	516	65
No data	216	61	186	45	105	21	-	-
6. Sex								
Male	80	23	100	24	132	26	231	29
Female	274	77	311	76	368	74	569	71
No data	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 1 - Continued

Study Classifications	1938-9 N	1938-9 %	1948-9 N	1948-9 %	1958-9 N	1958-9 %	1968-9 N	1968-9 %
7. Age								
Under 30	24	7	56	14	74	15	162	20
30 - 44	159	45	145	35	146	29	184	23
45 - 59	108	31	164	40	209	42	222	28
60 and over	36	10	29	7	69	14	63	8
No data	27	8	17	4	2	-	169	21
8. Service								
Under 5 years	68	19	104	25	179	36	467	58
5 - 9	89	25	51	12	69	14	102	13
10 - 14	64	18	36	9	73	15	78	10
15 - 19	32	9	56	14	50	10	53	7
20 and over	62	18	75	18	120	24	100	12
No data	39	11	89	22	9	2	-	-
9. Work								
Administrator	15	4	21	5	17	3	18	2
Instructional	261	74	284	69	349	70	556	70
Supportive	78	22	106	26	134	27	226	28
No data	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. Size of School								
Under 20 teachers	173	49	162	39	112	22	7	1
20 - 29	0	-	38	9	31	6	80	10
30 - 39	43	12	48	12	89	18	192	24
40 - 99	0	-	-	-	55	11	124	15
100 and over	129	36	141	34	172	34	388	49
No data	9	3	22	5	41	8	-	-

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF TOTAL ABSENCE OF PERSONNEL BY STUDY YEARS

Frequency of Total Absence

Frequency	1938-9 N	1938-9 C %	1938-9 Cu %	1948-9 N	1948-9 C %	1948-9 Cu %	1958-9 N	1958-9 C %	1958-9 Cu %	1968-9 N	1968-9 C %	1968-9 Cu %
0	127	36	36	93	23	23	59	12	12	30	4	4
1	99	28	64	96	23	46	109	22	34	79	10	14
2	58	16	80	70	17	63	105	21	55	95	12	26
3	30	9	89	62	15	78	78	15	70	107	13	39
4 & +	40	11	100	90	22	100	149	30	100	489	61	100
	354	100		411	100		500	100		800	100	

Duration of Total Absence

Days	1938-9 N	1938-9 C %	1938-9 Cu %	1948-9 N	1948-9 C %	1948-9 Cu %	1958-9 N	1958-9 C %	1958-9 Cu %	1968-9 N	1968-9 C %	1968-9 Cu %
0	127	36	36	93	23	23	59	12	12	29	4	3
1 - 2	71	20	56	79	19	42	91	18	30	97	12	15
3 - 4	54	15	71	71	17	59	101	20	50	98	12	27
5 - 9	54	15	86	100	24	83	131	26	76	284	35	63
10 & +	48	14	100	68	17	100	118	24	100	292	37	100
	354	100		411	100		500	100		800	100	
No data												

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ALL ABSENCE DURATIONS

BY STUDY YEARS

Days Duration	1938-9 %	1948-9 %	1958-9 %	1968-9 %
First Absence				
1 - 2	64	74	74	83
3 - 4	21	14	14	8
5 - 9	8	8	7	6
10 & +	6	4	5	3
Second Absence				
1 - 2	54	77	77	82
3 - 4	19	10	12	12
5 - 9	16	8	8	5
10 & +	12	5	3	1
Third Absence				
1 - 2	47	66	77	76
3 - 4	17	14	11	12
5 - 9	20	13	7	10
10 & +	16	7	5	2

TABLE 4

Comparison of Frequency of Total Absence of
Continuing Personnel from 1938-9 to 1948-9, Leavers 1939 to 1948 and Newcomers 1939 to 1948

No. of Absences	Continuing 1938-9 No. of Personnel	Col. %	Row %		Continuing 1948-9 No. of Personnel	Col. %	Row %
0	65	38	61		41	24	39
1	45	27	50		45	27	50
2	31	18	49	x^2=12.997	32	19	51
				.05 > p > .01			
3	11	7	35		21	13	65
4 & +	18	11	39	γ=.249	29	17	61
Total	170	101			168	100	
	x^2=3.100 N.S.			γ=.075	x^2=4.811 N.S.		γ=.081
	Leavers 1939 to 1948				Newcomers 1939 to 1948		
0	61	34	58		38	25	42
1	52	29	57		33	22	43
2	27	15	52	x^2=33.472	21	14	48
				p<.001			
3	19	11	38		28	18	62
4 & +	22	12	35	γ=.395	33	22	65
Total	181	101			153	101	

Comparison of Frequency of Total Absence of
Continuing Personnel from 1948-9 to 1958-9, Leavers 1949 to 1958 and Newcomers 1949 to 1958

No. of Absences	Continuing 1948-9 No. of Personnel	Col. %	Row %		Continuing 1958-9 No. of Personnel	Col. %	Row %
0	71	33	71		29	12	29
1	49	22	49		52	21	52
2	36	16	37	x^2=34.738 $p < .001$	61	25	63
3	30	14	44		38	16	56
4 & +	32	15	34	γ=.325	62	26	66
Total	218	100			242	100	
	x^2=4.639		γ=.059		x^2=6.232		γ=.092
	Leavers 1949-1958				Newcomers 1949-1958		
0	53	29	35		29	12	65
1	47	25	47		53	21	53
2	30	16	41	x^2=21.211 $p < .001$	44	18	59
3	17	9	31		38	15	69
4 & +	38	21	31	γ=.338	85	34	69
Total	185	100			249	100	

TABLE 6 -13-

Percentage Comparison of Newcomers and Continuing Personnel by Low, Medium and High Absence Frequency and Years of Study Data

Frequency	Total Absences	1938-9 %	1948-9 %	1958-9 %	1968-9 %
Low (0 & 1)	Newcomers	62	47	32	13
	Continuing	67	51	33	16
Medium (2)	Newcomers	17	13	17	9
	Continuing	16	19	26	18
High (3 & +)	Newcomers	22	40	50	88
	Continuing	17	30	41	66

Frequency	Illness Absences	1938-9 %	1948-9 %	1958-9 %	1968-9 %
Low (0 & 1)	Newcomers	67	53	40	33
	Continuing	75	59	47	37
Medium (2)	Newcomers	16	18	18	19
	Continuing	12	15	21	24
High (3 & +)	Newcomers	17	29	42	47
	Continuing	14	26	31	39

Frequency	Other Absences	1938-9 %	1948-9 %	1958-9 %	1968-9 %
Low (0)	Newcomers	83	70	67	21
	Continuing	84	78	64	30
Medium (1)	Newcomers	13	16	21	21
	Continuing	13	16	23	24
High (2 & +)	Newcomers	4	14	12	57
	Continuing	3	6	13	46

TABLE 7

Frequency of Total Absence for Newcomers and Continuing Personnel and Year of Data

Frequency	Newcomers								Continuing							
	1938-9		1948-9		1958-9		1968-9		1938-9		1948-9		1958-9		1968-9	
	N	%*	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	47	30	38	25	28	11	22	4	70	44	40	24	30	12	8	3
1	49	31	34	22	53	21	49	9	37	23	45	27	52	21	30	13
2	27	17	21	13	43	17	53	9	25	16	32	19	62	25	42	18
3	15	10	28	18	38	15	78	14	11	7	21	13	38	16	29	13
4	19	12	34	22	86	35	367	65	15	10	29	17	61	25	122	53
Total	157		155		248		569		158		167		243		231	
	$x^2 = 269.546$			γ .543					$x^2 = 190.852$			γ .482				

* Because of rounding, columns may not add to exactly 100%.

TABLE 8 -15-

Percentage Frequency of Illness and Other Absence
for Newcomers and Continuing Personnel and Year of Data

Illness Absence Frequency	Newcomers 1938-9 % *	1948-9 %	1958-9 %	1968-9 %	Continuing 1938-9 %	1948-9 %	1958-9 %	1968-9 %
0	37	32	17	13	49	33	21	19
1	30	21	23	20	26	26	26	18
2	16	18	18	19	12	15	21	24
3	7	13	13	15	8	11	12	14
4 & +	10	15	29	32	6	15	19	25
		$x^2 = 91.515$	$\gamma .292$			$x^2 = 75.187$	$\gamma .306$	
Other Absence								
0	82	70	67	21	84	78	64	30
1	13	15	21	21	13	16	24	24
2	3	8	6	18	1	4	9	16
3	1	4	3	16	1	1	3	11
4 & +	1	3	2	23	1	1	0	19
		$x^2 = 363.852$	$\gamma .687$			$x^2 = 221.819$	$\gamma .608$	

* Because of rounding, columns may not add to exactly 100%.

TABLE 9

Percentage Comparison of Newcomers and Continuing Personnel on Low, Medium and High Duration of the First, Second and Third Absences, Total and for Illness and Other Reasons

Total Absences

Days Duration		1938-9 First	1938-9 Second	1938-9 Third	1948-9 First	1948-9 Second	1948-9 Third	1958-9 First	1958-9 Second	1958-9 Third	1968-9 First	1968-9 Second	1968-9 Third
Low 1-2	Newcomers	68	53	53	74	81	66	81	81	79	86	85	77
	Continuing	56	57	39	71	69	60	69	71	74	76	75	75
	Difference	-12	+4	-14	-3	-12	-6	-12	-10	-5	-10	-10	-2
Medium 3-4	Newcomers	20	23	18	15	11	18	10	10	11	7	10	12
	Continuing	27	20	15	16	17	14	17	15	11	11	15	13
	Difference	+7	-3	-3	+1	+6	-4	+7	+5	0	+4	+5	+1
High 5-+	Newcomers	12	25	29	11	8	16	9	8	11	7	5	11
	Continuing	17	24	46	13	13	26	14	14	15	12	10	12
	Difference	+5	-1	+17	+2	+5	+10	+5	+6	+4	+5	+5	+1

Illness Absences

Low 1-2	Newcomers	67	56	52	75	77	69	79	80	79	82	80	77
	Continuing	56	60	29	70	69	61	70	66	76	64	72	70
	Difference	-11	+4	-23	-5	-8	-8	-9	-14	-3	-18	-8	-7
Medium 3-4	Newcomers	20	19	15	13	11	16	10	12	13	10	10	15
	Continuing	25	17	14	16	15	12	16	15	9	17	14	12
	Difference	+5	-2	-1	+3	+4	-4	+6	+3	-4	+7	+4	-3
High 5-+	Newcomers	13	25	33	12	12	15	11	8	8	8	10	9
	Continuing	20	23	57	14	16	28	12	19	15	19	14	18
	Difference	+7	-2	+24	+2	+4	+13	+1	+9	+7	+11	+4	+9

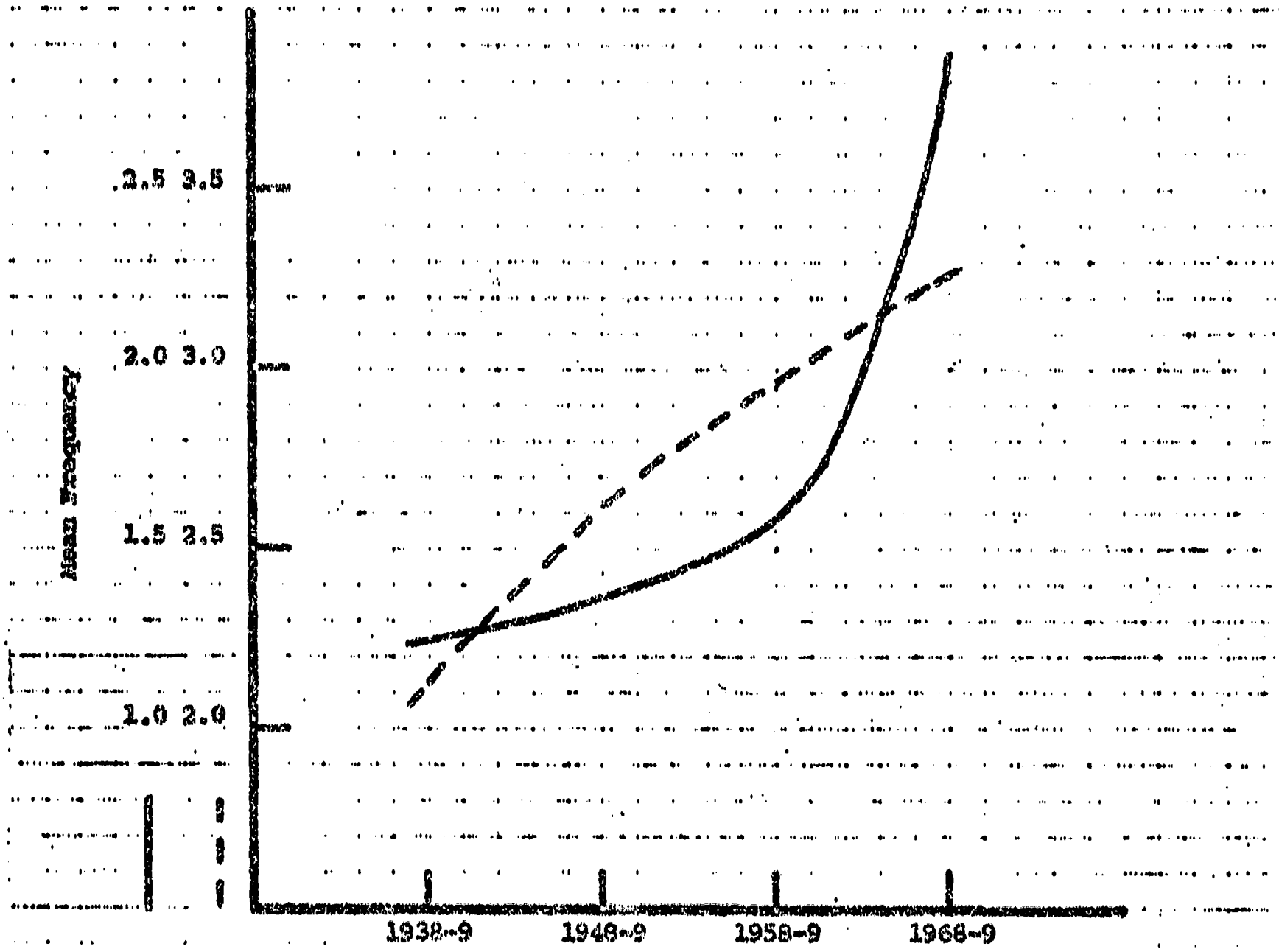
Table 9 - Continued

Other Absences

Days Duration		1938-9 First	1938-9 Second	1938-9 Third	1948-9 First	1948-9 Second	1948-9 Third	1958-9 First	1958-9 Second	1958-9 Third	1968-9 First	1968-9 Second	1968-9 Third
Low	Newcomers	63	50	100	70	86	50	81	83	50	88	85	57
1-2	Continuing	52	50	50	67	89	67	74	74	78	84	85	46
	Difference	-11	0	-50	-3	+3	+17	-7	-9	+28	-4	0	-11
Medium	Newcomers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nil	Continuing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Difference	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High	Newcomers	37	50	0	30	14	50	19	17	50	12	15	43
3-+	Continuing	48	50	50	33	11	33	26	26	22	16	15	54
	Difference	+11	0	+50	+3	-3	-17	+7	+9	-28	+4	0	+11

FIGURE 1

Mean Frequency of Illness and Other Absences by Years



Notes:

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2. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Computing Center, State University of New York for use of their CDC 6400 digital computer systems.

3. This article and those immediately following are:

   R. Oliver Gibson, "Toward a Conceptualization of Absence Behavior of Personnel in Organizations", Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 1, June 1966, pp. 107-133.

   I. Gadourek, Absences and Well-Being of Workers, Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., 1965.

   I. Gadourek, "Absenteeism, An Unsolved Problem", Ralph I. Collins (ed.), Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969.

   H. Philipsen, "Some Aspects of Rising Absenteeism", Mens en Ondern, Vol. 20, 1966-67.

   H. Philipsen, Absence Due to Illness, Leiden, The Netherlands: Institute of Preventive Medicine, 1968.

   Michael S. Backenheimer, "Demographic and Job Characteristics as Variables in Absences for Illness", Public Health Reports, Vol. 83, No. 12, Dec. 1968, pp. 1029-1032.

4. This study was made of a population and does not involve sampling assumptions. Use is made of X^2 and γ as indicators of relative strength of association.

5. J. J. Rousseau, Social Contract.

6. Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, Primitive Classification; Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor and Suicide. See also the very helpful article "Emile Durkheim" by Talcott Parsons in The International Encyclopedia of Social Science, Vol. 4, pp. 311-319.

7. Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.

8. Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, pp. 151ff.

Notes: (Continued)

9. The concept of a symbolic transducer conceives of the symbol as a means of transmitting information from one location to another and introducing modulation that makes it meaningful at the receiving location. The social role of symbols is treated extensively by Hugh Dalziel Duncan in Symbols in Society (Oxford, 1968). His axiomatic proposition 1 is: "Society arises in, and continues to exist through, the communication of significant symbols". His first two theoretical propositions are of some relevance here: "Social order, and its expression through hierarchy, is a social drama in which the actors struggle to uphold, destroy, or change principles of order which are believed "necessary to social integration" and "Social differences are resolved through appeals to principles of social order believed to be ultimate and transcendant sources of order". The symbolic transducer is seen as a means by which that translation process proceeds in society. Drama may serve such a purpose. The drama frequently surrounding the signing of a negotiated agreement, particularly when there has been open disagreement, serves to clarify its social legitimacy. Also in this connection there comes to mind the ballet, The Red Detachment of Women, recently shown during President Nixon's visit to China.

10. Talcott Parsons, Societies (Prentice-Hall, 1966).

11. Ibid. p. 28.

12. Marion J. Levy, Jr., Modernization and the Structure of Societies, (Princeton, 1966).