

OPEN ACCESS

ISSN 2280-4056

*E-Journal of
International and Comparative*

LABOUR STUDIES

Volume 3, No. 1 January 2014



ADAPT
www.adapt.it
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ADAPT *International School of Higher Education in Labour and Industrial Relations*

Scientific Directors

Lauren Appelbaum (USA), Greg Bamber (Australia), Stuart M. Basefsky, (United States), Daria V. Chernyaeva (Russia), Richard Croucher (United Kingdom), Maurizio del Conte (Italy), Tomas Davulis (Lithuania), Tayo Fashoyin (Nigeria), József Hajdu (Hungary), Ann Hodges (USA), Richard Hyman (United Kingdom), Maarten Keune (The Netherlands), Chris Leggett (Australia), Guglielmo Meardi, (United Kingdom), Shinya Ouchi (Japan), Massimo Pilati (Italy), Valeria Pulignano (Belgium), Michael Quinlan (Australia), Juan Raso Delgue (Uruguay), Raúl G. Saco Barrios (Peru), Alfredo Sánchez Castaneda (Mexico), Malcolm Sargeant (United Kingdom), Jean-Michel Servais (Belgium), Silvia Spattini (Italy), Michele Tiraboschi (Italy), Anil Verma (Canada), Stephen A. Woodbury (USA)

Joint Managing Editors

Malcolm Sargeant (Middlesex University, United Kingdom)
Michele Tiraboschi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy)

Editorial Board

Lilli Casano (Italy), Francesca Fazio (Italy), Emanuele Ferragina (United Kingdom), Antonio Firinu (Italy), Valentina Franca (Slovenia), Maria Giovannone (Italy), Erica Howard (United Kingdom), Karl Koch (United Kingdom), Lefteris Kretsos (United Kingdom), Attila Kun (Hungary), Felicity Lamm (New Zealand), Cristina Lincaru (Romania), Nikita Lyutov (Russia), Merle Muda (Estonia), Boaz Munga (Kenya), John Opute (UK), Eleonora Peliza (Argentina), Daiva Petrylaite (Lithuania), Ceciel Rayer (The Netherlands), Aidan Regan (Ireland), Marian Rizov (United Kingdom), Salma Slama (Tunisia), Francesca Sperotti (Italy), Araya Mesele Welemariam (Ethiopia), Barbara Winkler (Austria), Machilu Zimba (South Africa)

Language Editor

Pietro Manzella (ADAPT Senior Research Fellow)

Book Review Editor

Chris Leggett (James Cook University, Australia)

Digital Editor

Avinash Raut (ADAPT Technologies)

***The Committed Workforce: Evidence from the Field* by Yannis Markovits. A Review**

George Tsogas*

The Committed Workforce: Evidence from the Field examines the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction within the Greek organizational and cultural context, by probing employee attitudes, both in private and public sector organizations. This book is original in three distinctive ways. First, it provides a rare view of the interplay between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, by uniquely examining the role of economic sector and type of employment. Second, it is focused on Greece; a rarity considering the scarcity of literature addressing employment issues in this country. Third, while field research was mostly undertaken during the “prosperity” years, the publication of the book coincides with the worst depression suffered by Greece in the post-war years, with still unfolding consequences. Thus, this book stands at the crossroads of unique historical and cultural contexts.

Written in a rich and concise way, the book – based on the author’s Ph.D. thesis – is divided into seven chapters. Following the typical structure of a doctoral dissertation, chapter one provides the research background, explaining the contribution to existing knowledge. The second, introductory, chapter presents an extensive literature review (including a discussion on how English-language research has investigated the Greek organizational and cultural idiosyncrasies), as well as analyses of the concepts under examination: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, regulatory focus, and organizational citizenship behaviour, as well as the

* George Tsogas is Associate Professor of Management in the Cyprus International Institute of Management (CIIM). The present review refers to Yannis Markovits, *The Committed Workforce: Evidence from the Field*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2012. 217 pp. ISBN 978 1 4438 4084 2.

relations among them. Further, the book uses four studies, each examining the views of both public and private sector employees through statistical analyses of structured questionnaires. Each study is preceded by an in-depth discussion of its conceptual framework, methodology, and theoretical underpinnings. In chapter three, Study 1 examines how the economic sector in Greece moderates the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Findings suggest that private sector employees in Greece experience job satisfaction “more conservatively than public sector employees as it only aligns with their initial expectations. The relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment for the private sector employees is more cognitive than affective,” whereas it is suggested that the opposite is the case for public sector employees (p 65). In chapter four, Study 2 investigates how commitment profiles relate to job satisfaction in both sectors. Findings “lend support to the contention that commitment needs to be considered as a whole, irrespective of the formulation of commitment being used, and not merely broken down into constituent parts, or, in other words, seeking to develop organizational identification or ‘affective commitment’ is of primarily importance” (p 88). Study 3, in the fifth chapter, introduces regulatory focus theory and the relationship of regulatory focus with organizational commitment. Specifically, regulatory foci characters are developed and their moderation is examined with respect to job satisfaction and organizational commitment in both sectors. Findings suggest that “employees who tend to behave by safeguarding their interests and their job positions and status, are the ones that significantly positively relate satisfaction to commitment” (p 121). Chapter six includes the concluding Study 4, where the mediating role of job satisfaction is examined with respect to the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviours. Findings confirm the important role that job satisfaction plays on the power of the relationships between commitment and organizational citizenship behaviours. Finally, chapter seven provides some general conclusions derived from the survey, implications for theory, policy and HRM practices, the limitations of this work, and recommendations for further research. The book concludes with a references list, appendices the questionnaires used in field studies, and useful author and subject indexes.

The Committed Workforce: Evidence from the Field is an innovative research monograph – highly technical at points, especially on the statistical research parameters – aimed at a sophisticated audience. It will be essential reading for advanced researchers of work psychology and HRM

and for ambitious doctoral researchers who may wish to follow up on its suggestions for further research, or use it as a reference of a well-executed research project.

Nonetheless, we suggest that some caution should be exercised when contemplating the applicability of its findings. We advise that there is a high cultural and organisational specificity in the outcomes of this research, chiefly as far as the character of the public sector in Greece is concerned. At the outset the author hypothesises that “since employees in the private and public sector experience substantially different employment and organizational conditions, contracts and work environments, the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction should differ substantially, resulting to the development and implementation of tailor-made management practices and policies for human resources.” But, these differences in the public sector of Greece, how they came about, and how they specifically may influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction, are issues that have not been debated in the book. Under different circumstances, recognising such specificities might be a topic for an interesting academic debate. Nowadays, in the years of austerity, the troika, and of severe hardship for millions of Greeks, such omission is indefensible.

What is missing from *The Committed Workforce* is a critical appraisal of the social, cultural, and political background that has coloured the formation of the public sector in Greece. It all comes down to two words: corruption and patronage. Without any exaggeration, public sector employment in Greece is the cancer that has pushed the country to its current deathbed. Based on a client system of political patronage, jobs in the public sector have been typically generously ‘awarded’ across the numerous quangos, state enterprises, and departments (with some employees, nonetheless, entering the system through exams). At the time of carrying out field research for this book, conditions of employment for public sector employees were still very generous, salaries typically much higher than in equivalent positions in the private sector, and for open-ended contracts, employment was guaranteed, regardless of performance (which is still not assessed, across the whole of public sector in Greece) and even regardless of malice. Civil servants, as the author, still have constitutionally-guaranteed life employment. Consequently, people attracted by public sector employment have (also) included the least skilled, those lacking any ambition and the poorly educated.

Even after more than three years of austerity, resulting in more than 25% (private sector) unemployment rates, and the catastrophic deterioration of every socio-economic index, public sector jobs are still the ‘sacred cow’ of

the deeply corrupt Greek political system. How do these cultural and political “peculiarities” of Greece account for job satisfaction and commitment of public vs. private sector employees? Nowhere in the book is there any discussion of these issues. Thus, a number of serious questions arise: in general, how valid are the research findings when the historical and cultural specificities, that enabled the employee attitudes which are being probed in the research project, are ignored; and how applicable in a European context – as the survey positions itself – are the derived theory and policy implications? We suggest that the geographical location of Greece is not sufficient for a theoretical and policy treatment along (west) European HRM outlines. Instead, the pervasive nature of corruption, as evidenced by public sector employment based on cronyism, ought to bring about comparisons with developing and neighbouring east-European countries (a taboo comparison for many in Greece). The research question should then have been modified to account for the influences of a multifaceted and overbearing system of corruption and patronage, on the parameters on this research and, through them, to overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Such approach would have allowed for a more pragmatic explanation of the findings, historically and culturally specific.

Adapt International Network



ADAPT is a non-profit organisation founded in 2000 by Prof. Marco Biagi with the aim of promoting studies and research in the field of labour law and industrial relations from an international and comparative perspective. Our purpose is to encourage and implement a new approach to academic research, by establishing ongoing relationships with other universities and advanced studies institutes, and promoting academic and scientific exchange programmes with enterprises, institutions, foundations and associations. In collaboration with DEAL – the Centre for International and Comparative Studies on Law, Economics, Environment and Work, the Marco Biagi Department of Economics, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, ADAPT set up the International School of Higher Education in Labour and Industrial Relations, a centre of excellence which is accredited at an international level for research, study and postgraduate programmes in the area of industrial and labour relations. Further information at www.adapt.it.

For more information about the E-journal and to submit a paper, please send a mail to LS@adapt.it.

