

A MACAT ANALYSIS

CHRIS ARGYRIS'S

THE INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATION

SOME PROBLEMS OF
MUTUAL ADJUSTMENT





An Analysis of

Chris Argyris's

**The Individual
and Organization:
Some Problems of
Mutual Adjustment**

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Three allow us to fully understand a problem; three more give us the tools to solve it. Together, these six skills make up the

PACIER model of critical thinking. They are:

ANALYSIS – understanding how an argument is built

EVALUATION – exploring the strengths and weaknesses of an argument

INTERPRETATION – understanding issues of meaning

CREATIVE THINKING – coming up with new ideas and fresh connections

PROBLEM-SOLVING – producing strong solutions

REASONING – creating strong arguments

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CRITICAL THINKING AND “THE INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATION: SOME PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL ADJUSTMENT”

Primary critical thinking skill: REASONING

Secondary critical thinking skill: PROBLEM-SOLVING

The impact of “The Individual and Organization: Some Problems of Mutual Adjustment” depends heavily on reasoning skills. Chris Argyris uses strong, well-structured arguments to make his point. He presents the individual as an integral part of the work process and understands that the work process also forms an important part of the individual’s development. Argyris establishes that managers expect individuals to work toward achieving the organization’s objectives. However, he also observes a lack of reciprocal engagement from managers to recognize and satisfy the development needs of employees. This reasoning convinces the reader of the validity of Argyris’s demand that managers deliver prospects for the employee’s development and stimulate the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Argyris’s reasoning has strong implications for solving a problem that many organizations experience: disengaged and disloyal employees. He proposes that satisfying the development needs of employees is likely to result in higher loyalty to the organization and greater commitment to its goals. Individuals who are managed according to his principles are therefore expected to exercise higher self-control and be more efficient.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE ORIGINAL WORK

Chris Argyris (1923–2013) was an influential management theorist and a pioneer in organization development. He was Professor of Education and Organizational Behavior at both Harvard Graduate School of Education and Harvard Business School. He earlier helped create the Yale School of Management. His work on how organizations learn and the relationships between people and organizations is considered seminal. Argyris was acclaimed as an exceptional teacher. In addition to his research and teaching, he worked as a consultant. “The Individual and Organization: Some Problems of Mutual Adjustment” was published in 1957.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE ANALYSIS

Stoyan Stoyanov holds a PhD in Management from the University of Edinburgh. His research focuses on overcoming difficulties in internationalization. Dr. Stoyanov’s other research interests include reducing liabilities of outsidership of individuals; newness, smallness, and foreignness of organizations; and the ways in which individuals embed themselves in new local environments.

ABOUT MACAT

GREAT WORKS FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Macat is focused on making the ideas of the world’s great thinkers accessible and comprehensible to everybody, everywhere, in ways that promote the development of enhanced critical thinking skills.

It works with leading academics from the world’s top universities to produce new analyses that focus on the ideas and the impact of the most influential works ever written across a wide variety of academic disciplines. Each of the works that sit at the heart of its growing library is an enduring example of great thinking. But by setting them in context – and looking at the influences that shaped their authors, as well as the responses they provoked – Macat encourages readers to look at these classics and game-changers with fresh eyes. Readers learn to think, engage and challenge their ideas, rather than simply accepting them.

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Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education and Skills, Organisation for Economic
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former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge

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‘The Macat analyses provide immediate access to the critical conversation surrounding the books that have shaped their respective discipline, which will make them an invaluable resource to all of those, students and teachers, working in the field.’

Professor William Tronzo, University of California at San Diego



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WAYS IN TO THE TEXT

KEY POINTS

- Chris Argyris was a management theorist and pioneer in organization development who worked at Harvard Business School.
- Argyris's article scrutinizes the impacts that management, strict organizational configurations, and control mechanisms have on individuals.
- He provides insight into how organizations can adapt to individuals and their needs to make the most out of their symbiotic relationship.

Who Was Chris Argyris?

Chris Argyris (1923–2013) was the son of Greek immigrants and grew up in Irvington, New Jersey and Athens, Greece. During World War II,* he joined the US Army Signal Corps,* eventually reaching the rank of Second Lieutenant. Argyris graduated with a BA in Psychology from Clark University in 1947. He later went on to gain an MA in Psychology and Economics from Kansas University in 1949 and a PhD, under the supervision of William Whyte,* from Cornell University in 1951.

Argyris is an influential American management theorist and a pioneer in organization development. In a career that spanned more than 50 years, he played a formative role in the development of our