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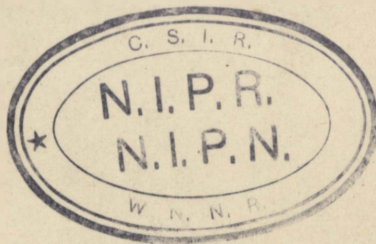
Contract Report

C/PERS 81

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING
TO THE UNDER-UTILIZATION OF MANPOWER IN
THE BUILDING INDUSTRY**

submitted to

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF BUILDING
TRADE EMPLOYERS IN SOUTH AFRICA.**



**APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY DIVISION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PERSONNEL RESEARCH
COUNCIL FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH**

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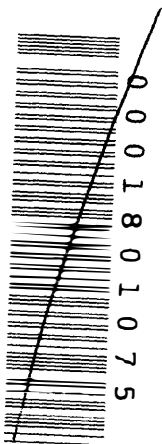
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The study was planned and supervised by B. von Mayer.

Interviews were conducted and the data was analysed by H. Kozma and E. Eksteen.

We thank Mr. T.J. Marchand and Mrs. E. de Jager of the Industrial Council for the Building Industry for the help and co-operation which they gave us.

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.

The present study arose out of certain findings of the "Statistical Study of Manpower in the Building Industry". The manpower study pointed to the lack of full manpower utilization in the private contracting sector of the Industry in the Witwatersrand-Pretoria region. The table below is taken from the report on this study and shows the total and average weeks worked in the Building Industry in the area during the period 1955 - 1961:

TABLE 1.

Total and Average Weeks Worked in the
Building Industry - Wits.Pta.Region, Period 1955-1961.

Year	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Total man-weeks	501,615	508,538	483,918	512,340	496,532	513,710	445,287
Average man-weeks	31.12	29.97	27.43	29.15	29.37	32.44	27-63

The conclusion drawn was that, on the average, over the period 1955-1961, approximately 20 weeks per man year were not used by the private contracting sector of the Industry within the Witwatersrand-Pretoria region. The nature of the data in the manpower study was such that it was impossible to determine the factors accounting for this under-utilization of labour. In the present study, the aim is to determine precisely the movements of artisans who had not worked for the full 49 weeks within the private contracting sector. More specifically, the aim is to account for those man-weeks which were not worked in this sector of the Building Industry.

2. HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED.

It was assumed that for every week a man had worked in the private contracting sector, he would have received a holiday stamp. Therefore, during the week November 4th - 9th the holiday stamp books of men calling at Labour House were examined. Those men who did not have a full complement of stamps in their books (i.e. 49 stamps) were asked what they had done during the weeks for which stamps were missing.

A total sample of 187 men were interviewed, (being only men who did not have the full number of stamps in their books).

Information for the year 1963 only was obtained. The trades were represented as follows :

Trade	No. of artisans interviewed	% of sample.
Bricklayers	60	32.1
Woodworkers	42	22.5
Painters	32	17.1
Plasterers	30	16.0
Plumbers	6	3.2
Minor Trades	17	9.1
	187	100.0

3. FINDINGS.

The findings may be taken to be representative of those persons who had not worked a full year in the private contracting sector of the Building Industry during 1963. Our first need is to establish how many weeks were worked within and without
the / ...

the Building Industry by the sample during this year. Tables 2 and 3 give this information.

TABLE 2.

Total and Average Man-Weeks worked in the
Building Industry by present sample.

Year	1963
Total man-weeks worked	5605
Average man-weeks worked	29.973

TABLE 3.

Total and Average Man-Weeks for which no
Holiday Stamps were received by present sample.

Year	1963
Total man-weeks for which no stamps were received.	3558
Average man-weeks for which no stamps were received.	19.027

It should be noted that only those artisans who did not have the full number of holiday stamps were interviewed. Because of the biased nature of the sample, therefore, the figures in Table 3 are not comparable with the figures quoted in Table 1, although they approximate closely to them.

The information given in Tables 2 and 3 is presented in another way in Table 4 which shows proportions of artisans in the

sample / ...

sample according to the percentage of time they worked in the Building Industry (i.e. those weeks for which they received holiday stamps).

TABLE 4.

Distribution of Men (Converted to Percentages)
According to Percentage of time worked. (Average
Number of weeks worked per year as a percentage
of 50 weeks).

<u>% of Time</u>	<u>0 - 20%</u> <u>(0-10 wks)</u>	<u>21-50%</u> <u>(11-25 wks)</u>	<u>51-80%</u> <u>(26-40 wks)</u>	<u>81-100%</u> <u>(41-50 wks)</u>
<u>No. of men</u>	21	49	72	45
<u>% of men</u>	11.2%	26.2%	38.5%	24.1%

The percentage of people working for more than half the year is 63% as compared with 37% who work for less than half the year. Table 5 indicates how those man-weeks which were not worked in the Building Industry are accounted for.

TABLE 5. / ...

TABLE 5.

Reasons why stamps were not received.	No. of wks.	Average No. of wks. per artisan.	% of total no. of wks. for which no stamps were received.
Worked for organization outside the Building Industry.	973.	5.203	27.3
Sick or injured	779	4.166	21.9
Unemployed	597	3.192	16.8
Self employed	457	2.444	12.8
Holiday-unpaid leave	247	1.321	6.9
Worked outside the Tvl.	130	.695	3.7
Worked for small contractor who did not issue stamps	97	.519	2.7
Salaried Staff	89	.476	2.5
Employer refused stamps	88	.471	2.5
Worked in small town in Transvaal	60	.321	1.7
Worked outside the Republic	41	.219	1.2
	3558	19.027	100.0

We notice from Table 5 that the largest number of weeks during which no holiday stamps were received were accounted for by artisans working for organizations outside the Building Industry, (27.3% of the total number of weeks for which no stamps were received). Other important categories are "sick or injured" (21.9%), "unemployed" (16.8%) and "self-employed"/ ...

"self-employed" (12.8%). Arising from Table 5, it is of interest to know the number of discrete periods making up the number of weeks for which no stamps were received and the average length of period in each category. We define a "period" in this context as a continuous space of time during which no stamps were received; it could consist of one or more weeks. The total number of 3558 weeks during which no stamps were received was made up of 325 separate periods. The overall average length of period was 10.332 weeks. Using this average length of period as a basis for comparison, it is useful to look at the average length of the periods in each category. This information is given in Table 6. (The average length of period in each category was calculated as follows : the total number of weeks spent by the sample in a certain way, e.g., working for an organization outside the Building Industry, was divided by the total number of periods so spent.

TABLE 6. / ...

TABLE 6.

Average Length of Periods spent by Artisans
under the various headings listed in

Table 5.

Reasons why stamps not received.	No. of wks*	No. of periods.	Average Length of period.
Worked for organization outside Building Industry.	973	40	24.325
Sick or injured.	779	85	9.165
Unemployed	597	100	5.970
Self-employed	457	30	15.233
Holiday/unpaid leave	247	31	7.958
Worked outside Transvaal.	130	8	16.250
Worked for small contractor	97	9	10.778
Salaried staff	89	4	22.250
Employer refused stamps	88	12	7.333
Worked in small town in Transvaal.	60	3	20.000
Worked outside the Republic.	41	3	13.667
Total	3558	325	
Overall average length of period.			10.332

* The figures in this column are taken from Table 5 (Page 5). Eight people in the sample gave the information not in terms of the number of periods and length of each period, but in terms of the total number of weeks, under a certain category, for which they

did / ...

did not receive stamps. This tends to slightly inflate the overall average length of period. If the combined number of weeks accounted for by these individuals (158 weeks) are subtracted from the total, the remaining 3,400 weeks give an average length of period of 10.726 weeks. This does not differ appreciably from the average obtained if these 8 individuals are included in the calculation.

In studying Table 6, it is worth noting that the periods worked for organizations outside the Building Industry were relatively long periods (average length of period - 24.3 weeks). Other periods, such as "unemployed", "sick", "self-employed", etc., were usually short periods interspersed over the year.

Table 7 shows the distribution of individuals in the sample according to the number of artisans in the various categories.

TABLE 7./ ...

TABLE 7.

Numbers and percentages of Artisans as they are distributed under the various headings listed in

Table 5.

Reasons why stamps were not received.	No. of Artisans	% of Sample
Organization outside the Industry	39	20.8
Sick or Injured	61	32.6
Unemployed	64	34.2
Self-employed	26	13.9
Holiday-unpaid leave	30	16.0
Worked outside the Transvaal	8	4.3
Worked for small contractor	9	4.8
Salaried staff	4	2.1
Employer refused stamps	12	6.4
Worked in small town in Transvaal	3	1.6
Worked outside the Republic	3	1.6

(Note: It is possible for one individual to be included under two or more headings).

If one looks at individuals in the sample, quite apart from weeks worked, it is apparent that large proportions of men in the sample missed weeks because they were unemployed (34.2% of the artisans interviewed), or because they were sick or injured (32.6%). (See Table 7).

From the information available we can assume that those in the "unemployed" category were out of work because of factors other than / ...

than ill health. We also notice from Table 7 that the percentage of artisans in the sample who worked for organizations outside the Building Industry (20.8%) is somewhat smaller than those in the two categories mentioned above. The relatively short average duration of the periods in the two categories "unemployed" and "sick or injured", (5.970 weeks and 9.165 weeks respectively), (see Table 6), as compared with the longer average length of period (24.325 weeks) worked in organizations outside the Building Industry accounts for the shorter overall length of time of each of the two former categories.

We conclude from this that although the largest number of man-weeks lost to the Building Industry are accounted for by artisans working for organizations outside the Building Industry, the number of men lost to such organizations is less than the number of men who are unemployed or who are not working due to ill health. In other words, a smaller number of artisans work for long periods outside the Building Industry and a larger number of artisans are unemployed, sick or injured for shorter periods.

We have seen that for the largest number of weeks that they did not receive holiday stamps, artisans in our sample worked for organizations outside the Building Industry. Table 8 shows what types of organizations these were :

TABLE 8. / ...

TABLE 8.

Total and average number of weeks worked in
Organizations outside the Building Industry.

Organizations outside the Building Industry	Total No. of weeks	Average No. of weeks
Factory	292	1.561
Engineering concern	190	1.016
Private concern e.g. shop	184	.984
Mines	105	.561
Government	84	.449
Farming	68	.364
Municipal	50	.267
	973	5,203

Of those weeks spent outside the Building Industry 507 weeks (average number of weeks - 2.711) were accounted for by persons who had not practised their trades during this time. Of the 39 individuals (21% of total sample) who had worked outside the Building Industry, 17 (44% of persons working outside the Building Industry) had followed some entirely different occupation.

Finally, we would like to consider the reasons why artisans left jobs in the Building Industry where they were receiving holiday stamps. Over one-third left because the contract was completed and they were laid off by their employers. Twenty-eight percent

left / ...

left through illness or because they had had an accident. A relatively small proportion (9.5%) left to go to a better job elsewhere. This information is summarized in Table 9.

TABLE 9.

Reasons why Artisans left jobs where they received Holiday Stamps.

Reasons for leaving jobs	No. of mentions	% of total No. of mentions
Job finished/no more work/ put off	103	36.4
Sick or accident	78	27.6
Wanted a holiday	29	10.2
Left for better job elsewhere (money/benefits/security)	27	9.5
Wanted to work for self	18	6.4
Moved place of residence	13	4.6
Dissatisfied with employer or had argument	13	4.6
Went farming	2	.7
	283	100.0

CONCLUSIONS.

1. Our study showed that an average of 19.005 man-weeks were not utilized by the private contracting sector of the Building Industry during 1963. This conclusion is based on the assumption that the sample of men interviewed is representative of / ...

of those artisans who had not worked a full year in the private contracting sector during the year.

2. A significant finding emerging from this study is that the largest proportion (27.35%) of the man-weeks lost to the Building Industry are accounted for by artisans working outside the Industry. (See Table 5). Relatively speaking however, it does appear that many individuals (20.8%) are lost to outside concerns. (See Table 7). Men working for such concerns appear to do so for long periods at a stretch, this accounting for the large number of man-weeks so spent. (See Table 6). This contention is supported by the fact that a comparatively small number of artisans said they had left jobs in the Building Industry for better jobs elsewhere. The reason most frequently given by artisans for leaving their jobs was that the contract had been completed. This ties up with the fact that artisans had said they were unemployed during a fairly large number of weeks (597 weeks).
3. The other categories accounting for a high number of lost man-weeks are "sick/injured" (779 weeks), "self-employed" (457 weeks) and "holiday-unpaid leave" (247 weeks). The large number of weeks accounted for by the first and last of these categories is probably due to the nature of the sample (i.e. only those artisans were included who had not worked for the full year). Because 1963 was something of a boom year for the Industry, most of the best workers - men who were strong, healthy and competent and who desired employment - were fully employed. Those who consistently

missed / ...

missed weeks due to ill-health appeared to be chronically ill or suffering from a recurring ailment. Many of those who took "holidays" appeared to work off and on merely to provide themselves with the means for taking a rest. With regard to the artisans who said they were "self-employed", Labour House employees remarked that there had been an unusually large number of men registered as sub-contractors during 1963. One possible explanation of the increased number of small sub-contractors might have been the desire to avoid paying income tax on the P.A.Y.E. system.

4. That the lack of full utilization of available manpower in the private contracting sector of the Building Industry is attributable to a variety of factors, is apparent from the findings of this investigation.

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