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SOME ASPECTS OF HUMAN RELATIONS
AND MANAGEMENT

by

DON T. NEBEKER

B.S. Utah State University, 1958

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

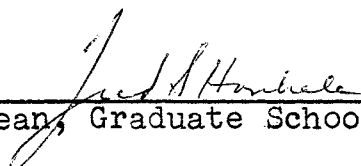
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

I. INTRODUCTION

A new era in administration is fast emerging. Developments in cybernetics, information technology and mechanization are advancing rapidly and promise to change the whole complexity of life. Along with the advances of the technical aspects of management, there are many far reaching developments in human relations which promise to open exciting opportunities in making a better life for all mankind. Research in areas of the behavioral sciences such as group dynamics, social psychology, semantics, and psycholinguistics is suggesting systematic evidence that tells us what must be done to make life more satisfying and at the same time more productive. It is providing a body of organized data from which some valuable insights into better management systems can be made.

Just as the engineer applies laws of geometry, as the forester applies what he knows of the laws of ecology, the professional manager seeks to discover and apply laws of behavior; indeed all are laws of nature. Whether they are applied consciously or unconsciously, with great

precision or without precision, depends on our present state of knowledge. Unfortunately there is a great deal we do not know concerning behavioral science, and it is probable that it will be a long time in the future before we will have enough research and experience in application to be able to predict with a high degree of accuracy. However, the picture is not all dark. It is beginning to be possible for the manager to be a professional in his own right, provided he is aware of all the cumulative developments in the behavioral science field either through his own knowledge or by way of staff specialists. Every action, every decision management makes has behavioral consequences. Successful management depends in large part on the ability to understand and predict human behavior.

Bridging the gap between theory and practice is not always easy. Research data concerning behavioral science trickles out in the form of controlled experiments concerning basic theory or specific applied research. At best social science data can only suggest the most logical approach to those who are familiar with the application, the subtleties and shortcomings of the science.

Failure to respect and understand the difference between the practical and theoretical may be a severe handicap, and it could lead to misguided attempts at cookbook attempts to translate indicative findings into quick solutions. For this reason, it must be borne in mind that the

data referred to in this paper are not the "final word."

It has not been possible to review all ramifications of the subject matter related to the various areas of inquiry. Indeed it is not the intention to do so. It is the purpose of this paper to review and introduce what are believed to be six rather important ideas, theories, principles and hypotheses relating to human relations which have important implications for management.

Again it must be borne in mind that these implications are only suggestive, that all variations and limitations could not be presented and indeed in many cases are not known. The material does present some interesting ideas and suggests implications which this paper will attempt to develop for adaption and direction in practical situations.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Following are definitions of terms referred to in this paper. Definitions, for the most part, are consistent with the way in which the terms are most often used in the various fields represented:

Administration. Refers to the direction, coordination, and control of men and facilities for the purpose of accomplishing an objective.

Management. Refers to the means in which the objectives of administration are carried out. It refers also

to the officials who are responsible for doing this.

Scientific Management. Refers to the logical systematic approach to management practices. Usually has the connotation of dealing with only the physical aspects of management, in contrast to the human relations aspects.

Behavioral Science. Refers to the systematic scientific study of human behavior. Used in the context of behavior in the administrative process.

Human Relations. Refers to the interrelations among persons, usually in the context of improving or providing satisfying relationships.

Public Relations. Refers to the relationships between an organization and the public. The objective is usually to improve the organizational image.

Hypothesis. Refers to the supposition of a verifiable model to guide investigation. It is more tentative than a principle of theory. Used in this study descriptively in naming certain behavioral phenomena which are so-called "hypotheses" in the literature.

Principle. Refers to a potentially fundamental law which is at least a partially validated model or hypothesis.

Theory. Refers to a relatively acceptable scientific explanation of phenomena. Less tentative than hypothesis or principle.

CHAPTER II

SEMANTIC PITFALLS

Some of the most profound and far-reaching implications for human relations are suggested by the field of General Semantics. General Semantics is broadly concerned with the study of symbols and the effect that symbols have on their users. This relationship has been widely recognized by thinkers in various disciplines throughout the ages, but only since the turn of the century has it been presented by the General Semantists for popular consumption. The ideas were brought together and named by Alfred Korzybski¹ and later related in terms of "real life" by Irving J. Lee,² Wendell Johnson,³ and S. I. Hayakawa.⁴ They are founded on the Logical Positivist philosophy, the Operationist method and the Pragmatist approach, and suggest that the way symbols are used affects language as well as the way we think and react. It is in this context that General Semantics is related to human relations.

¹Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity, an Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics (Lancaster, Pa.: The Science Press Printing Co., 1933).

²Irving J. Lee, Language Habits in Human Affairs, An Introduction to General Semantics (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1941).

³Wendell Johnson, People in Quandaries (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946).

⁴S. I. Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949).

Applications in Management

Following are some of the more important concepts suggested by general semantics as they apply to a management context. Common sensical as they are, they are nevertheless often overlooked:

Map-Territory Relationship. This is a simple idea of common sense that tells us the map or symbol we use to represent something is not the thing it represents. A common source of confusion is the tendency to think that the "thing" exists in the word we use to describe it.

Because of the tendency to think of words being the "things" they are used to represent, Lee suggests that for example rather than say "Smoking is bad" it is more likely to be acceptable if we say "Smoking appears to me to be bad."⁵ This designates that this is our own value judgment which we are entitled to have, but we are not implying that everyone looks at it this way. He suggests that for example rather than saying "Bill is a humorist," it tends to be more acceptable if we say "Bill can be classified as a humorist." This approach allows for the differences between "Bill" and "humorist." Obviously the words "bad" and "humorist" are only concepts, not "things" in the real world.

Homans suggests that: "How the individual cognizes

⁵Lee, op. cit., pp. 227-257.

his world is one of the major determinants of his manner of responding in the world."⁶ It is sometimes difficult to always separate the map and the territory. William F. Whyte⁷ points this out in describing an executive who was so prepossessed with the map, in this case a union contract, that he could not properly evaluate the territory, which was the fact that company production was suffering great loss over a minor point. After the minor disagreement had been settled by the executive after he had recognized that the contract (map) did not fit the situation (territory), the company's production was again restored.

In the context of relating the map to the territory, Whyte points out that executives often tend to deal in abstractions which are ideas and concepts that are really not closely related to the facts of the particular situation. He states that "he the executive⁷ would do well to keep his eye on that ball, and not allow his attention to be diverted by metaphysical⁸ considerations."⁹

Polarization. Another common cause of conflict

⁶George C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt and Company, 1950), p. 7.

⁷William F. Whyte, "Semantics and Industrial Relations," Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book, eds. W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), pp. 267-271.

⁸Concepts which are not based on empirical evidence that cannot be empirically tested.

⁹Whyte, op. cit., p. 274.

that is suggested by general semantics is the polarity of language and thought. Barnlund and Haiman suggest that "We tend . . . to talk in terms of opposites. That is, we regard things in life as belonging to two mutually exclusive categories. Something is either this or that."¹⁰ This means that as people discuss problems they will often come in conflict because of their own false dilemmas caused by polarizing. In demonstrating the defensive effects of polarization, Haney¹¹ uses an example of two friends discussing the value of unions. One stated that unions were beneficial to the economy, the other stated they caused inflation. This caused both men to take extreme opposite defensive positions and obscured the fact that unions may have both good and bad qualities. The disagreement ended in a serious conflict between the two men. When we choose between opposites we assume truth lies on one side and error on the other. This distorts realities, and causes communication barriers.

The tendency to polarized thinking leads to the danger of an administrator not recognizing all possible alternatives. This has important implications in the decision making process. It may also lead to exploitation

¹⁰Dean C. Barnlund and Franklyn S. Haiman, The Dynamics of Discussion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), p. 262.

¹¹William V. Haney, Communication Patterns and Incidents (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1960), p. 126.

if only those alternative choices someone would want us to consider were presented. Obviously if the fact that there were more alternatives than those presented was not recognized we would tend to choose among the choices presented. This could well not be in our best interest. An unscrupulous person could present the choices in such a combination as to be able to predict which ones would be chosen.¹²

Abstraction. Abstraction refers to the tendency to sacrifice detail. For example we often use words to represent "things" and then use other words to describe what the original words meant, and then other words to describe these words, and so on until we no longer are describing the original "things" because words mean different things to different people. This leads to vagueness and misunderstanding. The importance of speaking and thinking descriptively to avoid the confusion of abstraction is pointed out by Lee:

. . . the very effort of talking descriptively . . . brings about a delay in the reaction and a noticeable lessening of tension. . . . Many kinds of verbal quarreling are resolved whenever it is possible to measure some aspects of the objects and situations which produce the impressions inside of observers' nervous systems.¹³

As an example of this problem, one can think of a classroom where the instructor uses "abstract" terms which he is more or less familiar with but which do not represent

¹²For further explanation, see Chapter IV.

¹³Lee, op. cit., p. 250.

"real life" objects or ideas to the students. The problem suggests the importance of clear, down to earth communication in the administrative process.

The matter of semantical misunderstanding due to abstraction can be avoided by attempting to understand what a person really means by the terms he uses. This may be accomplished by reducing the level of discussion to descriptive terms. This will tend to clarify meaning and reduce inferences. It may come to mind that this will work best if both parties recognize the problem and are willing to approach it in this manner. However, one person can effect the approach by asking questions, such as "What did you observe which leads you to that conclusion?" and "What do you mean?"

In some cases, it would appear that when we really find out how people think and feel this may in itself increase problems, but at least then it is not a semantic problem altogether.

Signal Reactions. Lee points out the importance of avoiding what he calls "signal reactions," that is over-quick responses to what is said and done. He suggests that if one takes time to understand what is said and think of the most appropriate way to respond, this will tend to increase understanding and reduce conflict.¹⁴ In this same

¹⁴Lee, op. cit., pp. 195-200.

context, Carl R. Rogers hypothesizes that,

the major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication is our very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove the statement of the other person or the other group.¹⁵

He points out that there is this tendency to preevaluate and in effect counterargue about what the person is talking about. He suggests that this is avoided when we "listen with understanding"; that is to understand "with a person, not about him." He suggests that when there is an argument, people should try an experiment with the rule:

Each person can speak up for himself only after he has first restated the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker accurately and to that speaker's satisfaction.¹⁶

This suggests that if you see the other person's point of view, your own replies may well be revised. When persons realize that their points are understood they have less reason to be defensive and it reduces the chance that the polarity of being all right or all wrong will exist. Rogers makes the point that to see the other person's point of view and possibly face the alternative of changing to this view yourself takes courage.¹⁷

¹⁵Carl R. Rogers and F. J. Roethlisberger, "Barriers and Gateways to Communication," Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book, eds. W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 165.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 168.

Extensional Orientation. It is obvious that the different concepts of general semantics are not entirely mutually exclusive, but that they are all interrelated in some measure. This is true of "extensional orientation"; in fact it is a concept which tends to summarize and put together in terms of a guide to action all of the concepts suggested by general semantics. Lee defines it this way:

To be oriented extensionally is to realize the primary importance of life facts, to emphasize the roles of observation and investigation, to go to the facts first and to abide by them.

He contrasts this to "intensional orientation":

To be oriented intensionally is to order behavior in terms of definitions, arguments, verbal proofs, and theorizings essentially disregarding the existence of verifiable life facts.¹⁸

The significance of extensional orientation to the administrator appears to be great. For example, imagine the possible disastrous effects of important policy changes that are not based on fact. This suggests the importance of systematically applying facts to produce a desired response, just as one would expect the engineer to apply empirically tested methods to build a large dam.

Understanding and success in meeting an objective can often be increased by following the basic attitude: "I don't know. What are the facts?"

¹⁸Lee, op. cit., p. 148.

CHAPTER III

DEFENSIVENESS

Of the many causes of conflict which exist in human relations, defensiveness appears in the forefront. Expression of some form of defensiveness is present whenever there is a real or imagined "threat." In discussing the process, Chodorkoff and Chodorkoff state that whenever threat appears, an automatic reaction occurs to defend one's self.¹ It is one of the most basic of survival techniques along with the need for food and reproduction. In addition to threat against physical injury, Sappenfield² indicates that defensive activities are often carried out to defend the ego.³ "Ego defense" is the most significant form of defense to administration. McGregor⁴ points this out in defining the need for providing opportunities for fulfilling social (ego) desires. He emphasizes the complexities of social aspirations and sources of threat to egoistic needs. He

¹Bernard Chodorkoff and Joan Chodorkoff, "Perceptual Defense: An Integration with Other Research Findings," The Journal of General Psychology, LVIII (1958), pp. 75-80.

²Bert R. Sappenfield, Personality Dynamics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 73.

³In this context, personal feelings related to prestige.

⁴Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 35-43.

suggests that scalar organizations almost inherently cause threats to the needs a person has to feel a sense of belonging, acceptance by his fellow workers, giving and receiving friendship, and not to be overlooked, the need for achievement and recognition. This occurs in the organization when there is "arbitrary management actions, behavior which arouses uncertainty with respect to . . . employment or which reflects favoritism or discrimination."⁵ Preventing defensiveness is an area of constant challenge.

Applications in Management

A variety of different methods to overcome the effects of defensiveness suggest themselves. Virtually every text book dealing with human relations problems of management implies the author's approach to the problem. The discussion of general semantics in Chapter II suggests several areas which can create conflict and defensiveness. In addition, these other commonly suggested methods are presented here.

Maier suggests that in defining problems of management one can either focus upon the inadequacies of behavior which produce the problem or refer to the deficiency of the situation itself.

When a supervisor states a problem to a group in behavioral terms, it means that he is not satisfied with the performance of his employees; it represents disapproval not only of

⁵Ibid., p. 37.

their behavior but of them. Thus, with a single stroke he sets himself apart from the group, so that mutual goals are no longer in effect. This action tends to cause the subordinates to band together so the differences among them, which might have led to improvements, now are set aside to defend themselves against their common opponent--the supervisor.⁶

In describing a problem in which there has been "group abuses of the phone privileges" Maier suggests an example of a behavioral statement might be: "How can we best deal with the matter of unnecessary use of the company phone for personal purposes?" The use of the word "unnecessary" indicates someone's unfavorable value judgment and is likely to trigger some form of defense. In contrast he suggests the statement: "What would be a fair goal to set for personal calls?" The word "abuses" does not appear in either statement, indicating the approach which is likely to give the best results can be used. In the "situational" statement, "setting the goal" establishes a target to work toward and presents the problem in positive terms.⁷

This suggests the practice of carefully wording statements and questions to avoid putting people in defensive positions. To differentiate between "behavioral" and "situational" connotations statements which make reference

⁶Norman R. R. Maier, Problem-solving Discussions and Conferences: Leadership Methods and Skills (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1963), pp. 77-78.

⁷Ibid., pp. 77-80.

to behavior and thus involve ego may cause defensive or even hostile behavior. Defensive responses may take the form of the attempt to shift responsibility, of an argumentative attitude, or silent withdrawal.⁸ In contrast, statements referring to situations are impersonal. Problems stated in situational terms involve no threat and hence tend to stimulate thought and arouse interest. The situational approach orients the group toward an objective, "setting a goal," instead of focusing on personal, defensive mechanisms.

In diagnosing the problems of the centralized organization, Argyris⁹ points to what he calls "descriptive nonevaluative" feedback¹⁰ as a method of minimizing defensiveness. He simply means that feedback in interpersonal relations should be characterized by describing without evaluating. To demonstrate, he uses the examples: "You shouldn't behave in x manner" and "I experience the following feelings when you behave in x manner."¹¹ Thus in the latter approach emphasis is placed on description rather

⁸Silence may be one of the most difficult defensive acts to deal with. Literature suggests it may also be one of the most common defense mechanisms.

⁹Chris Argyris, Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin and Dorsey, 1962), pp. 15-19.

¹⁰Feedback simply means the response resulting from a stimuli which may be observed and interpreted by the source of the stimuli.

¹¹Argyris, op. cit., p. 16.

than on evaluation! It should be pointed out that nonevaluative feedback could also create defensive positions unless the proper atmosphere is established. Argyris points out that this technique is not easily learned, and that it is a matter of developing a basic philosophy and a set of values for individual growth rather than learning techniques simply by practice.

In summary, there are undoubtedly cases where the tendency for defensiveness can be used as an effective motivating force by the administrator. However, when the objective is to reduce defensiveness, it can often be effectively overcome if the administrator can avoid implying disapproval or, in effect, threatening people's sense of well being and by making clear exactly what is meant.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMITMENT

An interesting facet of human behavior is the effect of "commitment." Commitment is demonstrated by rigid, unbending behavior after a person has committed himself to a position. It may be manifest in relative degrees under varied and difficult to understand circumstances.

Studies suggest that commitment is closely connected with social pressure. Vohs, in a summary of commitment research, states that "In many cases, social pressures have made changing one's mind an unrewarding experience." He goes on to point out "deep-seated emotional overtones"¹ as another possible reason for the commitment effect. The principle of commitment is generally classified in two categories: (1) Internal, which refers to personal commitment made either privately or publicly,² and (2) External, which refers to commitment of a position attributed to one by someone else.

Literature relating to commitment is not extensive,

¹John L. Vohs, "Commitment Research in Group Communication: A Summary and Discussion" (paper prepared for a group communication seminar, State University of Iowa, 1962), p. 1.

²Sometimes called self-committal or self-commitment.

which is somewhat surprising due to the frequency with which the phenomenon occurs. However, some general principles regarding the effects of commitment are at least alluded to by the literature.

Rosenbaum and Franc³ investigated some of the conditions under which "external" commitment affects the response to an attempt to change opinion. They found that the attribution of an opinion which was congruent (consistent with the subject's true opinion or response tendency) significantly affected the subject's resistance to attempted opinion change away from the attributed congruent opinion.

Attributed opinion which was incongruent (inconsistent with the subject's response tendency) caused the subject to change his opinion in the direction of the attributed position. The latter (incongruent position) case was found to be more significant than an earlier study by Rosenbaum and Zimmerman,⁴ which indicated a lesser degree of opinion change with an incongruent position. This earlier study dealt with more emotionally oriented positions concerning segregation and desegregation at a Southern university.

³Milton F. Rosenbaum and Douglas E. Franc, "Opinion Change as a Function of External Commitment and Amount of Discrepancy from the Opinion of Another," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXI (1960), pp. 15-20.

⁴Milton E. Rosenbaum and Isabel M. Zimmerman, "The Effect of External Commitment on Response to an Attempt to Change Opinions," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIII (1959), pp. 247-254.

This led to the hypothesis by Rosenbaum and Franc⁵ that the failure to demonstrate this effect of opinion change was due to the deep-seated emotional character of the original response tendency.

In studying the effects of internal commitment (self-committal), Fisher, Rubenstein and Freeman⁶ found that within a continuous interaction situation subjects who commit themselves immediately prior to an attempt to change their opinion show more resistance to change initially; however, they tend to become somewhat more susceptible to change as interaction and persuasion attempts continue. This occurred both when the subject's opinion and the control opinion were relatively close and relatively divergent. The change appeared to occur as a result of subsequent commitments in response to persuasion attempts rather than a change in the initial commitment response.

The importance of the relationship between social pressures and the effect of commitment is indicated by Lewin,⁷ who found the most significant change in attitude

⁵Rosenbaum and Franc, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶Seymour Fisher, Irvin Rubenstein and Robert W. Freeman, "Effects of Immediate Self-Committal in a Continuous Social Influence Situation," The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LII (1956), pp. 200-207.

⁷Kurt Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change," Readings in Social Psychology, eds. Eleanor E. Maccoby, Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley (3d ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1958), pp. 197-211.

(toward different foods) was among housewives who had expressed public commitment in small discussion groups.

The general effect of commitment is pointed out by Hobart and Hovland⁸ in finding that subjects who were required to commit themselves on a social issue prior to an attempt at influence were more resistant to change by persuasion attempts than a control group in which commitment was lacking.

Schachter and Hall⁹ reported an interesting context of the commitment principle in groups of students volunteering for an experiment. They found that volunteers from a group in which high restraints to volunteering were present were more reliable as subjects than those from groups in which relatively less restraint was present. Subjects from the high restraint groups demonstrated a higher degree of commitment and subsequent follow-through after they had broken the restraint barriers.

In general, research suggests that resistance to attitude change when different degrees of commitment exist is greater as an individual is ego-involved, when social

⁸E. M. Hobart and C. I. Hovland, "The Effect of 'Commitment' on Opinion Change Following Communication," American Psychologist, IX (1954), p. 394.

⁹Stanley Schachter and Robert Hall, "Group Derived Restraints and Audience Persuasion," Human Relations, V (1952), pp. 397-406.

pressures are strong, and as stimuli are ambiguous.¹⁰

Applications in Management

Different forms of the principle of commitment are encountered frequently in any human interrelations. In terms of discussion groups, whether they are staff meetings, social exchanges, or public relations groups, the administrator's familiarity with commitment effects can lead to more satisfactory relations. If the effect of commitment can be postponed to allow freedom of interchange without taking sides, all possible positions and ideas can be explored cooperatively among the group. In this context, Vohs suggests:

Changing one's mind in light of new evidence and arguments could be encouraged and an atmosphere conducive to such practice could be established.¹¹

Barnlund and Haiman point out that:

As we become identified with a position, we begin to interpret criticism as not only an attack on our side, but as an attack on ourselves personally.¹²

This suggests to the administrator that for the most part decisive commitment should be discouraged and that criticism of an idea may well be interpreted as an attack on the

¹⁰Fisher, et al, op. cit., p. 200.

¹¹Vohs, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

¹²Dean C. Barnlund and Franklyn S. Haiman, The Dynamics of Discussion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), p. 264.

proponent. When this becomes a possibility, it would be well to clarify that disagreement is only with the idea and not with the person or his right to hold the view.

Along with encouraging an atmosphere of free exchange, it would appear appropriate for an administrator to be quick to provide a "line of retreat" both for himself and others with whom he is talking. This suggests a way to "save face" as well as to prevent further decisive commitment.

The results of external commitment upon groups and individuals suggest a method of gaining rapport and cooperation when used in the congruent case. For instance, a speaker might emphasize the strong features of the group and the individuals who compose the group. He might point out the intelligence of the group and the fact that they are people who can listen and are responsive to what is said. In this way he would be gaining the advantages of external congruent commitment from the group.

A discussion leader who is interested in gaining a free flow of ideas and communication could approach the group in the same manner, by pointing out that the group is composed of men of ability and ideas "with a known and respected willingness to speak freely."¹³

Research suggests that both external and internal incongruent commitment can be used as effective persuasion

¹³Vohs, op. cit., p. 13.

devices. By publicly attributing a belief or position to a person in such a way that it is difficult for him to reject or deny it, may lead to the person changing his attitude in the direction of the attributed position. This is subject to limitations including those of "ego involvement" and prior public commitment discussed earlier. This same effect is suggested by the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance¹⁴ in the case of internal incongruent commitment. If one is persuaded to commit himself about something which is not congruent with his beliefs and in a way which makes it difficult for him to change his position, he may change his belief toward the incongruent position. Dissonance Theory would predict that the less justification there is for making an incongruent statement, the greater the likelihood for belief change.

These practices are commonly observed in so-called high pressure salesmanship. It is a characteristic of the "Wayne system" often used in automobile sales technique. In this system the customer is persuaded to commit himself to a purchase at any low figure by signing a sale agreement. He is then "shuffled" through a series of "backup" men who supposedly represent a hierarchy in management. This is done in an effort to persuade the customer that the "deal" cannot be made at that low figure and that it is reasonable

¹⁴See Chapter VII.

to pay more. Going up the so-called chain of command helps establish credibility for the salesman, and gives external congruent commitment to the customer to the effect that he deserves to speak with the "top men." The act of commitment to purchase a car publicly and in writing serves to effect a form of social sanction against not going through with a purchase.

The fact that people may tend to consider as salient only alternatives presented to them in being persuaded towards making a decision leads to the use of another perhaps ethically questionable persuasive device. When given the choice of alternatives presented to him, a person can be expected to choose the most attractive one. Of course, this could be pre-established by the persuader. If the person then makes a choice and commits himself in public and/or in writing, it may be hard to change his mind. (Obviously the person could choose the alternative of not making a choice among the presented salient alternatives. This would depend on the extent of prior commitments, etc.)

Knowledge of the effects of commitment provide a valuable protection against the unethical use of the principle. By an awareness of this, an administrator can effectively avoid being inadvertently trapped by his own communicative processes and, at the same time, avoid becoming persuaded by others. This may well serve as a lesson to the administrator to not become committed to a position

he does not really want to defend, or become inflexible with regard to a position which he initially favors.

CHAPTER V

THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP HYPOTHESIS

What type of behavior can be expected to result within a group when there is a change of leadership? It is obvious this question has some important implications for management. Theory and research which might suggest answers to this question have been limited, however some possible implications can be postulated. The generalization that people tend to exhibit a basic resistance to change is implied with greater or lesser explicitness throughout the administrative case studies found in Stein's case book.¹ It would appear fair to assume that with any change in leadership there would follow a relative degree of policy change or at least a change in approach which can be expected to result in anxieties and frustrations for the group until a new equilibrium is reached.

In experimenting with authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership effects upon the same groups, Lippitt and White² found the tendency to "blow off" tension

¹Harold Stein (ed.), Public Administration and Policy Development (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952).

²Ronald Lippitt and Ralph K. White, "An Experimental Study of Leadership and Group Life," Readings in Social Psychology, eds. Guy E. Swanson, Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley (2d. ed.; New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1952), pp. 340-355.

through "great outbursts of horseplay between members" after their transition from an authoritarian atmosphere to a laissez-faire and democratic group situation. This was attributed to unexpressed group tension which seemed to prevail in the authoritarian social atmosphere. Under different types of leaders, groups handled their frustrations differently. In authoritarian groups the members tended to either internalize and hold feelings within themselves, or "blow off" steam toward others. In the democratically led groups there was evidence of a greater tendency to "unite in rejection of the real source of frustration."³ The democratic groups tended to first express aggression directly against the source and then

showed a slight rise in intermember tension. It was particularly interesting to discover that the clubs /groups/ under democratic leaders resisted scapegoating as a channel of aggressive release.⁴

It was obvious that previous group experience (i.e., preceding leadership atmospheres) were important in determining reaction to a new leader. Groups were much more frustrated and resistive to an authoritarian leader after having had a democratic leader than groups without such experience.

³Ibid., p. 354.

⁴Ibid.

Applications in Management

Although perhaps the study cited is not profoundly significant in itself, it does suggest answers to an important question. If not definitive answers, at least it suggests a guide to the problem. In almost all administrative organizations, changes in leadership are commonplace due to promotions, transfers, retirements, and for numerous other reasons. To be able to predict reactions and minimize adverse effects of changes would clearly be more efficient for an organization.

The Lippitt and White study⁵ suggests that when a democratic leader is replaced by an authoritarian leader, frustration and resistance may be expected. To overcome this a study by Merei⁶ suggests that if the new leader first accepts the traditions existing within the group he could then begin to change the group and set new norms in which a different type of leadership would be more acceptable. Again according to the Lippitt and White study, another pattern of behavior should result when a change is made from an authoritarian atmosphere to a democratic or laissez-faire pattern of leadership. It would be expected that in this case the group may exhibit a tendency to "blow off" tension. In fact it would seem appropriate

⁵Lippitt and White, loc. cit.

⁶Ferenc Merei, "Group Leadership and Institutionalization," Readings in Social Psychology, pp. 318-328.

to allow for this and perhaps ways could be found to channel this energy toward productive goals.

Sidney Verba⁷ points out that experiments have shown that in attempting to introduce a more democratic system, leaders are forced to sometimes engage in activities for a short time which may not be democratic. For instance in a previously laissez-faire group, some degree of structure development by the leader is necessary. The opposite is true when changing from autocratic to democratic leadership. The goal of the democratic leader when changing from an authoritarian atmosphere seems then to make himself superfluous, to be replaced by indigenous leaders from within the group. On the other hand it may be appropriate to add some small degree of autocracy to the previously laissez-faire group to develop some structure in the group.

Obviously firm conclusions cannot be drawn from these limited research examples. There are different definitions of authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. No one person is completely one type or another and situations vary. Human reactions vary as greatly as do leaders due to the many variables acting. It does seem, however, that cognizance of these findings and recognition of the variables would help in predicting and controlling situations created by changes in leadership.

⁷Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behavior: A Study of Leadership (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 217-219.

CHAPTER VI

THE PARTICIPATION HYPOTHESIS

It seems rather basic to human nature that people will defend their right to determine their own destiny and will oppose oppression. This is the very basis for the age-old class struggle and, indeed, the reason for the American Revolution. The right of the individual to choose and exercise a voice in government--consent of the governed--is the foundation upon which our country is built.

Approached from a more technical and less dramatic context, participation has been the subject of well-known experiments conducted in the field of group dynamics and social psychology since the late 1930's. One such study that summarizes the general theme, that persons will tend to support a decision almost in direct relation to the degree in which they participate in its development, was conducted by Coch and French. In studying the changing of group production norms, they found that:

the rate of recovery \sqrt{t} to original work production¹ is directly proportional to the amount of participation, and that the rates of turnover and aggression are inversely proportional to the amount of participation.¹

¹Lester Coch and J. R. French, "Overcoming Resistance to Change," Group Dynamics: Research and Theory, eds. Darwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander (2d ed.; New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1960), p. 332.

In addition to research being conducted to substantiate the idea empirically, contemporary writers in the fields of management and human relations are proponents of member involvement in decision-making. Simon states that:

significant changes in human behavior can be brought about rapidly only if the persons who are expected to change participate in deciding what change shall be made and how it shall be made.²

One of the more important contexts of participation is its application with every day, on-the-job situations. In pointing out participation results through group discussion in this context, Likert states that:

For both blue-collar and white-collar employees, those with favorable job-related attitudes were much more likely to feel that group discussions did some good, that their supervisor liked to get their ideas and tried to do something about them.

The frequency of work-group meetings as well as the attitude and behavior of the superior toward the ideas of subordinates, affects the extent to which employees feel that the supervisor is good at handling people.³

Similar support is evidenced by other recent students of behavioral science, too numerous to name. It is

²Herbert Simon, "Recent Advances in Organization Theory," Research Frontiers in Politics and Government (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1955), pp. 28-29.

³Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 26-27.

really not surprising that a hypothesis which suggests that there will be conflict in the absence of democracy is widely accepted in America. It is somewhat surprising, however, that it is not more widely practiced. It is not uncommon for management to issue policy, instigate changes and in general operate under a complete authoritarian approach. Perhaps this is less often the case since the emergence of organized labor, but still very much evidenced in basic philosophy.

What are the reasons for this apparent paradox between the recognition of the values of participative management and the general failure to achieve it? Chris Argyris⁴ writes in vivid and persuasive terms about what he regards as a built-in dilemma of formal organizations: "the conflict between the system and the individual." Argyris suggests that the formal organization, because of its superior-subordinate relationships, causes dependency and lack of communication, and consequently, limits participation throughout the organization regardless of good intentions. Because of this frustration of the "self actualizing" impulses, employees adopt ingenious sets of defense mechanisms. Management then reacts to these defenses by creating more controls and pressures, which only serve to further limit achievement of needs and frustrate

⁴Chris Argyris, Personality and Organization (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957).

the problem more.

This same general theme is expounded by Douglas McGregor⁵ in his postulation of management theory "X." Here he vividly describes the value system inherent in a scalar (superior-subordinate) organization which serves to create conflict and which becomes self-perpetuating by contributing to the very thing that causes it in the first place. Harold Stieglitz alludes to this same inherent problem in discussing "Barriers to Communication."⁶

Applications in Management

That the principle of participation has demonstrated value, but at the same time institutional organization presents some inherent barriers to its practice, presents the administrator with a challenging paradox. However, perusal of the idea of participative management suggests the following applications for administration which are practical to consider:

1) The participative approach is basic in overcoming resistance to change. In addition to the studies cited, French, et. al.,⁷ found similar results in introducing

⁶Harold Stieglitz, "Barriers to Communication," Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book, eds. W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), pp. 150-159.

⁷J. R. P. French, Jr., I. C. Ross, S. Kirby, J. R. Nelson, and R. Smith, "Employee Participation in a Program of Industrial Change," in Business and Industrial Communication.

large scale changes in an industrial organization. In initiating a participative management program in an industrial firm, Argyris⁸ accomplished acceptance among the managerial staff through the use of this technique.

2) In a somewhat different context, Merei⁹ found that in order for a leader to effect a change in a traditionalized group, he first had to accept the group's traditions. It was only then that the leader was able to make socially sanctioned changes on an incremental basis.

3) Through effecting active participation of all members of a group, the manager becomes aware of possible sources of conflict and problems before they develop into something more serious. This is pointed out by French, et. al.¹⁰ in discussing the advantages of participation.

4) The administrator can develop in a topic a wider variety of information, insights and talents by providing for free participation among members of an organization. Maier puts it this way:

Conference skills permit the effective use of a greater range of intellectual resources, thereby achieving high quality decisions as a by-product.

⁸Chris Argyris, Interpersonal Competence and Organizational Effectiveness (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin and Dorsey, 1962).

⁹Ferenc Merei, "Group Leadership and Institutionalization," Readings in Social Psychology, eds. Guy E. Swanson, Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley (2d. ed.; New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1952), pp. 318-328.

¹⁰French, op. cit., p. 375.

He emphasizes the point that the supervisor's skills and methods used make the difference in gaining higher quality decisions and also in gaining acceptance of decisions.¹¹

Barnlund and Haiman state that:

We believe that under most circumstances it participation is better as a decision-making method than the determination of policy by one man or a small elite. We believe that under most circumstances it is better as an educational tool than . . . one-way means of communication. We believe that under most circumstances it is a more effective vehicle for developing and evaluating solutions to problems than is solitary cogitation.¹²

5) In addition to adding to the cumulative cognitive resources of the organization, participation by all members of the group at the same time provides the administrator with a greater range of checks on thinking processes. The presence of group social pressure tends to make one be more critical about his own thinking and group effort may better facilitate correcting errors. It appears only fair to point out also, however, that under some circumstances, group decisions are not always of the best quality. Social pressures to conform and certain inhibitions that may be created within the group sometimes tend to stifle free exchange.

¹¹Norman R. F. Maier, Problem-solving Discussions and Conferences: Leadership Methods and Skills (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1963), p. 19.

¹²Dean C. Barnlund and Franklyn S. Haiman, The Dynamics of Discussion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), p. 325.

6) The use of participation provides the administrator with an effective means of creating interest and involvement among employees. Being active in management affairs will be a motivating force for the individual and collectively on the group. This helps build the important, but elusive, esprit de corps so necessary to efficient management. Another effect which goes hand-in-hand with involvement and participation is that it provides a safety valve for emotional tension, an outlet for energy. Catharsis is recognized as therapeutic and necessary for everyone. If tensions are released in this way, they are not as likely to be directed adversely toward the organization.

7) In terms of employee training and development, participation in decision making would appear to be an excellent device to develop abilities and creative potential of all members of the organization.

8) Supervisors at all levels can affect how their subordinates evaluate them. This in turn tends to fulfill the "self actualizing" needs of the supervisor, making them more effective.

9) Last, but by no means least, Likert¹³ presents a rather comprehensive body of data which tends to support the idea that managers can increase production significantly and at the same time more fully meet the personal, psychological needs of the organization by making proper use of

¹³Likert, loc. cit.

the principle of participation. Indeed this is the theme of Likert's work as well as most other contemporary writers in the field of human relations in management.

Since the principle of participation can be penetrating in its influence, the idea can become a powerful tool of the persuader. In oversimplified terms, the principle says that a person will tend to support a policy as he participates in its formulation. The problem lies in knowing how much participation one really exercises. By manipulating events it can be made to appear as if there is participation when in fact the outcome has been predetermined. It would seem important for a manager to recognize this and be vigilant in guarding against it.

Obviously participation is not a magic formula for eliminating all conflict and solving all problems. Neither is it merely a method of what McGregor calls "Managerial abdication."¹⁴ The degree of participation must depend on a number of factors, among them: the nature of the problem, the manager's skill, the attitudes and the past experience of the group.

¹⁴McGregor, op. cit., p. 125.

CHAPTER VII

THE THEORY OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE¹

When there exists an inconsistency between what one does and what he believes, there is said to be cognitive dissonance. So is the case whenever there is psychological inconsistency with what a person knows. Festinger explains the theory as follows:

This theory centers around the idea that if a person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with one another, he will, in a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent. Two items of information that psychologically do not fit together are said to be in a dissonant relation to each other. The items of information may be about behavior, feelings, opinions, things in the environment and so on. The word "cognitive" simply emphasizes that the theory deals with relations among items of information.²

When a person feels dissonance, he will in a variety of ways, try to reduce it, and in his mind make things seem more consistent.

Cognitive dissonance is a motivating state of affairs. Just as hunger impels a person to eat, so does dissonance impel a person to change his opinion or his behavior.³

¹Leon Festinger, "Cognitive Dissonance," Approaches, Contexts, and Problems of Social Psychology, ed. Edward E. Sampson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964).

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid.

The theory of cognitive dissonance implies a motivating effect and obviously has many rather far-reaching implications for management application. Studies have dealt with a variety of experimental variations within the context of the basic theory. Examples of some of the more important variations will be discussed here.

Decision making. First let us consider the theory in the context of the decision-making process. Suppose a person makes a choice among relatively attractive alternatives, both with some advantages and some disadvantages. Suppose for purposes of illustration that the decision is one which, for practical purposes, is irrevocable.

Since there are some attractive features of the alternative which was rejected, as well as some unattractive features of the chosen alternative, some dissonance exists because of the inconsistency and the individual will try to reduce the dissonance.

In this case dissonance can be reduced by de-emphasizing the advantages of the rejected alternative as well as the disadvantages of the chosen alternative; or by exaggerating the advantages of the chosen alternative; or obviously perhaps both. In other words, according to the theory, dissonance is reduced, making the desirability of the chosen alternative increase, at the same time decreasing the desirability of the rejected alternative. According to Festinger, this phenomenon has been demonstrated

in a variety of experiments.⁴

In trying to determine when the reduction process is active, Festinger found that ". . . dissonance reduction does not occur during the process of making a decision but only after the decision has been made."⁵

Saying-is-believing. Another implication of the theory is the reactions resulting from a person making a statement which he does not necessarily believe. This obviously would create dissonance to a greater or lesser degree depending on the deviance between the statement and one's true feeling. Studies designed to demonstrate the implications and effects of this have been conducted at Stanford University by Carlsmith and Festinger. They found that:

After having made an irrevocable public statement at variance with his private belief, a person will tend to change his private belief to bring it into line with his public statement. Furthermore, the degree to which he changes his private belief will depend on the amount of justification or the amount of pressure for making the public statement initially. The less the original justification or pressure, the greater the dissonance and the more the person's private belief can be expected to change.⁶

They found that people who are highly rewarded for doing something inconsistent with their beliefs tend to

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁶Ibid., pp. 12-13.

change their opinion less toward the direction of believing what they said than those receiving little reward. Perhaps the reason is that with little reward there is not as much "justifiable" reason for being inconsistent. Another experiment by Cohen showed that:

It is clear that the smaller the original justification for engaging in the dissonance-producing action, the greater the subsequent change in private opinion to bring it into line with the action.⁷

Resisting temptation. Another interesting application of the dissonance theory is the consequences associated with temptation. People tend to persuade themselves that something they want and cannot have is not worth having. This happens when there is dissonance created (an absence of justification for resisting temptation). When there is temptation and at the same time much prohibition, there exists relatively less dissonance since there is a high degree of justification for not giving in to temptation. Thus, it would appear that when one refrains from temptation where there is not great justification for doing so he will tend to persuade himself that the object of temptation is not worth having, and he will see the choice as less attractive. However, when significant prohibitions (justification for resisting temptation) exist, he will tend to continue the desire because dissonance will not tend to occur.

⁷Ibid., p. 13.

Severity of initiation. We frequently observe that when we go through much pain and trouble to attain something, we tend to value it more highly than when something is easy to get. The theory of cognitive dissonance strongly implies this relationship. Although a person may go through much effort to attain an end, such as to become a member of a group, there will always be things about the group that he does not like. This knowledge will be dissonant with his making the effort to gain membership. He may reduce his dissonance by convincing himself that the effort or initiation to gain membership was not really significant, or he can exaggerate the advantages of membership and minimize the disadvantages. With increasing effort to gain membership it becomes more and more difficult to believe the effort was not really significant. Thus a person will tend to reduce his dissonance by exaggerating the attractiveness of the group. In studying the effects of initiation to groups among female college students, Aronson and Mills found that:

The subjects who underwent a severe initiation perceived the group as being significantly more attractive than did those who underwent a mild initiation or no initiation. There was no appreciable difference between ratings by subjects who underwent a mild initiation and those who underwent no initiation.⁸

⁸Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills, "The Effect of Severity of Initiation on Liking for a Group," Group Dynamics: Research and Theory, eds. Darwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander (2d ed.; New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1960), pp. 102-103.

Direction of attitude change. The Principle of Congruity is a special case of dissonance theory dealing with the problem of direction of attitude change. It was advanced by Osgood and Tannenbaum⁹ in 1955, and assumes that there is a continuing pressure toward polarization and that there is a tendency to avoid the more complex categorizations in favor of extreme "black and white." Given these assumptions, Zajonc states:

The principle of congruity holds that when change in evaluation or attitude occurs it always occurs in the direction of increased congruity with the prevailing frame of reference.¹⁰

In other words, a person will tend to make things congruent, go together, be consistent in view.

If a person whom you are favorably disposed toward should say something favorable about a matter you are also favorable about, congruity is said to exist. However, if he should speak against a matter you are favorably disposed toward, incongruity would exist. When attitudes toward the person and the assertion are incongruent, there will be a tendency to change the attitudes toward the person and the object of the assertion in the direction of increased congruity.

⁹C. E. Osgood and P. H. Tannenbaum, "The Principle of Congruity in the Prediction of Attitude Change," Psychological Review, LXII (1955), pp. 42-55.

¹⁰Robert B. Zajonc, "Balance, Congruity, and Dissonance," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIV, No. 2 (1960), p. 287.

Much evidence can be interpreted as supporting the Principle of Congruity. Zajonc points out that as early as 1921, similar phenomena were observed in studying the influence of majority and expert opinion.¹¹

Summary of the theory. There exists an almost infinite variety of ways and situations in which dissonance is experienced. The conditions under which people will tend to reduce this dissonance as well as the ways they will go about doing it are as yet only generally defined. Studies seem to indicate that dissonance reduction is closely related to the severity or degree of dissonance. In other words, the more dissonance, it follows that the greater will be the effort to reduce it. The problem lies in predicting the amount of dissonance experienced. We have observed that inconsistencies are justified if reward for inconsistency is enough. Obviously rewards will be considered differently by different people. Studies concerning attitude change by Rosenbaum and Zimmerman¹² suggest that dissonance experienced may be related to the degree of emotion involved where incongruent commitment¹³ is used. Similar results were indicated by Kolz, et al.,

¹¹Ibid., p. 289.

¹²Milton E. Rosenbaum and Isabel M. Zimmerman, "The Effect of External Commitment on Response to an Attempt to Change Opinions," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIII (1959), pp. 247-254.

¹³As used here, commitment dissonant with the subject's belief.

in classifying the degree of ego defense.¹⁴ This seems to add confirmation to the hypothesis that dissonance will not occur when there is enough justification for inconsistency, whether it is emotional or material reward. The fact that what people will consider incongruent and what they will consider justification for incongruency is apparently still not predictable.

Applications in Management

Even though the effects of cognitive dissonance cannot be predicted with great accuracy because of the great variety of situations in which it applies, the idea does suggest direction for those concerned with human relations.

Decision making. Since the theory indicates that people tend to exaggerate advantages of "their choice" among alternatives, it would suggest that the effective administrator should be ever cognizant of this in weighing possible proposals for action. He would know that the "other side" may not have been given proper consideration. In fact it would seem appropriate to forestall the commitment to choices of a group until a problem had been properly weighed. The reader can probably think of instances in which proponents of different sides have become

¹⁴Daniel Kalz, Charles McClintock and Irving Sarnoff, "The Measurement of Ego Defense as Related to Attitude Change," Journal of Personnel, XXV (1957), pp. 465-474.

more and more insistent that their choice is the "right" one as they became more and more committed to their choice.¹⁵ On the other hand, early commitment toward a desired choice could be encouraged if it were felt that rationalization toward the choice would be desirable. In other words, if the objective were to gain exaggeration of the advantages of a given choice. This would appear to be characteristic of an authoritarian approach. Recognition of the latter approach is a tool to resist this type of persuasion.

Saying-is-believing. Dissonance-producing statements made by individuals may go a long way in affecting what they may eventually believe. Administrative awareness of this is of great importance if one (or a group) is to protect his integrity. The encouragement of a person or group to take a position publicly which is inconsistent with true belief or policy could lead to eventual change toward the inconsistent statement. As was pointed out above, the less the reward or justification for the inconsistent statement the greater should be the attitude change. Practice of this use of the theory obviously could be an effective persuasion technique by administrators in both personnel and public relations. Recognition of it provides protection against it. (The effects of lying are closely related to the effects of commitment and will be discussed

¹⁵The theory predicts that they will tend to exaggerate the advantages of their choice.

in this relation in another chapter.)

Resisting temptation. The application of this context of the theory seems to suggest usefulness in terms of incentives. For instance it would appear that if there is temptation towards a goal, i.e. a promotion, a monetary reward, etc., the tendency would be to maintain or even possibly increase the desire if it does not appear within easy reach. In this case there would be no dissonance, hence no reduction or decrease in desire. In other words, if the prohibitions or justifications against reaching the goal were great there would be less dissonance and less reason to change attitude away from the desire for the reward. On the other hand, if the prohibitions or justification were not great the dissonance would apparently be greater. To reduce the dissonance one could either make an effort to obtain the reward or convince himself that it is not worth having (exaggerate the disadvantages). Thus it would appear that for incentives to be effective, they must be relatively attractive so as to make it difficult to believe the reward is not worth the effort to attain, or be relatively difficult to attain so that the desire will not be reduced through dissonance reduction.

Severity of initiation. This application of the theory seems somewhat less complex than other applications. However, its practicability is perhaps as great if not greater than any of the other applications. From the

standpoint of the administrator, it would seem that in order to provide the most satisfaction and gain member attraction for groups, attainment should not be made easy. On the other hand, attainment must be kept within reach or the theory suggests that membership may be judged not worth the effort.¹⁶ This idea would apply to the various management groups within an organization, social groups, advisory boards, and even groups outside an organization with which it deals or has some control over.

Direction of attitude change. Interpersonal and public relations within the context of administration are recognized as the foundation for success. Recognition of dissonance theory as regards direction of attitude change implies some control over what interpersonal and public relations can be. The Principle of Congruity would suggest that the greater one's acceptance, whether speaking about an organization or an individual, the better one's opportunities to influence opinion. It would suggest that acceptance can be raised by communicating only those things which are rated favorable by the receiver. Incongruous relationships, i.e. going against what the receiver believes, should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid conflict. If the goal is to change opinion, it would appear that the more logical approach in the context of the

¹⁶In this case there would be justification for not joining and hence no dissonance.

congruity principle would be to approach the problem incrementally by a relatively well accepted person advancing the argument. The theory would predict that this will tend to change the receiver's opinion about the object two-thirds as much as about the speaker.

The most significant aspect of the principle seems to be a method of maximizing favorable opinion and minimizing unfavorable opinion. This could be an opinion about a policy, a person, or an organization. In the most simple terms, this is accomplished by avoiding negative feeling of the receiver and accentuating positive points.

Recognition of the process leaves one in the position to recognize the approach to influence and a method to counteract it.

Summary of the theory. The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance is as yet only theory, but nevertheless has been operationally demonstrated in a variety of ways. In the context of this paper it has been possible to describe only a few. Based upon these particular experiments, possible applications of the ideas represented have been postulated. It should be recognized that there is no way that behavior can be definitely predicted based on the assumptions made; however, possible reactions are suggested. Perhaps this is more reliable than not using an empirical systematically defined approach at all. It does provide at heart a way to try to answer some questions, and has been relatively

predictable in the context of the experiments. It is well to keep in mind that there are undoubtedly an infinite variety of other applications of the theory with the many ways in which dissonance expresses itself. Festinger summarizes by stating:

The theory of cognitive dissonance obviously has many implications for everyday life. In addition to throwing light on one's own behavior, it would seem to carry useful lessons for everyone concerned with understanding human behavior in a world where everything is not black and white.¹⁷

¹⁷Festinger, op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Only a few of the implications of the relevant variables involved in human relations have been discussed in this study. Even as what has been presented here is limited in comparison to what is available, the future of behavioral science in management is just beginning. Exciting developments in the physical sciences began over a half century ago. There is no reason to believe that the same will not be in store for us in the future of social science as it is related to administration.

It is important that new models for management are being constantly postulated and subjected to verification by the scientific method. This can only be accomplished by continuing attempts to describe, understand, and predict human behavior. It is in this way we learn to be effective in production and efficient in providing genuine satisfaction to all members of our society.

The introduction of models and postulation of their possible applications to management presented in this paper do not necessarily provide definitive answers. Further development and verification of these important hypotheses will come only through testing. By suggesting

insights to effective human relations, they provide tools for advancing beyond the limits of scientific management.

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