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Attitude Change Revisited: Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Development Policy

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Summary. — This paper extends earlier work done by Hirschman on the potential usefulness of cognitive dissonance theory for explaining the process of attitude change in the course of economic development. According to this theory attitude change may follow rather than precede a change in behavior. The paper shows that an examination of the specific conditions under which this may occur can throw light on the success and failure of particular development policies. Successful outcomes appear to have been produced by policies that paid close attention to the subtle psychological requirements for effecting counter-attitudinal behavior with a minimum amount of perceived pressure.

Cognitive dissonance theory has found widespread applications in marketing, social psychology and recently, its implications for economic theory have been explored.¹ Apart from the treatment given to it by Hirschman, in various contexts and at different times, the theory has, however, been totally ignored in development studies.² We believe that this is a regrettable state of affairs, especially since the dissonance formulation has certain direct and important implications for the design of policies to promote the kinds of attitude change (i.e. change in values, tastes, beliefs and attitudes) that are known to be essential for the process of development. The purpose of this paper, accordingly, is to analyze some of the developmental implications of this well-established theory and, through an interpretation of a selected set of policies in the light of these implications, to suggest areas for improvement in policy-making.

Following a summary of Hirschman's original analysis of the issue, we indicate the respects in which it is proposed to extend his analysis. In the next section, the theoretical underpinnings of the paper are presented. This is followed by a set of empirical applications of the argument, on the basis of which certain policy implications can be drawn.

1. HIRSCHMAN'S ANALYSIS

Hirschman was the first to draw attention to the implications of cognitive dissonance theory for the process of attitude change in development, and in particular to the key implication of the theory, that a change in attitudes may *follow*, rather than *precede* behavioral change. Thus,

the theory states that a person who, for some reason, commits himself to act in a manner contrary to his beliefs, or to what he believes to be his beliefs, is in a state of dissonance. Such a state is unpleasant, and the person will attempt to reduce dissonance. Since the discrepant behavior has already taken place and cannot be undone, while the belief can be changed, reduction of dissonance can be achieved principally by changing one's beliefs in the direction of greater harmony with the action

Dissonance theory deals with the possibility of replacing the "orderly" sequence, where attitude change is conceived as the prerequisite to behavioral change, by a "disorderly one," where modern attitudes are acquired *ex-post*, as a consequence of

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the dissonance aroused by "modern" type of behavior which happens to be engaged in by people with non-modern attitudes.³

The problem is, of course, one of inducing such behavior on the part of people whose attitudes are fundamentally in conflict with it. For Hirschman, however, "this is not much of a problem among *late coming* societies surrounded by modernity and by opportunities to transgress into or try out modern behavior; at one time or another, it is likely that the latecomer will *stumble more or less absent-mindedly into such behavior* as pursuit of individual profit, entrepreneurial risk-taking, promotion according to merit, long term planning, holding of democratic elections, etc.; dissonance will thus arise and will then gradually lead to those changes in attitude and basic beliefs which were thought to be prerequisites to the just-mentioned modes of behavior."⁴ The role of government, accordingly, is primarily to promote the extent to which individuals are able to "engage in these dissonance-arousing actions and in inducing initial commitment to them."

Hirschman's analysis does not, however, adequately incorporate the fact that the inducement of "dissonance-arousing actions" by government can — and indeed often does — take a wide variety of forms, ranging from mild encouragement on the one hand, to outright coercion on the other. It is the contribution of dissonance theory to show that these alternatives, and the precise manner in which they are effected, will have very different implications for the extent to which a favorable change in attitudes can be expected to accompany induced alterations in behavior. Our concern in this paper, therefore, is to consider in more detail than does Hirschman, the implications of the theory for the probable efficacy of government policies that seek, directly or indirectly, to induce people to alter their behavior. For this it is necessary to consider in some detail the conditions under which (i) cognitive dissonance will be aroused by certain types of behavior change and (ii) the dissonance thus aroused will be dealt with by an accompanying change in attitudes.

2. THE CONDITIONS FOR ACCOMPANYING ATTITUDE CHANGE CONSEQUENT UPON BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

"According to the dissonance theory analysis, behaving in a manner contrary to one's attitudinal position creates dissonance, which can be reduced by changing one's attitudes so that they become more consistent with the behavior en-

gaged in."⁵ This sequence, however, is by no means automatic — on the contrary, dissonance theory lays down a quite specific set of conditions that must be fulfilled in order for it to occur. In this section we examine the nature of these conditions.

There are two distinct stages in the process by which behavior change produces a favorable change in attitude through the dissonance mechanism. Each stage will be seen to give rise to a necessary condition for this change to occur. Firstly, it is necessary that the behavioral change actually induces dissonance and secondly, it is required that attitude change is the method that is chosen to reduce the dissonance. Together, the two sets of conditions will be sufficient for the required attitude change.

(a) *The conditions for dissonance arousal*

The basic mechanism that induces dissonance as a consequence of behavioral change is one of conflict, and in particular, the conflict between one's behavior and the attitudes that one holds. It is the extent of this conflict that determines the degree of dissonance that is aroused. This, in turn, will depend upon the conditions governing the behavioral change itself.

Individuals may engage in behavior which is inconsistent with their attitudes for a variety of reasons. In some cases this may occur "by accident" as envisaged in Hirschman's case where individuals "stumble more or less absent-mindedly into such behavior." In most cases, however, the discrepant behavior will occur as a result of inducements or outright coercion (as when the behavior is made compulsory by government). These different types of motivation are important because they have quite different implications for the amount of dissonance that is likely to be aroused.

Consider first the extreme case where the altered behavior is entirely due to coercion (which is known in the dissonance literature as the case of "forced compliance"). Here little or no dissonance will result since the behavior change can be easily dismissed as something that "had to be done" and for which the individual consequently bears no responsibility.

A similar argument applies to the case where behavioral change is induced not by outright coercion, but rather by some form of incentive scheme. In general, the theory predicts that the greater the incentives under which the behavioral change takes place the less will be the dissonance and consequently also the degree of attitude change. For the greater are the incentives the

more easily can the behavior change be considered (in a way that is analogous to forced compliance) as something that was done because of the circumstances rather through an act of individual volition. And lacking the volitional component, the behavior change fails to produce dissonance or a change in attitudes.

Firms trying to promote the sales of new products through free samples, cut-price offers, etc. frequently encounter this type of relationship between attitudes and behavioral change. Thus the more incentives are used to induce buyers to change their behavior patterns (i.e. to switch to the new brand) the less likely is it that attitude change in favor of the product (and hence repeat purchasing) will ensue.⁶ Indeed, from this point of view, it may be preferable to charge something, than offer free samples! And in the forced compliance literature numerous experiments have shown that the greater the inducement to make a public statement that is contrary to one's private opinion, the less is the resulting change in attitude in the direction of the view expressed in the public statement.

What the above discussion suggests as a necessary condition for dissonance arousal, therefore, is that the individual experiences some degree of choice in making his change of behavior. Even if this condition is met, and dissonance is therefore aroused, however, it does not necessarily follow that the outcome will be a change in attitude. For what is then crucial is how the individual chooses to reduce the dissonance that is aroused.

(b) *The mode of dissonance reduction*

"Dissonance theory is nonspecific with regard to the mode of dissonance reduction used by the individual after dissonance arousal."⁷ That is, it makes no specific prediction as to whether dissonance will be reduced by one means rather than another. What the theory does say, however, is that in general the individual will opt for the mode of dissonance reduction that offers the least resistance.

Consider the example of the smoker who experiences dissonance because the act of smoking is inconsistent with his knowledge that it is bad for his health. Because it is very difficult for him to deny that the habit is bad for his health, he may instead attempt to reduce dissonance by arguing that if he stopped smoking he would put on weight which is equally bad for his health.

It follows that if attitude change is to follow discrepant behavior change as the chosen mode of reducing the dissonance occasioned by the

latter, it must offer less resistance than other possible modes, perhaps the most obvious of which is attempting to revert to behavior that is more in line with one's attitudes. The question is then whether it is easier to alter one's new behavior or one's old attitudes. Among the crucial determinants of this choice are, firstly, the degree of irrevocability of the former, e.g., whether or not the individual would incur sizable financial losses from "uncommitting" himself from his new behavioral commitment. The difficulty of changing one's attitudes — the second major determinant — depends, on the one hand, on how entrenched these have become and on the other hand, on how much social support one has in changing them.⁸

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In the previous section we examined the conditions under which a change in behavior produces an accommodating attitude change. Brehm and Cohen have summed up the implications of these conditions for social policy in the following way.

The strongest effects on attitudes . . . and subsequent behavior are produced when careful thought is given to the conditions under which people are forced to comply with the demand that they do something they do not want to do. Changes in attitudes, and so forth, away from an initial position one has held, toward a new and originally unpleasant position, depend certainly on first arranging the social conditions that elicit the new and recalcitrant response. However, *it is the manner in which the environment is organized in getting the person into the new situation, or arranged once he is in it, that determines how well he will adjust to it by accepting it, incorporating it, rationalizing it, and, finally, even proselytizing for it.*⁹

Because many, if not most, development policies are designed eventually to alter the behavior of certain members of poor societies in ways that conflict with the (often traditional) attitudes held by these individuals, we believe that this statement has relevance also for this area of policy-making. Through an interpretation of some of these policies in the light of the analysis in the previous section, we shall therefore attempt to throw light on their frequently observed failure (as well as occasional successes) to produce accommodating attitude change, and in this way to indicate the direction future policies might take in order to raise their chances of success in this respect.

The above analysis of the necessary conditions for accommodating attitude change resultant

upon behavior change, suggests two major problems for development planners. The first is how to induce a change in behavior without at the same time negating the conditions for the arousal of dissonance. Thus, "While it is necessary to have a minimum of . . . extrinsic motivations in order to obtain compliance . . . the strength of any of these forces beyond the minimum makes a great deal of difference in ultimate attitude change."¹⁰ In other words, what policy-makers confront is a vicious circle; getting people to engage in dissonance-arousing activities would seem to require coercion or strong incentives but the very use of these methods defeats the objective of engendering sufficient dissonance to produce a change in attitudes.

One way for policy to overcome this "Catch 22" is to make use of group pressure, which, under some circumstances, may appear as less coercive than pressure exerted directly on individuals from above. These favorable circumstances seem to arise when the individual feels part of a cohesive group, whose norms he (therefore) likes to live up to and in whose decisions he takes some active role.¹¹ Group change will then tend to be easier to effect than change of individuals considered separately. During the Second World War, for example, psychologists who were seeking the best way to convince housewives to buy unfamiliar types of foods, found that "More housewives changed their behavior and attitudes about various types of foods after participating in a group discussion than after hearing a lecture on the value of eating these same new foods. Once the new group standard had been formed through group discussion, it was easier for the housewives to change their behavior to conform to the new standard."¹²

Much the same use of peer pressure in small groups (*hsiao-tsu*) appears to have been made for the purpose of mobilizing the Chinese population during the Maoist period. But as Whyte has pointed out, effective use of this type of pressure demanded an extremely subtle blend of psychological forces, which was not at all easy to establish. In particular,

Mutual criticism in a sense is the prime motive force behind attitude change in *hsiao-tsu*; as such it was extremely important that mutual criticism and the atmosphere surrounding it be correct. The desired atmosphere was one quite different from that valued in traditional Chinese primary groups. The terms used convey this point. What was desired was a "happy, tense, lively atmosphere." . . . "solidarity but not harmony." . . . Thus a new kind of unity was to develop, one based on rigorous group criticism rather than on the smoothing over of

conflict in order to preserve harmony (the traditional emphasis). On the other hand, *hsiao-tsu* were not supposed to be the scene of relentless and merciless criticism, which would serve only to alienate members. Solidarity and criticism were to be combined, with criticism leading not to disharmony but to improved unity As those criticized acknowledged their defects and resolved to change their ways, unity was restored, but at a higher level (i.e., with the defects corrected). *Only if criticism was properly balanced with group solidarity could it be effective in changing the attitudes of members.*¹³

A second way in which policy may be able to overcome the vicious circle described above is through use of the so-called "foot-in-the-door technique." This technique of producing compliance with a minimal amount of apparent pressure, is based on the assumption that "once a person has been induced to comply with a small request he is more likely to comply with a larger demand."¹⁴ One of the most interesting and widespread applications of the foot-in-the-door approach is to be found in sales campaigns that attempt to engage the consumer in even the most minor forms of initial involvement with the product (such as sending back a card indicating that he does not want the product).

Even if policy-makers are able successfully to employ techniques of peer pressure and gradual persuasion to bring about temporary counter-attitudinal behavior, they will still, however, face the problem of ensuring that this behavior *persists* and for this more sustained behavioral alteration a fundamental change in attitudes is generally likely to be necessary. The point can usefully be illustrated with reference to the distinction that Brehm and Cohen draw between what is required for racial desegregation on the one hand and more fundamental racial integration on the other. As they put it,

It is true that many of the advocates of desegregation feel that it does not matter *what* people's attitudes are or *how* they react so long as desegregation, and therefore racial equality, is brought about. But, if one is oriented toward the long view, and takes the position that desegregation is after all the first step toward integration, he should examine thoroughly the conditions under which desegregation takes place.¹⁵

In general, policy-makers need to ensure that attitude change is the preferred (i.e. least-cost) mode of dissonance reduction (assuming, as we are, that the change in behavior has been accompanied by a relatively high degree of dissonance). Policies for this can take the form either of making "uncommitment" of behavior difficult, or of facilitating accommodating attitude change, or both of these. Achievement of the

former can be promoted by ensuring that the policy underlying the induced behavior is firm and irrevocable and the latter by mobilizing village leaders or other authority figures to sanction the accommodating attitude change, for it is a fundamental proposition of dissonance theory that "dissonance will be resolved via positive attitude change . . . to the degree that such positive attitudes are socially sanctioned."¹⁶

How successfully the actual practice of development has dealt with these problems will be the subject of the following section, in which we present case-study material from a variety of different areas of policy-making.

4. POLICY CASE STUDIES

(a) *Population policy*

For a time, it seemed reasonable to those concerned with policies for family planning, that initial acceptance of family planning methods meant satisfaction and, furthermore, that initial acceptance and other short-term indicators were closely associated with long-term use.¹⁷

Subsequent findings, however, belied the view that success in family planning methods could be usefully measured by acceptor rates. In particular, it was found that continuation rates "were extremely low in studies from several dozen selected countries."¹⁸

These later findings are consistent with the dissonance approach, which, in general, predicts that a change in behavior (in this case acceptance of contraceptive methods) *may or may not* be associated with a corresponding attitude change and that there is no necessity for acceptor rates to be highly correlated with long-run success. According to the theory, the change in attitude — and consequently the degree of continuation — depends crucially on the *precise manner* in which the initial change in behavior is effected.

Consider the case of the individual with an initially unfavorable attitude towards family planning. The problem is not only to secure behavior on the part of the individual that is inconsistent with his/her initial attitude, but also to secure a *sustained* change in behavior which, in turn, demands a change in attitude. A major problem is that even if the first hurdle can be overcome and the initial behavior change is achieved (so that dissonance is aroused), it can all too easily be dispelled by reversion to one's initial behavior. That is, without some degree of commitment to the new mode of behavior, behavior rather than attitude change is likely to be the preferred mode of dissonance reduction.

An example from a contraceptive distribution scheme in Bangladesh illustrates the problems. In 1975 all married women of reproductive age were given information on and offered a supply of oral contraceptives. If they accepted, they were given a supply of six cycles. However, the women were not asked to commit themselves to using the contraceptives. Though contraceptive use rose quite sharply during the following year, the dropout rate was reported to be high.¹⁹ At least part of the reason for this may have been the lack of commitment — and the consequent ease of using "uncommitment," rather than attitude change, as a mode of dissonance reduction.

Similar problems of securing sustained behavioral change are often encountered in policies for compulsory education. With respect to the Chilean case, for example, Anderson and Bowman report that despite the existence of legal compulsory primary education, "There is a very heavy rate of school desertion . . . in direct violation of the law."²⁰ With poor enforcement of the law, it is all too easy to reduce dissonance-arousing behavior, by changing the behavior itself.

As noted in the previous section, attitude change may also fail to occur because of the way in which coercive-type methods are used to bring about the initial change in behavior. This problem, too, can be illustrated in the context of incentive policies for family planning.

Many developing countries have experimented with incentives of various kinds in the promotion of family planning practices. In some cases, incentives are provided to those responsible for promoting birth control in the field, who are often referred to as canvassers. This has led, on occasion, to results quite contrary to the objectives of the programs. In particular, canvassers have used a high degree of coercion to secure behavior change (e.g. through vasectomies). As a result, respondents have *continued to hold an unfavorable attitude towards vasectomy even after adoption*. And, "Such adopters are likely to spread unfavorable rumors about vasectomy. The result is an eventual plateau effect in the rate of adoption. . . . A dissatisfied customer who adopted because of pressure from a canvasser is the worst kind of interpersonal advertisement, for an innovation."²¹ (Note here that a similar outcome may be predicted by dissonance theory if, without actual coercion, incentives are very high.)

Rogers concludes his analysis of the efficacy of incentives for family planning with a plea for enriched "understanding of the sociopsychological process of persuasion and innovation decision making through which incentives have

an effect. How individuals perceive incentives and how such perceptions structure their motivation and affect their decisions are not yet known."²²

All of the above has been concerned with the second main question noted at the start of this section, namely, whether or not attitude change accompanies behavioral change (which assumes that the latter has actually been secured). But in the field of policies for family planning, securing the initial desired behavior change has often proved very difficult. Indeed, "Field experience clearly indicates that attacking values, on the one hand, or making structural changes on the other, is not always sufficient to change behavior."²³ That is, while non-coercive methods of securing behavior change have often failed, methods that are "too coercive" also, as we have seen, may fail to achieve the attitude changes that are required for a sustained improvement in methods of birth control.

Motivational aspects of the successful Chinese case

In the above, we argued that the dissonance formulation is able to throw light on certain instances of failure in the field of family planning. We also believe that the theory provides a useful framework within which aspects of the successful Chinese experience in this area can be understood.

As Leo Orleans has pointed out, the Chinese effort to introduce birth control to the population had to overcome virtually all the problems that are typically encountered by other developing countries, namely, "traditional values with regard to family, the desire for children, . . . an attitude toward sex that inhibited open discussion of the subject, the traditional subservient role of the woman."²⁴ He also indicates that with respect to the delivery system that the Chinese used to solve these problems, there is little that is new to family planning specialists. What does distinguish the Chinese approach appears to be its motivational aspect and we shall offer a dissonance theory interpretation of this experience.

The essence of the motivational system that is applied to population control is peer pressure. This pressure is felt both at the workplace and at the residential level. With respect to the former,

The involvement of the management and of the workers and employees or peasants in the personal lives of each individual extends considerably beyond work-related subjects . . . study topics related to family planning are common. . . . It is not unusual for the women workers in a factory, for example, to announce their joint decision as to the number of births they will collectively have during

the following year, or to see a chart on the wall of a hospital or an office.²⁵

The focus of peer pressure at the residential level is the basic level cadre whose function is to personally guide and continually assist mothers and potential mothers. In some cases, the degree of involvement of the local community in the choice of family size is such that debates are held to discuss which families would have children during forthcoming years. As a consequence of these powerful pressures that are brought to bear on the Chinese population it used to be the case that "a couple that has too many children not only rejects Mao's wishes but disgraces its own group or community."²⁶

One of the striking aspects of the way in which the Chinese confronted the intractable problem of "traditional attitudes" in birth control as well as in other areas during the Maoist period is that it appears to conform quite closely to what the theory described in the previous section would require for favorable attitude change to accompany prior alterations in behavior. (Indeed, as Whyte²⁷ points out, much of the reasoning presented in political pamphlets parallels closely the findings of Western social psychologists, although the pamphlets do not cite these findings and do not discuss the issues in the same terms.) In particular, the Chinese laid great stress on the need to avoid behavioral change through forced compliance. "Indirect pressure, persuasion, and the force of example should be emphasized and commands and threats de-emphasized."²⁸ That is, behavioral change was to be brought about in a manner that would arouse dissonance on the part of those whose initial attitudes were inconsistent with the change. For this purpose, as noted earlier, the Chinese leaders relied heavily on the peer pressure that was exerted through the small group, achieving in this way, what often appears as paradoxical about the Maoist development model, namely, the combination of regimentation and mass enthusiasm. "To the Western mind (these) seem quite contradictory, or attainable only in very special organizations with highly selected participants (perhaps in a monastery)."²⁹ But it is important to note that in the use of this method the Chinese were not always successful in achieving the ideal type of small group structure which was described in the theoretical section above and through which compliance could be secured with a minimum of apparent pressure. As Whyte has pointed out,

In some organizations individuals do feel pressure from peers whom they respect to change their attitudes, and find the prospect of "falling behind" hard to bear. But in some other organizational

settings individuals feel they are surrounded by opportunists waiting to criticize their slightest misstep in order to gain favor with superiors. In other settings individuals look upon political rituals as a bothersome but unavoidable routine, and save their energies and emotions for activities outside the group. In these and other ways the ideal strict political atmosphere is not achieved, and the psychological impact of group activities is reduced, or even reversed.³⁰

In terms of dissonance theory, all these difficulties may be said to have the effect of frustrating the attempt to produce *sustained* behavioral change through attitude change that is (intended to be) produced via (non-coercive) peer pressure in the small groups. And as a consequence, "In sustaining high commitments and efforts, the elite still relies upon material incentives and sanctions more than it would apparently like to."

(b) *A micro case-study: The diffusion of sanitation technology in Mexico*

Several of the elements that characterize the general Chinese model can be studied in operation at the micro-level of the successful introduction of new sanitation technology in Yalcuc, Mexico.

Latrines were first introduced into Yalcuc about 20 years ago and the subsequent experience in that community, "is an example of rapid diffusion and adoption of an innovation in a harmonious manner beneficial to the majority."³¹ In particular, following an initial adoption rate of almost 90%, the rate of continuous use over the ensuing 20-year period was 75%.

Much of the enduring success of this project appears to have been due to the precise manner in which it was first implemented. Specifically,

the decision to install latrines was made within the context of a community project; all the aura of the leadership and the pressures of social control were brought to bear on the villagers. Gradually, *all the men in the community signed an agreement in a village meeting signifying their commitment to the collective decision to install the latrines.* . . . The decision to install latrines was as much a matter of community dynamics as of individual decisionmaking. . . . The costs (in money and time) of installing a latrine were perceived by many as minor compared to the costs (in social pressure, loss of good will, and deterioration of solidarity) of *not* installing one.³²

In contrast to the contraceptive distribution scheme in Bangladesh referred to above (where the initial change in behavior was not sustained), what appears thus to have occurred in Yalcuc was that the commitment to the project that was

jointly enforced through group pressure and in writing, caused attitude change to be the preferred mode of dissonance reduction. Peer pressure in this case, as in the more successful Chinese examples, appears to have been perceived by participants as something much less coercive than a mere directive imposed from above. Indeed, the group structure that was employed for the purpose of diffusion of the latrines resembles in key respects the "ideal-type" sought by the Chinese leaders. In particular, "Proposals are discussed thoroughly, and opposing opinions are heard respectfully. . . . Never is a vote taken, and as a result, polarization is minimized."³³ And in this way "The concern with solidarity is supported by a system of social pressure to comply with collective decisions and generally follows the norms of the community."³⁴ Taken together, these aspects of the way in which the project was implemented, helped to ensure a lasting alteration in behavior, as was manifest in the long-term continued use of the latrine.

If, therefore, the Yalcuc sanitation project provides an illustration of the way in which peer pressure can be used to confront the problem of securing counter-attitudinal behavior with a minimal amount of perceived coercion, other apparently successful projects in this field suggest that attention should also be paid to the potential of the alternative, "foot-in-the-door" (i.e., gradual persuasion) technique. In two small communities in rural Guatemala, for example, the initiators of the project managed first "to gain the allegiance of a small group active in the community and capable of generating community support. The commitment of the rest of the community members was obtained in a gradual process of individual persuasion by core leaders."³⁵

(c) *Motivational aspects of villagization in Tanzania*

Following the Arusha Declaration of 1967, the government of Tanzania embarked on a policy of establishing communally organized villages throughout the rural areas of the country (the so-called *Ujamaa* village scheme). That this policy had only a very limited degree of success is now widely acknowledged and in this section we try to relate certain of the unsuccessful aspects of this scheme to a failure to comply with the afore-mentioned conditions for favorable attitude change.

In seeking to foster a new type of organization of rural production, the government confronted the problem of transforming individualistic atti-

tudes that were rooted in a long tradition of smallholder agriculture. And this problem was dealt with in two different ways. On the one hand, entirely voluntary means of persuasion were used and on the other, resort was made to methods of outright coercion. Following the predictions of dissonance theory, one would expect a totally different outcome from the two types of approach, and this is indeed what occurred. Thus,

the experience of the many *ujamaa* villages throughout the country shows that *the key to the future success of a village lies in the way it is initiated*, and in the motivation of the farmers who came together to establish the village. Ideally, this beginning should be entirely spontaneous Some villages which indeed started in this way benefit enormously from the cohesion and mutual confidence within the community which ensue. . . . On the other hand, the experience where forms of coercion, even if reasonably subtle, have been used to organize *ujamaa* villages, has shown the extreme difficulty of promoting cooperation other than through entirely voluntary means.³⁶

In one district where coercive methods were employed the outcome after four years was that "the villages remain dependent on government assistance and have made very little progress towards social or economic viability."³⁷

Nor was it only with respect to the conditions under which the initial change in behavior was brought about that problems with the motivational aspects of villagization arose. There were failures also in regard to policies for those farmers who had already made the change to, and were working in, the new villages. In particular, inadequate attention appears to have been paid to obtaining the commitment to the new way of life, that, in the dissonance formulation, is so critical to obtaining attitude change. One commentator of the villagization program, refers, for example, to the feelings of insecurity that were aroused by doubts as to whether *ujamaa* agriculture was really "there to stay."³⁸ Another describes a group of villagers as retaining "their reservations about leaving their former homes and lands in the valley. Many were watching the alternatives open to them carefully even as they cut their way through the thick thornbush."³⁹ What appears to have been lacking, among other things, was the operation of any mechanism that provided social pressure of the Chinese small group type. "What was needed was a mobilizing agency which could mediate between the goals determined by the state and the perhaps understandable but nevertheless regrettable reluctance of the peasant."⁴⁰

(d) *The motivational aspects of compulsory rural medical service*

In many developing countries doctors are required to engage in temporary health work in rural areas for periods of typically one or two years. The ILO Mission to Colombia recommended that "the authorities should carefully consider a possible extension of the period of compulsory rural service," on the grounds that "This may be the only way to overcome the existing rural scarcity."⁴¹

In the short run, schemes such as these, will, of course, alleviate the problem, but in the longer term their negative motivational aspects are likely to prove counterproductive. On the one hand, as Oftedal and Levinson have pointed out, "The doctors almost always return to the cities at the end of the compulsory service."⁴² What is worse, the attitudes of the returning doctors to rural service often seem to become even more unfavorable as a direct result of the rural service itself.

Dissonance theory would interpret these results in the following way. Firstly, they may be seen in terms of a failure to meet the conditions required for the arousal of dissonance, because of the coercive methods used to obtain compliance with the scheme. And even if dissonance is aroused, the purely temporary nature of rural service means that behavioral commitment to it by the visiting doctor is likely to be entirely lacking. Consequently, what dissonance is aroused, will not be reduced by the adoption of a more favorable attitude to the conditions of this service.

(e) *International relations: foreign aid and IMF conditionality*

So far, all of our examples have been drawn from a situation in which the government of a developing country has sought to alter the behavior and attitudes of society. But there are also numerous areas in which it is the behavior/attitudes of the government itself which are the object of attempts at change.

Hirschman has pointed to the use of foreign aid as one such instrument of influence on the policies of Third World governments. Specifically, he shows how the very operation of the forced compliance principle makes it difficult for donors to use aid as an effective means of influencing change on the part of unwilling aid recipients. As he puts it,

The conditioning of foreign aid on internal reform can do positive harm at the stage when an underde-

veloped country is about to commit herself to new types of "modern" or reform actions; to reward such perhaps partly dissonant behavior would lead to less cumulative change than if the behavior could not be dismissed by the actors as something they did just to get hold of the aid funds. In this way, the theory throws some light on the difficulties of using aid as a means of promoting internal reform which have beset the Alliance for Progress since its inception.⁴³

A very similar argument can be made in the case of IMF conditionality, which, according to Dell, has become much more exacting since the mid-1970s⁴⁴ (and hence much less likely to exert any lasting influence over recipients). And, in fact, one commentator has very recently observed that "even where governments accept the economic wisdom of the Fund prescriptions, it may prove politically more convenient for them to present the policies as 'Fund policies' which have been unwillingly forced on them."⁴⁵ As a consequence of this forced compliance, one would expect to find a diminished commitment to the policies, and an associated tendency to "reversion behavior" rather than a reform of attitudes. It is interesting, therefore (if not at all conclusive), to discover that in Latin America,

after about 25 years of Fund-assisted stabilization policies the region's performance has not improved and local economic policy-makers . . . have not learnt how to emancipate themselves from disproportionate reliance on adjustment assistance from outside agencies. On the contrary the more advanced economies have manifested increasing symptoms of "Latin American" style economic instability.⁴⁶

5. CONCLUSIONS

A vast literature attests to the essentiality of attitude change in the process of development. In almost all this literature a change in attitudes is regarded as a necessary prerequisite for the type of behavioral changes that are thought to pro-

duce economic development. Almost 20 years ago, however, Hirschman pointed out that this sequence may not in fact be necessary, and indeed, that according to the social psychological theory of cognitive dissonance the reverse may occur (that is, favorable attitude change may be the result rather than the cause of alterations in behavior). Because Hirschman did not, however, deal with the conditions that are required for this reversal of the traditional sequence to occur, we have tried to extend his analysis to incorporate a specification of the conditions laid down by dissonance theory. In addition, we have sought to show that numerous instances of success and failure in policies designed to promote attitude change in the Third World can plausibly be interpreted in the light of these conditions. To the extent that our interpretations are valid, a number of powerful implications for the design of development policy emerge from the analysis. To be more specific, policy-makers will have to pay especially close attention to the subtle psychological requirements for bringing about counter-attitudinal behavior with a minimum amount of perceived pressure.

In assessing the validity of our interpretations, the reader should recognize that underlying these is the assumption that cognitive dissonance theory is "universally correct." That is to say, we have implicitly assumed not only that the theory is applicable to the modern Western type of society for which it was originally intended, but also that it is largely transferable to the often traditional societies of the Third World. With respect to the former, we can do no better than refer the reader to the specialized experimental evidence.⁴⁷ The case for the transferability of the theory seems to us to depend on whether the human need for cognitive consistency can really be placed on the same footing as the basic human instincts for hunger, thirst, etc. (as Festinger suggested in his original formulation), and if so, on the extent to which even these drives are capable of being modified by different environments.⁴⁸

NOTES

1. Akerlof and Dickens (1982).
2. Hirschman (1965, 1970, 1971, 1981, 1982).
3. Hirschman (1965), p. 392.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 392-393 (emphasis added).
5. Brehm and Cohen (1962), p. 272.
6. Wicklund and Brehm (1976).
7. Brehm and Cohen (1962), p. 280.
8. Hirschman (1970), pp. 146-147, attempts to identify the conditions for different responses to dissonant situations on the part of group members. The dissonance aroused is a consequence of the difference between the "cognition that (one) has undergone an

unpleasant ordeal to attain membership and the cognition concerning the undesirable aspects of the group." As a mode of dissonance reduction, "exit" is likely to occur when the costs of exit are low, which may be partly a consequence of the lower dissonance that is aroused by a "mild initiation to the group."

9. Brehm and Cohen (1962), p. 298 (emphasis added).

10. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

11. Hare (1976).

12. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

13. Whyte (1974), p. 49 (emphasis added).

14. Freedman and Fraser (1966), p. 195.

15. Brehm and Cohen (1962), pp. 284-285.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 284 (emphasis added).

17. Bruce (1980).

18. Zeidenstein (1980).

19. Huber and Khan (1979).

20. Anderson and Bowman (1971), p. 305.

21. Rogers (1971), p. 246.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

23. Knight (1980).

24. Orleans (1975), p. 503.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 515.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 525.

27. Whyte (1974).

28. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

31. Elmendorf and Buckles (1980), p. 20.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20 (emphasis added).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

36. Ellman (1975), p. 333.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

39. Turok (1975), p. 407.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

41. ILO (1970), p. 256.

42. Oftedal and Levinson (1977), p. 419.

43. Hirschman (1965), p. 393.

44. Dell (1981).

45. Bird (1984), p. 176.

46. Foxley and Whitehead (1980), p. 825.

47. See for example Wicklund and Brehm (1976) and Margulis and Songer (1969).

48. A similar question arises in relation to the universality of major elements of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. In this regard Erich Fromm (1978), p. 163, has argued that "the instinctual apparatus, both quantitatively and qualitatively, has certain physiologically and biologically determined limits to its modifiability and that only within these limits is it subject to the influence of social factors."

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