Communication Theory as a Dynamic Frame of Reference for Understanding and Controlling Organization Behavior.

Carlton James Whitehead
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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COMMUNICATION THEORY AS A DYNAMIC FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR UNDERSTANDING AND CONTROLLING ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR

A Dissertation

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The Department of Management

by

Carlton James Whitehead
B.S., Southeastern Louisiana College, 1958
M.B.A., Louisiana State University, 1962
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ABSTRACT

Organization is a dynamic phenomenon, and in this dissertation the dynamic frame of reference provided by communication theory is utilized to investigate certain aspects of organization behavior. A model of the interpersonal communication process and selected features of the relationship between communication and behavior are investigated to develop the dynamic framework used to analyze goal orientation, coordinated behavior, the decision process, and control of organization behavior.

The present fragmented development of organization theory motivated the use of secondary research and a broad theoretical approach.

Communication is intimately related to the behavioral development and socialization of an individual. One learns value systems and acceptable social behavior through communication. The pervasive symbols in the social system and their related values tend to become the dominant ones within the personality system. Individuals are stimulated and stimulate others in desired directions through symbols. Feedback from communicating helps to correct personal knowledge and maintain realistic views of oneself, other persons, events, and realities in the environment.

The communication variable is an important determinant of individual and group organization goals. Differentiation of information transmitted to members provides the informational frame of reference.
which significantly influences subgoals adopted. Anxiety created by perceived dissonance of orientation encourages an entering member to institute concerted communication efforts to discover group norms. His personal need for coorientation, the selective and biased exposure to goal-related messages, and intense group pressure motivates adaptation to group norms.

Subgoals, once formed, are reinforced through the individual's capacity for selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention of goal-related messages, and by the group's control and filtering of information in its network.

Behavior directed toward predetermined ends, that is, coordinated behavior, is dependent upon the communication variable. The generation and internalization of symbolic systems of expectations provide the framework for coordination. This framework is developed by defining an interrelated system of roles, and prescribing both general and specific goal-directed symbolic boundaries called policies, procedures, and methods. Defining role relationships creates structure, status, and authority.

The structured stimulus situation guides perception and facilitates assigning similar meanings to message stimuli—a necessity for achieving coordinated behavior. It also encourages and facilitates developing and internalizing programmed responses, which can be evoked by selective exposure to message stimuli.

Communication difficulties are responsible for many coordination problems. Individuals misinterpret and distort role descriptions, and receive filtered descriptions from secondary sources. Programmed responses short circuit the evaluative problem-solving process, and
unanticipated connotative meanings are evoked by unintended cues. Inadequate intergroup communication difficulties are partially attributable to technical vocabularies, perceived status differences, rivalry, and structural deterrents to communication.

Communication is vital to the decision process. Receipt of message stimuli initiates the decision process. Discovering and evaluating alternatives involves search-related communication. A member who is the source of vital information, an important network link, or controls network access has significant decision making potential. Both predecision and postdecision behavior involves selective communication to reduce decision-related anxiety.

Internalized symbol systems provide the foundation for socially controlled behavior. Selective use of communication is utilized to encourage internalization of expected behavior by providing rewarding and dissonant producing stimuli.

The communication system and its networks direct the flow of information. They are most effective when connected to informal networks via the group leader and coincidental with the formal system of authority.

Providing for controlled change influences its direction and rate. Controlled change should be approached through the individual's frame of reference and his primary group and implemented by planned use of selected communication.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Complex organization is directly correlated to a complex, highly-developed society. Each is mutually dependent upon the other. Recognition of man's dependency upon effective organization to advance his economic and cultural status in our dynamic society is providing the stimulus for the current mushrooming interest in organization theory. This attitude is exemplified by the observation "... improvement in organizational level thinking is undoubtedly most crucial to human survival."¹

Modern organization theory is one of the frontiers of research in the social sciences. Principles of organization, once considered universal truths, have become dated just as many of their expounders.² Organization is a dynamic process, and any analysis which falls to approach it as such is fatally limited in usefulness. In this study, a dynamic framework is utilized.


²As social structure and values change, the form of organization
I. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

The analysis is directed toward investigating the relationship between communication and organization, or on a higher level of abstraction, the relationship between communication theory and organization theory. Selected aspects of organizational dynamics are investigated utilizing the dynamic frame of reference provided by communication theory. The objective is to develop an understanding of organization behavior, the dynamics of organization.

In this study communication is perceived to be a basic variable in organization. The observation of Bavelas and Barrett exemplifies this point of view:

It is entirely possible to view an organization as an elaborate system for gathering evaluating, recombining and disseminating information . . . .

This line of reasoning leads us to the belief that communication is not a secondary or derived aspect of organization - a 'helper' of the other and presumably more basic functions. Rather it is the essence of organized activity and is the basic process out of which all of the other functions derive. The goals an organization selects, the methods it applies, the effectiveness with which it improves its own procedures - all of these hinge upon the quality and availability of information in the system. 3

must change to survive in a competitive environment.

3Alex Bavelas and Dermot Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," Personnel, XXVII (1951), 368.
Likewise, it is believed in the area of organization theory, information as a psychological variable "... will be one of the richest in generating both concepts and research in the near future."  

Furthermore, communication is seen as a basic variable in understanding and explaining human behavior:

Therefore in order to facilitate progress, we propose to use one single system to understand multiple aspects of human behavior. As of today, we believe that communication is the only scientific model which enables us to explain physical, intrapersonal, and cultural aspects of events within one system. By use of one single system, we eliminate the multiplicity of single universes, the multifarious vocabularies, and the controversies which arise because we, the scientist and clinician, cannot understand each other.

This point of view is emphasized still further:

The essence of our message to the reader is that communication is the matrix in which all human activities are embedded. In practice, communication links object to person and person to person; and scientifically speaking this interrelatedness is understood in terms of systems of communication.

The field of communication encompasses many disciplines in its formulations, and as this analysis will attempt to demonstrate, is capable of helping to provide a needed frame of reference for organizational analysis.

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6 Ibid., p. 13.
Finally, although there has been a plethora of writing about communication and organization, little effort has been devoted to integrating these areas. There is a notable gap in the literature at this point. Organization theory is in the very early stages of its development. The belief that it can benefit extensively from the more highly developed field of communication theory provides the incentive for this effort. An attempt will be made to expose this potential.

II. PURVIEW OF RESEARCH AND SELECTED DEFINITIONS

Scope Of The Study

The investigation will be directed toward establishing a communication frame of reference for understanding and controlling organization behavior. The emphasis on a behavioral frame of reference has abundant precedent. A number of theorists have recognized the intimate relationship between behavior and organization. Bakke observed "...the basic 'stuff' of organization...should be behavior in its steady state which makes the organization recognizable as a unique entity over time." March and Simon recognize the value of establishing a frame of reference. "Propositions about organizations are


statements about human behavior, and imbedded in every proposition, explicitly or implicitly is a set of assumptions as to what properties of human beings have to be taken into account to explain their behavior in organization. 9 Haire also expresses a similar point of view. "It is clear that there are very different answers to the question of organization depending on the implicit assumptions about the nature of human nature." 10 Likewise, the importance of understanding behavior has been emphasized. "Prediction and control of behavior are the fruits of understanding. Too often administrators and scientists try to take short cuts and go directly to predicting and controlling." 11

The present study is concerned primarily with theoretical matters, and utilizes a descriptive rather than an experimental approach. An effort is made to reorganize and reinterpret existing data in the current store of knowledge, within the scope of the problem. The goal is to work toward establishing a framework which will enable the theorist and practitioner to focus this knowledge on the problems of organization in a meaningful way.


A theoretical as opposed to an empirical approach demands some justification. The process of reshuffling and rearranging facts and constructs is perceived as having the potential to produce some extremely meaningful results. For example, "Euclid, Newton, and Einstein did most of their work using their minds as the primary research instrument. This is called theory building and is crucial in the development of all sciences." Theory and research are uniquely related. "Theory is both the end product and starting point of scientific research." Thus, "Our initial conceptions and theories determine the directions of our investigations, and results of these in turn cause us to reformulate our theories." Theory provides a necessary guide to research and research, in turn, acts to alter theory:

On the one hand, the objective of all scientific endeavor is to develop a body of substantive theory, that is, a set of interrelated verifiable generalizations that account for and predict the empirical phenomena that can be observed. On the other hand, scientific research must be guided by a theoretical framework, that is, a system of interrelated concepts that suggest theoretical fruitful lines of empirical investigation.

Furthermore, a theoretical framework is essential in interpreting results of experimental research. An empirical study may result in

\[\text{12 Ibid., p. 4.} \quad 13 \text{Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 8.} \]

\[14 \text{Howard R. Bowen, "The Business Enterprise as a Subject for Research," Social Science Research Council, No. 11, (1957), p. 43.} \]

\[15 \text{Blau and Scott, loc. cit.}\]
new facts being added to knowledge, but without a theoretical framework, these facts are difficult to interpret, evaluate, and utilize.

An interdisciplinary approach is utilized, relying extensively upon the various social sciences. However, as one person observed, "The study of business is a behavioral science, studying a sample of behavior in a particular context." Furthermore, the student of business can be viewed as a behavioral scientist. "His lectures touch on those areas, his theoretical models demand assumptions about them, and his research leads to the brink of them." Also, this writer views the boundaries between the various fields and disciplines in the social sciences as being primarily symbolic rather than substantive. "It is the symbol system which defines location of boundaries...." They exist for practical purposes, for which they prove beneficial. Nevertheless, they are non-existent in reality. Chris Argyris advanced a similar idea, "The traditional disciplines are a result of historical accidents. All were once philosophy...."


19 Argyris, Social Science Approaches to Business Behavior, p. 5.
On one level of analysis, rigid symbolic boundaries placed around disciplines present no problem. However, on a deeper level of analysis, such as an investigation of organization behavior, the symbolic boundaries of fields like sociology, psychology, anthropology, social psychology, and others must be transcended. It is impossible to analyze organization behavior within the framework of any single discipline.

Both communication theory and organization theory are very broad fields. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, only selected aspects of both areas are investigated. Formal organization (broadly defined) is of major interest as opposed to other very closely related social systems. Likewise, an important area in communications, information theory, receives little attention. The reason information theory is not considered of prime importance to the study is expounded in some detail in the section on definitions.

Finally, it is recognized that any analysis of organization behavior which focuses almost exclusively upon the communication variable is incomplete. The purpose here is not to advance a theory of organization, but rather to reexamine selected concepts of existing theory from a communication point of view. The advantage of this approach should outweigh its limitations.
Definition Of Selected Terms

Frame of reference in the present context, is intended to denote the psychological framework used to view particular phenomena or to define a situation. External and internal influences in an interdependent way shape a particular psychological pattern. The totality of the interdependent external and internal factors operating at a given time constitute one's frame of reference. It is not a psychological event, such as perception, but is merely revealed by such psychological events. Frame of reference is a dynamic concept, and should be used in reference to a given experience and behavior. 20

Communication is easier to describe than define. It is a multiordinal term; that is, it has different meanings on different levels of analysis and abstraction. Basically, communication is related to the arousal and guidance of perception by the use of signs and symbols. 21 To the extent that it is purposive, communication is concerned with the systematic use of signs. The theory of signs has been divided into three divisions, syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics, 22 where:

1. Syntactics includes the systematic aspects of communication, the relations of signs to each other. It deals with combining of signs without regard to their specific signification


21 The two terms "signs" and "symbols" will be used interchangeably in the present discussion.

or without considering their relation to the behavior in which they occur. The development of information theory has provided a unified and quantitative approach to syntactics.

2. Semantics deals with signification of symbols, that is, the problem of meaning. Here the relationship between the symbols and the reality to which they refer is brought into focus.

3. Pragmatics refers to the origin, use, and effects of symbols within the behavior in which they occur. Here the need relatedness and purposiveness in the use of symbols is brought into focus.²³

This analysis is more concerned with the pragmatic and semantic aspects of communication, that is, the cognitive and behavioral aspects. The scope of the field is emphasized by Colin Cherry. He defined communication broadly as "The establishment of a social unit from individuals, by use of language or signs. The sharing of common sets of rules for various goal seeking individuals."²⁴

The difficulty in defining communication can be understood better when the process nature of the phenomenon is discussed in chapter two. Generally, in the context of this investigation, communication is used to signify the process by which stimuli are originated, perceived, and responded to, as well as the process by which stimuli, either consciously or unconsciously, guide responses. However, the term will not always denote this broad meaning, but at times will simply refer to a particular message.

²³Ibid., p. 219.
²⁴Colin Cherry, On Human Communications, A Review, A Survey
A **sign** may be defined as "a transmission, or construct by which one organism affects the behavior state of another in a communication situation." A symbol is a sign which, through general consent, represents something because of like qualities or simply because of prior agreement to such an association. In the succeeding discussion, the two terms are used interchangeably. Although there are many kinds of signs, language signs, that is words, are the predominantly important ones in the succeeding analysis.

Information theory is concerned with the technical aspects of communication, for example, the alternative possibilities of structuring and transmitting messages. One of its important objectives is to measure quantitively (in units called bits) the information content of messages. In information theory, **information** is used to denote "...a quantitative measure of the amount of order (or disorder) in a system." Information, organization, and predictability are interrelated. The better a system is organized, the more predictable is its behavior. Therefore, less information can be obtained from observing it. A perfectly predictable system, that is, one which can produce only one message, contains no information \((\log_2 1=0)\). In a

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system which can produce two hundred and fifty-six messages, eight bits \((\log_2 256 = 8)\) of information are required to move from a state of uncertainty to certainty. Thus, although information is a carrier of order, it can be considered as a measure of the amount of disorder. The greater the disorder in a system, the greater the amount of information required to describe it completely.\(^{27}\)

Application of the concepts of information theory to human behavioral systems is limited; "...precision breaks down, predictability becomes far more tenuous, and the regions for fruitful concrete applications rapidly diminish."\(^{28}\) The following passage further emphasizes the limitations of information theory:

"...It is not maximally useful for studying decision making in groups. Here one needs a model of the cognitive aspects of communication theory - a way to indicate the potential of bits for reducing uncertainty about a real state of affairs.... Information theory treats the transmission of symbols regardless of referents; a more semantic communication theory deals with referents and largely bypasses the problem of transmission.

This shift from "bits" to "bits of meaning" has real implication.... Now it becomes important which "bit" is lost; redundancy is not as important....\(^{29}\)

Because of these limitations, this investigation will concentrate on the more cognitive aspects of communication theory.

\(^{27}\)Ibid., pp. 211 - 216. \(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 211.

Interaction refers to the stimulation of one person by the activity of another person or by an object in his environment. The term is used most frequently to signify situations when the interacting units are persons, but not always. One interacts with every aspect of his environment.

Symbolic interaction is used to denote interaction as it takes place between human beings. Communication and interaction can almost be used interchangeably. "Interaction between individuals relies chiefly on communication. Therefore, when we speak of human interaction, communication is necessarily implied," Homans prefers to distinguish between the two terms. He perceives interaction to have a more precise meaning than communication.

A role is a symbolically defined system of expectations. Then, role is a symbolic concept. "Role behavior seems...to be symbol-controlled behavior and therefore role boundaries to be symbol boundaries." Roles are the units of a social system. "A social

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32 Sherif and Sherif, op. cit., p. 41.
33 Homans, op. cit.
34 Parsons, "Boundary Relations Between Sociocultural and Personality Systems," p. 335.
35 Ibid.
system is a behavior system, "that is, "...an organized set of behaviors of persons interacting with each other: a pattern of roles." On the lowest level of analysis, a social system is constituted by interacting of two personalities. On the other hand, social systems are the units of society. "Society is an aggregate of social sub-systems, and as a limiting case, it is the social system which comprises all the roles of all the individuals who participate." Culture may be considered a complex, symbol-meaning system created through and embodied in social interaction. Culture may be transmitted from one system of action to another, where action is concerned with "...the organism as a unit in a set of relationships..." The set of relationships are under the label, situation or environment. Culture is an integral part of personality and social systems, and is built into personality through the process of internalization, which Freud described as the development of the superego. Building of culture into social systems is called institutionalization.

Organization is also a multiordinal term having different meanings on different levels of analysis. A sampling of the diversity and similarity of meanings assigned to the term by different organization

36 Ibid., p. 328. 37 Ibid.
39 Ibid. 40 Ibid., p. 56. 41 Ibid., p. 55. 42 Ibid., p. 57.
analysts follows. Bernard defines a formal organization as "...a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons." To Argyris, an organization is:

1. A plurality of parts
2. Each achieving specific objective(s), and
3. Maintaining themselves through their interrelatedness
4. Simultaneously adapting to external environment, thereby,
5. Maintaining the interrelated state of parts.

Simon uses the term to refer to:

...the complex pattern of communication and other relationships in a group of human beings. This pattern provides to each member of the group, assumptions, goals, and attitudes, that enter into his decisions, and provides him also with a set of stable and comprehensible expectations as to what other members of the group are doing and how they will react to what he says and does. The sociologists call this pattern 'role system'. To most of us it is more familiarly known as an organization.

E. Wight Bakke perceives an organization to be:

...a continuing system of differentiated and coordinated human activities utilizing, transforming, and welding together a specific set of human material, capital ideational and natural resources into a unique problem solving whole

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whose function is to satisfy particular human needs in the interaction with other system of human activities and resources in its particular environment. 46

These analysts tend to view organizations as dynamic social systems in contrast to the mechanistic approach of the classical viewpoint of organization. 47 The position taken here is that a formal organization is a particular type of social system, distinguished by its purposefulness or goal directedness. 48 The essence of formal organization is captured in Barnard’s emphasis on consciously coordinated activity, 49 and reiterated by the other writers quoted above. A more detailed analysis of the concept will appear in chapters three and four.

Method Of Research

Secondary research is used exclusively in this investigation. The effort is focused on integrating the existing store of knowledge, making it more useful in analyzing the problem, organization. Secondary research will permit building a broad frame of reference, as opposed to the narrow focus inherent in an empirical study. The present status of organization theory justifies such an approach, and makes it enticingly promising.


III. PLAN OF PRESENTATION

In chapter two, selected aspects of the interpersonal communication process and communicative behavior are considered. The nature of goal and value orientation, coordinated behavior, and the decision process are examined in chapter three in an effort to understand organization behavior. Communicative aspects of controlling organization behavior are considered in the succeeding chapter. A final chapter is devoted to summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION THEORY

To comprehend communication theory, one must understand the communication process. Consequently, this brief survey focuses first on an analysis of the process. Secondly, keeping in mind the objective of relating communication and organization theory, selected aspects of the relationship between communication and behavior are considered.

I. PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Concept Of Process

Understanding the concept of process is just as basic to understanding the communication process as the latter is to understanding communication theory. In fact, the concept of process is most basic and crucial to this entire analysis.

The importance of recognizing and understanding the process nature of all reality, should not be underestimated. Due to the capacity of individuals to think in terms of process, the physical sciences were revolutionized. Likewise, the same type thinking has been applied to

1 Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-
language and communication by Alfred Korzybski and others. In this section, the nature of process and structure will be investigated.

Statics Versus Dynamics

For centuries, physical scientists elementalistically divided the world (reality) into "processes" and "things."\(^2\) Things, (static entities) were thought to exist in isolation, independent of the existence and operation of other things. The physical sciences were revolutionized by the works of Mindowski, Whitehead, Russell, Einstein and others who rejected the elemental division of reality into dynamics and statics. They theorized that no reality exists in isolation. All objects and events are inextricably related, and can only be analyzed in terms of related events. All the world is viewed as complex processes. For example, an object as static or stable as a pencil can be viewed as a dynamic entity. Scientifically, it represents an event:

...a mad dance of electrons which is different in every instant, which never repeats itself, which is known to consist of extremely complex dynamic processes of very fine structure, acted upon by, and reacting upon the rest of the universe, inextricably connected with everything else and dependent upon everything else...it represents a process that never stops in one form or another...\(^3\)

Furthermore, the perception of these supposedly static entities changes

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\(^3\)Korzybski, Ibid., p. 387.
as the perceiver changes. This entirely new way of viewing the
world and events has led to great scientific discoveries, and is in-
fluencing thinking in the social sciences.

Communication theory is built around the process point of view.
The theorist sees a world in process, in which events are inseparable
from all other events. Processes are occurring in all directions.
Consequently, "He argues that you cannot talk about the beginning or
the end of communication or say that a particular idea came from one
specific source, that communication occurs in only one way, and so
on."  

For observational purposes, we shall assume in contrast to
reality, that processes can be arrested. "To stop a process imposes
a degree of artificiality." Nevertheless, "In order to communicate
at all we have to stop motion and say what the relations are at a parti-
cular time." The consequences of arresting processes varies accord-
ing to the degree to which the person understands that he is stopping
them and imposing his own structure. This discussion necessitates
consideration of the nature of structure.

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4 Berlo, op. cit., p. 24. 5 Korzybski, op. cit., pp. 55 ff; and Ibid.
6 Berlo, Ibid.
7 Roy R. Grinker (ed.), Toward A Unified Theory of Human
8 Ibid.
Inferential Nature of Structure

The structure of reality (the world) is a product of the inferential processes of the perceiver and is assigned in at least two ways. First, from the infinite characteristics of the event, the perceiver selects only a few. Secondly, he chooses the way in which the perceptions will be organized. For example, "A printed text is not simply a chain of individual words picked one at a time; it is a whole. It has structure...." Thus, "In 'constructing' reality the theorist chooses to organize his perceptions in one way or another." Then, the accuracy and structuring of one's perceptions (gross abstractions from the reality) determines the degree to which these observations about reality are consistent with the reality. This concept of structure is best illustrated by observing the relationship between a map and a territory. A map is not the territory, but only the structuring of one's perception of it. If the map is consistent with the structure of the territory, then it serves as an accurate guide to the territory. If not, one who uses the map to traverse the territory is led astray.


The same relationships exist between events and objects and the symbols (the most important ones being words) used to direct one to these objects and events. Words are not the objects they represent. The word level is, as a minimum, a second order abstraction. From the event (reality) which has infinite characteristics, the finite mind can only make a gross abstraction of a finite number of these characteristics to form an object (a first order abstraction). Next, a label is assigned to the object and a limited number of the characteristics being abstracted from the objective level serve as definitions for the label (a second order abstraction). These abstracted characteristics are in the form of a number of descriptive statements. Then as we move to higher order abstraction (third, fourth, etc.), statements are made about the second order statements, etc., until we are communicating in very high order abstraction. Nevertheless, if these high order abstractions are consistent in structure, one should be able to move back down the ladder of abstraction to the objective level. 13

Some implications of the process of abstracting should be noted. First, the objective level, that is, the image of the scientific events formed by selective abstraction of its characteristics, is the reality to the individual. It will be different for every one according to the characteristics he abstracts from the event. A consciousness of the process of abstracting, that is, the awareness that one abstracts in

13 Ibid., pp. 386 - 425.
different orders and omits characteristics, eliminates identification. Identification is used as the label for the semantic process of inappropriate evaluations which confuses orders of abstraction. It occurs on three levels. Scientific events are identified with finite objects when the person fails to realize the infinite, continuously changing characteristics of the scientific events, and this condition is called ignorance. Confusing the verbal and objective level, that is, words with the objects they label or describe, is called objectification. Finally, identification of different levels, for example the event and word level, results from confusion of order of abstracting. 14

A second important implication of the process of abstracting is the distinction made between the verbal and the non-verbal levels. Words are only guideposts to the non-verbal level. They have different meanings for different people, depending upon which characteristics have been abstracted to serve as descriptive statements (definitions) for them. Also, the same word has different meanings at different levels of abstraction. Failure to recognize that words are higher order abstractions manufactured by the nervous system may result in the condition vividly described by the following statement:

Under such identity--delusions he seeks to establish ultimate truths 'eternal verities,' and is willing to fight for them, never recognizing the noises he makes are not the objective actualities we deal with. Forgetting characteristics left out he is always 'right.' For him his statement is not the only statement possible but he actually attributes some cosmic objective evaluation to it. 15

14 Ibid., pp. 405 - 406. 15 Ibid., pp. 418 - 419.
Finally, an understanding of the process of abstracting elucidates
the profound importance of structure. Discrimination between the
objective and verbal levels leaves structure as the only link between
the two. The following summary of the importance of structure
would be difficult to improve:

If words are not things, or maps are not the actual
territory, then, obviously, the only possible link between
the objective world and the linguistic world is found in
structure, and structure alone. The only usefulness of
a map or a language depends on the similarity of structure
between the empirical world and the map-languages. If
the structure is not similar, then the traveler or speaker
is led astray, which, in serious human life-problems,
must become always eminently harmful. If the structures
are similar, then the empirical world becomes 'rational'
to a potentially rational being, which means no more than
that verbal, or map-predicted characteristics, which
follow up the linguistic or map-structure, are applicable
to the empirical world.

In fact, in structure we find the mystery of rationality,
adjustment, and we find that the whole content of knowledge
is exclusively structural. If we want to be rational and to
understand anything at all, we must look for structure,
relations, and ultimately, multi-dimensional order. . . .

Model of the Communication Process

The Assumptions

A basic assumption is that a process can be stopped and the basic
elements examined, but in the previous discussion, the lack of validity
of a static analysis was clearly emphasized. However, to facilitate a
deeper investigation of processes, they must be stopped and structured.
Thus, in order to write about the communication process, it is

16 Ibid., p. 404.
necessary to arrest its dynamics. Consequently, the following discussion will be a snapshot of the communication process at a point in space-time. It will take place within a static framework, fully recognizing that the static framework is only a point in space-time and does not reveal the full dynamics of the reality of communication.\(^{17}\)

A second basic assumption is that communication is purposeful; that is, the originator of a particular message has some intent in coding and transmitting it. This model may not be all inclusive. However, it will be concerned with those communications which are purposely originated with the intent of affecting the behavior of the receiver. The assumption of purposefulness is very vital to the receiver in assigning meaning to messages.\(^{18}\)

The third assumption is that communication is need-related. It is closely related to the previous assumption of purposefulness; that is, messages are originated with the intent of affecting the behavioral state of the receiver. The assumption of need-relatedness asserts that messages arise from an attempt to satisfy the needs of the source and must be designed around the needs of the receiver-decoder.\(^{19}\)

\(^{17}\)Berlo, op. cit., pp. 23 - 28; and Grinker, op. cit., p. 20.


The fourth assumption refers to the type of analysis. While the following model will contain monatic and dyadic elements of analysis, it will consist primarily of a dyadic approach. Consideration of an element monatically, is to isolate it from other elements and things; whereas, a dyadic analysis is an analysis of the interrelationships of elements. Communication theory is primarily concerned with interrelationships, thus, with dyadic analysis.

A fifth assumption is that the interpersonal model presented here can be extended to the different levels of analysis. For example, it is assumed that the model can be adjusted to be used to analyze intrapersonal communications as well as multiperson communication systems. Further consideration will be given to this assumption within the model itself.

The Basic Elements

Models of the communication process have been designed by a number of writers. Four elements are common to most of these models; an encoder, a message, a channel, and a decoder. The model discussed here will include six elements; a source, an encoder, a

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20 Berlo, op. cit., p. 53.


message, a channel, a decoder, and a receiver. Obviously, in an interpersonal model the source and encoder are the same person. However, since one of the basic assumptions is that this model can be extended to different levels of analysis, it is necessary to include all six. Only a brief survey of the elements will be presented since they will receive further consideration when the model is presented.

The source is the originator of the message. Encoding is the psychological process of selecting the symbols that will be included in the message, as well as, the psychological and physical process of structuring the symbols; that is, arranging them in a particular order. Channel has been assigned a variety of meanings by communication theorists. However, in the present context, it will be used to mean the medium or carrier of messages. A receiver is the intended recipient of a message and can be either a mechanical device, one person, or many people. This is not to say the only receiver is the intended receiver. However, to remain consistent with the basic assumption, that communication is purposeful, it is important to assume the intended receiver is the actual receiver. Finally, decoding is the process of interpreting and assigning meanings to messages. The decoder is the person or persons for whom the message was designed.

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24 Berlo, op. cit., p. 31.
With this brief description, the stage is now set for investigating the model itself.

The Model

It must be kept in mind that the explanation is a snapshot in a distinct space-time interval. X and Y are two persons who exist in physical and psychological environments, E and E₁, respectively, which are bounded by space-time intervals, S-T₁ and S-T₂, respectively. Assume at some point in space-time, the exteroceptors of X receive a stimulus from his environment. There are three possible sources of stimuli in X's environment: those which derive from objects and events other than persons, those which arise from actions of other persons, and the ones which are created by actions of Mr. X himself, or, in other words, feedback.  

The impulses arising from the external stimulus are not the only ones operating in the communication center of X. Present, also, are


impulses which originate within the organism itself and stimuli from past events. Then the processes of perception are based upon "...the impulse which derives from exteroception, the impulses which arise from proprioception, and the impulses which denote past events." X next evaluates the external stimulus, of course, within the frame of reference of the other stimuli operating in his psychological mechanisms. Essentially, "...these evaluative processes consist of operations with available information." The phrase, "available information," is important because in the process of reaching the communication center, the external stimuli has been transformed several times with a resulting loss of information each time. The process of evaluation is essentially the process of decoding.

Now, it is assumed the evaluation of the stimulus by X has aroused a need in X to communicate with Y, which can be satisfied only by sending a message composed of symbols, in this case words. While encoding the message, X chooses and structures symbols in such a way that Y will be able to reconstruct the experience or assign the meaning which motivates the message. Thus, X is faced with a formidable task because now he is forced to attempt to evaluate the environmental and

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27 Ruesch, Ibid. 28 Ibid. 29 Ibid. 30 The preceding assumption is made with the understanding that actually the message may only be a smile from X to Y or consist of X punching Y in the nose. However, our primary interest is the messages composed of words.
experimental state of \( Y \). Just as these two variables were vitally important in \( X \)'s interpretation of the stimulus they will be vital in \( Y \)'s interpretation of the message that is received from \( X \).

Once \( X \) has completed the task of encoding the message, he selects a means of bringing the message into the environmental state of \( Y \) in a manner conducive to reception by the exteroceptors of \( Y \). That is, he selects a channel. \( Y \)'s exteroceptors receive the message and it is transmitted to \( Y \)'s communication center in the same manner as described for \( X \). Likewise, \( Y \) decodes the message in the same way as \( X \). Possibly a need is aroused in \( Y \) to communicate with \( X \) or someone else, as a result of interpretation and evaluation of the message. Again, the process of \( Y \) encoding a message occurs just as described for \( X \).

A pertinent question is, when has communication been consumated? Communication has taken place if \( Y \) has assigned a meaning to the message similar to that intended by \( X \). Notice that the statement here stresses a similar meaning, not the exact meaning. The exact meaning would be an ideal. Communication occurs in degrees and seldom is there perfect communication. \(^{31}\) The degree to which a meaning assigned to a message diverges from the meaning intended, measures the extent of miscommunication which has occurred.

It is very important to realize what has been done here. The assumption has been made that one stimulus could be isolated and that it could be traced through a total processing. This is not consistent with reality because at any one time many stimuli are being brought into the communication center of both X and Y. Also the model implies that a particular response results from a particular stimulus, and this also is not consistent with reality. Any one response is the result of the interaction of many stimuli and not the result of just one stimulus, since, during any space-time interval many stimuli are at work in the psychological mechanism of a person. What has been done is necessary in order to examine the communication process. Nevertheless, the process nature of communication has been distorted.

This effort has been devoted to the evaluation of what happens in the process in interpersonal communication. The same model can be used in analyzing a many-person communication system. However, in such a system, the source-encoder and the receiver-decoder may be two or many different persons. The nature of the elements, in the final analysis, will be determined by the nature of the many-person system. It could be a one to many, a many to one, or a many to many system.

\[32\] A simple stimulus - response model overlooks the complex dynamics at work in any situation.
The same model with exactly the same elements can be used to evaluate the process of intrapersonal communication. At the intrapersonal level the source, encoder, receiver, and decoder consist of only one person. It is a highly bounded process taking place entirely within a single person.

**Ramifications of the Interpersonal Communication Model**

The model presented in the previous section has raised a number of questions and suggested a number of implications. Several of the most important of these are discussed in this section.

**Importance of Empathy**

Empathy is a vital concept in the process of communication. Here, empathy is "...the ability to project ourselves into other people's personalities." It involves the evaluation of a person's frame of reference in a particular space-time interval, which is a crucial aspect of encoding. The encoder is forced to evaluate something of the personality state of the decoder, in order to achieve the purposes motivating the message. Likewise, in interpreting the message, the decoder is forced to do the same thing. He also must attempt to project himself into the personality state of the encoder, in order to recreate the intended meaning of the message. The probability of achieving perfect

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33Berlo, op. cit., p. 119.
empathy is very low, or zero. Consequently, the probability of completely communicating the intended meaning or experience is less than one.

Consideration of the inferential nature of communication underscores the significance of empathy in the process. Communication can be compared to statistical processes. For example, when the decoder receives the message he differentiates a number of possible meanings, which is analogous in statistics to a probability distribution. To these inferred meanings he subjectively assigns a probability distribution. Then, assuming rationality, he chooses the meaning or meanings with the highest probability. The process of encoding could be viewed in the same way, only in this instance, the encoder devises a number of possible ways of structuring his message. In the process of evaluation, he subjectively assigns probabilities to the different message combinations. These probabilities represent the probability of the particular message being interpreted as intended by the encoder. Finally, the encoder chooses the message which he estimates has the highest probability of being assigned the intended meaning.

The processes of encoding and decoding are not always conscious. Consequently, most of the time, the inferential process discussed above occurs beyond the awareness of the person. Nevertheless, it is usually carried out in varying degrees by most individuals depending upon the level of awareness of the communicant and the consequences of miscommunication.
Now the complexity of communication, as well as the importance of understanding it, is becoming evident. The process of establishing empathy is very demanding upon the communicants. For example, the encoder must have clearly in mind the meaning which he desires to transmit. Once this is clearly established in his mind, the encoder must then attempt to evaluate the experiential and personality state of the decoder during the space-time interval the message will be received, since these factors establish the decoder's current frame of reference, the decisive factor in the evaluative process.

Not only must the encoder attempt to evaluate the preceding, but he must also attempt to evaluate how the decoder will perceive him, since this is a very important cue for assigning meaning to the message. But the process even becomes more complicated, because the encoder also attempts to evaluate how the decoder views the encoder's perception of the decoder, etc. 34 Thus, empathy is a process also, because any attempt to evaluate it as a static concept could not include the previous dynamic analysis. As a matter of fact, empathy is a process of constant revaluations. 35


35 Smith, op. cit.
There are two basic theories of empathy: the role theory, and the inference theory. According to role theory, a person's behavior can be predicted from the particular role relationships in which he is involved. The basic problem then would be to determine the role the individual thinks he is playing, and to evaluate the particular characteristics associated with that role. A deeper analysis of role theory will be postponed until a later section of the paper.

According to the inference theory of empathy, the first step is for the person to come to know himself, that is, to form a self image. Then, utilizing the capacity of projection which every individual has, the encoder or decoder projects this self knowledge into others. He attributes his own particular characteristics to the opposite party. Actually, the inferential process operates very similar to the defense mechanism, projection. Here, projection is used to signify the act of attributing to another what really is one's own characteristics. The implication is that we attribute to other people and the world in general our own real self. Empathy, according to the inference theory, would

36 Berlo, op. cit., p. 121.

37 The preceding discussion of empathy in this paper has included elements of both theories.

38 The basic theoretical work for inference theory was contributed by George H. Mead, Mind Self and Society From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist, Charles W. Morris, editor. (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1934), p. 400.
involve a process of inductive reasoning, that is, going from a specific
knowledge, in the present context, a knowledge of oneself, to a gener-
alization; that is, a general assertion about the personality state of the
other person or persons.

**Importance of the Process of Metacommunication**

Metacommunication is that set of cues which are built into the mes-
sage to assist in interpreting and assigning the intended meaning. The
metasymbols are included, not to add information to the message it-
self, but as explicit or implicit instructions for interpreting it. An
analysis of metacommunication cannot stop here. It, too, is a process.
When the encoder codes the message, he includes metasymbols. During
the process of structuring and transmitting the message, the encoder
receives feedback from it. This feedback may indicate the possibility
of increasing the probability of the desired interpretation. Then, by
use of words or other signs, the encoder gives further instruction for
interpretation.

Not only does the encoder receive feedback from the message but
he also receives feedback arising during the process of decoding. The
stimuli from this feedback may be evaluated as a need or opportunity
to restructure the message or to transmit further instructions for
interpreting the previous message. In summary, metacommunication
is viewed as being absolutely essential to the process of communication.

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Importance of a Common Frame of Reference

The requirement of some common fields of experience for the communicants is fundamental to the process of communication. While the communicants must not necessarily have had the same experiences with the subject of communication, they must at least have had related experiences. For example, one who has been an ardent researcher of the available information on Antartica may be able to hold a very meaningful conversation with an explorer who has spent the greatest part of his life in the area. 40 They have both gained experience on the subject in different ways, yet both are probably well versed in this particular subject area.

A person can only interpret symbols in terms of his past experience with these symbols. 41 If there is no past experience, then communication is impossible and only miscommunication can result. For example, a conversation in Russian would not be possible for the writer. Since he has had no past experience with the Russian language, the symbols could not have a shared meaning and could only be assigned some meaning quite different from the intent of the message.


Another example will facilitate in illustrating the role of past experience in assigning meaning. To a native on one of the Pacific Islands who remembers World War II, an airplane may be perceived as being a large bird which dissipates fire, destruction, and death. Yet to a businessman in New York City, the same airplane is perceived with a completely different meaning.

A symbol can have many different meanings according to the experience that different individuals have had with the symbol. The symbol or word "fish" is a good example. To a commercial fisherman, the symbol evokes a particular image and meaning. To a child who has a home aquarium, the symbol would probably evoke a different image and meaning. For an ardent bass fisherman in South Louisiana, the symbol would evoke still another mental image. This example illustrates that a symbol may have the same denotative meaning for different people but highly divergent connotative meanings.

In summary, communication is impossible unless the communicants have had some similar experience with the symbols of communication. Also, communication between communicants who are using familiar symbols but have had entirely different experiences with them, or are completely unfamiliar with the realities behind those symbols, is very low if achieved at all. Thus as the homogeneity of experience
with the symbols of communication as well as the realities behind those symbols increases, the probability of achieving communication increases.

Importance of Perception

The old cliché, "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," says a great deal about perception. Perception is intimately related to the process of abstracting. It involves the selective receipt of stimuli from the environment of the perceptor and the processing of it to form an image or judgment related to the stimuli. "...perception is the interpretive process through which we pass all stimuli that we

Actually this discussion pinpoints the focus of education. Education is an attempt to broaden the individual's area of experience with certain symbols and the realities behind these symbols. Thus, through education, one can vicariously experience what has been experienced first-hand by other individuals. Then two individuals who have vicariously had the same experiences can communicate with understanding concerning those experiences. Also, when one has vicariously experienced, he is better prepared for the primary experience. For example, a person who has rigorously studied the geography, culture, etc. of the Blue Ridge Mountains area could more than likely communicate with understanding with the mountaineers of this area, even though he had never been there before in his life. On the other hand, a person who knows of the area but nothing of the folklore of the people would have a very difficult time understanding the people and also in getting them to understand him. A person with a broad background of primary and vicarious experiences (in traditional terminology, an educated person) should be more skilled in establishing empathy with others.

Perception is also viewed as a transaction process between the perceiver and perceived. According to this concept, perception is "...a process of negotiation in which the perceptual end product is a result of influences within the perceiver and of the characteristics of the perceived." 

Two broad classifications of factors have been advanced as the major determinants of perception. These are structural factors and functional factors. "By structural factors I mean those factors deriving solely from the nature of the physical stimuli and the neural effects they work in the nervous system of the individual." The sensory factors of the individual are believed to force the organization of stimuli relatively independent of one's reasoning, needs, moods, past learning, etc. While the gestalt psychologist does not deny the


46 Zalkind and Costello, op. cit., p. 220.

influence of motivation, personality needs, mental set, etc., he believes that sensory factors are the basic determinants of image formation from the stimuli. 48

"The functional factors of perceptual organization . . . are those which derive primarily from the needs, moods, past experiences, and memory of the individual." 49 Thus, according to this line of reasoning, it is the personality needs, etc., of the individual which determine what is perceived rather than the nature of the physical stimuli. The argument is advanced by the proponents of the functional theory that the different interpretations assigned to the same set of stimuli are not the result of structural factors. For example, if a hungry person and a person who had just finished eating were presented with a particular image, the first may interpret it as a food object while the latter is more likely to perceive it as being something else. The different interpretation which occurs is attributed primarily to the functional factors, that is, the needs of the individual. 50

The question arises--which is the basic determinant of perception? Strong evidence indicates both structural and functional factors are very important. Actually, the writer does not believe either factor can function in the perceptual process to the exclusion of the other, because they are inseparable. Each is dependent upon the

48 Ibid., pp. 116-117. 49 Ibid., p. 117. 50 Ibid., pp. 117-118.
other and neither operates alone. Both will be considered as basic
determinants of perception.

A number of general propositions concerning the nature of percep-
tion are worthy of consideration.

1. "The perceptual and cognitive field in its natural state is organ-
ized and meaningful." This proposition asserts that a person organ-
izes and structures his environment in a meaningful way. Even when
the objects or events which are providing the stimuli are new and
bizarre, the person still structures and organizes the stimuli so as to
make them meaningful for himself. A person organizes his perceptions
of objects, events, ideas, etc., immediately and according to his past
experience.

2. Perception is a functionally selective process. Finite man
is incapable of perceiving the infinite characteristics of any event or
object; that is, he is incapable of receiving the infinite number of
stimuli arising from an event or object. Consequently, from the large
bombardment of stimuli in the person's environment, he is forced to
choose only a selected few.

Not only is perception said to be selective, but also functional.
The functional aspect of perception asserts that the stimuli which have
the potential of serving the immediate purposes of the perceiving

\[51\text{Ibid., p. 118.} \quad 52\text{Ibid., p. 121.}\]
individual are likely to be selected. The following statement indicates the importance of functionality to the individual's perception:

There are no impartial facts. They do not have a logic of their own that results in the same perceptions and cognitions for all people. They are perceived and interpreted in terms of the individual perceiver's own needs, own emotions, own personality, own previously formed cognitive patterns.

3. The perception of a substructure, subgroup, event, etc., to a large extent, is determined by the perceived characteristics of the structure, group, or whole to which the substructure, subgroup, or event belongs. An event or object is perceived within the framework of the perceiver's conception of the whole. That is, the characteristics of the whole, with which the object or event is identified, are usually ascribed to the event or object by the perceiver.

For example, if John Doe identifies himself as a communist, the perceiver is likely to ascribe to John Doe the characteristics that he understands the group "communist" to have.

4. Objects and events similar in appearance or proximity in a particular space-time interval are perceived as belonging to a common structure. Two examples will be used to illustrate the perceptual implications of the proposition. First, a person is told the three people who will enter a room are a married couple and a single person. According to our proposition, the two persons perceived as

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53 Ibid., p. 128. 54 Ibid., pp. 128 - 133. 55 Ibid., pp. 133 - 136.
being the married couple will be the man and woman who tend to stay close to each other. A second example illustrates another extremely important aspect of the proposition, the perception of cause and effect. If events X, Y, and Z occur in that order, to which of the three possible causes X, Y, and Z will the effect, M, be attributed? Within the framework of the present proposition, the effect M would be attributed to cause Z because of the proximity of occurrence of the two events in space-time.

The preceding discussion has been primarily concerned with the perceptual process itself. Now several propositions related to the realistic perception of people will be mentioned without elaboration:

1. Knowing oneself makes it easier to see others accurately.
2. One's own characteristics affect the characteristics he is likely to see in others.
3. The person who accepts himself is more likely to be able to see favorable aspects of other people.  

Perception is a complex phenomena; consequently, any brief analysis of the complex subject must of necessity be highly selective and cursory, as the preceding discussion has been.

56 Zalkind and Costello, _op. cit._, pp. 227 - 228.
Interpretation of Meaning

Any discussion of perception naturally leads to a discussion of meaning. In fact, the two concepts are inseparable. "Perception is the interpretive process through which we pass all stimuli that we accept from our environment, and meaning is what comes out of this process—the picture in our head." Thus, for the individual, meaning is the end product of perception.

An often confused concept of meaning is that it resides in symbols or in messages. However, the previous discussion in this paper clearly indicates that meaning does not reside in symbols but in individuals, and is assigned to symbols.

What we perceive, in a large part, is our own creation, and depends upon the assumptions we bring into a particular situation. We seem to give meaning and order to sensory impingement in terms of our own needs and purposes and this process of selection is actively creative.

Because of common experiences, two persons or many people may assign the same meaning to symbols. The significant point of


59 Cantril, op. cit., p. 123.
this discussion is that meaning is the way one responds to the symbols internally and the predisposition he has to respond to them externally.  

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On a philosophical level the two concepts, meaning and reality, would be identities. Thus, within the philosophical frame of reference, meaning denotes what really exists, or reality. In the preceding paragraph, the discussion has dealt with meaning on a lower level of analysis, where meaning is what exists for the individual. For the preceding and succeeding discussion the latter concept is the most important one. What exists for the individual is the reality for him, and the only way he can test the validity of his perception of the reality and the meaning he has assigned to it is to compare his perception with the perception of a large number of people. Therefore, from the personal point of view, reality could be viewed as the arithmetic mean of the distribution of the perceptions of a large number of people.

In summary, several inferences and implications related to the preceding concept of meaning will be presented with a minimum of elaboration.

1. Meaning is the internal response to stimuli and the internal stimulation that these responses elicit. Consequently, people assign similar meaning to stimuli only to the extent that they have had similar

60 Berlo, op. cit., p. 184.
experiences with them. However, no two individuals will ever assign exactly the same meaning to the same set of stimuli.

2. In interpreting or assigning meaning to a message or to stimuli the receiver utilizes his experiences and learned responses. An encoder must always adapt the message to the decoder, if he is to keep the distortion level at a minimum.

3. The receiver interprets the message so as to prevent changes in firmly established personality patterns. A person tends to reinforce his particular personality structure through selective perception and evaluation. Therefore, distortion of intended meaning of messages can be partially explained as the attempt of the receiver to maintain or to reinforce a particular personality structuring.

4. A perceiver has a desire to obtain wholeness in his perception. Therefore, there is a tendency for a receiver to group characteristics to achieve this wholeness. A message with incomplete information will tend to be completed by the receiver. This type of perception may lead to distortion. Nevertheless, even though the capacity can be used to distort messages, it is still very important to the decoder in achieving

61 Ibid.


63 Ibid., p. 112.
communication. Seldom does any message contain all the information needed; thus it must be completed by the receiver.  

While other aspects of the model of the process of communication could be presented here, it is believed that the ones selected are sufficient to lead to a basic understanding of communication. However, a number of factors interfere with the process, and these disturbances are the subject of the succeeding topic.

**Interference with the Process of Interpersonal Communication**

In the following discussion, selected aspects of some major causes of interpersonal communication failures will be isolated and examined. The presentation is not intended to imply that a particular variable can be assigned as the cause of a miscommunication. In a social situation, these barriers interact, and a number of them may contribute to any one miscommunication act. Barriers to communication in multiperson (three or more) systems will be considered later in the paper.

**Lack of a Common Frame of Reference**

Frame of reference is used to denote the past and present functionally related factors which operate in the psychological mechanism of an individual and determine his psychological phenomena. An example of one such psychological phenomena would be the assigning of meaning to messages and symbols. If two individuals have not

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64 Ibid., pp. 112 - 113.

had similar past or present experiences with a common set of symbols and/or the realities behind the symbols, these individuals will not have common frames of reference. Consequently, the probability is very small that the psychological process of evaluating and assigning meaning to the same set of symbols by such individuals will produce the same results. Therefore, the probability of achieving communication is very low.

Contrasting frames of reference also interfere with the process of communication by yielding opposing definitions of the situation. A person tends to define the prevailing nature of his environment in every space-time interval. The practice of structuring the environment in which an event occurs is called delineation of the field. The definition of the situation by the individual in any space-time interval is determined by his particular current frame of reference. His definition will lead him to "... adopt roles, apply rules, instigate action, and think and feel in a manner which has proven successful in the past. 66

Thus, the individual is led to adopt behavior appropriate to his particular definition of the situation. Therefore, it is predictable that difficulty will arise when two individuals with opposing frames of reference are brought into a communication situation. Although the

Objective situation is the same for both individuals, it is defined differently by each. Hence, the differing psychological sets at this particular space-time interval will lead to different views of the communication situation and to different communicative behavior. Consequently, because of differing definitions of the situation, one of the basic cues to interpreting the message is distorted.

Contrasting frames of reference interfere with the process of interpersonal communication in still a third way by interfering with the empathic process. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to project oneself into the world of another unless one knows something about that world. Yet, the ability to empathize with a fellow communicant--that is, to think, feel, and structure the world as he does--is basic to the process of communication. In essence, a communicant is required to adapt the frame of reference of his opposing element. Yet, this adaptation takes place within his own existing frame of reference. Consequently, if the frames of reference lack common elements, the probability that the communicant can project himself into the frame of reference of the other person approaches zero.

**Distortion of the Perceptual Process**

In our discussion, the emphasis has been upon the process of selecting evaluating, interpreting, and assigning meaning to stimuli from one's

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67 Ibid., pp. 181 - 182.
environment and originating other stimuli in the form of messages.

A basic assumption has been that communication is purposeful, and the conclusion reached that meaning does not reside in messages or symbols but within individuals. Also, it has been concluded that meaning is the final step of the process of perception. Therefore, since communication involves the process of originating messages in an attempt to provide a stimulus to a prospective decoder so that he may reconstruct the experience or meaning which gave rise to the message, disturbances in the perceptual process will directly lead to disturbances in the communication process.  

The pitfalls involved in perceiving and forming impressions of other people are the ones of most interest to us. One writer suggests the following limitations to forming accurate impressions of others:

1. The environment or situation in which the impression is formed disproportionately influences it as opposed to the perception of the person perceived. Our perception of others is prejudiced by the situation in which the perceiving takes place.

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69 Zalkind and Costello, *op. cit.*, pp. 221 - 222.
2. Impressions are frequently based upon limited observation of the perceived person's behavior resulting in unwarranted generalization.

3. Due to the nature of the interaction situation, the person perceived may not have the opportunity to show behavior relevant to the traits about which impressions are being formed by the perceiver. For example, the perceiver may form impressions about the intellectual capacity of the perceived from a casual conversation at a social event.

The preceding has been a listing of some of the errors in forming impressions of other people. Now, we will examine some of the specific perceptual pitfalls in perceiving and forming impressions of others. The particular pitfalls that will be discussed here can be placed into four broad classifications: stereotyping, halo effect, projection, and identification.

Stereotyping. Stereotyping is the act of combining characteristics of objects or groups of people into a common class and then evaluating or judging the individual member of the group on the basis of one's perception of the characteristics of the group as a whole. The group Negro can be used as an example. The impression formed or the

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70Ibid. 71Ibid., p. 222.

judgment made about Joe Doe, Negro, by a person who strongly
exhibits the perceptual trait, stereotyping, will be influenced exten-
sively or conclusively by the particular stereotype that the perceiver
holds for the group Negro. "Stereotypes have developed about many
types of groups, and they have prejudiced many of our preceptions
about their members." Some examples of stereotyped groups are
Germans, Italians, management, labor, union, bankers, etc.

Mason Haire conducted a study which vividly illustrates the per-
ceptual pitfall of stereotyping. A photograph was labeled as a
management representative and as a union leader. The impressions
formed of the person in the photographs were opposite, yet similar,
when the photographs were shown to management and to labor. Each
group perceived its own members to be more understanding and depend-
able. "Each had similar stereotypes of his opposite and considered the
thinking, emotional characteristics and interpersonal relations of his
opposite as inferior to his own." Likewise each group perceived its
own group as being more appreciative of the other's point of view. This
example illustrates the distorting effect of stereotyping upon the process
of perception.

73 Zalkind and Costello, op. cit., p. 222.
74 Mason Haire, "Role Perception in Labor-Management Relations:
An Experimental Approach," Industrial Labor Relations Review, VIII
(1955), pp. 204 - 216.
75 Zalkind and Costello, op. cit., p. 223.
Halo effect. The term halo effect is the label assigned to a situation in which a general impression, either favorable or unfavorable, is used to evaluate specific traits.  

For example, one trait of an individual may serve as a screen to distort the perceiver's perception of all other traits. Tardiness of an employee, for example, may result in his being evaluated as unproductive and his work as being of low quality; whereas, the opposite may really be the case.  

Another aspect of the halo effect, the logical error, has been noted by psychologists. It is the tendency to link certain traits in the process of perception. This aspect of the halo effect is well illustrated in the research by Asch:

In his study the addition of one trait to a list of traits produced a major change in the impression formed. Knowing that a person was intelligent, skillful, industrious, determined, practical, conscious, and warm, led a group to judge him to be also wise, humorous, popular, and imaginative. When warm was replaced by cold a radically different impression (beyond the difference between warm and cold) was formed.

Projection. Projection is the process of attributing to others one's own particular personality characteristics or emotional state. While the capacity for projection is definitely an asset to achieving empathy, it can also serve as a hindrance. Research studies have revealed

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76 Ibid., p. 224.  
77 Ibid., pp. 224 - 225.  
79 Zalkind and Costello, op. cit., p. 225.
that frightened perceivers tend to judge other people as being frightened; fearful persons tend to judge another person as being fearful; aggressive people and those high in such traits as stinginess, obstinacy, and disorderliness tend to rate others high in such traits.

This research indicates that the indiscriminant projection of one's own emotional traits and particular personality states into the-perceived, distorts one's perception and impressions of the perceived. For example, "...a manager frightened by rumored organizational changes might not only judge others to be more frightened than they were, but also assess various policy decisions as more frightening than they were."

Identification. A basic error in the process of perception is the lack of awareness of the process of abstracting. The orders of abstraction are often confused, resulting in one identifying symbols with objects they represent, and also identifying the same object or person in different space-time intervals. The latter sense of identification is the one of most interest to us here. John Jones 1940 may be identified with John Jones 1964, or the United States 1940 may be identified with the United States 1964. The lack of consciousness of abstracting and the lack of awareness of the process nature of all reality results in frozen evaluations and, consequently, in distorted

80 Ibid., p. 226. 81 Ibid.
perceptions. Perception is a continuous process of revaluation since everything perceived is dynamic; objects, events, and persons are all dynamic entities.

**Personality Traits of the Communicants.**

The personality traits of an individual play a very important role in his ability to communicate. A number of personality traits prevent many people from carrying on complete communication. Some of these personality disturbances are: language and speech disturbances, disturbances of retention, recall and recognition, disturbances of thinking, judgment, and decision-making, general mental dullness or inertia, aggressiveness, ego-centricity, and others. Careful examination and reflection upon the foregoing list of personality disturbances will indicate the variety of ways that these problems interfere with the process of communication. A thorough analysis of the inter-relationship between communication and personality traits is much too

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83For an excellent discussion of the interrelationship between personality and communication, see Ruesch, Disturbed Communication: The Clinical Assessment of Normal and Pathological Clinical Behavior, pp. 1 - 191.

84M. Smith, op. cit., p. 295.

85Ruesch, Disturbed Communication: The Clinical Assessment of Normal and Pathological Clinical Behavior, pp. 11 - 15; and Smith, Ibid.
extensive for the present paper. However, it is believed safe to
assert that this is the basic barrier to communication and is the root
of many other barriers.

**Physical Limitations in the Process.**

This is a very broad classification of possible barriers. It
would include any malfunctioning or disturbance in the exteroceptors
of the person and any malfunctioning or disturbance in the output
mechanism. For example, the loss of sight or hearing of an individual
would significantly affect his communication ability. Likewise, the
loss of the output mechanism of speech or writing would limit one's
communicative skills.

Not only are the physical aspects of output and input mechanisms
important but also the physical limitations to the channel. Any physical
interference with the channel or in transmission of the message will
have a disruptive effect upon communication. In order to avoid miscom-
munication, the message must be brought into the environment of a
decoder without distortion in the process of transmission. Undoubtedly
the physical factors in the process of communication are of vital
importance.

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Lack of Adequate Feedback.

Adequate feedback is of such fundamental importance to the process of communication that it is felt necessary to mention it here even though the subject is considered, either directly or indirectly, in a number of places in this paper. For whatever reasons they may exist, limitations placed upon feedback impose a severe handicap on the process of communication. It is through the process of feedback that the encoder receives stimuli from the message itself and from the reactions of the decoder to the message. Feedback from these two sources guides the originator of a message in determining the necessity for further communication. Likewise, the feedback originating from the encoder, motivated by the feedback which the encoder receives from the decoder as he begins to decode the message, is invaluable in evaluating the message. Since meaning does not reside in messages but in individuals, the cues provided by feedback are of utmost significance in achieving communication.

II. COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOR

While the following discussion will center around communicative behavior, it is evident that much of the previous discussion has been concerned with the same subject. The process nature of the reality, communication, defies any neat compartmentalization of the subject into distinct, isolated subdivisions. Nevertheless, in spite of this
difficulty, the following discussion will be very vital to the analysis in
the succeeding chapters.

Two important concepts of human behavior have been selected
for consideration. First, examination of the theory of cognitive con-
sistency will involve investigating certain aspects of the relationship
between communication and interpersonal behavior. Second, symbolic
interaction theory will be summarized in an attempt to correlate per-
sonal and interpersonal behavior, communication, social systems, and
society.

Communication and Interpersonal Behavior

Theory of Cognitive Consistency

The past decade has seen a keenly developing interest in models
of cognitive consistency as predicting devices for communicative be-

A statement of the theory will be taken
from one of the major contributors to it, Leon Festinger. His anal-
ysis begins with the assumption that a person's opinions and attitudes
exist in internally consistent clusters. What one knows and believes
is consistent with what he does. Yet, deviations from these consist-
encies are observable; that is, inconsistencies exist within the person's

87 For a summary of the work done in this area see Schramm,

88 Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (Evanston,
cognitive framework. For example, people may know and believe
that smoking is harmful, yet continue to smoke. Thus, a cognitive
inconsistency exists. The following basic hypotheses of the theory
utilize this fundamental assumption as a foundation for their asser-
tions;

1. The existence of dissonance being psychologically
uncomfortable will motivate the person to try to
reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.

2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying
to reduce it, a person will actively avoid situations
and information which would likely increase the
dissonance. 89

Dissonance is defined as "The existence of nonfitting relations among
cognitions...." Cognition is "...any knowledge, opinion, or belief
about the environment, about oneself or about one's behavior. 90

The essence of the theory is that dissonance is inevitable. The
very existence of dissonance gives rise to motivating pressures to
reduce the dissonance; and, finally, the motivating pressures are
manifested in behavioral changes, that is, changes of cognition and
circumspect exposure to new information and new opinions. 91

Newcomb integrates consistency theory, communication, and
interpersonal behavior in his theory of "Strain Toward Symmetry"
utilizing the ABX model. 92 He begins with the belief that the

89Ibid., p. 3. 90Ibid. 91Ibid., p. 31.
92He set forth the theory in T. M. Newcomb, "An Approach To
The Study of Communicative Acts," Psychological Review, LX (1953),
phenomenon commonly labeled interaction could best be studied as communication acts, and utilizes the basic assumption that interpersonal communication "...performs the essential function of enabling two or more individuals to maintain simultaneously orientation to one another as communicators and towards objects of communication." He further assumes that coorientation is essential to human life. For example, if there were two persons A and B and one object X in an environment, the A, out of human necessity, must orient himself to B and X; vice versa for B. The lack of perceived consistency of orientation motivates communication between A and B: "...the strain of perceived non-consistency or discrepancy serves as an instigation to communication, a process by which, ordinarily, consistency is increased.

The preceding theory will now be restated using Festinger's terminology. Perceived dissonance of orientation of persons toward each other or coorientation towards objects in their environment will


94 Ibid., pp. 394 - 395.

provide a motivating force for the persons to institute communications to reduce dissonance of orientation and move towards consonance of orientation. The strength of the motivating force is dependent upon the strength of the need for coorientation or consensus. Likewise, the extent to which one or more communicative acts leads to a reduction in dissonance, is a function of the strength of the motivating force which stimulated the communicative act.

While the core of the theory of cognitive consistency is rather simple, its ramifications are far reaching and can become very complex. Some of the practical aspects and ramifications of the theory will be considered in the chapters on organization behavior.


97 The theory of cognitive consistency appears to be closely related to the theories of interpersonal behavior utilizing anxiety reduction and avoidance as a basic variable in explaining behavior. A representative example of that school of thought is Harry S. Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1953).

98 While the following publications were not mentioned specifically in the brief summary presented here it is felt that they are of such vital significance to the theory of cognitive consistency that they should be presented. First, the entire issue of the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXIV, No. 2, (July, 1960), was devoted to summarizing much of the current thinking and research on consistency theories. This issue was edited by Katz and also contained articles by Osgood and Rosenberg, Cohen and Zayone. Second, an important work on consistency in attitude organization is M. J. Rosenberg *et al.*, *Attitude, Organization and Change* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960). This book is concerned with the problems of consistency, among the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of attitude.
Interaction and self orientation.

The investigation of interaction is really the investigation of the effect of communication upon the behavior of the two or more interacting entities. Communication provides a link between the person and his environment, that is, between the person and the outside world. Through the process of interaction man gains knowledge of the environment. Communication through interaction assumes significant importance by providing a self-correcting mechanism to adjust one's information and knowledge about "the things" and "the persons" in his environment. Once more the importance of feedback is vividly emphasized. Self-correction occurs as a result of feedback from the person's interaction with all aspects of his surroundings. "Correction of information occurs when within a communication system the results of actions are fed back to the control centers; this feature is characteristic of social organizations, individuals, animals and other machines." 100 Only through the process of feedback and correction can the person maintain a realistic view of himself, other people, and the physical realities of his environment. "Correction is basic to all forms of learning and hence to adaptive, healthy behavior, and successful communication." 101

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99 Here interaction includes the relationship between the person and things as well as between the person and other persons.


101 Ibid.
It is common to find someone who has attempted to stop the process of correction through feedback. He attempts to maintain certain evaluations of his environment as they were during some past space-time interval. When that happens, the process of self-correction ceases to operate. The longer the process is arrested the more the person becomes isolated from this aspect of his environment, and, consequently, the more distorted his viewpoint becomes. Frozen evaluations develop when communications break down between individuals or groups of individuals. A completely distorted, unhealthy perception of the opposite will tend to result. The process nature of all reality necessitates a constant interaction with one's surroundings and the fellow members of one's society. This discussion implies one's knowledge and evaluations are relative to a particular space-time interval. They should not be stable, absolute judgments continuing without revision.

Thus, the process of feedback and self-correction is basic to all healthy, personal and interpersonal behavior. It is basic to personal behavior because only through the process of interaction does one form a healthy view of oneself. On the interpersonal level it would be impossible to maintain a viable relationship over time without the self-corrective process being at least partially in effect. Perhaps it should
be pointed out here that just as communications is imperfect the process of self-correction through feedback is also imperfect. The previous discussion of the problems that interfere with the communication process is also applicable to the process presently under discussion. The same disturbances interfere with the process of self-correction. The aspect of communication as a link between the person and his environment will be considered in greater detail in the following section on symbolic interaction theory.

**Communication and Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Behavior**

Symbolic interactionist theory provides a communicative frame of reference for viewing society, social organization, personal and interpersonal relations or behavior. The writings of a number of scholars in the areas of sociology, social psychology, and psychology contain partial statements of the theory. The theory is presented because


103 Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," Human Behavior and Social Processes, Arnold M. Rose, editor. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), pp. 179 - 192. He sees some of the major contributors from the fields of sociology as being Charles H. Cooley, W. I. Thomas, Robert E. Park, E. W. Burgess, Florian Vnaniecki, Ellisworth Faris, and James M. Williams. Among those outside the discipline, he includes William James, John Dewey, and George H. Mead. Blumer feels that none of these individuals has presented a systematic statement of the theory. He believes that Mead stands out among all of the others as laying the bare fundamental premises of the approach. Blumer himself is one of the leading, living
of the profound role assigned to communication in the development of personal, interpersonal, and especially, social behavior. It culminates, expands, and extends many of the concepts and assertions presented or implied in the discussion of communication theory. The following statement indicates the significance assigned to the communication variable by some of the exponents of the theory: "For Mead, communications is not a residual but a constitutive category. We act as we do because we communicate, not because we have drives or ideas first and then come together to express them. The self and society originate and develop in communication."\textsuperscript{104} Another writer recently made a similar observation. "Man as a social being exists in and through communication; communication is as basic to man's nature as food and sex. . . ."\textsuperscript{105}

Only a very sketchy summary of the theory is presented.

Actually, an excellent recent summary and statement of the theory by Arnold M. Rose is utilized extensively in this discussion.\textsuperscript{106}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{105} Ibid., p. 27.
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The framework for the presentation will be the statement and discussion of a series of assumptions and general propositions.

**Stimulation Through Symbols.**

The first assumption is: man exists in a symbolic as well as a physical environment and can be stimulated to act by both symbolic and physical stimuli. In the present context, a symbol refers to a stimulus having "... a learned meaning and value for people. ..." Man responds to a symbol in terms of this meaning and value rather than to its physical impact upon his senses even though it does have a physical stimulating effect upon these organs. A person responds to any symbol in terms of learned meaning and value rather than to the physical aspects of the symbol. Meaning signifies the way a person actually uses a term in his behavior, while value is the learned attraction or repulsion felt for the meaning. According to Mead's thinking, language symbolizes more than a situation or object already in existence, rather it is a mechanism to which the situation or object is brought into existence or created.

Symbols are learned through communication with other people. Consequently, they may be thought of as common or shared meanings and values. The implication is that meanings and values will be

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107 This framework will essentially be the one developed by Rose, *Ibid.*
similar, not identical, for the interacting persons involved in learning symbols. Charles Morris asserts, in a strict sense, the organism in the process of growth does not become a personality until certain symbols are operative in the organization and steering processes of the individual. 111

Thus, according to the hypothesis being considered, symbols become an integral part of the personality structure of the individual. Once symbol systems have become internalized, particular behavior patterns tend to emerge and to be repeated in similar social-stimulus situations. The implication is that a particular symbolic stimulus applied to the same human organism will evoke substantially similar behavior, provided the total situation for the organism is substantially the same. For example, if we were to sit down on a tack, the stimulus is very obvious and the reaction predictable. Yet, the assertion here is that a word symbol may and often does stimulate the individual just as strongly as the physical stimuli in the environment. Korzybski indicated his belief in the extent of the influence of internalized symbols upon the behavior of an individual:

> We often live, feel happy or unhappy, by what actually amounts to a definition and not by the empirical, individual facts less colored by semantic factors. When Smith

marries Smith2 they mostly do so by a kind of definition. They have certain notions as to what 'man,' 'woman,' and 'marriage,' 'are' by definition. They actually go through the performance and find that the Smith1 and his wife, Smith2, have unexpected likes, dislikes, and particularities—in general, characteristics and semantic reactions not included in their definition of the terms 'man,' 'woman,' 'husband,' 'wife,' or 'marriage.' . . . Disappointments accumulate and a more or less unhappy life begins.

On verbal, 'definitional,' or doctrinal semantic grounds, we expect something else than what the experiences of life give us. The non-fulfillment of expectation produces a serious affective and semantic shock.112

In conclusion, the essence of the assertion made here is that symbols provide as strong a stimulus as the physical stimuli in our environment. Because of the abstract nature of symbolic stimuli, their primordial importance is often not comprehended by administrative personnel.

Stimulation of Others Through Signs

The assertion of assumption two essentially is that man can use symbols to stimulate others in directions that he himself is not stimulated.113 The essence of the assumption is that man has a capacity to recognize certain meanings and values, and even though he does not accept these meanings and values for himself, he is able

112 Korzybski, op. cit., p. 415.

to evoke them in others by utilizing symbols. A distinction between natural signs and significant symbols advanced by Mead may be helpful here. Significant symbols are those which are learned by the individual through interaction with others and require role taking. Natural signs, on the other hand, instinctively evoke body responses in the other individual. Natural signs depend on the activation of the autonomic nervous system of the individual. The communicator controls the behavior of the receiver when natural signs are used because of the involuntary responses of the nervous system of the receiver to such signs. However, when significant symbols are used the behavior can only be influenced, not controlled, because the meaning and value applied to the symbol resides in the receiver himself. Nevertheless, when the evaluative process is short circuited and responses to significant symbols become programmed responses, the distinction between natural signs and significant symbols loses its importance.

The implications of the use of symbols to influence and control man's behavior are far ranging and profound.

**Learning of Meanings and Values Through Symbols**

Assumption three asserts that man learns value systems and acceptable means of acting through communication with other men.

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114 Ibid., pp. 7 - 9; and Morris, op. cit., pp. 187 - 216.

115 Rose, Ibid., p. 9.
"Thus, it is assumed that most of the modern adult's behavior is learned behavior, and specifically learned in symbolic communication rather than through individual trial and error, conditioning, or any other purely psychogenic process."\(^{116}\) The learning of culture is essentially a process of internalization of certain values and meanings through the use of symbols. The assumption here essentially ties together communication, social systems, culture, and personality.

"The fact that the same symbols operate and constitute the social system that become dominant symbols in the personality system is the linkage--the common element--between the social system and the personality system."\(^{117}\) Thus, "... to the extent the symbols by which we define the social system become also the key integrating symbols in the personality system, there is a process of internalization of a social system and personality system."\(^{118}\) The essence of the discussion here is "... man can have a culture--an elaborate set of meanings and values--shared by members of a society, which guides much of his behavior."\(^{119}\)

\(^{116}\) Ibid.  
\(^{117}\) Parsons, op. cit., p. 335.  
\(^{118}\) Ibid.  
\(^{119}\) Rose, op. cit., p. 9.
Prediction of Behavior

General proposition (deduction) one arises from the previous discussion. The proposition is that the learning of culture enables men to predict behavior of others and likewise orient their behavior to the predicted behavior. This deduction arises naturally from the assumption of internalization of a common set of symbols with similar meaning and the assumed capability of role taking with common symbols. Here the society in which the individual exists is understood to be "... a collection of individuals with a culture, which has been learned by symbolic communication from other individuals back through time, so that the members can gauge their behavior to each other and to the society as a whole." The culture of a society is the acceptable modes or ways of acting in that society; that is, "... the characteristic ways in which basic needs of the individual are satisfied in that society."

The extent of the pervasiveness of the predictability of behavior in any particular society or social system will be determined by the extent or degree of cohesion in that society or social system. A highly integrated society or social system will show a very consistent pattern of culture, whereas, a less integrated one will have a less consistent

\[\text{120} \text{Ibid., p. 10.} \quad \text{121Ibid.} \quad \text{122Morris, op. cit., p. 205.}\]
patterning of culture. Naturally, the more cohesive a society the better the predictability of behavior throughout the society as a whole.

Clusters of Meanings

A fourth assumption of the theory is that symbols and their referents often occur as large and complex systems rather than in isolated bits.

123 Ibid.
124 While the influence on behavior of the internalization of culture, that is, the socialization of the individual, is recognized and emphasized, the intention has not been to assert complete cultural determinism. The following qualifications to culture determinism are extracted from Rose, op. cit., p. 14.
1. Interaction between individuals on the natural-sign level is independent of specific cultures.
2. Most cultural expectations involved ranges of behavior rather than specific behavior.
3. Most cultural expectations are for specific roles and situations rather than for all individuals and all situations.
4. Certain cultural expectations are for variation rather than conformity, that is, they involve the expectation for innovation.
5. Flexibility is built into cultural meanings which many times only indicate possibilities, not requirements.
6. The commonly existent conflicting patterns of expectations requires and permits an individual to synthesize and redefine cultural expectations for himself.
7. Finally, the symbolic interactionist does not exclude the influence of biogenic and psychogenic factors in behavior even though he does not incorporate them into his theory.

125 Rose, Ibid., p. 10.
The assertion here is essentially that meanings and values occur in clusters, and a key symbol of the cluster will trigger a predictable evocation of the entire system of meanings and values. Thus, if the particular symbol position is evoked, then a predictable evocation of a distinct cluster of meanings and values can be expected to follow.

The term or social position "father" is a good example of a key symbol.

Role and structure are the two terms chosen to signify the clusters of values. Used in this sense, the term "role" "...refers to a cluster of related meanings and values that guide and direct an individual's behavior in a given social setting...". Much of behavior is role behavior and a person is involved in playing many different roles in the course of a day as he moves from one social situation to another. In the present context, the term structure "...refers to a cluster of related meanings and values that govern a given social setting, including the relationships of all the individual roles that are expected parts of it." The primary difference between the two terms or two meanings is that role is viewed from the standpoint of the individual while structure is viewed from the standpoint of the social setting.

Definition of the Self

The second general proposition of the symbolic interactionist theory is related to the definition of the self in a social situation. The
assertion is that an individual perceives and defines himself as well as every other aspect of his environment. 129 George Mead, whose work serves as a foundation for this proposition, perceives the self to be a social phenomenon, "The self as that which can be an object to itself is essentially a social structure and it arises in social experience." 130

Thus, the self is perceived to be a distinct feature of the individual developed through social interaction:

The self has a character which is different from that of psychological organism proper. The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but rises in the process of social experience and activity; that is, it develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process. 131

The self is perceived as developing through communication. "The importance of what we term 'communications' lies in the fact that it provides a form of behavior in which the organism or the individual may become an object to himself." 132

The definition of the self is perceived to involve two distinctly different operations. 133 First, the "me" is the definition of

129 Ibid., p. 11.
perception of one's self in a particular role relationship, that is, as a specific role player in a prescribed relationship. Then, each time the role relationship changes, the defined 'me' changes. Thus, there is a defined 'me' existing for each different role assumed. Second, the 'I' is the definition or perception of one's self as a whole, and is called self-conception. The distinction that Mead makes between the 'I' and the 'me' follows: 'The 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the 'me' is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitude of the others constitute the organized 'me' and then one reacts to that as an 'I'." "

In essence, the self has two interacting parts. The 'me' is the parts of the individual which reflect the relation with others, and which allows others to take roles and predict very accurately the behavior of the individual in a particular relationship. The second part of the self, the 'I', or the self-conception, is more personal and less dependent on the cultural environment. While the self-concept is a dynamic phenomenon, it is often very stable, and allows another to predict the behavior of the individual with some degree of accuracy. The relationship between the 'I' and the 'me' necessarily makes the 'I' partially dependent upon the cultural expectations. "The 'I', while personal, is by no means independent of cultural expectations, since it is built on the individual's 'me's', and since the individual

134 Ibid., p. 175.
always sees himself in relation to the community." The importance of the ability of an individual to define himself as well as other aspects of his environment to organizational behavior, will become more evident as this topic is examined in detail.

The preceding discussion of symbolic interactionist theory has been abbreviated and highly selective. There are many aspects and ramifications of the theory not even touched in the brief summary presented. However, it is believed that the ones presented have far reaching and multitudinous ramifications in understanding and controlling organizational behavior.

III. SUMMARY

Chapter II has been devoted to a selective and abbreviated analysis of the process of communication and communicative behavior. The major topics considered under the process of communication were the concept of process, interpersonal communication model, ramifications of the interpersonal model, and finally, the disturbances or interferences with the process of interpersonal communication.

Communication theory is built around the process point of view. The theorist views a world in process; events are inseparable from

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all other events, and processes are occurring in all directions. Nevertheless, in order to talk about communications or communicate at all these events must be arrested and a relationship established at a particular space-time interval. In the process of arresting events, structure is assigned to them; thus, it is an inferred quality. The perceiver selects a limited number of the infinite characteristics of any event and chooses the way in which these perceptions are organized.

The model of the communication process presented is based upon a number of assumptions. These are: (1) processes can be arrested, (2) communication is purposeful, (3) communication is need related, (4) the elements of the communication process must be considered dyadically, and (5) the interpersonal model can be extended to the different level of analysis including intrapersonal level and the multiperson level.

Six basic elements—a source, an encoder, a message, a channel, a decoder, and a receiver—were utilized to explain how stimuli are received, evaluated, encoded, and transmitted to another receiver.

A number of important ramifications of the interpersonal model were discussed. The capacity and the necessity of projecting oneself into the frame of reference of the individual with whom one is trying to communicate, that is to empathize, is recognized. The process of building in cues for interpreting the message, that is the process of metacommunication, is viewed as being essential to achieving communication. Having some common experiences with symbol and the
realities behind these symbols is a primary condition for achieving communication. Perception, the process of receiving and evaluating stimuli, is a vital aspect of the communication process. Finally, meaning, the end product of perception, is viewed as residing within the individual rather than in the symbols of communication.

A number of factors interfere with the process of interpersonal communication. Some of the more important of these are: lack of a common frame of reference, distortion of the perceptual process (that is, stereotyping, halo effect, projection, and identification), personality traits of the individual, physical limitations to the process, and finally, lack of adequate feedback.

While the previously discussed aspects of the communication process cannot be separated from human behavior, several aspects of communicative behavior were singled out for special consideration. The first of these is the theory of cognitive consistency, and it can be summarized as follows: the existence of non-fitting relations among cognitions, that is one's knowledge, opinions or beliefs about his environment, himself, or his behavior, creates anxiety, which motivates the effort to achieve consonance. The essence of the theory is that dissonance is inevitable. The very existence of dissonance gives rise to motivating pressures to reduce dissonance, and finally, the motivating pressures are manifested in behavioral changes, that is, changes of cognition and circumspect exposure to new information and
new opinions. Communication is the basic variable in this process of strain towards symmetry of orientation or cognition.

Communication provides the means by which the individual is linked to his environment, that is, to other persons or the world outside the individual. In the process of relating to the outside world through communication, the self correcting mechanism operates to adjust one's information and knowledge about the things and persons in his environment.

The symbolic interactionist theory of behavior and its relationship to communication is also summarized in this chapter. Symbolic interactionist theory provides a communicative frame of reference for viewing society, social organization, and personal behavior. A series of assumptions and general propositions were examined. First, it assumed that man exists in a symbolic as well as a physical environment and can be stimulated to act by both symbolic and physical stimuli. The second assumption was that man can use symbols to stimulate others in directions in which he himself is not stimulated. The third assumption was that man learns value systems and acceptable means of acting through communication with other men. The first general proposition was that the learning of culture enables men to predict behavior of others, and likewise orient his behavior to the predicted behavior. A fourth assumption was that symbols and their referents often occur as large and complex systems rather than in isolated bits. The final general proposition was related to the definition
of the self in the social situation. The assertion was that an individual perceives and defines himself as well as every other aspect of his environment.
CHAPTER III

UTILIZING A COMMUNICATIVE FRAME OF REFERENCE

AS A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING SELECTED ASPECTS OF

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

The multifarious nature of organizational behavior makes selecting a few aspects for analysis a difficult task; thus, the particular characteristics elected require some justification. The following major topics will be considered: goal formation and value orientation, coordination, decision making, and informal organization.

Goal formation and value orientation is included because it encompasses the normative framework and commitments which provide the rationale for the organization’s existence. Coordinated behavior, directed towards the ends or goals and subgoals of the organization, is the essence of organized activity and has been described as the ultimate goal of organization. "The comprehensive objective of an organization is to maximize the synergistic effect."^1

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Synergism is defined as "... cooperative action such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the parts taken separately."\textsuperscript{2}

Decision making is examined because it is considered as one of the most characteristic and important forms of behavior in organizations. Finally, the development of informal relationships is included because it provides a broad mechanism for explaining the reconciliation of individual and group needs and expectations with formal organizational needs and expectations.\textsuperscript{3}

Formal organization is of primary concern. As distinguished from other social systems, formal organizations are established to achieve a set of predetermined ends and are maintained through goal-directed coordinated activity. "In contrast to social organizations that emerge whenever men are working together, these are the organizations that have been deliberately established for certain purposes ... the term, formal organization is used to designate them."\textsuperscript{4}

This analysis is not confined to organizations of any particular type or size, but it is probably more applicable to larger organizations.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 30.

\textsuperscript{3}Informal organization relationship will not be explored as a separate topic, but as an integral part of the other topics.

especially economic or governmental ones. The basic orientation for the discussion is communication theory. Nevertheless, in order to achieve continuity, some factors outside the communication frame of reference must be considered. However, the primary focus of the inquiry will be the communication aspects of the selected topics.

I. GOAL FORMATION AND VALUE ORIENTATION

A consciously constituted system of goals or objectives is the distinctive characteristic of formal organization. In the present context, formal organizations are assumed to have the common goal of continued existence for the indefinite future. A basic requirement for continued existence is a minimum degree of value orientation of the organization's goals with those of the society in which it operates and, also, between the objectives and needs of the organization and those of its members. In the discussion which follows, the nature of organizational goals, subgoals, and the intervening variables which

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5Ibid.

6This assumption is made in order to make the analysis more generalized and to exclude the discussion of those organizations formed for a relatively limited period of time to achieve limited objectives.

operate to modify them are considered. Although the inquiry is not
limited completely to the communicative aspects of these topics, the
primary focus is in that direction.

**Organization Goals**

Goals are the *raison d'être* of organization. ² Organization may
be viewed as "... intricate human strategies designed to achieve
certain objectives." ⁹ Organizational goals are rallying points for the
various human coalitions which constitute it. ¹⁰ For example, typical
economic organization may have coalitions of owners as well as coaliti-
ions of employees. Each, with his own particular definition of the
situation, perceives the organization as a means of fulfillment of per-
sonal needs and objectives. Formal organization exists because of

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² Talcott Parsons, "Suggestions for a Sociological Approach to a
(1956), 64.

⁹ Chris Argyris, *Understanding Organizational Behavior*

¹⁰ James G. March and R. M. Cyert, "A Behavioral Theory of
Organizational Objective," *Modern Organization Theory: A
Symposium of the Foundation for Research on Human Behavior*, Mason

¹¹ Ibid.
the perceived inability of an individual acting alone to achieve particular personal objectives and needs. 12 A brief discussion of the nature of organization goals follows. 13

Consistency With Value System of Society

An organization is one of the many social systems constituting a society. Thus, it is a subsystem of the larger system, society. Because of the interrelatedness of these social systems, an organization must continually interact with the other social systems in its environment and carry on a continuous exchange of communication. The output of the organization, which represents a partial manifestation of goal fulfillment for it, can be considered as an input to the superordinant or the larger system. 14 In this light, since the organization is a subsystem of the larger system, society, its goals and value systems must, to at least a minimum degree, be consistent with those of the society, or at least, those of the subsystems in its milieu. 15 As Merton observes, during any particular historical period, "Cultural

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13 While the discussion will depart somewhat from the communication frame of reference, it is judged as necessary to the succeeding analysis.

14 Parsons, op. cit., p. 67. 15 Ibid.
goals and institutional norms operate jointly to shape prevailing practices. " The organization is in a continuous state of interaction with its environment from which its membership is drawn. Consequently, the actual goals of the organization will invariably be influenced in the direction of those of the society. 17

The point here is that society legitimizes organizational objectives, to the extent it is convinced, through interaction with the organization, that the pursuit of these objectives is beneficial to the larger system. 18 Parsons makes the following observations about this relationship.

"For the business firm money returned is a primary measure and symbol of success and is thus part of the goal structure of the organization. But it cannot be the primary organization goal because profit making is not by itself a function on behalf of society as a system." 19

Following this line of reasoning, the value system of the organization must, to a degree, be consistent with the value system of the society. "In the most general sense, the values of the organization legitimize its existence as a system." 20 More specifically, the value system legitimizes the functional patterns of operation necessary for


18 Parsons, op. cit., p. 68. 19 Ibid. 20 Ibid.
the attainment of organizational objectives. The organization is not only dependent upon its environment to assimilate its output, but is also dependent upon its environment for the resource input.

By communicating value systems to the particular social setting in which it operates, the organization attracts particular resource qualities into itself. For example, Argyris found in the study of a bank that a particular type of personality is attracted to this type organization, and the attraction is based upon the image that the organization communicates to its environment. For example, he observed that the type of personality likely to be attracted as an employee "... tends to have a self concept which results in his expressing: (1) a strong desire for security, stability, and predictability in his life; (2) a strong desire to be left alone and to work in relative isolation; and (3) a strong dislike for aggressiveness and hostility in himself and in others." Thus, a bank has communicated a particular image and value system to the environment. Since there are individuals in society to whom these values are important, members can be attracted who will perpetuate these values. Misfits will

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21 Ibid.


23 Ibid.
of organization, who, like some of the actors they observe, use the organizational goals as a yardstick with which to measure the organization's performance. 25

Dynamic in Nature

Formally recognized organizational goals are process oriented. Organizations exist in a dynamic environment, 26 and the objective of indefinite self perpetuation is one of their basic goals. To achieve self-perpetuation, they must remain in constant communication and interaction with their environment and sensitive to its goals. "In a dynamic context, goals do not remain obvious, but mechanisms for their evaluation, reflection, implementation, and periodic revision must be institutionalized." 27 Through the process of communication, an organization is apprised of the changing taste, desires, and norms of the larger system. Therefore, the process of correction through feedback enables it to maintain a necessary degree of harmony with its milieu, upon which it is completely dependent.

Furthermore, as certain objectives of organization are achieved, it is necessary to reformulate new ones. This process of rethinking,


26 For a discussion of dynamics or the nature of processes, Supra, pp. 18 - 21.

terminate or be terminated. Ruesch has also observed the importance of a particular image being projected to potential resources of an organization. For example, he points out the tendency of an individual to be attracted to an organization with a value system and communication system that is similar to the particular group situation in which, through past experience, the person has found himself most adaptive. 24

In summary, the assertion here is twofold. First, goals define and provide the rationale for organizational existence. Second, the goals and value systems of an organization must be consistent with the goals and value systems of the society in which the organization is a subsystem. The society's goals and value systems legitimize the existence of the organization as an entity. The following statement, to a certain extent, summarizes the functions and characteristics of organizational goals:

They give organizational activity its orientation by depicting the state of affairs which the organization attempts to realize. They serve as sources of legitimation which justifies the organization's activities and is its very existence, at least in the eyes of some participants and those of the general public and sub-public. They serve as a source for standards by which actors assess the success of their organization. Finally, they serve as an important starting point for students

revaluation, and alteration of objectives enables an organization to remain sensitive to the spirit of the times. Thus, following a course charted with hard logic, based upon the best available information, and born out of continuous sensitivity to the dynamic society and its own personnel, the organization's probability of generating a successful set of realizable goals is enhanced; yet, the process of goal formation should be a consciously continuous one.

Subgoals

It is not intended to minimize the importance of organizational goals, but individual and group goals are believed to be of much greater importance to understanding organization behavior than are organizational goals. Actually, to understand the true goals an organization is pursuing as opposed to the stated goals, it is essential to understand the process of individual and group goal formation in an organization. The objective here is to examine selected characteristics of individual goals within the context of the group in which the goal behavior is evidenced.

Organizational goals are highly abstract ends or norms towards which the activity of the organization is supposedly directed. For the goals to serve as active stimuli, thus as effective directional criteria, they must be related to the actual situation in which the acting unit is

\[28\text{Merton, op. cit., p. 132ff.}\]
found. Consequently, the phenomenon of subgoal formation is noted in organization. Each individual defines and structures his situation in a way meaningful to himself. In an attempt to make the situation sufficiently defined so as to be meaningful to the individual, the generalized goals are factored into a series of interrelated subgoals which become the formally recognized ends of a distinct organizational unit. Once these subgoals (which are usually associated with the differentiation of activity of the enterprise) have been formalized for a particular organizational unit, they tend to become a major anchor for the individual in forming his definition of the work situation. The latter will be a key factor in the worker's perception and evaluation of organizational stimuli. Instead of the organizational goals providing the individual's frame of reference for evaluating the subgoals, the reverse is more likely. In effect, the person tends to displace other goals for the group's subgoals with which he has strongest identity.

33 Later, the possible dysfunctional effect of this in pursuing a unified set of objectives is discussed.
A group of selected factors which influence the formation and reinforcement of subgoals are considered in the following analysis.

**Subgoal Formation**

**Strain Toward Cognitive Consistency.** Subgoal formation can be explained partially by the member's strain toward cognitive consistency. When a person becomes a member or is employed by a formal bureaucratic type of organization, he is assigned to a particular work group. As discussed above, this group has an established system of goals. The individual is motivated to institute a concerted flow of communications to learn the value and goal system of the group, and vice versa. Perceived dissonance of goal orientation resulting from this communication process creates anxiety which provides motivation for achieving consonance of goal orientation. Thus, pressure is created within the individual to reduce conflict that may arise from lack of coorientation towards group members or group norms.

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Therefore, the mechanism described here is automatically triggered when the individual enters the group and the process of subgoal formation is instituted.  

**Differentiated Communication.** Another extremely important factor in subgoal formation is selective exposure to stimuli. The division of the activity of an organization into various activity centers (that is, the division of labor in an organization) and assigning the acting unit to a particular activity center strongly influences the stimuli to which the acting unit will be subjected. The information reaching individuals from higher levels of the organization is substantially determined by the particular activity center to which they are assigned. For example, a salesman would be in one type of environment, a research engineer in another, in which he would be probably subjected to different types of stimuli, etc.

The subgoals of an activity center and of a particular acting unit are based upon the perception and definition of the situation. To an

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37 For a more detailed discussion of the communicative mechanism for reducing perceived dissonance of orientation, see Supra, pp. 59 - 65.

important degree, the definition of the situation is influenced by the particular information available. Thus, differentiation of information contributes to differentiation of subgoals.

In order to predict what particular subgoals we are likely to find in particular parts of an organization, we must take as our starting point (a) the system of subgoal assignment that has resulted from analysis of the organization's goals, and (b) the kinds of stimuli to which each organizational unit is exposed in carrying out its assignment.

Differentiation of communication is a very important aspect of subgoal formation, as far as the organization is concerned. Formal channels are designed and their use is controlled by higher level organization members who are responsible for maintaining a goal oriented effort. Consequently, a powerful mechanism is provided for influencing subgoal formation. By controlling and carefully designing information transmitted to subgroups, the organization can substantially influence the subgoals a group formulates.

**Group Pressure and Influence.** Group pressure plays an important part in the coorientation of the new member to its subgoals. Solomon Asch reports in research studies he conducted that an individual will conform to an incorrect group judgment. Other investigators report


the tendency of an individual to adopt the norms of a group to which he belongs or aspires.

The group pressure is successful in achieving a coorientation of subgoals for a number of reasons. First, a person becomes a member of the group partially to establish meaningful social relationships. "People... tend to move into groups which, in their judgment, hold opinions which agree with their own..." The external, thus also internal, conflict created by non-homogeneity of orientation to subgoals will lead to either a change in orientation or termination of group membership. Secondly, the member is induced to conform either to win rewards or to avoid negative sanctions. Whenever he conforms, his associates are likely to approve and reward; whenever he fails to conform they bring negative sanctions to bear. "Hence he often


\[43\] The impact of the individual upon group norms is being ignored here.


conforms in order to win approval or (in Veblen's telling irony) to gain 'an increment of good repute.'

Finally, the group provides the informational frame of reference for the individual. Under the overt or covert pressure of continuous interaction, the person's capacity for selective exposure to, and perceptual distortion of, group information is limited. Thus, because of effective continuous exposure and continuous feedback, the tendency to accept group goals is increased.

Reinforcement of Subgoals.

The mechanisms used to reinforce existing subgoals are essentially the same mechanisms that are involved in the subgoal formation. Thus, the factors that will be discussed here could just as easily have been discussed under subgoal formation and vice versa, but are included here because of the belief that they are more important to subgoal reinforcement than to subgoal formation.

Selective Exposure, Perception and Retention of Stimuli. The predisposition toward selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention of stimuli (messages, information, etc.) is a basic means of reinforcement of a particular personality structuring or organization of an environment. These mechanisms have been shown to affect behavior profoundly.

\[46\text{Ibid.} \quad 47\text{Klapper, op. cit., p. 19 - 26.} \quad 48\text{Ibid.}\]
Selective exposure is a tendency of individuals to permit themselves to be exposed only to information which is consistent with their present beliefs, attitudes, opinions, etc. Actual exposure to information is a function of not only availability, but also predisposition.

Studies in mass communications have shown that those people interested or already predisposed in a particular direction are generally the ones who will avail themselves of an opportunity to obtain information about their particular interest. The same factor can be seen to operate in an organization, especially when the member can either choose or reject an opportunity to receive a particular message or sets of messages. Thus, the possible modifying effect of information, contrary to a person's presently existing goal structure, is avoided.

Selective perception is also an extremely important mechanism for maintaining a particular personality or value structuring.

"Laboratory experiments have established that perception of moving lights, relative size of coins, relative length of lines and the like is

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50 Klapper, op. cit., p. 21 - 22.

in part or whole determined by what persons want to perceive, have
habitually perceived or expect some form of social or physical reward
for perceiving." Thus research has satisfactorily established that
one's perception is a highly selective process.

In selective perception, a person does not necessarily reject the
information but simply recasts the information to fit his own predeter-
mined attitudes, etc.; or, viewed in another way, the person will tend
to select that part of the message which fits his own sentiments and to
recast, reject, or ignore the remainder of the message. This explains
why two persons in an organization receiving the same message can
interpret it completely differently. In essence, the end result is just
about the same as having sent two different messages. Thus, the
previously noted phenomenon whereby a person distorts messages in
order to maintain a particular personality structure is reemphasized.

Selective retention is a trait closely related to selective perception.
Selective retention is the tendency of the individual to forget at
a more rapid rate that information which is not consistent with his own
particular pattern of sentiments, etc. The result of one study indicated
that sympathetic material is retained longer, and vice versa for

52Klapper, loc. cit.
53For a summary of another study made on selected perception
see Ibid., pp. 22 - 23.
unsympathetic material. While selective retention is definitely an existing phenomenon, it is so interrelated with other phenomena that a great deal of study has not been directed toward investigating this area in the last few years.

In summary, while selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention are definite capacities of the individual, the assertion here is not that every person exhibits all three of the tendencies in communication situations; in fact, research data has shown the contrary. Yet, the writer believes, and research has shown, the use of the selective capacities of the individual is a commonly used method of maintaining and reinforcing a particular structuring of subgoals. The selective capacities prevent cognitive dissonance and the related anxiety that would arise from undistorted perception of information or environmental stimuli; therefore, this selectivity impairs the corrective mechanism previously described.

Content of "in group" Communications. A second major group of factors contributing to subgoal reinforcement is the content of "in group" communication. In group situations, patterned flows of communication tend to develop. For other than those communications received

54 Klapper, Ibid., p. 23 - 24. 55 Ibid., p. 25. 56 Ibid.
57 March and Simon, op. cit., p. 152.
58 Lazarsfeld and Katz, op. cit., pp. 84 - 98.
directly from the higher organization, the group member tends to receive his information through the group network. That is, he will generally receive information from the same source or sources within the group. "Given enough time and freedom of communication... a small group will typically establish working lines of communication which can be more or less formalized within the group." For the majority of group members, information is not received directly, but only after passing through individuals' frames of reference in the group network. "Since these perceptions have already been filtered by one or more communicators, most of whom have frames of reference similar to our own, the reports are generally consonant with filtered reports of our own perceptions, and serve to reinforce the latter." 60 The mere existence of the group facilities is prima facie evidence of the possibility for sympathetic communication reinforcement because "...a ready-made network for interpersonal dissemination of their content," 61 is provided. Thus, a particular value structuring is maintained not only by the member's filtering out undesirable, unfitting information, but also by the protection provided by the group's control of "in group" communication content.


60 March and Simon, op. cit., p. 153.

61 Klapper, op. cit., p. 29.
In essence, the summary of the discussion on subgoal formation and reinforcement is that a subgroup member is likely to identify with the subgroup. The stronger these identifications, the more likely he is to conform to what he perceives the group norms to be. While a number of interacting variables determine the degree or extent of subgroup identification, the following is thought to be a fairly significant listing of these variables:

1. The greater the perceived prestige of the group the stronger the propensity of an individual to identify with it; and vice versa.

2. The greater the extent to which goals are perceived as shared among the members of a group, the stronger the propensity of an individual to identify with a group; and vice versa.

3. The more frequent the interaction between the individual and the members of a group, the stronger the propensity of an individual to identify with the group; and vice versa.

4. The greater the number of individual needs satisfied in the group, the stronger the propensity of the individual to identify with the group; and vice versa.

5. The less the amount of competition between the members of a group and an individual, the stronger the propensity of the individual to identify with the group; and vice versa.\(^{62}\)

An analysis of these propositions would indicate each is related, either directly or indirectly, to communication; that is, each would be dependent upon some type of communication having taken place to influence one's perception of, for example, the amount of competition, the need satisfaction provided by the group, shared goals,

\(^{62}\)March and Simon, _op. cit._, pp. 65 - 66.
prestige of the group, etc. The claim here is not that the communication variable is the sole determinant of subgoal formation, but that it is a very important factor in this process.

**Intervening Variables**

An often noted phenomenon is the deviation of actual organizational goals from the formally expressed ones. The deviation can partially, but not completely, be explained by the dynamic nature of goals as opposed to the lethargy in formally recognizing their change and restating them. To ascertain the actual goals of an organization, one must discover the resultant determinant or vector arising from the interacting of group goals with those formalized by the organization. Inevitably, organizational goal fulfillment is completely dependent upon individual and group effort. The two intervening variables which mediate organizational goals, the individual and group, are briefly discussed.

**The Individual Versus Organizational Goal Fulfillment**

In reviewing some of the work done in the area of organization theory in the last few years, Mason Haire made the following observation: "The most frequent single psychological thread running through this material is the conflict between the organization's goal and the

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63 Etzioni, *op. cit.*, p. 258.
satisfaction of the individual's motives." In the following discussion some of the variables which influence the individual's adaptation to organizational goals are examined.

**Cultural Influence.** When an individual becomes a member of an organization, he brings into it an internalized set of cultural goals and institutional norms which will significantly influence his commitments and activity within the organization. 65 As pointed out by Presthus, the internalized cultural values are not necessarily dysfunctional. "The organization draws upon the accumulated learning and experience of the individual who brings to it certain socially inculcated attitudes that encourage a satisfactory accomodation to the organization's major values and expectations." 66 Thus, the internalized symbol system and the meanings and values associated with the symbols enable an organization, through communication with the individual, to direct his effort toward predetermined ends. However, there are meanings and values brought into the organization that are dysfunctional, and evocation of these meanings and values will prevent wholehearted adherence to organizational goals. For example, for the good of the

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65 Merton, op. cit., p. 133. 66 Presthus, op. cit., p. 49.
organization, the most competent person should fill a position. However, the value system of society may require that the authority be vested in an older person, a person with the most seniority, or a male rather than a female, etc.  

Etzioni has given a vivid example of cultural values and norms dysfunctionally affecting the achievement of organizational goals. He points out two phenomena. First, "The goals of mental hospitals, correctional institutions, and prisons are therapeutic." Second, "Despite large efforts to transform these organizations from custodial to therapeutic institutions, little change has taken place." The question is, why this divergence from the stated goal and purposes of these organizations? The divergence is attributed to two basic factors. First those factors external to the organization, the cultural environment, that is, the prevailing value system of the milieu, in which these organizations operate, prevent goal fulfillment.

When the power of the various elements in the environment are carefully examined, it becomes clear that in general the subpublics (e.g., professionals, universities, well-educated people, some health authorities) which support therapeutic goals are less powerful than those that support custodial or segregated activities of these organizations . . . . A local community, which is both an important segment of the organizational environment and . . . custodial minded, can make an organization maintain its bars, fences, and guards or be closed."  

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67 Gouldner, op. cit., p. 417. 68 Etzioni, op. cit., pp. 262 - 266. 69 Ibid., p. 263. 70 Ibid. 71 Ibid., p. 264.
This example also illustrates the impact of the member's cultural values and social experiences on interpreting and implementing organizational goals. While their expressed goal is therapy, because of the individuals attracted as employees, it is highly unlikely these objectives could be implemented. For example, in most of these organizations, there are a small number of professional individuals who are oriented toward therapeutic goals and a large number of members who are drawn from the segment of society which envisions the goals to be custodial. Consequently, because the majority of the employees bring with them a culturally instilled understanding that the goals are custodial, the organization's goals are displaced by the goals of the individuals comprising it. The communications of those professional persons who are therapeutic oriented, are received and interpreted by decoders with an entirely different cultural background and understanding. Although these individuals may not purposely distort goal-related messages, they interpret therapeutic goals in a personal frame of reference custodially oriented. Consequently, distortion is inevitable.

In summary, one's cultural frame of reference brought into an organization can be both functional and dysfunctional to the achievement of organizational objectives. In essence, it will provide the frame of

\[72\text{Ibid.}\]
reference dictating one's understanding of the organizational objectives, one's value system, and, finally, the degree of commitment and identification with the organization. Communication directed to the individual will be interpreted within this frame of reference.

Personal Needs. Personal needs are highly significant in determining the degree of identification and commitment to organizational goals. In fact, this factor has been cited as limiting the degree of commitment to an organization. "... the needs of an individual do not permit a single minded attention to the stated goals of the system within which they have been assigned." Many studies have established the fact that the needs of the individual significantly influence the perception process. Thus, one's perception and perceptual structuring of the expressed organizational goals does not occur outside the framework of one's individual needs, moods, past experiences, present experiences, etc. Therefore, personal needs are a highly significant variable in interpretation of, and commitment to, organizational goals. To the extent these goals are perceived as fulfilling, there will be a high degree of coorientation between individual and organizational goals. Also, perceived discrepancy between the

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individual and organizational goals should trigger the automatic mechanism to bring about coordination. However, the corrective process can also be perverted by selective exposure to organizational communication or selective perception of it. Distortion is utilized to maintain a particular goal structuring and to minimize anxiety, which would be aroused by perceived dissonance. Consequently, the potentially corrective mechanisms are impaired.

**Group Identification.** Previously, the influence of the group upon individual subgoal formation was examined. This again can be both functional and dysfunctional. If the group subgoals are formally derived and recognized goals of the organization, then group identification is a very powerful goal orienting mechanism. However, the group identification may be just as strong when the subgoals of the group are divergent from the prescribed subgoals. Since the individual is dependent upon the group for the vast majority of this information, then the subgoals he tends to generate and reinforce will be the group's subgoals rather than the subgoals of the organization. In fact, any communication received from formal sources in the organization will be interpreted in view of his present environment, which is the group. Consequently, the member's work group can influence him to adopt dysfunctional subgoals.

Not only is the group within the organization important to orientation toward organizational goals, but also the groups with which the individual identifies outside the organization. These groups may
command a higher degree of his loyalty than the organization. For example, a scientist in an organization may identify with his particular professional group and desire professional excellence above the practical results needed by the organization. Thus, he will displace the goals of the organization, which require him to produce practical results, for those of professional groups, which emphasize professional and theoretical excellence.

The Group Versus Organizational Goal Fulfillment.

Some of the variables that tend to contribute to group deviation from organizational goals are now considered.

Functional Autonomy. Factoring organizational goals into subgoals for particular activity centers helps to make them meaningful for individuals and groups, but at the same time provides the mechanism whereby a group can develop a strong intracohesion and a feeling of autonomy from the organization and other groups within it. Gouldner asserts that organization "... cannot be said to be oriented toward a goal except merely in a metaphorical sense unless it is assumed that its parts possess a much lower degree of functional autonomy than can, in fact, be observed."  


78 Ibid., p. 420.
Communication Shortage. One major problem in maintaining coorientation of group and organizational goals is adequate communication in the system. The more the communication between related groups "... the more similar they become in their norms and values; the less communication or interaction between them the more tendency there is for conflict to arise. ..." Thus, a dilemma is created between breaking organizational goals down into meaningful subgoals, organizational activity into activity centers, and providing the necessary information to maintain a goal oriented effort. The division or structuring of the activity creates a hierarchy which may adversely affect the flow of communication to the varied groups or activity centers in the organization.

Previously, the tendency of communication networks to develop within the group itself was discussed. The failure of the formal organization network to tie into the group network can partially account for the communication shortage which results in dysfunctional subgoal formation. "The efficiency of a large formal organization is sizeably enhanced when its communication is tied into the informal network of groups within the organization so that the network can be used to support the organization's goals."  

79Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 331.  80Ibid., p. 370.
Identification. Just as individuals can identify with outside groups, so can groups in the organization identify with external groups. For example, a group belonging to a labor union tends to identify with the union and its goals rather than the goals of the organization. The result is commitment to the labor organization's goals rather than to those of the organization in which it works. Other examples of group identification outside of the organizational environment could be cited but the results are the same. Identification with groups outside the organization is dysfunctional to the extent the out-group objectives diverge from organizational goals.

In summary, what are the goals of an organization? Organization goals are likely to be some compromise between the formally stated goals and the individual and group goals. The creation of a goal system creates a set of expectations for the groups and individuals. Yet, because of the intervening variables discussed, complete orientation toward organizational goals is unlikely. The extent to which actual goals of the organization deviate from stated goals is determined by the divergence between actual subgoals. The group subgoals are the most significant variable in determining the goals of an organization. Through control of formal communication networks

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and information which flows through these networks; and, also, by control over sanction and reward systems, the organization is assured of at least a minimum degree of goal orientation on the part of the organizational unit.

II. COORDINATED BEHAVIOR

Although goals provide the *raison d'etre* of formal organization, a system of coordinated behavior is the essence of it. Coordinated behavior is an essential feature of organization; without it collective attainment is impossible. Coordination is chosen for discussion because of the intimate relationship between it and the communication variable. "Communicative behavior relates, underlies and makes possible collective and corporate behavior. Without it no social group could exist; human society would be impossible." In this section, selected aspects of coordinated behavior in formal organizations are examined, utilizing the communication frame of reference. Arranged in the order in which they are considered, the topics are: (1) framework for coordination, (2) import of structured stimulus situation, and, finally, (3) intervening variables.

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83 Coordination is a matter of degree along the continuum from no coordination to complete coordination.

84 Mapheus Brewster Smith, "Communicative Behavior,"
Framework for Coordination

This analysis begins by assuming the existence of predetermined goals which create the need for coordinated activity directed toward these ends. The need for coordinated behavior necessitates the development of a framework for coordination. The framework is generated by creation of a symbolic system of behavioral expectations. Communication is seen as the basic variable in this process. "Communications directed towards human beings are accompanied by the implicit expectation that, if the meaning is apprehended, responses within a given range of possibilities will be forthcoming." 85

The symbolic system of behavioral expectations is defined and created in at least two ways. First, role systems are generated and role activities defined, resulting in the creation of structure and a set of authority relationships. Second, policies, procedures, and methods are formulated as further guides to behavior. These factors are the subject of the following discussion.

Role Relationships

Creates Structure. In organization, it is necessary to generate a system of interrelated set of expectations. As discussed earlier, the total activity of the organization is factored into interrelated activities,

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85 Dorsey, op. cit., p. 313.
which are assigned to activity centers. The activities consist of a series of interrelated roles. Therefore, in essence, the process of organizing consists of generating a system of interrelated roles, where a role is a symbolically defined system of expectations.

Hence, role is a symbolic concept, and role boundaries are symbolic boundaries. When an employee comes into an organization, he is assigned a specific role. The role description not only defines the expected behavior of the individual in the organization, but the relative position of the role in the total system. Thus, the role description not only sets forth the boundaries of the expected behavior for the role performer, but, also, it establishes his expected relationship to the other role performers in the organization.

Therefore, through the process of generating the role prescriptions and their interrelatedness for every member or every position in the organization, the structure of the organization is defined.  

86 That is, work centers are created, and when the various activities are staffed, work groups are formed.


88 Ibid. 89 Berlo, op. cit., p. 136.

90 Of course, this implies the formal organization structure and not the structure that may exist at any one time because of the interactions of the role players and modification of the role structure as formulated by the organization.
According to this line of reasoning, the formal organization structure is simply an outgrowth of the symbolic boundaries drawn around the various functions or positions necessary for carrying out the activity for which the organization exists.

**Creates Authority Relationships.** Since the process of generating role systems within the organization establishes not only systems of behavioral expectations but also the relative relationship among roles, that is, their relative position, the system of authority relationships is an end product of the process. Because role positions partially prescribe the possibility for, and the nature of, interaction in the system, they establish the right of some role players, in the performance of their expected behavior, to coordinate, direct, and control the behavior of others. If the symbol system establishing the boundary relationships of the individual roles has been internalized and accepted by the various role players, then the relative rights and positions of the different roles and the person performing them will be recognized and, presumedly, accepted. Therefore, the role system defines the authority system in the organization. In essence, the formalized system of authority is a system of specialized roles.

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91 Presthus, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

92 Qualification of these generalizations will be examined later in this discussion.
Consequently, the process of internalization of these symbolic systems of behavioral expectations is crucial to establishing and maintaining a coordinated system. An intensive, consciously formulated effort to internalize the predetermined role behavior—should accompany the induction of a new member into the organization. Therefore, a training program, to a large extent, would be an indoctrinal attempt directed toward internalizing the role description which defines expected behavior. An incoming organizational member experiences the need to institute communication to orient himself to his new environment and to become acquainted with the new role assumed.93

Studies indicate that primacy of exposure to communication does influence the tendency to internalize information, and, thus, for it to become a behavioral anchor. As a generalization, the information presented first will be more influential than the succeeding; also, the first exposure to the data is the most influential. Consequently, the personnel concerned with coordinating the organizational activity has a unique opportunity to provide the informational frame of reference for the entering member. A concerted effort at this time can minimize the perversion of the formal structure and authority

93 See Newcomb, op. cit., p. 392 - 402.

relationships as the member is integrated into a particular work 
group. Never again will the opportunity to influence his thinking be 
as great.

Policies, Procedures, and Methods

Once a preconceived set of objectives has been established, the 
measure of an organization's effectiveness is partially a function of 
how well each activity center is contributing toward these objectives. 
Uncoordinated subgoals may become ends rather than means to 
achieving the higher objectives. For coordination purposes, in order 
to insure a unified sense of direction, it is necessary to establish 
symbolic systems of boundaries in addition to the role boundaries. 
Establishing these broad boundaries, policies, assists persons and 
groups to perform their role functions in a unified manner by indicat-
ing the systematic effort desired, and, also, by providing a limited 
definition of the situation. Instead of an individual having to con-
sider all possible behavioral alternatives, he is limited to those with-
in the framework of the particular policy boundaries established. 
Thus, an important function of policies is to insure a similar defini-
tion of the situation by those role players to whom the policies apply, 
especially the ones in authority positions in the organization.

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95 Later in this discussion it is pointed out that after the member 
becomes established in a work group, this group will be the most 
important influence on his behavioral expectations.
For many role players, especially those in the lower levels of the structured hierarchy, policies are too broad to provide an effective behavioral stimulus. Consequently, coordination is further assured by breaking the policies down into more meaningful units, or into more narrow boundaries. These groupings of boundaries are called procedures and methods. They are more highly prescribed symbolic boundaries to guide expected behavior and to limit the alternatives of a particular role player. Thus, a meaningful definition and interpretation of the situation and, thus, a more unified system of action is enhanced.

Import of Structured Stimulus Situation

It is important to view organization as a structured symbolic system of expectations. It is a unique behavioral system made possible by the acceptance and internalization of a structured set of symbolic boundary relationships, which, in turn, guide behavior. These relationships are especially influential in guiding individual behavior because "... they are organized systems of expectation." They carry societal and group legitimation. "Their status and authority symbols function as patterns of manifest stimuli that

96 This is not to imply total acceptance but, at least, a partial acceptance on the part of the organizational member.

97 Presthus, op. cit., p. 53.
reinforce the human tendency to honor majority values." Thus, the structured stimulus situation in an organization creates a consciously articulated normative framework within which organizational behavior occurs.

In this section, the role of the structured stimulus situation in guiding perception and meaning and in providing for the development of programmed responses is examined.

Guides Perception and Meaning

An organization is being viewed as a structured system of behavioral expectations derived by internalization of symbol systems. For continued existence, a minimum degree of coordinated activity is required. Information, in the form of consciously derived sets of stimuli (messages), is a vital input into this system. It can be compared to blood in the human body, which functions to supply the necessities for the various organs, and, also, as an outlet for non-essentials. The vessel system provides the structured path to direct the flow of blood. The organizationally established networks guide the flow of stimuli needed to activate and guide the various acting units, who are ultimately responsible for interpreting these stimuli. 99

98 Ibid.
The generated structured set of relationships makes possible directing and adapting the informational stimuli to a particular acting unit. More importantly, because of the structured stimulus situation, the perception and evaluation of messages is significantly enhanced. Consequently, the probability of achieving communications is increased. Evaluation of the source, a basic cue to interpreting and assigning meaning to messages, is significantly facilitated by the structured situation in which the message is received. Likewise, the opportunity to bring the message into the environmental state of the receiver, enabling it to become an effective stimulus, is enhanced. Provision for feedback can make corrective metacommunication possible immediately, that is, a message which contains cues for interpreting a previous message. The destructive consequences of distortion can be minimized. Also, the possibility for flexibility in the nature of the process and media increases the probability of achieving communication. For example, the communication could be changed from a written memo originating from a manager directed to the group to interpersonal oral communication.

Behavior, resulting from a message, is closely related to the meaning assigned to it, which, in turn, is determined by the evaluative

processes through which the message stimuli is filtered. The structured stimulus situation of an organization significantly influences this interpretive process. First, the organization has influenced the receiver's frame of reference through the internalization of certain symbol systems. Secondly, it has partial control over the receiver's environment, which will influence both the interpretation and response to the message. Thirdly, the implicit sanctions for misinterpretation and the resultant behavior motivates the receiver to evaluate more carefully. A related consideration is the stimulus-response-reward concept of learning. The importance of the latter concept for present discussion is that the meaning and response, which will tend to lead to maximum reward or minimum sanctions, is most likely to be chosen.

The structured stimulus situation facilitates communication in still a fourth way. A repertory of symbols, which have a common

101 Presthus, op. cit., p. 55.


103 As discussed earlier, the potential consequences of miscommunication influence how carefully the evaluative process is carried out.

104 For a discussion of this concept, see Berlo, op. cit., pp. 92 - 102.
denotative meaning for the participants, is established. Because of persistent exposure to a particular set of symbols, individuals tend to have common experiential backgrounds with them, therefore assign similar meanings to the symbols.

The development of a familiar vocabulary, composed of both technical and non-technical terms, increases the efficiency of communications in organizations, and the more efficient the message, that is, the more information that can be built into them, the fewer required to be transmitted through the communication channels. Reduction in message frequency may increase the effectiveness of those transmitted because an individual has limited capacity for attending stimuli in his environment.

...when there is an abundant or superfluous input... the senses ignore... small differences. As the available input decreases and becomes sparse, the sensitivity to detect intensity and difference increases tremendously, until man obtains his maximum sensitivity under conditions of minimum stimulation. 107

105 Again, it must be pointed out here that because a set of symbols have the same denotative meaning for individuals, that is, dictionary definitions, they are not likely to have the same connotative meaning. Consequently, it is not intended here to ignore the connotative significance of symbols, only to emphasize the importance of having a set of symbols with similar denotative meanings.


107 Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., pp. 91 - 92.
Alleviating overexposure, by reducing the number of messages, increases the effectiveness of those sent; "... the reduction of the available stimuli increases the effectiveness of the stimuli that remain." Therefore, the increased efficiency of communication resulting from having an effective, familiar vocabulary definitely influences the coordination achieved. For example, experimental data has shown that lack of an adequate commonly understood technical vocabulary does affect performance and, thus, coordination. In essence, having a commonly understood set of technical terms is vital to achieving the level of communication necessary for a high degree of coordination.

Encourages the Development of Programmed Responses

One phenomenon, already discussed, is the tendency of individuals to group symbols and their related meanings and values into complex

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109 March and Simon, op. cit., p. 162.
111 In fact, this is one of the major handicaps to research in the area of organizational theory and the behavioral sciences in general. The lack of a common set of language symbols and technical terms is definitely a limiting factor in utilizing as effectively as possible the experimental and theoretical data from the various areas of behavioral sciences.
systems which can be evoked by a lead symbol stimulus. The nature of organization, as a symbolic system of expectation, is conducive to the tendency toward grouping of symbol systems. Not only is the milieu conducive to this tendency, but also in many cases it is actively encouraged as a device for coordinating and controlling organization behavior. This encouragement can be attributed to the routine nature of many of the task performances and the need for similar responses to similar environmental stimuli. Thus, in the structured milieu, an environmental stimulus "... may evoke immediately from the organization a highly complex and organized set of responses ... we call a performance program." The following discussion on the nature and development of performance programs emphasizes the importance of the structured stimulus situation to coordinated activity.

**Development and Importance of Performance Programs.**

Programmed responses are perceived to be a very important aspect of behavior in general and in organization behavior in particular.

"They account for a very large part of the behavior of all persons and for almost all the behavior of persons in relatively routine positions." It may be observed here that programmed responses are primarily

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communicative behavior phenomena. They require, first, the internalization of a particular cluster of symbols which serve as boundaries to the particular behavior and, second, the existence of a key program evoking symbol. The structured stimulus situation of organization is conducive to the existence of both of these conditions. "In the structured milieu of a big organization we can assume that both perception and conditioning are facilitated by the manifest and authoritative nature of the stimuli." 115

Programmed responses are an important type of organization behavior for several reasons. 116 First, they are time saving because they limit the time spent searching for alternatives. Curtailing the search activity can be beneficial since much of the required organization behavior is routine. The redundant search activity for alternative responses to the same stimulus situation is eliminated after an internalized set of desired responses has been established. 117

Second, control of the formal channels through which information is transmitted enables the organization to control the program evoking

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115 Presthus, op. cit., p. 55.

116 For a more detailed discussion of performance programs, see March and Simon, op. cit., pp. 140 - 150.

117 Although programmed responses in most cases are beneficial, there are circumstances where program responses could be detrimental. This possibility will be considered under the section on intervening variables.
stimuli. It also enables the differentiation of stimuli; thus the program evoking stimulus can be directed to the intended activity center of the role player with a reasonable degree of accuracy and a minimum degree of leakage. "The very definition of a 'structured field' is that stimuli are stable, obvious, and compelling, in the sense they define appropriate behavior." Likewise, "The more obvious and powerful (structured) the stimuli in a given interpersonal situation are, the more predictable and constant the response." Therefore, the capability of instituting a predetermined set of behavioral responses by planned directing of program evoking stimuli is an important coordinating mechanism.

Third, coordination of organizational behavior is partially dependent upon the capacity to predict the behavior of members. As March and Simon observe, the predictability of behavior is importantly related to a knowledge of various performance programs.

"Knowledge of the program of an organization permits one to predict, in considerable detail, the behavior of members of the organization."  

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118 This discussion is not intended to deny the importance of informal channels, filters, etc. but is intended to emphasize the coordinative potential of a highly bounded structured stimulus situation.

119 Presthus, op. cit., p. 62. 120 Ibid., p. 59.


122 March and Simon, op. cit., p. 143.
Consequently, the more conducive organizational activity is to becoming programmed, the more predictable and coordinated are the behavioral patterns in the organization.

Nature of Programs. To fully understand and utilize the coordinating potential of programmed responses, it is necessary to understand the nature of programs. First, they can be consciously formulated sets of expected behaviors which are capable of being elicited by particular stimuli. As such, they become habitual behaviors, which must be learned, and "... to produce learning in a receiver, we must break some existing habit patterns and establish new ones." Then the consciously formulated programs must be derived and taught to those role players from whom the predetermined responses to directed stimuli are expected.

Second, an important kind of program is the one which has been developed from past experience and internalized, but never has been reduced to procedural statements. "Most programs are stored in the minds of the employees who carry them out, or in the minds of their superiors, subordinates, or associates." Then, one must study the organizational activity to discover and define this particular type of

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123 Berlo, op. cit., p. 83.

124 For a discussion of the learning process and principles involved in internalizing habitual responses, see Ibid., pp. 84 - 99.

125 March and Simon, op. cit., p. 142.
performance program. A trained analyst can discern these through observing organizational behavior in response to repetitive stimuli and by interviewing the various members involved in any one repetitive response.

Finally, as mentioned previously, programmed responses tend to arise in particular types of situations. Those organizational activities which involve substantial repetitive responses to particular stimuli tend to become programmed, in contrast to the activities requiring unique responses to the same stimuli and those consistently confronted with unique stimuli. 126

In summary, it has been inferred here that a substantial amount of organizational behavior is programmed or habitual behavior. As such, it is relatively easier to predict and, consequently, more readily coordinated by use of the communication variable.

**Intervening Variables**

In the preceding analysis, coordinated behavior is considered the essence of organization. The discussion has dealt primarily with an ideal system, and many of the intervening variables which limit the degree of coordination achieved were ignored. Coordination is a matter of degree, and numerous intervening variables prevent perfect coordination in organization. Several of these dysfunctional factors are considered in the following discussion.

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126 Ibid., p. 143.
Individual Deviations from Formalized Behavioral Expectations.

When an individual becomes a member of an organization, he is informed of his expected role in its activity. The description includes information about his expected organizational behavior and its relationship to that of the other members. The role description is communicated, usually, both orally and in written form. Thus, the first possibility arises for discrepancy between the organizationally prescribed role and the role perceived by the individual. The role description is a message like any other message with exactly the same possibilities for distortion and misinterpretation. While the role description has an intended meaning, the only true meaning it has for the member is the one which he assigns.

In the following discussion, four variables which influence the divergence from organizationally prescribed roles are considered. They are: one's frame of reference, perceptual distortion, the source of the communication describing the role behavior, and dysfunctional internalized performance programs.

Lack of a common frame of reference. The entering member brings a particular frame of reference into the organization. The meanings that he assigns to the messages defining his expected behavior are directly related to this frame of reference. In fact, the role description can only be interpreted in reference to his past experience with the particular symbols utilized. Thus, while terms may be used with one intended meaning by the source, the member (decoder) might
have had a different set of experiences with the particular symbols in
the message, and he may assign an entirely different meaning to
them. Thus, the assigned meaning or understanding of the role to
be assumed differs from the intended one. Rather than intentional
distortion, there may be misinterpretation of the messages conveying
the role description.

As a matter of fact, a person brings into the organization a set
of expectations which constitute his preconception of what the role or
the new job should involve. Consequently, his interpretation of
the official role description is likely to be prejudiced by his environ-
mentally derived expectations. These expectations develop during
the process of communicating and interacting with the various mem-
bers and segments of his particular milieu.

Then, two aspects of the individual's frame of reference may
account for his deviant behavior. First, his orientation to symbols
may diverge from those of the persons who originate the role descrip-
tion. Second, environmentally derived expectations can interfere
with his interpretative processes, thus, lead to misunderstanding.


128 Frank J. Jasciński, "The Dynamics of Organizational
Behavior," Personnel, XXXVI (March, 1959), 62.
Perceptual Distortion. Another factor which may influence the divergence between the organizationally prescribed and actually perceived role is the capacity for perceptual distortion. "The substantial literature on perception and cognition makes it quite clear that the human organism does not simply hear or see or touch 'what is there'; on the contrary it perceives (within the limits of the stimulus situation) what it wants to perceive." In the discussion on perception in Chapter II, it is pointed out that an individual has the capacity to adjust his perceptions to fit his own particular needs, values, emotions, past experience, etc. Therefore, while the symbols themselves may not create any problems, the person's individual needs may motivate perceptual distortion of the message. The end result is that the individual, either consciously, or unconsciously, perceives his role to be different from the organizationally prescribed one. Hence, perception is intimately related to organizational behavior. "Our perception of the situation defines our behavioral limits in the sense that its speed and accuracy determine the appropriateness of the role we choose."

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129 Riley and Riley, op. cit., p. 545.
130 Supra, pp. 39 - 44. 131 Presthus, op. cit., p. 54.
Although it may be possible to generate a symbolic system of behavioral expectations which would result in a prescribed set of highly bounded behaviors, these roles must be filled by individuals who will adjust them according to their perceptions and needs. Essentially, performance is made consistent with cognition. In effect, every role generated throughout the organization must be filled by an individual. So, theoretically, a potentially highly coordinated behavioral system might have been designed. Yet, after the roles in the system have been assigned to individuals, the actual result may be a somewhat less than highly coordinated system of activity.

Source of Role Description. Another very important variable which influences the discrepancy between actual and intended performance is the role description source. The internalization of the particular symbolic boundaries for the organizationally prescribed behavior of the particular role requires an extended period of time. Consequently, when the individual is assigned to a role located in a particular activity center (work group), he has probably not completely internalized the particular set of symbolic descriptions related to the role. According to the theory of cognitive consistency, the behavioral uncertainty will produce dissonance within the cognitive mechanism of the individual. Likewise, the dissonance creates the need and

desire to communicate with the individuals in the work group in an effort to determine the exact nature of what behavior is expected. Thus, the members of the work group become an important source of information for the new member. Then, "From the perspective of a given individual, his own group tends to become the organization." Therefore, instead of the organizationally prescribed set of expectations, those communicated from the new member's associates in his work group tend to become internalized.

The possible dysfunctional consequences to coordination are obvious. For one thing, the new member's peers' view of the role may diverge significantly from what the role actually should involve. Secondly, the final perception of the role now becomes the new member's perception of the perceptions of the individuals with whom he is interacting. Consequently, the possibility of distortion is increased substantially. Finally, the internalization of the expectations communicated from the group impairs the effectiveness of future communication to the member. Information will be perceived, evaluated, and assigned meaning within a frame of reference substantially influenced by the group.

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133 Presthus, _op. cit._, p. 67.

134 Other group factors could be employed to explain the conflict between the assumed and prescribed role. For example, as discussed above, the identification of the new member with the work group which in turn may have identifications in loyalties in conflict with organizational objectives or the good of the organization could lead to this conflict.
Programmed Responses. One final factor which may adversely affect the coordination of the individual's effort with that of organization is internalized performance programs. Although these programs can produce very positive results, they can have negative effects. If the internalized performance program does not lead to a coordinated effort on the part of the individual, then it is definitely pathological to the organization's performance. For example, a particular role may call for a unique problem-solving behavior involving a search among alternatives and evaluations of these alternatives. Yet, the individual may respond to the stimuli with programmed behavior, failing to realize the uniqueness of events. The member responds to dissimilar problem solving situations as though they were the same. Essentially, the result is the identification of unique events. Under these circumstances, the communicative behavior emerging from this identification conflicts with the good of the organization, thus impairing the coordinated effort.

In summary, the first major cause of the discrepancy between the planned and actual degree of coordination is the deviation that occurs between the organizationally prescribed role and the one

135 Blau and Scott, op. cit., pp. 242 - 244.

136 For a discussion of the nature of identification of events, see Supra, pp. 50 - 56.
actually performed when the individual is assigned to it. Every role in the system must be filled by an individual who is ultimately responsible for interpreting the role performance desired.

**Group Deviations From Formalized Behavioral Expectations.**

Coordinating the various work group efforts in the organization is highly significant to organizational performance. Some of the inter-group coordination problems which are, either directly or indirectly, related to the communication variable are considered.

**Inadequate Intergroup Communication.** The tendency of subgroups to develop subgoals in conflict with organizational goals has been discussed previously. This tendency can be accelerated by the lack of adequate communication between the various subgroups in the organization. Sykes and Bates report on a study made of the breakdown in coordination and the resulting conflict in the organization. Their analysis concluded, in part, that the problems were a result of,

"... a latent situation of group conflict: a failure in informal communication between different levels of management permitted this to become active conflict." 138 Thus, this and other studies indicate inadequate intergroup communication in the organization deters coordinated activity.

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Functional Independence. For coordinated activity, there is a need for perceived functional interdependence among subgroups in the organization. However, many times there is a tendency for the subunits to strive to become autonomous. Many social and cultural structures serve to perpetuate functional autonomy of subunits in organizations.

In the cultural structure, for example, norms of privacy, of privileged communications, of confidentiality of information; norms which call for hoarding technical knowledge and guarding of office secrets, norms which deny to 'outsiders' the right and competence to judge technical performance—all commonly serve to reinforce the functional autonomy of organizational parts. Of course, the greater the perceived autonomy of a subunit, the more reluctant it is to communicate, especially on an informal level, with the other units in the organization. An important reason for the perceived autonomy is the variation in dependence of subgroups upon each other. The dependence differential would include the variation in perceived contribution to the over-all success of the enterprise.

Just as interpersonal communication is need-related, intergroup communication is also. A group which perceives itself to have a high degree of autonomy and importance in achieving organizational objectives may be reluctant to communicate with a group perceived to be

140 Ibid., p. 422. 141 Ibid., p. 419.
of less importance. Yet, the autonomous group may be the source of vital information for others, which it is reluctant to share. Reciprocity of withholding information develops, and the effect upon coordination is obvious.

Rivalry and Competition. In an organization, there is always the possibility of the development of strong rivalries and an intense sense of competition. Although competition might motivate particular individuals and groups, it can hinder the organization's coordinated effort. For example, Mintz, in an experiment, introduced the element of competition into a task performance requiring the co-operative effort of two people for proper execution. Before the element of competition was introduced, the task was performed effectively and co-operatively. When the variable was injected, co-operation and, consequently, effectiveness declined. An experiment performed by Deutsch also indicated that, in performance, co-operative groups may be superior to competitive ones.

Hence, in the case of strong rivalries between subgroups, one group may withhold needed information from the other and the

142 Ibid.


coordinated effort of enterprise is affected. The over-all level of organizational achievement rather than the contribution of one subgroup in the organization is the basic consideration for coordination. To have a coordinated effort, there must be an ample exchange of information among the interdependent subunits of the system.

Identification. Finally, a basic determinant of whether a group is willing to turn inward and coordinate efforts through intergroup communication is the extent to which the group identifies with the organization as opposed to other external social systems. Although the problem of external identification occurs throughout organizations, it is especially prevalent in research groups. The impact of latent social roles brought into the organization, when reinforced within the group situation, can have a significant impact upon the organization as a whole. 145

Communication Problems.

Communication is absolutely essential to coordination. As Barnard observed, "... a common purpose must be commonly known and to be known must in some way be communicated." 146 He

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further perceives comminication as "... an important part in any organization and ... the preeminent problems of many." The following discussion is concerned with the third major intervening variable, that is, communication problems that adversely affect coordination of organizational behavior and activity.148

**Technical Language Versus Communication.** In many complex organizations there is a tendency toward specialization among the subunits of the system. Not only do specialized techniques, subunit goals, and group identifications develop, but also a group language. The attempts of a subunit to communicate, utilizing its vernacular, with other subunits in the organization may result in a high degree of miscommunication. Thus, while the group may not wilfully withhold information from the others in the system, communication among the specialized units is impaired to a significant degree because the technical language is unfamiliar.149

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147 Ibid.

148 While the discussion of individual and group deviation from the prescribed roles primarily considered communication problems, this section more explicitly considers some of the problems implied by the previous discussion and other problems not touched in the previous discussion.

149 The tendency toward development of specialized languages is becoming more prominent due to the increased emphasis on research and development in organizations, and also because of the development of organizations which specialize in research.
A marked degree of difficulty arises when two research groups attempt to communicate with unfamiliar terms, or when terms which have different meanings for the different groups are utilized. A basic requirement for effective communication is the existence of a set of commonly understood symbols. Thus, at times, a conflict develops between the need for coordinated activity and the need for technical expertise. 150

A classic example of a problem arising in an organization, which can be diagnosed partially as a communication problem, is the conflict between line and staff. It is suggested here that a fundamental, but not exclusive, cause of the line-staff conflict is the breakdown in communication which develops between the more technical staff and the operating line officials. 151 The communication problems, which may develop because of difference in technical vocabulary, are complicated by differing experiential backgrounds, personality conflicts, etc., and, more importantly, by the tendency for the differences to be exaggerated because of the lack of communication between the groups. 152

150 Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 242 - 247.

151 The increasing dependence of organizations upon technology will result in sweeping changes in organizational level thinking. And, also, demand an increasing understanding of the problems and especially the communication problems within the organization.

Structure Versus Communication. There is a conflict between the generation of the hierarchy necessary for coordinated activity, and the flow of communication necessary to achieve the coordinated activity; "... hierarchial organization serves important functions for achieving coordination ... by restricting the free flow of communication." Yet, by establishing a system which enables and requires restricting the flow of information, the basis is established for communication filters. This structure may, and often does, result in restriction of unnecessary information but also, in a biased message, that is, one which has been filtered through several frames of reference before reaching the final destinations. For example, Argyris reporting on a field study made by himself, observed that supervisors in an industrial setting tend to filter the information communicated to their superiors. They tend to minimize problems, emphasize successes, and generally transmit complimentary information from their own point of view and uncomplimentary information related to other supervisors, whenever possible.


In reporting about a study made of an employment agency, Blau also noted the tendency toward the filtering process. He observed that operating directives were adjusted, redefined, and amplified as they were communicated from higher to lower levels of the hierarchy. These and other studies indicate that the filtering process affects communications flowing either downward or upward through the hierarchy in an organization. In summary, both field and laboratory experiments have indicated that the hierarchial structuring of an organization does create obstacles to the flow of information.

Social status related to social structuring creates a second coordination dilemma. Studies have shown that social differentiation can hamper the exchange of information among group members. Observations of the actual work environment have indicated the same thing. In reporting on one research study, the researchers made the following observation, "... because of


158 Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 131.


social differences between them, there was little informal communication between the general manager and lower levels of staff." They report that the communication barrier resulted in breakdown in coordination. Thus, the restrictive effect on the flow of information due to differences in social status, partially created and perpetuated by hierachial structuring of organizations, is hypothesized to be potentially dysfunctional to coordination. Again, this conflict is a dilemma because the hierachial structuring is necessary to achieve coordination.

One final dilemma between communication, coordination, and structure is mentioned here. The restriction of communication, necessary for coordination and structure, may adversely affect the groups problem-solving capacity, especially when the major objective of the group is to seek possible alternative, unique solutions to problems. It has been shown that, while the development of status in groups enables them to be more successful in achieving consensus about case problems, the hierachial differentiation impedes the free flow of communication. Hence, the tendency to establish a

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161 Sykes and Bates, op. cit., p. 321. 162 Ibid.
163 Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 125.
hierarchy which contributes to group consensus and thus, to
coordinated effort, at the same time, impedes problem-solving.

In peer groups, moreover, the free flow of
communication that contributes to problem-solving also
creates an informal differentiation of status as some
members earn the respect and deference of others,
and this differentiation, once established, creates
obstacles to communication. This dilemma appears
to be inherent in the conflicting requirements of
coordination and problem-solving.165

The free exchange of information in problem-solving groups has
been found to be helpful to the problem-solving process. For example,
Peltz reports that for optimum research performance, the situation
should be such that the members of the research group are able to
consult with colleagues who have differing points of view and at the
same time with colleagues who have the same point of view.166 The
result of this study is consistent with the present analysis. Com-
munication with disagreeing colleagues can serve as an error-
correcting mechanism, and, at the same time, the support of agreeing
colleagues prevents the situation from becoming too threatening for
the individual.167

165 Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 244.
166 Donald C. Peltz, "Some Social Factors Related to Performance
in a Research Organization," Administrative Science Quarterly, I
(1956), 310 - 325.
167 This statement is based upon the analysis of correction through
feedback made possible through communication, also upon the
hypothesis that communications are instituted upon the perception of
dissonance of orientation.
In essence, an inevitable conflict exists between structure needed for coordinations and the free exchange of communication needed for problem-solving.

**Connotative Meanings.** One final communication problem is related to the coordination model presented. Differentiated communications in the form of message stimuli were assigned a significant role for evoking a desired, predetermined behavioral response. However, this simple stimulus-response model over simplifies complicated processes. Specifically, it ignores the evocation of unanticipated cognitive meanings assigned to messages because of unforeseen, culturally and experientially instilled, cues contained in them. 168

Connotative meanings arise from individual's experiences with particular signs. It is possible for persons to agree on the same denotative meanings, yet to assign varying connotative meanings due to different cultural, environmental, or primary experiences with

168 Perhaps it would be beneficial to review what the term denotative meaning signifies. Berlo, *op. cit.*, p. 192, perceives the term to signify the following: "Denotative meaning is a kind of shorthand. We cannot afford to carry the physical world with us wherever we go. We cannot take the time to point to objects in the physical world every time we communicate; so we create words that we use to represent the objects. Denotative meaning consists of a relationship between a wordsign and an object. In fact, we define denotative meaning as a signobject relationship." In essence, denotative meaning is the group's consensus to what a particular sign is used to signify.
the object of the signification. The word fire, for example, illustrates this point. Widely divergent behavioral responses could be expected from a person who has survived a third degree burn and from one who has never experienced being burned.

Actually, connotative meaning or anamalous use of signs often leads to sign pathology. "The signs of an individual are, in general, healthy in so far as they are subject to correction and improvement; they become pathic in so far as they are anamalousy resistant to such correction and improvement." Thus, extreme connotative meanings assigned to various signs could be classified as sign pathology, or for the particular individual, these are pathologic signs.

The organizational membership has probably been drawn from many subcultures of society, bringing both differing denotative and connotative meanings into the organization. It is reasonable to assume that similar denotative meaning can be developed for sets of signs, and these meanings can be evoked upon the application of the sign stimuli. However, a message contains many unanticipated cues which may serve as dysfunctional connotative evoking stimuli. Because of the tendency for the unintended as well as the intended


170 Ibid., p. 199.
meaning to be evoked, any particular sign stimulus cannot automatically be assumed to evoke a particular behavior.

Thus, the intervening variable of unanticipated evocation of responses definitely can interfere with the plan to achieve coordination through internalization of programmed stimuli. Therefore, the highly-coordinated, predictable behavior system, which is based upon internalization of performance programs and the stimulus-response mechanism, is mediated by evocation of connotative meaning.

III. THE DECISION PROCESS

The decision process has received considerable attention from organizational analysts and is used as the key variable in some analyses. For example, Marschak used the decision process as an independent and basic variable to the survival of organization. Because it is a characteristic and highly important form of organizational behavior and because there is an intimate relationship between communication and decision making, the decision process is included in the present analysis.

A decision is used to designate the choice of a behavior or a course of action from among those which are mutually exclusive alternatives. Included among the alternatives is the one to maintain the status quo, that is, to refrain from choosing. The frame of reference for the discussion is a viable, formal organization. Thus, a goal oriented coordinated system is assumed to already exist. Initially, only the decision process, which takes place within the formally provided system of authority, is considered. In order of their presentation, the following topics are discussed: selected aspects of the relationship between communication and the decision process, communication and the decision maker, and, finally, variables which intervene to limit the formally constituted decision making process.

**Communication and the Decision Process**

Communication is viewed as a basic variable in the decision process. For example, Dorsey asserts "... decision may be viewed as a communication process or a series of interrelated communication events." Also, Ruesch views a decision "... as an input of information which, when combined with memory material, leads to an output which will alter the parameters of a given social situation."

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In summarizing a report on their observations of the decision process in action, Cyert, Simon and Trow made the following observation. "The information-transmitting function is crucial to organizational decision-making..." 174

The role of the communication variable in the decision process is the focus of the succeeding discussion. The topics considered are the following: occasion for decision, the basis of decision, and, finally, the legitimation of decision.

**Occasion for Decision**

Decisions are motivated by some type of communication;

"... decision making is initiated by stimuli, internal or external, to the individual, which channel his attention in definite directions." 175

Essentially, the occasion for decision arises anytime a stimulus is perceived as creating the need for choosing a course of action, that is, a set of behaviors. The communication or series of


communications, which create the need for decision, arise from sources external to the organization, from superiors, from subordinates, or from within the person himself.

The organization is in constant communication with its environment by individuals within the organization. Many of these communications are related to the distribution of the organization's output or resource acquisition. The need for decision, created by messages originated externally, may even involve the decision for membership maintenance in the group. For example, the communication could be an offer for another job, and that message would force the participant to decide to continue participation or to terminate and offer his resources to another group. Thus, the multifarious messages from the environment create the need for continuous decision making by the variously located decision makers in the organization.

Occasions for decisions are often created by the receipt of authoritative information, that is, communication from a superior. Authoritative communications not only create the perceived need for choice but also, carry explicitly or implicitly, an expectation of what the choice should be. In essence, these stimuli create the need for decision and often prescribe the desired choice. Barnard observed that these decisions become serious matters "... when the instructions seem morally wrong, harmful to the organization,
or impossible of execution." Therefore, in the case of serious conflict between the decision maker's choice and the authoritative communication, the decision to continue participation may also be a serious alternative.

The stimuli or series of stimuli which result in the evocation of the need for decision may also originate from one's subordinates. For example, a person on a lower level in organization may refer a decision upward because of a lack of perceived or actual authority to make it. Likewise, information provided by one's subordinates may simply indicate the need for decision. At any rate, many of the messages, which result in perception of the need for decision, originate from lower levels of the organization.

Finally, there are those messages which arise through the process of intracommunication and create an awareness within the individual of the need for decision. These messages are a result of one's thought processes, or possibly from one's impressions derived through interacting with his environment. The latter stimuli are not intentionally originated communications from the environment. For example, they could originate from the interaction of the decision maker with the nonhuman aspects of his milieu.

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176 Barnard, op. cit., p. 191.
In essence, the occasion for decision is always a result of the receipt of a message or a series of messages from one's environment. After the need for a decision has been aroused, the criteria of decision must be ascertained and defined. This is the subject of the following section.

**Basis for Decision**

Decisions are based upon: first, a definition of the situation; second, evaluation of the situation; and, finally, isolation of one element in the situation. Each of these factors are now considered.

**Definition of the Situation.** Assuming that the decision maker has received a message or series of messages which have aroused the need to make a decision, he is forced to define the nature of the decision situation. This definition involves two basic cognitive activities: first, an awareness of alternative courses of action; second, determining what the courses of action are. 178

**Awareness of the Availability of Alternative Courses of Action.** The basic step in the decision process is the arousal of the need for decision. The second step is the awareness that alternative courses of action are available. This awareness is the product of a

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177 Since the previous discussion has attempted to point out the process nature of all behavior, it is important to recognize that one stimulus cannot be isolated because this stimulus is combined with the memory of all previously received stimuli. Consequently, the phrase 'series of messages' is included.

communication event or a series of interrelated communication events. In the process of interacting with the environment, the decision maker becomes aware of possible alternatives. If this awareness is not achieved, the decision process is short circuited, since the search activity that should accompany a decision is foregone.

However, it must be emphasized that a portion of the organizational strategy is to eliminate the awareness of alternative courses of action for some decision makers in the organization. For example, in instituting performance programs, one strategy is to minimize the awareness of alternative choices. Likewise, an organization purposefully attempts to minimize the awareness of certain alternatives. For example, it attempts to minimize the member's awareness of choice between participating and not participating and in determining the quality of his participation. Nevertheless, awareness of possible courses of action is an essential basic element in the decision matrix.

**Ascertaining the Possible Alternative Courses of Action.** Once the decision maker becomes aware that there are alternative courses of action, he must then define what they are. The process of communication by which this awareness is evoked may also result in the evocation of specific alternative behaviors. Yet, in many cases, especially in higher levels of the organizational hierarchy where decision boundaries are less defined, a search program for alternatives
is needed. The search program is essentially an information gathering process in which the decision maker avails himself of all available communication related to the particular decision.

The search program is limited by several factors. First, the time element may limit it. Second, the cost to the organization limits the search activity. The communication and effort necessary to derive data for identifying alternatives may be costly, thus limited in scope. Of course, the perceived importance of the decision influences the scope of the search. Fourth, the inability of any single decision maker or group of decision makers to process and utilize an infinitely large number of behavior-guiding stimuli is a determinate factor in the search activity. Finally, the impact of certain alternatives may limit one's perception of other alternatives, as well as his desire to continue the search.

Evaluation of the Situation. Once the behavioral alternatives have been defined, it becomes necessary to determine the relative merits of each. The framework within which this evaluation takes place is the particular set of organizational goals perceived as being relevant to the decision maker. Again, the communication variable is very

179This is not to deny the importance of the individual's goals. However, at the present time, we are considering the decision making process in a normative rather than actual sense. This limiting factor to decision making is considered later.
important to this process. The amount and quality of information in
the system related to these alternatives is a determinate factor in
the relative evaluation of them.

The classification of techniques labeled 'quantitative decision
making' enters the decision process via the process of evaluation of
alternatives. Actually, quantitative decision making is a misnomer
because the quantitative data derived is not a decision; it is only one
aspect of the total information that will be used to evaluate relative
alternatives. However, it is an important aspect in many decision
making situations. Nevertheless, all information that is derived
relative to the various alternatives is fed into the individual's frame of
reference, and it is here that one alternative is perceived to be the best.

Essentially, the process of evaluating alternatives consists of
determining the possible consequences related to each alternative, and
then the probability that these consequences will occur. One group of
writers perceives this process as being the essence of decision
making.\(^{180}\) They assert that decisions are based primarily upon,

"... (1) the probability with which certain immediate outcomes may
result if a given course of action is taken; and (2) the value or worth

\(^{180}\) Nicholas M. Smith, Jr., et. al., "The Theory of Value and the
Science of Decision: A Summary," Some Theories of Organization,
Albert Harold Rubenstei and Chadwich J. Haberstroh, editors.
of these outcomes." If this process were followed, the decision maker could arrive at an expected value for each alternative. The expected value would be the value of each possible consequence for each alternative weighed by the probability that it will occur. The limitation of this procedure is the difficulty encountered in quantifying some important decision criteria. Thus, the expected values derived must be weighed by the non-quantifiable aspects of the alternatives.

The extent to which alternatives are evaluated is a function of the time available, the cost, the capacity of the individual, the relative importance of the decision, and the facilities available for deriving the information. Since the decision maker has culminated the process of evaluation of alternatives, he must select one of these mutually exclusive alternatives.

Choice of an Alternative. The information related to the decision is derived from communication with various elements in the organization, and it is then evaluated with the frame of reference of the decision maker. Therefore, the evaluative process is influenced by his previous communication within the organization. Consequently, the choice is based upon premises strongly influenced and partially provided by the organization itself. Nevertheless, the final choice is made by the decision maker.

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181 Ibid., p. 431. 182 But not collectively exhaustive events.
The process of choice raises the question of rationality in decision making. For several reasons, it is impossible to always reach the decision which maximizes organizational well-being. First, the individual is limited in his capacity to perceive alternatives. Consequently, only a few of a possible large number of alternatives can be processed by his psychological mechanisms. Second, the alternatives must be evaluated as to their possible outcomes. Again, it is impossible to evaluate all possible outcomes of any alternative; thus, this variable would intervene to reduce rationality. Finally, decisions are forward looking. They effect future operations. Consequently, much of the information needed for decision making is unavailable; therefore, rationality is limited because of unobtainable information.

Nevertheless, the rationality achieved by an organization has the potential of exceeding the rationality of any single individual. The structuring of the organizational environment providing a simplified definition of the situation, selective exposure to stimuli, limiting the choices of alternative behavior, etc., positively influence the rational processes. In fact, the total concept of organization involves the implicit assumption of intended rational behavior. However, objective rationality is an ideal which can never be achieved, if it is defined as optimum achievement as opposed to optimum achievement relative to

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the information available in the system. Nevertheless, to understand organizational behavior, the intentionally rational processes should not be ignored as some analysts have tended to do.  

Legitimation of Decision.

As previously discussed, the process of achieving a coordinated system of behavior involves creating interrelated sets of roles and, thus, structure and authority potential. As one writer observes, "... social order always involves people who communicate as superiors, inferiors, and equals, and pass from one position to another." The creation of the superior-subordinate relationship is highly significant as far as decision making in an organization is concerned. For example, once the decision maker in the structured organization has chosen between possible courses of action for those members of the organization who are his subordinates, as far as this individual is concerned, a decision has been reached. However, from the standpoint of the organization as a whole, the decision has not been made until each individual subordinate accepts it to guide his actions. As Barnard expressed, "Authority is a character of a communication (order) in a formal organization by virtue of which it is accepted by a

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184 Ibid.


186 This observation is based upon the acceptance theory of authority.
contributor or 'member' of the organization as governing the action he contributes; that is, as governing or determining what he does or is not to do so far as the organization is concerned." 187 Thus, while a decision maker may occupy a position of authority, "The real source of authority . . . lies in the acceptance of its exercise by those who are subject to it." 188 Consequently, formal authority, or that authority which is created by the generation of a coordinated set of interrelated roles as a means of achieving predetermined ends, " . . . is, in effect, nominal authority. It becomes real only when it is accepted." 189

The communication of the superior's decision to the subordinate is considered an authoritative communication if it illicits from the perceiver the desired course of action, or if it results in the generation of the desired communications. Thus, the legitimation of decision making rests upon the receiver's accepting the decision-related message as an authoritative communication and utilizing it as a behavioral premise. From an organizational point of view, therefore, the decision making process is operative only when the members are willing for authoritative communication to supplant personal behavioral premises.

187 Barnard, op. cit., p. 163.
188 Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massarik, op. cit., p. 271.
189 Ibid.
The concept, power, has been implicitly included in the previous discussion. Power is easier to describe and identify than to define. For example, using a two-person model consisting of Mr. X and Mr. Y in a social situation, Mr. X is said to have power over Mr. Y if, in the process of communicating, Mr. X can influence Mr. Y to pursue or not to pursue a predetermined course of action that he would not follow without the influence of Mr. X. As Duncan observes, "Power always involves persuasion . . . ," and superiors gain and retain their power by persuading inferiors they have the right to rule them." This persuasion can be either overt or covert pressure applied to gain compliance. Presthus distinguishes between authority and power in the following way. Authority is " . . . a condition that is subject to being reinforced by sanctions, while influence usually secured compliance without reference to sanctions." The important distinction for this analysis is that the creation of structured hierarchy creates positions of authority. The authority is legitimated only when there is equal power to implement the authority granted. This power may arise from the authority position itself, institutionalized value systems, possession of meaningful sanctions,

190 Mapheus Brewster Smith, "Communicative Behavior," Psychological Review, LIII (September, 1946), 298 - 300.
capacity to influence without reference to sanction, etc. In essence, authority, in the absence of power to legitimate it, is meaningless.

Communication and the Decision Maker.

The vital relationship between the decision maker in the organization and the communication variable now is explored. First, the nature of the communication variable in creating decision making potential within an organization is considered. Second, the communicative behavior of the decision maker in the decision process is examined.

Decision Making Potential

The following three aspects of the vital relationship between the communication variable and the decision making potential of the organizational member are considered: (1) source of vital information, (2) vital link in the network, and (3) authority over symbols.

Source of Vital Information. An organization member, who is in a position to serve as a source of information which is considered vital to the remainder of the organization, is in a position to exert a great deal of influence and power. As expressed by March and Simon, "... a great deal of discretion and influence is exercised by those

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195 This would include the personal qualities of the individual, among other things.

persons who are in direct contact with some part of 'reality' that is of concern to the organization." Because a person in such a position originates information which becomes premises for other decision makers, he prejudices their decisions even though he originates informative as opposed to authoritative communication. In essence, the communication from such an individual assumes the role of authoritative communication whether or not he is in an authoritative position in the organization. March and Simon label this situation uncertainty absorption and define it as occurring "... when inferences are drawn from a body of evidence and the inferences, instead of the evidence itself, are then communicated." Thus, in the process of establishing roles in an organization, implicit decision making potential is created for those members who are placed in roles which enable them to become information sources for other members.

Vital Link in Communication Network. The organizational roles of certain members make them keylinks in the formal communication network. Studies by Bavelas and Barrett and Leavitt indicate that the role players occupying vital linking positions in the group

197March and Simon, op. cit., p. 165. 198Ibid. 199Ibid., p. 166.

200Alex Bavelas and Dermot Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," Personnel, XXVII (1951), 368 ff.

communication network tend to emerge as leaders. Thus, decision making potential is created in an organization by establishing a particular flow of communication, that is, the formal network. These key, network-linking positions should be the formally constituted positions of authority in the hierarchy. As Merton observed, "Effective organization requires that those in authority be located at junctures in the network of communication . . . ."

The following corollary may be derived from the foregoing analysis. The greater the convergence of the formal communication network at a particular position, the greater the decision making potential created at that position. As Merton observed, this would be an important juncture in the organizational network. However, every juncture is not of equal importance. Because of differentiation of communication flowing through certain branches of the network, some junctures -- for example, those in the upper level of the hierarchy -- are more complex and relatively more important than the others.

The assertion here is that the individual occupying a key linking position in the communication network is in a position with a pronounced degree of decision making potential. The actual decision making

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202 Because of informal channels, they may not be.

203 Merton, op. cit., p. 342.
propensity of the individual performing this role is determined by a number of factors, including his personal characteristics.

**Authority over Organizational Communication.** Individuals who are given authority over the information transmitted through the formally established network are granted extensive decision making potential. Control of the symbol system in an organization creates a power potential with extensive ramifications. The use of symbols to stimulate others in predetermined directions and the potential of internalizing certain symbol systems through learning have been discussed. The ability to choose, subject to certain limitations, the information to which an organizational member is exposed is a powerful tool in influencing his behavior. For example, in the decision process, the member who has chosen the information transmitted through the networks substantially influences the decision premises of those exposed to the communication.

In summary, an important degree of decision making potential is created by a position which makes the individual who staffs it, a source of information vital to the remainder of the organization, a key link in

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204 *Supra*, pp. 69 - 70.

205 Those imposed by the informal channels of communication and those outside the organization.

the communication network of the organization, and a controller of information transmitted through the formal communication network.

**Communicative Behavior.**

If it is appropriate to describe the decision process as a communication process, then the behavior of the decision maker should be, at least partially, capable of being described as communicative behavior. In the succeeding discussion, the individual's decision making behavior is examined within the communicative framework developed previously in this paper.

**During the Process of Decision.** The decision making process is initiated, within the decision maker, upon the receipt of informational stimuli, usually from a source external to the organism. His evaluation of the informational stimuli creates awareness of the need to alter some aspect of his environment. This awareness arouses dissonance within an individual, because he now perceives the need to alter his environment, and as of that point in space-time he has not done so. The perceived dissonance will motivate the initiation of communication to seek information from appropriate sources. The discovery of the various alternative choices the individual faces is the net result of the communication effort. This discovery, in itself, produces dissonance because there is likely to be two choices which are almost equally attractive. Finally, one of the alternatives is chosen and communicated to the source(s) who will implement it. These sources, in turn, may institute further communications in regard to the particular
choice. All those cognitive elements related to the choice made are now consonant with the action taken. As related to the choice made, dissonance has been reduced.

After Reaching the Decision. Not only is the process of reaching decisions anxiety producing, the action taken related to the decision is dissonant with the recognition of the merits of the choices eliminated. As Festinger has observed, dissonance is "... an inevitable consequence of the decision." Therefore, the ex post behavior of the decision maker can be explained as an effort to reduce postdecision dissonance.

Of course, the amount of effort to reduce postdecision dissonance is related to the magnitude of the dissonance. The magnitude is a function of the importance of the decision and the relative attractiveness of alternatives not chosen. After reviewing a number of studies related to postdecision dissonance reduction, Festinger made the following summary observations:

This chapter has reviewed a number of studies which in one way or another deal with events that occur after decision has been made. The data shows (1) Following a decision, there is active seeking out of information which produces cognition consonant with action taken. (2) Following a decision, there is an increase in confidence in the decision or a decrease in discrepancy in the attractiveness between the alternatives involved in the choice, or both. Each reflect successful reduction of dissonance.

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207 Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, p. 35.
208 Ibid., p. 47. 209 Ibid. 210 Ibid., pp. 48 - 83. 211 Ibid., p. 83.
In essence, the first of the preceding observations simply states that the decision maker, through selective exposure to and perception of information, attempts to convince himself that the proper decision has been made. This process produces the result reported in observation two. Through the mechanisms of selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention, the individual's conviction, that the proper choice has been made, is reinforced. These two observations account for the difficulty one experiences in reversing a decision once it has been made. The reinforcement that takes place immediately following the decision, to enable the decision maker to reduce anxiety, makes it very difficult for him to reverse the decision. In essence, he loses the degree of objectivity achieved before the decision.

Intervening Variables.

A number of factors intervene to limit the intentionally rational decision making process in an organization. Several of these variables are next considered.

Inadequate Information.

A decision can be only as good as the premises upon which it is based. These premises are usually derived from information communicated to the point of decision by the members of the organization. A substantial amount of the information needed to make decisions,

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Ibid.
which, when accepted, guide the behavior of one's subordinates, primarily comes from these subordinates. The tendency to filter messages before communicating them to superiors has already been discussed. Therefore, many times the superior is forced to make decisions with faulty information. Thus, a major problem to the higher level manager in an organization "... is that much of the information relative to the decision at this level originates at lower level, and may not ever reach the high level unless the executive is extraordinarily alert."  

**Inadequate Decision-Related Communication.** Most of the pre-decision and postdecision behavior of the decision maker is communicative. Obtaining adequate information related to the alternative choices, involves sending and receiving messages. Also, after one alternative is chosen it must be communicated to those who are affected by it. Therefore, communication is required to ascertain the progress of the activity related to the decision.

As a key variable in the decision process, communication becomes the most crucial aspect of it. Many problems in decision making arise because the decision is poorly communicated to members who must ratify and implement it. The problem is partially related to the person who originates the decision. Specifically, he may not be aware of the vital importance of adequately planned communicative strategy relative

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to the decision, or he may not have the communicative competence to formulate a meaningful message. The problem also may be related to those individuals serving in the communication centers through which the authoritative message must pass. Their communicative incompetence may prove to be critical in transmitting the message throughout the organization.

From an organizational point of view, the decision is the receiver's interpretation of the authoritative message communicating it. The member's behavior will be based upon the meaning he assigns to the message. Thus, a significant amount of emphasis should be placed upon the process of communicating decisions. No matter how thorough and scientific the choice of the decision maker, originating the authoritative communication, unless that message can be and is adequately understood by those members who must ratify and implement it, the end result will not meet the standard of intended rational behavior.

Thus, the decision process is only as efficient and rational as its weakest link. Simon made the following observation about the problem being considered here:

No step in the administrative process is more generally ignored, or more poorly performed, than the task of communicating decisions. All too often, plans are 'ordered' into effect without any consideration of the manner in which they can be brought to influence the behavior of the individual member of the group.215

Breakdowns in the authoritative communication process may result from forgetting "... that the behavior of individuals is the tool with which organization achieves its purpose." 216

Ignoring Informal Communication Networks

Failure to recognize and utilize the informal communication networks, which develop in all organizations, can noticeably hamper the flow of authoritative communication to points of execution. The overdependence upon the formally constituted network may result in communication voids, distorted messages, and general information shortages. 217 The information needed to reach decisions, obtained from informal networks, may be more accurate, in certain situations, than information derived from organizational channels. Likewise, at times, bypassing formal networks and using informal communication may be more effective in getting the message understood.

Recognition and use of informal nets is beneficial in several ways. First, the informal authoritative roles can be located. Those individuals in key positions in informal networks are likely to have authority bestowed by their associates. This authority, while not legitimated by the organization, is real, and those who possess it can influence organization behavior. These informal relationships may be

216 Ibid.
a limitation to organizational decision making, but if they are recognized and utilized in the decision process, the limitation is minimized. Second, the formal network can be tied into the informal networks, to provide a more efficient communication system. The informal channels of communication are more pervasive than the organizational channels and, consequently, provide a greater opportunity for reaching certain individuals in the organization. Third, the informal channels are more flexible, and this very flexibility provides an opportunity for managers who recognize the existence of these channels to utilize them.

In summary, any or all of the intervening variables discussed may intervene to limit the effectiveness of decision processes in organization.

IV. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the communicative frame of reference has been utilized in an effort to understand selected features of organization behavior. The three major topics selected for consideration were: goal formation and value orientation, coordinated behavior, and decision making.

Organization goals define the organization's reason for existence. There is an intimate relationship between the goals and value system

Ibid.
of the organization and society. Organization goals must be legitimized by the society of which it is a subsystem, and just as a society is highly dynamic, so must be the goals of organization. To understand organization goals, it is necessary to understand the process of subgoal formation and reinforcement in an organization. Subgoal formation can partially be understood as developing from: the effort to gain cognitive consistency, the differentiation of communications to various subunits in the organization, and finally, the social pressure exerted in interaction between the member and the group. Reinforcement of goals is achieved through selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention of stimuli, as well as through the group's control of the content of communication within the group.

Several factors intervene to cause the often observed deviation of formally prescribed and actually pursued organization goals. The goals the individual pursues in the organization may deviate from those prescribed for several reasons. First, his cultural background provides his communicative frame of reference for understanding organization goals. Second, the personal needs of an individual may lead to distortion of his perception of these goals. Finally, the person's identification with a work group which may have deviant subgoals will cause him to displace organization goals.

Groups also deviate from the formally prescribed organization goals. The tendency to develop a sense of functional autonomy
interferes with pursuit of the ultimate ends. The lack of adequate goal-oriented communication in the system to provide the informational basis for subgoal formation may be dysfunctional. Finally, identifications outside the organization may result in goal displacement.

Coordinated behavior is the essence of organized activity. It is achieved through the generation of a symbolic system of behavioral expectations. The definition of the role system in the organization creates both structure and authority relationships. Policies, procedures, and methods are symbolic boundaries created to further assure behavioral uniformity. The creation of a structured stimulus situation is highly important because it provides a basic guide to perception and meaning for the organizational member; furthermore, it encourages the development of performance programs, and these programs can facilitate coordinated effort.

Because of deviations from formalized behavioral expectations and communication problems, the degree of coordination achieved by the organization is often less than desired. Individual deviation can often be attributed to lack of a common frame of reference, perceptual distortion, improper communication of expected role behavior, and dysfunctional programmed responses. Group deviation, on the other hand, may arise from inadequate intergroup communication, development of a sense of functional independence, the existence of rivalry and competition among groups, and, the failure of the group to identify with the organization which constituted it.
A number of communication problems arise to prevent a fully coordinated effort. Some of these problems are: the technical language utilized by different groups makes intergroup communication difficult; the creation of structure necessary for coordination often impedes the flow of communication, which is also necessary for coordination; and, finally, the unintended cues contained in messages to organizational members evoke unanticipated connotative meanings to these messages.

Decision making is one of the most important and typical kinds of organizational behavior. Communication is a basic variable in the decision process. The need for decision is created by the receipt of some type of communication. Discovering and evaluating alternatives involves communication between the decision maker and others in his environment. Furthermore, there is an important relationship between communication and the individual who will be instituting choices guiding the behavior of other members of the organization. Usually, he will be a member who is the source of valuable information for the remainder of the organization, a vital link in the communication network, or a controller of information communicated through the network. Likewise, both the predecision and postdecision behavior of the decision maker is essentially communicative behavior. Much of his predecision and postdecision behavior involves communication -- that is, selective communication -- to reduce dissonance and achieve consonance in his cognitions.
Several communication-related factors intervene to limit the intentionally rational decision process in an organization. First, information for decision primarily comes up through the hierarchy and is often highly filtered. Second, due to communicative incompetence, or failure to recognize and emphasize the importance of communicating the decision to the subordinates, the transmission of the authoritative communication is impeded. Finally, a failure to recognize and utilize the informal communication networks limits the receipt of both informative and authoritative communication.
CHAPTER IV

UTILIZING COMMUNICATION IN CONTROLLING ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR

Since control of organization behavior is based upon understand­
ing this behavior, Chapters III and IV are closely related. From an organization point of view, controlled behavior is the conscious following of prescribed goals by the member in performing his formally prescribed roles and in reaching decisions. Thus, control of behavior within the organization involves maximizing the probability that the person's decision making and role performance is producing a coordinated goal-oriented effort. In essence, control is concerned with obtaining desired behavior.

There are many aspects of control; however, the primary focus of the present analysis is the role of the communication variable in obtaining desired behavior in structured organizations. The potential importance of communication in controlling social behavior is emphasized by Morris' observation:

To effect the signs of individuals is to bind them by the most powerful chain which men have devised or to place in their hands the most powerful of all instruments for individual liberation and social reconstruction. Social control of individuals through their sign process
is inevitable, and the possibilities for such control will become even greater as the knowledge of signs and the techniques of communication develop.\(^1\)

Essentially, communication functions to facilitate control of the member's behavior in two ways--through control of the situation and by influencing intentions.\(^2\) These two factors are considered in the three major parts of this chapter which are: interrelatedness between communication and control, communication systems and control, and finally, providing for controlled change.

I. INTERRELATEDNESS BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL

Man is both a social being and a biological organism. The cultural anthropologist and the social psychologist, especially the school of interpersonal psychology, hypothesize that man's behavior is primarily a product of socialization and is developed through interaction with his environment.\(^3\) Communication is viewed as a basic variable in the process of socialization, and social behavior is perceived as essentially communicative behavior.\(^4\)

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2 Talcott Parsons, "On the Concept of Influence," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXVII (Spring, 1963), 42.


In the following discussion it is assumed that control is primarily exercised through the social processes and is gained short of physical force. In addition, communication is viewed as a basic variable in the social control process. As Wiener asserts, "Control, in other words, is nothing but sending of messages which effectively change the behavior of the recipient."\(^{5}\) The following aspects of this relationship are examined in the succeeding discussion: foundation for control, mechanism of control, and definition of the situation.

**Foundation for Control**

Social organizations gain and maintain their existence through control of behavior. Likewise, controlled behavior is based upon the existence of internalized language symbols and values.

**Internalized Language Symbols**

The necessary existence of an internalized set of symbols which have a common meaning or for which a common meaning can be derived is so basic and obvious that it is often ignored. However, try to imagine a goal-oriented social behavior without a language system. The culture which legitimizes the organization's existence is a sign process.\(^{5}\) . . . Culture is largely a sign configuration . . . mainly affected by the transmission of signs from the existing members of the society to the young, or to those who enter the society from other societies.\(^{6}\) Control of individuals in a social situation is


\(^{6}\)Morris, op. cit., p. 207.
made possible through the internalization of these signs. "It is by instilling in members of culture the designations, appraisals, and prescriptions characteristic of the culture that society gains its major control over the individual." \(^7\)

The very existence of a social system is completely dependent upon sign processes. "Human society in its most characteristic traits, like the developed human individual, is dependent in its nature and for its continued existence upon signs..." \(^8\) Communicative behavior is the very essence of social behavior. Consequently, the internalization of language symbols enabling effective communication is necessary for human beings to gain coorientation toward each other, other objects, and purposes. Sapir and Whorf hypothesize a person's language will, to an extent, determine what he thinks, sees, and the very methods that he uses in his thought processes. \(^9\) Therefore, the very existence of internalized symbol systems creates the possibility for significant social influence, thus, control.

**Internalized values**

In the process of communicating with other people in his environment, man not only learns symbols, but he also learns the values the

\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)Ibid.

members of his culture associate with those symbols. These values, in turn, become basic behavioral premises guiding the social behavior of the individual. They are manifest in social systems as cultural norms and institutionalized values. Thus, the behavior of a non-deviant member in a society is based primarily upon two factors—the biological traits of the individual and the internalized cultural values and norms which are assigned to the symbols and derived from interaction and communication with the individual's environment. The latter determinant of behavior is the basic one to understanding control in formal organizations.

Symbols not only signify, but also contain the value structure for individuals. Consequently, values are symbolically defined, and individual behavior can be viewed as communicative or symbolic behavior. As such, the communication variable is basic to a society and the social systems in that society, as for example, formal organizations.

**Internalized role system**

The final basic foundation for control of social behavior is man's capability and tendency to learn clusters of symbols along with their

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10 Rose, op. cit., p. 5.


12 In the above analysis a society has been viewed as unitary whole, however, any society, there are many subsystems and subcultures. Consequently, it is not empirically sound to speak of the value systems of a society, rather it would be more correct to speak of the values of a particular social system or subculture in a society.
related values, and to evoke these symbols in a particular stimulus situation. These clusters of symbols are called role systems, and they become a highly significant aspect of social behavior in any society. An example of such a cluster of meanings and values, a role, is the symbol, father. Role behavior is particularly important because it is predictable and to some extent controllable.

Internalized roles are of utmost significance to organized behavior. Becoming a member of an organization involves internalization of symbol clusters which define the role behavior. In defining role behavior for the organization member, it must be remembered that his motivating values have been learned primarily in the particular subculture of his environment. Likewise, the meanings assigned to the role description are consistent with the member's particular value system. Organizational roles are likely to be assumed to the extent they can be viewed as satisfying culturally defined values for the member, assuming the basic biological needs are not at stake.

In summary, internalization of predetermined symbol systems, and prescription of their associated values is the foundation underlying nonviolent social control.

Mechanism of Control

Communication not only provides a basis for social control but is a major mechanism in the process. The aspects of this relation-

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13 Rose, op. cit., p. 10.

Selective Exposure

Selective exposure to stimuli is the fundamental means of gaining and maintaining social control. To the extent the communication to which one is exposed can be controlled, the symbol systems internalized and the values associated with them can be influenced significantly. For example, "Through its control over what can be said by school and print and film and stage, society attempts to secure for itself the ultimate control over the sign processes of the individual, and in this way to control its individual members through the signs which will operate in their behavior." The particular ramifications of these implications are far-reaching and quite profound. Even if particular behavioral prescriptions do not accompany the communication to which a person is exposed, "... the mere control over what information is made available to individuals will go a long way towards determining the nature of their own appraisals and prescriptions and, hence, their behavior." 

Not only is the selective exposure to communications utilized by the larger society in gaining and maintaining social control, but also by the various subsystems, including formal organizations. The internalization of a symbolic system of expected behavior in an

15 Morris, op. cit., p. 208.
16 Ibid.
organization, which enables the individual to achieve goal-oriented behavior, is based upon selective structuring of, and selective exposure to, messages. Simon must have recognized this relationship when he described an organization as a complex pattern of communication and other relations. He amplified this by saying, "This pattern provides to each member of the group much of the information, assumptions, goals, and attitudes that go into his decisions . . . ." 

An organization member's behavior will be based upon a particular set of symbolic expectations he internalizes. This, in turn, is significantly related to the information to which the individual has been exposed. The question has been raised; "Does man live for months or years in a particular position in an organization exposed to some streams of communication shielded from others without the most profound affect upon what he knows, believes, attends to, hopes, wishes, emphasizes, fears, and proposes?" The answer to this question is an emphatic "No!" Essentially, the internalized symbol systems derived from this selective exposure to particular information will provide his decision premises, thus, control his behavior.

Therefore, in the normative sense, the organization should be extremely conscious of the information to which a member is exposed.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. xv.
Emphasis should also be placed upon identifying and partially prescribing values for the internalized symbol system. No member in the organization should have to guess his expected role behavior nor the ends toward which this role behavior is directed. "Control over the perception of consequences is one of the critical types of influence . . . . "

Communication related to roles and objectives should be intensive, explicit, and frequent. Through selective exposure, the organization can state goals in such a way that they can be made meaningful to each member. In essence, differentiation of communication is a powerful means of controlling the behavior eventually pursued by the organizational member.

_Rewarding Communication_

Rewarding communication may be defined as that which reaffirms a member's decision-action-related behavior or recognizes exceptionally good organizational behavior. This could be just a slap on the back assuring the individual his good work is recognized, a formal message sent to the individual, a communique sent throughout the organization, or a news release to the various media. Rewarding communication is important in the control process for several reasons.

_Reinforces Desired Behavior._ The process of learning organizationally desired role behavior is a dynamic one. Rewards and

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21 Supra, pp. 94-95.
22 Provided the rewarding communication is deserved.
sanctions play an important part in learning and securing desired behavior. "A trial response is retained if the organism perceives the consequences to be rewarding. A trial response is discarded if the organism does not perceive the consequences to be rewarding." Subsequently, by supplying stimuli perceived as being rewarding to the member, internalization of desired responses is enhanced. This is a highly important process in teaching members desired roles, as well as in establishing performance programs in an organization. Likewise, it is an important means of keeping the performance programs and role descriptions dynamic. Through the application of rewards in response to particular stimuli, the individuals can be taught new responses to old stimuli or new responses to new stimuli.25

Not only are rewards vital to effective authoritative communication, but also the timing of the reward is highly important. A person needs to be able to relate the response to the reward. Consequently, the closer the identification between the response and the reward, the greater the probability that the response will be internalized and repeated upon the application of the same series of stimuli.

Relieves Post Decision Dissonance. The phenomenon of post decision anxiety has already been discussed.27 By supplying reward

24 Berlo, op. cit., p. 81.
25 Ibid., p. 77.
26 Ibid., p. 89.
27 Supra, pp. 166 - 167.
as soon as possible after action-decision-related behavior, the anxiety created by a decision and the resultant effort to reduce it can be minimized. Therefore, the negative effects of selective exposure to, and distortion of, postdecision stimuli can be reduced. If this self-reinforcement process can be minimized, greater flexibility can be achieved in the decision making. Events subsequent to the decision may indicate the need for reversing the decision, yet the reinforcement achieved through individual's efforts to relieve the postdecision dissonance can make the reversibility of prior decisions difficult.  

By providing rewarding communication the organization can relieve post-decision dissonance and, possibly at the same time, minimize the consequences of the anxiety reduction.

Creates Prestige. When the rewarding communication becomes common knowledge of the member's associates, to the remainder of the organization, or to the external community, it may increase the member's prestige in the various milieu.  

The increase in personal prestige may lead to an improvement of the individual's status in the relevant groups. Status is used to refer "... to the stimuli a man presents to other men (and to himself)."  

Stated otherwise, status refers "... to what men perceive about one of their fellows."  

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29 This will be true provided the particular rewarded decision or behavior is consistent with the objectives of the group or subgroups in the organization and/or community.


31 Ibid.
Thus, this socially rewarding recognition helps satisfy some of the basic social needs of the individual— that is, social recognition and social status. Therefore, it is highly significant in influencing and controlling personal behavior. In fact, Presthus hypothesizes, because of the changing nature of the American society the achievement of status and the symbols thereof is becoming more basic in satisfying the inner strivings of the individual. He asserts that the self-reliance of the frontier personality, the craftsman, and the relatively small entrepreneur has been displaced by the effort to gain status in the large organizations.  

The organization can benefit in another way by providing rewarding-status-creating communication to a deserving member. An influence potential is created within the group to guide it toward desired behavior. Research studies indicate that members initiate communication more frequently with the high-status, most competent group member.  

Blau reports in a study made of a federal agency that the most competent member of the group was consulted more often, and his advice was the most sought after advice by other group members. Thus, the rewarding communication notifies other group members about the behavior desired, and, at the same time, a mechanism is provided by which the desired behavior may be taught by the "prestigious" member.

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35 This assumes that the workers place a positive value upon expert
**Dissonance-Producing Communication**

Correction of deviations from expected behavior is dependent upon informative and authoritative information reaching the sources who can correct them. For the corrective process to begin, there must be some means of detecting the deviations. After detection, messages related to the divergence must be sent to the person in authority over the function. This message stimuli arouses dissonance in the cognitive mechanism of the individual. The communicative-decision process which follows is essentially the same as described in Chapter III.

Thus, the basic mechanics of this aspect of the control process is the mechanism of correction through feedback. However, it is completely dependent upon the will of the members of the system, the acceptance of roles and goals as guides to behavior, systems of rewards and sanctions, etc. Consequently, any attempt to evaluate an open loop control system as a mechanical and automatic process overlooks, probably, the basic factors in the process—why and how human beings allow themselves to be controlled. The latter is the basic focus of the discussion of social control in this paper.

knowledge and competence, rather than a negative value. If a negative value is placed upon the achievement of this member, the opposite conclusions could be drawn.

36 For a discussion of the decision process, see Supra, pp. 165 - 167.

37 Supra, pp. 147 - 167.

38 See Supra, pp. 119 - 120, 124 - 127.
Nevertheless, the homeostatic process whereby an organization maintains itself as a coordinated system by the process of correction through feedback is highly important. The argument here is that this mechanism is a necessary but not sufficient condition for gaining and maintaining control. The homeostatic mechanism assumes a number of givens which in reality are not given but must be developed--that is, the existence of an internalized symbol system which facilitates establishing common objectives and role systems.

In summary, rewarding and dissonance producing communication utilized in conjunction with selective exposure are effective mechanisms of social control.

**Definition of The Situation**

An individual's definition of the situation, which is provided by his personal frame of reference, is the context in which all control related stimuli must make their impact. In the following discussion the dysfunctional effect of false definitions of the situation and the modification of one's definition are considered.

**The Self-Fulfilling Prophesy**

A theorem which originated in the United States with W. I. Thomas pervades sociological thinking and serves as a basis for the self-fulfilling prophesy is; "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." This theorem is highly consistent with

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39 For a prior discussion of these concepts see Supra, pp. 107 - 108.

40 Merton, op. cit., p. 421.
communicative theory; that is, people do not necessarily respond to the objective situation but to their particular definition of it or to the meaning that the situation has for them. Essentially, the self-fulfilling prophesy is "... a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the original false conception come true. The specious validity of the self-fulfilling prophesy perpetuates a reign of error." 41

Many examples of the self-fulfilling prophesy in action in society could be given. For example, the fate of a successful bank in a community could be the victim of a self-fulfilling prophesy. 42 An individual in the community may define the financial condition of a bank as being shaky. Acting according to this definition of the situation, he, along with his closest friends who have also accepted this situation and their closest friends, etc., go to withdraw their money from the bank. If this definition of the situation is widely accepted as real, then the altered behavior of these individuals will make it real. Thus a sound financial institution is ruined or placed in a precarious financial condition. According to the self-fulfilling prophesy, the individuals defined a situation as being real, and acting on this definition, their altered behavior made it real in consequence. As a matter of objective reality, the bank was completely liquid and sound. Now the individuals can cite the bank's failure as evidence that their definition of the situation was correct.

Another example of the self-fulfilling prophesy in action is the individual who has predetermined that he will fail an examination. As

41Ibid., p. 423.

42Ibid., p. 422 - 423.
a result of this definition of the situation, he spends more time worrying than studying or spends no time studying. He then takes the examination and fails it. His definition has become real in consequence.  

An example of the self-fulfilling prophesy at work in an organization could be the relationship between the success of a superior and a definition of the situation by the subordinates. For example, the superior's key subordinate may decide that the organizational unit can never be a success with this particular superior. Acting on the basis of his definition of the situation, he fails to support his superior, and, his actions undermine the superior's chances of success. Consequently, the organizational unit is not effective. The subordinate then may be overheard to say, "I told you we could not be successful under this man's leadership."

This brief discussion of the self-fulfilling prophesy should indicate the profound ramifications that this type thinking can have on control of organizational behavior. To have goal-directed behavior, which is controlled behavior in an organization, the vicious circle of the self-fulfilling prophesy must be spotted and eliminated. To break the vicious cycle, "The initial definition of the situation which has set the circle in motion, must be abandoned." 44 Actually, much of the control effort in an organization should be devoted to discovering such self-fulfilling prophesies and modifying definitions of situations upon which these are based. This effort is the subject of the following discussion.

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43 Ibid., p. 423.
44 Ibid., p. 424.
Modifying Definitions

The necessity of an effort to internalize an organizational frame of reference has been emphasized several times in the preceding discussion. Although the cultural norms and institutionalized values make possible the existence and functioning of an organization, they are not sufficient. A coordinated goal-directed effort requires individuals who define the group situation similarly. This consensus requires internalization of role and goal systems which should be communicated from a source least likely to be subject to distorted perception. It will involve a concerted effort on the part of the organization, beginning with the induction process of a new member and continuing ceaselessly until he retires or terminates.

While the person can form a distorted view of the situation even in the presence of corrective stimuli, it is much more difficult. For example, continuous exposure to information emphasizing the individual's contribution to the organization and vice versa, the organization's contribution to the individual in satisfying his individual and personal objectives, could counteract, for most members, the tendency to develop negative attitudes. For example, such prevalent attitudes as the idea that the organization is not concerned about the individual or group, and is not fulfilling needs or providing an opportunity to satisfy these needs, can be modified.

Sometimes in an organization an entire group may have a distorted definition of the situation. That is, they are capable of maintaining

\(^{45}\) For example, see Supra, pp. 102 - 108.

\(^{46}\) For example, the institutionalization of authority.
opinions and beliefs in the face of continual definite evidence to the contrary. When this occurs, the process of correction through feedback, which would be operative in a non pathologic group does not function properly. Each member's perception and definition of the situation reinforces the others. Consequently, there is a magnifying effect. Under such circumstances the organization is faced with a massive reeducation effort for the group, or with disbanding it.

In summary, communication has been pictured as being intimately related to control. An internalized language system provides the basis for control. Selective use of the communication variable is an important mechanism for controlling behavior and providing the definition of the situation which serves as the framework in which control is exercised.

II. THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND CONTROL

To be more exact, the above title should be communication systems because all basic systems are relevant in an organization, including the intrapersonal, interpersonal and multiperson systems. However, the multiperson system is basic to the present analysis. Nevertheless, the theoretical formulations developed for the interpersonal system are applicable to multiperson ones, because all communication between persons is essentially interpersonal communication.

47 Festinger, op. cit., p. 198.

48 An example of an entire society forming a distorted definition of the situation would be the German society under Hitler and the Italian society under Mussolini.
A multiperson system has several distinct characteristics. First, it often involves one source encoding messages to many receivers. Thus, messages primarily flow one way from the center to the periphery with specialized transmitters and receivers. Second, it involves the communication from the periphery to the center, that is, "many to one." This necessitates, "Progressive abstraction of messages . . . because of the limited capacity of the receiver." Finally, in multiperson systems, the opportunity for transmitting and receiving is unequally divided among the participants.

Communication systems and control are inextricably related. They are interacting variables. In the following discussion, the nature and importance of communication networks and utilization of these networks in the control process are considered.

**Importance of Communication Networks**

**Formal versus Informal Nets**

Simply defined, a communication network is the usual path that messages follow as they are transmitted throughout the organization. The entire communication system in the organization could be considered as a network with a series of branches; or, on the other hand,

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50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., p. 280.

it could be viewed as a series of interrelated, intertwined networks. In
the present analysis, the formally prescribed paths that communication
is to follow in organization are designated the formal communication net-
work. All other paths are considered informal networks. Therefore,
whether a network is organizationally prescribed or developed by mem-
ers through interaction, is the primary distinction made between for-
mal and informal networks.

The linking process is the basic function performed by the formal
network.\footnote{William G. Scott, Human Relations in Management: A Be-
havioral Science Approach (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc.,
1962), p. 143.} It can actually be visualized "... as a system of
decision centers, interconnected by communication channels."\footnote{Ibid., p. 184.} Thus,
the network supposedly links individuals and groups together in a pre-
determined pattern in the organization. Therefore, the formal network
provides the channel through which authoritative and informative
communications can flow from sources of authority, and vice versa.

While the formal networks are built around the authority positions,
informal communications systems are built around social relation-
ships. The formation of these informal nets is inevitable. "No matter
how elaborate a system of formal communications is set up in the
organization, this system will always be supplemented by informal
channels."\footnote{Simon, op. cit., p. 160.} Although informal networks are "... a vehicle for
achieving satisfaction of employees' personal objectives, "56 they are not necessarily detrimental to the organization. Sometimes they improve speed and accuracy of transmission, "57 mediate conflict between the individual and the formal organization, "58 and function to support and mediate the weaknesses in the formal network. "59

Thus, both the formal and informal networks are vital linking mechanisms and the means by which information necessary for control purposes is transmitted. "60

Limiting Factor To Growth of Organizations

Increasing the size of an organization increases the need for communication more than proportionately; ""... as organizations grow, the need for information increases at a disproportionate rate.""61 Haire believes the growth of an organization increases the burden of control and coordination, both of which rely upon the communication

56Scott, op. cit., p. 190.

57Ibid., p. 191.


60Henceforth in the discussion "network" will be used to signify the formal network and when the informal network in being spoken of, it will be identified as such.

61Scott, op. cit., p. 166.
variable. 62 He asserts the increasing complexity of the control function arises because, "As the organization grows, the force that seems likeliest to destroy it is a centrifugal force arising from the fact that the members or individuals tend to fly off on tangents towards their own goals." 63

The usual way of handling the increase in the bulk of communication needed in the network has been to expand the capacity, that is, to add more people. 64 For example, Haire reports in his study that while the line personnel doubled, the staff personnel increased by six. 65 The staff consists of clerks and others who are engaged largely in the communication functions of the organization—that is, discovering, disiminating, processing and assimilating information—all of which contribute to the increasingly difficult control and coordinating functions.

At some point in its growth, given the networks and communication system, diminishing returns will be reached by simply adding more people to the communication function. This point represents a limit to the growth of an organization. 66 Stated otherwise, "Communication channels in a network will be added or the capacity of existing channels increased to the point where the incremental cost of such additional capacity expansions is equal to the values of the incremental addition

63 Ibid., p. 302.
64 Scott, op. cit., p. 167.
65 Haire, op. cit., p. 298.
66 Scott, loc. cit.
to the bulk of information carried in the system. At this point, greater size can be economically achieved only through improving the information handling system in the organization, that is, improving the networks, the transmitting techniques, etc. This improvement necessarily involves technological progress, among other things.

**Directs Flow of Information**

The directed flow of information in the system is highly important. For example, the previous discussion has indicated that directed stimuli increases authority potential and power potential initiates the decision making process, etc. Consequently, the directed flow of communication is basic to the control process. For example, March and Simon perceive the control process as essentially the directed flow of information. "Information and stimuli move from sources to points of decision; instructions move from points of decision to points of action; information about results moves from points of action to points of decision and control."

The existence of the predetermined network makes possible the systematic and routine transmission of messages in all directions in organization, especially in the two most important ones, upward and downward. The lack of clear cut channels—that is; an effective network—delays the availability of adequate information in the system and consequently, prevents effective coordination and control. However,

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67 Ibid. 68 Supra, pp. 115 - 117, 161 - 164.
69 Supra, pp. 159 - 161, 163 - 164. 70 Supra, pp. 161 - 164.
71 March and Simon, op. cit., p. 176.
not all communication channels are deliberately planned. As a matter of fact, they, in part, develop out of usage. Nevertheless, once developed they are deliberately and consciously used to direct stimuli to desired receivers, which is completely essential to instituting the process of correction through feedback.

Designing and Utilizing Networks in the Control Process

Information in the system is the lifeblood of an organization. The networks provide the means by which this information is brought to its various organs. Several factors in designing and utilizing these vessels which can increase their effectiveness are: connecting them to informal networks, making them coincidental with formal authority systems, and assuring their adequacy for the organization's need. These factors are now considered in more detail.

Connected to Informal Nets

The development of informal networks in an organization is inevitable. If properly understood and utilized, these informal networks and the related groups constituting them can effectively advance the interest of the organization. For example, informal groups can be highly effective instruments for translating, interpreting, and supporting the larger goals and practices. The efficiency of a large formal organization is sizeably enhanced when its own chain of command or

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72 Ibid.
decision or communication is tied into the informal network of groups within the organization, so that the network can be used to support the organization's goals.\(^\text{74}\)

Informal nets are often more pervasive than the organizational nets and act with greater speed and more flexibility.\(^\text{75}\) It is important to recognize that informal nets have channels running throughout the organization which are involved in transmitting all kinds of messages. Often, because of lack of adequate information, messages transmitted may be rumor rather than fact. The organization has an opportunity to influence the information carried through these networks by supplying information to them, thus, limiting dysfunctional rumor transmission.

The following example is used to illustrate how information transmitted through the informal network can dysfunctionally affect organization behavior. The Apex Corporation, in anticipation of an increasing demand for its product, decided to establish another plant in a neighboring state. Only a few of the top executives in the company were apprised of this development. They were told the new location would give the company an opportunity to promote many people in the present plant to higher positions in the two locations. When the facility was completed, the company planned to inform the other employees and offer higher positions to a number of them. It was anticipated this would be a highly pleasant surprise for the members of their company. However, in the


interim, the news leaked out, and the grapevine in the organization received a distorted version of what was actually taking place. When it reached the individual members, the story was that the present facility would be closed and many of the men would lose their jobs. Restlessness developed, with some members actively seeking and finding other jobs, before the rumor was clarified with factual information. This example indicates what can happen when rumor rather than factual information is transmitted through the networks, and it also emphasizes that the grapevine, if not properly utilized, can be destructive.

For most effective results, studies have shown that the connection between the formal and informal networks should be through the opinion leader in the group, that is, the informal group leader. Berelson and Steiner reached the same conclusion after reviewing a number of studies. "Communication from a central body to a community works much better if conducted through the informally selected leaders of the 'basic social units' set up by the residents." Also, they observed, "The more communications are directed to the groups' opinion leaders rather than to the rank- and- file members, the more effective they are likely to be." These same conclusions should be applicable to the informal groups which develop in the organization. These studies

77 Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 371.
78 Ibid., p. 550.
indicate that management personnel should identify the group leaders and utilize them as a linking mechanism between the formal and informal networks.

**Coincidental With Formal Authority System**

Authority and power potential are created for roles which are vital links in the communication network. The individuals who are placed in these roles possess a significant amount of influence. Thus, it is very important that these key positions coincide with the formally prescribed authority relationships in the organization. If they do not, the person in the position of authority actually may have very little power, while a member who is not, theoretically, in as important authoritative position in reality may have more decision making power. By designing the communication network around the role structure, the individuals who need extensive access to information and who serve as encoder of authoritative communications have the greatest amount of access to the channel. This design minimizes undermining the authority positions and the possible dysfunctional effects thereof, and the organization is enabled to maintain control over its authority relationships.

**Adequate for Need**

As March and Simon observe, "Where the available means of communication are primitive--relative to the communication needs--so will be the system of coordination." Thus, the overall system should be designed around the particular organization's needs.

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79 Supra, pp. 115-117.
Nevertheless, in an open loop control system, adequate communication networks and information in them does not automatically and necessarily lead to controlled behavior, nor to correction through feedback. However, the probability of getting this result is substantially increased.

For control purposes, it is highly important to provide networks for feedback of information to points of decision and action. "If the network for feedback is appropriate, then the maintenance of responsibility will be sufficient for achievement of organizational goals." Although this statement may be a little optimistic, it does emphasize the necessity of designing networks with channels specially constructed for feedback of information.

Channels should be set up so as to minimize the filtering effect inherent in the upward flow of communication in the organization. It may be necessary to establish alternate channels so information may be derived from more than one source. Likewise, direct channels may be established to minimize the distorting and filtering effects which develop when messages flow through the chain of command. Group meetings

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82 While relevant information can be provided to individuals in organization, their utilization of this information is based upon a number of factors, many of which have already been discussed.

83 Supra, pp. 168-170.


85 Supra, p. 164-165.
are sometimes utilized to overcome the filtering inherent in communicating through the network. In this way, all members in the key linking positions in the network are brought together in a face to face interpersonal discussion group.

Precaution should be exercised in providing for networks and the flow of information in the organization. For example, in designing alternate channels, care must be exercised to prevent short circuiting the authority positions which may lead to undermining authority relationships. Furthermore, precaution is needed in providing adequate information to prevent communication overload and the resultant stimuli saturation. The inability of attending and responding to excessive stimuli has already been discussed. A breakdown in communication and control can develop from excessive information in the system.

In summary, the control of organization behavior can be enhanced significantly by the way communication networks are designed and utilized.

III. CONTROLLED CHANGE

Providing for controlled change is a highly important aspect of the total process of controlling organization behavior. The following

87 Ibid., p. 200.
88 Supra, pp. 123-124
89 While the present discussion of the complex and much studied problem of behavioral change is an abbreviated one the total concept is so vital to control that it is believed necessary to include it here.
aspects of controlled change are investigated in the succeeding discussion: the need, the approach, and finally, attitude change. 90

The Need

Throughout the discussion in this paper, an extraordinary amount of emphasis has been given to the dynamics of reality in general and, particularly, the dynamics of organization behavior. If behavior is dynamic, then why the emphasis upon providing for change in organization behavior? The two basic reasons are to insure that the change is in the right direction and at the desired rate.

Direction of Change

Change per se is not beneficial since it may either adversely or favorably affect the organization. The importance of control is to insure that the change is in a favorable direction. The desired behavioral change must be ascertained, and then the necessary provisions for the desired change must be implemented. The important consideration for the present discussion is that beneficial changes in organization behavior do not automatically occur, but are planned and controlled.

Rate of Change

An organization is operating in a dynamic competitive environment. Consequently, to survive and operate at a satisfactory level of effectiveness, it must be flexible and capable of reacting reasonably rapidly in its dynamic situation. Although change within an organization may be inevitable and may be occurring in the right direction, it may not

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necessarily be taking place rapidly enough. Thus, another dimension of the need for controlled change is the necessity for providing the capacity to change at a relatively rapid rate.

The need for rapid change introduces further complexity into the problem because, while people are continuously involved in the process of change, they tend to resist rapid changes. "The most characteristic individual and group reaction to change is called resistance to change." Thus, for the maintenance of a goal directed coordinated effort, it is necessary to control both the direction and rate of change of organization behavior.

The Approach

Providing for and controlling organizational change is more than manipulating organizational structure as the classical theorists once asserted. Controlled change must be implemented and realized through the individuals and groups in the organization. Thus, organizational change is the manifestation of what is taking place among the units which constitute it and, consequently, must be implemented through these individuals and groups.

Utilize Individual Frames of Reference

The process of controlled change must begin like any other communication process, that is, by empathizing with the individual whose behavior is to be changed. It is necessary to attempt to project oneself into the frame of reference of the individual in order to ascertain what

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meaning the change will have for him. His interpretation of the personal impact of the change is the important thing to the member.\footnote{Tannenbaum, Weschler, and Massarik, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 82.} Osgood and Tannenbaum emphasize the importance of the individual's frame of reference to his interpretations; "...changes in evaluation are always in the direction of increased congruity with the existing frame of reference."\footnote{Charles E. Osgood and Percy H. Tannenbaum, "Attitude and the Principle Congruity," \textit{The Process and Effects of Mass Communication}, Wilbur Schramm, editor. (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 253.} Essentially, all efforts to change individual behavior must begin by attempting to evaluate the individual's frame of reference, in order to ascertain how he may interpret the meaning of the change. Then the source of the change-related communication must attempt to work within this frame of reference to affect the desired direction and speed of reorientation.\footnote{Bennis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 145. \footnotemark[4] \footnotetext[4]{Bennis, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 145.} \footnotetext[5]{Ibid., p. 159} \footnotetext[6]{Berelson and Steiner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 354.}}

**Utilize the Group**

Any program designed to affect the behavior of the individual which does not involve the primary work group in which the behavior will be expressed is doomed to achieving minimum results.\footnote{Ibid., p. 159} Thus, "When change is desired, it is typically more effective to influence people as group members than to do so in an isolated, individual by individual, manner."\footnote{Berelson and Steiner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 354.} Many well designed and well meaning training programs do not succeed in achieving desired results because they fail to take into consideration the environment in which the new behavior must take place. The training program may have been given in a laboratory and
the individual sent back to a particular work group. The communicative framework developed in this paper can be used to predict the result of such training. When the individual returns to the group, he may influence its conduct, but the greater probability is that the group will influence his conduct more than vice versa.

Bennis commented upon the fadeout problem of laboratory training as follows: "At times the results are disturbing, for training and learning acquired during human relations training does not last after the participant's return to the company."\textsuperscript{97} In discussing research related to this problem, he further observed, "What remains clear is that T-group members ... had difficulty in transferring their learning into settings without T-group training."\textsuperscript{98} Therefore, because of the tremendous impact the group exerts upon individual behavior, controlled change must necessarily be implemented through it. Efforts to circumvent the group may produce some results, but the results achieved will be minimized.\textsuperscript{99}

### Attitude Change

Attitude change is a highly significant variable in providing for controlled change in organization behavior.\textsuperscript{100} Sociologists, social-psychologists, and communication theorists have devoted a significant

\textsuperscript{97}Bennis, op. cit., p. 159. \textsuperscript{98}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{99}This is not to say that an individual does not influence the group behavior. It simply implies that one individual in the group is influenced more by the group than he is likely to influence the group. I believe the problem is more prevalent when a member is taken from a group for training, then returns to the same group. This is true because the group already has established behavioral expectations for this individual.

\textsuperscript{100}This is especially true in organizations where control is gained and maintained short of physical force.
amount of work to the study of attitudes. However, the present analysis is a very selective view of the complex subject. The topics considered in the following discussion are: the definition and importance of attitude change, attitude change through communication, and, finally, role performance and attitude change.

**Definition and Importance**

The term "attitude" is a high order abstraction. No one has ever seen an attitude, since only overt behavior is observable. Consequently, attitudes are inferred on the basis of either verbal or nonverbal behavior. A review of the meaning assigned to the term by several analysts may help to understand it. Schramm defines the term as follows:

> By attitudes, we mean inferred states of readiness to react in an evaluative way, in support of or against a given stimulus situation. We say "inferred" states of readiness because there is no way to observe an attitude directly. Attitudes are one class of intervening variables, the existence of which we assume in order to explain how the human nervous system converts a given stimulus into a given response.

Gordon Allport defines an attitude as, "A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and

\[101 A \text{ considerable amount of the research on attitude change has been related to attitude change through mass communication.} \]


\[103 \text{ Wilbur Schramm (ed) The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana; Ill.: The University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 209.} \]
situations with which it is related. Finally, Berlo used the following descriptive definition of an attitude. "Given a man, Mr. A, and an object x, which might be another person, Mr. A himself, or any other object, we can say that Mr. A has an attitude towards x if Mr. A has some predisposition, some tendency, some desire to either approach or avoid x." The preceding definitions should provide an adequate view of how the term is utilized by various social scientists. The most important thing for the present analysis is the impact of attitudes upon behavior. Several of these implications are noted.

First, the existence of an attitude implies a "state of readiness" to respond to a particular stimulus. In fact, it is a predisposition to act in a particular way; "... if we know the nature of an attitude an individual holds towards a given object or situation, we can predict that the individual, stimulated by the object or situation and free to act, will act in the direction of the attitude." Thus, there is a direct relationship between attitudes and actions. Any attempt to control or to change actions must consider the important determinant of behavior in response to a particular stimulus, that is, attitudes.

A second important aspect of attitudes and their relationship to behavior is their influence upon the perceptual process. They may lead to the short circuiting of the perceptual process. That is, the predisposition to act or react in a predetermined manner to a

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105 Berlo, op. cit., p. 45.

106 Schramm, loc. cit.
particular stimulus precludes any objective evaluation of messages or stimulus situations. Predispositions lead to rigid patterns of behavior which are difficult to change through communication. The predisposition to respond, although it is not necessarily completely rigid, makes difficult an objective evaluation of any stimulus situation.

A final and highly important aspect of attitudes is that they are learned. Consequently, they can be molded and altered; "... these states of readiness to react in an evaluative way to a given stimulus are learned and so, under appropriate conditions, presumably reinforced, generalized, and forgotten." This characteristic is basic to the total concept of providing for controlled change in organization behavior. The succeeding topic is devoted to a discussion of the relationship between communication and attitude change.

Attitude Change Through Communication.

Attitudes are learned and learning is essentially a communication process. However, a number of factors intervene to determine the effectiveness of communication in changing attitudes. In reviewing the literature on the effects of communication on attitudes, Sherif and Hovland note a variety of results:

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A few studies reported no substantial change following communication. A more frequent finding was shift in the distribution towards the position taken in the communication. A third and not infrequent finding following communication was a bimodal distribution, revealing shift towards the communication by some subjects and away from the communication by other subjects.110

A number of variables intervene to determine the effectiveness of communication in changing attitudes. Several of these variables are the subject of the following discussion.

Reception and Acceptance of Communication Advocating Change

Of course, getting the message to the individual whose attitude is to be changed is of basic importance. While the analysis usually begins by assuming the message is at the disposal of the intended receiver, it is not necessarily true, and the organization must be conscious of presenting the message to its members.

Once the individual receives the message, his acceptance or rejection of it becomes the basic factor. Studies indicate that if a message diverges too radically from an individual's present frame of reference, he is likely to reject it.111 The latter factor has been utilized to explain those shifts away from the direction of change advocated by the communication noted in some studies. 112

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111 Ibid., pp. 127 - 145. 112 Ibid., p. 147.
of the following factors discussed are related, either directly or indirectly to whether the individual accepts, rejects, or distorts change-related communication.

Source of Communication. Substantial research evidence indicates that attitude change is positively correlated with the receiver's evaluation of the source. In reporting on a study of the relationship between the effectiveness of communication and the credibility of the source, Hovland and Weiss observed, "Opinions were changed immediately after the communication in the direction advocated by the communicator to a significantly greater degree when the material was presented by a trustworthy source than when presented by an untrustworthy source." 

Hovland and Weiss also discovered a sleeper effect in this experiment. With the passing of time and the process of forgetting, the receiver tends to dissociate the source and the message. Therefore, in certain cases, after a few weeks no more attitude change is experienced from a trustworthy as opposed to an untrustworthy source of the message. However, when and if the individual is reminded of the source, the influence of the source reasserts itself.

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113 Schramm, op. cit., p. 212.

114 The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness in Ibid., p. 288.

115 Schramm, Ibid.
Thus, in an organization, the attempt to initiate attitude change cannot be dissociated from the member's past experience with the source of the change-advocating communication. Included in the receiver's evaluation would be the trustworthiness, the expertness, and the general meaning of the source.

**Divergence From Group Norms.** The influence of one's primary group upon his perception and acceptance of communication has been emphasized repeatedly in this dissertation. The same analysis applies to communications advocating attitude change. Thus, the extent to which the advocated change can be reconciled with group norms will be a basic factor in determining the receiver's inclination towards change. As Schramm observed, "... the target's reference groups must always be kept in mind when designing a message intended to change attitudes." 116 Likewise, if the advocated change is consistent with group norms this should be emphasized, and vice versa, if it is inconsistent with group norms. 117 In general, it may be concluded, "On matters involving group norms the more attached people are to the group, or the more active they are within it, the more their membership determines their response to communications." 118

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116 Ibid., p. 211. 117 Ibid. 118 Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 539.
**Manner of Presentation.** The manner in which the change-related communication is presented to the receiver is a factor in the amount of attitude change achieved. The following list of suggestions are abstracted from Schramm.

1. It is often advantageous to state the desired conclusion specifically and positively. Research indicates that letting the facts speak for themselves is not enough. More positive results are achieved when the receiver is presented with an interpretation.

2. While it is better sometimes to state only one side of an issue, in an organization it may be better to present the various aspects of it. Better initial results are usually achieved by just stating one side of an issue, but if there is reason to believe that the individuals will later receive competing arguments, evidence indicates it would probably be better to use a two-sided presentation. Less initial but more long range results will be achieved.

3. Repeat the message with variation. There is a saturation point beyond which redundancy is harmful. However, studies indicate that more examples make for more learning.

4. Make the message as simple as possible. This adaptation may involve using simplified labels and slogans where appropriate.

5. Utilize group participation whenever possible. If a person can be given a channel by which to express the desired attitude, then the attitude is more likely to stick. More importantly, if he can be put in a position of stating the arguments in his own words, then he will be more likely to find the appeals which are closest to him, and, in effect, convince himself.

6. Gain primacy of exposure, if possible, to the message. Evidence indicates that the initial exposure to information may be the most influential. Thus, an effort should be made to provide the member the initial communication related to the desired attitude change rather than letting this message be obtained from a secondary source.

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Perceived Consequences of Change. One final factor in determining the individual's inclination to move in the direction of suggested attitude change is his perceived consequences of the change. If the communication is perceived as beneficial, then it is likely to be accepted and becomes a behavioral premise. Consequently, in advocating attitude change, it is necessary to provide some cues as to the consequences of either altering or failing to alter behavior. Thus, the consequences could either be sanctions or rewards. At any rate, most change is motivated by perceived need-fulfilling consequences or, vice versa, the avoidance of sanctions.

In summary, the relationship between attitude change and communication is a complex one. Any simplifying generalizations are subject to a number of qualifications. The present discussion has not attempted to get much beyond the surface.

Role Performance and Attitude Change

It has been found that attitudes change more slowly than actual behavior. For example, Festinger and Carlsmith report that when an individual is induced to say or do something contrary to his present private opinions, he tends to change his opinions to make

them consistent with his statement or actions. Also, Bauer and Bauer assert, "A considerable body of common sense observation, clinical data and, more recently, experimental findings indicate that in many instances attitude change follows after behavioral change." These observations and reported findings are very consistent with the previous discussion of communicative behavior. An individual strives to achieve cognitive consistency, that is, to make his actions and expressions consistent with his attitudes and beliefs.

The ramifications of these observations and findings are very significant in instituting controlled change. If the organization can get a minimum degree of commitment in a desired direction, then attitudes are likely to follow. Therefore, by inducing the member to accept a change in his role performance, his attitudes will tend to change in order to be consistent with his actions. Thus, a concerted effort should be made to induce some type of commitment. However, this effort should involve as little coercion as possible because as Festinger and Carlsmith report, the greater the pressure to bring about the commitment, the less the tendency to change attitudes to make them consistent with actions.

125 Supra, pp. 59 - 65. 126 Festinger and Carlsmith, Ibid.
IV. SUMMARY

In this chapter, selected aspects of communication as a basic variable in controlling organization behavior have been considered. The three major topics discussed were interrelatedness of communication and control, communication system and control, and, finally, controlled change. In the present context, control is used to signify role and decision behavior which produces a goal-directed, coordinated effort.

Communication has been viewed as being closely related to the control process. Internalized language symbols, the values assigned to the symbols, and internalized role systems provide a basis for exercising social control. All of these factors are functions of the communication process.

The selective use of the communication variable also serves as a mechanism for exercising control. Selective exposure to stimuli is very influential in determining the language symbols, values, and roles internalized. Rewarding communication can be used to reinforce organizationally desired behavior, to relieve post decision dissonance which may increase flexibility in decision making, and, finally, to create prestige for the competent, most productive member in a group. Dissonance-producing communication is necessary
to institute the decision process and the communicative process of
correction through feedback by which deviations from desired behavior
are corrected.

The individual's personal frame of reference, which provides
his definition of the situation, is the context in which control of
individual behavior is exercised. The communication variable is a
basic determinant of one's definition of the situation. To maintain
controlled behavior, the organization must be sensitive to possible
false definitions of the situation, the basis of the self-fulfilling
prophesy. Essentially, the term self-fulfilling prophesy is used to
describe the condition whereby an individual defines a situation as
being true, and the consequences of his altered behavior may cause
the situation to become as he defined it. Modifying definitions is a
continuing feature of gaining and maintaining control of organizational
behavior.

Communication systems are also very important to the control
process. Formal organizational networks are the organizationally
provided channels through which informative and authoritative com-
munications can flow throughout the organization. The informal
networks, often called the grapevine, develop through interaction of
members. They serve as means of mediating conflict between the
organization and the members, as a means of providing social satis-
faction, and as supplements to the formal network. As organizations
grow, the need for information to control behavior increases more
than proportionately. Thus, an existing communication system may be overcome through technological innovation and general improvement of the communication system. Because they direct the flow of information in the organization, networks are influential in determining decision, authority, and power potential, etc.

Consequently, they should be consciously designed and utilized in the control process. They are more effective when connected to the informal networks, when they are coincidental with the formal system of authority, and, if they are adequate for the need of the particular organization.

Providing for controlled change is an important aspect of the total process of controlling organization behavior. A significant amount of emphasis has been placed upon the dynamic nature of behavior. If behavior is dynamic, the question may be raised as to why the need to provide for change of behavior. Controlled change insures that behavioral change is in the right direction and at a desired rate. The approach to initiating change should be through the individual's frame of reference and his primary group(s).

Attitude is an inferred property since only overt behavior can be observed and attitudes inferred from this behavior. Attitude is used to designate the readiness to act or react in a predisposed way to a particular stimulus situation. The communication variable is important in bringing about attitude change. Studies of the relationship of communication to attitude change indicate that the most usual
situation is for attitudes to change in the direction advocated by the communication. However, a number of studies report changes in directions opposite from those advocated by the communication, or no change at all. A number of factors have been found to influence the degree of change related to particular change-advocating communication. Some of these are, the reception and acceptance of the communication advocating change, the source of the communication, the extent to which the communication diverges from group norms, the manner in which the change-advocating message is presented, and, the perceived consequences of the change.

Finally, research studies indicate that attitude change often lags behind changes in behavior. Hence, any type of commitment obtained from a member may provide the motivation necessary for attitude change. The individual strives for cognitive consistency, and, thus, he will tend to change behavior to make it consistent with his attitudes or vice versa.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

This study has examined selected aspects of organization behavior utilizing the dynamic frame of reference provided by communication theory. Selected features of communication theory have been considered in order to provide the dynamic framework for investigating goal formation, coordinated behavior, the decision process, and, finally, control of organization behavior.

While empirical evidence derived from other studies is utilized, primary research was not conducted in conjunction with the study. A broad theoretical approach was utilized primarily because of the perceived fragmented state of development of organization theory in general, and of the communicative ramifications of organization behavior in particular.

II. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication theory is built around the process point of view. Events are seen as having an infinite number of characteristics and as being inseparable from all other events. Only a limited number of these infinite and continuously changing characteristics can be abstracted by the finite mind.
In order to talk about communications or communicate at all, the process oriented events must be arrested and a relationship established at a particular space-time interval. In this way, structure is inferred and assigned.

The model of the communication process presented is based upon a number of assumptions. These are: (1) processes can be arrested, (2) communication is purposeful, (3) communication is need related, (4) the elements of the communication process must be considered dyadically, and (5) the interpersonal model can be extended to the different levels of analysis, including the intrapersonal and the multiperson levels.

Six basic elements—a source, an encoder, a message, a channel, a decoder, and a receiver—were utilized to explain how stimuli are received, evaluated, encoded, and transmitted to another receiver.

Some important ramifications of the interpersonal model were discussed. The capacity to project oneself into the frame of reference of the individual with whom one is trying to communicate—that is, to empathize—is recognized. The process of building in cues for interpreting the message—that is, metacommunication—is viewed as being essential to achieving communication. Common experiences with symbols and realities behind these symbols are primary conditions for achieving communication. Perception, the process of receiving and evaluating stimuli, is crucial. Finally, meaning, the end product of perception, is considered to reside within the individual rather than in symbols.

A number of factors interfere with the process of interpersonal communication. Some of the more important of these are lack of a
common frame of reference, distortion of the perceptual process,
(that is, stereotyping, halo effect, projection, and identification) per-
sonality traits of the individual, physical limitations to the process,
and the lack of adequate feedback.

III. COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOR

Most of man's learned behavior can be broadly viewed as com-
municative behavior. Through communication with others, a person
learns value systems and societally sanctioned behavior. The same
symbols and their related values, which are pervasive in the social
system, tend to become the dominant symbols in the personality system.
They tend to be internalized in complex systems, called roles and
structure, rather than in isolated bits, and the entire cluster of mean-
ings and values can be triggered by a key symbol stimulus—for example,
the symbol stimulus, mother.

Several aspects of internalized symbol systems and their related
values have significant behavioral implications. First, an individual
can be, and is, stimulated through symbols, just as he is through the
impingement of physical stimuli. Second, a person can use symbols to
stimulate others in predetermined directions. Third, internalized
symbol and value systems facilitate prediction of one's behavior in
particular stimulus situations, and, the more cohesive the society, the
more predictable the behavior.

Communication provides the link between an individual and his
environment. Communication with others and the resultant feedback
helps to correct one's knowledge about "things" and "persons" in his
environment. Thus, it enables him to maintain a realistic view of himself, other people, and other realities in his milieu.

Finally, the individual's striving for cognitive consistency and coorientation with others is partially a function of the communication variable. Perceived dissonance between what one knows and believes and his behavior creates anxiety which motivates the effort to reduce the dissonance. The process of dissonance reduction may involve selective use of communication, including selective exposure to, and perception of, messages.

Likewise, perceived dissonance of orientations of persons toward each other or objects of their environment motivates them to institute communications to reduce dissonance and move toward consonance orientation. The need for coorientation determines the strength of the desire to institute communication and the results achieved from it.

IV. COMMUNICATION AND GOAL ORIENTATION

The goals pursued by an organization are likely to be some compromise between the formally prescribed goals and the interacting subgoals of the various groups and individuals in it. Thus, to understand the goals pursued, it is necessary to understand the process of subgoal formation and reinforcement.

For goals to serve as active stimuli, thus, as effective directional criteria, they must be related to the actual situation in which the acting unit is found. In order to achieve a meaningful definition of the situation, members must factor the highly abstract generalized goals into a series of interrelated subgoals.
The communication variable is highly important in determining subgoal formation and reinforcement. When an individual enters an organization, he becomes a member of a particular work group. Perceived dissonance of orientation between the member and the group motivates him to initiate a concerted flow of communications to learn the value and goal system of the group, and vice versa. Furthermore, perceived dissonance of goal orientation resulting from this communication creates anxiety which provides the motivation for achieving consonance of goal orientation.

Differentiation of communication is an extremely important factor in determining what goals will be formulated by individuals and groups. Differentiated information sent to the various subunits in the organization contributes significantly to differentiated subgoals. Thus, the organization, by controlling information flows, is provided an important tool for influencing goal orientation.

The group is one of the basic determinants of the subgoals of the individual member. It provides his informational frame of reference. Under the overt or covert pressure of continuous interaction, the person's capacity for selective exposure to, and perceptual distortion of, group information is limited. Because of this effective continuous exposure and continuous feedback, the tendency to accept group goals is enhanced.

The mechanisms used to reinforce existing subgoals are essentially the same ones involved in subgoal formation. The predisposition toward selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention of stimuli (messages, information, etc.) is the basic means of reinforcing a particular personality or goal structuring. The nature of
the content of "in group" communication is a second significant factor contributing to subgoal reinforcement. Patterned flows of communication tend to develop in groups, and group members tend to receive information only after it has been filtered through individuals with similar frames of reference as their own. Thus, a member can not only maintain a particular value structuring by filtering out undesirable, unfitting information, but also by receiving filtered information through the process of "in group" communication.

A number of factors intervene to cause the subgoals actually formed and pursued by individuals and groups to deviate from organizationally prescribed ones. Individual deviation is attributable to several factors. First, one's cultural background provides his communicative frame of reference for understanding goals. From an organizational point of view, some of the meanings and values brought into the organization may be dysfunctional, and evocation of them will prevent singular adherence to prescribed goals. Second, the communication related to prescribed subgoals may be distorted by the individual in order to fulfill personal needs. Finally, the person tends to identify with his work group. When the latter has deviant subgoals, the member tends to displace the prescribed with the deviant subgoals.

Groups also deviate from organizationally designated subgoals for a number of reasons. The lack of adequate goal-oriented communication in a system to provide the informational basis for subgoal formation and reinforcement may be the basic cause of a group's deviation. Manifestations of this may be seen in the tendency for the group to develop a sense of functional autonomy or to identify with social systems outside the organization.
V. COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATED BEHAVIOR

Coordinated behavior is the essence of organized activity and is basically dependent upon the communication variable. The generation of a symbolic system of behavioral expectations provides the framework for coordination. The latter is created by generation of role systems and establishment of policies, procedures, and methods. The role system creates both structure and authority relationships since it not only defines expected behavior but also the relative position of the role in the total system. In order to insure a unified effort by individuals and groups, it is necessary to establish other general and specific symbolic boundaries. Thus, policies, procedures, and methods are generated to further assure behavioral uniformity.

The creation of a structured stimulus situation serves as an important guide to perception and meaning for the organization member and encourages the development of programmed responses. Similar perception of, and meanings assigned to, messages provides the basis for coordinated effort. This similarity is enhanced because the organization has the opportunity to bring the message into, and partially control, the receiver's environment, influence his frame of reference, and create a repertory of common symbols.

The structured milieu of the organization is conducive to the development and activation of programmed responses. The development of performance programs is an important form of organization behavior because they limit unnecessary time spent searching for alternatives. By controlling communication networks and the information transmitted through them, the organization can direct and
partially control program evocating stimuli. The existence of identifiable performance programs increases the predictability of other members' behavior, and this predictability is essential to achieving coordinated effort.

Deviations from formalized behavioral expectations by individuals and groups and various communication problems limit coordination. In essence, every role in the organization must be filled by a person who ultimately interprets the described role behavior. This interpretation occurs within an existing frame of reference and is subject to the same communication disturbances as other messages. Furthermore, the role description may be communicated to the member from a source who has distorted it.

Groups also deviate from the formally prescribed coordinated effort. The tendency for a group to develop a sense of functional autonomy, either real or imagined, often limits the desire to communicate and cooperate with other groups, resulting in vital information being withheld. Competition and rivalry also inhibit coordination in the same way. Strong identification with outside groups contributes to greater allegiance being given to these elements than to the organization. External identification has been more prevalent in research units.

A number of communication problems intervene to limit coordination. Technical vocabularies may interfere with intergroup communication. Structure, which enables restriction of the flow of communications necessary for coordination, creates communication problems, and the latter often limits coordination. Structure creates filtering potential and social status and these limit the undistorted
flow of information. In addition, structure prevents the free flow of information needed for problem solving.

Programmed responses are an important aspect of a coordinated behavioral system. However, the internalization of performance programs and evocation of desired responses upon application of the program evoking stimulus, is mediated by the evocation of unanticipated connotative meanings. The unintended cues contained in messages to organization members limit coordination because of the unanticipated connotative meanings they evoke.

VI. COMMUNICATION AND THE DECISION PROCESS

Decision making is one of the most important and typical kinds of organization behavior, and communication is a basic variable in this process. The decision process is set into motion by the receipt of a message or series of messages indicating a need for decision. Communication also provides the definition of the decision situation by serving as a mechanism through which the individual becomes aware of various alternative courses of action and identifies them through communicating with his environment. The combining of information obtained results in a relative evaluation being assigned to the alternatives. Finally, a choice is made from among mutually exclusive alternatives, and this decision must be communicated to relevant organization members. The decision is legitimated when the members accept the communication as authoritative behavioral premises.

There is an important relationship between communication and the individual who will be instituting choices guiding the behavior of other members in the organization. He is usually a member who is the
source of information vital to the remainder of the organization, an important link in the communication networks, or a controller of information communicated through the network. Furthermore, both predecision and postdecision behavior of the decision maker is essentially communicative behavior, since both involve selective use of communication to reduce dissonance and achieve consonance.

A number of communication related factors intervene to limit the intentionally rational decision process in an organization. First, information for decision primarily comes up through the hierarchy, and it is often inadequate because of the tendency for messages communicated upward to be filtered. These messages tend to be designed to communicate what the subordinate perceives the superior wants to hear. Second, due to communicative incompetence or failure to recognize and emphasize the importance of communicating decisions to the subordinates, transmission of authoritative communication is often impeded. The communicative incompetence of the linking individuals in the chain of command also intervenes to inhibit the flow of authoritative communication. Finally, failure to recognize and utilize the informal communication networks limits the receipt and transmission of both informative and authoritative communication.

VII. COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL OF ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR

In the present context, control is used to signify role and decision behavior which produces goal directed, coordinated effort. Internalized language symbols, the values assigned to them, and internalized role systems provide the foundation for exercising social control, and these factors are all functions of communication. Furthermore, the selective
use of the communication variable serves as a mechanism for exercising control. Selective exposure to stimuli is very influential in determining the language symbols, values, and roles internalized. Rewarding communication can be selectively used to reinforce organizationally desired behavior, to relieve postdecision dissonance which increases flexibility in reversing decisions, and to create prestige for the competent, productive member which encourages others to follow his example. Dissonance-producing communication is necessary to institute the decision process and the process of correction through feedback.

The use of the communication variable to modify definitions of the situation is a continuing feature of gaining and maintaining control of organization behavior. Modification of definitions is necessary to overcome false ones and dysfunctional alteration of behavior which accompanies them.

Communication systems are extremely important in maintaining controlled behavior. Since the networks in the system direct the flow of information in the organization, they are influential in determining decision, authority, and power potential. Likewise, as organizations grow the need for information to control behavior increases more than proportionately. Consequently, an existing communication system may be a limiting factor to growth. The traditional means of extending the span of control is the addition of staff members who are primarily involved in the communication function. Given an existing system, there is some point beyond which diminishing returns occur from simply adding individuals to it. However, this limitation may be overcome through technological innovation and general improvement of the system.
Informal networks tend to develop through interaction of organization members. They serve as means of mediating conflict between the organization and the member, provide social satisfaction, and supplement the formal network.

Communication systems should be consciously designed and utilized in the control process. They are more effective when connected to the informal network, coincidental with the formal system of authority, and adequate for the need of the particular organization.

Providing for controlled change is an important aspect of the total process of controlling organization behavior. It helps to assure that behavior changes in the right direction and at the desired rate. The approach to instituting change should be through the individual's frame of reference and his primary group (s).

Communication is also important in bringing about attitude change. Studies of the relationship of communication to attitude change indicate that the most usual situation is for attitudes to change in the direction advocated by the communication. However, a number of studies report changes in directions opposite to those advocated, or no change at all.

Several factors influence the degree of change related to a particular change-advocating communication. These include: perception and acceptance of the change-advocating message, the past experience of the receiver with the source originating the message, the extent to which the message diverges from the group norms and the individual's existing attitudes, the manner in which the change-advocating message is presented, and the perceived consequences of the change.

Research studies indicate that attitude change may be achieved by obtaining either a verbal or behavioral commitment from a member,
which, in turn, may lead to attitude change in order to maintain cognitive consistency.

VIII. MAJOR LIMITATIONS

Any study of organization behavior which focuses almost exclusively upon the communicative aspects of it is necessarily limited in scope. The presentation was not intended to be comprehensive, yet the pertinent factors excluded, because they were considered outside the scope of the study, may at times have been the most important considerations.

The broad theoretical approach utilized necessitated ignoring details and considering the ramifications of many theoretical constructs.

For the most part, practical applications of theoretical constructs were not investigated.

Primary research to strengthen and modify the theory was not undertaken.

Finally, only selected aspects of both communication theory and organization behavior were discussed.

Many of the limitations to the present analysis can be attributed to the complex nature of organization behavior. The writer strongly believes a communicative analysis of organization behavior contributes significantly to understanding it. Likewise, the above limitations are believed to be far surpassed by the insights gained.
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VITA

Carlton James Whitehead was born in Holden, Louisiana, on October 12, 1934. He graduated from Doyle High School, Livingston, Louisiana, in 1953 and from Southeastern Louisiana College in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science degree.

He entered graduate school in 1960 after gaining work experiences as a secondary school teacher and as an oilfield mud analyst. In 1962, a Master of Business Administration degree was conferred upon him by Louisiana State University, and he was permitted to remain there in the doctoral program, majoring in management. During the summer of 1963, he completed all the requirements to become a candidate for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. He has been a member of the management faculty at the University of Southwestern Louisiana during the academic year 1963-64.

He is married to the former Kathryn Acosta of New Orleans, and they have one daughter, Carla Kay.
Candidate: Carlton James Whitehead

Major Field: Management and Marketing

Title of Thesis: "Communication Theory as a Dynamic Frame of Reference for Understanding and Controlling Organization Behavior"

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

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